Historico-Critical
INTRODUCTION
to the
PHILOSOPHY OF
MYTHOLOGY

BY
F. W. J. SCHELLING

1856

Translated by Sydney Grew
CONTENTS

Translator’s Preliminary Remarks

Editor’s Foreword from 1856 Edition

Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology:
   Lecture One
   Lecture Two
   Lecture Three
   Lecture Four
   Lecture Five
   Lecture Six
   Lecture Seven
   Lecture Eight
   Lecture Nine
   Lecture Ten

Summary of Contents from 1856 Edition

Other Translations of Schelling

Index
AUTHOR’s notes may be found at the bottom of the page. Translator’s notes come at the end of each chapter. The following abbreviations are used in the translator’s notes:

AV = Authorized Version of the Bible (King James Version, 1611)

NIV = New International Version of the Bible (1978)

OED = Oxford English Dictionary

[D v, p] = page reference to Schelling’s Sämtliche Werke (Collected Works, Division I in 10 volumes and Division II in 4 volumes, 1856-61), division D, volume v, page p. (For example [II 1, 268] means division two, volume one, page 268.)

The pagination of the original German edition, in division two volume one of the Sämtliche Werke, published in 1856, is given in square brackets at the appropriate points of the text.

Long introductions to translated works are often tedious and unnecessary, and may even be misguided and misleading. In the present case, especially since the work is itself an introduction, I shall confine myself to a few points which seem indispensable. There is an excellent longer introduction to Schelling by Norbert Guterman, accompanying the 1966 English translation by E. S. Morgan of Schelling’s On University Studies.

Here, then, are five excerpts from other works of Schelling, which should show why I wanted to translate him and may arouse the reader’s interest too.

1. All life must pass through the fire of contradiction; contradiction is the driving force and innermost nature of life.
2. What Dante saw written on the gates of the Inferno should also be written, in a
different sense, at the entrance to philosophy: Leave all hope behind ye who enter here.
He who would truly philosophize must be rid of all hope, all desire, all longing; he
must desire nothing, feel himself entirely poor and bereft, surrender all to gain all. This
step is hard, the ultimate abnegation. We realize this from the fact that so few have ever
been capable of it.

3. True philosophy consists of soul, reason, and feeling.

4. What is highest in all works—both of art and science—arises precisely because the
impersonal is operative in them.

5. Just as in the beginning of creation, which was nothing other than the birth of light,
the dark principle had to be there as its basis so that light could be raised out of it (as
the actual out of the merely potential); so there must be another basis for the birth of
spirit, and hence a second principle of darkness, which must be as much higher than
the former as the spirit is higher than light.

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (later von Schelling) was born
on the twenty-seventh of January 1775, at Leonberg (near Stuttgart),
in Württemberg. He died on the twentieth of August 1854, at Bad
Ragaz among the mountains of eastern Switzerland, at the age of
seventy-nine.

This work was written at intervals throughout Schelling’s later life,
from his thirty-sixth year (approximately), to his seventy-ninth.

He became a student at the theology school of the university of
Tübingen in 1790, and his first published work (apart from his
master’s dissertation), in 1793, was about mythology: *On Myths,
historical Legends, and Philosophemes of the World in earliest times.*
By the age of nineteen, in 1794, he had begun writing about
philosophy, and soon became very well known. Both theology and
mythology retained a vital place in his thought throughout his life.
In 1796 he wrote to Hegel:

*Poetry becomes in the end what it was at the beginning: the teacher of mankind—for
there is no philosophy any more, no history; the poetic art alone will outlive all the arts
and sciences.*

*At the same time we hear so often that the mass of the people needs a sensuous
religion. Not only the masses, the philosopher too needs one. Monotheism of Reason
and the heart, polytheism of the imagination and art—this is what we need.*

*First of all I shall speak here of an idea which, so far as I know, has not yet come to
any man’s mind—we must have a mythology of the Ideas—an eventual mythology of
Reason.*
Until we have made the Ideas æsthetic, that is to say mythological, they are of no interest to the people; and conversely, until mythology has been made rational, the philosopher can only be ashamed of it. (Translated by Norbert Guterman.)

The initial material for the present *Introduction* probably dates from the decade between 1811 and 1821. Schelling first began to lecture on the philosophy of mythology in general at Erlangen in 1821. The first record of him lecturing on a distinct *Introduction* to the subject is in summer 1828 at Munich, but much of the present work—the ideas at least, if not the words—must be derived from the Erlangen lectures. As is stated in the editor’s foreword to the 1856 edition (part of which may be found following this note), an early version was printed—in fact (referring to Schelling’s correspondence with his publisher Cotta) *three* early versions of his lectures on mythology appear to have been printed, in 1821, 1824, and 1830—but I do not know whether any copies of those assuredly very rare books have survived. In its final form this work belongs among the productions of the later part of Schelling’s life, and had taken on this final form by 1845, according to the same foreword, and possibly by 1842, although there is a certain amount of internal evidence which suggests a revision at a later date. The *Philosophy of Mythology* itself, in twenty-nine lectures, is said to have been completed by 1842, and was published posthumously in 1857. (A translation of it is in preparation.)

In the 1856 edition the ten lectures of the present *Historico-Critical Introduction* were coupled with a further ten lectures which, unlike the first ten, were not designed as a single work, but were put together by Schelling’s editors (probably following his own instructions) mainly from parts of lectures on various subjects dating from the period 1847 to 1852. These further ten lectures are, however, best treated as a separate work, and in fact are published as such in the 1927 edition, under the title of *Exposition of Purely Rational Philosophy*. The relationship of this “purely rational philosophy” to the *Philosophy of Mythology* itself is described on page eight of the latter work. The present translation contains simply the ten lectures of the *Historico-Critical Introduction*.

As is appropriate for a philosophical work, the translation is intended to be as nearly literal, and as close to the original, as
possible, and thus the English may not be particularly idiomatic. Although the meaning is in the thought and not in the words, I have found in practice that the thought is most likely to be discovered and conveyed by as close an adherence as possible to the original form of words.

Like most writers of the period, even those writing in English and French, Schelling uses long and complicated sentences. I have not been tempted to break these up into shorter ones, as has been done, for instance, by some translators of Hegel. This means that sometimes it is necessary to read the sentence more than once in order to understand it, or even to construe it. That in itself is not a bad thing. Although the number of full stops is the same as in the original, I have, where there are two main verbs, occasionally changed commas to semi-colons, and have substituted parentheses for commas in two or three places. I have not, on the other hand, inserted question marks at a number of points where the sentence has the form of a rhetorical question.

It is difficult to imagine these lectures being delivered aloud in their present form, even disregarding the footnotes: the style is very elaborate and literary in many places. This is so particularly at those crucial points where Schelling tends to resort to rhetoric and simply to exclaim: “How could it be otherwise!” (This method of argument, not often encountered nowadays, is well described in Vincent McCarthy’s book *Quest for a Philosophical Jesus*—writing of Schelling’s *Philosophy of Revelation* he says “The thinker thinks a thought and his very enthusiasm seems to constitute sufficient—even ‘empirical’—proof.” Schelling himself, in his introduction to his 1797 *Outlines of a Philosophy of Nature*, says that, in contrast to dogmatism, there is no longer, in his genetic philosophy, any separation between experience and speculation.) The elaborate quality of Schelling’s prose may stem from the final revision of these lectures, but there is more to it than that. A book once published acquires a definitive form, regardless of any later revisions which it may undergo, but Schelling’s posthumous lectures are literary works which were subject to continual revision over a good part of the author’s life. (He certainly wanted to publish them but never felt able to do this, justified in doing it.) It is possible to distinguish between the vocabulary and style of different sections which may for
that reason be presumed to have been written at different periods, but this is not the place to go into the details of that.

If I have unintentionally introduced any ambiguity or errors, I apologize to the reader and shall correct with pleasure anything which he might be kind enough to draw to my attention.

A number of words which are always difficult to translate from German are discussed in my notes, mostly at the point where they first occur.

The notes are rather extensive, and may recall certain notorious examples of gratuitous notes which I shall not identify here. But after realizing that I did not know the exact dates of such familiar figures as Plato, Bacon, and Goethe, I decided to include them: in short these notes are carried forward to the point where all the questions which arose out of the work are answered, within the limits of the library facilities available to me.

In my translation of the *Philosophy of Mythology* itself there will be the opportunity to fill in any gaps in references and explanations. What is more, in that work Schelling treats in greater detail many of the points briefly mentioned here.

It is inexcusable, in my opinion, that such scant regard is paid to Schelling in English and American universities. This is the result not simply of the absence of translations, but of a wilful ignorance. Two examples may show the extent of this, and how bad and ludicrous it is: the first is from the *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, which says: “He is generally regarded as more poet than philosopher.” (This falsehood follows a misleading summary of his life and works.) The second is found in the *History of Western Philosophy* by an Englishman, one Bertrand Russell; he dismisses Schelling in three lines, while devoting a chapter each to Kant and Hegel, men neither as good nor even (mainly for that reason) as important historically, in the very long run. These three really quite unpleasant lines say: “Schelling was more amiable [than Fichte] but not less subjective. He was closely associated with the German romantics; philosophically, though famous in his day, he is not important.” Remarks like these two just display, in the end, the inferiority of the person making them. In short, Schelling is one of the many writers who are belittled for trivial, dishonest, or sinister reasons, but are less often read.
Having said that, though, I am still a little concerned that Schelling may have had some preconceived idea of what the world should be, and may, consequentially, have accommodated this work to that frame (whose elements are God, Christianity, Germany, and so on). In his earlier, more philosophical works, this is not so apparent, and a lot more is said about art and the spirit. Where possible, I have, in some of my notes, provided references to that wider range of Schelling’s mind, often present in the background of the present Introduction.

It has been said, by many of those whom Schelling would call “crass empiricists” and Socrates “hard, repellent folk, quite without refinement,” that metaphysical statements have no meaning. But the same can be said of anything, not just of metaphysics. Metaphysics is not the point, the system is the point. Without a whole system, without a totality (as Schelling says here and as others too have said), nothing makes any sense, everything is contradictory. Even with a system, every particular is contradictory, but the system shows us why it is contradictory.

Unlike that of most writers of the period, Schelling’s thought (because of its sincerity and truth) has not dated, and it is possible to read this work without, in general, making any kind of special allowance. Inevitably there are a few passages which will not ring true, for example those which refer to the tribes, societies, non-societies, and, especially, the South American natives: “only superficially human,” says he. We who, while we may not have met them, have at least seen them on the television, would probably prefer their company to that of most Germans. But they do not, we must admit, devote themselves to art and philosophy.

EDITOR’S FOREWORD TO THE 1856 EDITION

(Extract)

THE following work, which is the first to be published from Schelling’s manuscript remains, and which in fact is appearing, as the author intended, in the form of lectures, consists of two parts. The first part (lectures one to ten [which are translated in the present volume]), containing a philosophical analysis both of those methods of explaining mythology which actually have been proposed, and of those which are in any way possible, did not flow from the pen of the philosopher only during the last few years, but was in fact already printed almost thirty years ago in a form which was certainly different in both organization and treatment, but which was completely in accord with the present one in respect to the principal ideas; it was, however, not distributed, but this fact, incidentally, did not prevent a few copies coming into the hands of the public. This first, historical part of the introduction was given its final revision by its late author partly during the final years of his residence in Munich, and partly even in Berlin itself, where (in 1842 and 1845) he also lectured on the philosophy of mythology. [Two pages describing in detail the remaining contents of the 1856 edition are omitted here.]

In accordance with the express wishes of the departed, who commissioned his sons to publish his works, should it no longer be possible for him, I have undertaken both the task of publishing the whole of his remains and the responsibility for their authenticity—but in collaboration with my brothers, and in editing this volume I have taken into account the advice of my younger brother Hermann, who lived together with our father, even during recent years, for a considerable length of time, and thus had the opportunity to become particularly familiar with much in his way of thinking. The temporary release from my spiritual duties, kindly granted at my request, affords me the opportunity to devote myself exclusively to the task I have undertaken.

Weinsberg, January 1856.
K. F. A. Schelling.
LECTURE ONE

[3]

GENTLEMEN, you are right to expect me first of all to give an explanation of the title under which these lectures are announced, not, indeed, for the reason that it is new, and would especially some years ago have fitted with difficulty into the curriculum of a German University: for as far as that circumstance is concerned, if anyone wished to make it an issue, we should be sanctioned simply by that laudable freedom of our educational institutions which does not confine lecturers within the bounds of certain major disciplines distinguished in earlier times and handed down under traditional titles, but permits them to extend their science to new fields as well, to bring into association with it, and treat in special freely nominated lectures, subjects which have until now remained foreign to it, whereby it would be rare for these subjects not to be raised to a higher significance, and the science itself in some sense extended. In any case this freedom allows the scientific spirit to be stimulated not just in a more general and diverse way, but more profoundly, even, than is possible in schools where only what is prescribed is taught and only what is required by law is heard. For in the case of sciences which have long enjoyed general recognition, the result is for the most part passed on only as a lifeless body, without the listener’s being at the same time shown the manner in which it was reached, whereas at a lecture on a new science the audience are called upon to be themselves witnesses at its birth, to look on as the scientific spirit comes to grips with the subject for the first time, [4] and then—not so much compels, as rather persuades it to reveal to the understanding the hidden sources still locked away within it. For our efforts to understand a subject should (it must always be repeated) never have the intention of introducing something into it, but only of giving it the opportunity of offering itself to understanding; and observation of the way in which, through scientific arts, the recalcitrant subject is brought to self-revelation, may, more than any knowledge of bare results, very well equip the
onlooker to take an active part himself in the future development of the science.

Equally unlikely to lead us to give a preliminary explanation, would be were someone to say for instance that few pairs of things were so foreign from each other and disparate as philosophy and mythology; it is exactly there that the challenge to bring them closer together could lie, since we live in a time when in science even the most remote things bear on each other, and in no earlier time, perhaps, was a lively sense of the inner unity and kinship of all sciences more entrenched and widespread.

But a preliminary explanation may indeed be necessary for the reason that the title *Philosophy of Mythology*, in so far as it evokes similar titles such as *Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Nature*, and so on, claims for mythology a status which until now has not appeared justified, and which requires the more substantiation the higher it is. We shall not deem it sufficient to say that it is based on a higher viewpoint; for such a formulation proves nothing, indeed it does not even say anything. Viewpoints have to conform to the nature of the subjects, not the other way round with subjects conforming to viewpoints.¹ There is no law saying that everything has to be explained philosophically, and where lesser means suffice, it would be superfluous to call in philosophy, to which, in particular, should apply the Horatian precept:

\[
\textit{Ne Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus}
\]

\[
\textit{Incident}^{11}\]

¹ This, then, is exactly what we shall attempt in regard to mythology too: to see, that is, whether it does not admit of a more modest point of view than the one which the title “Philosophy of Mythology” seems to express. That is to say, all other and more obvious viewpoints must be demonstrated to be impossible, and it must itself have become the sole possible one, before we may consider it to have been established.

Now this will not be achieved through mere random enumeration; an analysis will be required which takes in not just everything which actually⁴ is put forward, but everything, even, which ever could be, an analysis whose method ensures that nothing which could
possibly be thought is passed over. Such a method can only be the one which ascends from below, which begins, that is, with the first possible viewpoint, by eliminating that reaches a second, and in this way, through the elimination of each of the antecedents in turn, establishes the basis for a following one, until that one is reached which has no others beyond itself which it could become by eliminating itself, and which emerges thus no longer simply as the viewpoint which could be true, but as the necessarily true one.

At the same time this in itself would also mean passing through every stage of a philosophical investigation of mythology, since every investigation which goes beyond the bare fact, here the existence of mythology, and inquires into the nature, the essence of mythology, is already, in general, a philosophical one, while mere scholarly or historical research is content to establish the mythological facts. This research has to prove the existence of the facts, which consist here of representations, using the means made available to it by surviving or, in the case of non-survival, historically verified activities and customs, mute monuments (temples, figurative art) or eloquent witnesses, literary works which themselves enact those representations, or portray them as existing.

The philosopher will not immediately concern himself with this activity of historical research; rather will he, assuming it, in the main, to have been carried out, at most take it up himself in those places where it seems to him not to have been done properly by the antiquarians or not to have been fully carried through.

Going through the various possible points of view will, moreover, provide another advantage. Mythological research, like anything else, has had to undergo an apprenticeship: the whole enquiry has developed only one step at a time, as the various aspects of the subject revealed themselves only one by one to the researcher; aspects such as this, even: the fact that we speak not about this or that mythology, but of mythology in general and as a universal phenomenon, presupposes not just the knowledge of various mythologies, which comes to us only very gradually, but also the gaining of the insight that in all of them there is something common and consistent. The various viewpoints will thus not pass us by without all aspects of the subject successively revealing themselves in this way, so that only at the end of this process will we really
know *what mythology is*; since the concept we start off with can naturally at first be no more than a superficial and merely nominal\textsuperscript{v} one.

So, part of the preliminary orientation will be to observe that mythology is thought of as a *whole*, and that the enquiry is into the nature of this whole (thus not, in the first instance, that of the individual representations), and that everywhere, thus, only the *original matter*\textsuperscript{vi} is considered. The word, as is known, comes to us from the Greeks; for them it signified, in the widest sense, the whole corpus of their indigenous fables and legends, which in general go back beyond the historical era. Yet two very different components are soon distinguished therein. For some of those fables do indeed go back beyond the historical era, but they remain within the prehistoric, that is they still contain deeds and occasions of a race which is human, even if better endowed and constituted than the one now living. Additionally there is much that even now is accounted to be mythology, but which is clearly no more than poetry just derived from or based on it. Yet the core to which all this has attached itself, the original matter, consists of events and occasions which belong to a quite different order of things, different not just from the historical but also from the human, and whose heroes are gods, an unspecified number, as it would seem, of personalities venerated in a religious way, who form among themselves a *world* of their own, indeed related in many ways to the common order of things and of human existence, but essentially separate from that and existing in its own right, the *world of the gods*. To the extent that the fact that there are many of these worshipped beings is considered, mythology is polytheism, and we shall call this phase,\textsuperscript{vii} the first to offer itself to our attention, the *polytheistic* one. For this reason, mythology is, in general, *theology*.

But these personalities are at the same time thought of as bearing certain natural and historical relationships to one another. When Cronus is called a son of Uranus, then that is a natural relationship, and when he castrates his father and usurps mastery of the world, that is a historical relationship. Since natural relationships in the wider sense, though, are also historical ones, this phase will be adequately identified if we call it the *historical* one.
Here however it should at once be remembered that the gods are not initially present in the abstract, as it were, and outside these historical relationships: as mythological beings they are historical ones, in accordance with their nature, thus from the beginning. The full concept of mythology, thus, has to be not mere theology, but "history of the gods," or as the Greeks put it, emphasizing only the natural aspect, *theogony*.

Thus we are faced with this characteristic body of human ideas, and its true nature has to be found, and established and substantiated in the way that I have announced. But since here we should begin with a first possible viewpoint, we shall have no choice but to return to the first impression which mythology as a whole engenders in us; for the lower the level from which we start, the more certain shall we be not to have ruled out in advance any view which might possibly be put forward.

Let us therefore, so as to begin, as the saying goes, at the beginning, put ourselves in the position of someone who has never before heard of mythology, and to whom now for the very first time a part of the history of the Greek gods, or mythology itself, is being expounded, and let us ask what his impression would be. Undeniably a sort of bewilderment, which would continually be expressed in the questions: How should I take this? What is it intended to mean? How, then, did it come about? You will see that the three questions relentlessly merge one into another, and are, at bottom, just the one question. With the first, what the questioner wants is only a viewpoint in itself; but in fact he cannot take mythology in any other way, that is he cannot wish to understand it in any other sense, than that in which it was understood *originally*, in which it therefore *came into existence*. Accordingly he is forced to go on from the first question to the second, and from the second to the third. The second asks about the *meaning*, the *original* meaning though; the answer will therefore have to be framed in such a way that mythology in the same sense could have come into existence as well. The *viewpoint*, which relates to the *meaning*, is necessarily followed by the *explanation*, which relates to the *coming into existence*, and if, for example, in order to permit mythology to come into existence in any one sense, that is, in order to ascribe to it a certain meaning as original, assumptions are needed which can be
shown to be impossible, then the explanation will collapse, and with
the explanation the viewpoint collapses too.

Really it does not require much thought to realize that every
investigation which goes beyond the bare fact, and is thus in some
way philosophical, has always begun with the question about
meaning.

Our preliminary task is to substantiate the viewpoint expressed in
the title, by ruling out and eliminating all others, to substantiate it,
thus, generally in a negative way, since its positive demonstration
can only be the forthcoming science itself. VIII Now we have just seen,
though, that the mere viewpoint in itself is nothing, and thus in
itself does not allow of any assessment either, but only by way of the
explanation associated with it or corresponding to it. But this
explanation itself will be unable to avoid making certain
assumptions which, being inevitably fortuitous, are susceptible of
an evaluation quite independent of philosophy. Now by means of
such an analysis—which does not itself introduce a viewpoint
prescribed or as it were dictated by philosophy—it will be possible to
make, for those assumptions corresponding to each individual mode
of explanation, a comparison either with what is inherently
conceivable, or with what is believable, or even with what is
historically ascertainable, such that thereby the assumptions
themselves can be made to prove themselves to be possible or
impossible, according to whether they are consistent with, or
contradict, one or the other of these. For some things are already in
themselves inconceivable, other things may well be conceivable but
not believable, still other things possibly believable, but in
contradiction to known historical facts. For admittedly mythology, in
virtue of its origins, fades back into a time which no historical
knowledge reaches; nevertheless, starting from that which is still
within the reach of historical understanding, conclusions may be
drawn about what may be supposed possible in the historically
inaccessible time, and what not; and a different historical dialectic
from the one which was formerly attempted, based mostly upon
mere psychological reflections, admittedly about these same times
so remote from all historical knowledge, might still permit a good
deal more to be found out, even about a very obscure prehistory,
than might be supposed by the capriciousness with which
conjectures about it are usually made. And precisely to the extent that we remove the pseudohistorical cloak, in which the various explanations have attempted to envelop themselves, will everything which can still be discovered historically about the origin of mythology and the circumstances in which it arose assuredly become discernible. In addition, there is at least one relic preserved from that time, the least dispensable one, mythology itself, and everyone will admit that assumptions which mythology itself contradicts cannot be other than untrue.

After these remarks, which prefigure the course of the following exposition, and to which I would ask you to adhere firmly as a guideline, since it is inevitable that this investigation will become involved in many incidental discussions and diversions, in the course of which it would be easy to lose sight of its main direction and organization—after these remarks, therefore, we return to the first question, to the question “How should I take it?” More accurately it is expressed as “Should I take it as truth or not as truth?”—As truth? If I could do that, then I would not have asked the question. When a sequence of real events is recounted to us in a detailed and intelligible narrative, then it will occur to none of us to ask what this account means. Its meaning lies simply in the fact that the events recounted are real. We presuppose, in him who is reciting them to us, the intention of informing us, and we ourselves listen to him with the intention of being informed. His recitation has for us indubitably doctrinal meaning. The question “How should I take it?” that is to say, what is mythology for, or what does it mean, thus already implies that the questioner does not feel himself to be in a position to see truth, real events, in the mythological accounts, nor, since the historical aspect is here inseparable from the content, in the mythological representations themselves. But if they may not be taken as truth, then as what? Well the natural antithesis of truth is poetry or creative literature, something made up. IX I shall therefore take them as poetry; I shall assume that they are also intended to be taken as poetry and hence came into being, too, as poetry.

So this would indisputably be the first viewpoint, since it arises from the question itself. We could call it the natural or the innocent one, in so far as it is formed in the first impression, and does not go
beyond that and consider the multitude of serious questions which are bound up with any explanation of mythology. The difficulties which would be associated with this view, if one wished to espouse it seriously, are indeed at once apparent to the more experienced person, nor have we any intention of maintaining that it could ever actually have been put forward; in accordance with the explanations given above, it suffices for us that it is a possible one. Moreover, even though it has admittedly never tried to put itself forward as an explanation, there has still been no lack of those who at least refused to hear of any [11] view of mythology other than the poetical one, and displayed a great aversion towards any research into the reasons behind the gods (causis Deorum, as ancient writers already expressed it), or towards any investigation at all which supports for mythology a sense other than ideal. We can find the reason for this reluctance only in an affectionate concern for the poetical quality of the gods, which is, though, captured solely in the works of the poets; the fear is that, in the course of investigations into the cause, that poetical quality could suffer or even vanish; a fear which would, what is more, be groundless, even in the worst possible case. For the result, however it turned out, would always relate only to the origin, and would ordain nothing about how the gods were to be taken in the works of the poets or in the context of pure works of art. For even those who see some kind of scientific meaning (for example a physical one) in myths, do not for that reason have any particular wish that this interpretation also be kept in mind in the case of the poets, just as in general the risk does not appear at all high that in our era, lavishly informed about everything æsthetic, and at least better than about much else, there could still be many people inclined to spoil Homer for themselves with such peripheral ideas; in the extreme case, and if our era were still in need of such tutelage, one could even draw attention to the well-known book, still very much to be recommended for its purpose, of Moritz. It is open to everyone to regard Nature, too, purely æsthetically, without thereby being justified in outlawing natural science or Nature-philosophy. Similarly, anyone may take mythology on its own in a purely poetical way; but anyone holding this view who wishes to state something about the nature of mythology will be obliged to maintain
that it came into existence, too, in a purely poetical way, and to deal
with all the questions arising from this position.

Now taken as unqualified, and we can take it in no other way,
until a reason for the qualification is supplied, the poetical
explanation would mean that the mythological representations are
not produced with the intention of thereby asserting or teaching
something, but only in order to satisfy an—admittedly at first
incomprehensible—impulse towards poetical invention. The
explanation would thus entail the exclusion of any doctrinal
meaning. Against that, now, the following objection might be
brought.

Every work of poetry requires some foundation which is
independent of it, a basis from which it arises; nothing can be
created simply as poetry, plucked pure out of the air. The freest
poetry, which is invented wholly out of its own nature and excludes
any reference to true circumstances, does nonetheless have its
prerequisite in the real and shared events of human life. Every
single circumstance must be similar to others attested to elsewhere
or assumed to be true (ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα), as Odysseus boasts in
respect of his stories, \(^{1}\) even though the whole chronology and
linking of events verges on the incredible. The so-called miraculous
element in the Homeric heroic poem is no challenge to this. That has
a real foundation in the theology now, from its point of view, already
in existence and accepted as true; the miraculous becomes the
natural, because gods who interfere with human affairs belong to
the real world of that era, conform with the order of things which
was once believed in and was absorbed into its ideas. But if the
Homeric poetry has as its background the whole great corpus of
religious belief, how could poetry be given again to this as
background. Clearly there preceded it nothing which is possible only
subsequent to it, and which it itself brings about, such as free
poetry, in fact.

In consequence of these remarks, the poetical explanation would
go on to define itself more specifically: There may indeed be a truth
in mythology, but none which has been put into it intentionally, and
so none which may be grasped and expressed as such. All the

\(^{1}\) Od. XIX, 203.
elements of reality may be present in it, but in much the same way as they are, too, in a fairy-tale of the kind of which Goethe left us a splendid example, where, that is, the inherent attraction consists in its showing us a meaning in a mirage or in the distance, a meaning, however, which continually escapes us, which we are compelled to pursue, without ever being able to reach; and certainly, he who knew how most skilfully to deceive us in this way, how best to hold the listeners in suspense and as it were tease them, would be accounted a master of this genre. In fact, though, this might be the most fitting description of mythology, which beguiles us with the whisper of a deeper sense and lures us always further on, without ever declaring itself. Has anyone ever succeeded in bringing those lost, aimlessly roving tones into a real harmony? They are like those of the Æolian harp, which arouse in us a confusion of musical impressions, but never come together to form a whole.

A coherence, a system, would seem to be apparent everywhere, but with that it would be the same as it is, according to the Neo-Platonists, with pure matter, of which they say that if one is not looking for it, it will show itself, but if one reaches out for it, or tries to acquire some knowledge of it, then it will take flight; and how many who have tried to arrest the fugitive apparitions of mythology have not, like Ixion in the fable, embraced the mists instead of Juno? If only the intentionally introduced meaning is excluded from mythology, then, with that, every specific meaning is also at once excluded, and if, in what follows, we come to know of a number of explanations, each one of which assigns a different meaning to mythology, then the poetical explanation would be that one which is indifferent towards every one of them, but which also, for that very reason, excludes none of them, and certainly this advantage would be no inconsiderable one. The poetical viewpoint can admit that natural phenomena glimmer through the forms of the gods, it can believe itself to sense in mythology the first experiences of forces invisibly governing human things, and why not sensations of religious awe, even—nothing which could astound the new man, not yet master of himself, would be foreign to its first beginnings, and all this would be reflected in those literary works and generate the uncanny appearance of a consistency, indeed, from a distance, of a
body of learning, which we readily admit to be illusion, and discard only when reason, crude and common, wants to transform it into reality. Every meaning in mythology is, though, merely potential, as if in a condition of chaos, without permitting itself, for that very reason, to be qualified or particularized; as soon as this is attempted, the manifestation is disturbed, indeed destroyed; if one leaves the meaning in it as it is, and rejoices at this infinity of possible relationships, then one is in the right frame of mind to grasp mythology.

In this way, it seems, the idea which at the beginning may have seemed almost too tenuous to find a place in a scientific process has, in spite of that, acquired a certain standing, and we hope thereby to have persuaded many people of its substance, even though they may not have thought it appropriate to put its viewpoint forward as an explanation. And who, after all, if other considerations permitted, would not willingly remain with it? Would it not at the same time be in complete accordance with a familiar and cherished mode of thought to imagine, preceding the later, serious times of our race, a world-epoch of halcyon poetry, a condition which was still free from religious terrors and all those sinister feelings by which more recent humanity is harassed, the time of a happy and innocent atheism, where those very ideas which later, among nations become barbaric, have darkened into exclusively religious ones, still had purely poetical significance, a condition which was possibly in the mind of the perspicacious Bacon when he called the Greek myths “airs from better times, which lit upon the reed-pipes of the Greeks”. Who would not willingly envisage a race of men—if not even now to be found on some distant isles, then in the dawn of time, at least—for whom some spiritual Fata Morgana has elevated the whole of reality into the realm of fable? In any case the viewpoint contains an idea which everyone passes through, even if no one lingers with it. Yet we fear it would be preferable to believe it itself a poetical invention, rather than to carry through a historical investigation. For whatever more specific construction one might wish to place on it, there must always be explained at the same time how humanity or a primitive society or societies in general in their earliest period,

---

2 *Auræ temporum meliorum, quæ in fistulas Græcorum inciderunt.*
overcome, as it were, by an irresistible inner urge, had produced a poetry whose content was gods and the history of gods.

Anyone endowed with common sense will have been able to discover that in complicated problems usually the initial interpretations are in the nature of things the correct ones. But they are correct only to the extent that they indicate the goal towards which our thoughts should strive, not, though, in their having already reached the goal themselves. The poetical viewpoint is just such an initial interpretation; it incontestably contains correctness, in so far as it excludes no meaning, and allows mythology to be taken literally throughout, and thus we would hesitate to say it is false; on the contrary, it points to what has to be attained; only the means of explanation are lacking; thus it itself forces us to leave it aside and go on to further investigations.

In any case the explanation would gain much in precision if, instead of just generally seeing poetry in the history of the gods, we were to come down to real individual poets, and make them the authors, following, perhaps, the famous and much-discussed passage in Herodotus, where he says, not, it is true, of poets in general, but of Hesiod and Homer, “It is they who made the theogony for the Hellenes.”

It is part of the purpose of this preliminary discussion to seek out everything which can possibly still throw a historical light onto the genesis of mythology, and it is also a good idea to use this opportunity to work out what can be learnt historically about the earliest relationship of poetry to mythology. For this reason we shall find that the passage from the historian certainly merits a more detailed discussion in the present context. For to understand his words just in the sense of the fortuitous and superficial circumstance that the history of the gods was first sung by them both only in poems, would not be permitted by the context, even though linguistic usage would allow it.

Something more essential must be intended. And there is also something historical which can unquestionably be won from the passage; for Herodotus

---

3 ὤντι ἐστιν οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἑλληνι. II, 53.
4 Wolffii Prolegg. ad Homer. p. LIV. not.
himself offers his statement as the end result of investigations specifically undertaken and of well-directed inquiries.

Were it Hesiod alone who was named, then “theogony” could be taken as referring to the poem; but since it is said of both poets equally that it is they who made the theogony for the Hellenes, then it is evident that only the subject, the history of the gods itself, can be meant.

Now the gods in general cannot, however, have been invented by the two of them, the historian cannot be understood as saying that Greece has known gods only since the times of Homer and Hesiod. To see the impossibility of this, one needs only to turn to Homer himself. For he is familiar with temples, priests, sacrifices and altars to the gods, not as some recent development, but as something inherently ancient. One may often hear it said, certainly, that in Homer the gods are no longer anything but poetical beings. Quite right!—if that is intended to say that he is no longer experiencing their serious, sombrely religious significance, but it cannot altogether be said that for him they retain only a poetical value; they have a very real value for the people he portrays, and as beings of religious and thus also doctrinal significance he has not invented them, but discovered them. Herodotus however is in fact speaking not of the gods in general, but of the history of the gods, and expresses himself in greater detail as follows: “Where each one of the gods may have come from, or whether they all always existed, first became known only yesterday, so to speak, or the day before yesterday”, in fact since the time of the two poets, who lived no more than four hundred years before him. “They it is who made the history of the gods for the Hellenes, gave the gods their names, distributed ranks and functions among them, and determined the character of each one.”

The main emphasis is therefore to be placed on the word “theogony”. For this whole pantheon, Herodotus means to say, in which the natural [17] and historical relationships of each god are determined, his own name and particular office ascribed, his character assigned; for this doctrine of gods, which is a history of gods, the Hellenes have to thank Hesiod and Homer.

But now, even when it is understood in this way, how might the assertion be justified? For where do we see Homer ever really
concern himself with the origin of the gods? He enters into a discussion of the natural and historical associations of the gods extremely rarely, and even then only incidentally and in passing. For him they are beings no longer in the process of taking shape, but now already existing, whose causes and initial source are not examined, no more than does the heroic poet, in describing the hero’s career, recall the natural processes by which he was formed. Nor does his poem, hurrying on, take the time to assign them names, offices, or ranks; all this is treated as a known fact, and referred to as if it were something which has existed always.—And Hesiod? Well he does indeed sing of the genesis of the gods, and in view of the descriptive and didactic character of his poem it might rather be said that the theogony was made by him. But it is much more the reverse; only the unfolding of the history of the gods could have inspired him to make that history itself the subject of an epic chronicle.

Thus certainly—the objection may be conceded this point—by way of their poems, or as a consequence of these only, the history of the gods did not arise. Nor, though, when examined carefully, does Herodotus say this. For he does not say that these natural and historical differences between the gods were previously wholly nonexistent, he only says they were not known (οὐκ ἐπιστεατο), thus he ascribes to the poets only the fact that the gods became known. This does not impede but rather requires one’s acceptance that in the nature of the subject they existed before the two poets, only in an obscure consciousness, chaotically, as indeed for Hesiod too in the beginning (πρώτιστα). Accordingly a double origin is evident here, once in respect of the substance and in the enfoldment, then in the unfolding and explication. It is evident that the history of the gods was not originally present in the form in which we find it in poetry; the unexpressed form could certainly have been poetical in tendency, but not in actuality, and so it did not come into being poetically either. The dark mill, the site where mythology was first brought forth, lies beyond all poetry; the foundation of the history of the gods was not laid by poetry. This clearly follows from the words of the historian, when they are considered in their full context.

Now even though Herodotus simply means to say that both poets expressed for the first time the previously unexpressed history of the
gods, it is still not clear from that what his view was of their particular role therein. So here we must again draw attention to a point in the original passage: “Ἑλλησι” he says—“for the Hellenes”—have they made the history of the gods, and this is not there without reason. Herodotus’ only concern in the whole passage is to bring out that of which the investigations on which he relies have convinced him. But what these have taught him is simply the newness of the history, as such, of the gods; that it is in fact entirely Hellenic, in other words that it came into being for the first time with the Hellenes as such. Herodotus places the Pelasgians prior to the Hellenes; for him the former—by way of what crisis it is now not possible to tell—but for him they became, by way of a crisis, Hellenes. Now what he knows of the Pelasgians, according to another passage closely related to the present one, is the following: namely that they sacrificed everything to the gods, but without distinguishing between them by way of names or epithets. So here we have the time of that mute, still enfolded history of the gods. Let us go back in our minds to this condition, where consciousness is still wrestling chaotically with the divine images, without being able to distance them from itself, to make itself objective, without, for that very reason, being able to differentiate them and interpret them; where it thus has no kind of free relationship with them at all. Poetry too, in this oppressed state, was entirely impossible; the two earliest poets would thus, simply as poets, signify the end of that unfree condition of the Pelasgian consciousness, regardless of the content of their works. The liberation which was granted to consciousness by the differentiation of the representations of gods, first gave poets, too, to the Hellenes, and conversely, only the era which gave them poets first brought the fully developed history of the gods as well. Poetry did not come first, at least not real poetry, nor did poetry truly engender the explicit history of the gods; neither precedes the other, but the two are the common and simultaneous end result of an earlier condition, a condition of enfoldment and silence.

Now we have already come significantly closer to the historian’s meaning: “Hesiod and Homer,” he says—“the era of the two poets,” we would say—made for the Hellenes the history of the gods. Herodotus can express himself in the way that he has since Homer
is not an individual, like later poets such as Alkaios, Tyrtaios or others; he represents a whole era, he is the predominant force, the principle of an era. The meaning, in the case of the two poets, is the same as when Hesiod relates of Zeus, in almost the same words, that after the conclusion of the battle against the Titans he was urged by the gods to take over sovereignty, and did indeed distribute honours and ranks to the Immortals. Only with Zeus as chief does the true Hellenic history of the gods appear, and it is simply the same turning-point, the beginning of genuinely Hellenic life, which the poet indicates mythologically using the name of Zeus, and the historian historically using the names of the two poets.

But now we take a step further, by asking who, especially of all those who are capable of reading Homer with understanding, would not see the gods coming into being, even, in the Homeric poems. Admittedly the gods emerge out of a past unfathomable to him himself, but one feels, at least, that they are emerging. In the Homeric poetry everything glitters with newness, as it were; here this historical world of the gods is still in its first freshness and youth. The religious aspect of the gods is alone the primordial part, but it is also merely glinting out from an obscure background; the historical, unfettered quality in these gods is what is new, what is just coming into existence. The crisis, through which the world of the gods is evolving into the history of the gods, is not outside the poets, it is enacted in the poets themselves, it makes their poems, and thus Herodotus can justly say that the two poets, according to his confident and well-founded opinion the earliest of the Hellenes, have made for them the history of the gods. It is not, as he is admittedly obliged to express it, the poets as individuals, it is the

5 Theog. v. 881 ss.:

Αὐτὰρ ἔρει ὑπὸ πόνον μάκαρις θεοὶ ἔξετέλεσαν,
Τιλήσας δὲ τιμάς κριάντα βῆθι.
Δὴ μάτοι ὑπὸ πόνον λαυλαίμενοι ἔλαλον
Γαῖης φραδοσύνης ἐλαύνῃ τῷ αἰχμαλωσάροις Ζῆν
Ἀθανάτων ὡς δὲ τοῖς ἐκ διαδάσαστο τιμάς

Herodotus' expressions are: οὗτοι (Hesiod and Homer) δε εἰσι—τοῖς θεοῖς τὰς ἐπωνΥμίας δόντες καὶ τιμᾶς τε καὶ τέχνες διελόντες, cf. Theogon. v. 112. Ὡς τ᾿ ἀφενὸς δάσσαντα, καὶ ὡς τιμᾶς δέλωντο.

One can only marvel that in the many commentaries which the passage from Herodotus has provoked, no consideration has ever, as far as I know, been given to these words of Hesiod.
crisis of the mythological consciousness coming to pass in them which makes the history of the gods. They make the history of the gods in a sense quite different from that in which it is commonly said that two swallows make no summer; for the summer would come even without any swallows; but the history of the gods is made in the poets themselves, it grows in them, it reaches its maturity in them, in them is it for the first time present and explicit.

And thus we would seem to have corroborated to the very word the historian, whose uncommon perspicacity especially in the most ancient affairs, as far as the facts are concerned, has always stood the test, even in the most recondite investigations. He had a perspective of the birth of the history of the gods close enough, still, for him to ascribe to himself a historically founded judgement about it. We too should refer to his view as such, and accept his judgement as proof that poetry could certainly be the natural outcome and even the necessarily immediate product of mythology, but that as real poetry (and what would be the point of talking about a poetry in potentia?) it could not have been the productive cause, could not have been the source, of the representations of the gods.

Accordingly, that is how it may be seen in the most regular evolution, the evolution of the pre-eminently poetical society, the Hellenic one.

If we go further back, so as to get to grips with everything which is still historically ascertainable about this situation, then the next in line are the Indians. If indeed everything, which one individual or several might take it into their heads to assert, becomes at once dogma, then we would have uttered no small historical heresy in placing the Indians immediately prior to the Greeks. In fact, though, the Indians are the only society to have in common with the Greeks a free poetic art, mature in all its forms, and deriving in the same way from mythology. Quite apart from everything else, this richly developed poetry would suffice to accord the Indians this position. But in fact there is something additional, which would of itself be a no less decisive factor, the language, which not only belongs to the same family as Greek, but is also very close to it in grammatical structure. He who, once his attention is drawn to this, could still support the view which promotes the Indians to the position of primal race and places them as historically prior to all other races,
must be devoid of any feeling for a regular course in every evolution, and thus in historical phenomena in particular, even though the initial rise of this view is understandable and to a certain extent excusable. For the initial knowledge of the language in which the greatest monuments of Indian literature are written could not have been gained without a great talent for languages and appreciable exertion; and who would be unwilling to give due recognition to the men who, some of them already at an age when the learning of any language is no longer such an easy endeavour, not only mastered Sanscrit themselves, indeed at a great remove, but also smoothed and facilitated for their successors the thorny way to its understanding? Now from a great effort it is reasonable also to expect a significant success, and while the pioneers might simply have considered the attainment and mastery of Sanscrit as their highest reward, followers or pupils, devoted as they are to every possible augmentation of human knowledge, must have wished to recoup in another way the effort expended, even if by means of trivial exaggerations and hypotheses, which overturned the hitherto accepted hierarchy and sequence of societies, and made the highest into the lowest. In fact this elevation of the Indians might be assessed, in its influence, in a way not greatly different from the way in which the hypothesis of geological elevation was assessed by Goethe, who says that it derives from a point of view in which there can no longer be any question of anything definite and methodical, but only of accidental and unconnected occurrences, an assessment with which one can indeed concur as far as the theory of uplift is concerned, at least in its form up to the present, without therefore underestimating the importance of the facts on which it is based, or finding more credible the ways of coming into existence which were formerly accepted, or even wanting to defend them.

You must not be surprised when I speak out decisively against such arbitrariness right from the start of this investigation; for were it permissible to proceed everywhere in the way which was attempted in the Indian case, then I would prefer to abandon at once the investigation which has only just begun, since there would no longer be any question of an inner evolution, an evolution of the

---

subject itself, and everything would instead be brought into a merely superficial and accidental relationship. In this way one could set up what is youngest, and furthest removed from the source, as a measure for that which is earliest and original, and could put forward the most recent as proof and confirmation of a shallow and unfounded view of what is most ancient. For such a presumptuous and insistent intrusion of things Indian into everything else, even for example into researches into Genesis, an intrusion with which genuine experts [23] on Indian matters are certainly least sympathetic, the general name “mythology” has to serve as a blanket term, since under this heading the most remote things, belonging to quite separate levels and often to contradictory goals, are treated as completely identical. But there are in mythology itself great and powerful distinctions, and as little as we could stand idly by while the individual gods, well distinguished by name and rank, are lumped together and treated as comparable, in an attempt to eliminate their distinctions, no less shall we permit the true, that is to say internal,\textsuperscript{XXVII} and thereby well-regulated, succession of the major phases of mythological evolution to become blurred and to be completely eliminated. And this even less so since, if it were allowed, all scientific research into higher antiquity, for which it is precisely mythology which offers the only sure guideline, would have to be abandoned.\textsuperscript{7} \textsuperscript{XXVIII}

Were mythology in general a poetic invention, then that of the Indians would have to be such too. Now Indian poetry, to the extent that it is known up to now, has had the most favourable reception, and as a novel phenomenon has perhaps to some extent even been overvalued. On the other hand, the Indian gods have not, speaking very generally, been felt to be particularly poetical. Goethe’s remarks about their lack of form\textsuperscript{XXIX} are well-known and powerful enough,

\textsuperscript{7} Those who, in the other camp, have their reasons to isolate as far as possible what is Greek and keep it apart from any general context, have coined the name “Indomanes” for people who find the key to everything in things Indian. I did not wait for this coinage before declaring, in my dissertation \textit{On the Samothracian Deities}, that I was against any derivation of Greek ideas from Indian ones; this occurred even before the famous pronouncements in Goethe’s \textit{Westöstliches Divan}. Certainly the opinion is expressed there (p. 30), that Greek theology in particular may be traced back to a higher provenance than to Indian ideas; had the first concepts come from such backwaters to the Pelasgians, out of whom everything Hellenic emerged, and not, rather, from the source of mythology itself, then their visions of the gods could never have evolved into such beauty.
but cannot exactly be called inapt, even though an admixture of ill-will might perhaps be detected in them, in which the strikingly real and doctrinal character of the Indian gods, and the all too palpable impossibility of applying to them the merely ideal explanations with which one could rest in the case of the Greeks, may play some part. For the Indian gods cannot just be left unexplained, they are not to be set aside by way of a mere judgement of taste; repulsive or not, they do exist, and since they exist, they have to be explained. But it is even less feasible, it seems, to put forward one explanation for the Indian gods, and another for the Greek ones. If we wished, though, to draw some conclusion from a comparison between the two, then it would have to be this, that the doctrinal element, that which is genuinely religious in the mythological ideas, was completely overthrown only gradually and not until the most recent differentiation.

The crisis which gave the Hellenes their gods clearly put them at once in a position of freedom in respect to them; the Indian, on the other hand, remained far more deeply and inwardly dependent on his gods. The formless epic poems of India, like the elaborate dramatic ones, display a far more dogmatic character than any Greek work of the same type. The poetically transfigured quality of the Greek gods, in comparison with the Indian ones, is not something wholly original, but simply the fruit of the more profound, indeed complete, subjugation of a force which still exerts its power over Indian poetry. Without a real principle underlying them, the celebrated ideality of the Greek gods, even, could only have been a lustreless one.

Creative poetry, literary art ranging freely through all its forms, is found apart from the Greeks only among the Indians; thus it is found only in those very societies which are the most recent or youngest in the mythological evolution. But again between the Indians and Greeks themselves there emerges the relationship that among the former the doctrinal aspect seems predominant and is far more visible than among the latter.

If we look further back, then we encounter next the Egyptians. The theology of the Egyptians is shaped in stone in the form of giant edifices and colossal images, but a versatile poetry, holding sway together with the gods as an independent entity, free of its origin,
seems completely foreign to them. With the exception of a single lugubrious dirge and some ancestral songs, to which, as Herodotus expressly says,\textsuperscript{8} no more were added, there is no trace of poetry among them. Herodotus neither mentions a poet comparable with the Greek ones, a poet whom he, being so fond of comparisons, would surely not have omitted to name, nor, up to now, has any of the numerous inscriptions on obelisks or temple walls proved to be a poem. And yet the Egyptian mythology is such a highly developed one that Herodotus, by no means “talked into it by Egyptian priests”,\textsuperscript{xxx} recognizes Greek deities in the Egyptian ones.

Yet further back we find a theology among the Phoenicians, not developed to the same degree, but still significantly so, and the rudiments of a similar theology among the Babylonians; to both societies could be ascribed at most a poetry similar to the Old Hebraic, psalmlike and thus doctrinal, but in fact we know nothing of a Babylonian poetry and as little of a Phoenician.

Nowhere does poetry appear as something primal, original, as it is assumed to be in so many explanations; it too had an earlier condition to overcome, and it manifests itself as more versatile, more as poetry, the more it has subdued this past.

All this, therefore, may give rise to misgivings about the unconditional validity of the purely poetical viewpoint and explanation, misgivings which show us that with it we have not reached the end of the matter, and that an indefinite expanse of investigations and discussions in other fields still lies ahead of us.

\textsuperscript{8} Lib. II, c. 79.
IF we are reluctant to turn away from the poetical viewpoint, the reasons are principally because it imposes no restriction upon us, because it allows us complete freedom in regard to mythology, and leaves this itself intact in its universality, but especially because it permits us to remain with the literal meaning, even though it cannot do this otherwise than by simultaneously excluding a literally doctrinal meaning. This may thus be its limitation. Hence another viewpoint will emerge, which admits both truth and a doctrinal meaning, which maintains that, at least originally, truth was intended to be understood in mythology. In exchange for that, though, as is usually the case, it will now sacrifice the other, the literalness, and in its place introduce the extrinsic meaning. There is truth in mythology, but not in mythology as such, in that it is theology and history of gods, and thus appears to have religious significance. So mythology says, or seems to say, something different from what is intended to be understood, and the interpretations consistent with the viewpoint stated are, in general, and taking the word in its widest sense, allegorical ones.9

The various possible levels will be as follows.

On the first level, personalities are understood in it, not gods, though, not superhuman beings belonging to a higher order, but historical human beings; actual events too are referred to, events, though, from human or civil history. The gods are simply heroes, kings, lawgivers, or when, as is the case today, finance and trade enjoy such prominence, they are seafarers, discovers of new trade routes, founders of colonies, and so on, elevated to the status of gods. Anyone who might have the inclination to see how a mythology explained in this sense turns out, could be directed to Clericus’s commentary on the Theogony of Hesiod, or to Mosheim’s commentary on Cudworth’s Systema Intellectuale, and to Hüllmann’s Beginnings of Greek History.

The historical method of explanation is called the euhemeristic one, after Euhemerus, an Epicurean of the Alexandrian period, who

---

9 Allegory deriving, as is well known, from ἄλλο (an other) and ἀνορεύειν (say).
seems to have been not its first, but its most sedulous defendant. It is known that Epicurus assumed that there did exist actual, *genuine* gods, completely idle ones though, unconcerned with human affairs. Chance, ruling alone, according to his doctrine, admitted no providence and no influence of higher beings on the world and human things. For such a doctrine, the gods of popular belief, actively interfering in human activities and occasions, were an impediment which had to be removed. This removal was effected if it was said of them that they were not genuine gods, but simply men represented as gods. You will see that this explanation presupposes genuine gods, the idea of which Epicurus is known to have derived from a notion *anteecedent to every doctrine*, rooted in human nature, a notion which would therefore also be common to all men.  

“Since this notion is not introduced by way of an institution, nor through custom or law, but is met with prior to all these in all men, gods must exist,” concluded Epicurus, here too more astute than many later thinkers.

[28] But from this it is also evident how inappropriate it is when some people in Christian times, in our own indeed, who perhaps believe in much else yet not in any actual gods, think they can make use, to some extent at least, of the euhemeristic explanation.

Now a second level would be this, to say that in mythology no gods at all are intended to be understood, neither genuine ones nor spurious, no personalities, but impersonal objects which are represented as persons only in a poetical way. Personification is the principle of this method of explanation; what are personified are either moral or natural qualities and phenomena.

Since the gods are moral beings, and in each of them some quality of the spirit or the sensibility predominates, to the exclusion of others, and is thereby raised above the usual human mode, they may be used as symbols of moral concepts, as has perennially occurred. That which already exists is used, but the use does not

---


11 Cum non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneateque ad unum omnium firma consensio, intelligi necesse est, esse deos. *ibid.* 17.
explain the origin. The poet, when he has need of a deity who inspires moderation and self-control, will not invoke the rancorous Hera, but the serene Athene. But the latter is not, either for him himself or for mythology, for that reason merely wisdom personified. Bacon, living in an age of great political schisms, used mythology as a cloak for political ideas in his little book *De Sapientia Veterum.* To represent mythology as a cleverly disguised moral philosophy, as the demon in Calderon’s *Wonderful Magus* says:

*Those are but fairy-tales, wherein
The profane producers of scripts
Using the Gods’ names
Presume artfully to veil
Moral philosophy.*

was not so much a learned as rather a pedagogical invention of the Jesuits, who in the rivalry with the protestant schools even gave their pupils access to the ancient poets, although mostly in an emasculated form, and to this end expounded mythology too.

As far as the physical interpretations are concerned, their material possibility is beyond question, even though the explanation is not thereby borne out, for one would be obliged first to isolate Nature itself, and deny its relationship with a higher and universal world, which is reflected in mythology perhaps only in the same way as in Nature. That such explanations are possible only testifies to the universality of mythology, which is in fact of such a nature that, once the allegorical explanations are admitted, it is almost more difficult to say what it does not mean, than what it does. Attempts of this kind, if they take no account of the *formal* explanation, which shows how mythology in such a sense might also have originated, are thus at best empty diversions befitting idle minds.

Anyone who, without a sense for the general, allows himself to be influenced by mere incidental impressions, can even descend to *special* physical interpretations, as has many times occurred. In the heyday of alchemy there were adepts who could detect, in the battle for Troy, the so-called philosophical process. The interpretation was even capable of being supported by etymologies which yield nothing in plausibility to many which are customary today. For *Helen,* over
whom the war broke out, is Selene, the moon (the alchemical sign for silver); Ilios though, the holy city, just as clearly Helios, the sun (which stands for gold in alchemy). While the antiphlogistian chemistry was still exciting widespread interest, it was possible to believe that the substances of this chemistry could be recognized in the male and female deities of the Greeks, for instance oxygen, initiating every natural process, in the all-providing Aphrodite. These days natural scientists are principally occupied with electromagnetism and chemical action; why should it not be possible to find this too in mythology? It would be vain to try to confute such an exegetist, to whom this discovery has granted the inestimable happiness of viewing his own most recent insight in the mirror of such high antiquity, while he finds it superfluous to point out either how those who are said to have invented the myths arrived at the splendid physical knowledge which he postulates, [30] or what induced them to disguise and conceal that knowledge in such a strange way.  

On a higher level still than these special interpretations would be the readings which fancy they see in mythology the history of Nature; for some of them, admittedly, it is just an allegory of that which repeats itself annually, the apparent movement of the sun through the signs of the zodiac; for others the poetically portrayed actual history of Nature, the outcome of transformations and catastrophes which preceded its present calmed state, an interpretation strongly suggested by the inimical relations between the successive races of gods, especially the battle of the Titans against the youngest of them; one can go on even further to a doctrine of the natural genesis of the world (cosmogony), which is said to be contained in mythology. This last was principally attempted, after many precursors, by Heyne, who was at the

---

12 Kant, speaking of the erstwhile hypothesis of phlogiston, mentions a young American native, who, asked what amazed him so much about the English beer emerging as foam from an unstopped bottle, gave the reply “I am not surprised that it comes out; I only wonder how you can have got it in.”

13 According to Pamenophis, and other works of Dornedden, at one time a lecturer at Göttingen, the whole Egyptian theology is just a calendrical system, a disguised representation of the annual course of the sun and the cycle of phenomena associated with that during the course of an Egyptian year.

14 De origine et causis Fabularum Homericarum (Commentt. Gott. T. viii).
same time the first who felt it to some degree necessary also to make the *genesis* in this reading comprehensible. He did not demur at considering philosophers to have been the authors; the original contents of mythology were, for him, more or less consistent philosophical statements about the formation of the world. That Zeus robbed his father Cronus of the throne and, according to some accounts, of his masculinity, means (I am perhaps not making use of his exact words) that creative Nature, over a certain length of time, brought forth merely wild and monstrous things (such as the inorganic world); after this there came a moment when the production of mere quantity ceased, and in place of the misshapen and formless, the structured organic world was generated. The cessation of this amorphous production is the emasculation of Cronus; Zeus is the natural force, itself already structured and generating that which is structured, and by means of which that first wild force is confined, delimited, and restrained from further production. Clearly this is a reading worthy of note, and such explanations may always have a value as preliminary exercises; in an earlier era they served at least to preserve the idea of mythology having a real content. Now when one asks how the philosophers were led to clothe their valuable insights in this form, Heyne, at least, tries to distance himself as much as possible from the artificial aspect; “they did not freely choose the portrayal, but were urged on towards and almost forced into it”; to some extent “the most ancient languages lacked scientific expressions for general principles or causes, and poverty of language obliged them to express abstract concepts as personalities, logical or real relationships by way of the image of procreation”; to some extent, though, he suggests they were so fascinated themselves by the subjects that they set to work to display them to the audience too, dramatically as it were, like performing characters.  

They themselves—the postulated philosophers—*knew* that they were not

---

15 *Nec vero hoc (per fabulas) philosophandi genus recte satis appellatur allegoricum, cum non tam sententiis involucria quærerent homines studio argutiarum, quam quod animi sensus quomodo aliter exprimerent non habebant. Angustabat enim et coarctabat spiritum quasi erumpere luctantem orationis difficultas et inopia, percussusque tanquam numinis alicuius afflatus animus, cum verba deficerent propria, et sua et communia, aestuans et abreptus exhibere ipsas res et representare oculis, facta in conspectu ponere et in dramatis modum in scenam proferre cogitata allaborabat. Heyne l.c. p. 38.*
discussing actual persons. But how, then, did the personalities created by them become actual ones, and thus gods? Through a very natural misunderstanding, we might think, which was unavoidable as soon as the representations reached the sort of people to whom the secret of their origin was unknown. Yet Heyne sees the transformation differently. First, the personifications are there, well understood by all those who know about their meaning. Then the poets notice that, taken as actual persons, they would provide the material for all kinds of amusing tales and stories, by way of which one could hope to find acceptance among a people fond of entertainment; Heyne is not indisposed, even, to attribute principally to Homer himself this transformation of philosophically meaningful myths into quite ordinary tales. To Homer the philosophical reading was “still very well known, as can be gathered from some hints which he lets slip; only he does not let it become apparent; as a poet he understands his advantage too well to let the meaning do more than at most glimmer through, since the common people have no love for philosophical ideas; and meaningless tales, if only a certain variation of subjects and actions may be observed therein, appeal to them far more. In this way, therefore, the mythological personalities would have gained that independence of their scientific significance which they evince among the poets, together with the meaninglessness which is the only sense in which the popular belief still knows them.”

It seems a remarkable fact that already for the Greeks the origin of mythology, to which they were so much closer than we, was no more comprehensible than it is for us; just as the Greek natural scientist was no closer to Nature than the modern one. For already at the time of Plato quite similar interpretations of the mythological traditions were, at least in part, attempted, interpretations about which Socrates declares in the *Phaedrus*, “In such matters, to really carry them through to the end despite everything, a man of great energy is required, who will be neither particularly happy nor enviable; for in order to reduce everything to the same level or to render it plausible, using this kind of crude reasoning (*ἄγροικος σοφία*), a great deal of time would be needed which not everyone who
could be busying himself with something more serious and important could spare.”  

Cicero’s Academic expresses himself quite similarly about the laborious quality of these interpretations with reference to the Stoics; for it is noteworthy that the two last remaining systems in the field of philosophy in Greece and in Rome, the Epicurean and the Stoic, divided into the two interpretations, the historical or euhemeristic one and that of natural science. The Stoics did indeed find room for men deified as a result of great and good works, where this origin seemed clear, as in the cases of Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Æsculapius and so on. But everything more profound in the history of the gods, such as the emasculation of Uranus, and the overpowering of Saturn by Jupiter, they explained from purely physical relationships. In the end they were both supplanted by the Neo-Platonists, who finally saw real metaphysics in mythology, driven to that no doubt mainly so as to provide a counterbalance to the spiritual content of Christianity in an analogous content in heathenism. Yet since, in these exertions, undertaken partly to harmonize their own speculative ideas with the traditions of the ancient religion, and partly to overturn the latter all over again by means of the former, they were very far from entertaining the idea of a natural origin for mythology, which they presupposed, rather, as an unconditional authority, they can find no place among the genuine interpreters of mythology.

Heyne protested against the application of the name “allegorical” to his interpretation or even to the way his philosophers couched their ideas, since in fact they did not chose this with the intention of disguising their doctrines or opinions. As if that were the point! It

---

17 Cicero, De nat. D. L. iii, c. 24. Magnam molestiam suscepit et minime necessarium primus Zeno, post Cleanthes, deinde Chrysippus commentitairum fabularum reddere rationem, vocabulorum, cur quique ita appellati sint, causas explicare. Quod cum facitis, illud profecto confitemini, longe aliter rem se habere atque hominum opinio sit: eos enim, qui Dii appellentur, rerum naturas esse, non figuras Deorum.
18 Alia quoque ex ratione, et quidem physica, magna fluxit multitud Deorum; qui induti specie humana fabulas poetis suppeditaerunt, hominum autem utam superstitione omni referserunt. Atque hic locus a Zenone tractatus, post a Cleanthe et Chrysippo plunbus verbis explicatus est. etc. ibid. II, c. 24.
19 Compare the remarks of V. Cousin in the two articles on Olympiodorus, Journal des Savants, June 1834 and May 1835.
is enough that they speak of gods, where they are thinking only of forces of Nature; they mean, therefore, something other than what they are saying, and utter something which they are really not thinking. But once one has come far enough to accept that the content is scientific, would it not be desirable to find the expression, too, to be completely natural and scientific, and so at least to cross over once and for all to the side contrary to the poetical viewpoint, whereas Heyne has come to a halt halfway across? He was certainly by no means the man to follow through some particular chain of reasoning fully and to take it, even if just in an exploratory way, as far as its final point. Perhaps it was a happy frivolity which held him back from putting the philosophical explanation to the final test, to which it was subjected by a more rigorous spirit, his renowned successor in philological research, Gottfried Hermann, who in fact constructed the entirely literal sense in such a way that, disregarding a superficially personifying hue in the style, he sees even in the names just scientific designations of the objects themselves, so that for him “Dionysus” for example means not the god of wine, but wine itself, in a strictly etymological way, and “Phoebus” not the god of light, but, in the same way, light itself; an interpretation which, simply as a reaction against the allegorizing movement, certainly deserves attention and a detailed exposition.

If—thus does the highly esteemed grammarian build up his theory—the supposed names of the gods are investigated, then it is apparent, firstly, that they are all, in general, meaningful; when one inquires into the meaning more closely then it is found, secondly, as a result of an etymology in part plainly evident and in part coming to light after deeper research, that they all without exception contain just predicates of forms, forces, phenomena or operations of Nature; and if one investigates further the association and the context in which they are placed, then no other conclusion can be drawn but that the names too must be simply designations of natural objects; for if they are taken as names of gods, then they soon lose all recognizable interrelationship, but understood as purely scientific designations for the objects themselves, containing their characteristic predicate, which in the usual random

---

nomenclature is either not expressed at all or is no longer recognizable, then the representation is additionally afforded the wholly unobjectionable means of expressing, by way of the image of procreation, the dependence of the one phenomenon on the other just as we too indeed, without even reflecting that it is stated in a biblical manner, will have warmth being generated from light, or one principle, indeed one concept, issuing from another, and thus is revealed a comprehensive whole, whose components display among themselves a completely plausible and scientific interrelationship. There can be nothing coincidental about this interrelationship; the whole must therefore have originated too with a purely scientific intention, and if the Theogony of Hesiod is taken as a basis, being the most authentic documentation of the initial origin, then we shall scarcely be able to understand the source of this whole other than in the following manner:

Once upon a time there lived—but no, that way Hermann’s theory would itself begin like a myth, and in fact in the most common form—so we shall say: there must have lived once, that is to say at some time and some place—possibly in Thrace, where Greek legend places Thamyris, Orpheus and Linus, or in Lycia, where it places the first singer Olen; later on, admittedly, it will be found that we have to go right back to the Far East—enough, there must have lived once, among a society otherwise still unenlightened, a few men distinguished by their special spiritual gifts, rising above the common norm, who observed and came to know forces, phenomena, indeed laws of Nature, and who thus must also probably have thought about devising a formal theory of the origin and interrelationship of things. In this they followed the only method which makes definite, reliable and clear knowledge possible, in that it seeks out the distinguishing predicate of each object, so as to ascertain, in this way, its concept. Since he who for example calls the snow “snow,” certainly represents the object, but does not really think of it. But for them it is the concept which matters, and the nomenclature too should fix this concept. Thus they wish, for example, to express the three kinds of bad weather, snow, rain, and hail. It is found of hail that it pounds, and thus they could say “the

pounding one,” but with that only a predicate would be expressed, not an object. So they call it “the pounder,” ΚΟΤΤΟΣ in Greek (from κόττω), familiar as the name of a hundred-armed giant in Hesiod.\textsuperscript{LVIII} Of rain it may be observed that it gouges furrows in the fields (admittedly it may more often flood them), thus it is called furrow-maker, γύγης in Greek, the name of the second Hesiodic giant.\textsuperscript{LIX} It is observed of snow that it bears down and is heavy, thus they call it heavyman, βριάρεως,\textsuperscript{LX} but they are not thereby thinking of a man, still less of a giant, but simply of the snow. It is not the object itself which is personified, as with Heyne, but only, if you will, the expression, and there is nothing more in this purely grammatical personification here than there is in expressions such as appear in every language, as when a kind of broad dagger is called a sticker, the implement with which writing is erased is called the eraser,\textsuperscript{LXI} or when the country people call a fire in the grain the burner, and the canker with which trees are affected the feeder. To represent the objects themselves as persons, in the way that common people might call a strong wind “St. Blasius,”\textsuperscript{LXII} was quite contrary to the intention of the authors or author (for in the end Hermann himself speaks only of one).\textsuperscript{22} A taste for a personifying depiction in the sense of Heyne could be retained no longer by an era of the scientific gravity which was necessary to bring forth such a system as Hermann sees in the Hesiodic \textit{Theogony}, in which there exists so much exact knowledge, such a consistent \cite{note37} structure, such a convincing organization (they are his own expressions), that he has no hesitation in declaring the doctrine underlying the \textit{Theogony} to be the most admirable masterwork of antiquity; he sees in the myths not, for instance, a superficial collection of hypotheses, but theories founded on long experience, meticulous observation, even precise calculation, and in the whole edifice of mythology not only rigorous science, but profound wisdom.\textsuperscript{23}

We must leave aside the question of what part may have been played, in these certainly somewhat hyperbolic encomiums, either by a natural preference for the objects of our own true or supposed discoveries, or by a not particularly accurate conception of the value

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{ibid.} p. 107.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{ibid.} p. 47.
and force of such predicates (which would still not seem excessively modest were it Laplace’s *Système du Monde*,\textsuperscript{LXIII} perhaps, being discussed), or even by both causes together. Indisputably doctrines like the following should not also be numbered among these results of fundamental science: that the seed corn (\(\piερσεφόνι\))\textsuperscript{LXIV} has to be hidden (stolen from the god of the underworld) in the soil so as to bear fruit; that wine (\(δίονυσος\))\textsuperscript{LXV} is derived from the vine (Semele); that the waves of the sea are constant, but their direction changeable, and the like, which every man who comes into this world receives as a free gift, so to speak. In order to become convinced of the philosophical spirit of the *Theogony*, we must pay attention not to the detail, in which familiar propositions are admittedly unavoidable, but to the whole, and especially to the beginning, to the explanation of which according to Hermann we shall gladly devote a few moments.

That ancient philosopher, then, from whom derives the initial groundwork, become unintelligible already to Hesiod himself, wished to begin the explanation of the world right at the beginning, from the point, that is, where nothing yet existed. To this end he says “First of all there was *chaos*”; etymologically this means *expanse* (from \(χάω, χίνω\))\textsuperscript{LXVI}, that which is still open\textsuperscript{[38]} to everything, that which is unfilled, thus *space, empty* of all matter. Naturally nothing can follow this except that which fills it, *matter*, itself however still to be thought of as formless, etymologically (from \(γάω, γέγαα\) that out of which everything comes to be, thus not the earth, but the original material of all evolution, the as yet unformed basis of everything coming into existence in the future. Now after the establishment both of that *in* which and that *out of* which everything comes into existence, all then that is still lacking is the third, that *through whose agency* everything comes to be. This third is the bond linking everything, the unifier, *Eros* (from \(εἴρω\)), who here has *only* this scientific significance, not that of the later *god*. And after he has established these three elements, the philosopher can embark on an explanation of the creation of things themselves.

The first three products of space as the first element are:

1) *Erebus*, the coverer; this is the name applied to that darkness which covered substance before something else was created out of it;

2) *Nyx*, not the night, but here too we should stay with the original
meaning; the name comes from νυεῖν (νεύειν), “nutare”, “vergere”, to incline downwards; for the immediate consequence (thus product) of space is movement, but the first and simplest movement is the downward one, falling. These two between them now generate Æther and Hemera, clarity and brightness; for when darkness, which the cosmogonic poet represents as something corporeal and resembling a fine mist, espouses Nyx, that is to say falls away, then overhead it becomes clear and bright.

Now come the products of the second element, the still formless matter. This, of itself and still without a spouse, first produces Uranus, that is to say the superior one. The meaning is that the finer part in matter rose of its own accord, and became separated, as the sky, from the coarser part, which remained behind as the true substance of the earth. This coarser part is denoted by the great mountains mentioned here, and by Pontus, meaning not the sea, a misunderstanding already found in Hesiod, but, as Professor Hermann has now realized, deepness in general, from the verb πιτνεῖν, to which the Latin fundus is also related. So only now, after the detachment of that which is superior, does Gæa have the significance of the Earth; as she enters into an interaction with the superior one, her first offspring is Oceanus, not the ocean, but deriving etymologically from ὤκυς, he who runs quickly, the water which spreads out over everything and fills all deep places. Accompanying this torrent of primal water is a vast derangement of the elements, so that they move indiscriminately backwards and forwards, up and down, until finally, confining one other reciprocally, they come to rest. This tumult is signified by the children of Gæa and Uranus who succeed the primal water, the Titans, associated in pairs, whose name means strainers, from τείνω, τιταίνω, for they are the forces of the still wildly straining, un placated Nature. Each of the pairs expresses, in accordance with their names, one of the antitheses which has to be presumed in a Nature still under stress and at cross-purposes with itself, thus 1) Crius and Coeus, the Separator (from κρίνω) and the Mingler; 2) Hyperion and Iapetus, the Climber and the Faller; 3) Theia and Rhea: the concept common to both is Being Driven Away, but the difference is that then some things retain their substance (Theia), and others lose it (Rhea deriving from ῥέω to flow); 4) Themis and Mnemosyne, who cannot
retain their usual meaning in this context; the first is the force which causes liquid things to stop moving or solidify, the second, on the other hand, is that which agitates and moves what is rigid; 5) Phoebe and Tethys, the power of purifying, disposing of that which is useless, and the power which attracts what is useful; finally, the last of all is Cronus, the Ender, from the verb κραίνω; for Chronos, Time, only got her name from Cronus because she too brings everything to an end.

Here there is, Hermann assures us, not only thoroughly scientific consistency, but even genuine philosophy, which in fact eschews everything hyperphysical and tries instead to explain everything in a merely natural way. Of gods, if one has no wish to introduce them arbitrarily, not a trace. The whole, evidence of a mode of thought which one must tend to regard as more atheistic than theistic. [40] And when it is seen how, right back to the first beginnings and forward to the most recent manifestations, only the natural relationship is brought out, then one cannot help concluding that not only is the author himself unwilling to hear anything of gods, but that his intention is a polemical one even, directed against already existing religious ideas.24

With this we have arrived at the high point of Hermann’s theory, which, as you will see, has far more to offer than Heyne’s on the whole weak attempt to remove all originally religious significance from mythology.

At the same time, though, it becomes evident that Hermann himself restricts his explanation to the genuinely mythological gods. He has no intention of explaining the origin of religious belief in general; but instead, in his assumptions, he presupposes a society which had to be freed from an existing religious superstition by the philosophers, philosophers who through their attempt, moreover, only provide the instigation for a new and different religious belief.

But it is in any case certainly unthinkable that the society among whom could emerge a philosopher so perspicacious, in Hermann’s view, could have been on the same level as communities such as those in which, until now, no trace of religious ideas has been found. A society whose language was richly articulated and flexible enough

to have designated scientific concepts with wholly specific\textsuperscript{LXXI} words, will not have expressed themselves using mere click sounds as the African Bushmen do. We shall not be able to consider the society to which the postulated philosophers belonged to have been on a par with those South American natives whose humanity, as Don Felix Azara relates, even religious councils had formally denied, to whom the Catholic clergy had refused to dispense the sacrament, and who could at last be pronounced to be men only by way of a papal edict, amid continuing opposition from the local clergy.\textsuperscript{25 LXXII [41]} For only human strains of the type mentioned have until now been encountered without any religious ideas.

Even independently of the assumed polemical intention, we shall have to admit the existence of religious ideas in the society postulated by Hermann, although ideas of the most elementary, and thus, as he says, of the rudest kind. Their religion in all probability consisted of a primitive physical superstition, which was based on the idea of invisible beings associated with natural phenomena. Subsequently the \textit{matured intelligence} of a few individuals recognizes that the supposed gods are nothing other than Nature and its forces; so here arises that purely physical knowledge, free from any religious element, which the originators disseminate with the intention of rendering the society forever free from all religious ideas. From this is explained, in a surprising way, why mythology remained until now so difficult to comprehend, for there had always, perversely, been the desire to have it emerging from religious ideas, but here there appears the quite new and astounding notion that it was invented \textit{so as to do away with all religious ideas}, and by those very men who were best placed to know that there were no such things as gods.\textsuperscript{26}

Had the noble intention which Hermann ascribes to the inventor of the theogony been carried out, then a philanthropic man of our own era could have rejoiced to find in prehistoric times not superstitious servants of the gods, but a society free of any religion, which understands everything in a purely natural way and is unhampered by any hyperphysical delusions. How, though, the

\textsuperscript{25} Voyages dans l’Amérique Méridionale T. II, pp. 186–7.
\textsuperscript{26} On the Nature and Treatment of Mythology p. 140.
intention miscarried, in that the inventors do indeed impart their teachings to the people, but, faced with men already filled with ideas of invisible beings lying behind natural phenomena, inexplicably omit to give a prior explanation of the purely grammatically intended personification—and leave it to the people themselves to penetrate to the true meaning, or, misunderstanding it, just to delude themselves; how then the people come to accept the natural forces, only named as persons, as actual persons, “in whom they have absolutely no thought of anything further,”27 LXXIII this is indeed not easy to understand, yet is so to some extent. But how the people now do not merely misunderstand the doctrine, but, under no sort of compulsion, accept the misunderstood doctrine, and, in place of the invisible beings which are for them associated with natural phenomena and thus possessed significance, allow the completely uncomprehended personalities, or rather only their meaningless names, to be imposed on themselves; this so much exceeds all credibility that we gladly refrain from following the esteemed author in the further course of his explanation. LXXIV We have only considered his hypothesis worthy of attention at all because firstly it is the last one possible in the given direction and has the advantage that with a scientific content for mythology it is not possible to go beyond it; and secondly because at least something in it is important for us, the philological groundwork and the indisputable truth in the observation from which it set out: for we should in no way admit that underlying the view of such a man, a view he expounded, what is more, not as a joke, as some would assume in a way truly wounding for him, but with all the seriousness which is evident in every one of his other works, and in the most diligent manner, there should be nothing at all true and correct.

Accordingly we cannot but find it helpful simply to have our attention directed once again to that product of antiquity, as remarkable as it is enigmatic, the poem of Hesiod, and principally to its scientific side, of which so little note is taken. This scientific meaning in the names, which Hermann was not the first to observe, but which he placed entirely beyond doubt, is also a fact, which no

theory claiming to be complete [43] may leave unconsidered and unexplained, and the very element which a number of his colleagues felt they could deride in the renowned man, this use of philology for a higher end, is what the true scholar has to acknowledge gratefully.

But especially in the principal observation, from which this all began, we have no choice but to agree with him completely; in his perception, that is, of the *philosophical* consciousness, which comes out in the *Theogony*, particularly at the beginning, so definitely and unmistakably. The error begins only when Hermann is at once ready to ascribe this scientific consciousness to the fictitious original author of the poem (whom we would, as I said, have to seek out in the Far East), instead of attributing it to the actual author of the poem (extant in its original form, even if out of joint here and there or corrupted by interpolations and later additions), that is to say, to Hesiod himself. Only this too hastily formed view could have allowed him to overlook so much that was striking and not at all in agreement with his theory, namely, that even the beginning has so many abstract, impersonal, and thus quite unmythological elements; as when Gæa, still on her own account, without the assistance of Uranus, creates the great mountains (*οὔρεα μακρὰ*), which do not become personalities simply because the words are written with initial capital letters. In Greece, that is, as for us, notable mountains such as Olympus, Pindus, Helicon, and so on, were by reason of their names individuals but not persons. If the *Theogony* may be traced back to a philosopher who makes it a rule for himself not to designate things by their common names, but by scientifically constructed ones, why do the mountains too not receive a *general* name, derived from their property of rising into the heights, just as later the name “Titans” is also one shared by many?

The neuter *Erebus* occasions another remark. Hermann makes it a masculine form in his translation (“opertanus”), completely without comment; but it remains what it is: Homer too knows it only as genderless; for him it never signifies anything other [44] than the *place* of darkness beneath the earth. This impersonal quality does not prevent the poet from having it (for thus must we refer to Erebus) contract a love-match with Nyx and beget children on her—

*Oūς τέκε κυσσαμένη Ἕρεβει φιλότηπι μινείσα.*
Just as, in the case of the great mountains, what is literal is mixed with what is not, a normal nomenclature with a supposedly personifying one, so here too has a concept which remained abstract nonetheless been artificially mythologized. Someone doing this is certainly not the inventor of mythology, but clearly has it already available as a model.

The offspring of Erebus and Nyx are Æther and Hemera. Æther, surely, is a purely physical concept, never considered, by the author of the poem or anyone else, to possess a divine personality or any personality at all, unless it were in the invocation which Aristophanes sets in the mouth of Socrates:

\[ \text{Ὦ δέδποτ᾿ ἀναξ, ἀμέτρητ᾿ ἀήρ, ὃς ἔχεις τὴν γῆν μετέωρον} \]
\[ \text{Λαμπρὸς τ᾿ ἈΙΘΗΡ...} \]

(Oh King and Lord, immeasurable air, which carries the globe soaring around, And radiant Æther);\textsuperscript{LXXVI} but this very invocation is a proof that the Æther did not count as a mythological personality, for what the comedian means to say is that Socrates would call on no such being.\textsuperscript{28 LXXVII}

Among the grandchildren of the destructive Nyx may even be found treacherous words (\textit{ψευδέες λόγοι}) and ambiguous utterances (\textit{ἀμφιλογίαι}), wholly unpersonified. Here Hermann must indeed seek refuge in an interpolation. But when he marks the entire progeny of Nyx with an obelus, so as to point out that such concepts could not come from the source of the \textit{Theogony}, then he would have done better to have applied this sign of rejection first in the case of Eros, to have remembered, that is, the bird-chorus in Aristophanes, where philosophical statements are still \textsuperscript{[45]} made about Eros in exactly the same way as here,\textsuperscript{LXXVIII} but primarily he should have applied it right away to the first verse of the \textit{Theogony}: “Lo, first of all was Chaos”; for the way the principle of grammatical personification comes to grief at once with the first verse is truly regrettable, for where would Chaos ever have counted as a god or as a personality?—who would ever have said “he” of Chaos?

\[ \text{28 Only the ὤ διὸς αἰθήρ of Prometheus in ἈEschylus (v. 88, compare the other invocations immediately thereafter) could be mentioned in the same sense.} \]
This concept of Chaos, impudently placed at the beginning and completely foreign to Homer, a concept which in Aristophanes has already become the battle-cry of that philosophy directed against the gods and striving to go beyond popular beliefs, proclaims in the most definite way the first stirrings of an abstract thought, distancing itself from the mythological, the first stirrings of a free philosophy. Chaos and, likewise present among the primal concepts, Æther, are in Hesiod the earliest demonstrable germs of that purely physical wisdom, whose constituents Aristophanes, who never tired of poking fun at those of a conservative and more conscientious disposition over this airy philosophy, summarizes in Socrates’ oath:

Μὰ τὴν Ἀναπνοὴν, μὰ τὸ ΧΑΟΣ, μὰ τὸν Ἀέρα

Hermann was thus correct to see the philosophical aspect in the beginning of the Theogony, but the explanation lies right at the end opposite to the one where he looks for it. He assures us that Hesiod has no suspicion that he is undertaking something scientific, and accepts the nomenclature expressing philosophical concepts simply and trustingly as names of real gods—which, as shown in many cases, for example with Chaos and Æther, Hesiod simply could not have done. If no one had ever taken these to be gods, then Hesiod would surely have been the last to see them in that way. Chaos, which only later writers explain as empty space or even as a crude mixture of material elements, is a purely speculative concept, not, though, the product of a philosophy which precedes mythology, but of one which follows it, which strives to comprehend it, and therefore goes beyond it. Only the mythology which has arrived at its [46] end point and is looking back from there towards the beginning, trying thence to grasp and comprehend itself, could place Chaos at the beginning. Philosophy was no more a precursor of mythology than was poetry, but certainly there may be discerned in Hesiod’s poem the first stirrings of a philosophy which is extricating itself from mythology, so that later it may even oppose it. How?—if the poem merited the significant position which Herodotus assigns to the author, alongside, indeed even above, Homer, and if it delineated a vital phase in the development of mythology, for the very reason...
that it may have been the first product of the philosophy which is striving to become conscious of itself, to show itself? If, in complete accordance with the symmetry which we perceive in Hellenic culture, the two poets, so very different from each other, between whom very ancient legends already record a rivalry and thus a certain antithesis, if these two poets delineated both of the equally possible—not beginnings, but culminations of mythology?—if Homer showed how it was in poetry, and Hesiod how it was in philosophy, that it—ended?

I would add just one further remark. Of all the implausibilities to be found in Hermann’s explanation, in my view the least comprehensible is that his critical sense could have allowed him to suggest that all the names without distinction, those whose origin is evidently lost in the night of the past, like Cronus, Poseidon, Gaea, Zeus, and those whose comparatively recent origin is plain for all to see, such as Plutus, Horae, Charites, Eunomia, Dike and so many like them—to suggest that all of these came into being together and at once out of the mind of one individual man.
LECTURE THREE

[47]

THE purely poetical one, as we have called the first viewpoint, and the philosophical, as we shall continue to call the second, not that we considered it to be particularly philosophical, that is to say worthy of a philosopher, but simply because it assigns a philosophical content to mythology—each of these two viewpoints, to which we were first drawn in a natural and unbidden way, we have allowed first to express itself in terms of its particular presupposition, and we have investigated it thus, in the course of which investigation we incidentally at the same time gained the advantage that a lot of factual matter was discussed in advance, to which we need not return, and which may be presupposed as something now already established. But precisely for that reason, what is common to the two of them has not yet been brought out, much less evaluated. Now the presuppositions specific to each one could be found to be untenable, and yet those which they have in common could remain and be regarded as a possible foundation for new endeavours. Accordingly, in order to complete our treatment of the two principal viewpoints, it will be necessary to bring out just that aspect in which they both agree, and to subject this too to evaluation.

At least it is not difficult now to make out the first presupposition common to both: this is that mythology in general is an invention. It has to be decided, though, whether this common aspect also has to be given up, or whether the error lies perhaps merely in the fact that the one viewpoint sees only poetical invention in mythology, the other only philosophical. Yet it should above all be noted that certainly neither of the two, of itself alone, wholly excludes the other. The purely poetical viewpoint does certainly also leave room for a doctrinal content, but admittedly only a fortuitous one, not intended; the philosophical cannot dispense with the poetical element, but for it, now, it is this instead which is the more or less artificial part, and thus fortuitous simply in another way.

Now the first point, the merely fortuitous aspect of any doctrinal content, which is all that the purely poetical explanation leaves over, seems to be contradicted simply by the systematic nature of the succession of the divine races, and even by the sombre gravity
which pervades many parts of their history. For we still have no wish for the time being to consider the fact that mythology did actually serve as religious doctrine, that it tyrannically determined every action and the whole lives of the societies, which will, though, certainly have to be explained as well, whatever the outcome. Yet still more than by this fortuitousness in the one explanation are we repelled by the crude calculation which the other ascribes to the first beginnings. How much, especially, would one like to spare the philosopher postulated by Heyne from the double task of first producing the content and then looking again especially for the form or formulation. How pertinent it seems, then, to ask whether, while retaining the general presupposition that mythology as a whole is an invention, the two elements might be brought closer together, the two explanations raised, by amalgamation, to a higher level, and the aversion which we feel towards each of them individually overcome through a fusion of the two. Yet might it not be asked, even, whether poetry and philosophy are essentially as foreign to each other as they are assumed to be in the two explanations, whether between the two there does not exist a natural kinship, an almost necessary mutual attraction. It must surely be recognized that general applicability and necessity are required of truly poetic forms no less than of philosophical concepts. Admittedly, if we are looking at recent times, only a few rare masters have succeeded in inspiring the forms, whose substance they could take only from incidental and impermanent life, [49] with a universal and eternal significance, in investing them with a kind of mythological power; but those few are also the true poets, and the others are really poets in name only. On the other hand, philosophical concepts should be no mere general categories, they should be specific real entities, and the more that they are this, the more, that is, they are furnished by the philosopher with real and individual life, then the more do they appear to approach poetical forms, even if the philosopher eschews any poetical garb: here the poetical quality resides in the thought and has no need to come to it from outside.

But now it could still specifically be asked whether, in the era of the birth of mythology, poetry and philosophy as such, in their formal contraposition, that is, could indeed have been present at all, since on the contrary we have seen how, once mythology exists and
has completely filled consciousness, they both only then start to diverge from it in different directions, as if from a common centre, although even now they are moving apart only very slowly. For while the first sign of a departure of philosophy from mythology is found already in Hesiod, it required the whole period from him until Aristotle before philosophy had parted from everything mythical and thus also poetical. How long the road is!—not from the realism of the Pythagoreans to the nominalism of Aristotle, for the principles (ἀρχαὶ) are, for the one, just as much real entities as for the others, just as their inner identity too may certainly be discerned—but from the almost mythical language of the first up to the purely conceptual mode of expression of the second. Now would not precisely this common provenance from mythology, however, be a proof that in it was just where the two were still united, although admittedly neither one of them could function in its own right and as such and still less could the one or the other precede mythology and be itself a factor in it.

Linguists and philologists should be the last to trust the conclusion that poetry and philosophy, because they are found in mythology, also had a role in its genesis; [50] in the morphology of the most ancient languages a treasure-house of philosophy may be discovered. But was it for that reason real philosophy through which these languages continued to preserve, in the nomenclature often of even the most abstract concepts, their original significance, which had however become foreign to later thinking? What is more abstract than the meaning of the copula in a proposition, what more abstract than the concept of the pure subject, which appears to be nothing; for what it is, we in fact learn only from the statement, and yet even without the attribute it cannot be nothing; so what is it then? When we mention it, we say of it: it is this or that, e.g. a man is healthy or ill, a body dark or bright; but what is the concept then, before we mention this? Evidently only that which can be this, e.g. healthy or ill; the general concept of the subject is thus pure capability of existing. How odd now, when in Arabic the “is” is expressed by a word which not only sounds the same as our “can” but is indisputably identical with it, in that, contrary to the analogy of all other languages it is not followed by the nominative of the predicate, but, like “can” in German (e.g. eine Sprache können)
or posse in Latin, by the accusative; to say no more. Was it philosophy which put a network of scientific concepts, whose interrelationship it has difficulty in rediscovering, into the different meanings of the same verb which are at first sight so remote from each other? Arabic especially has verbs rich in wholly disparate meanings. What is usually said, that here originally different words, between which later pronunciations no longer distinguished, have coalesced, may in many cases be credible, yet it should only be accepted after all means of discovering an inner relationship have been applied in vain. However it can certainly happen that other investigations unexpectedly put us in a situation where, between apparently irreconcilable meanings, a philosophical relationship is revealed, and in this apparent confusion a true system of concepts whose real interrelationship does not lie on the surface, but reveals itself only to deeper scientific means.

The roots of the Semitic languages are verbs, and specifically, regularly disyllabic ones, consisting of three radicals (even in those whose pronunciation has become monosyllabic the original pattern reappears in certain forms). In accordance with this tendency in language, the word which in Hebrew means “father” must inevitably be traced back to a verb which signifies “desire, long for”, and thus at the same time contains the concept of “need”, which also makes an appearance in an adjective derived from it. Accordingly, there is expressed here, one could say, the philosophical concept that the quality of a father is that of someone standing, as precursor or initiator, in need of a successor. Against that it is objected, with complete justification, that the Hebrew will not have derived his expression for “father” initially from a verb and in quite such a philosophical way, nor will he have known the abstract concept of “desiring” before the concept “father”, which belongs among those which are naturally primal. But that is not the point at all; the question is whether—not the Hebrew himself, it is true, but the spirit which created the Hebrew language, in naming the father thus, did not also think of that verb, just as creative Nature, in shaping the skull, also already has regard for the nerve which is to make its

---

29 If one looks into the meanings of the word in Hebrew, one is likewise led to the concept of capability or of the subject (ejus, quod substat [Of that which stands under]).
way though it. Language did not come into being in a fragmentary or atomistic way, but in all its parts at once, as a whole, and thus organically. The relationship mentioned earlier is one which resides objectively in language itself, and for that precise reason is definitely not one intentionally introduced by men.

Leibnitz says of the German language, “philosophiæ nata videtur”; and if it can be spirit alone which in every case creates the appropriate instrument for itself, then here has a philosophy which was not yet actually philosophy prepared an instrument for itself, of which it is to avail itself only subsequently.

Since, without language, not only may no philosophical consciousness be contemplated, but no human consciousness at all, the foundation of language could not, then, have been laid by consciousness, and yet the more deeply we penetrate into language, the more clearly is it revealed that its profundity exceeds by far that of anything created in the most conscious way.

With language it is the same as with organic life; we believe that we see this coming blindly into existence, and cannot deny the unfathomable calculation in its structure even in the smallest detail.

But could the poetry already in the bare material structure of languages ever be overlooked? I am not talking about the expressions for spiritual concepts, which are usually called metaphorical, although there would be difficulty in maintaining the view that in their origin they are extrinsic. But what treasures of poetry lie hidden in language pure and simple, which the poet does not put into it, which he only as it were raises, brings out as from a treasure-chamber, which he simply persuades language to reveal. Is not, though, every act of naming already a personification, and if things admitting of an opposite are understood, or explicitly signified, by all languages in terms of gender differences; if the German language makes the sky masculine and the earth feminine; space masculine and time feminine: is it still far from there to the expression of spiritual concepts in terms of male and female deities.

One is almost tempted to say that language itself is just etiolated mythology, that what mythology still preserves in living and concrete distinctions might be preserved in language only in abstract and formal ones.
For all these reasons one might now certainly feel inclined to say that in mythology there could not be a philosophy at work which is obliged to seek out the forms only in poetry, but that this philosophy at the same time was itself and in essence poetry; likewise the converse: that the poetry which created the forms of mythology was not the servant of a philosophy distinct from it, but was itself and in essence also knowledge-generating activity, philosophy. This last point would effectively mean that in the mythological representations there would be—truth, not merely accidentally though, but with a kind of necessity; the first, that the poetical element in mythology would not be something which came to it from outside, but would be something internal, essential, and intrinsic in the thought itself. If we call the philosophical or doctrinal element the content, and the poetical element the form, then the content would never have existed of its own accord, it would have come into being only in this form and would therefore be inseparably and inextricably fused with it. Indeed mythology then would not in general be just a natural production, but an organic one; certainly a significant step forward in comparison with the merely mechanical method of explanation. But something organic in the following respect as well. Either one of poetry and philosophy, when taken singly, is for us a principle of free intentional invention, but since they are linked to each other, neither of them can really operate freely: mythology would thus be a product of activities in themselves free but acting here in an unfree way, thus, like what is organic, a child of free-but-necessary origin, and to the extent that the word “invention” is still applicable, of an unintentional-but-intentional instinctlike invention, which on the one hand would reject everything merely constructed and artificial, and at the same time would, on the other hand, make it possible to see that the most profound meaning and the most real references in mythology were in fact not merely accidental.

This, now, would therefore be the higher level, which may be reached from the two explanations by way of their synthesis, a synthesis to which one must unerringly come in consequence of an orientation given to thought by contemporary philosophy, whereas the concepts of the Kantian school could have led to little more than an explanation like that of Hermann; and certainly, in comparison
with explanations such as the last-named, the organic interpretation could deem itself to be a very good thing. But let us see in detail what would be gained in the way of a real *explanation* through such a synthesis.

[54] Supposing the view to be perhaps this, that the *principle* which generates mythology amounts, in its *effect*, to philosophy and poetry acting in combination, *without itself containing anything of either of them*, then this could be conceded to be true and correct, without thereby the slightest knowledge of the real nature of that principle being imparted, in that this in itself could be something which was *wholly different from either of them*, and which would have nothing in common with either. Or if the view is that both of them, philosophy and poetry, should be retained as *active*, simply not separated, but acting together rather like the male and female in procreation, then here too it will be a case of what is always the case when two principles opposed in some way combine in one action, namely that, since both cannot dominate, only the one is really performing the action, and the other resigns itself more to a submissive and instrumental function. Then here again we would only have either a philosophical poetry or a poetical philosophy, which would again behave with respect to each other in exactly the same way as poetry and philosophy behaved alone; all that would have been gained by going to this higher level would be an improvement in the form of the two explanations; this, certainly, could well be a good thing, but only if those explanations themselves were a good thing.

Or—to show the same thing in another way—the supposed synthesis still *names* poetry and philosophy, activities well known to us; but precisely because these two may not act as *such*, then they no longer *explain* anything either; that which would explain does not reside in them, but in that to which they are both subordinated, that which allows them not to act, but merely, as we could say, to “transact”.[LXXXV] *This* would be the essence, the inherent principle or that which we are seeking. The poetical and scientific would exist only in the product; it[LXXXVI] would be something which necessarily arose together with that, but of its very nature as arising together it would only be something additional, something fortuitous. Instead of just the one aspect, either the doctrinal or the poetical, having to
appear to be the fortuitous element, as in the first two viewpoints, here both of them would be reduced to the fortuitous, but the essential element, that which truly explains, would be something independent of both, residing outside and above both, which until now has been a completely unknown quantity, and of which only this may be seen: that as something to which poetry and philosophy are subordinate it can have nothing in common with free invention and must come from somewhere else entirely. But from where? For from the only two principles known to us—philosophy and poetry—there is no path which leads to their effective and real unity, so all that would remain for the moment is pure guesswork. Someone might well propose clairvoyance, much resorted to and for which so much is claimed, and by means of which admittedly a great deal might be explained, if only one could first obtain a somewhat clearer view of this clairvoyance itself. LXXXVII A dream state too would perhaps be found not unacceptable, in the same way that Epicurus can only have regarded the transient phenomena, by which he considers the gods to be authenticated, as dream phenomena. LXXXVIII For even in a dream state, what is more, the poetry and philosophy natural to men can “transact” or continue to operate. Even delirium, as a condition excluding all free invention, albeit not every influence of reason and fantasy, should not be rejected out of hand. But what would be gained from all such explanations? Nothing whatever; since every condition which one might postulate so as to explain the development of mythological representations would itself have to be explained, to be given at the same time, that is to say, a historical motivation. The substantiation would have to consist in showing by which natural or divine foredestiny such a condition in any one era was imposed upon the human race or a part thereof; for mythology is above all a historical phenomenon.

This remark shows us that no further progress can be made using the abstract presuppositions of the two explanations with which we have been concerned hitherto, just as these explanations themselves could not help but associate, with their abstract presuppositions, historical ones. As we set out to examine these, our investigation too is now shifted away from the area of abstract discussions and onto historical ground.
We return to the view that mythology is, in general, an *invention*. Once this is accepted, then the next *external* presupposition will be that it was invented by *individual people*. This assumption is unavoidable for the philosophical explanation. The poetical one will offer some resistance at first, but, as long as it neither renounces all historical application nor has the intention of losing itself completely in the indefinite, will also come in the end to individual poets. But regarded strictly, now, this assuming of individuals to have been the originators of mythology is such an outrageous presupposition that one can only be thoroughly amazed at the mindlessness with which it is asserted so generally, as if there were no other possibility. It is true that in general no one finds it hard to presuppose poets or philosophers, as required; in the case of the indistinct ideas of the primæval time, which one believes oneself justified in regarding as an empty space, into which it is open to everyone to insert what he feels is pleasant or convenient, more or less everything is permitted. Heyne still required, in addition to his poetic philosophers, the genuine poets (who transform, for him, the philosophical statements into fairy stories), and probably power-hungry priests as well, who turn them into popular religion. Hermann’s philosophers, who are poets too, even if rather timid ones, turn directly to the people; he omitted to explain only one thing: how they set about persuading the people even to give their homespun wisdom a hearing, to say nothing of impressing it on them so deeply that it could have been distorted into a theology for them.

But in general, he who knows what their mythology is for a people, would admit the possibility that their mythology was invented for them by individuals no more readily than the possibility that for a people their language, too, had come into existence through the efforts of individuals among them. To introduce a new mythology is not such an easy affair as is for us the introduction of school timetables, textbooks, catechisms and the like. To create a mythology, to endow it with that authenticity and reality in the thoughts of men necessary for it to achieve the level of popularity which it requires even for poetical use, is beyond the power of any individual, or even of several individuals who might come together for such a purpose.
If, however, we do now grant all this, then mythology would come into being for one society—mythology, though, is not the affair of one society, but of many societies.

Happy time, when Heyne could be content with having explained the Greek mythology in his own way and using his own assumptions. Hermann already is less happy, he knows that in the Greek myths there is too much which is similar to the Oriental ones for them not both to have come into being in a similar way. He feels that whatever explains one mythology must explain all. On the other hand he is much too astute not to see that the rise of mythology among one society, according to his explanation, is already quite wonderful enough, and that it would completely exceed all credibility to let the same chance event, or rather the same sequence of chance events, in which each one that follows is less believable than the one before, be repeated in a second, third, and fourth society. His steadfastness is unshaken thereby; for it always remains possible that the ideas, once they came into existence in some place for the first time, were transmitted to other societies, and this possibility only adds to the value of his discovery, since it follows that belief in gods, not just in Greece, but in Asia, Egypt, and the whole world, derives from that doctrine of the origin of the world once fortuitously thought up within one society by a few individuals, couched in even more fortuitous terms, and therefore misunderstood, yet none the less accepted as truth and passed down, a doctrine whose original ideas, preserved as by a miracle, his etymologico-grammatical art of analysis has now discovered there still in the poem of Hesiod, where the original Asiatic names were simply replaced by synonymous Greek ones, skilfully modelled after them.

If we had to say honestly, but with forbearance, how a piece of fortuitousness like this impresses us, then we would say that it reminds us of the explanation which the same scholar gives of the fable of Io. She, a grandchild of Oceanus and daughter of Inachus, is loved by Zeus and arouses the jealousy of Here; in order to hide her from the goddess, Zeus changes her into a cow, which the rancorous Here arranges to have guarded by a herdsman, and so on. What can

---

30 Correspondence Relating to Homer and Hesiod by G. Hermann and Fr. Creuzer. Heidelberg 1818. pp. 14, 65, etc.
31 ibid., pp. 14, 65, etc. Dissert. cit. p. IV.
the grandchild of Oceanus (the ocean) and daughter of Inachus (etymologically “the overflower,” thus an overflowing stream) be other than a stretch of running water, produced by the overflowing of a stream? Actually “Io” means, etymologically, only “the mutable one.” Zeus’s love for Io—what can it be but the rain which makes the water rise still more; what Here’s jealousy of Io but the vexation which the people (“Here” is translated as “Populonia”) feel on account of the flood; the cow, into which Zeus changes Io, is the meandering path of the escaping flood, for the cow has crooked horns, and crooked horns mean the crooked path of the water. The herdsman is a dam erected by the people against the water; he is called Argus, “the white one,” since the dam is made of white potter’s clay, and “the thousand-eyed one,” since the clay has a multitude of little apertures or pores, which are filled by the water. Instead of this last, the fable says “the herdsman was put to sleep.” The reed pipe means the whispering of the waves; that the herdsman is killed, means the dam is broken; that Io flees in a frenzy to Egypt and espouses the Nile, means the escaping stream of water mingles with the Nile; that Io bears the Nile’s child Epaphus (Occupus), means that out of the stream of water there comes into being the Nile, which appropriates and floods the land.32 LXXXIX

Would, then, the most ancient literary art have couched in such extravagant terms such an everyday event, one might say, as the overflowing of the stream, and whatever else empty and insignificant [59] that follows from it?—would the fable of the madness and wild flight of Io, the description of which in ÆschylusXC fills us with amazement and terror, have had such a watery beginning?—the majestic Nile, dominating Egypt, such a fortuitous source? And would, one might continue, the living stream of theology and legends of gods, which poured out profoundly and powerfully, as if from bottomless founts, over the whole prehistoric world, have had a no less shallow origin in the thought-agglutinations, as fortuitous as they are unprofitable, of one individual or a few individuals? Would the age-old history of the erratic path of nations have evolved out of concepts of Nature, and personifications, abstracted from arbitrary

32 Dissertatio de Historiæ Græcæ primordiis, in which the principle of interpretation earlier brought to bear on the Theogony is also applied to the legendary history of Greece.
reflection and generated by arid intellect in conjunction with meagre knowledge, concepts and personifications which, comparable at best with the pastimes of a childish intelligence, could scarcely have occupied their creator seriously for a moment; and the dark monstrous power of faith in gods from a beginning at once so paltry and so contrived?

A chance event like that portrayed above, where, that is, the mythology of the Greeks, of the Egyptians, of the Indians, in short of the whole world, is supposed to have its origin in a cosmogony of one or a few individuals thought up in a highly fortuitous way, at once disguised, finally misunderstood and believed regardless of that—such a chance event seems to be of the kind before which, all things considered, even many of those would baulk who otherwise hold the view that the greatest and most influential occurrences in this world are brought about by the most fortuitous and trivial causes.

But now the higher interpretation, which postulated an instinctlike invention, will try to raise itself here too to a higher level, and when we show that it is an incongruity to regard mythology as the invention of individuals, will blithely answer us: certainly mythology was not invented by individuals, it came from the society itself. The mythology of a society is so much interfused with its life and being that it could only have emerged from the society itself. Everything of an instinctive kind operates in any case more in the mass than in individuals, and just as in certain families of the animal kingdom a common constructive urge brings together independent individuals for the production of a collective artefact, so too, among individuals distinct but belonging to the same society, does there arise, of its own accord and as if through inner necessity, a spiritual bond, which must inevitably reveal itself in a common product such as mythology. Indeed it seems that this spiritual cooperation continued even after the time of the first emergence of mythology. Wolf's studies on Homer, rather more intelligently formulated than was the case with his contemporaries, long ago set out a great and significant analogy. If the Iliad, and the Iliad and the Odyssey taken together, are not the work of one individual, but of a whole race over the course of more than one epoch, then it must at
least be admitted that this race created poetry as if it were one individual.

There is encountered universally, and, as it is a natural development, with particular approbation, a *folk*-poetry which is older than any poetic *art*, and survives still *alongside* the latter in legends, fairy-tales, and songs, whose origin no one can identify; just as there is a natural world-wisdom, which, stimulated by events in everyday life or by animated companionship, continually invents new aphorisms, puzzles, and parables. Thus, by means of an interplay of natural poetry and natural philosophy, not in a calculated and intentional way, but without reflection, in the course of life itself, a society creates for itself those higher forms which it needs to fill the emptiness of its soul and of its fantasy, through which it feels itself elevated to a higher level, which retrospectively ennable and beautify its own life, and which are of just as profound a natural significance on the one hand as are they poetical on the other.

And certainly, were there no choice but that between individuals and society, who, especially nowadays, would ponder long about the one he would support? But the more plausible the idea, the more closely should it be inspected to see whether here too a tacit presupposition has crept in, which does not stand up to examination. Assumptions of such a kind are, to the researcher, what coral reefs hidden under the surface of the water are to the mariner; and the critical spirit is distinguished from the uncritical simply by the fact that the latter goes to work with presuppositions of which he is not conscious, while the former admits nothing hidden and unconsidered, but brings everything as far as possible out into the open.

It is true that we breathe as it were more freely as soon as we hear it said that mythology did not come from individuals but from the whole society. But this society, which is here understood only as the society as a whole, will still be just *one* society. Mythology, though, is not merely the affair of one society, but of many societies, and between their mythological representations there is not merely a general correspondence, but one extending into the detail. Here, then, there would emerge for the first time the great and undeniable fact of the inner kinship between the mythologies of the most diverse
and otherwise most dissimilar societies. How is it proposed to explain this fact, to explain mythology as a universal phenomenon, on the whole everywhere the same? Surely not by reasons and circumstances as they might perhaps be imagined within one society? In this case, if one assumed, that is, that it first came into existence within one society, there would evidently remain, in order to explain that correspondence, no other means than to additionally assume that the mythological representations did indeed first come into existence within one society, but were transmitted by that society to a second, and were always passed on at once to a following one, admittedly not without acquiring modifications, yet in such a way that as a whole and in their fundamental principles they remained the same. Hermann is not alone in accounting for the fact in this way. Others too, without being obliged to do so by the special nature of their premises, propose the explanation according to which mythology would really no longer be a universal phenomenon except in appearance, and the correspondence in material between the various mythologies would no longer be more than a superficial and accidental one. It may be thought convenient to explain the kinship, lying not on the surface but in the depths, by means of such a merely superficial and subordinate relationship, but the character of the correspondence contradicts the assumption. Had the Greeks got their Demeter only from the Egyptians, then Demeter, like Isis, would have had to search for her murdered husband, or Isis, like Demeter, her abducted daughter. But the similarity only consists in the fact that they both search for someone they lost. Since this lost person, though, is for each of them different, the Greek representation cannot then be a mere duplication of the Egyptian one, nor dependent on the latter; it must have come into being of its own accord and independently of previous representations. The similarities are not like those usually existing between original and copy, they do not point to a one-sided derivation of the one mythology from the other, but to a derivation common to all. It is not a superficially explainable similarity, it is one of blood relationship.

But if the relationship between the various mythologies did admit of being explained in that superficial, mechanical way, if, too, one could bring oneself to shrug off so easily this great fact, which must
be esteemed a powerful tool for the development of the true theory: one thing would still remain presupposed, and that is that mythology could come into existence out of or within one society. But this very point, to which until now no one has taken exception, seems to me to be very much in need of investigation: whether, in fact, it could even be thinkable that mythology might come into existence out of or within one society. For first of all, what is a society anyway, or what makes it a society? Definitely not the mere spatial co-existence of a greater or lesser number of physically similar individuals, but rather the community of consciousness between them. In the common language this has only its direct expression; but in what are we to find this common quality itself or its basis, if not in a common world-view, and this in turn, in what can this be originally contained for a society, and given to it, if not in its mythology? It seems thus impossible that a mythology should come later to a society already in existence, whether by the invention of individuals within it or by coming into being for it through a collective instinctlike process of generation. This too appears impossible, because it is unthinkable that a society could—exist without mythology.

One may perhaps consider responding that a society is held together by the collective performance of some enterprise, for example agriculture or trade, by common customs, legislation, sovereignty, and so on. Certainly all this does belong to the concept of a society, but it seems almost unnecessary to recall how intimately in all societies sovereign power, legislation, customs, even occupations are connected with ideas of gods. The question is, in fact, whether all this which is presupposed, and which is certainly given with a society, could be thought of apart from any religious ideas, which exist nowhere without mythology. It will be objected that there are indeed communities in whom no trace of religious ideas is encountered, and thus no trace of mythological ones either. Among these belong, for instance, the previously mentioned races of South America, human only in outward appearance. But these very people live, as Azara reports, without any kind of community among themselves, exactly like animals in the wild, in that they recognize neither a visible nor an invisible power over themselves, and feel as foreign in relation to each other as do animals of the same species;
and they no more constitute a society than might the wolves or foxes do, indeed they live less gregariously than many animals which live and work in communities, such as the beavers, the ants, or the bees. Any attempt to turn them into a society, to bring into being, that is, a social cohesion among them, would be vain. Introduced by force, it would be the end of them, which shows that neither by divine nor by human power can a society emerge from that which is not a society from its very birth, and that where the original unity and community of consciousness is lacking, none can be brought into being.

Here too language again has a place beside mythology. It would at once be recognized as absurd to assume that its language could come into existence for a society through the efforts of individuals within it. But would it be any less absurd to think it possible that it could come into existence out of or within the society itself, just as if a society could exist without a common language, instead of being from the first the one society which has a common language?

The same could be said if one wished to understand the opinion that in legislation not everything needed to take place through the agency of individual legislators, that the laws were produced by the society itself in the course of its life—if one wished to understand that opinion to mean that a society could make laws for itself from the beginning, and thus exist without laws, since it is, in fact, only a society, and specifically this society, by virtue of its laws. In fact it received the law of its life and continued existence, of which all the laws which appear in the course of its history can be no more than extensions, together with its existence as a society. But it can have received this original law itself only in conjunction with the world-

---

33 Refer to Azara Voyages etc., T. II, p. 44, where it is said of the Pampas, “ils ne connaissent ni religion, ni culte, ni soumission, ni lois, ni obligations, ni récompenses, ni châtiments”; the same is said on p. 91 of the Guanas; on p. 151 of the Lenguas: “ils ne reconnaissent ni culte, ni divinité, ni lois, ni chefs, ni obéissance, et ils sont libres en tout”; of the M’bajas the same on p. 113, where may also be seen the situation in regard to the so-called caciques (assigned to these natives by the other inhabitants living under a civil constitution), who (cf. p. 43) have neither the right to give orders, nor to punish, nor to demand anything, but do indeed enjoy a certain respect among the others, who for the most part support their views in assemblies and obey them not as overlords, or with the feeling of some obligation, but because they attribute to them more understanding, guile, and bodily strength than to themselves. Among the Charruas nobody is obliged to go through with an agreed piece of business, not even he who suggested it; the parties themselves settle their disagreements, usually by means of fist-fights. *Ibid.* p. 16.
view innate in it as a society, and this world-view is contained in its mythology.

In whatever way the emergence of mythology out of or within a society is explained, the society itself will always be presupposed, and thus for instance it will be assumed that the Hellene was a Hellene, the Egyptian an Egyptian, before he received his mythological ideas in one way or another. I am asking you now, though, whether the Hellene does remain a Hellene, and the Egyptian an Egyptian, if we remove his mythology. Thus he neither received his mythology from others, nor created it himself, *after* he had become a Hellene or an Egyptian; he became a Hellene or an Egyptian only *together with* this mythology, because of the fact that this mythology came into being for him. If its mythology comes into being for a society in the course of its history (and this begins for every society as soon as the society is in existence), it thus emerges for it particularly through historical relationships and contacts with other societies, and so the society has a history before it has a mythology. Usually the opposite of that is assumed. Its mythology is not determined for it by its history, but on the contrary its history is determined for it by its mythology, or rather the latter does not determine, *it is* itself the society’s destiny (as the character of a man is his destiny), the lot fallen to it right at the beginning. How could anyone deny that with the theology of the Indians, Hellenes, and so on, their whole history is given.

If it is impossible that the mythology of a society comes into existence out of or within the society which is already present, then nothing remains but that it might come into existence at the same time as the society, as the individual consciousness of *that* society, by way of which it emerged from the common consciousness of humanity, and through which, no less than by its language, it is this particular society and is distinguished from every other.

But hereby, as you see, is the basis on which they attempted to establish themselves completely withdrawn from the explanations considered up to now: this basis was a historical one, presupposing, that is, the prior existence of societies, whereas it has become evident here that the emergence of mythology dates from the time of the coming into existence of societies. The origin of the mythology of every society goes back to a period where there is no time for
invention, whether it be taken to emanate from an individual or from the society itself, no time for ingenious formulation [66] nor for misunderstanding. Consequently there is no longer the time for the circumstances which Heyne, Hermann, and others postulate. With the explanations which assume mythology in general to be an invention, whether it be an invention of individuals at odds with a society, or an invention of the whole society by way of a collective instinct, it is no longer possible to go back to the time when the societies came into being. The mythological ideas, which come into being with the societies themselves, and determine their initial existence, must also have been intended to be understood as truth, and indeed as whole, full truth, accordingly as theology; and what we have to explain is how they could have come into being in this sense. We are required to find other lines of approach for this investigation, for among all those which have been put forward up to now, there is nothing which went back to that region of time. We shall not judge the explanations now passed over to contain nothing at all which is true. This would be too much; but they do not amount to the whole truth, so this still remains to be found, but even now we cannot reach this in a single bound, but only by way of an argument taken step by step, overlooking no possibility.—I like to remind you of the method of the investigation, since I consider it to be possibly one of its main benefits that you learn how a subject so profusely complicated and displaying so many aspects can nevertheless be grasped, mastered, and by way of a methodical progression, finally shown under a full light.—Only the following is certain for the time being, and the clear result of the previous argument: what is true, that which we are seeking, lies outside the previous theories. In other words, what is true lies in that which the explanations hitherto introduced and considered exclude, and now it is at least not difficult to see what they all exclude unanimously and in the same way.
IF progress is to be made neither with the view that originally there was no truth at all intended to be understood in mythology, nor with the one which does admit an original truth in it, but not in mythology as such, that is to say specifically in so far as it is theology and history of gods, then with the elimination of these two views the third is established of its own accord and is now even necessary: mythology was, as it stands, intended to be understood as truth; but this of itself amounts to the same as the assertion that mythology was originally understood as theology and history of the gods, that it has originally religious meaning, and this very meaning, now, is also what the earlier explanations exclude; for they all tried to bring out the idea that the religious meaning which they had to concede to mythology, in so far as it undeniably counted as religious doctrine, was foreign to its original emergence, and came to it only later. Certainly the purely poetical interpretation, in so far as it denies only the intentionally introduced sense, can admit originally religious overtones, but for the same reason opposes any religious origin, and that which might appear to be a religious aspect in mythology, must, for this view, amount to something just as accidental and unintentional as any other seemingly doctrinal sense. It is quite different, though, with the non-poetical, more philosophical explanations. Here the religious is not admitted even as an originally accidental aspect. According to Heyne, the original authors were, on the contrary, well aware that the characters they thought up were not real beings, and thus, for that same reason, that they were no gods; for the very minimum in the concept of gods is that they are beings which are feared, but only real beings or those taken to be real are feared. In the most consistent working-out, as it is found, admittedly, only in the case of Hermann, the religious significance even has to become the one which is intentionally excluded.

If we now wished, accordingly, to apply the common name “irreligious” (understood without any denigrating connotation) to all the theories considered up to now, then they would still perhaps
reject the name, because from their point of view they do still assume, at least to some extent, that there existed really religious ideas at least prior to mythology, and thus they do not entirely exclude the religious element. And certainly someone who supported for example Euhemerus would have to imagine genuine gods prior to the mythological ones, which are for him simply false. In the same way Hermann speaks of a preliminary stage of mythology, a crudely physical superstition, which did indeed imagine actual beings believed to be associated with natural phenomena, and Heyne too, were it possible to question him about it, would not hesitate to accept this view; for he too has to assume genuine prior gods, so that his personalities, who are not genuine gods, might be taken to be gods. So even these explanations require genuine gods, from their point of view, and thus something really religious, at least as a background. Accordingly it would seem that no category of irreligious viewpoints could, in general, be introduced.

But in respect to what has just been discussed, at least, it would in fact first have to be decided whether we shall concede that the beings which it presupposes before the genuinely mythological ones were beings of really religious significance. For at first sight they are indeed real beings which men fancy to be hidden behind natural effects, be it due to ignorance of the true causes, or from pure unthinking animal terror, or in consequence of a positive tendency which is ascribed to man to presuppose, wherever he perceives an effect, will and freedom as well, if only because he creates the concept of existence, under which he understands the things outside himself, only from himself, and only gradually generalizes it and learns to separate from it what is associated with this concept in human consciousness. As all-powerful, and in general superior to human forces, these beings associated with the processes of Nature are feared (primus in orbe Deos fecit timor); and because they appear, as the mood takes them, now obstructive and now encouraging to human endeavours, demonstrations of subservience are used in an attempt to dispose them favourably. So the belief in such beings, it is said, was the first religion.

34 Compare the article on existence in the French Encyclopædia, from which a great deal in later popular explanations of the initial origin of ideas about gods seems to have been borrowed. The article is by Turgot.
This explanation was propounded in recent times principally by *David Hume*, although he is less inclined to derive the initial ideas of invisible beings from reflections about natural phenomena; these, he thinks, must rather have led to one single being, by reason of their consistency and symmetry; the idea of many gods would be more likely to have first emerged out of observations and experiences of the contradictions and change in human life. Since, however, the life of the unsophisticated man is itself only a life of Nature, and the variety of his encounters depends principally on variations in Nature, this distinction is meaningless. According to D. Hume this first real polytheism only becomes mythological when human individuals, who in their time acted authoritatively or beneficially towards others, are accepted among those beings revered in a religious way.

*Johann Heinrich Voss* had another approach. He too considered the initial ideas, out of which mythology was later to emerge, to have been still especially crude and to have grown out of a condition of partially or wholly animal obtuseness. He will have no doctrinal meaning in mythology, and especially not an originally religious one, nor can he accept that it is simple poetry: thus he is obliged to seek another antithesis to the doctrinal besides the poetical, and he finds it in what is completely meaningless; the more meaningless the original representations are, the better; for with that he has at the same time the radical remedy against every attempt to see a meaning in mythology and to go beyond his treatment of it, which is willing only to consider the lifeless raw letters. So in this initial profoundly obtuse condition, stimulated by natural events, man suspects that, associated with these, there are beings like himself, that is to say equally crude, who are his first gods. But *poets*, whom Voss calls in, have to serve for the transition to mythology; these are there to gradually flesh out the misty forms and indeterminate beings for him, equip them with endearing human qualities, and finally promote them to ideal personalities. In the end these poets even invent a *history* for these beings, by way of which what was originally meaningless is disguised in a pleasant and attractive way. That is how mythology came into existence, in Voss’s view.

Anyone who has some feeling for Hellenic mythology recognizes in it something meaningful, rich in references, and organic. It could
only have been possible for that hideous ignorance of Nature which prevailed among many circles of earlier philologists to think that anything organic could ever have emerged out of such wholly random and completely unsystematic ideas as the ones proposed. Incidentally it might be asked at this point how, in Germany, people could have been so ready, over a considerable length of time, to see poets emerging immediately out of the crudest condition of life, in which effectively nothing of any human quality remains. Was it passages from the ancients, such as the one from Horace, for instance, which refers to Orpheus, and how he weaned men living in the wild away from animal coarseness by the sweet tones of his song, and guided them to a more human life:

*Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque Deorum
Caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus,
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidosque leones.*

These words, though, refer clearly enough to the particular Orphic dogma which enjoins sparing the lives of animals; [71] but this dogma has as little in common with the theology which demands bloody sacrifices, as has the Orphic way of life with the ample appetite for flesh of Homeric heroes. No ancient writer assigns Orpheus a place in mythology; and Voss at least would certainly not have had Orpheus in mind; his view of pre-mythological poets probably stems from nothing more remote than the good old Göttingen days, when Heyne, of whom Voss is accustomed to speak never otherwise than disdainfully, without therefore being able to repudiate his school, as far as questions of this kind are concerned, taught the following, taken from the Englishman Wood’s book “On the Original Genius of Homer”:

35 A. P. 391 ss.
36 See the review of the above-mentioned work, reprinted in the *Götting. gel. Anzeigen*, prior to its translation into German.
believed, the sons of Teut, still clothed in animal skins, were not merely urged on to valour in battle, but were also guided towards a more human life in general, although the picture which the Homeric poems themselves sketch of the gay and cultivated conviviality of their time permits us to imagine that those who listened to the bards of that time were nothing less than savages or semi-savages, as the speech set even in the mouth of Odysseus proves:

Truly, though, it is bliss to listen together to the bard,
To those like him, with a voice like the immortals!
For I myself know of nothing more pleasant,
Than when a festival of joy spreads throughout the people,
And, in the dwellings all around, the feasters are listening to the bard.
Such, methinks, is the most heavenly bliss in life.

Beings of the type described, then, are supposed to have been the first, the genuine gods, which preceded the mythological ones, and so the question is, whether we can accept these as beings of really religious significance. [72] However we very much doubt whether ideas such as those just mentioned could be called religion; since for example even to the savages who roam around the wide plains of the Rio de la Plata the unthinking dread of anything uncanny and invisible in Nature, a dread, indeed, which we believe we detect even in many animals, will not be unknown; they too will not lack for dark ideas of ghostly beings stirring in phenomena of Nature; and yet Azara assures us that they are devoid of any religion. It is true that objections have been made to this statement, but a man like Azara is not to be refuted by commonplaces, among which may be reckoned even the famous remark of Cicero to the effect that no society would be encountered which was so crude and inhuman as to lack any ideas of gods. This proposition we can certainly accept, for we have already noted that those bands devoid of unity are not worthy of the name “society.” It is always found difficult to relinquish a view long held; it is well known that the testimonies cited by Robertson, saying the very same thing about many American communities, were earlier exposed to the same objections; but the question of whether a number of men, who live before our

37 Compare the remarks of the French translator, among others.
eyes, and enact and perform in front of us without inhibition everything pertaining to their customs and their nature, might evince a kind of cult of some visible or invisible being, is of the kind that is capable of being decided wholly unambiguously by way of simple observation; acts of adoration are visible acts. The brilliant Azara cannot be set on a par with common travellers. If it was the spirit of all-embracing natural science which accompanied our own renowned Alexander von Humboldt thither, then it was the mind of the independent unprejudiced thinker, of the philosopher, which Azara brought to those regions, whence he returned with problems for natural science and for the study of the history of man which are still awaiting a solution, and indeed, for the most part, consideration, even given the scientific competence of our time especially among our natural scientists. [73] He could not have been mistaken about the fact that those natives evinced no sign, in any of their activities, of a religious veneration towards any object. The conclusion drawn from this, that they are devoid of all religion, is equally incontestable.38 CV

If invisible beings, imagined to be associated with natural processes, amounted to gods, then the mountain and water spirits of the Celtic peoples, the kobolds of the Germanic ones, and the fairies of lands East and West would also have to be gods, which they have never been held to be. The Greek imagination, too, knows oreads, dryads, and nymphs, who are indeed to some extent revered as handmaidens of deities, but are never regarded as deities themselves. The awe which is certainly felt before such beings too,

38 Since the fact is important for what is to follow, the relevant passages might be reproduced here. One, in which the author expresses himself in a quite general way, is the following:

Les ecclésiastiques y en ont ajouté une autre fausseté positive en disant, que ces peuples avaient une religion. Persuadés qu’il était impossible aux hommes de vivre sans en avoir une bonne ou mauvaise, et voyant quelques figures dessinées ou gravées sur les pipes, les arcs, les bâtons et les poteries des indiens, ils se firent à l’instant que c’étaient leurs idoles, et les brûlèrent. Ces peuples emploient encore aujourd’hui les mêmes figures; mais ils ne le font que par amusement, car ils n’ont aucune religion. Voyages T. II, p. 3.

Of the Payaguas, among others, he relates the same thing on page 137:

Quand la tempête ou le vent renverse leurs huttes ou cases, ils prennent quelques tisons de leur feu; ils courrent à quelque distance contre le vent, en le menaçant avec leurs tisons. D’autres, pour épouser la tempête, donnent force coups de poing en l’air. Ils en font quelquefois autant, quand ils aperçoivent la nouvelle lune; mais, disent-ils, ç’ est que pour marquer leur joie: ce qui a donné lieu à quelques personnes de croire qu’ils l’adoraient; mais le fait positif est qu’ils ne rendent ni adoration ni culte à rien au monde, et qu’ils n’ont aucune religion.
even offerings in an attempt to gain their good will and dispose them favourably and amicably, are still no proof of beings worshipped as gods, possessing, that is to say, religious significance. These attempts to evoke gods without God seem thus not to have attained to the true force and strength of the concept. Yet gods of this kind would simply be improperly named. Hume himself admits this and states it. “To anyone who considers justly of the matter,” he writes, “... these pretended religionists are really a kind of superstitious atheists, and acknowledge no being, that corresponds to our idea of a deity.” In another passage he says that if God and the angels (for these, as tools of the deity, without a will of their own, could not be imagined without him) were excluded from the ancient European belief and only the fairies and sprites retained, then a belief similar to that apparent polytheism would result.

According to this explanation given by D. Hume, which admits of no contradiction, we are now also justified in bringing together under the common head of “irreligious” all the explanations previously attempted, and in setting them entirely aside in this way; and it is equally clear that we are only now turning to the religious explanations as the subject of a completely new analysis. The analysis hitherto applied only to the question of which explanations could be called “religious,” and which not. Common sense says “But polytheism cannot be atheism, real polytheism cannot be something in which there is no trace of theism at all. Only those gods at whose basis God lies, be it by way of however many intermediate links, and in whatever way, but at least in some way, can be called genuine gods.”—Nothing in this is changed by deciding to say that mythology is false religion. For false religion is not therefore irreligion, just as error (at least that which is worthy of the name) is not complete lack of truth, but only the inverted truth itself.

But while, with that, we state what we require of a really religious viewpoint, there at once also appears the difficulty which it encounters in practice, and which only now points to the reasons the earlier exegetists had for retreating so uncompromisingly from the religious meaning, and for sacrificing everything, indeed even

---

39 Natural History of Religion p. 38.
40 ibid. p. 45.
making do with what is unbelievable, rather than admitting there to be something genuinely religious in mythology, or even in the supposedly premythological ideas, of which Hume himself says that they contain no trace of God. For it is human nature to take fright before seemingly insuperable difficulties and to look for ways out, and to resign oneself to the inevitable and irresistible only when it is seen that all these false palliatives afford no succour.

Supposing the really religious meaning of mythology to have been the original one, the difficulty which has to be explained is how God could originally have been at the basis of polytheism. Here too various possibilities will become apparent, and to expound them will be our next task. For now that no other viewpoint is left to us but the religious, we shall wholly confine ourselves to that and see what may be made of it, and here too we shall again take pains to start out from the first possible presupposition which allows an originally religious meaning to be comprehended.

But the first possible is in every case the one which assumes least, so here indisputably that one which presupposes least of an actual knowledge of God, but only the potential or the embryo of that. The obvious choice for this, though, is: the notitia Dei insita,\textsuperscript{CX} already found in ancient writers and at one time widely taught in schools, with which in fact no concept may be associated other than that of a consciousness merely potentia of God, a consciousness which would however contain in itself the necessity of turning into actus, of raising itself to actual consciousness of God. This may be the point where the instinctlike emergence touched on earlier could attain a distinct concept: it would be a religious instinct which produced mythology; for what else is one to understand in a merely general and \textsuperscript{[76]} vague notion of God like that? Every instinct is associated with a search for the object to which it relates. By way of such a grasping and groping for the God obscurely called for, a polytheism which actually exists might, it seems, be understood without great effort. However here too there is no shortage of hierarchies.

The immediate object of human knowledge remains Nature or the world of the senses; God is only the obscure goal, towards which we strive, and which is first sought in Nature. The popular explanation by way of deification of Nature would not find its place until this point, since at least an inborn obscure notion of God would always
have to come first. So this explanation could not have been discussed earlier. By presupposing a religious instinct it would be possible to understand how man believes himself to have found the God, whom he seeks, at first in the all-pervading elements or in the heavenly bodies which exercise the strongest or most beneficial influence on him, gradually, so as to come nearer to him, descends to the earth, imagines God even in inorganic forms, soon to a greater degree in organic beings, for a time even among animal forms, and finally fancies he can represent him in pure human shape. Here would be the place, then, for those interpretations for which the mythological deities are deified natural objects, or in particular only one of those, the sun, which in each of its different positions during the course of a year becomes a different deity: specifically the explanations due to Volney,\textsuperscript{41} Dupuis,\textsuperscript{42} etc.

Worthy of more philosophical regard would be the explanation derived from the \textit{notitia insita}, allowing Nature no part at all, and making the origin of the external world independent and wholly inward, by presupposing that perhaps that instinct possesses a law inherent in itself (the same one by which the hierarchy in Nature is also determined), that by means of this law it passes through the whole of Nature, possessing God and losing him again at every stage, until it \[77\] attains to the God towering above all phases, establishing them as his own past, thus as mere phases of \textit{Nature}, and accordingly himself transcending Nature. Since God is the goal (\textit{terminus ad quem}) in this ascending movement, God would be believed in at each level, and the final content of the polytheism coming into existence in this way would thus in fact actually be God.

This explanation would be the first to have mythology coming into existence through a purely inner and at the same time necessary movement, which would thus have freed itself from all external and merely accidental preconditions, and this might certainly be regarded as a model, at least, of the highest point to which we might have to ascend. For it could not count as the last or highest itself, simply because it too has a precondition as yet uncomprehended; that same instinct, which, if it is powerful enough to maintain

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Les Ruines}.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Origine de tous les Cultes}.
humanity in this movement towards the true god, must itself be something real, an actual potence,\textsuperscript{CXIII} for the explanation of which the mere idea of God could not be expected to suffice, unless one believed one was dealing here with a mere logical contrivance, with which an impoverished philosophy might perhaps readily come to the aid of this investigation too, in order first to reduce that indigent—the idea of God—to the most impoverished form, so as then to allow it once again to attain perfection artificially in thought. It is not a question of the relationship into which the material side of mythology may certainly be brought with the \textit{mere idea} also (mythology would countenance this, just as Nature too countenances it); but as little as would Nature be explained by such a contrivance would mythology be explained by a similar one, yet explanation is precisely the point here, not the mere ideal possibility, but the actual coming into existence, of mythology. The presupposition of a religious instinct, an instinct which in its own way is no less actual than any other, could be the first step towards the insight that mythology is not to be explained by a merely ideal relationship which consciousness bears to some object.

In any case, there would be more difficulty in having polytheism preceded by a \textsuperscript{[78]} formal doctrine than by a merely inborn notion of God. Also repellent, in the presupposition of a prior doctrine, is the assumption of a corruption, which is necessarily associated with a doctrine if it is to become polytheism. David Hume’s triumphant thought opposes both the possibility that such a doctrine could have arisen, and also the possibility of its corruption. He did not consider the \textit{notitia insita} at all. Hume belongs in general among those who wish to hear as little of an instinct as of inborn concepts. On the basis that, as he asserts, no two societies, indeed no two men, concur on the point of religion,\textsuperscript{CXIV} he draws the conclusion that the religious sensibility could not, like self-love or the mutual attraction of the sexes, be based on a natural \textit{urge},\textsuperscript{CXV} and is willing to acknowledge at most a susceptibility, which we all have, to believe in a vague way in the existence of some invisible and intelligent power, a susceptibility whose foundation in an original instinct still seems to him highly doubtful.\textsuperscript{43} \textsuperscript{CXVI}

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Natural History of Religion}, p. 93.
Hume’s intention is to deny that the really religious meaning of mythology is an original one; in this respect he would primarily have had to oppose the *notitia insita*, had he not found it unnecessary for the reason already indicated; for in his day that doctrine of a congenital notion was completely outmoded and had lost all validity. So all he believes it necessary to deny is the possibility of supposing there to have been, prior to polytheism and mythology, a religious *doctrine* which might have been corrupted into the two of them. Once a *doctrine* is assumed, then Hume will hear of none but a scientifically founded one, of no other theism but one based on rational proofs (*théisme raisonné*). But an explanation which might have presupposed such a thing has never really existed. Hume simply puts this explanation forward in order to reject it, and with that, since he knows no better, an originally theistic meaning in general. [79] For then it is quite easy for him to show that such a theism—*raisonné*—could not have come into being in the times before mythology, and if it could have come into being, could not have been corrupted into polytheism.

Something worth noting is that Hume, here in his *Natural History of Religion*, presupposes as possible what he is known to be very reluctant to admit in his more general philosophical investigations: that it would be possible for reason, by way of conclusions starting out from visible Nature, to reach the concept and the persuasion of an *intelligent creator of the world*, of a supremely perfect being and so on, in short to reach that which he understands by “theism,” something in fact so lacking in content that it is far better assigned to an era spent or just coming to an end, than to one still fresh and powerful; so lacking in content that Hume could reasonably have foregone his whole proof.

“It seems certain, that, according to the natural progress of human thought, the ignorant multitude must first entertain some groveling and familiar notion of superior powers, before they stretch their conception to that perfect being, who bestowed order on the whole frame of nature. We may as reasonably imagine, that men inhabited palaces before huts and cottages, or studied geometry before agriculture; as assert that the deity appeared to them a pure spirit, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, before he was apprehended to be a powerful, tho’ limited being, with human passions and appetites, limbs and organs.”

---

44 *ibid.* p. 27.
“But farther, if men were at first led into the belief of one supreme being, by reasoning from the frame of nature, they could never possibly leave that belief, in order to embrace idolatry; but the same principles of reasoning, which at first produced, and diffused over mankind, so magnificent an opinion, must be able, with greater facility, to preserve it. The first invention and proof of any doctrine is infinitely more difficult than the supporting and retaining it.”

“But with regard to speculative opinions, the case is far otherwise. If these opinions be founded in arguments so clear and obvious as to carry conviction with the generality of mankind, the same arguments, which at first diffused the opinions, will still preserve them in their original purity. If the arguments be more abstruse, and more remote from vulgar apprehensions, the opinions will always be confined to a few persons; and as soon as men leave the contemplation of the arguments, the opinions will immediately be lost and be buried in oblivion. Which ever side of this dilemma we take, it must appear impossible, that theism could, from reasoning, have been the primary religion of human race, and have afterwards, by its corruption, given birth to idolatry and to all the various superstitions of the heathen world. Reason, when very obvious, prevents these corruptions: When abstruse, it keeps the principles entirely from the knowledge of the vulgar, who are alone liable to corrupt any principles, or opinions.”

For Hume then, we may observe in passing, genuine theism, that is to say that to which he gives the name, cannot exist in humanity prior to the age when reason was already practised and fully formed. In the time to which the origin of polytheism goes back, there is thus no question of such a theism, and anything similar which might come to light in prehistory, only appears to be like that and is explained simply in the following way: “It may readily happen, in an idolatrous nation, that, tho’ men admit the existence of several limited deities, yet may there be some one god, whom, in a particular manner, they make the object of their worship and adoration. They may either suppose, that, in the distribution of power and territory among the gods, their nation was subjected to the jurisdiction of that particular deity; or reducing heavenly objects to the model of things below, they may represent one god as the prince or supreme magistrate of the rest, who, tho’ of the same nature, rules them with an authority, like that which an earthly sovereign exercises over his subjects and vassals. Whether this god, therefore, be considered as their peculiar patron, or as the general sovereign of heaven, his votaries will endeavour, by every act, to insinuate themselves into his favour; and supposing him to be

45 ibid. p. 29.
pleased, like themselves, with praise and flattery, there is no eulogy or exaggeration, which will be spared in their addresses to him,” as indeed also happens in the case of earthly monarchs, who are not merely mandatorily referred to as supreme and all-bountiful, but are, even among Christians, voluntarily referred to as *venerated monarchs*. Once such a contest of flattery has begun, “in proportion as men’s fears or distresses become more urgent, they still invent new strains of adulation; and even he who out-does his predecessors, in swelling up the titles of his divinity, is sure to be out-done by his successors, in newer and more pompous epithets of praise. Thus they proceed; till at last they arrive at infinity itself, beyond which there is no farther progress”; the one being is now called the *highest* being, the *infinite being*, the being which has no equal, which is *lord and preserver of the world*. Thus there emerges the idea of a being which looks *superficially* similar to that which we call God; for Hume himself, who in this way really brings out the paradoxical, indeed bizarre-sounding proposition that polytheism preceded theism, is too shrewd not to be fully aware that a theism like that is really only atheism.

But were we now to accept that, for whatever reason, it was thought to be unavoidable to assume a doctrine prior to polytheism, then both its content and the way it came into existence would have to be ascertained. In the first respect, the material one, one should on no account rest content with a doctrine as empty and abstract as the one taught in today’s schools, for only a doctrine itself full of meaning, systematic, and richly developed could serve the purpose; but thereby would an invention become still less credible, and one would see oneself thus, in what concerns the formal side, forced to assume a religious doctrine as having existed in humanity *independently* of human invention, and such a doctrine could only be a *divinely* revealed one. With that in itself, then, a whole new sphere of explanation would have been entered, for a divine revelation is a real relationship of God to human consciousness. The *actus* of revelation itself is a real event. At the same time, that which is the opposite of all human invention would seem to have been reached with this, that which was called for earlier but not found; in

---

46 *ibid.* pp. 51-2.
any case in a divine revelation we would have a more solid precondition than in those suggested earlier, in the dream state, clairvoyance, and so on. Hume in the circumstances of his own time was able to judge it unnecessary even to mention this possibility. Hermann wishes, as he says, to begrudge no one this pious view. And yet he would perhaps have some reason to speak of it rather less disparagingly, partly because it coincides with his own theory on one main point, the assumption of a corruption, and partly because he himself could still have been forced into accepting the pious interpretation, had he been correct in respect of the dilemma he makes use of, according to which no third option is conceivable apart from independent invention and divine revelation. Hermann’s theory would certainly be quite splendid if mythology had never existed elsewhere but on paper, or had been a mere school exercise. What would it have to say, though, if reminded of the unnatural sacrifices which societies have made to their mythological images? Tantum, one could well ask of him, quod sumis potuit suadere malorum? Could, from that which you assume—from such innocent presuppositions—so much that is bad have arisen? Confess, one could call to all those who concur with him in opposing the originally religious meaning, that consequences like that are not derivable from such causes; acknowledge, that an inexorable authority is required just as much to demand these sacrifices as to carry them out, for example to burn one’s most beloved children alive for the sake of some god! If cosmogonic philosophers alone were in the background, and no memory of a real event, which lent such ideas an irresistible power over consciousness, would not Nature then at once have to reassert its rights? From the natural sensibility which confronts such unnatural demands, only [83] a supernatural fact, whose impress persists permanently through every kind of confusion, could have commanded silence.

If, however, mythology is regarded as a corruption of revealed truth, then it is simply no longer adequate to assume mere theism to have preceded it, for in this there is only the idea that God in general was thought of. But in revelation it is not merely God in general, it is the specific God, the God which there is, the true God, who reveals

---

himself, and he reveals himself also as the true God. So here a qualification must be added: it is not theism, it is *monotheism* which precedes polytheism, for thereby is signified, universally and in every circumstance, not merely religion in general, but the true religion. And this view then (that monotheism preceded polytheism) was, throughout the Christian era until recently, quite definitely until D. Hume, in undisturbed enjoyment of a complete and universal consent. It was held to be tantamount to impossible that polytheism could have come into being in any way other than through the decay of a purer religion, and that the latter was derived from a divine revelation was a thought again more or less inseparable from every premise.

But there is more to it than the mere word “monotheism.” What is its content? Is it of a kind such that the material for a later polytheism is present in it? Certainly not when the content of monotheism is taken to consist in the mere concept of the singularity of God. For what does this singularity of God contain? It is just the pure negation of another god beyond the one, mere fending off of all multiplicity; how, now, out of this, is its direct opposite to emerge? What substance, what possibility of a multiplicity is left over by the abstract singularity, once it has been stated? This difficulty was also experienced by *Lessing* when, in *The Education of Mankind*, he wrote the following: “Even if the first man was at once equipped with the concept of a single god, still it was impossible for this concept, imparted and not acquired, to have continued to exist in its purity for long. As soon as reason, left to itself, began to work on it, it dismantled what was single and immensurable into several mensurable parts, and gave each of these a particular feature; thus arose, in a natural way, polytheism and idolatry.” The words are of value to us as a proof that the eminent man did once apply himself to this question too, even if only in passing; for one may certainly assume, incidentally, that in a treatise with a much more ambitious aim, and in which he intended in general to express himself succinctly, Lessing tried to get the difficult point out of the way as quickly as possible. There is

---

48 §. 6 and §. 7.

49 Lessing himself, in a letter to his brother (*Collected Works* XXX, p. 523), speaks of the *Education of Mankind* in such a way as to indicate that it did not satisfy *him*: “I have,” it reads,
nothing but truth in his statement that a concept not actively acquired, for as long as it has not become an acquired one, is exposed to decay. In addition, polytheism is said to come into being when the imparted concept (for the later expression explains the earlier one very well: man is said to be equipped with this concept) is operated on by reason; yet with this a rational genesis would be given to polytheism: not it itself, only the concept assumed to have preceded it, is independent of human reason. Lessing presumably found the means for the assumed disintegration of the one in the fact that the oneness is nonetheless considered at the same time to be the pattern of all God’s relations [85] with Nature and the world; to every aspect of them the deity turns as it were a different face, without thereby becoming multifarious himself. Naturally the deity seen from each of these possible viewpoints is designated by a particular name; examples of such names, expressing different aspects, are found even in the Old Testament. Subsequently these names, of which there may well be a great many, turn into just as many names of particular deities. The oneness above the multiplicity is forgotten, and as this or that society, indeed within the one society this or that tribe, within the one tribe this or that individual, turns, according to their needs or inclinations, to one of those aspects in particular, multitheism arises. Cudworth, at least, considered the transition to have been as easy and as unremarkable as that. This purely nominal disintegration served, though, as the prelude to a real one which was postulated subsequently.

Now here we would do well to remember that mythological polytheism is not merely theology, but history of gods. To the extent that revelation brings also the true god into a historical relationship

“sent him (the publisher Voss) the E. O. M., which he is going to pad out to a half dozen signatures for me. I can certainly send the whole thing out into the world, for I would never acknowledge it to be my own work, and yet several people have shown an interest in the complete plan.”—While one may be inclined to conclude from the italicized words that Lessing was not the author at all, in fact it may, rather, be the opposite which they imply. When he says that he would never acknowledge it to be his own work, he is in fact thereby confessing that it is his work. Yet even a great author, and especially one such as Lessing, is certainly capable of publishing a work which does not satisfy him (and could the E. O. M. have satisfied a spirit like Lessing in general, also, that is, in a larger context, would he not have been obliged to regard its content as something which was put forward only in a preliminary way, whose place would have to be taken at some future time by something quite different, which even now cannot be carried out?)—but an author like Lessing can indeed, as I say, publish a work like that too, specifically as a transition and stepping-stone towards something higher.
with humanity, it may, now, be thought that precisely this divine history given with revelation had become the substance of polytheism, that its phases had decayed into mythological ones. An evolution of mythology out of revelation in this sense might have offered much of interest. However, among the explanations which actually are proposed, we do not find an evolution of this kind; in part the difficulties encountered in carrying it through may have been too great, and in part it may have been considered, in some other respect, too daring. Instead, people eagerly turned to the human side of the history of revelation, and tried first of all to use the merely historical content of principally the Mosaic scriptures for euhemeristic interpretations. Thus the Greek Cronus, who sinned against his father Uranus, was taken to be Ham, deified by the heathens, who sinned against his father Noah. The Hamitic nations are in fact mainly worshippers of Cronus. The contrary explanation, that legends about gods from other societies are euhemerised in the Old Testament, and related in the form of human events, was unthinkable in those days.

The chief architect of this euhemeristic use of the Old Testament was Gerhard Voss, whose work De Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ has, what is more, for its time the merit of a thorough and comprehensive scholarship. It was put to use, with an often unfortunate wit, by Samuel Bochart, and carried entirely into the realm of the fatuous by the well-known French bishop Daniel Huet, in whose Demonstratio Evangelica may be read a proof that the Taaat of the Phoenicians, the Adonis of the Syrians, the Osiris of the Egyptians, the Zoroaster of the Persians, the Cadmus and Danaus of the Greeks, in short that all divine and human personalities in the various mythologies are just one individual—Moses. These interpretations can be mentioned at best as sententiae dudum explosæ in case somebody might take it into his head to resurrect them, as did recently happen in regard to another matter.

In this way it was, in the end, no longer revelation itself, it was the Old Testament scriptures, and also principally just the historical ones among these, in which generally speaking the explanation of the most ancient myths was sought. In the more dogmatic part of the books of Moses (assuming one were permitted to suppose their contents too to have been present already earlier in the tradition)
one could find correspondingly less material in favour of the coming into existence of mythological ideas, the easier it was to perceive, even in the initial statements of the book of Genesis, for example in the creation story, clear references to pre-existing doctrines of a false religion. In the way that the account of the creation has light coming into existence at divine behest, and only with that an antithesis between light and darkness, and in the way that God calls the light good, without calling the darkness bad, coupled with the repeated assurance that everything was good, it can appear to be trying to deny the doctrines which see light and darkness as two principles which, instead of being created, engender the world, as good principle and bad, in contention with and contradiction of each other. [87] In stating this to be a possible view, I reject all the more categorically the notion that these chapters themselves contain philosophemes and myths from non-Hebraic societies. At least that conjecture will not be extended to the Greek myths, and yet it would be easy to show that the story of the Fall, for example, has far more in common with the Persephone myths of the Hellenes than with anything else which anyone has been capable of furnishing from Persian or Indian sources.

So the attempt to bring mythology into a relationship with revelation remained within these limits until the end of the last century; but since that time, as our knowledge of the various mythologies, and especially of the religious systems of the East, has expanded to such a considerable extent, it has been possible for a viewpoint to become accepted which is freer and, in particular, less dependent on the scriptural documentation of revelation.

Through the correspondences which exist between the Egyptian, Indian, and Greek mythologies, a common corpus of ideas in the explanation of mythology was finally revealed, in which the various theologies were at one. This unity lying at the basis of all theologies then served as the consequence in a hypothesis. Such a unity can in fact no longer be thought of as being in the consciousness of a single society (every society becomes aware of itself as such only as it departs from this unity), nor in that of a primordial society; the concept of a primordial society is known to have been put into circulation by Bailly with his History of Astronomy and his Letters on the Origin of the Sciences, but really it is one which
cancels itself out. For either it is conceived of as possessing the distinguishing characteristics of an actual society, when it can no longer contain the unity which we seek, and it presupposes other societies already existing apart from itself; or it is conceived of without particular character and without any kind of individual consciousness, and then it is not a society but original mankind itself, prior to the society. Thus, starting from the initial perception of those correspondences, [88] little by little the point was finally reached of presupposing, in the primal era, prompted or imparted by a primal revelation, which was not bestowed on a single society but on the entire human race, a system going far beyond the literal content of the Mosaic scriptures, a system of which the teaching of Moses himself would give no complete conception, but would contain no more than as it were an excerpt; set up in contradiction to polytheism, and with the object of suppressing it, this doctrine would have removed, with wise foresight, all the elements out of the misunderstanding of which polytheism emerged, and confined itself more to the negative aspect alone—the rejection of multitheism. So if one wished to obtain a conception of that original system, then the Mosaic scriptures would not be adequate for that purpose, and one would in fact have to search out the missing links in foreign theologies, in the fragments of Eastern religions and in the various mythologies.50 CXXIX

The first person to be led to such conclusions (and what is more, to have led others to them), by the correspondence of Oriental theologies with Greek ideas on the one hand, and with Old Testament doctrines on the other, was the founder and first president of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, William Jones, CXXX to whom the history of Eastern poetry and the study of Asiatic religions will remain indebted in perpetuity. Although he may have been carried away too passionately by his first astonishment at the newly discovered world, and may in some respects have gone further than cold reason and the calm reflection of a later era could endorse, yet

50 Compare the passage in my dissertation On the Samothracian Deities, p. 30, which, moreover, as the context shows, is not intended to contain any assertion, but only to put forward, in contrast to the view described there, which keeps merely to the letter of the Mosaic documents, another, as equally possible. At that time, what is more, the author was certainly more concerned with the material side of mythology, and still shunned the formal questions, which have been taken up for the first time in the current lectures.
the beauty and nobility of his spirit will always, in the estimation of all who are capable of recognizing it, raise him far above the censure of the common herd of crude scholars fit merely for donkey-work.

If William Jones’ comparisons and conclusions too often lacked precise substantiation and execution, then Friedrich Creuzer, on the other hand, through the power of an all-embracing and triumphant induction, brought the originally religious significance of mythology to a historical evidentness no longer admitting of contradiction. But the services of his renowned work are not confined to this general aspect; the profound philosophical insight, with which the author reveals the most obscure associations between the various theologies, and the analogous ideas in them, has evoked particularly vividly the idea of an original whole, of an edifice of primordial human science, which gradually decayed or experienced a sudden annihilation, and covered the whole Earth with its fragments, which no single society, but only all of them together, possess in full; and at least since then there has been no going back to the earlier explanations which assemble mythology atomistically.

In more detail Creuzer’s whole view may perhaps be stated as follows. Since revelation itself is not directly susceptible of alteration, but only the result left in consciousness, then certainly a doctrine must have intervened here, but one of a kind in which God was portrayed not only theistically, simply as God, in his dissociation from the world, but at the same time as a unity embracing Nature and the World, whether in a way which was analogous to those systems of which all, without discrimination, are labelled as pantheism, particularly by a certain shallow theism, or

---

51 Symbolism and Mythology of the Ancient Societies, Particularly of the Greeks, 3rd. edition in four volumes. The second edition is used for the preparation of the current lectures.—Moser’s abstract of the work (put out by the same publisher), which contains everything essential in one volume, without omissions, might be recommended for students; also of great interest is the French translation by Guigniaut (Religions de l’Antiquité, Ouvrage traduit de l’Allemand du Dr. F. Creuzer refondu en partie completé et développé. Paris 1825. III Volumes), which has added much that is valuable and new.

52 Mythology could perhaps also be compared to a great piece of music, which a number of people who had lost all sense of its musical structure, of its rhythm and tempo, went on playing as it were mechanically, so that then it could give the impression only of an inextricable mass of discords, while the same piece, performed in a way appropriate to a work of art, would at once again reveal its harmony, its structure and original intelligence.
whether that system might be thought of more in the way of ancient Oriental doctrines of emanation, where the deity, in itself free of all multiplicity, descending, fashions itself into a multiplicity of finite images, which are only just as many manifestations, or to use a current vogue-word, incarnations, of its infinite essence. Taken either way the doctrine would be *monotheism*, not an abstract monotheism, absolutely excluding multiplicity, but a real one, establishing multiplicity within itself.

As long as the multiplicity of the elements is governed and subdued by the oneness, the oneness of God remains unsupplanted in consciousness; then as the doctrine progresses from society to society, indeed within the one society over the course of time and tradition, it takes on an ever more polytheistic colouring as the elements escape from organic subordination to the governing idea and gradually acquire a more independent form, until finally the whole system falls apart, and the oneness retreats completely, while multiplicity emerges. Thus W. Jones, already, found in the Indian Vedas, which in his opinion we would have to consider as having been written a considerable time before the legation of Moses in the epoch immediately subsequent to the Flood, a system still, far removed from the later Indian popular belief, and closer to the primal religion. The later polytheism of India does not descend directly from the most ancient religion, but only by way of successive misrepresentation of the traditions better preserved in Holy Scripture. In general, close attention will clearly show in the various theologies a slow retreat of oneness, almost one step at a time. To the extent that the oneness still predominates, the representations of Indian and Egyptian [91] theology still appear to possess a much more doctrinal content, but are correspondingly more repulsive, more excessive, in part even monstrous; on the other hand, to the extent that the oneness in it has been further relinquished, Greek mythology does indeed manifest slighter doctrinal content, but a content all the more poetical; the error in it has so to speak purged itself of the truth, and to that extent really ceases to be error, and becomes a truth of a characteristic kind, a poetical truth, forsaking all reality (which in fact resides in the oneness), and if despite that one wished to describe its content as error, at least an error more
attractive, more beautiful, and, in comparison with the more real error in the Oriental religions, almost meriting the name “innocent.”

In this way, then, mythology would be a disintegrated monotheism. And this would thus be the final peak to which the viewpoints relating to mythology have led us, one step at a time. No one will deny that this viewpoint is more splendid than the earlier ones, simply because it is not derived from the indefinite multitude of objects fortuitously extracted from Nature, but from the central point of a oneness governing the multiplicity. It is not partial beings of a highly accidental and ambiguous nature, but the thought of the necessary and general being, to which alone the human spirit defers—it is that thought which holds sway throughout mythology and raises it to a true system of coordinated phases, a system which in the midst of the disintegration still sets its stamp on every individual idea, and which therefore, in addition, can end not in a mere indefinite multiplicity, but only in polytheism—in a multiplicity of gods.

Now with this last analysis it is—I ask you to note this carefully, since in order to understand a course of lectures like the current one in its full significance, one should always pre-eminently be aware of the points of transition—here it is no longer asserted merely philosophically that the polytheism which actually exists presupposes monotheism, here monotheism has become a historical presupposition of mythology, it is itself in turn derived from a historical fact (a primal revelation); through these historical presuppositions the explanation becomes a hypothesis, and thus at the same time susceptible of a historical evaluation.

It undeniably has its strongest historical support in the fact that it offers the simplest means of explaining the kinship between the ideas in otherwise quite distinct theologies, and in this respect one can only wonder why Creuzer pays less attention to this advantage, and gives more weight to a historical relationship between societies, which is difficult to prove, indeed in the principal cases unprovable, and from which, in part, he intends to derive those correspondences. But our earlier arguments have already led us to formulations which make even the monotheistic hypothesis, as we shall call it, still appear very vague in its present form. We were earlier led to the conclusion that the mythology of every society can come into
existence only at the same time as that society itself. Thus the various mythologies, and polytheism in general, since mythology exists nowhere in abstracto, can also only have come into existence at the same time as the societies, and accordingly there would be no room for the monotheism postulated, except in the era before the rise of societies. Creuzer too seems to have had something similar in mind, when he stated that the monotheism which still predominated in the most ancient doctrine could have lasted only for as long as the tribes stayed together, and that with their separation multitheism must have come into existence.53

We have, it is true, no way of telling what Creuzer meant by the “separation of the tribes,” but if we replace that with “separation of the societies,” then it is clear that a double causal relationship may be understood between this and the emerging polytheism. It could on the one hand be said, that is, in agreement with Creuzer, that after humanity had split up into societies, monotheism could no longer have endured, as the doctrine which until then had held sway grew obscure in proportion to its increasing distance from the source, and more and more fell apart. But it could equally well be said that the polytheism coming into existence was the cause of the separation of societies. And we must decide between these two possibilities, if everything is not to remain in a state of suspension and incertitude.

But the decision will depend on the following question. If polytheism only comes as a result of the separation of the societies, then it must be possible to find another cause, by reason of which humanity was divided into societies, so we have to investigate whether such a cause exists; this means, though, that we have to investigate in general, and answer, the question towards which we have long been heading: What is the reason for this separation of humanity into societies? The earlier explanations all assumed the prior existence of societies. But how did societies come into existence? Is it possible to believe that such a great and universal phenomenon as mythology and polytheism, or—for here for the first time does this expression find its rightful place—as heathenism CXXXV—is it credible, I say, that such a potent

53 Correspondence Relating to Homer and Hesiod, p. 100 f.
phenomenon can be understood outside the general context of the
great events which have befallen humanity as a whole? The question
of how societies came into existence is thus not one raised
arbitrarily, it is one which is introduced by way of our analysis itself
and is therefore necessary and inescapable, and we may indeed
rejoice to find ourselves translated, with this question, out of the
confined space of the earlier investigations and into a field of
research which is wider and more universal, and which for that very
reason also promises universal results on a higher plane.
HOW did societies come into being? Anyone wanting to declare this question to be superfluous would have to establish either the proposition “societies have always existed,” or alternatively “societies come into being of their own accord.” It would not be easy for anyone to opt for the first assertion. But an attempt could certainly be made to assert that societies arise of their own accord, that they arise simply as a consequence of the continuing increase in the number of generations, whereby not only does, in general, a larger area of the Earth become populated, but also the lines of descent diverge ever more widely. This led, though, only to tribes, not to societies. Yet it could be said that to the degree that vigorously growing tribes are forced to split up and seek out domiciles remote from one another, they do become mutually alienated. But even so, not to the point of becoming different societies, unless every tribal fragment is made a society through other factors which join it later; for through mere external separation tribes do not become societies. The most striking example is given by the vast separation between the Oriental and Occidental Arabs. Cut off by seas from their brothers, the Arabs in Africa, disregarding a few minor nuances in their common language and their common customs, are still today what their tribal comrades in the Arabian desert are. Conversely, unity of descent does not prevent a tribe breaking up into different societies, which proves that there must be some additional factor quite distinct from and independent of heredity, for a society to come into existence.

A merely spatial disintegration would always give just parts of a similar kind, but never dissimilar parts such as societies, which are from the time they come into existence essentially dissimilar both physically and spiritually. In the historical era we do indeed see how one society comes up against another and exerts pressure on it, forces it to become confined within narrower boundaries or to abandon its original domicile entirely, without, what is more, the society which was cast out or even banished to the most remote frontier ceasing for that reason to maintain its character and to be
the same society. Even with the Arab tribes, both those who lead
their nomadic life in the land of their birth, and the others in the
interior of Africa, naming and distinguishing themselves according
to their progenitors, there are raids and battles among themselves,
without them thereby becoming societies for each other, or ceasing
to be a homogeneous mass, exactly as in the ocean there is no lack
of storms to raise mighty waves which restore, though, after a short
time, the former calm surface of the element and revert into it
without leaving a trace behind, or as the desert wind whirs the sand
up into destructive columns, sand which soon afterwards displays
once more the former featureless surface.\textsuperscript{CXXXVI}

An \textit{inner} separation, for that very reason inexpungible and
irrevocable, such as exists between societies, can on no account be
brought about merely from \textit{outside}, nor, thus, can it be brought
about by mere natural events, as one might at first think. Volcanic
eruptions, earthquakes, changes in the sea level, the breaking up of
land masses, however widespread one might assume them to have
been, would explain a separation into similar parts, but never into
dissimilar ones. So it must at any rate have been \textit{inner} causes,
arising in the inner nature of homogeneous mankind itself, by which
the latter became divided, by which it was brought to the point of
breaking up into dissimilar, henceforth mutually exclusive parts. To
do that, these inner causes could still have been natural ones.
Divergences in physical evolution appearing in the \textit{inner nature}
of mankind itself, divergences which in accordance with a hidden law
in the human race\footnote{[96]} began to express themselves, and through
which then, as a further consequence, certain spiritual, moral, and
psychological differences also appear, might be considered, sooner
even than \textit{external} events, to be the reasons why humanity was
brought to the point of breaking up into societies.

To demonstrate the separative power which physical divergences
are capable of exercising, one could point to the consequences which
have occurred whenever, conversely, large masses of the human
race, having been kept apart by divine providence as it were, came
into contact or even intermingled (for it was in vain, as Horace
already laments, that provident God let Oceanus sunder
unassimilable lands, if mankind nonetheless bestraddles, with
transgressing conveyance, the forbidden aqueous reaches\textsuperscript{CXXXVII}); to
this end one could recall the diseases which have influenced world
to history, spread among the human race by the Crusades, or from
America, newly-discovered or rediscovered after millennia, or the
devastating diseases which regularly develop in the wake of world
wars, by which societies far removed from one another are brought
together in the same area and become for a moment what amounts
to one society. If the unforeseen merging of societies separated from
each other by wide stretches of land, by streams, swamps,
mountains, and deserts, gives rise to pestilential diseases; if (to set
lesser examples beside these greater ones) the by no means
numerous inhabitants of the Shetland Islands, completely isolated
from the world and from intercourse with the rest of the human race,
whenever a foreign ship arrives, indeed whenever the crew of the
ship which returns annually bringing them food and other
necessities set foot on their desolate shores, are afflicted by a
convulsive coughing, which does not leave them until after the
departure of the aliens; if something similar, indeed still more
striking, occurs on the lonely Færoes, where the appearance of a
foreign ship has the consequence for the inhabitants, as a rule, of a
characteristic catarrhal fever, by which not infrequently a
proportionately not inconsiderable section of their feeble population
is carried off; if similar symptoms are observed on South Sea islands,
[97] where even the arrival of a few missionaries was enough to bring
on fevers which were previously unknown and which reduced the
population; if thus, once a separation has become established, the
co-existence, restored for an instant, of human races become alien
to each other, gives rise to diseases, then in the same way incipient
divergences in physical evolution and antipathies aroused thereby or
diseases which have already actually come into existence could have
become the cause of a mutual exclusion, perhaps of an instinctive
kind, of human strains no longer endurable for each other.

So this hypothesis may, among those which are purely physical,
still be that one which accords best with the conformity of all
original events to laws; but on the one hand it explains only
mutually unendurable strains, it does not explain societies; on the
other it may in fact, in the light of other experience, rather be
spiritual and moral differences which result in a physical
incompatibility between certain human species. Relevant here is the
rapid extinction of all natives in contact with Europeans, as a result of which all nations seem destined to vanish who are not defended by their countless numbers, like the Indians and Chinese, or by the climate, like the Negroes. In Van Diemen’s Land since the settlement of the English the entire aboriginal population has died out. Similarly in New South Wales. It is as if the higher and freer evolution of the European nations becomes deadly for all others.

One cannot speak of physical differences within the human species without at once being reminded of the so-called “races of men,” whose differentiation has indeed seemed to some to be great enough to justify even the abandonment of the idea of a common provenance of the human species. Now certainly as far as this view goes (for in an investigation such as the present we cannot avoid saying at least something about this question), the conclusion that racial difference is a decisive refutation of the original unity of the human species might be called premature, at least; for the fact that there are difficulties associated with the assumption of a common provenance proves nothing; we are too much beginners in this investigation, too many facts are not yet even adequately known, for us to be able to assert that future researches could not give our views on this subject a quite different bearing, or introduce amplifications which have not until now been contemplated. Yet is it not that which is tacitly presupposed in all discussions itself an idea until now merely presumed but not proven, namely that the process through which racial differences came into existence only took place among one section of humanity, that section which we now see actually degraded into races (for European man should properly not be referred to as a “race”), while it may be seen as equally possible that this process passed through the whole of humanity, and that the nobler part of humanity is not the one which remained quite untouched by it, but simply the one which has overcome it and in that very process raised itself to higher spirituality, while conversely the races actually in existence now are simply the part which succumbed to the process, and in which one of those trends in a divergent physical evolution has established itself and become a permanent characteristic. We hope, if we succeed in carrying this great investigation through to its end, to identify facts which might be what is required to give our thought
access to the general nature of that process, and indeed facts of a kind derived not merely from the history of Nature, for example from the boundary, become as it were fluid as a result of recent discoveries, between the various races, but from quite different aspects. For the moment it will suffice to say that, not as it might be merely for the sake of tradition or in the interest of some moral feeling, but in consequence of purely scientific judgement, we must, as long it has not been proved impossible to comprehend under this presupposition the natural and historical differences within the human species, hold fast to the unity of provenance, which in any case is supported by the fact, still not wholly disproved, that the progeny even of individuals of different races are themselves in turn capable of propagation.

[99] Now if, additionally, the facts adumbrated just now do amount to a proof that the racial process, as we shall express it for the sake of brevity, might have played a part as far back as the times of the emergence of societies, then it should still be noted that societies are not, at least not consistently, divided along racial lines. On the contrary, it is fact possible to point to societies in which are found, between their various classes, distinctions at least approximating to racial differences. Niebuhr has already mentioned the strikingly white skin and complexion of the Indian Brahmins, which in the other castes becomes correspondingly darker the lower the caste, and is lost in an utter ape-brown among the Pariahs, who are not even regarded as a caste. Niebuhr should be credited with not confusing an innate difference in complexion with the accidental one produced by a different mode of life and perceived everywhere when comparing leisured people, living mostly in the shade, with those who are almost always in the open, exposed to the direct influence of sun and air. If the Indians are the example of a society among whom a physical distinction approaching a racial difference has brought with it only a division into castes, but has not supplanted the unity of the society itself, then the Egyptians are perhaps the example of a society in which racial difference has been overcome; otherwise whither could have vanished that Negroid race with frizzy hair and

54 In the Indian language a caste is called “jāti,” but also “varna,” colour. See *Journal Asiat.* Vol. VI, p. 179.
black skin-colour whom Herodotus still saw in Egypt, and who must have been pointed out to him as the most ancient there, since he based conclusions about the provenance of the Egyptians on this sight, if one does not wish to assume that he himself had not been in Egypt at all or was simply romancing.

What has been presented up to now may have been sufficient preparation for the following question: whether divergent trends in physical evolution, instead of being the causes, were not rather themselves just an attendant phenomenon of the great spiritual movements which must have been associated with the initial emergence and formation of societies. For it is very relevant to recall the experience that even in individual cases a complete spiritual immobility also retards certain physical changes, and conversely, great spiritual unrest also gives rise to certain physical changes or abnormalities; just as, in step with the multiplicity of spiritual changes in humanity, the number and complexity of diseases has increased; and just as, corresponding with the observation that in the life of the individual an disease overcome not uncommonly signals the moment of a profound spiritual transformation, and new diseases emerging in vigorous forms appear as parallel symptoms of major spiritual emancipations. And if societies, as they are separated not merely spatially and externally, nor by mere natural differences, if they are masses excluding each other spiritually and inwardly, but at the same time inextricably held together in themselves, then, neither is the original unity of the still unseparated human race, to which, after all, we must ascribe some duration, conceivable without a spiritual power which maintains humanity in this immobility and even prevents from taking effect the germs, contained in it, of divergent physical changes, nor may it be assumed that humanity would ever have left this condition, where there were no distinctions between societies, but merely between tribes, without a spiritual crisis which must have been of the most profound significance, must have taken place in the foundation of human consciousness itself, if it was to have been strong enough to

55 Herodot. L. II, c. 104.
56 Compare the well-known works of the regrettably prematurely departed Dr. Schnurrer.
empower or to induce humanity, united until then, to split up into societies.

And now, after this has been stated in general, that the reason must have been a *spiritual* one, we can only marvel that something so obvious was not seen at once. For without different languages, different societies are indeed inconceivable, [101] and language is, after all, something *spiritual*. If societies are separated by none of their external differences, among which language too, in one of its aspects, does indeed belong, so inwardly as by language, and if only those societies which speak different languages are really distinct, then the coming into existence of languages is inseparable from the coming into existence of societies. And if the differentiation of societies is not something which has always been, but something which has come to be, then this very same thing must be true of the differentiation of languages. If there was a time in which there were no societies, a time too, then, in which there were no distinct languages—and there must inevitably be presupposed, prior to a humanity separated into societies, a humanity unseparated—then it is no less inevitable to have a language common to the whole of humanity preceding the languages separating societies. These are straightforward statements which are usually not considered, or which, thanks to a cerebrating critical analysis which discourages and stunts the spirit (and which, it seems, is quite particularly at home in many parts of our native land), one does not permit oneself to consider, but they are statements which, as soon as they are expressed, *must* be seen to be incontrovertible, and no less irrefutable is the consequence necessarily associated with them, the fact that a *spiritual* crisis in the *inner nature* of man must have preceded the emergence of societies, simply because that emergence inevitably brought with it a fragmentation of language. At this point we encounter the most ancient document of the human race, the Mosaic scriptures, towards which so many harbour antipathy only because they do not know where to begin with it, nor how to understand or to use it.

Genesis[^57] in fact associates the emergence of societies with the emergence of different languages, but in such a way that the

[^57]: Ge. 11.
confusion of language is specified as the cause, and the emergence of societies as the effect. For the intention of the account is by no means only to make the differentiation of languages intelligible, as is claimed by those who explain it as a mythical philosopheme invented to this end. And it is certainly not mere invention; this account is created, rather, from actual recollection, which has indeed also been preserved to some extent in other societies, a reminiscence—from mythical times certainly but of an actual event therein; since those who at once take every account deriving from mythical times or from mythical circumstances to be a fiction, seem not at all to consider that those times and those circumstances which we commonly call “mythical” were nonetheless actual too. So this myth, as the account can certainly be termed, disregarding the false interpretation just mentioned, but in accordance with its language and subject matter, has the value of an actual record, in which case, then, it will in addition be self-evident that we retain the right to draw a distinction between the subject matter and the way in which it appears to the narrator from his standpoint. Since for him the coming into being of societies, for example, is a misfortune, an evil, even a punishment. Additionally we must also forgive him for taking the liberty of portraying as having come to pass in one day, as it were, an event which did, in all probability, occur suddenly, but whose effects extended over a whole epoch.

But in that very fact that for him the coming into being of societies is an event at all, something, that is, which does not take place of its own accord without a particular cause—in that fact resides the truth of the account, as does the rebuttal of the view that no explanation is needed, that societies come into existence imperceptibly because of the mere length of time and through a quite natural process. For him the event is an unforeseen one, incomprehensible even to the humanity affected by it, in which case, then, it is also no wonder that it left behind that deep, abiding impression, the memory of which endured into the historical era. The coming into existence of societies is for the ancient narrator a

58 Compare the famous fragments of Abydenos in the first book of Eusebius’s Chronicle; also the Platonic dialogue Politicus p. 272 B, wherein there is a glimpse, at least dimly, of the same recollection.
judgement, and, for that reason is indeed, as we have termed it, a crisis.

But as the immediate cause of the separation of societies the account names the confusion of the language until then unified and common to the whole human race. There already, even, the coming into existence is expressed in terms of a spiritual process.

For it is not possible to conceive of a confusion of language without an internal occurrence, without a disruption of consciousness itself. If we order the occurrences in their natural sequence, then the most inward one is necessarily an alteration of consciousness, the next, already more outward, is the spontaneous confusion of language, and the most outward one is the separation of the human race into groups henceforth mutually exclusive, not merely spatially but also inwardly and spiritually, that is to say into societies. In this sequence the intermediate member still has, to the most outward, which is pure effect, the relationship of a cause, in fact of an immediate cause; the account names only this, as the most comprehensible one, the one becoming apparent first to everyone who looks at the separative differences between societies, because, that is, the distinction between languages is at the same time an outwardly perceivable one.

But even that affection of consciousness, that affection which directly results in a confusion of language, could have been no merely superficial one; it must have disrupted consciousness in its principle, in its foundation, and (if the assumed outcome, confusion of the language until then common, is to come about), in that very aspect which had hitherto been what was common and had held humanity together; the spiritual force must have begun to falter which up to this point had impeded every development tending towards disintegration, and had maintained humanity at the stage of a complete, absolute homogeneity, regardless of the division into tribes, which in itself accounts for a merely outward distinction.

It was a spiritual force which brought this about. For the fact of humanity’s remaining unified, the fact that it did not disintegrate, requires for its explanation a positive reason, just as much as does the subsequent disintegration. What duration we assign to this time of homogeneous humanity is wholly immaterial, to the extent that this time, in which nothing takes place, has in any case only the
significance of a starting point, of a pure *terminus a quo*, from which onwards reckoning is made, but which itself contains no actual time, that is to say no sequence of different times. Yet we have to give this uniform time *some* duration, and this is quite inconceivable without a force resisting any development tending towards disintegration. But if we ask what spiritual force was strong enough in itself to maintain humanity in this immobility, then it is immediately apparent that it must have been a *principle*, and indeed one principle by which the consciousness of men was exclusively occupied and governed; for as soon as two principles divided this governance between themselves, differences within humanity must have come into being, because humanity inevitably divided in accordance with the two principles. But in addition, a principle like that, which left no room for any other in consciousness, and admitted no other apart from itself, could itself only have been an infinite one, only a *god*, a god who *entirely* filled consciousness, who was common to the whole of humanity, a god who, as it were, drew humanity in, into his own oneness, denied it any movement, any deviation, be it to the right or to the left, as the *Old Testament* many times expresses it; only a god like that could have given a duration to that absolute immobility, to that arrest of all evolution.

Now in just the same way, though, as humanity could not have been kept together and in motionless calm more decidedly than by the unqualified oneness of the god by whom it was governed, then on the other hand no more powerful and profound disruption is conceivable than must have ensued as soon as the One, until then motionless, became itself mobile, and this was unavoidable as soon as another god or several others were present, or came to the fore, in consciousness. This polytheism, coming about as it always does (for a more detailed explanation is here still not possible), made a continuing oneness in the human race impossible. Polytheism is thus the separating agent which was introduced into homogeneous humanity. Different theologies, diverging from one another, mutually exclusive, even, as they evolve further, are the unerring instrument of the separation of societies. Were it that other causes could be devised which could have brought about a dispersal of humanity, which we have every reason to doubt, however, after what has been discussed up to now: what the division and finally the
complete separation of societies must inexorably and irresistibly have brought about was unambiguous polytheism and the differentiation, inseparable therefrom, of theologies no longer supportable for each other. The same god who, in imperturbable identity with himself maintained the oneness, must now, become distinct from himself and mutable, have himself scattered the human race in the same way as he had earlier held it together, and just as, in his identity, he was the cause of its oneness, so must he have become in his multiplicity the cause of its disintegration.

This specification of the innermost process is admittedly not explicit in the Mosaic record, but if that record names merely the immediate cause (the confusion of languages), it has at least indicated the indirect and ultimate cause (the emergence of polytheism). Of these indications only the one might be mentioned for the present: that it names Babel as the setting of the confusion, the location of the future great city which ranks, for the whole of the Old Testament, as the beginning and initial site of the definitive and now inexorably spreading polytheism, as the location “where,” as a prophet expresses it, “the golden cup was filled, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine”. 59 CXLVIII Wholly independent historical research, as we shall be persuaded in the sequel, likewise points to the fact that in Babylon the transition to polytheism proper took place. The concept of heathenism, which is to say, in fact, of societies—for the word in Hebrew and Greek which is rendered into German by Heiden (heathen) expresses no more than that—is so inseparably tied to the name “Babel” that right up to the final book of the New Testament Babylon serves as the symbol of everything heathen and of everything which might be regarded as heathen. Such an inexpungible symbolic significance as is attached to the name “Babel” comes into being only when it derives from an imprint as old as time. CXLIX

More recently, it is true, attempts have been made to dissociate the name of the great city from the meaningful memory which it preserves, attempts have been made to find a derivation for it different from the one given it by the ancient account. “Babel” is said to amount to the same as Bâb-Bel (gateway, courtyard of Baal:

59 Jer. 51:7.
Belus-Baal); but to no avail! The derivation is proved wrong simply by the fact that “bab” in this sense is characteristic only of the Arabic dialect. It is, rather, actually just as the old account says: “Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth.” CL “Babel” is really only a contraction of “Balbel,” a word in which there clearly resides some onomatopoeic quality. Oddly enough the repetition of sound, which is obscured in the pronunciation “Babel,” is preserved still in the later descendant of the same word (“Balbel”), belonging to a quite different and much younger language; I am referring to the Greek βάρβαρος, barbarian, which until now could be derived only from the Chaldaic “bar,” outside (extra), “barya,” foreigner (extraneus). For the Greeks and Romans, however, the word “barbarian” does not have this general meaning, but specifically that of someone speaking incomprehensibly, as the famous line of Ovid would suffice to make evident:

Barbanus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulla. CLI 60

Additionally, in the derivation from “bar” the iteration of the syllable is not taken into consideration, an iteration in which primarily the quality of sound imitation resides, such that this in itself would suffice to prove that the word referred to language, as Strabo too has already observed. CLI Thus the Greek “barbaros” [107] is formed, simply by way of the familiar and so commonly occurring interchange of the consonants “r” and “l”, from the Eastern word balbal, which imitates the sound of stammering language, jumbling the sounds together, and is also even now preserved with the

---

60 This same meaning may be seen in the Apostle Paul, 1. Co. 14: 11: Εὰν μὴ εἰδὼ τὴν δύναμιν (sense, meaning) τῆς φωνῆς, ἔσομαι πῦ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν (ἐν) ἐμὸι βάρβαρος, which Luther translates as “I shall be unto him that speaketh unintelligible, and he that speaketh shall be unintelligible unto me.” In conformity with this usage, someone who speaks unintelligibly is a βάρβαρος too, without being an extraneus. Cicero too contrasts disertus with the barbarus. In the same way in Plato βαρβαρίζειν means “come out with something unintelligible”: ἀπορῶν καὶ βαρβαρίζων. Theæt. 175. D.
significance of confused speech in the Arabic and Syrian language.⁶¹

Here, now, another question naturally arises: How can the polytheism coming into existence be considered the cause of the confusion of languages, what relationship is there between a crisis of the religious consciousness and the utterances of the power of speech?

We could simply reply that it is so, whether we can see the connection or not. The utility of a piece of research does not always consist merely in resolving difficult questions; a more significant service is perhaps to create new problems and mark them out for a future investigation, or to extract a new aspect from existing questions (precisely like the one about the foundation of and relationship between languages). This new aspect may at first seem only to plunge us into a still more profound ignorance, but it also in fact all the more restrains us from trusting over-simple and superficial solutions, and can become the means of answering the principal question more aptly than hitherto, in that it compels us to take it up from a side which had not until this point been considered. But facts, even, which testify to such a relationship are not wholly lacking, although equally difficult to explain readily. There are many curious things in Herodotus: one of the oddest is what he says of the Attic people: “since they were really Pelasgian, they have, in turning into Hellenes, also learnt a new language”.⁶² The metamorphosis of the Pelasgian soul into the Hellenic, as already pointed out earlier in these lectures in relation to the famous passage from Herodotus, was precisely the transition from the still unexpressed mythological consciousness to the explicit one.—Affections of the power of speech, and indeed not just of the external power but of the internal, which are associated with religious states, are claimed to have been observed in many cases which I shall not go into here. But what, other than the consequence of a religious affection, could

---

⁶¹ In the Arabic translation of the *New Testament* the word “balbal” is also used for *ταράσσειν* (*τὴν ψυχὴν*). Ac. 15:24.—From the same sound imitation comes the Latin *balbus*, *balbutiens*, the German *babeln*, *babbeln* (Swabian) = chatter; French *babiller*, *babil*.

⁶² Τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος, ἕως πελασγικὸν, ἄμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ελληνας καὶ τὴν γλώσσαν μετέμαθεν. L. I. c. 57.
the *speaking with tongues* in the Corinthian community have been, which the Apostle, moreover, accepts at nothing less than face value, and really does treat only with circumspection, but which, for that very reason, he attests the more certainly to have been a fact? We are only too little accustomed to see the principles, by which the spontaneous religious movements in human consciousness are determined, as principles possessing universal significance, which can therefore in certain circumstances become the causes of other effects, even physical ones. Let us, though, leave the relationship still unexplained for now; this much has become intelligible to human research through careful progress, one step at a time. The relationship in question, that of religious affections to affections of the power of speech, is no more mysterious than the way certain peculiarities of physical constitution, also, were associated with a particular mythology or form of religion. The Egyptian is organized in one way, the Indian in another, and the Hellene in another way again, and on closer investigation, each in a certain conformity with the nature of his theology.

Yet let us recall the phenomenon parallel to the confusion of language, more in order to justify the reference to polytheism which we see in the ancient account, than to show yet another example of the relationship between religious movements and language. Only one thing in the whole course of religious history is comparable with the occurrence of the *confusion of language*: the momentarily restored unity of language (*ὁμογλωσσία*) at Pentecost, with which Christianity, destined to bring the whole human race together once again in unity through the recognition of the one true god, sets off on its great path.\(^{63}\) CLV

I hope it will not seem excessive if I add that in the same way only one event in the whole of history corresponds to the *separation of societies*, and that is the *Exodus*, which is, though, more like a

---

\(^{63}\) In the lectures on the *Philosophy of Revelation* I called the manifestation at Pentecost, for this reason, “the reversed Babel,” an expression which I later found in other writers. At that time the hint from Gesenius in the article “Babylon” in the Halle encyclopedia was still unknown to me. Even for the Church Fathers, however, this antithesis was not unusual, so to that extent it certainly has a claim to be regarded as a natural one. Another parallel from the Persian doctrine, where the diversity of languages (*ἑτερογλωσσία*) is described as the work of Ahriman, and where, for the time of the restoration of the reign of pure light after the vanquishing of Ahriman, the unity of languages is also foretold, is mentioned in the *Philosophy of Revelation*. 
coming together or reunification than a scattering. For it could only have been a force such as is reserved for the supreme turning points of world history, an attractive force equal in strength to the earlier repulsive, divisive one, which brought those societies which had, for that end, been kept in reserve, out of the still unexhausted antechamberCLVI and onto the stage of world history, so that they took Christianity unto themselves and made it into that which it was destined to become, and which it could have become only through them.

In any event it is clear that the coming into existence of societies, the confusion of language, and polytheism are, for the Old Testament mode of thought, related concepts and connected phenomena. When we look back from this point at what was discovered earlier, every society exists, then, as such, only after it has been defined and distinguished in respect of its mythology. So its mythology cannot come into existence for it in the time when the severance has already been accomplished, and after it has already come into being as a society; since, however, mythology was as little capable of coming into existence for the society for as long as the latter was still embraced, as a part until then invisible, in the whole of humanity, its origin, thus, will date precisely from the transition, when the society is not yet present in a well-defined form, but is just on the point of withdrawing and isolating itself as such.

[110] But this same thing must now also be true of the language of every society: that it only becomes defined as the society itself becomes distinct. Until then, and for as long as the society remains caught up in the crisis, and thus in the process of coming into being, its language too is fluid, mobile, not cleanly separated from others, so that languages actually to some extent different are confounded in speech,64CLVII just as the ancient account too assumes only a confusion, not that the languages at once became completely detached from one another. From that stage, where languages had

64 Therefore a true γλώσσαις (in the plural) λαλεῖν, in Corinth too something quite different from the ἑτέραις γλώσσαις λαλεῖν, the explanation of which is contained in the following: Ὑπὸ ἡκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῇ ἱδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλοῦντων αὐτῶν, and that is only possible if the language which is spoken is instar omnium, not merely if the different languages lose their tension or exclusivity with respect to each other; anyone speaking in this way is “βάρβαρος” for the Apostle according to the passage already mentioned.
not yet become separated, but were in the process of separating, may derive, under the names of Greek deities, those which are clearly non-Greek and prehistoric; Herodotus, who may certainly be credited with a Hellenic feeling for language, and who would certainly have detected a Greek etymology in the name “Poseidon,” for example, quite as easily as a grammarian of our own time,⁶⁵ CLVIII says that almost all the names of the gods came to the Greeks from the barbarians, CLIX which is clearly not to say that the gods themselves also came to them from the barbarians, nor even necessarily prior to the barbarians. This is also the probable explanation of a few material correspondences between languages otherwise constructed in accordance with wholly different principles. In comparisons between languages in general the following hierarchy occurs: some are just dialects of the same language, like Arabic and Hebrew, and here there is a unity of descent;⁶⁶ CLX others belong to the same formation, like Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, and German; others again neither to the same line of descent [11] nor to the same formation, and yet there are correspondences, between the various languages, which are explained neither by historical circumstances, like Arabic words in Spanish and French,⁶⁶ CLXI nor from the fact that the languages belong to the same line of descent or the equivalent stage of evolution (formation). Examples of this kind are provided by the occurrence of Semitic words in Sanscrit, in Greek, and also, it seems, in ancient Egyptian; these are thus correspondences which go beyond any history. No language comes into existence for the society which is already complete and in existence, nor, therefore, does its language, either, arise for any society in the absence of any relationship with the original unity of language, which still seeks to assert itself even in the divided state.

For a unity, whose force survives even in the disintegration, is indicated by the phenomena, the behaviour of societies, in so far as

⁶⁵ Hermann, as is well known, explains it from ποτὸν (πόσις) and εἰδεσθαι, quod potile videtur, non est. (Unless I am mistaken, potile should probably read potabile. For sea-water actually is something potable in the general sense of potile—like everything fluid which drips—yet potable in the particular sense of being acceptable to human taste, potabile, it only appears to be.)
⁶⁶ The familiar adjective mesquin is a purely Arabic word, which passed from Spanish into French.
it is still discernible through the mist of the primæval era regardless of the great span of time.

It was not an external spur, but the spur of inner unrest, the feeling of being no longer the whole of humanity but only a part of it, and of no longer belonging to the absolutely One, but of coming under the sway of a particular god or particular gods; this feeling, it was, which drove them from land to land, from coast to coast, until each part came to see itself as alone and separated from all those of an alien cast, and had found the location marked out for it, appropriate to it.\(^{67}\) Or is mere chance thought to have prevailed there too? Was it chance which brought into the narrow Nile valley the oldest inhabitants of Egypt, who proclaimed with their dark skin colour simply the sombre disposition of their own inner nature,\(^{68}\) or was it the feeling that only in such isolation \(^{112}\) could they preserve what they were destined to preserve in themselves? For even after the scattering the fear stayed with them; they sensed the destruction of the original unity, which gave way to a confusing multiplicity, and seemed not to be able to end otherwise than in the total loss of all consciousness of unity, and thereby of everything human.

For this extreme condition too the evidence is preserved for us, as are surely preserved still, regardless of all the depredations of time, memorials for everything which true and methodically advancing science of its own exertions comes to know or claims; this, as I have often enough stated, is the creed of the true seeker after knowledge, which does him no disgrace. Here again I draw attention to those inhabitants of South America referred to several times already, dispersed and only outwardly like men still. It is quite impossible to detect in them examples of the initial condition, assumed still to be the coarsest, and most closely approaching animality; on the contrary they refute in the clearest possible way the fantasy of such a dull-witted\(^{CLXIV}\) original condition of humanity, since they show

\(^{67}\) According to a passage from the Pentateuch (Deu. 32:8) the societies were distributed by the all-highest (to individual gods, the Hebrew word is elsewhere usually followed by a dative), and the Platonic \(τὸ ἕν \gammaὰρ \) (in the first world-epoch) \(αὐτῆς \) πρῶτον \(τῆς \) κυκλώσεως \(ήρχεν \) εἰπεμελούμενος \(δίς \) ὁ \(θεός, \) \(ὡς \) νῦν \(κατὰ \) τόπους \(ταύτων \) τούτων \(ὑπὸ \) \(θεῶν, \) ἀρχόντων \(πάντι \) τά \(τοῦ \) κόσμου \(μέρη \) διειλημμένα (Politic. p. 271. D) is similar.

\(^{68}\) Herod. Lib. II, c. 104.
that, starting from such a condition, no advance is possible; and I feel it would be equally out of place for me to apply to these species the model of societies which have reverted from an erstwhile cultivation back into barbarism. The condition in which they exist presents no problem to intelligences who make do merely with second-hand ideas; the meticulous thinker, though, did not until now know how to place them. If societies may not be presupposed as coming into existence of their own accord, if the necessity of explaining societies has to be recognized, then the same applies to those masses who, although physically homogeneous, have yet remained without any moral and spiritual unity among themselves. To me they seem to be just the unfortunate result of that same crisis out of which the rest of humanity salvaged the foundation of all human consciousness, while for them this foundation was lost completely. They are the still living testimony of the dispersal which has run its full course, restrained by nothing; in them the whole curse of disintegration was fulfilled—they are truly the flock which grazes without shepherd, and without becoming a society they perished [113] in the very crisis which gave the societies their existence. If, as I will assume, independently of witnesses on whose reliability I would in any case prefer to base nothing, there really are to be found among them a few traces of culture, or rather, weak vestiges of customs senselessly kept alive, then these too do not prove that they are the fragments of a society destroyed and shattered by historical or natural catastrophes. For the prehistoric condition of which these people too partook, preceding the emergence of societies—this is, as emerges amply from our explanations, nothing less than a condition of complete absence of culture, a condition of animal crudity, out of which a transition to social evolution would never have been possible. For we have upheld at least the division into tribes within that condition: but where this division exists, then there also already exist relationships similar to marriage and the family; even tribes which have not yet become societies do at least recognize moveable property and, to the extent that it is property, contracts too, indisputably; but no possible political collapse can bring an entity which was once a society and had appropriate customs, laws, civil institutions, and what is invariably associated with these, characteristic religious ideas and
customs, down to such a condition of absolute lawlessness and of
dehumanization (brutality), as is the one in which those races
subsist who lack the notion of any law, of any obligation, or of an
order to which everyone is committed, just as they lack all religious
ideas. Physical events can destroy a society materially, but cannot
rob it of its tradition, its memory, and its entire past, in the way of
this human type which has a past as little as does some species of
animal. But their condition does indeed become understandable if
they are the part of the original humanity in which all consciousness
of unity has actually perished. I have already observed that societies
cannot be explained by way of a mere disintegration, that a cohesive
force was required at the same time: in those people we see what the
whole of humanity would have become had it salvaged nothing from
the original unity.

Yet another consideration assigns this place to them. It is
quite specifically these races which testify to the truth which resides
in the ancient account of the confusion of language. Attention has
already been drawn to the expression “confusion.” Confusion arises
only where inimical elements, which cannot achieve unity, cannot
disperse either. In every developing language the original unity
continues to exert an effect, as is to some degree shown simply by
the kinship between languages; an extinction of all unity would be
the extinction of language itself, but thereby of everything human; for man is only man to the degree that he is capable of a
universal consciousness extending beyond his individuality; and
language too has meaning only as something shared. The languages
of societies which are pre-eminently human and held together
spiritually do extend over large areas, and there are only a few such
languages. Here, then, a community of consciousness is still
preserved among large masses of people. Additionally, these
languages still retain within themselves references to others, traces
of an original unity, signs of a common provenance. I despair of
finding any material correspondence between the idioms of that
American population and true national languages, just as I must
leave open the question of how far the study which has been devoted
to these idioms could have fulfilled the hope, in which it was
undertaken, of finding their actual, that is to say genetic, elements;
final elements will have been found in them, but elements of
decomposition, not of composition and growth. Among that population the Guarani language is, according to Azara, the only one still understood over a relatively wide area, and even this perhaps calls for more detailed research. For otherwise, as the same Azara observes—and he did not travel through those countries, he lived in them and remained there for years—otherwise the language changes from one band to the next, indeed from one hut to the next, so that often only the members of the same family understand each other; and not only that, but the power of speech itself seems in them to be on the point of failing and becoming extinct. Their voice is never strong and sonorous, they speak only quietly, and never cry aloud, not even if they are killed. In speaking, they scarcely move their lips, and do not accompany their speech with any regard which solicits attention. With this apathy is conjoined such a disinclination to speak, that when they have business with someone who is a hundred paces in front of them, they never call out, but run to catch up with him. Here, then, language is poised at the last frontier, beyond which it expires entirely, while it may well be asked whether idioms whose sounds are mostly nose and throat tones, not from the chest and lips, and are accordingly for the most part incapable of being expressed with characters from our written language, still deserve to be called “languages” at all.  

This fear then, this horror of losing all consciousness of unity, kept together those who remained united, and incited them to maintain at least a partial unity, so as to continue in existence if not as humanity, then at least as a society. This fear of the total disappearance of unity and of all truly human consciousness gave them not only the first establishments of a religious kind, but even the first civil institutions, whose aim was none other than to preserve what they had salvaged of the unity and to secure it against further destruction. Since, once the unity has been lost, the individual too tries to isolate himself and to secure his own possessions, they called upon every means at their disposal so as to hold fast to the escaping unity 1) by the formation of separate communities, and particularly by the strict isolation of those in

---

whom what they had in common, the consciousness of unity, was to survive: the division into castes, the foundation of which is as old as history and common to all societies whose constitution as known to us dates from this time, and which had no other aim but to preserve that consciousness more securely in such isolation, and indirectly to preserve it also for the others in whom it was unavoidably becoming more and more ephemeral; 2) by way of strict priestly statutes, establishment of knowledge as doctrine, as seems to have happened particularly in Egypt; but externally they tried to keep themselves united 3) by way of those monuments clearly belonging to a prehistoric era, which are found in all parts of the known world and provide, in their size and construction, evidence of almost superhuman strength, and by which we cannot help being reminded of that portentous tower which the most ancient account mentions in connection with the scattering of societies. The architects say to one another: “Let us build us a bulwark and a tower, whose top reaches unto heaven, so that we might make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” They say this even before language becomes confused; they sense what lies ahead of them, the crisis which is foreshadowed for them.

They want to make a name for themselves. In ordinary language: “so that we might become famous.” But although such a translation does accord with common linguistic usage, the multitude speaking here cannot, however, be thinking of becoming famous, before they have a name, that is to say before they are a society, just as no man, either, can make a name for himself, as is commonly said, if he does not already have one. In the nature of the thing, then, the expression must be understood here in its straightforward meaning still, of which the other (becoming famous) is merely the derivative.—According to their own words, therefore, they were until then one nameless humanity; it is indeed the name which distinguishes one society, like one individual, from another, segregates it but at the same time, for that very reason, keeps it together. The words “so that we might make us a name” accordingly

---

70 Πρῶτοι μὲν ὃν ἄνθρωπων, τῶν ἡμείς ἢμεν, Αἰγύπτιοι λέγοντι θεῶν τε ἐννοίην λαβεῖν, καὶ ἵρα ἱσασθαὶ ι. . . πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ οὐνόματα ἵρα ἐγνώσαν, καὶ λόγους ἱροὺς ἔλεξαν. Lucian. de Syria Dea c. 2.
mean nothing other than “so that we might become a society,”⁷¹ and they give as the reason for this: so that they do not become scattered abroad into every land. Thus the fear of becoming scattered, of being no longer a whole at all, [117] but of breaking up completely, inspires them to the undertaking. Fixed domiciles are considered only when humanity is in danger of wholly fading away and perishing, but with the first fixed abode the segregation begins, thus the rejection and exclusion too, just as the tower of Babel, intended to prevent a total scattering, became the starting-point and motivation for the separation of societies. In the time precisely of this transition belong also, therefore, those monuments of a prehistoric time, particularly the structures reputed to be Cyclopean and thus named by the Greeks, found in Greece, on islands of the Mediterranean, here and there even on the mainland of Italy; structures which Homer, which Hesiod had already seen,⁷² CLXX walls and battlements, sometimes built of undressed stones without cement, sometimes fitted together out of irregular polygons, monuments of a race become legendary for the later Greeks themselves, a race which has left behind no other traces of its existence, but which nonetheless has actual historical significance to a greater degree than is commonly thought. For as Homer in the Odyssey describes the life of the Cyclopes, how they live without laws, without public assemblies, each, but for his wives and children, on his own, and how none of them pays attention to any other,⁷³ we have to conclude that in them there is already a beginning of those completely dispersed races who are distinguished precisely by the fact that none of them concerns himself with the others, that they remain as foreign to one another as are animals, and are united by no consciousness of a common bond. In the New World this condition, which the Cyclopes in Homer exhibit, was preserved, while the same race in Greece, overwhelmed by the ever more vigorously encroaching unrest, remains, for the society which

⁷¹ In Ge. 12:2 Jehovah promises Abraham that he will make of him a great nation and make his name great.
⁷² Since we hope to return later to this subject of the pre-Homeric age of the Cyclopean structures in Greece, might I for the time being draw attention to my dissertation given in the Academy of Sciences in Munich, and found in summary form in the second annual report (1829-31) of that body.
⁷³ ... οὐ δὲ ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν. Odyssey. IX, 115.
thereby came into existence, only in the memory. In Homer they still live in natural but apparently [118] artificially enlarged grottos, just as later legend too ascribed to them the subterranean constructions, the grottos and labyrinths of Megara, Nauplia (Napoli di Malvasia),CLXXI among others. But the same race goes on from these workings formed within the substance of the earth to those monuments towering over the earth, which are formed out of material unconnected with and free from the earth; but simultaneously with these the race itself vanishes; for with these constructions is linked the transition to the society in which that transitional race comes to its end.
ACCORDING to the immediately preceding analysis, in which, though, it is easily seen that many points of detail await further investigation, it now seems that there could no longer be any doubt that the explanation which assumes, prior to polytheism, a monotheism—a historical monotheism, not just monotheism in general—and in the time, in fact, before the separation of societies, will be the one with which we too shall have to rest. The sole question which remained in doubt for us in this explanation—whether the separation of societies came first and had polytheism as a consequence, or vice versa—has, we must judge, been settled as well; for we believe that what has already been said has been enough to satisfy us that no cause independent of polytheism for the emergence of societies may be found, and we regard the following conclusion, resulting from the analysis up to this point, as the foundation upon which we shall go on to build:

If humanity separated into societies as soon as diverse gods emerged in the consciousness which had until then been united: then the unity in the human race prior to the separation, which unity we are as little able to consider to be without a positive cause, could have been preserved so staunchly by nothing other than the consciousness of one universal god, common to the whole of humanity.

This conclusion, however, contains no ruling of any kind about whether the universal god common to the whole human race was, because he was such a god, of necessity also the One, in the sense of monotheism and indeed in the sense of a revealed monotheism; whether he really had to be an absolutely unmythological god, excluding from himself everything mythological.

Certainly it will be asked what, then, this god, common to all humanity, could have been, other than the truly One, and a god still wholly unmythological; and answering this question is what really matters now: we hope thereby to achieve a basis on which may be constructed no longer merely hypothetical conclusions about the origin of mythology, but categorical ones.

I shall not, though, be able to answer this question without going more deeply than has hitherto been the case and has hitherto, also,
been necessary, into the nature of polytheism, which after all became the main problem for us only with the religious explanation.

Here, then, we wish to draw attention to a distinction within polytheism itself, which has been ignored in all the explanations which have hitherto arisen, and which for that very reason we too disregarded, but which now must be discussed.

No one, namely, to whom it is pointed out, cannot help seeing that there is a great difference between, on the one hand, the polytheism which comes into existence if there are thought to be indeed a greater or lesser number of gods who are, however, subordinated to one and the same god as the highest and dominant one among them, and on the other hand, that polytheism which comes into existence if several gods are assumed, of whom, though, each is the highest and dominant one in a specific era, and who, for this reason, are capable only of succeeding each other. If we consider that the history of the Greek gods might have had, instead of the three races of gods which succeed each other therein, only a single race, that of Zeus for instance, then it too would have known only contemporaneous and co-existent gods, who were all resolved in Zeus as their common unity, it would have known only simultaneous polytheism. In fact, though, it has three systems of gods, and in each of them one god is the highest, Uranus in the first, Cronus in the second, and Zeus in the third. These three, therefore, cannot be gods which exist at the same time, but only mutually exclusive gods, succeeding each other, for this reason, over the course of time. As long as Uranus reigns, Cronus cannot reign, and if Zeus is to gain sway, Cronus must retreat into the past. This polytheism, therefore, we shall call the successive kind.

But now the following, too, is at once evident. Through the second kind alone is the oneness, or to state it quite precisely, the uniqueness of the god unambiguously supplanted: only successive polytheism is true, genuine polytheism. For as far as those gods are concerned who are jointly subordinated to one supreme god, then they do indeed exist simultaneously with the latter, if you will, but are not therefore equivalent to him; they exist in him; he exists apart from them; he is the one who comprehends them, but is not comprehended by them; he is not of their number and exists, even if considered only as their emanative cause, prior to them at least in
nature and essence. The multiplicity of the others does not affect
him, he is always the One, knowing no equal, since the difference
between him and them is not a difference of mere individuality, like
that between them themselves, but a difference of entire category
(differentia totius generis); here there is no actual polytheism, for
everything is in the end again resolved in unity, or a polytheism only
in the sense, perhaps, in which Jewish theology too calls the angels
“Elohim” (gods), without being concerned that the uniqueness of the
god whose mere servants and instruments they are might thereby be
encroached upon. Here there is indeed multiplicity of gods, but no
multitheism. This comes into being only when several supreme
and to that extent equivalent gods succeed each other, gods who
cannot be resolved again into a higher unity. We must, therefore,
adhore strictly to this distinction between multiplicity of gods and
multitheism, and particularly in order to be able to pass on now to
the subject which is really in question.

For you will understand at once, and without being prompted,
that these two kinds of polytheism have a very different relationship
to any explanation. If one asks which of the two chiefly calls for
explanation, then it is clearly the successive; this is the mystery,
here lies the problem, but for that very reason the solution too.
Certainly the simultaneous kind is quite easily and simply
understood by way of the simple disintegration of an original
unity, but the successive is not as easy to understand in the same
way, at least in the absence of artificial and forced secondary
assumptions.

Successive polytheism will also be considered first because it goes
beyond any simultaneous kind, and thus includes the simultaneous
kinds as a whole, while it itself is the polytheism which exists
absolutely and freely.

But let us now confess honestly that in everything which has been
raised until now in this whole discussion, nothing whatever has
come to light which might explain successive polytheism, and that
in a sense we are in the position of starting at the very beginning, as
we ask “How may multitheism be understood?”

But even as we take up the investigation, it becomes clear to us
that with this question we find ourselves in wholly different territory,
that of actuality, and that we are drawing near to a truth before which all mere hypotheses must vanish like mist before the sun.

According to the Greek theogony, then (at least this is how it recounts it), there was once a time when Uranus reigned alone. Now would this be a mere *fable*, something else purely contrived and invented? Was there not perhaps actually a time when just the god of heaven was worshipped, when nothing was known of any other, of a Zeus, nor even of a Cronus, and is not in this way the fully developed history of the gods at the same time the original historical documentation of how they themselves came into being?—shall we, in the face of this, still find it credible that mythology could have come into being all at once through the invention of an individual or a few individuals, or (the other hypothesis) through the mere disintegration of a oneness, out of which could have emerged at best no more than a simultaneous polytheism, a mere stationary juxtaposition, and in the final outcome only an unpleasant isolationism, not the living succession of versatile mythology, multifaceted because richly structured?

If we are correct in our judgement, then it is precisely the successive aspect of mythology in which lies what is actual, what is actually historical, thus also what is true, its truth in general; with this we find ourselves on historical ground, on the basis of the actual course which events have taken.

That it is the actual history of its coming into being which mythology has preserved in the succession of its gods becomes completely incontestable when the mythologies of different societies are compared. Here it is apparent that the theologies which remain visible in the mythologies of more recent societies only as theologies of the past were the actual and present theologies of earlier societies, and similarly the reverse, that the reigning gods of earlier societies were incorporated into the mythologies of later ones only as phases of the past. Only thus is the oft-quoted correspondence correctly grasped and explained. In the highest-ranking, or, we would be more correct to say, in the exclusively reigning god of the Phoenicians the Hellenes recognize with absolute certainty the Cronus of their own theogony, and even refer to him as such; it is easy to point out the differences between the Phoenician god and the Greek one, so as to prove that the latter has no reference to (kinship
with) the former, but all these differences are fully explained by the single difference that in the Phoenician mythology Cronus still reigns alone, whereas in the Hellenic he is the ousted god, already overcome by a later one; that Cronus is, in the former, the present god, in the latter no more than the god of the past. But how could the Hellenes have recognized their god in the Phoenician one, if they themselves had not been conscious of their Cronus as an actual, not merely imagined and fictitious, past?

We would have been spared the appearance of so many unnatural explanations, had the earlier hypotheses, instead of being content to explain only polytheism in general, explained first and foremost the historical kind. Such a sequence of gods cannot be merely imagined, it cannot be a fiction; whoever makes a god for himself or others, at least makes for himself and others a god who is present. It goes against Nature for something to be introduced at once as past; to become something past is all that anything can do, and it must therefore first have been present; what I am to experience as something past, I must first have experienced as something present. That which never had reality for us, cannot become a stage for us, cannot become a phase; but the earlier god must actually have been retained as a stage, as a phase, for otherwise no successive polytheism could have arisen; at one time he must have governed consciousness and even wholly absorbed it; and if he has disappeared, he could not have disappeared without resistance and a struggle, for otherwise he would not have been retained in the memory.

Were we to suppose, even, so as to take the extreme case, that a cosmological philosopher of the primæval era had made the observation that the world, as it is, is not explicable by way of a single cause, and could not have come into being without a certain succession of active forces or potences, where each in turn laid the foundation for the next, and that he had also, accordingly, incorporated into his cosmolgy a corresponding succession of such causes, which he represented as personalities: then, no matter what success we might ascribe to his invention, there would never have arisen, towards gods merely thought of and represented as in the past, that religious awe and dread with which we find Cronus to be imbued not only in Greek mythology but even in Greek poetry and
art. These religious trepidations felt before a god now powerless, what is more, are no mere poetical falsehood, they are actually felt, and also, for that reason alone, something truly poetical; but they could only have been actually felt if a memory of the god had remained for consciousness, if as a consequence of continued and uninterrupted transmission from generation to generation it was even now still imprinted on the consciousness that this god, albeit in a time inconceivably long ago, had once actually reigned.

Certainly mythology has no reality outside consciousness; but if it takes its course only in formulations of the latter, thus in representations, this course, however, this succession of representations itself, this cannot in turn be merely represented as such a succession, this must actually have come to pass, must actually have occurred in consciousness; this succession is not made by mythology, but on the contrary mythology is made by it; for mythology is in fact simply the totality of these theologies which actually succeeded each other, and it thus came into existence through this succession.

Precisely because the gods exist merely in representations, successive polytheism can become actual only through the establishment in consciousness first of one god, whose place is taken by another, who—does not absolutely eliminate him (for then consciousness would also cease to know of him), but who at least shifts him from the present back into the past, and deprives him, not of his godhood in general, but certainly of his exclusive godhood. This is simply to state nothing more than that which one hears extolled so often, but so seldom actually finds, the pure fact; the fact is not deduced, it is there in successive polytheism itself. We are not explaining why that first god is of such a nature that another succeeds him, nor according to what law this latter succeeds him; all this remains open, it is only asserted as a fact that it was so, that mythology, as it itself shows, came into existence in this way—not through invention, not through a disintegration, but through a succession which actually came to pass in consciousness.

Mythology is not theology merely represented as successive. A struggle between the successive gods, such as is found in the Theogony, would not exist at all among the mythological representations, had it not actually taken place in the consciousness
of the societies who know of it, and to that extent in the consciousness of humanity, of which every society is a part. Successive polytheism is only to be explained by assuming that human consciousness has actually lingered in all the phases of that polytheism one after another. The successive gods actually took possession of consciousness one after another. Mythology as history of the gods, thus genuine mythology, could only have evolved in life itself, it must have been something lived through and experienced.

[126] As I utter these last words it brings me great joy to observe that the same expressions, at least in one of his casual remarks, were also used by Creuzer with reference to mythology. Evidently here a natural impression has prevailed over a preconceived assumption, and if we differ to some extent from the sagacious man in respect to the formal part of his explanation, then we are only using against him that which he himself stated out of the most fitting and genuine access of feeling.

No one can fail to see that a succession of representations through which consciousness has actually passed is the sole explanation of mythological polytheism which accords with its nature.

If, now, provided with this insight, we return to the principal question, for the sake of which this whole preceding discussion has taken place, to the question which seeks to determine whether that god common to the whole human race necessarily had to be the unconditionally-One and hence wholly unmythological, then you will see yourselves that this does not necessarily follow, and that the effect, in respect of both the cohesion and the subsequent separation, is achieved at least equally well if even this god is simply the first element, only not yet explained and recognized as such, in a series of gods, that is to say in a successive polytheism. If you think of this god, the first to appear in consciousness, as A, then consciousness does not suspect that a second, B, is impending, who will initially station himself alongside, and soon above, the first. The first god is thus until now the One not only in general, but also in one sense in which no succeeding god can again be it. For in consciousness god B was preceded by god A, and god C (for there is reason to suppose that the second, which ousts the first, might only be preparing the way for a third), the third therefore, when he comes
along, has already been preceded in consciousness by A and B. But
the god A is the one prior to which there was no other, and after
which—as consciousness sees it—there will be no other; for
consciousness he is thus not the One merely accidentally, but in
fact absolutely, the unconditionally-One. As yet there is no
multitheism [127] in the currently defined sense of the word.
Therefore if monotheism is understood to mean only the opposite of
multitheism, then in consciousness there is still actually
monotheism; but it is easy to see that this—indeed absolute for the
humanity involved with it—is merely relative, however, in itself and
for us. For the absolutely-One god is the one also does not admit the
possibility of other gods apart from himself, and the merely
relatively-unique god is the one who has only in actuality no other
prior to, accompanying, or subsequent to himself. Hermann’s astute
observation is wholly applicable here: “A doctrine which knows of
only one god merely by chance is in the nature of the thing true
polytheism, because it does not eliminate the possibility of other
gods, and knows only of one simply because it has not yet heard of
others, or, as we would say initially, of another.”74—Of our god A we
would thus say: he is, for humanity, for as long as they do not know
of a second, a completely unmythological god, just as in the case of
that series (whose elements we designate by A, B, and C) A is a
member thereof only when B actually succeeds him. A mythological
god is one who has a place in a history of gods; the postulated god is
not yet actually this, but he is not therefore an unmythological god
by nature, even though he can appear to be such for as long as
there is no sign of the second god who will deprive him of his
absoluteness.

Were we to imagine that, together with the first god, but
subordinated to him, there was established a system of gods, even,
then with that a multiplicity of gods would indeed have been
established, but still no multitheism, and the gods of this system too
could still be common to the whole of humanity; for they are not yet
gods of different kinds, as for example in the Greek theogony the
Uranus, the Cronus, and the Zeus gods are of different kinds; they
are from first to last gods of a single kind. Every element which has

---

no other element outside itself by which it is defined, always and necessarily remains identical to itself.\textsuperscript{CLXXV} If the reigning god does not change, then the gods subordinated to him \textsuperscript{[128]} cannot change either, and because they remain always the same, they also cannot be different and distinct gods for different people, and thus they do not cease to be common to all.

Now what has been said so far is already enough to prove that, in order to explain both the original oneness and the subsequent disintegration of humanity, an absolute monotheism, a god who is the One unconditionally, apart from whom there can be no other, is at least not \textit{necessary}; but since only one of the two presuppositions can be the true one, it is impossible to rest with this result. We must decide between the two and thus investigate whether relative monotheism in fact explains the two (the oneness and the disintegration) better than absolute, or even whether perhaps it alone \textit{really} explains them. So we have once again come back to the emergence of societies. The distinction just discovered, between an absolute monotheism and one which is relative but can appear over a certain period of time to be absolute, shows us that in the first argument there was still something unclear; for in an investigation like this it is in general only possible to advance one step at a time, and to state anything at any given time only to the extent that it comes out at that point in the argument. This whole course of lectures is one which is steadily growing and advancing in all its parts, and the understanding which it is aiming at should not be considered complete until the final touch has been added.

When the question “How did societies come into being?” first found its way from my lecture hall into wider spheres, it met, to some degree, with a reception which clearly showed how new and unexpected it was to many, and since then I have had even more opportunity to see how little thought had until that time been given to the first elements of a \textit{philosophical} ethnology, which presupposes a universal ethnogeny.\textsuperscript{CLXXVI} It actually was just as I said in the previous lecture; to most people the explanation seemed superfluous, there was no need, they said, for any particular reason, societies come into being \textit{of their own accord}. If from the present standpoint, now that the separation of societies has been recognized as a spiritual crisis, a thought is still to be associated with this “coming
into being of their own accord,” then it would have to be assumed that the spiritual differences, which subsequently became evident in the variations among societies and in the divergent theologies, lay ineffective and hidden in original mankind, and achieved expression and development only with the ever more widely ramifying generations. So here the ever-increasing remoteness from the central point of the common origin would be assumed to be the sole determining cause. When this remoteness reaches a certain point, those differences would become effective. In this way, certainly, societies would then come into existence through the mere passage of time. But can there still be any question in this of conforming to a law?—for who is confident enough to say after how many generations, at which point of remoteness from the common forbear, the differences would have achieved that strength which was necessary to separate the societies? But if mere chance is not to reign over such a great event, if the evolution is to progress in a sequence which seems reasonable to the understanding, and is to occur non sine numine, then the duration which we must ascribe to the time of the complete homogeneity of the human race cannot be something merely fortuitous, it must be as it were guaranteed by a principle, by a force which supports and restrains the higher stages of evolution which lie ahead for humanity and which, in the sequel, will introduce differences within it other than those merely natural ones. To say of this force, once it is established, that it might lose its power through the mere passage of time, is inadmissible: for it to lose this power another principle is required, independent of it, an actual second principle, which first disrupts and in the end totally overcomes it. The coming into existence of societies is not something which a calm sequence arising out of pre-existing circumstances brings about of its own accord, it is something by which an earlier order of things is interrupted and a wholly new order is introduced. The transition from that homogeneous existence to the higher and more developed one, where societies, that is to say ensembles of spiritual differences, already exist, goes forward as little of its own accord as does, for example, the transition from inorganic to organic Nature, with which the other transition is in fact comparable. For if, in the realm of the inorganic, all bodies still lie within the common gravity, and even
heat, electricity, and everything similar is still *common* to them all, then with organic beings there arise independent centres, beings existing *in their own right*, who possess all this as their own, and use gravity itself, over which they have gained control, as a power of free movement.\textsuperscript{CLXXVIII}

The principle which preserved humanity within the oneness, *could* accordingly have been no absolute principle, it must have been of such a kind that there could follow it another, by which it was set in motion, transformed, and indeed finally subdued.

But now, the moment that this second principle begins to exert its effect on humanity, all possible differences in humanity stemming from that relationship are established, as if at a stroke, certainly, but some as possible in the near future, others as more remotely so; differences of which earlier no trace had been present. The reason for these differences lies, in the first instance, in the fact that the god until now immobile (A), as soon as he is forced by a second god to accept determinations, cannot remain the same, cannot avoid, in conflict with the latter, going on from form to form, assuming first one, then another, according to the extent to which the second god (B) has achieved power over him. Certainly it is possible that even those gods of the Greek theogony whom we regarded until now as the paradigm of successive gods (Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus), are only such different forms, successively assumed, of the one or the first god, and that the second, who forces him to pass through these forms, is a god whose name has until now not been uttered, standing wholly apart from these. But once the initial form of the god has been established, the following forms are established as well, only as more remote possibilities.\textsuperscript{CLXXIX} To the various forms of the god there correspond equally various materially differing theologies, which are thus, with the appearance of the second principle, already all potentially present as well, although they cannot all actually emerge at the same time, but only to the extent that the god caught up in the continuing process of being overpowered, but still retaining his hold on humanity, \textsuperscript{[131]} cedes it or allows it. To the different theologies correspond the different societies; these too are thus with the entry of the second cause potentially already present, even if they do not all become actuality at once, but only in a measured sequence. Through the successive aspect of polytheism,
societies are at the same time kept apart from one another in respect of their advent, their entry into history. Until the phase has arrived which it is to represent, every society remains in a potential state as part of a humanity still indeterminate, although destined for dissolution into societies, just as we have seen the Pelasgians, before they became Greeks, existing in an indeterminate condition of that kind. But since the crisis which results from the second cause is a universal one, extending to the whole of humanity, even the society reserved for a later era and a later differentiation passes through all the phases, not, indeed, as an actual society but as part of a still indeterminate humanity. Only in this way is it possible for the phases distributed among different societies to come together in the consciousness of the latest to form a fully fledged mythology.

You will see that the course of the coming into existence both of the different theologies and of the societies parallel with them, achieves, by means of this viewpoint introducing a movement which starts out from relative monotheism, a form quite other than and more definite than that which would be attainable through the mere disintegration of an original monotheism. Be assured that our investigation is making progress; we understand no longer merely societies in general, as earlier, but also their successive advent. We might, however, still turn our attention to one possible objection. It could be said that the differences or distinguishing characteristics, which we assume exist first in societies, exist already in tribes; for if one retains the old classification, derived from the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth, which has survived to this day, then the Semites, for example, are distinguished from the Japhetites by the fact that in general they remained closer to the original religion, and the latter have distanced themselves further from it; perhaps this already resides in the names, very probably at least in that of the Japhetites, which perhaps foretokens as much the greatest extension or evolution of polytheism, as its widest geographical dissemination. This difference, which would have to be considered as already given with the diversity between tribes, would contradict the assumed complete homogeneity of the human race. The reply to that is: At first the possibility of departing from the original religion would have to have been provided in general, before that difference could have been present in any way. This possibility
came into existence only with the appearance of the second principle, before which the assumed difference did not even have the possibility of expressing itself, and if one calls possible that which is able to express itself, it was not even possible. The tribes receive this spiritual significance only in the aftermath, and in contradiction to what is usually assumed we would have to say that tribes themselves in this sense only exist once societies are in existence; indeed if the stated meaning of the names is correct, then the tribes only received these names once they had become societies.

So only relative monotheism explains the coming into existence of societies not merely in general but, as we have now seen, also in their particular circumstances, namely the successive aspect of the advent of societies. But there is still something left, of which we earlier had to admit that it could not be fully explained using the concepts gained at that time: namely the coming into existence of different languages, which goes hand in hand with the coming into existence of societies—the confusion of language as the consequence of a religious crisis. Might not this relationship too, which seemed to us a problem still indefinitely far from a solution, have moved, through the insight now gained, at least somewhat nearer to complete understanding?

If there was a time in which, as the Old Testament says, the whole earth was of one language and of one speech—and we have as little insight into how we might parry this assumption as the other: that there was a time when there were no societies—then we shall be able to understand such an immobility of language too in no other way than by imagining that in that time language was governed only by one principle, which, itself fixed, kept any alteration away from language too, and thus kept it at the stage of a substantiality, just as the first god A was pure substance and was only compelled to accept accidental determinations by the second, B. Now if it was a principle, and indisputably a spiritual one, by which language was held back at this stage, then from that alone it is more easily understood how there was and even had to be a relationship between this principle of language and that religious principle which in the same era took possession of and governed not a part of consciousness but the whole of it. For language could resemble only the god by whom consciousness was filled. But now there arrives a
new principle, by which that first one, also in its capacity of determining language, is affected, transformed, and finally made unrecognizable and driven back into the depths. At this point, if language is determined by two principles, not only are material distinctions within it unavoidable, coming to the fore en masse, but according to whether the effect of the second transforming principle penetrates more deeply or more superficially, and thus language loses to a greater or lesser extent its substantial character, languages appear which are mutually exclusive no longer merely in material, but also in form, corresponding to the principles.

This much may be made out even before having subjected the actual fundamental differences within language to closer inspection.

But now I shall ask you to accept the following. If our assumptions are well-founded, then humanity will progress from relative monotheism or monolatry (here the word elsewhere, and as it was formerly used, wholly inadmissible, is not at all out of place), through the worship of two gods (ditheism), to an unambiguous multitheism (polytheism). But the same progression exists in the principles of languages, which go on from original monosyllabism through dissyllabism to wholly unbridled polysyllabism.

Monosyllabism preserves the word in its pure substance, and where it itself appears as a principle we shall not be able to avoid presupposing a retaining principle, precluding all accidental modifications. Yet—we hear the objection that there is no characteristically monosyllabic language. It is true that we know only one linguistic system in which monosyllabism prevails, the Chinese, and the man who was until recently accounted the greatest expert in Chinese language and literature (Abel Rémusat) believed he was obliged to deny the monosyllabic character of this. If we look more closely, though, it turns out that the learned gentleman was in the main motivated only by the view that with that assumption a stigma of barbarism would be attached to the nation and the language to the knowledge of which he had rendered such valuable services. In this regard we might now venture to set him completely at his ease; it is not our view that the condition in which

---

consciousness was ruled only by one principle was a condition of barbarism; and as far as his examples cited from the language itself are concerned, perhaps no more than this reassurance would be required for him to become himself doubtful of their value as evidence. The following may contain the main point of the objection: the term “monosyllabic” has, it is claimed, no meaning, for were it taken to refer to the root, then all languages of the world would be monosyllabic, but if it refers to the words, then the languages commonly held to be monosyllabic would be no more so than any others, for the words in these are nothing but an aggregate of syllables, which only appear to be separated because the nature of their written characters imposes it. Now here that very point which comes first, the suggestion that the roots in all languages of the world are monosyllabic, is false. For the dissyllabism of the Semitic languages is nothing fortuitous, it is their characteristic principle, a principle with which an earlier barrier is broken down and a new evolution begins. It is true that, so as not to be tempted from the comfortable ways where any explanation based on principles is avoided and as far as possible everything is derived from fortuities, there have recently again (for the attempt is very ancient) been attempts to reduce the Semitic languages to monosyllabic roots, namely by asserting that many Hebrew verbs which correspond only in two radicals, indeed sometimes only in one, do nonetheless remain related in respect to their meaning; the third consonant, it is said, is in the rule only an adjunct, and this extension of the word mostly signifies only an extension of the original meaning of the monosyllabic one. Thus “cham” (properly “chamam”) in Hebrew is said to mean “be warm,” or “become warm,” from which later came “chamar,” “be red,” because redness is a consequence of becoming hot; thus “chamar” would not really be a root, but “cham” (which appears as monosyllabic only in its pronunciation, however). But precisely the fact mentioned, if it can be established universally, would, rather, serve to prove that monosyllabism is an actual principle, and hence that the Semitic languages were those which had to overcome it and only for that reason still preserve, in the form of a trace or as an element, that

---

76 Val. Löscher in the familiar work De Causis Linguae Hebrææ is a precedent of long standing.
which was overcome. But for the Japhetic languages now, thus for example the Germanic ones, together with Sanscrit, Greek, and so on, one would think that this principle already overcome in the Semitic languages could no longer have had any power or significance. Against that, the latest report is that it is precisely their roots which are said to be unambiguously monosyllabic, after which only one further step is needed to declare the Semitic family of languages, as it exists at present (with its dissyllabic roots) to be younger, Sanscrit, though, to be older, purer, more original. I have already had something to say in general terms about this overturning of all rational order; here we do not want to waste time with the observation of how difficult it seems to discover roots in German words, and also particularly in Greek ones, of which, once their accidental (grammatical) modifications are taken away, there often remains only a single vowel, while on the other side it is not clear how one should treat words which obviously point back to dissyllabic roots, such as ἀγαπάω, which perhaps actually is related to the corresponding Hebrew. It would be simpler to bring to light the reason for the misconception. It may, that is, be the case that a) Chinese is nothing but root, pure substance, b) in the Semitic languages the principle of monosyllabism has already been overcome, and thus c) in the Japhetic ones dissyllabism as contrast and accordingly as principle has likewise disappeared. Now anyone who keeps merely the last point in mind would be thereby tempted to summon forth monosyllabism again, while he who perceives the true situation will not hesitate to say that these languages are polysyllabic in their principle, because in them monosyllabism and dissyllabism have both lost their significance as a principle.

In the Philosophy of Mythology itself there will be the opportunity to come back to this relationship, and thereby at the same time to refute misinterpretations, one of which would be the assertion that according to our view Chinese must have been the original language of the human race. But we shall also, as I hope conclusively, come back to that parallelism between linguistic and religious evolution, with the addition of new points which cannot be gone into here.

The arguments above should in general be taken only as indirect proofs of a merely relative monotheism in the consciousness of
original mankind. A direct deduction will now prove this same precondition exhaustively, and show it to be the only one possible.

If successive polytheism is something which actually took place in humanity, that is to say if humanity actually passed through such a sequence of gods as we have accepted—and here we should recall that this is an incontrovertible fact, just as much as any historically attested one—then there must also have existed in humanity at some time such a primal god as is our god A, who, although only the first element in a future succession, still does not, however, appear as such, but is actually still the unconditionally-One, and hence spreads peace over the world, and the tranquillity of an undivided and unchallenged rule. But this peace could continue no longer as soon as the second god was heralded, for with this god confusion and division were, as shown, unavoidably introduced. If, therefore, we seek out the era in which there was still space for a primal god, then it is clear that this space is not to be found in the era when the separation was already accomplished, and that even in the transitional era when the division was just beginning it could no longer be found, so that it should therefore be sought only in the absolutely prehistoric era. So either there never was such a primal god as our god A, that is to say there never existed an actual succession of the kind we are obliged to acknowledge in true polytheism, or such a god did reign in the consciousness of the original, still totally unseparated humanity.

But with this, now, the reverse is also yielded: the one god reigning over the tranquil prehistoric era was indeed the sole god existing up to that point, not, though, in the sense that no second god could have succeeded him, but only in the sense that another had not yet actually followed him. To this extent he was in essence (potentia) already a mythological god, although actually (actu) he became such a god only when the second actually arrived and made himself master of human consciousness.

If we compare this result with the supposition which has a pure doctrine, very close to spiritual monotheism, preceding the emerging multitheism, then—not to mention that the original unity of the human race was held together far more firmly by a blind force, independent of human will and thought, than by knowledge in the form which has to be thought of in association with a spiritual
monotheism—but quite independently of that, the higher the premythological consciousness is set by the supposition of a spiritual monotheism, the less comprehensible is to what end it should have fallen apart, for this change could after all only have led (as the advocate of this viewpoint himself explains) something worse. Whatever else one may think about polytheism, it must still in some way have been the agency of a higher knowledge, the transition to a greater liberation of the human consciousness. So much for the reason for the disintegration.

Next we can look at the how, the way in which the disintegration took place. To explain this, Creuzer makes use of a simile. How one planet might disintegrate into several smaller ones, might, however, be explained, if need be, in more than one way, once one is willing to accept that in the formation of the solar system things go on in such a tumultuous way; if one is unwilling to assign this function to a comet, ever ready to hand, then in the interior of the planets there are elastic fluids which could escape, and metalloids which could explode in combination with water; and in the event of such an expansion or explosion a planet could well have shattered at some time; in the extreme case a high electrical potential would be enough to produce such an effect.

Here we have positive causes of a breaking apart or explosion; but in respect of that premythological system purely negative reasons are all that is offered, obscuration and gradual fading of the original knowledge. But such a mere remission or weakening of former insight would perhaps result in the doctrine being no longer understood, also, no doubt, in all religion being entirely forgotten, but would not necessarily result in polytheism. The mere obscurcation of an earlier concept would not explain the terror which humanity experienced, following the premonition mentioned earlier,

---

77 See for example Creuzer in the preface to the first part of Symbolism and Mythology, second edition, p. xi: “I stand by my principal proposition through all its implications. It is the foundation of an initially purer worship and knowledge of one God, to which religion all that come later are related as are fitful and faded rays to the full outpouring of the sun’s light.”

Compare another passage from the Correspondence Relating to Homer and Hesiod p. 95: “I would like to compare my view of mythology with the hypothesis of the astronomers who see in the recently discovered planets Pallas, Ceres and Vesta the debris of a shattered original planet”; whereupon he then goes on to say that the original oneness, which is all one should have regard to, was a purer primal religion, monotheism, and, however much it too was splintered by the polytheism which took over, has yet at no time been wholly destroyed.
at the first appearance of polytheism. Consciousness, once having waned, would have relinquished the unity easily, without a struggle, thus also without [139] a positive result. The energy with which polytheism comes into existence is no more explained by way of a mere weakening of the original knowledge than does, from the other side, the clinging to a mere doctrine, which is already assumed to have become weaker, explain the opposing energy with which the unity asserts itself in consciousness and prevents complete extinction, which in the end would have left behind not even polytheism.

Only a positive cause, destroying the oneness, explains that trepidation in humanity at the first presentiment of multitheism. From one point of view, one which in the end we too shall have to espouse, the action of this cause will appear as divinely imposed, it will appear as a judgement. Seen in this way the oneness destroyed by a divine judgement could not have been the absolutely-true oneness. For a judgement is passed in every case only on the relatively-true and the one-sided which is taken to be all-sided or universal.\textsuperscript{CLXXXIX} The usual lamentation about the downfall of a pure knowledge and its fragmentation into multitheism is hence as little in accordance with the religious standpoint as is it with the philosophical one and the true course of history. Polytheism was imposed upon humanity so as to destroy not the truly-One, but the one-sided-One, a merely relative monotheism. Polytheism, despite appearances to the contrary, and as little as this is still open to understanding from the present standpoint, was nevertheless truly a transition to something better, to the liberation of humanity from a force in itself beneficial, but suppressing its freedom, holding back all development and thereby the highest knowledge. At least it will be admitted that this is a more understandable, and, as always,\textsuperscript{CXC} at the same time more pleasant viewpoint than that one which has an originally pure knowledge destroying itself and perishing in a completely pointless way, and without this process seeming in any way to be the elicitation of a higher result.

Up to now we have been looking for a starting point for the argument, a starting point on which may be founded no longer merely hypothetical conclusions, but categorical ones, [140] about the emergence and the initial source of mythology. But here, at this very
point where we believe ourselves to have secured it, there is still a powerful objection which threatens the outcome. We have until now judged the monotheistic hypothesis only from one side; let us not forget that by it there was asserted to have existed, in the consciousness of the earliest men, not only a pure monotheism in general, but a revealed monotheism. Now until this point we have only considered one aspect of the monotheism, the material one, and not the formal one, the aspect of how it came into existence. But the very impartiality and equanimity, which we have made a rule for ourselves in this whole investigation, would require us also to allow the other side its right of reply, even though we might not exactly expect of it a particularly persuasive argument. In fact the following objection can be put to us: There would be no argument with what you have proposed if there were no revelation. In the purely natural course of human evolution perhaps such a one-sided monotheism would be what came first. But revelation—how would that fit in with it? That relative monotheism, at least, cannot derive from revelation, revelation cannot introduce it; but if revelation cannot introduce monotheism, then it will forestall it, or at least at once oppose it, eliminating it. You will see that this is thus a new instance which we cannot circumvent, and which must be overcome if we are to continue to build with safety on the foundation established. We shall leave aside the question of whether there is a revelation or not, and simply ask whether, supposing such a thing to exist, our assumption of a relative monotheism as the consciousness of original man could survive.

So now, as far as the claimed anteriority is concerned, it is admittedly recognized that not merely theologians but also a certain class of philosophers of history take revelation back to the first man, and many would believe that they were certainly presenting us with no small problem if they required us to explain whether in our view, then, even the religion of the first man had been no more than that transitory monotheism. We, on the other hand, wish simply to recall their attention to their own assumption, to the fact that indeed they themselves assume a double condition in the first man, his condition before the so-called Fall, and his condition thereafter, and then they would primarily have to explain, so as to take revelation back not merely to the first, but also to the original man,
how originally, too, that is to say before the Fall, the relationship of man to God could have been such an indirect one as they would be obliged to contemplate even in the concept of revelation, if they did not wish, by an inappropriate extension thereof, to rob this concept of all meaning. Formerly revelation was explained, as we know, as an act of compassion by God for the fallen race; according to the firmly established concepts of the old orthodoxy—and I confess that I much prefer this, no matter that it might also be called rigid, to a newer spinning out of concepts and words, blending everything together, and then of course, for the ends of a certain cloying religiosity, making everything possible—according to these concepts, then, revelation would always be regarded only as something stemming from earlier events, never as something direct, primal, original. The original existence of man, even according to the concepts assumed, if they try to some extent to clarify themselves, may only be thought of as an existence still supratemporal and within essential eternity, which is itself, under the aspect of time, no more than a timeless moment. Here there is no room for a revelation whose concept expresses a happening, an event in time; here nothing could have come between man and God, nothing by which man is separated from God and held at a distance; and something of the kind must exist for revelation to be possible; for revelation is a relationship which is actual (founded on an actus); but in that original existence only an essential relationship is conceivable; there is actus only where there is resistance, where there is something which negates and must be eliminated. What is more, were the original man not already in himself consciousness of God, if a consciousness of God had to be imparted to him only by way of a special act, then those who assume this would themselves have to claim an original atheism in human consciousness, which however would certainly in the end conflict with their view; just as I have in general had occasion to satisfy myself that, with the exception of those for whom it is consciously or unconsciously only a matter of allowing the principle of tradition the greatest possible extension, this derivation of all science and religion from a revelation is undertaken, in the case of most people, only with the view that thereby they are saying something edifying, and gratifying to pious ears.
As far as that, then, as far as the original relationship of man to God, the concept of revelation may not be extended. But now it is further assumed that man was expelled from paradise through his own sin, that is to say removed from that original condition of a merely essential relationship with God. But this, now, is inconceivable unless, just as man himself became another, God too became another for him, that is to say it is inconceivable without an alteration in religious consciousness, and if one attaches value to the account in Genesis of this event, which must fill with admiration everyone who understands it, and which certainly contains, in any sense of the word, one of the most profound revelations (for in different sections and passages of the *Old Testament*, despite the uniform appearance of the whole, there is no mistaking the very different levels of inspiration); if, thus, one attaches value to this belief, then that alteration was just such a one as would correspond with what we have termed relative monotheism. For God says: “Behold, the man is become as one of us”; thus—in what other sense can the words be understood?—“he is no longer equivalent to the whole deity, but only to one of us Elohim.” But as it is with the existence of man, so is it also with his consciousness (and the relationship which man has to God in consciousness rests precisely on the equivalence of his existence and the divine existence); thus without appealing to the axiom that the known is like the knower, it lies directly in the words that consciousness has a relationship, still, only to one aspect of the deity, no longer to the whole; [143] but what can this be other than that which we have termed relative monotheism?\(^{78}\)

So in this way the claimed anteriority of a revelation, through which a relative monotheism in mankind might have been obviated, is countered by the ingenuous and honest account in a scripture accepted by those with faith in revelation as being itself revealed, and consequently it is countered by revelation itself, and so, instead of having to fear an impediment to our argument from that quarter, we shall rather appeal to revelation itself, that is to say to the scriptures regarded as revealed, as support for our argument, just

\(^{78}\)We shall return to this interesting passage in the sequel, and shall then at the same time have occasion to show that literally and factually it cannot be understood otherwise than in the way proposed above.
as in general, then, now that the relationship between mythology and revelation has been brought up, we should not leave this stage in the argument without having clarified this relationship as far as is, for the time being, possible.
As we are now at odds with those who in respect to the initial condition of the human race rest their faith only in disclosures of revelation, it may be regarded as true good fortune for our investigation to find our assertions confirmed so unambiguously by the Mosaic scriptures themselves, as at once in the case of the first, the assertion that from the beginning of history, as Kant has rightly termed the Fall, the relatively-One took the place of the absolutely-One in human consciousness; and for exactly the same reason it will appear only to be one of many false assumptions if, in the way that usually happens, it is suggested that in the consciousness of the first men the knowledge of God was more pure and complete, still, than in that of those who came later; for what should have been said instead was that in the first man and his first progeny it was the consciousness of the relatively-One, precisely because it did not yet appear as such, which was more powerful, pure, complete and untroubled, still, than in those who came later, when the second god was already drawing nearer to consciousness. There, among the first men, no doubt at all could have arisen that the relationship to the relatively-One might not have been the true religion. For there this god was himself still the unqualified god, and substituted fully for the absolutely-One, who was (at least to that extent, therefore) within him. But for that very reason the absolute god, too, had not yet been distinguished as such, nor, therefore, known as such; thus there was still no monotheism in the sense in which it is knowledge of the true god as such and in distinction from others; for this distinction first became possible when the relative god ceased to be the absolute god, and was understood to be relative. And precisely this point, that the very first race of men really did not know of the true god as such, is confirmed in a wonderful way by Genesis itself; if this has not been noted, then this is only because these most ancient documents have not yet had the good fortune to be considered and investigated wholly impartially in respect of their content, for which undertaking adherents of the formally orthodox theology were as little qualified as their opponents, no more than were those who, rather than with the content, have occupied
themselves with the merely external composition of these scriptures. I belong neither to the one group nor the other; I have looked at these scriptures neither with the eyes of a theologian, nor with those of an opponent of all theology, nor even with those of a mere critic, but with the eyes of a philosopher, for whom everywhere and by preference it is a question of the content of things, and I may perhaps have been able for that reason to notice much in these scriptures which has escaped others.

For as long as the first race of men worshipped, in the first god, simply and without question the true god, there was no reason to distinguish the true god as such. As that first god began to become questionable, because of a succeeding god, then only did they try to hold fast to the true god within him, and learnt in this way to distinguish that true god. It has always been remarkable that the Hebrew nation had two ways of naming their god, an undiscriminating one, “Elohim,” and then another, specific name, “Jehovah.” Only a full induction could show that in the Old Testament and quite specifically in the Mosaic scriptures the god who is the immediate content of consciousness is called “Elohim,” and the god who is distinguished as the true god is called “Jehovah.” This distinction is always adhered to. Thus as early as the fourth chapter of Genesis there is a genealogy; this begins thus:79 Adam (the first man) begat Seth, and to Seth also there was born a son; whom he called Enos: from then on, thus from the time of Enos on, men began to call upon Jehovah. It is not said that men began to call upon God in general, Elohim. Seth and Adam must have known the latter as well as Enos did; yet it is said only of Jehovah. But since otherwise Jehovah is also Elohim and Elohim Jehovah, the difference between the two can be only that Elohim is God still indistincte, and Jehovah God distinguished as such. But all the more certain, now, is precisely this: that Jehovah was called upon only from the time of Enos onwards, thus only from the third generation. Literally it is said, “from then on men began to call upon Jehovah by name”; but this amounts to the same as “he was distinguished,” for whoever is called by a name, is distinguished precisely by that. From that it undeniably follows that before Enos, that is to say before the race of men designated by this name, the true god was not distinguished as such, nor was there thus,  

79 vv. 25, 26.
until that time, a monotheism in the sense of a knowledge of the true god as such. The contradiction between this and received ideas was admittedly too direct for there not to have been attempts to help out using interpretation, as commonly happens to no less a degree in other cases. Thus already Dr. Luther says: “At the same time men began to pre\-\text{\textit{ach}} the Lord’s name,” others “to call themselves after Jehovah’s name”; yet others thought it referred only to a public cult; but nothing of any of that resides in the Hebrew; in conformity with the language the words can be translated only as “Jehovah was called by name,” \textsuperscript{80} which then also admittedly amounts to the same as “he was called upon,” for anyone who is called by his name, for example by another person whom he is passing, is certainly also called upon. The most interesting thing, though, is that this calling of Jehovah by name begins only among the second race; the first (designated by Adam and Seth) knows nothing of him. For the first race, who knew only one principle, no uncertainty could have arisen about the truth, oneness, and eternity of the god with whom they were filled; in him they worshipped, with simple heart, if I may thus express it, \textsuperscript{[147]} the absolutely-eternal and unique. The necessity of distinguishing this god as such and designating him with a specific name could only have arisen when he threatened to disappear, to become a relative god, because of the advent of the second. Then there was need to call by name the truly (that is to say not transiently but abidingly) eternal which they worshipped in that god, just as we might call out to someone who is threatening to disappear from our view.\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{cxcvi}} This was their way of rising from the relatively-One to the absolutely-One really worshipped therein. The usual view, which ascribes to the first men complete knowledge and worship of the true god as \textit{such}, we should thus consider all the more as refuted, and refuted in fact by the Mosaic account itself, in that this same account, in another respect as well, marks out the second race of men, beginning with Enos, as another race, essentially distinct from the first.

This occurs, in fact, in the remarkable genealogy of the human race, drawn from Adam down to Noah, which is found in the fifth chapter of Genesis. Indeed this genealogy displays another remarkable feature, namely that it knows nothing of Cain and Abel, just as also in the subsequent histories there is no further mention

\textsuperscript{80} For the linguistic usage refer to Isa. 43:1; it is not \textit{כְּשִׁמִּית קִרְאתָּ יְהוָה} but only \textit{כְּשִׁמִּית קִרְאתָּ יְהוָה}. 

of either of them (in 1 Chr. 1:1 too Adam is directly followed by Seth); but we cannot go into this now, as it is not part of our purpose; what belongs here is the following: that the above-mentioned genealogy, which, partly by going back to the creation of man, and partly by the special preamble “this is the book of the generation of man”,\textsuperscript{CXCVII} is marked out as beginning right at the beginning and as the most authentically documented—that this says of Adam “He lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son after his image, and called his name Seth.”\textsuperscript{CXCVIII} But Seth, as is then further related, “lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos.” What is strange here is: Firstly, that Enos, as the genealogy has it, was no longer begotten like Seth after the image of the first man (for otherwise the addition in the case of Seth would contain a wholly unnecessary assurance). Seth still bears \textsuperscript{[148]} the image of the first man; Enos no longer. Secondly, that the name, “Enos,” of this grandson of the first man, means nothing other than simply “man” again, like “Adam,” only with the secondary concept of a strength already weakened and afflicted; for the verb \textit{anas}, to which the Greek \textit{νόσος} is related, means “ail.” With Enos, thus, there actually begins a \textit{second} human race, a second because its progenitor is again called “man,” and because it is no longer the same as the first, descending directly from Adam. The question can now be raised of the way in which this second human race represented by Enos differed from the first, descending directly from Adam, the man without secondary concept; of the way in which, relative to that first race, it was as it were the ailing and weak one. Now if, in responding to this question, we accept what was deduced earlier from the other passage in Genesis, then the following will emerge of its own accord and in an unforced way. In Seth the human race was still strong and vigorous, for it was driven by only one principle; the one god, the first, still dwelt in it; but the second race is ailing and weak, for the second god had already drawn near to it, the god who weakens that first one, destroys his power and strength; for everything which is governed by one principle is strong and healthy, whereas that governed by two is already weak and ailing.

The overall outcome is thus that according to the account in Genesis itself the true god was recognized and known \textit{as such} only by a second race of men, and indeed by a race which in comparison to the first was already affected, thus subject to another potence, foreign to the first race. This foreign potence can only be our second
god (B), whose acquaintance we have made as the prime effective cause of polytheism. With that it would at the same time be demonstrated that true monotheism does not come into existence unless the danger of polytheism is present, and that that merely relatively-One god is the precondition just as much for the coming into existence of monotheism as for that of polytheism. Since we have made some reference to the meaning of the name (Enos), we could, going further, at the same time find in this name the hallmark of the god himself by whom the second race of men was affected. For the most probable etymology of the name “Dionysos,” under which the second god was celebrated by the Hellenes, remains that of an Arabic word (and among the Arabs, as we shall see in the sequel, the second god was first given a name) which in Arabic means “lord” and like the Hebrew baal is combined with many other words, plus Enos, man, and indeed man with that secondary concept of already afflicted strength. I could, I say, mention that too, if it were possible to explain this combination further here; but let us content ourselves with the single observation that in the great course of evolution which we are portraying, even subjects which are most remote from each other, like the Old Testament and Hellenism, or revelation and mythology, are far more relevant to each other than those people think who have become accustomed to an entirely abstract way of looking at things (Hellenic mythology for example), in isolation from the general context.

We have had to acknowledge a first race of men signified by Adam and Seth, and a second signified by Enos. Only with the latter do there come intimations of the second god, whose traces we shall now pursue further, and indeed in the history chronicled by revelation itself.

The next great turning point is the Flood, and after this comes the confusion of languages, the separation of societies, and unambiguous polytheism. But the Flood itself, now, is introduced in the Mosaic record by the following account: “when men began to multiply on the face of the earth,” then “the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them as wives,” whence arose the “giants” and the “mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” In this passage, which has long provided so much employment for commentators, there is such a clear reference to actual mythological circumstances that this account, too, cannot be anything made up, but only a reminiscence from the actual
history of mythology, just as, indeed, an equivalent memory is also found in the mythologies of other societies. [150] It is related how the sons of the god (in Hebrew the article marks him out as the god who alone is god), how, thus, those in whom dwells the first god, absolute for his own era, cast glances at the daughters of men; but what can be understood by men, here, as opposed to sons of the God, other than adherents of the god through whom men really first become men and decline from that undeviating power and strength of the primal era—thus it is related how those in whom the strong god of the primal time still lives incline towards the daughters of men, towards the adherents, that is to say, of the second god, unite with them, and generate that intermediate race which we meet also in Greek mythology under the name of Giants, where they are likewise in the middle between the god of the primal era and the more human gods, the anthropomorphic polytheism of a later era, and oppose this evolution into the human (for the god of the primal era is still, in the sense intended here, superhuman), bring it to a halt. In precisely this way Genesis here has that intermediate race coming into existence, a race which, because it stands between two eras, and the continuing process is unstoppable, cannot endure, but is destined for the annihilation which now ensues as a result of the universal Flood. This fragment of such wholly characteristic colour guarantees precisely because of that colour the authenticity of its content, and the fact that it actually derives from prehistoric tradition. Something of the kind could simply no longer have been invented in later times. This high-mythological colouring greatly distinguishes the fragment from the account of the Flood which now follows, where already everything is presented more in accordance with the later Mosaic standpoint. Yet in this account too the true reason for the Flood may be discerned. What leads God to bring the ruinous Flood over the Earth is that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth.” But here it is not wicked or evil thoughts in the usual (moral) sense which are referred to; this is shown by the particular expression used: God says that the “imagination” or fiction (figmentum) of the thoughts of man’s heart is evil. The same turn of phrase appears elsewhere, [151] and always in a context which leaves no doubt about its meaning. In the address to Moses, when the latter’s time has come to die, Jehovah says: “Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Isræl: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me among them.
For I shall bring them into the land which I sware unto their fathers . . . and when “they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them and break my covenant which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land”. At King David’s final royal assembly he says to Solomon: “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the composition of all thoughts (the imagination of all thoughts): if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever”. Similarly King David, after he has completed the arrangements for the building of the temple, says in his final prayer: “O Lord, God of our fathers, keep for ever such intention and thoughts in the heart (such imagination of the thoughts in the inner nature) of thy people so that they might serve you with upright heart”. In accordance with linguistic usage these words therefore have religious significance. The “imagination of the thoughts” inclining more and more towards the bad is understood to mean the polytheistic presentiments becoming ever stronger.

[152] If Moses finds grace in the eyes of the true god, that is to say if the latter is revealed to him, then that is simply because he is a steadfast man and without change, as Luther aptly translates, who, that is to say, did not, in his own times, incline to the second god. Due to those presentiments, therefore, the universal Flood is brought upon the earth. But what, now, is the outcome? That they disappear and are eradicated, perhaps? By no means. Instead God sees in the end that the imagination and endeavours of

---

81 Deu. 31:19-21.
82 1. Chr. 28:9. In other ways too the books of the Chronicle prefer to return to the most ancient phraseology where religious matters are concerned.
83 ibid. 29:18.
84 In his commentary on Ge. 6:2, J. D. Michælis says: “Hitherto the human race had been divided into two major parts: the better part, who believed in one god, named themselves ‘sons of God,’ after the true god; the rest, who were languishing not in superstition, since we find no trace of that before the Flood, but in entire unbelief, Moses calls ‘sons of men.’” However the missing clue was, as shown, already to be found in Ge. 4:26, where the Chaldaic translator and the oldest Jewish commentators, who after all had no interest in having multitheism begin so early, had also found it, albeit by way of an incorrect interpretation.
85 This last is expressly stated in Ge. 7:1.
man’s heart are evil “from his youth”86 (simple expression to express a natural and ungovernable tendency), and in stating that he will in future no longer wish for this reason (due to these thoughts) to eradicate life on earth, he himself admits that the human race cannot be held back from the shift to polytheism. In the Mosaic portrayal too, then, the Flood is, in the end, or in accordance with its true outcome, simply the borderline between the two eras, the era of the still superhumanly strong race and that of the race now become entirely human and turned towards human things, but for that very reason also succumbing to polytheism.

Let us compare the Mosaic account with the equivalent traditions in other societies. If one looks at which deities each of these associates with the devastating Flood, then it is invariably later deities. One of those traditions names Cronus, who already in Greek mythology replaced the original god Uranus, as the god in whose time the Flood took place. But in the Syrian Hierapolis, not far from the Euphrates, there was according to Lucian’s well-known detailed account a temple, where was shown the maw into which the waters of the Flood had drawn back: this temple was consecrated to Derceto;87 but this Syrian goddess is simply the first female deity, worshipped under many names, by whose agency, as we shall see in the sequel, the transition from the first to the second god, to true multitheism, that is to say, is everywhere brought about. Thus anyone who considers this and knows, as well, the role water plays in all transitions from one ruling principle to a second, to which the first subjugates itself, not merely in the history of the Earth but also in mythology (in Babylon too Oannes, teaching the human law, emerges from the Euphrates), will however, if he has any experience in such investigations elsewhere, recognize in Noah’s Flood, even if, what is more, he admits it to have been a physical event, simply the sign in Nature of the great turning point of mythology, which was later followed by the unpreventable transition itself, the confusion of languages, multitheism together with the various theologies, and the separation of humanity into societies and nations, to all of which must have been conjoined the beginnings and germs from the time before the Flood, if in the first

86 Ge. 8:21, cf. 6:5.
87 The references may be found together in a summarized form in Rosenmüller’s Old and New East, part I, p. 23. (Also in Stolberg’s History of the Religion of Jesus Christ, part I, p. 394).
88 Compare Eichhorn in the Repertory of Biblical and Eastern Literature, V, p. 216.
centuries thereafter the Near East was to be thickly populated with people no longer merely nomadic, but united into nations, and if already in the time of Abraham there was to arise a kingdom in Babylon, mercantile Phoenicians on the Mediterranean coast, a monarchical state in Egypt with all the appropriate appurtenances, and everywhere mythologies developed to a greater or lesser degree.

A second indication of this significance of the Flood, as transition to the irresistibly advancing power of the second god, is contained in another feature of the Mosaic account, when it describes Noah as becoming a husbandman after the Flood, and planting the first vine. The meaning of this will become clear from the following. The way of life of the most ancient men before any multitheism was the nomadic one. Not to sow seeds, not to plant vines, remained a religion even for the last remnants of this most ancient race. This is shown by the example of the Rechabites, of whom the prophet Jeremiah speaks, whom he holds up to his people as an example of constancy, of holding fast to the paternal religion, and before whom, in one of the chapels of the temple in Jerusalem, according to his account, he places a cup of wine, whereupon they answer: “We will drink no wine: for our father Jonadab the son of Rechab commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.”—You see: to build houses, that is to say to live in fixed domiciles, to sow seeds, and plant vines, is here regarded as forbidden it from the earliest times by a tribe which does not belong among the Isrælites, but, at the time when Nebuchadnezzar came up into the land, drifted towards Jerusalem ahead of the host of the Chaldeans and Syrians, and remained there. “We drink no wine, neither we nor our fathers, our sons, nor our daughters; nor build houses in which we have dwelt: neither have we vineyard, nor field: but we dwell in tents”; and to abstain from all of that which the Greek mythology pre-eminently celebrates as a gift and favour from the second god, was for them truly religion. Thus the incredible longevity of such tribes; for in Niebuhr’s day, at least, there existed still, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, a tribe living nomadically, having remained entirely faithful to this law, in all probability the descendants of those

89 Ge. 9:20.
90 Jer. 35.
Rechabites. Diodorus of Sicily relates in respect of the Catathars, an Arabian tribe, the same thing I quoted of the Rechabites: that they do not sow seeds, do not plant vines, nor live in houses. So when, after the Flood, Noah becomes a husbandman and plants the first vine, he is by that very action designated as the progenitor of a new race of men, who no longer live in tents, but establish fixed domiciles, engage in agriculture, and become societies, but also for that very reason were to succumb to polytheism as an unavoidable transition which could no longer be held in check.

The conclusion we may draw from the facts set out thus far is the following: only with the second race of men, designated by the name “Enos,” is the true god, that is to say the abidingly One and eternal, distinguished as such, distinguished from the primal god, who becomes for consciousness the relatively-One and merely transiently eternal; in the meantime the fruit of polytheism ripens, the human race cannot remain bound to the first god, who, while not the false, is nevertheless not the absolutely true god either—not God in his truth, that is, and they must therefore be liberated from this first god so as to achieve the worship of God in his truth. But they can only be liberated from him by a second god. To that extent polytheism is inevitable, and the crisis through which it now gains entry, and with which a new series of developments begins, is in fact the Flood; from that point on, also, there no longer exists the differentiation and worship of the true god, which began with Enos, nor revelation either (which can indeed only be revelation of the true god), within humanity in general, for this as such has disappeared and become fragmented, no more than does this (revelation) exist (I ask you to mark this well) among one society—for everything which goes under the name “society” has already succumbed to polytheism—the knowledge of the true god exists in one single race, which remained apart from societies. For humanity did not split up merely into societies, but into societies and non-societies, although admittedly the latter are also no longer quite what the still completely homogeneous humanity was, just as, when milk curdles, the uncurdled part is also no longer milk. That very “not to have become partialized” becomes their peculiarity, just as the universal god to whom they cling has now certainly become their god. After individual societies as such have separated out, then for those left behind the attraction of the purely natural relationships is increased,
of the tribal relationships which only here receive their isolating force, while the consciousness of them had, earlier, more the meaning of preserving the unity [156] of every race with the whole, with the totality of humanity. The true religion, as well as revelation, will thus be found neither in humanity nor within one society, but in a race which remained aloof from the path of societies and believes itself still to be bound to the god of the primal era. This race is that of the Israëlite, descended via Shem from Noah, which stands opposed to societies in general, with which (with the concept of societies), the secondary concept of adherents of other gods has for them become inextricably associated. This is not at all the literal meaning; for where the word “heathen” stands in our translations, there are found, in the Hebrew, words which mean nothing other than “societies” or “nations,” for even between the two words “ammim” and “goyim” there is no distinction in this respect, as many imagine who know that the Jews of today call all non-Jewish societies, thus the Christians too in particular, “goyim.” The Old-Hebraic writers do not make this distinction, indeed they occasionally call their own nation (and Israel did indeed itself later become a nation) a “got” in the same way. This association of the two concepts of polytheism and nationhood, on which until now we have touched only in passing, but which I would now assert to be the final and decisive confirmation of our viewpoint that polytheism was the instrument of the separation of nations, has been imprinted so deeply in this race ever since the earliest times, that they, themselves long since become a nation, call the adherents of false gods simply and without qualification “nations,” a linguistic usage that is carried on into the New Testament, which in fact also calls the heathens simply “the nations” (ἔθνη). Among the kings whom Abraham with his servants attacks and defeats, there is, besides others designated by the names of their land or of their nation, one mentioned by name, but only as a “king of nations,” that is to say as a heathen king in general.91 The Israëlites thus regarded themselves as not belonging among the nations, as a non-nation, and this is precisely what the name [157] “Hebrews” expresses, as well. Where Abraham contends with the kings of the nations, he is called for the first time Haibri (the Ibri) in contrast to them. Later too, except

91 Ge. 14:1. There is no reason to take Goyim itself as the name of a nation, the Goyites, of whom otherwise nothing at all is known, and every other contrived explanation would be equally uncalled-for; the appellative interpretation is fully supported by the viewpoint above.
perhaps in the poetic style, the name *Hebrews* was invariably given to the Isrælites only in contrast to the nations.²⁹ The name must therefore, it seems, have expressed also their differentiation from the nations. Genesis even includes in the list of generations an “Eber,” from whom it subsequently has Abraham descending in the sixth generation. Today, though, we are certain that this Eber in fact owes his origin to the Hebrews in the same way that Dorus and Ion owe theirs, in the Greek legendary history, to the Dorians and Ionians. Yet in the same genealogy names of countries are turned into names of persons, it is in fact stated that the sons of Ham, for example, were Chus (Ethiopia) and Mizraim (Egypt), and again it is said of Canaan that “he begat Sidon (the name of the familiar city) his firstborn.” A superstitious reverence for the letter would be misplaced here. The name “Hebrew” cannot be traced back to the chance existence of a Eber among their forefathers, for this derivation expresses an antithesis to nations as little as does the “having come across the Euphrates.”²³ The name has the form of a name of a nation or society; for once societies exist, then the Isrælites too become what amounts to a society, a society in a relative way, that is, without it being so for themselves; but a concept congruent with the constant use of the name as an antithesis to societies arises only if it is derived from the corresponding verb, which means not merely to pass over (over a river), but also to pass through a place or a district, to pass in general.³³ “Abraham the Ibri” means, therefore, Abraham who belongs among those passing through, tied to no fixed domicile, living nomadically, just as in Canaan too the patriarch is always called the stranger,³⁴ for he who tarries nowhere is everywhere only a stranger, a wanderer.³⁵ The devotion to the one universal god is so entirely bound up with this way of life, that it is said of Jacob, in contrast to Esau, who becomes a hunter and a farmer,

³³ Ge. 12:6, where it is used of Abraham himself; 37:28, then 2 Ki. 4:8, 9 etc.
³⁴ Ge. 17:8, 35:27, 37:1. The promises of Jehovah to give him and his seed after him, for an everlasting possession, the land wherein he is a stranger, achieve thereby a more definite meaning.
³⁵ Compare Ge. 47:9.—The only one of the explanations of the name “Hebrew” stated above which might be given preference would be that of choice, which, based on the fact that עֲרָבָה, for which a plural, עֲרָבוֹת (Jer. 5:6, 2 Ki. 25:5), also appears, means desert, gives rise to the fertile suggestion that *Ibrim* (Hebrew), *Arabim* (Arab), and *Aramim* (Aramæan) are mere variations, indeed intelligible in an analogous way, of the same name. Nothing in the subject under discussion, what is more, would be changed.
that “he was an upright\textsuperscript{CCXXIII} (literally a whole, undivided) man (who
remained with the One) and dwelt in tents”,\textsuperscript{96} and when Isræl, which
until then had always had the god of its fathers as sole shepherd
and king, desires a king from Samuel, “as all the nations have”,\textsuperscript{97}
then God says to the prophet “According to all the works which they
have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even
unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other
gods, so do they also unto thee.”\textsuperscript{98}

It may seem strange, but it may be excused by the importance
which this transition of humanity to societies has for our whole
investigation, if I offer an example of the antithesis (between society
and non-society) which I believe I have found still in a very recent
era. For I at least can only consider the Alemanni, who at the time of
Caracalla appeared at the Roman borders like a suddenly provoked
and ever-waxing swarm and descended upon Gaul and Italy, to have
been, according to all accounts, sparse though they may be,\textsuperscript{99} CCXXIV
a part of Germanic humanity which had not yet been defined as a
society, and which also for that reason appeared so late on the world
stage. The name is consistent with this, whether one thinks in this
connection of the word \textit{alamanas}, which in some fragments of the
Gothic \textsuperscript{1159} translation of the \textit{New Testament} seems to mean merely
“men in general, without distinction”—if one gives the \textit{ala}\textsuperscript{100} CCXXV
this basically negatory meaning, then the Alemanni\textsuperscript{CCXXVI} would be a
nameless race (not yet become a society), for that same reason not
yet confined within definite borders (in this case Marcomani would
be considered to be the opposite)—or whether one simply recalls
\textit{almende}, a piece of ground which is left waste (unbuilt on), and
mostly used as pasture, not the property of an individual, but of the
whole community. A decided aversion of the Alemanni towards an
existence of a social kind is evidenced by their undoubted
inclination, even later still deeply rooted, towards free individual life,
their detestation of cities, which they regard as graves in which
people bury themselves alive,\textsuperscript{101} CCXXVII and their destructive rage
directed against the Roman settlements. Now against that, if the
patronymic explanation of the name of the Germans (\textit{Deutschen}) as

\textsuperscript{96} Ge. 25:27.
\textsuperscript{97} 1 Sa. 8:5.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{ibid.} v. 8.
\textsuperscript{99} See Gibbon’s \textit{History} c. X.
\textsuperscript{100} J. Grimm sees it as an intensifying prefix. \textit{Götting. Gelehrte Anzeigen} 1835, p. 1105.
\textsuperscript{101} Ammian. Marcell. L. XVI, c. 2.
Teut’scher (offspring of Teut) really must be given up, and Thiod does after all mean “nation,” then the Germans (Thiod’schen) would be precisely those Germani who have already particularized or isolated themselves as a society, just as in the words theotiscus and theotisce customary since the seventh century the reference to “society” still seems to stand out. It would be well worth the effort to investigate all the names under which Germanic societies or tribes are referred to, and from the standpoint of this antithesis, as well. This distinction would, perhaps, be no less useful in resolving the contradictions found in references to German theology, for example between Julius Cæsar and Tacitus.

So now, in the history of religious evolution, as it is itself recorded in the Mosaic documents, on which alone, after all, rests everything which can be asserted about revelation, we have advanced to the point where the knowledge of the true god is preserved still only among one race which has remained apart from the societies, indeed in opposition to them, and to that extent is the sole remaining representative of pure humanity. [160] It is, as well, in this same race alone, now, that revelation exists, and it is precisely in this race that the preconditions for a revelation may be recognized so clearly and distinctly that we must unavoidably once again direct our attention to the Isrælites in particular, in order fully to answer the question with which this last investigation began. The question arose, as you know, from the consideration of whether revelation preceded polytheism. Approaching the investigation of mythology in the way that we have, its revelation could not have been ruled out. Absolutely nothing more can be understood in isolation or disconnectedly, everything becomes comprehensible only in the grand universal context, and this is true of revelation itself just as much as of mythology. Now it follows from what has been established up to now that the first race of men worshipped the true god implicite, in the relatively-One, that is, but without distinguishing him as such. But revelation is precisely manifestation of the true god as such, manifestation for which there was no receptivity in the first race of men, simply because they had no need of this distinction. It is said of the second race that they called the true god by name, that is to say distinguished him as such: so here the possibility of a revelation is afforded, but not before the first presentiment of polytheism was also present. The most prominent figure is Noah, with whom the true god communicates; but it is
precisely in his time, too, that polytheism can no longer be restrained, and the Flood itself is only the transition, from the age of multitheism still held back, to that of multitheism surging forth uncontrollably and pouring over the human race. In the race now ensuing, among whom monotheism in the true sense, knowledge of the true god and thus revelation, was preserved, must now also be perceived in the clearest possible way the conditions under which alone such a relationship to the true god could have continued to exist. You have followed the arguments up to this point with so much interest, that I have high hopes of the same for the conclusion, which alone will lead to the satisfactory achievement of our goal.

[161] Now, therefore, in regard to monotheism and the relationship to the true god, with whose glory the head of Abraham is surrounded not only in the Old Testament, but in the legends of the entire Orient (they unite in calling him the friend of God)—and a subsequent fiction could never have produced this correspondence between the traditions—I wish first and foremost to draw attention to the constancy with which Genesis says of Jehovah, but never, to my knowledge, of the Elohim, that he appeared\textsuperscript{102} to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; this in itself presupposes that he was not the immediate content of their consciousness, as those think who propose revelation as the one and only first principle of explanation. No less noteworthy is the way the patriarchs at significant moments call Jehovah by name,\textsuperscript{103} as one calls someone whom one wishes to detain, or who should show himself. If Jehovah is only called and only shows himself, then the immediate content of their consciousness can only be the god who in the Mosaic scriptures is called Elohim. Here is the place for us to provide an explanation of this name. A plural in grammatical form, the verb which follows it too is occasionally in the plural—not, as some believe, due to merely mechanical adaptation to the form; for a closer investigation of the passages shows that the plural form of the verb is written only in specific cases, and thus not randomly, for if it is, in the account of the Babylonian tower for instance, Jehovah who speaks, saying “Let us go down, and there confound their language,” then the reason is clear, for God must replicate himself in order to fragment humanity.

\textsuperscript{102} Ge. 12:7, 17:1, 18:1, 26:2, 28:12. But Chapter 35? Here Elohim appears, but only in order to summon up the memory of the god who “appeared” (v. 1) and to confirm the blessing of the latter (v. 11).

\textsuperscript{103} Ge. 12:8, 13:4, 21:33, 26:25.
Similarly in the creation story, where Elohim alone speaks, saying “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” for the absolutely One god as such is without image. When Abraham says that the gods have caused him to wander from his father’s house, to go, that is to say, into the desert, to choose the nomadic life, then, because the word “Elohim” is not coupled here, as it is elsewhere, with the article, actual gods can be understood (Abraham fled from the idolatry becoming increasingly influential in the house of his father), and the other passages, where Jehovah orders him to flee, would not be inconsistent with this, since the two can be in existence together. But when, in a passage like the one already quoted, the god explicitly named “Jehovah Elohim” says “Behold, Adam is become as one of us,” when this god, thus, himself distinguishes, and contrasts with the others, one god within himself, then certainly a plurality must be understood. Nor may the plural form of the name, or the construction with the plural of the verb, be explained as the remnant of an earlier polytheism, as many have thought. But certainly it may be explained from the fact that God as Jehovah is indeed always One, but as Elohim is that god who is still exposed to the solicitations of multiplicity, and in addition actually does become, for the consciousness otherwise clinging to the oneness, a multiplicity which is just always suppressed. It is not an older polytheism which intrudes here, but the later one, to the presentiments of which even Abraham, for instance, was not immune. But now, apart from this plural meaning which appears from time to time, there can no longer be any doubt that “Elohim” had, like many other plurals, a singular meaning, and is a plural not of multiplicity but of magnitude (pluralis magnitudinis, qui unam sed magnam rem indicat), which is used whenever something has to be expressed which is large, powerful, or astonishing of its kind. But that universal god, the god beside whom, in his time, there was no other, indisputably had the first claim to a name so expressive of astonishment. Indeed the name itself expresses only astonishment, since it derives from a verb which has precisely this meaning in Arabic (obstupuit, attonitus fuit). Thus in

104 Ge. 20:13.
105 cf. e.g. 35:7.
106 Ge. 12:1, 24:7.
“Elohim” the original Semitic name of the primal god has indeed indubitably been preserved for us, which is consistent with the fact that here, in contrast to other cases, the singular (Eloah) is formed from the plural, as may be seen from the fact that this singular only appears in later books of the Old Testament, mostly just in the poetical ones. Since in Genesis, and to some extent in the following books still, the names “Elohim” and “Jehovah” alternate, attempts have been made to base on that the hypothesis that Genesis in particular might have been put together from sources of two kinds; one was called the “Elohim” source, and the other the “Jehovah.” But it is easy to satisfy oneself that in the narratives the names do not change randomly, but are used to draw an intentional distinction, and that the use of the one or the other has its reason in the subject matter, and is not determined by a merely external or chance circumstance. At times, specifically in the story of the Fall, both names are conjoined, but only when the narrator speaks, not the woman or the serpent; Adam too, had he been given a speaking part, would have said only “Elohim,” for the first man still knew nothing of Jehovah. The Elohim is the god whom the nations too, the heathens, still feared, and who also comes in a dream to Abimelech, the king of Gerar, and to Laban the Syrian. The dream seems to be the natural mode of operation of the god who is already beginning to succumb to the past. Abraham prays to the natural god, constantly present simply because natural, to Elohim, for the restoration to health of Abimelech the king of Gerar. Since here the literal word is used for “pray,” it is evident from that that the “calling Jehovah by name” does not amount to “praying.” In reference to Abraham himself it is the Elohim, and indeed quite specifically so, as is clearly seen when the passage is read in context, who ordains for him the circumcision which was a religious custom as old as time, common also among a section of the nations, and a tribute brought to the primal god. It is the Elohim, the universal god, by whom, and for whom, Abraham is tempted to slay his son as a burnt offering in the manner of the heathens, but Jehovah manifesting himself who restrains him from the execution. For

108 Ge. 20:11.
110 Ge. 20:17.
111 Ge. 17:9; from 1-8 Jehovah was speaking. That this is no accident is evident from 21:4, where the commandment is simply mentioned again, and yet it reads “as Elohim had commanded him.”
because Jehovah can only become manifest, very frequently “the angel,” that is to say the manifestation of Jehovah, is written in place of “Jehovah,” even in later scriptures.\textsuperscript{112}

The original human race had, in the relatively-One and eternal, in fact really understood the true, the essentially-One and eternal. Only the advent of the second god brings consciousness to the point where it distinguishes the essentially-eternal, which in the merely accidentally-eternal had been the true, the genuine god—where it distinguishes the essentially-eternal from that which was so only for one era. Here must be assumed that it was still open, even to those who took the path of polytheism, to turn to the essentially-eternal, which had been the true god within the other (the accidentally-eternal), to turn, thus, to the true god. Up to here the path of the human race is the same; only at this point does it divide. Without the second god—without the solicitation to polytheism, there would also have existed no advance to genuine monotheism. The same potence which becomes the immediate cause of multitheism in one part of humanity, elevates a chosen race to the true religion. Abraham, after the god whom even the primal era already worshipped, although unknowingly, in the relatively-One—after this god has appeared to him, that is to say has become revealed and distinguishable, turns to the god voluntarily and consciously. For him this god is not the original god, he is the god who has come to be for him, manifested himself, but he had no more invented this god than found him through thought; \textsuperscript{165} all he does here is hold fast to the god who has been seen by him (been revealed to him); but as he holds fast to the god, the latter also leads him on, and enters into a special relationship with him, through which he is set wholly apart from the societies. Because there is no knowledge of the true god without distinguishing him, \textit{that} is why the name is so important.\textsuperscript{CCXXXV} The worshippers of the true god are those who know his \textit{name}; the heathens, who do not know his \textit{name}, they\textsuperscript{CCXXXVI} are not totally (not, that is, also in respect of substance) ignorant of the god, they simply do not know his name, that is to say they do not know him as distinct. Yet Abraham cannot, after he has seen the true god, as it were break loose from the precondition of that god. The immediate content of his consciousness remains for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} The principal passage naturally Ge. 22:11. The angel of Jehovah not distinguished from Jehovah himself Judg. 6:12, cf. 14, 16, 22. Where Jehovah and the angel of Jehovah are, there, naturally, is also the Elohim, \textit{ibid.} 13:21 cf. with 22.
\end{itemize}
him the god of the primal era, who did not *come to be* for him, and thus also was not revealed, and who—we are obliged to put it this way—is his *natural* god. In order that the true god might become manifest to him, the basis must remain for the manifestation of the first god, in whom alone can that true god constantly come to be for him. The true god is mediated for him by the natural god not just transiently, but constantly, for him the true god is never the *existing* god, but constantly only the god *coming to be*, which in itself would suffice to explain the name “Jehovah,” in which that same concept of coming to be is pre-eminently expressed. Abraham’s religion does not therefore consist in his abandoning that god of the primal time, and becoming untrue to him, in fact it is the heathens who do that; the true god himself was revealed to Abraham only in that god of the primal time, and is thus indivisible from him, indivisible from the god *who always was*, the *El Olam*, as he is called.

This expression is usually translated as “the eternal god”; but one would be wrong to take that as referring to metaphysical eternity. Quite literally the word *olam* designates the time before which humankind know of no time, the time in which they *find* themselves in the way that they find themselves, the time which did not *come to be* for them, and which in this sense is admittedly an eternity. The prophet calls the Chaldeans a nation *me olam*, a society which has existed since the time in which there existed no societies. Thus Luther [166] translates it correctly as “which has been the most ancient nation”; *olam* is the time when there existed no societies. In the same sense the fragment mentioned earlier, about the heroes and mighty men of prehistory, says that they were renowned *me olam*, that is to say from the time which preceded the coming into existence of societies. Joshua says to the children of Israel, “Your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates *me olam*, from the time that is to say, when there were not yet any societies, thus ever since societies existed. The first historical era, the first era which is known, finds them there. The *El Olam* is thus the god who existed not *since*, but already in, that time when societies did not yet exist, the god prior to whom there was none, of whose coming into existence thus no one knows, the absolutely primal god, the god from *time immemorial*. Contrasted with the *El Olam* are the

---

113 Jer. 5:15.
114 Jos. 24:2.
Elohim Chadaschim, the new gods “that came newly up,” who have only just come into existence.\(^{115}\) And so for Abraham too the true god is not eternal in the metaphysical sense, but as the god in whom no beginning is known.

Just as the true god is for him the same as the El Olam, similarly this true god is the same as the god of heaven and earth; for as such was once worshipped the god common to the whole human race. For Abraham, Jehovah is not a materially different god from this one, for him he is simply the true god of heaven and earth. When he has his eldest servant swear that he will take no wife for him from the children of the heathens,\(^{116}\) he says “Swear to me by Jehovah, the God of heaven and of the earth.”\(^{117}\) This god is for him thus still common to the whole ancient human race. A figure who belongs to this same race is that Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of El Elioun the highest god, who appears again under this name in the fragments of Sanchuniathon,\(^{118}\) the god who, as it is said, possesses heaven and earth. Everything about this figure emerging from the obscurity of prehistory is remarkable, even the names, his own as much as the name of the land or locality of which he is called king. The words sedek, saddik do indeed also mean “justice” and “just,” but the original meaning, as may still be seen from the Arabic, is steadfastness, immobility. Melchizedek is thus the immoveable one, that is to say, he who remains immovably with the One.\(^{119}\) The same thing is contained in the name “Salem,” which is used elsewhere when it has to be said that a man is or walks wholly, that is to say undividedly, with Elohim.\(^{120}\) It is the same word from which “Islam” and “Moslem” are formed. “Islam” means nothing other than the complete, that is to say the whole, the undivided religion; “Moslem” is that which is wholly devoted to the One. Even that which is quite recent is understood only if one has understood what is most ancient. Those who deny the monotheism of Abraham, or consider his whole story to be a romance, have certainly never reflected on the consequences of Islam, consequences of such a frightful kind, issuing from a part of humanity which had remained thousands of years in evolution behind the part which it conquered and laid waste before it, that

---

\(^{115}\) Deu. 32:17.

\(^{116}\) Ge. 24:3.

\(^{117}\) Clearly saddik in Ge. 6:9 is also to be understood in this sense.

\(^{118}\) Ge. 5:22, 6:9.
they are only explicable by way of the immense power of a past
which, re-emerging in what has come to be and taken shape in the
interval, intrudes destructively and devastatingly. Mohammed’s doctrine of oneness could never have produced this
catastrophic effect if it had not persisted since primæval times in
these children of Hagar, who had been passed by without a trace by
the whole period from their patriarch until Mohammed. But with
Christianity there came into being a religion which no longer merely
excluded polytheism as it had been excluded by Judaism. It was
precisely there, at this stage in the evolution, where the rigid, one-
sided oneness had been entirely overcome, that the old primal
religion had to come forth once again—blindly and fanatically, as it
was bound to have appeared, set off against the much more
advanced times. The reaction was not merely towards the idolatry
embraced in Mohammed’s time to some extent even among a section
of the Arabs who had not abandoned the nomadic life, but far more
towards the apparent multiðeism of Christianity, to which
Mohammed opposed the rigid immobile god of the primal time.
Everything here hangs together; Mohammed’s law even forbade wine
to his followers, just as the Rechabites rejected it.

So Abraham subordinates himself to this king of Salem and priest
of the highest god, for Jehovah is himself only an appearance
stemming from that highest, primal god. Abraham submits to him
by giving him tithes of all. A younger but pious era always reveres
the older one, as being closer to the source, so to speak. Melchizedek
came from that race which depended simply, without doubt and
without making any distinction, on the primal god, and
unknowingly worshipped in him the true god, in contrast to which
race Abraham is already in the situation of being to some extent less
pure; for he has not remained free from the temptations which came
in the wake of the societies, although he has withstood them and
has saved from them the true god distinguished and known as such.
In comparison, Melchizedek offers Abraham bread and wine, the
symbols of the new era; for while Abraham did not become unfaithful
to the old bond with the primal god, he would at least have had to
distance himself from him, so as to distinguish the true god as such;
in contradistinction to the most ancient race, he shares the
distancing with the societies, who forsook that bond entirely and
entered into another, whose offerings they consider bread and wine
to be.
For Abraham, Jehovah is simply the primal god in his true enduring essence. To that extent this god is also for him the El Olam, god of the primal time, the god of heaven and earth,\(^\text{119}\) he is also, for him, the El Shaddai: this is his third attribute. The form in itself points to the highest antiquity; shaddai is an archaistic plural, another plural of magnitude. The basic concept of the word is strength, power, which is indeed no less the basic concept in the likewise very ancient word \[^{169}\text{el}\] (distinguished from “Elohim” and “Eloah”). “El Shaddai” could be translated as “the strength of the strong,” but shaddai does also stand alone, and seems thus to be associated with el merely through apposition, so that the two together mean “the god who is the power and strength exalted above everything.” Now Jehovah says to Abraham “I am the El Shaddai.”\(^\text{120}\) Here “El Shaddai” has the function of the explanatory predicate, and in contrast to Jehovah the status of what was previously known, thus also of what went before. Now in the second book of Moses\(^\text{121}\) there is a famous passage of great historical importance, where on the contrary the Elohim says to Moses “I am Jehovah,” where Jehovah, thus, is presupposed as the god already better known, and “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob—beel shaddai,” in the El Shaddai.\(^\text{CCXLVIII}\) So here we have the explicit evidence that the El Shaddai, that is to say the god of the primal time, was the medium of revelation, or of manifestation, of the true god, Jehovah. Our own view of the first revelation could not have been expressed more clearly than it is here, set in the mouth of Jehovah himself. Jehovah did not appear to Abraham directly; as a consequence of the spirituality of his concept he cannot appear directly, he appeared to Abraham in the El Shaddai.\(^\text{122}\) But now in the second clause there appear the words “and in or under my name Jehovah was I not known to them (the fathers).” It is principally these words from which people wished to conclude that the name “Jehovah” was, in accordance with Moses’ own submission, not ancient, but was first taught by him; if one regards the books of


\(^{120}\) Ge. 17:1.

\(^{121}\) Ex. 6:2 f.

\(^{122}\) If, which in any case there is no reason to do, one wished to explain the נ in בְאֵל as the familiar נ predicate (see Storri’s Obss. p. 454), although it could be construed in this way with difficulty, then it would amount to the same thing, it would be like saying “I appeared to them as El Shaddai.”
Moses from beginning to end as not having been written by him himself, then one could, indeed, take this name right down to the period of David and Solomon. But it is at least possible that the words mentioned are not intended to say\([170]\) what people would like to find in them. The ground rule of the Hebraic style is known to be parallelism, where, that is, there are always two successive clauses which say the same thing in different words, but mostly in such a way that what is affirmed in the first section is expressed in the second through denial of the contrary, for example “I am the Lord, and there is none other beside me,” or “the honour is mine, and I shall allow it to none other.”\[CCXLIX\] Now if here the first clause says “I appeared to the fathers \(in\) the El Shaddai,” then the second, “and in my name Jehovah was I not known to them,” can only be repeating the same thing in a negative way; it can only be saying “\(Directly\) (this simply means: in my name Jehovah), without the mediation of the El Shaddai, they knew nothing of me.” The “\(bischmi\)” (in my name) is just another way of writing “in my own nature.” In the El Shaddai have they seen me, in my \(own\) nature have they not seen me. The second clause thus only confirms the first; and certainly a later and higher phase of consciousness, which knows Jehovah also independently of the El Shaddai—a consciousness such as we have to ascribe to Moses for other reasons too, is indicated by the words. But a proof of the alleged later origin of the name, through which the principal content of Genesis itself would be lost, is not to be found, not in the passage in question, at least.

Everything I have said up to this point shows what kind of monotheism Abraham’s was, in fact that it was not an absolutely unmythological monotheism, for it had as its precondition the god who is just as much the precondition of polytheism, and for Abraham the manifestation of the true god is so closely bound up with this other god that Jehovah manifesting himself regards obedience to the inspirations of the other god as obedience to himself.\[123\] The monotheism of Abraham is not a totally unmythological one, I said just now: for it has as its precondition the relatively-One, which is itself only the first potence of polytheism. The reason it is the \(way\) in which the true god becomes manifest, is because the manifestation cannot break away from \([171]\) its precondition—even this is a wholly mythological precondition,\[CCL\]

that is to say one of a kind in which the polytheistic always intervenes. People have been inclined to judge as sinful the idea of treating all the accounts, especially that in Genesis, as myths, but they are at the very least evidently mythical; they are not, it is true, myths in the sense in which the word is usually understood, that is to say fables, on the contrary, it is actual facts which are recounted, although mythological facts: subject, that is to say, to the conditions of mythology.

This dependence on the relatively-One god is a limitation which must also be felt as such, and which consciousness strives to surmount. But it cannot eliminate it for the present, it will therefore overcome this limitation only to the extent that it recognizes the true god as the god indeed now merely appearing, but at the same time as the god who at some time shall be. Seen from this side, the religion of Abraham is pure authentic monotheism, but this is for him not the religion of the present—in the present his monotheism is subject to the restriction of mythology—certainly, though, it is for him the religion of the future; the true god is the one who shall be, that is his name. When Moses asks under which name he should proclaim the god who will lead the people out of Egypt, this god answers “I shall be the I shall be”;124 CCLI here, thus, where the god speaks in his own person, the name is translated from the third person into the first, and it would be quite inadmissible to find here too the expression of the metaphysical eternity or immutability of God. It is true that the correct pronunciation of the name “Jehovah” is unknown to us, but grammatically it cannot be other than an archaistic future of haua, or in the later form hayah = exist; the current pronunciation could never be the correct one, because since very ancient times the vowels of a second word (“Adonai”), which means “Lord,” have been set below the name which in fact may not be uttered, which is also the reason why, already in the Greek translation and in all later ones, “the Lord” is written instead of [172] “Jehovah.” With the true vowels the name could be read “Yiveh” (likewise very ancient), or analogously with other forms of proper names (like “Jacob”CCLI), “ Yahvo,” the former consistent with the “Yevo” in the fragments of Sanchuniathon, the latter with the Yao (lāw) in Diodorus of Sicily and in the well-known fragment in Macrobius. CCLIII

124 Ex. 3:14.
We earlier explained the name “Jehovah” as the name of the one who is coming to be—perhaps this was its initial meaning, but according to that explanation it is, in the case of Moses, the name of the future one, of the one who is now only coming to be, who will one day exist, and all his pledges too concern the future. Promises are all that Abraham is given. It is promised to him, who is now no nation, that he “shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him,” for in him lay the future of that monotheism through which one day all the societies presently scattered and separated are to be reunited.\textsuperscript{125} It may well be convenient, and in the interest of the spiritual laziness which is often promoted as rational enlightenment, to see in all these promises just fanciful notions born of the later Jewish national pride. But where, in the whole history of the Abrahamic race, is there a point of time in which such a promise, in the accepted sense of political greatness, could have been thought up? Just as Abraham has to believe in this promised greatness of his people, so also does he believe in the future religion, which will do away with the principle under which he is constrained, and this belief is even accounted to him as consummate religion.\textsuperscript{126} In respect to this future religion Abraham is termed, right at the start, a \textit{prophet},\textsuperscript{127} for he still stands outside the law under which his descendants will be constrained even more firmly, and so sees beyond it, just as the later so-called prophets saw beyond it.\textsuperscript{128} CCLIV

\[173\] If in fact the religion of the patriarchs is not free from the precondition which allows the true god only to appear as such, not to exist, then the law given through Moses is even more closely tied to this precondition. The content of the Mosaic law is indeed the oneness of God, but is certainly just as much the fact that this god should be only a mediated god.

\textsuperscript{125} Ge. 18:18, 19, 26:4.
\textsuperscript{126} Ge. 15:6. Abraham “\textit{believed} in the Lord; and he counted it to him for \textit{righteousness}.”
\textsuperscript{127} Ge. 20:7.
\textsuperscript{128} All the thoughts in the \textit{Old Testament} are directed towards the future in this way, so that the pious narrator in Ge. 4:1 already sets a prophecy in the mouth of Eve (what is more by way of a far-fetched explanation of the name “Cain,” which according to the same etymology permits of a much more likely one): “I have gotten the man the Jehovah.” With the continuance of the human race, which is guaranteed by the first male birth, the true god too, whom they do not yet possess, is assured to humanity.—I would quarrel with no one who was inclined to see actual words of Eve in the speech; as long as he then also admitted it to be historically proved that the true god was for the first men only a future god.
According to some passages which cannot really be understood in
any other way, a direct relationship was vouchsafed to the lawgiver,
who in that capacity stands to a certain extent apart from the people;
with him the Lord speaks “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his
friend,”129 he saw the Lord “as he is,”130 CCLV and a “prophet like him,
with whom the Lord spoke as with him, will arise no more”,131 CCLVI
but on the people the law is imposed like a yoke. To the extent that,
as mythology advances, relative monotheism is already contending
with unambiguous polytheism, and the dispensation of Cronus now
extends over the nations, then, even for the nation of the true god,
the relative god, in whom it has to preserve for itself the basis of the
absolute god, must become ever more strict, more exclusive, and
more jealous of his oneness. This character of exclusiveness, of the
strictest negative uniqueness, can only derive from the relatively-
One; for the true, the absolute god is not, in this exclusive way, One,
and, as that which excludes nothing, is also threatened by nothing.
The Mosaic religious law is nothing other than relative monotheism,
in the only form in which it could still have been preserved and
asserted as real in one particular era in opposition
[174] to the
heathenism encroaching on all sides.132 That principle, moreover,
had to be preserved not for its own sake, but in fact simply as a
basis, and thus the Mosaic religious law too is pregnant with the
future, towards which, mutely like an image, it points the way. The
heathenish quality, by which it is evidently pervaded, has only a
temporary significance, and will be eliminated simultaneously with
heathenism itself. But while, obedient to necessity, it primarily only
seeks to preserve the basis for the future, the true principle of the
future is implanted in prophetism, the other, complementary aspect
of Hebrew religious law, and just as essential to it and characteristic.
But in the prophets the expectation of, and the hope for, the future
liberating religion no longer breaks out merely in isolated utterances,

129 Ex. 33:11.
130 Nu. 12:8.
131 Deu. 34:10.
132 To think it possible that superstitious customs such as are prescribed by the Mosaic
ceremonial law could still perhaps have come into being in times such as those of David or his
successors, presupposes a lack of knowledge of the general course of religious evolution which
forty years ago could have been excused; for in those days it was still pardonable to hold the view
that a phenomenon like the Mosaic law could be evaluated outside the grand and universal
context. Today, though, it is not an unreasonable requirement that everyone should first take
steps to acquire a higher education, before venturing to speak out about topics of such high
antiquity.
it is the principal goal and content of their speeches, and no longer is this the religion merely of Israël, but of all nations; the feeling of negation under which the prophets themselves suffer gives them an equivalent feeling for the whole of humanity, and even among heathendom they begin to see the future.

It has thus now been proved from the most ancient document, from the very scripture accepted as revealed, that humanity did not begin with pure or absolute monotheism, but with relative. I shall now add a few general remarks about this most ancient condition of the human race, a condition which is significant for us not merely as a religious one, but also in the general context.
OVER the era of the still *united* and *undivided* human race there reigned, thus—we may now state it as a fact, and revelation too has confirmed it—a spiritual power, the god who held off the free disintegration, and kept the evolution of the human race at the first stage, the stage where its existence contained mere *natural* or tribal differences, and was otherwise *completely homogeneous*, CCLVII a condition which would indeed also be the only one justly to be called the *state of Nature*. And assuredly, this same era was also the celebrated *Golden Age*, the recollection of which has remained with the human race, even with that part long since separated into societies and at the furthest remove from it, the age when, that is, as the Platonic account stemming from the same memory says, God himself was their protector and guardian, and when, because he nurtured them, there were no forms of civil government. For just as the shepherd does not allow his flock to stray, in the same way did God, acting as a mighty attractive force, hold humanity, with gentle but irresistible strength, enclosed in the sphere in which it was meet for him to keep them. Note well the Platonic expression, that *God himself* was their guardian. At that time, therefore, God had as yet been imparted to man through no *doctrine*, nor any science; the relationship was a *real* one, and hence could [176] only have been a relationship to God *in his actuality*, not to God in his essence, and thus not to the *true* god either; for the actual god is not at once the true god as well, just as we do indeed still grant, even to someone whom we regard in other respects as a godless person, a relationship to God in his actuality, but not to God in his truth, from whom he is, on the contrary, completely estranged. The god of the primæval time is an actual real god, and a god in whom, also, the true god *exists*, but is not known as *such*. So humanity worshipped *that which it did not know*, to which it had no ideal (free) relationship, but only a real one. Christ says to the Samaritans (as is known, these were regarded by the Jews as heathens, so actually he is saying it about the heathens) “*Ye worship ye know not what: we*”—

---

133 Θεὸς εὐεμεν αὐτοὺς ἐπιστατῶν· νέμοντος δὲ ἐκείνου πολιτείαι τε οὐκ ἦσαν. Polit. p. 271. E.
the Jews, as monotheists, who have a relationship to the true god as such—“we know what we worship”\textsuperscript{CCLI\text{IX}} (know at least as something of the future). The true god, the god as such, can only exist in the act of knowing, and in direct contradiction to a well-known and little considered saying,\textsuperscript{CCLI\text{X}} but in agreement with the words of Christ, we are obliged to say that the god who was not known would be no god. Monotheism has always existed only as doctrine and science, and not even just as doctrine in general, but drawn up in written form and preserved in holy books, and even those who make knowledge of the true god a precondition of mythology are required to think of this monotheism as a doctrine, indeed as a system. Those who worship the true god, thus God in his truth, can only worship him, as Christ says, in spirit, at the same time, and this relationship can only be a free one, just as on the other hand the relationship to God apart from his truth, of the kind that is espoused in polytheism and in mythology, can only be an unfree one.

Once man had fallen from the essential relationship to God,\textsuperscript{134} which could only have been, what is more, a relationship to God in his essential being, that is to say \textsuperscript{[177]} in his truth, then the path which humanity travelled in mythology was no accidental one, but necessary if humanity was destined to reach the goal by that path alone. But the goal is the one willed by providence. Seen from this standpoint, it was divine providence itself which gave the human race that relatively-One as first lord and protector; humanity was directed towards the latter and as it were taken in hand by him. The god of the primæval time himself is for the chosen people only the bridle or rein, to which they are held by the true god. Their knowledge of the true god is no \textit{natural} one, nor for that very reason a stationary one, but always just knowledge which is coming to be, because the true god himself is for consciousness not the existing god, but always just the god who is coming to be, who precisely as such is also called the living god, forever just the god who appears, who must always be called to and captured as an appearance is captured. The knowledge of the true god remains, thus, always a \textit{demand}, a commandment,\textsuperscript{CCL\text{XI}} and even the later nation of Israël must always be entreated and exhorted to love their god Jehovah,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{134} See p. 141.
\end{flushleft}
that is to say to hold fast to him with *whole* heart, with *whole* soul, and with all their might,\textsuperscript{CCLXII} because the true god is not the one natural to their consciousness, but must be held fast by a continual explicit act. Because God never becomes an existing god for them, the most ancient condition is the condition of a trusting humility and anticipation, and it is with reason that Abraham is called, not just by the Jews, but also by other Orientals, "the father of all believers," for he believes in the god who does not exist, but will exist. They all anticipate a future salvation. The patriarch Jacob interrupts the benediction with which he is blessing his children, with the words: "Jehovah, I await your salvation."\textsuperscript{CCLXIII} To understand this correctly, we must go back to the meaning of the corresponding verb, which is "to lead from confinement into the open," thus, taken in a passive sense, "to escape from confinement," hence "to be saved." Accordingly, they all anticipate that they will be led out of this confinement in which they have been kept until now, and become free from the precondition (of the \textsuperscript{178} one-sided monotheism), which God himself cannot now remove, which is imposed upon them, in common with the whole human race, like the *law*, the necessity, until the day of atonement, when the true god ceases to be the god who merely appears, the god merely revealing himself, and thus revelation itself ceases, as happened in Christ, for Christ is the *end* of revelation.

We have no fears of having devoted too much time to the great fact that even the god of the earliest human race was already no longer the absolutely-One, but only the relatively-One, even if not yet explained and recognized as such, and that thus the human race began from relative monotheism. To establish this fact from all sides appeared necessarily of the greatest importance for us, not merely in opposition to those who think they can understand mythology and polytheism only by way of a corrupted revelation, but also in opposition to so-called "philosophers of history," who let all religious evolution in humanity stem not from oneness, but from the *multiplicity* of thoroughly partial, indeed even initially *local*, ideas, from so-called fetishism or shamanism, or from a deification of Nature which deifies not even *concepts* or *genera*, but *individual* natural objects, for example this particular tree or this particular river. No, humanity did not rise from such squalor, the majestic
course of history had quite another beginning, the keynote in the consciousness of humanity always remained that great One, who still did not know his like, who actually filled heaven and earth, that is to say, everything. Of course, those who make the deification of Nature, which they have found among wretched hordes, degenerate tribes, never among nations, into the first thing in the human race—compared with those, the others who allow monotheism, in whatever sense, were it even that of a revealed monotheism, to precede mythology, are on an incalculably higher level. In the meantime the relationship between mythology and revelation has proved to be historically quite different. We have been obliged to see for ourselves that revelation, that the monotheism which is historically demonstrable in some section of humanity, was brought about by precisely that which also brought about polytheism, that thus, far from it being possible to make the one a precondition of the other, the precondition is common to both. And it seems to me that even the adherents of the hypothesis of revelation can in the end only rejoice at this result.

Any revelation could only have been directed, after all, towards an actual consciousness; but in the first actual consciousness we find already the relatively-One, which, as we have seen, is the first potence of a successive polytheism, thus already the first potence of mythology itself. This potence, though, could not itself have been established by revelation; hence revelation must find it as a precondition independent of itself; and did it not even have need of such a precondition in order to be revelation? Revelation exists only where something which obfuscates is broken through, it thus presupposes an obfuscation, something which has come between consciousness and the god who is to reveal himself.

The postulated corruption, too, of the original content of a revelation would be conceivable only over the course of time and history; but the precondition of mythology, the beginning of polytheism, is in existence, just as humanity is in existence, so early, that it is not explicable by any corruption.

If men like Gerhard Voss, mentioned earlier, explained individual myths as corrupted incidents from the Old Testament, then it may certainly be presumed that there they were concerned, in fact, simply with the explanation of these individual myths, and that they
were far from considering themselves to have thereby also
discovered the foundation of heathenism itself.

The use of the concept of revelation for every explanation which
encounters difficulties with other approaches, is on the one hand a
poor proof of particular reverence for this concept, which lies too
deep for us to be able to get to grips with it, to make use of it, as
directly as many imagine; on the other hand it amounts to giving up
any attempt to understand, if one tries to explain something not
understood, by way of something else no better, or even less well,
understood. For as familiar as the word is to many among us, is
there, however, anyone who, when he utters it, actually has something in his mind. Explain, one might say, anything you like by
way of a revelation, but first explain to us what this itself is, make
intelligible for us the specific process, the fact, the event, which you
must surely think of in the concept.

The genuine advocates of a revelation have always restricted it to
one particular era, thus they have explained the state of
consciousness, which makes it accessible to a revelation (obnoxium
reddit), CCLXV as a transient one, just as the apostles of the last and
most complete revelation proclaimed that one of its effects was also
the elimination of all exceptional phenomena and states, and
without these an actual revelation is unthinkable.

For Christian theologians it should have been of prime importance
to have preserved revelation in this independence of any particular
state which would have to be a precondition for it, so that for them it
did not become dissolved, as has long ago occurred, into a merely
general and rational relationship, and was retained, rather, in its
strict historicity. Revelation, if such a thing is postulated,
presupposes a specific exceptional state of consciousness. Every
theory which deals with revelation would have to establish the
existence of such a state, independent of it. But there may, now, be
no fact which sheds light on such an exceptional state except
mythology itself, and hence it is far more likely that mythology
would be the precondition of a scientific understanding of revelation,
rather than the reverse, that mythology could be derived from a
revelation.

From the scientific standpoint we cannot set the hypothesis of
revelation higher than any other hypothesis which makes mythology
dependent on a merely fortuitous fact. For a revelation postulated without concept, and it cannot be postulated otherwise with the insights and scientific means available until now, should be considered to be nothing but a purely fortuitous fact.

It could be objected that relative monotheism, from which we consider all mythology to stem, might also be a fact hitherto not understood. But the difference is, that the hypothesis of revelation is put forward as a final one, which cuts off any further regress, while we have no intention of concluding with that fact, but now at once regard it, being historically established and secured, from this side, as we may assume, against any challenge, as the point of departure for a new analysis.

Accordingly, first of all the following reflection will serve as the transition to a further analysis. That One, who does not yet know his like, and who is, for primal humanity, the absolutely-One, behaves, nonetheless, as the merely relatively-One who does not yet have, but still can have, another apart from himself, and can have, in fact, such another as will relieve him of his exclusive existence. So with him then the foundation for successive polytheism is in fact already laid; he is, even if not yet known as such, yet in accordance with his nature, the first member of a future succession of gods, of a genuine multitheism. From this—and this is now the next necessary conclusion—follows the consequence that we know absolutely no historical beginning for polytheism, even taking historical time in the widest sense. In the strict sense, historical time begins with the completed separation of societies. But the completed separation is preceded by the era of the crisis of societies; this, as transition to the historical era, is to that extent genuinely prehistoric, but to the extent that even in it something does after all go on and come to pass, it is only prehistoric in respect to historical time in the strictest sense of the words—but in itself also historical, in fact—thus it is the prehistoric era or the historical only in a relative way. Against that, the era of the calm, still unshattered unity of the human race—this will be the absolutely prehistoric era. Now consciousness in this era, however, is already wholly filled by that unqualified-One, who will in the sequel become the first god of successive polytheism. To that extent we know of no historical beginning for polytheism. One might, it is true, perhaps think that it
would not be necessary for the whole [182] prehistoric era to have been filled by that god, that indeed even in this era there might be contemplated an even earlier time, when man still communed directly with the true god, and a later time, when he first came under the influence of the relatively-One. If one wished to raise this objection, it would be advisable to note the following. With the mere concept of absolutely prehistoric time, any before and after which one might think of within it itself, is eliminated. For if it were still possible, even in it, for something to occur—and the assumed transition from the true god to the relatively-One would in fact be an occurrence—then it would simply not be the absolutely prehistoric time, but would itself belong to historical time. If there were not one principle in it, but a succession of principles, then it would be a succession of actually distinct times, and thus it itself would be a part or section of historical time. Absolutely prehistoric time is the time indivisible of its own nature, absolutely identical, and hence, whatever duration might be ascribed to it, it is still only to be regarded as a moment, that is to say as a time in which the end is like the beginning and the beginning like the end, a kind of eternity, because it itself is not a succession of times, but just one time, which is not in itself an actual time, that is to say a succession of times, but becomes time (namely the past) only relatively to the time following it. Now if that is how it is, and the absolutely prehistoric time allows no further distinction of times within itself, then that consciousness in humanity, a consciousness for which the relatively-One god is still the absolutely-One, is the first actual consciousness in humanity, the consciousness before which they themselves know of no other consciousness in which they exist in the way that they exist, the consciousness to which in respect of time no other may be supposed prior; and it follows, therefore, that we know no historical beginning to polytheism, for in the first actual consciousness it is indeed not yet present actually (for no initial term suffices, in itself, to form an actual succession), but all the same present potentia.

What might seem remarkable here, in what is otherwise such a wholly divergent approach, is the agreement with David Hume, who first declared, “As far back as we go in history, [183] we find multitheism.” In that, then, we fully concur with him, even if
the imprecision and even the inaccuracies of his exposition lead us to regret that the preconceived opinions of the philosopher here allowed the industriousness and accuracy of the historical researcher to appear dispensable. Hume starts out from the completely abstract concept of polytheism, without thinking it worth the trouble to go into its real nature and its various types, and now investigates, in accordance with this abstract concept, how polytheism can have come into existence. Here Hume has supplied the first example of that unspeakable kind of rationalism which was later (only without Hume’s wit, spirit, and philosophical acumen) so often applied to historical problems, where, that is, without having regard for what is still actually ascertainable historically, people try to imagine how the thing could have taken place, and then boldly assert that it actually did take place in that way.

Especially typical of his era is the way that Hume completely sets aside the Old Testament, just as if, simply because it is regarded by Jews and Christians as holy scripture, it would lose all historical value, or as if these scriptures ceased, because they are principally used only by theologians and for dogmatic ends, to be a source for the knowledge of the most ancient religious ideas, a source with which, for purity as for age, none is comparable, and whose preservation is itself, so to speak, a miracle. The Old Testament in particular has served to show us in what sense multitheism is as old as history. Not in the sense of a Humean polytheism, but in the sense that with the first actual consciousness the first elements of a

---

135 For comparison some passages from his work might be quoted here. “’Tis a matter of fact uncontestable, that about 1700 years ago all mankind were idolaters. The doubtful and sceptical principles of a few philosophers, or the theism, and that too not entirely pure, of one or two nations, form no objection worth regarding.” (With that Hume seems to wish to set aside the fact of the Old Testament religion or specifically only of Mosaic religion, instead of using this itself as proof of the priority of polytheism.) “Behold then the clear testimony of history. The farther we mount up into antiquity, the more do we find mankind plunged into idolatry.” (Now this, at any rate, even disregarding the word idolatry, which in no way has the same meaning as polytheism, is saying too much, and does not accord with history.) “No marks, no symptoms” (?) “of any more perfect religion. The most antient records of human race still present us with polytheism as the popular and established system. The north, the south, the east, the west, give their unanimous testimony to the same fact. What can be opposed to so full an evidence?

As far as writing or history reaches, mankind, in antient times, appear universally to have been polytheists. Shall we assert, that, in more antient times, before the knowledge of letters, or the discovery of any art or science, men entertained the principles of pure theism? That is, while they were ignorant and barbarous, they discovered truth: But fell into error, as soon as they acquired learning and politeness.”—Natural History of Religion. p. 26.
successive polytheism were also already introduced. But this, now, still no more than the fact, which may not remain unexplained. That it must be explained, means: even this consciousness which is already mythological *potentia* can only be one which has *come to be*, but as we have just seen, not one which has come to be *historically*. The process through which that consciousness, which we find already in the absolutely prehistoric time, came to be, can thus only be a *suprahistorical* process. Just as earlier we advanced from the historical into the relatively-prehistoric, then into the absolutely-prehistoric, so here do we see ourselves obliged to go on from that last into the suprahistorical, and just as earlier from the individual to the society, and from the society to humanity, so now from humanity to *the original man himself*, for in the suprahistorical only he may still be contemplated. But we find ourselves obliged also by another necessary consideration to go on at once into the suprahistorical, by a question which until now had been held back only because the time for its discussion had not yet come.

We have seen humanity, in its own estimation, as old as time in its relationship to the relatively-One. But now, apart from both true monotheism and the merely relative kind, which is monotheism only because it still harbours its opposite—apart from both of these there is a third possibility: consciousness could have had no relationship of any kind to God, not to the true god, nor to the god who has to exclude another. So for the fact, then, that it has a relationship to God *at all*: for that fact the basis can lie no longer in the first actual consciousness, it can only lie beyond that. But beyond the first actual consciousness nothing more is conceivable but man, or consciousness in its pure substance prior to all actual consciousness, where man is not consciousness of *himself* (for this, without a process of *becoming* conscious, that is to say without an *actus*, would be inconceivable), and thus, since he must, after all, be consciousness of *something*, can only be consciousness of God, not a consciousness associated with an *actus*, thus with an act of knowing or willing, for example, and thus can only be purely substantial consciousness of God. Original man is that which establishes God not *actus*, but *natura sua*, and indeed—since God considered merely in general is only an abstract term, but just the relatively-One already belongs to the actual consciousness—
there remains for the primal consciousness nothing but that it is that which establishes God in his truth and absolute unity. And so admittedly then, if it is permissible at all to apply to such an essential establishing of God an expression which properly designates a scientific concept, or if we wish to understand in monotheism no more than just the establishing of the true god in general, the final precondition of mythology would be—monotheism; but, as you certainly now see, firstly a suprahistorical monotheism, and secondly not a monotheism of the human understanding, but of human nature, because man in his original essence has no other meaning than to be god-establishing Nature, because in origin he exists only in order to be this god-establishing essence, thus not Nature existing for itself, but Nature turned towards God, enraptured, as it were, in God; for I like in every case to use the most appropriate and characteristic expressions, and I have no fear that here it will be said, for instance, that that is an extravagant doctrine; for it is indeed not a question of what man is now, nor even only of what he can be, now that there lies, between his original existence and his present existence, the whole great eventful course of history. Certainly the doctrine which might maintain that man exists now only in order to be that which establishes God would be extravagant; this doctrine of the direct establishing of God by man would be extravagant if one wished to make this, now that man has taken the great step forward into actuality, the exclusive rule of his present life, as has happened with the contemplatives, the yogis of India or the Persian Sufis, who, inwardly torn by the contradictions of their religion, or tired altogether of existence and of imagination, both subject to becoming, wish to make their way, practically, back to that immersion in God, thus like the mystics of all times to find only the way backwards, but not forwards into free knowledge.

It is a question which must be raised not merely in an investigation of mythology, but in any history of humanity, how human consciousness could from the beginning, indeed before all else, have been occupied with ideas of a religious nature, could have been, indeed, entirely taken up by such. But what happens in so many cases like this, that by putting the question wrongly the answer itself is made impossible, has happened here too. The question was: “How does consciousness arrive at God?” But
consciousness does not arrive at God; its first movement leads away, as we have seen, from the true god; in the first actual consciousness there only remains one phase of him (for thus can we already regard the relatively-One, even provisionally), no longer he himself; so since consciousness, as soon as it leaves its original state, as soon as it moves, departs from God, all that remains is that this state was designed into it originally, or that consciousness had God in itself, in itself in the sense that one says of a man that he has a virtue in him, or more often a vice, by which one means to say precisely that it is not objective for him himself, not something that he would want, indeed not even something about which he would know. [187] Man (meaning still the original essential man) is, in himself and as it were before himself, that is to say before he is in possession of himself; before, therefore, he has become something else—for he is already something else if, returning to himself, he has become an object for himself—man, as soon as he simply exists and has as yet become nothing, he is consciousness of God; he does not possess this consciousness, he is it, and in fact just in the absence of act, in the absence of movement, is he that which establishes the true god. CCLXXIII

We have spoken of a monotheism of the primal consciousness, of which was observed that it 1) would be no accidental monotheism, having somehow come to be for consciousness, because it was inherent in the substance of consciousness, that it 2) is for that very reason not a monotheism to be regarded as a historical precondition, which was imparted to man or the human race and which he later lost. Since it is a monotheism established with the nature of man, it did not come to be in man only over a period of time, it exists for him eternally, CCLXXV because it came to be with his nature; 3) and we shall also have to admit that this monotheism of the primal consciousness is not one which knows itself, that it is only a natural, blind monotheism, which has yet to become known. If, now, in consequence of this definition, someone were to go on to argue that in a blind monotheism there could be no question of a differentiation, no question of consciousness (that is to say of formal consciousness) as such of the true god, CCLXXVI then we can fully concede this; and furthermore if it is said that resting as it does on an absorption of the human essence in the divine, it would suffice to designate that
consciousness as a natural or essential theism, then we shall not quarrel with that either, especially since it is necessary, in the proper separation of the concepts and their designations, to introduce theism as that which is common to, and that which precedes in common, (genuine) monotheism and polytheism, their indifference, their equal possibility, and our intention can indeed be no other but to allow polytheism just as much as monotheism to issue from the primal consciousness. To the question of which came first, polytheism or monotheism, we shall in a certain sense reply: neither [188] of them. Not polytheism; of that it goes without saying that it is nothing original, everyone admits this, for everyone tries to explain it. Nor, though, as we have already stated, may a polytheism, which actually is this, be explained by way of an original atheism in consciousness. So surely then monotheism would be what was original? But not this either, not, that is, according to the concepts which the advocates of its priority associate with the word, in that they either mean thereby abstract monotheism, which only excludes its opposite, from which thus polytheism could never have come into existence, or formal monotheism, based, that is to say, on actual knowledge and differentiation. So if we are to retain the word, then it is in fact only possible by replying along these lines: monotheism certainly, but a monotheism which both is and is not this; is, at this point, that is, and as long as consciousness does not stir; is not, is not such, that is, that it could not have become polytheism. Or still more precisely, so as to guard against misunderstanding: monotheism certainly, but monotheism which still knows nothing of its opposite, which thus also does not know itself as monotheism, and which neither has, by excluding its opposite, already turned itself into abstract monotheism, nor is, by having overcome it and containing it within itself as defeated, already actual monotheism, knowing itself and in possession of itself. But now we certainly see that the monotheism which, towards polytheism, just as much as towards the future formal monotheism, based on actual knowledge, behaves only as the common possibility or material, is itself merely material monotheism, and this cannot be distinguished from simple theism, if that theism is understood not in the abstract contemporary sense, but in the one established by us, where it is precisely the equal possibility of both.
This then should suffice to explain the sense in which we assume, as prior to mythology, either monotheism or theism: 1) not a formal sense, in which the true god as such is distinguished; 2) not an abstract sense, which simply excludes polytheism; for on the contrary it still in fact contains polytheism within itself. But from here on, now, [189] our whole investigation has to take another turn. So let me in conclusion once again summarizes, from a general point of view, what has just been said.

Our examination, as it gained a wider perspective, led us finally to the first actual consciousness of humanity, but in this already, in the consciousness beyond which they know nothing, there is God with a qualification; we find as the content of this consciousness, at least as immediate content, no longer the pure godlike self, but God in a particular form of existence, we find him as god of power, of strength, as El Shaddai, which the Hebrews called him, as the god of heaven and earth. Nonetheless the content of this consciousness is God in general, and indeed is (indisputably) of necessity: God. This necessity must derive from an earlier phase; but further back beyond the first actual consciousness nothing more can be contemplated but consciousness in its pure substance; this is that which establishes God, not with knowledge and will, but according to its nature, essentially, and such that it is nothing else, nothing beyond that—and as itself merely essential, it can also only have a relationship to God in his essence, that is to say in his pure self. But now it may immediately be understood, additionally, that this essential relationship should be thought of as no more than a moment, that man cannot tarry in this existence apart from himself, that he must strive to leave that state of immersion in God, so as to transform it into a knowledge of God, and thereby into a free relationship. But he can only achieve such a relationship by stages. If his original relationship is destroyed, his relationship to God is not thereby altogether destroyed, for it is an eternal and indestructible one. Himself become actual, man succumbs to God in his actuality. Now if we assume—in consequence of that which is admittedly not yet understood philosophically, but has been factually demonstrated by our explanation of successive polytheism—if we assume that God in accordance with his forms of existence is just as much Several, as is he in accordance with his
godlike self or essence *One*, then it may be understood on what the successive element in polytheism is based, and at what it is directed. None of these forms is in itself equivalent to God, but if, in consciousness, they become a unity, then this unity which has come to be is also, in that it has *come to be*, a monotheism known, attained with consciousness.

True monotheism, associated with the act of knowing, is found even historically only as result. Directly, however, consciousness will not succumb to the plurality of forms succeeding each other, alternating in consciousness, thus it will not succumb directly to unambiguous polytheism. With the first form the succeeding ones, and thus polytheism, will be given as yet merely *potentia*; this is that phase recognized by us historically, when consciousness wholly and undividedly belongs to the relatively-One, which is not yet in contradiction with the absolutely-One, but for consciousness is *equivalent* to it. In that phase, we said, humanity still worshipped, although unknowingly, the One. The unambiguous polytheism now succeeding is only the path towards the liberation from the one-sided strength of that One, only the transition to the relationship which has to be regained. In polytheism nothing is brought about through the agency of an act of knowing; on the other hand monotheism, which, if it is knowledge of the true god as such and distinguished from others, can only be *result*, not what is original—monotheism expresses the relationship to God which man can have only in the act of knowing, only as a *free* relationship. When Christ has liberation (σωτηρία) coming from the Jews, in the same context where he proclaims the worship of God in spirit and in truth as the future universal worship, the context shows that this liberation is, in Christ’s sense, the liberation or redemption from precisely that which humanity worshipped without *knowing* it, and elevation to that which is *known*, and which may *only* be known. God in his truth can only be known; to God in his bare actuality a blind relationship is possible as well.

The meaning of this last argument is that only in this way *can* mythology be understood. For that reason, though, it is not yet *actually* understood. In the meantime we have also been freed from

---

136 Jn. 4:23-4.
the final accidental precondition—of a monotheism which historically preceded mythology, a monotheism which, because it could not have been, for humanity, one it invented itself, could only have been a revealed one; and because this precondition was, as well, the last of all which remained earlier, we are only now free of all accidental preconditions, and with that from all explanations which deserve to be called merely hypotheses. But where hypotheses and accidental preconditions cease, there begins science. Those accidental preconditions could only have been, in the nature of the subject, of a historical kind, but instead they have shown themselves, through our analysis, to be unhistorical ones; and apart from consciousness in its substance, and the initial movement indisputably to be regarded as natural, through which consciousness sustains that qualification by means of which it becomes subject to the mythological succession, no precondition is required. But these preconditions are no longer of a historical nature. The limit of the possible historical explanations was reached with the prehistoric consciousness of humanity, and all that was left was the path into the suprahistorical. The blind theism of the primal consciousness, from which we start out, may only be characterized as a suprahistorical theism, since it is established with the essence of man before any movement, thus also before any happening, and in the same way, that movement through which man, removed from the relationship with the divine self, succumbs to the actual god, may be thought of only as a suprahistorical event.

But now, with preconditions like this, the whole method of explaining mythology changes too; for we shall understandably not yet be able to go on to the explanation itself; but that method of explanation which is, after the preconditions just described, the only one possible, may already be perceived, even if only in a preliminary way.

First of all, then, it will become clear through the following observations how, with these preconditions, every merely accidental way of coming into being would be eliminated of its own accord.

[192] The foundation of mythology is already laid in the first actual consciousness, and polytheism, thus, already came into existence in essence with the transition to this. From this it follows that the act through which the foundation for polytheism is laid is not itself
within the actual consciousness, but lies outside this. The first actual consciousness is found already with this affection, through which it is separated from its eternal and essential existence. It can no longer go back to that, and it can as little go beyond this qualification as beyond itself. Hence this qualification has something incomprehensible for consciousness, it is the unwanted and unforeseen consequence of a movement which consciousness cannot reverse. The origin of the qualification lies in a region to which consciousness no longer has access, once it has been separated from it. That which has intruded, that which is accidental, is transformed into something necessary and immediately assumes the form of something which can now never be eliminated.

The alteration of consciousness consists in the absolutely-One god no longer dwelling in it, only the relatively-One. But this relative god is succeeded by the second not by chance, but in accordance with an objective necessity which we do indeed not yet understand, but are no less for that reason obliged to recognize as such (as objective) in advance. With that first qualification, thus, consciousness at the same time becomes subject to the necessary succession of representations by way of which genuine polytheism comes into existence. Once the first affection has been established, the movement of consciousness through these successive forms is one of a kind in which thought and will, reason and freedom, no longer play a part. Consciousness became caught up in this movement unawares, in a manner now no longer comprehensible to it itself. The movement behaves in respect to consciousness like its fate, like its doom, in the face of which it can do nothing. It is, for consciousness, a real force, that is to say a force now no longer under its control, which has taken it over. Prior to all thought, consciousness has already been captured by that principle, whose purely natural consequence is multitheism and mythology.

Therefore—admittedly not in the sense of a philosophy which has man beginning from animal obtuseness and meaninglessness, but certainly in the sense which the Greeks suggested in various very characteristic expressions like θεόπλεκτος, θεοβλαβής and so on, in the sense, thus, that consciousness is afflicted by the onesided-One and as it were struck down—anyway, the most ancient man is found in a condition of bondage (of which we living
under the law of an entirely different era can form for ourselves no
direct concept), struck down by a kind of *stupor* (*stupefacta quasi et
atonita* CCLXXXI) and seized by an alien power, rendered beside *himself*,
that is to say out of his own control.

The ideas through whose succession not only does formal
polytheism arise directly, but also, indirectly, material (simultaneous)
polytheism, are generated for consciousness *without its participation*,
indeed against its will, and—to state it in a definitive way, putting an
end to all earlier explanations which assume *invention* is somehow
involved in mythology, and in a way which is the first which really
gives us that which is independent of all invention, indeed *opposed to all invention*, and which we already had occasion to call for
earlier—mythology comes into existence through one **NECESSARY**
(as seen by consciousness) **PROCESS**, whose origin is lost in the
suprahistorical and hidden from its own self, a process which
consciousness, at odd moments, can perhaps resist, but which as a
whole it cannot arrest, still less reverse.

With this, accordingly, there would be put forward, as the general
concept of the way it comes into existence, the concept of the
process, which takes mythology, and with it our investigation, right
out of the sphere within which all of the explanations hitherto have
remained. With this concept is resolved the question of how the
mythological ideas were intended to be understood as they came
into existence. The question about *how* the mythological ideas were
intended to be understood, points to the difficulty or impossibility, in
which we find ourselves, of accepting that they were intended to be
understood as truth. Therefore what is then first attempted is to
interpret them extrinsically, that is to say, to assume a truth in
them, but a truth different from that which they directly [194]
express—what is attempted secondly is to see an original truth in
them, but one which has been *corrupted*. But according to the result
now reached the question can be raised, rather, of whether the
mythological ideas were *intended to be understood* at all, whether,
that is, they were the object of an expression of what is understood,
the object, that is to say, of a free act of holding something to be
true. CCLXXXII Here too, therefore, the question was put wrongly, it was
put subject to a presupposition which was itself incorrect. The
mythological ideas are neither invented nor freely assumed.—
Products of a process independent of thought and will, they possessed, for the consciousness subject to that process, unambiguous and irrefutable reality. Societies, like individuals, are only instruments of this process, of which they have no overall view, which they serve without understanding it. It is not in the power of societies to escape these ideas, to accept them or not to accept them; for they do not come to societies from outside, they exist in societies, without the societies being conscious of how; for they come from the inner nature of consciousness itself, to which they display themselves with a necessity which permits no doubt about their truth.

Once the idea of its coming into existence in such a way has been arrived at, then it is entirely understandable that mythology regarded in a merely material way seemed so enigmatic, while it is a known fact that other things too which are based on a spiritual process, on a characteristic inner experience, seem strange and incomprehensible to him who lacks this experience, whereas for him from whom the inner process is not concealed they have a wholly understandable and rational meaning. The main question in respect to mythology is the question of its meaning. But the meaning of mythology can only be the meaning of the process through which it comes into existence.

Were the personalities and events, which form the content of mythology, of such a kind that we could take them to be, in accordance with accepted concepts, possible objects of an immediate experience, were gods beings who could become manifest, then no one would ever have considered taking them in any sense other than the literal one. [195] The belief in the truth and objectivity of these representations, a belief which we would certainly have to ascribe to heathenism, lest it became itself a fable for us, would have been explained quite simply by an actual experience of that earlier humanity; it would have simply been assumed that these personalities, these events, had for it indeed existed and appeared in that way, thus had also been true for that humanity when understood entirely literally, in just the same way as the analogous appearances and encounters which are related of the Isrælites, and which for us in the circumstances of today are equally impossible, were true for them. But now, precisely this, which was earlier
unthinkable, has been made possible by the explanation now established; this explanation is the first which has an answer to the question of how it was possible for the societies of antiquity not only to give credence to those religious ideas, which seem to us thoroughly absurd and irrational, but also to offer up to them the most solemn, and in some cases cruel, sacrifices.

Because mythology is something which did not come into existence artificially, but naturally, indeed, subject to the precondition stated, with necessity, then in it content and form, substance and expression, may not be distinguished from each other. The ideas are not first present in another form, but come into being only in and thus also at the same time as this form. Such an organic development was called for by us earlier in these lectures, but the principle of the only process by which it could be explained had not been found.

Because consciousness chooses or invents neither the ideas themselves nor their expression, mythology, then, comes into being at once as such, and in no other sense but the one in which it is expressed. In consequence of the necessity with which the content of the ideas is generated, mythology has, right from the beginning, real and thus also doctrinal meaning; in consequence of the necessity with which the form, too, comes into existence, mythology is wholly literal, that is to say everything in it should be understood just as it is stated, not as if one thing were thought, and another said. Mythology is not allegorical, it is tautegorical. The gods,
for it, are beings actually existing, who do not exist as one thing, and mean another, but mean only that which they are. Earlier, literality and doctrinal meaning were set up in opposition to each other. But the two (literality and doctrinal meaning) may not, according to our explanation, be separated, and instead of relinquishing the literality for the sake of some doctrinal sense, or, like the poetical viewpoint, saving the literality, but at the cost of the doctrinal meaning, we are, on the contrary, in fact obliged by our explanation to maintain the all-encompassing unity and indivisibility of the meaning.

In order to demonstrate the principle of unqualified literality at once in practice, let us recall that in mythology two phases were distinguished: 1) the polytheistic; in respect to [197] this we shall therefore maintain, after discarding every extrinsic meaning, that it is actually about gods; what this means needs no further discussion after the earlier explanations. All that has been added since then is the ascertainment that the process giving rise to mythology already has its basis and its beginning in the first actual consciousness of humanity. From this it follows that the representations of gods could at no possible or presumed time have been left to that accidental emergence which is assumed in the usual hypotheses, and that in particular, for a presumed pre-mythological polytheism, as is presupposed, in part, by those explanations, there is just as little a time left over, as is there for the reflections on natural phenomena, out of which, for Heyne, Hermann, or Hume, mythology is supposed to have emerged, since the first actual consciousness was already in the nature of the thing a mythological one. That polytheism, a polytheism in name only, is supposed to be based on fortuitous representations of invisible all-powerful beings; but there was never, originally, a part of the human race which was in the position to arrive at representations of gods in such a way. This polytheism prior to mythology is thus a mere scholastic figment; it is, dare we say, historically proven that before the mythological polytheism there could have been no other, that there never was a polytheism other than a mythological one, that is to say one which is established by the process demonstrated by us, none, therefore, in which there

---

the subject permitted, he blithely serves up for his unhabituated compatriots, albeit with a certain irony, expressions such as subject-object and the like.
were not actual gods, none, that is to say, in which the final content would not have been God. But mythology is not merely polytheism in general, but 2) historical polytheism, to such an extent that a polytheism not (potentiā or actu) historical, could also not be called mythological. But with respect to this phase, too, we should keep a firm hold on the unqualified literality; the succession should be understood as an actual one. It is a movement to which consciousness is in fact subject, one which truly takes place. Even in the specific details of the succession, that this god, and no other, precedes or follows that god, there is not arbitrariness, but necessity, and even in respect of the particular circumstances of those events which are found in the [198] history of the gods, as strange as they may seem to us, there will always be shown to exist in consciousness the conditions out of which the representation of those circumstances naturally emerged. The castration of Uranus, the dethronement of Cronus, and the numerous other deeds and events in the history of the gods, need not be taken other than literally in order to acquire an intelligible and comprehensible meaning.

Nor would it be possible, as was attempted, certainly, with revelation, to distinguish, for instance, between doctrine and history, to regard the latter as a mere form of expression for the former. Doctrine does not exist apart from history, but in fact history itself is also doctrine, and conversely, the doctrinal element in mythology is contained precisely in its historical quality.

Regarded objectively, mythology is that which it gives itself out to be, actual theogony, history of gods; since, however, actual gods are only those at the basis of which God lies, the final content of the history of the gods is the generation, an actual evolution, of God in consciousness, for which the gods act only as the individual generating phases.

Subjectively, or under the aspect of the way it comes into existence, mythology is a theogonic process. It is 1) a process in general, which consciousness actually goes through, in such a way, that is, that it is obliged to linger in the individual phases, and always retains, in the following, the preceding ones, thus lives through the movement in the literal sense. It is 2) an actually theogonic process, deriving, that is to say, from an essential
relationship of human consciousness to God, a relationship which consciousness possesses in respect of its substance, and by way of which alone it is thus that which naturally (*natura sua*) establishes God. Because the original relationship is a natural one, consciousness cannot withdraw from it, without being led back into it *by a process*. In this it has, then, (I ask you to note this well) no choice but to appear as that which, only *indirectly* now, re-*establishes* God—precisely by way of a process, that is—that is to say it has no choice but to appear precisely as the consciousness which generates God, and accordingly as theogonic consciousness.
IF, from the standpoint gained, we cast a final glance back at the merely external preconditions, with the help of which, in the earlier hypotheses, it was thought mythology could be understood (even revelation, indeed, was one of those), then it was undeniably an essential step in the direction of a philosophical attitude towards mythology in general, when its emergence was shifted into the inner nature of primordial mankind, when poets or cosmogonic philosophers or adherents of a historically prior religious doctrine were no longer taken to be the originators, but human consciousness itself was acknowledged to be the true seat and the real productive principle of the mythological representations.

In the whole analysis up to now I have endeavoured to give proper recognition to, and to describe, in its rightful place, every advance which the investigation owed to earlier researchers, and even to extract, from those viewpoints which could have appeared wholly fortuitous, an aspect from which they nevertheless showed themselves to be necessary. Also, it was guaranteed by the method that no idea about mythology in any way worthy of mention was passed over. Yet we are prompted to give special consideration to one more work simply by its title, which would seem to indicate something similar to the intention and the content of the present lectures; we refer to the work of the prematurely deceased K. Ottfried Müller: Prolegomena to a Scientific Mythology 1825. There I found the following statements, which could have appeared to be in agreement with some of my own, expressed in lectures given four years earlier. [200] “Mythology arose, from the beginning, through the union and interpenetration of the ideal and real,” where by the “ideal” is understood that which is thought, and by the “real” that which has occurred. What is more, by “that which has occurred” he understands, as we shall see, not the form of what happens in mythology, but something which has actually happened outside mythology. This same man will not entertain the idea of invention in connection with the emergence of the myths, but

---

138 p. 100.
invention in what sense? As he himself explains, in the sense in which it “would be a free and intentional activity, by which something recognized, by him who is acting, to be untrue, would be varnished over with the appearance of truth.” Invention in this sense we have neither accepted nor rejected. Yet Müller does admit invention to the extent that it is communal invention. This is clear from his assumption “that in the association of ideal and real in the myth a clear necessity prevailed, that the shapers” (that means inventors, presumably?) “of the myth were led to it” (to the myth, presumably?) “by impulses which affected all in common, and that in the myth those distinct elements (the ideal and the real) merged, without those, through whose agency it took place, having themselves recognized the distinction between them, or having become conscious of it.” This would thus come back to that communal constructive urge (probably of a myth-engendering society), which we too pointed out earlier as a possibility which, however, was there rejected as well. It seems that this interpenetration of the ideal and real in their application to mythology (for the learned gentleman probably had the general idea, at any rate, from a philosophical school) appeared obscure and mystical to many antiquarians. O. Müller tries, therefore, to explain it with the help of examples, and it is there that we shall obtain a clear view of his meaning. The first of these examples is drawn from the pestilence in the first book of the Iliad, where, as is known, Agamemnon offends against the priest of Apollo, and the priest then implores the god to revenge him, the god who thereupon brings down the pestilence, and where, assuming the facts—that is to say, then, that the daughter of a priest of Apollo was demanded back in vain by her father, the father was turned away with scorn, whereupon the pestilence broke out—where, assuming these facts to be correct, “all those who were filled with the belief in Apollo’s vengeful and punitive power” at once, each independently and with one accord, formed the association that Apollo had sent the pestilence at the request of his priest, wronged by the refusal to

---

139 p. 111.
140 This “without” is inserted here because it seems necessary to the sense; it is wanting in the original.
141 Lecture 3.
return the daughter, and each person gave utterance to this association with the same conviction as the facts (here one can see how much what had happened meant for him) which he had seen for himself. It seems possible to conclude from this that the explanation put forward is, in its author's own view, not at all considered to extend to the only enigmatic aspect, namely how men came to be convinced of the existence of an Apollo and his vengeful and punitive power, not to extend, thus, to the true content of mythology itself; for that story in the first book of the *Iliad* belongs as little to mythology itself as does the story of the *legio fulminatrix*, or the like, belong to the Christian doctrine itself. After I had found this, I perceived that O. Müller's prolegomena have nothing in common with the philosophy of mythology. This philosophy relates to what is original, to the history of gods itself, not to the myths which arise after a historical fact is associated with a deity, and for this reason it was also not possible to discuss O. Müller's among the earlier viewpoints concerning mythology, because it simply does not relate to true mythology. For with the question of how these stories derived from mythology arose, the philosophy of mythology does not concern itself. That would be just as if, where the meaning of Christianity is being discussed, someone were to speak of legends and wish to explain how these arose. Naturally, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth runneth over. Once filled with ideas of gods, they will have mingled these into all their affairs, thus into all their stories too, and so admittedly, without prior agreement, without intention, and with a kind of necessity, myths in O. Müller's sense will come into being.

Now if, in this whole analysis, I have gone out of my way to be historically faithful to my predecessors and have tried to render to each of them what is his own, it will not be possible to take me amiss if I apply this fairness to myself too, and vindicate that first step without which I would certainly never have been induced to give lectures relating to mythology—of seeking the idea, the seat, the *subjectum agens* of mythology in human consciousness itself. This idea of putting human consciousness itself in the place of inventors, poets, or individuals in general, later found a counterpart in the attempt to make, for the doctrine of revelation, the *Christian consciousness* the bearer and the support of all Christian ideas,
although in this case, it seems, it was more that the means was sought to be rid of all objective questions, while in the case of mythology it was, rather, a matter of winning objectivity for the mythological representations.

Goethe expressed the view—for the moment I do not know on what occasion—that “Anyone who wishes to get some work done and not to be disturbed, would do well to keep what he is doing as far as possible secret. The least of the disadvantages which he might otherwise expect, if by chance he is thought to know where a treasure is to be unearthed, is that he should be prepared for many people to aspire to find the treasure in great haste before him, or if they are really polite and selfless, for them at least to want to be of assistance to him in its unearthing.” So clearly, then, the public lecturer who does not merely repeat what has long been known is in the worse case in that respect, since there are soon thousands who know the same as he does, and what is once delivered from the lectern in Germany is disseminated as circumstances dictate by all kinds of routes and secret paths, particularly by way of transcribed notebooks, into the most far-flung domain. It has often been misinterpreted, and censured one moment as a confession of poverty of ideas, the next as ignoble resentment, if academic teachers do not react with complete indifference to the unauthorized appropriation of ideas communicated by them purely orally. Now the first could be tolerated, for no one is under an obligation to be richly endowed with ideas; poverty through no fault of one’s own is no disgrace. In the case of the other reproach, though, one should in all fairness consider that anyone who has never for example had the good fortune to engage in the armed defence of his native land, has never taken part in the public concerns of administration or legislation, and can answer the *dic cur hic* in general only with his poetical productions or a few scientific ideas, does certainly have some right to preserve purely for himself the entitlement to those, an entitlement which he thinks he can justify to his contemporaries or posterity, and in fact the noblest spirits have not been insensible to that right. The great poet just named mentions it in his autobiography, when a friend of his youth appropriates a mere motif from him, not even, it seems to me, one particularly worth begrudging. If it is said that it well befits the rich man to give
something of his abundance to the poor, then indeed there is no lack of opportunity for anyone who has his own thoughts about scientific subjects or subjects arising out of everyday life, and is accustomed to confiding them to others, quietly to exercise this Christian virtue. Yet even this generosity has its limits, for with no other form of generosity are so many ungrateful people brought to light. I am not talking about the usual kind of ingratitude, about which many teachers complain: perhaps this takes place as naturally as when one magnetic pole induces the opposite pole at the point of contact. But he who has once brought to market as his own the ideas of another which happened to become known to him, naturally becomes the implacable enemy of that other. It is strange to hear, from those very men who believe they cannot come out emphatically enough against reprinting,\textsuperscript{CCXCIV} and \textsuperscript{[204]} confer the most abusive names on those who perform this odious handiwork, the recommendation of leniency towards prior publishing, which, though, should it succeed in its aim, would be a far worse case of theft than the first. The many errors introduced, too, are held against the reprint; but no attention is paid to the form in which misappropriated ideas are presented to the world, mostly so battered and adulterated that they could become offensive to the author himself. To use notebooks containing the transcribed words of a public lecturer who communicates not what is already known, but new and distinctive ideas, means wanting to learn from him, without acknowledging oneself to be his pupil, and means at the same time trying to gain an advantage over fellow-students who either lack the opportunity for such employment or who scorn it; for he, too, who takes care to avoid using them for material ends, has at least gained an advantage in respect of the method, the treatment, and the mode of expression, if these are new and distinctive. Incidentally, if there is less fuss made about all this now, then the reason is that in the end due recognition is always given to the true author, and instead of \textit{sic vos non vobis} the other saying is borne out: \textit{sic redit ad dominum, quod fuit ante suum}.\textsuperscript{CCXCV}

Our last result was that mythology in general comes into existence by way of a process, specifically by way of a theogonic process, in which human consciousness is held fast by its essential being. Once this concept has been gained, then in accordance with
the course followed in this whole investigation, this same concept immediately becomes in turn the point of departure for a new analysis, indeed that very process will be the sole subject of the science to which the lectures up to now have served as an introduction. It will not have escaped you that for the moment we have only used that result to bring out the subjective meaning of the process, the meaning which it had for the humanity involved in it. This had to be taken care of before all else, too; for this whole investigation began with the question of what mythology means originally, to those, that is to say, for whom it came into being. So as far as this question is concerned, a completely satisfactory resolution has been reached, and this investigation may be regarded as concluded. But for that very reason we are spurred on to the higher question of what the process means, not in respect to the consciousness subject to it, but what it means in itself, what it means objectively.

Now we have seen that the ideas which are generated in that process have a subjective necessity for the humanity caught up in it, and in the same way a subjective truth too. In fact this, as you will certainly understand, would not prevent the same ideas, regarded objectively, from being, nonetheless, false and fortuitous, and also in this sense explanations are conceivable which, because they only become possible from the present standpoint of subjective necessity, could not have been discussed earlier. All the earlier explanations remained, together with their preconditions, within historical time; we have now put forward an explanation which goes back to a suprahistorical process, and here we do in fact find predecessors who could not have been considered earlier. It is a very old view which derives heathenism, like all corruption in mankind, solely from the Fall. This derivation can take on now a merely moral colouring, now a pietistic or mystical one. But in every form it deserves recognition for the sake of the insight that mythology is incapable of being explained without a real dislodgement of man from his original standpoint. Here it agrees with our explanation; but against that, now the course of the explanation will be different, particularly in so far as it finds it necessary to bring in Nature and to explain polytheism by way of deification of Nature. In the way it has mankind descending to deification of Nature, the theological
viewpoint is distinguished from the famous analogous explanations; but with the deification of Nature it returns to a category of interpretations which was current earlier. Man, come through sin into Nature's sphere of attraction, and sinking ever more deeply in this direction, confuses creation with the creator, who thereby ceases to be One for him, and becomes Many. This, in summary, may be the content of this explanation—in its simplest form. In mystical terms, it could possibly be stated in more detail in the following way. Certainly we must begin not from an original knowledge, be it ever so splendid, but from an existence of man within the divine oneness. Man was created in the centre of the godhead, and to be in the centre is essential for him, for only there is he in his true place. Now as long as he is situated in this centre, he sees the things as they are in God, not in the superficiality, lacking spirit and oneness, of common vision, but as they are absorbed in each other stage by stage, thereby in man as their chief, and through him in God. But as soon as man has shifted out of the midpoint and has given way, the periphery becomes confused for him and that divine oneness is disturbed, for he himself is no longer above the things in a godlike way, but has even sunk to the same level as them. But because, while already in a different place, he wants to preserve his central position and the vision associated with it, there then, out of the striving and wrestling to retain, within what has already been disturbed and disintegrated, the original divine oneness—there then comes into being that intermediate world which we call a world of the gods, and which is as it were the dream of a higher state of being, which man went on dreaming for a little while, after he had fallen away from it; and this world of the gods comes into being for him in an involuntary way in fact, as the consequence of a necessity imposed on him by his original relationship itself, whose effect continues until the final awakening, when, arrived at self-knowledge, he surrenders himself to this extra-divine world, glad to have escaped from the direct relationship which he cannot sustain, and all the more constrained to set in its place one which is indirect but at the same time leaves him himself free.

In this explanation too a return is made to the original being of man: mythology is no less the consequence of an involuntary process to which man falls victim through his moving away from his
original position. But according to this explanation, as you yourselves will see, mythology would in fact only be something false [207] and also something merely subjective, consisting, that is, in ideas of a kind to which would correspond nothing actual outside them, for deified natural objects are no longer actual ones. But the main point to emphasize would be the fortuitousness which is still introduced to the explanation by bringing in the things, while the way in which we arrived at the concept of the process is in itself enough to ensure that nothing other than consciousness is required for it, nothing other than the principles establishing and constituting consciousness itself.\textsuperscript{CCXCVII} It is not the things at all with which man is associating in the mythological process, it is forces arising in the inner nature of consciousness itself, by which it (consciousness) is motivated. The theogonic process through which mythology comes into existence is a subjective one to the extent that it goes on in consciousness and becomes evident through the generation of ideas: but the causes and thus also the objects of these ideas are the actually and in themselves theogonic forces, the very same as those by way of which consciousness is originally the consciousness which establishes God. The content of the process is not potences which are merely imagined,\textsuperscript{CCXCIX} but the potences themselves—which create consciousness, and which, since consciousness is only the end of Nature, create Nature, and are therefore also actual forces. The mythological process does not have to do with objects of Nature, but with the pure potences which create, and of which the original product is consciousness itself. Here, then, is the point where our explanation breaks through into the objective completely, becomes, that is, wholly objective. There was a point earlier where we lumped together under the name of “irreligious” all the explanations dealt with up to then, so as to contrast to them the religious explanation in general as the only one still possible; now there is need of a still more general head under which even the religious explanations disproved up to this point can be added to those eliminated. We shall now call all those which have arisen so far, even the religious ones which in addition ascribe a merely accidental or subjective meaning to the mythological ideas, the subjective ones, above which the objective explanation stands out as the sole successful one in the end.
The mythological process, whose causes are the potences in themselves theogonic, does not merely have religious meaning in general, but has *objectively-religious* meaning; for it is the potences in themselves god-establishing which operate in the mythological process. But even with that the final definition has not yet been reached, for we heard earlier of a monotheism which is said to have *disintegrated* and to have split up into polytheism. So the theogonic potences could indeed themselves be in the process, but as potences which disintegrate in it and bring it about through *disintegration*. In this way, then, mythology would after all be just the primal consciousness in a *corrupted*, mutilated, and ruined form. Earlier, in the monotheism which was thought to have decayed into multitheism, certainly a historical monotheism was contemplated, which was thought to have been present during a certain era of the human race. Admittedly we have had to give up a monotheism like that. But in the meantime we have accepted an essential, that is to say potential monotheism in the primal consciousness. It is therefore at least possible that it was this which destroyed itself in the theogonic process, and now it could be said that the same potences which, in their combined effect and in their *unity*, make consciousness into that which establishes God, become in their *disintegration* the causes of the process by which the gods in the plural are established, and thus mythology comes into being.

But now, first of all, how is the *true* oneness thought to have destroyed itself in the postulated process, since on the contrary it was specifically established that that process was a destruction of the *false* uniqueness as such, and that this destruction itself was in turn only a *means*, only a transition, which could have had no other aim but the restoration of the true oneness, the reconstruction and, in the final objective, the actualization in consciousness of the same monotheism which in the beginning was merely essential or potential?

One could, though, raise the following objection. Mythology is essentially successive polytheism, and this can only come into being through an actual succession of potences, in which each that goes before requires the one which follows, the one which follows is reinforced by the one that went before, and so in the end the true oneness is re-established; but just this successive manifestation of
the phases which assemble and reconstruct the oneness would in fact be a disintegration of that oneness, or would at least presuppose it to have disintegrated.

This last could be conceded, but with the rider that this disintegration would not happen in the process itself which generates mythology, for in this process the potences make their appearance successively only in order to re-establish and regenerate the oneness. Hence the meaning of the process is not a disintegration, but rather a coming together, of the phases which establish the oneness, and the process itself does not consist in the separation of these phases, but in their reunification. The instigation for this process is provided in all probability by a potence which has possessed itself of consciousness—without the latter having any suspicion of it—exclusively, thus to the exclusion of others; but this same potence, supplanting to that extent the true oneness, transforms itself (relieved in turn of the exclusiveness and overcome by the process) into the potence which establishes the oneness no longer tacitly now, but actually, or, as I usually express it, *cum ictu et actu,* so that the monotheism established hereby is also now *more actual,* has come more fully *into existence,* and is accordingly at the same time *better understood,* more objective for consciousness itself. That which is false, by which the tension is introduced, and the process instigated, lies, therefore, *prior* to the process; *in* the process as such (and this is what matters) there is thus nothing false, but *truth;* it is the process of the truth re-establishing and thereby actualizing itself; thus admittedly there is no truth in the individual phase, for otherwise there would have been no need for an advance to a following phase, no need for a process; but in this process itself there is generated, and hence in it there *exists,* the truth (as truth being generated), truth which is the end of the process, and which therefore the process itself *as a whole* contains as fully evolved.

When it was found quite impossible to find truth in mythology as it stands, and when, therefore, it was resolved to acknowledge at best a *distorted* truth in it, then the impossibility stemmed precisely from the fact that people took just the individual ideas as such, not in their *sequence,* but in their abstraction, that is to say it was because they did not raise themselves to the concept of the
process. It can be conceded that what is individual in mythology may be false, but for that reason it is not the whole in its final understanding, thus as seen in the process. Successive polytheism is only the way of regenerating the true oneness, multitheism as such is merely the *accidental* aspect which is cancelled out again in the whole (if one has regard to this), it is not the intention of the process. Accordingly it could certainly be said that what is false in mythology is only present through misunderstanding of the process, or that it exists only in those aspects of the process which are separated out, are seen individually; but this is then an error of the observer, who sees mythology merely superficially, not in its essential being (in the process); it explains his false view of mythology, but not this itself.

In order to make this clear to someone, the phases in mythology could be compared with the individual propositions in philosophy. Each proposition in a true system is true in its place, in its time, that is to say when understood within the advancing movement, and each is false when regarded in itself or when removed from the relentless advance. Thus there is inevitably a point where it *must* be said that God is also the direct principle of Nature; for what can exist which God would not be, from which God would have to be excluded? For people of limited understanding this in itself amounts to pantheism, and they take “all,” which God is, to mean “all things”; but above the things there are the pure causes, from which those *things* are only derived, and for the very reason that God is *all*, he is also the opposite of that immediate principle, and the proposition, therefore, is true or false according to how it is regarded; true, in the sense that God is the principle of Nature, not, though, in order to be that principle, but in order, as that principle, to supplant himself again, to negate himself and establish himself as spirit (here we already have three phases); it would be false in the sense that God is that principle in particular, in a stationary or exclusive way. In passing it can be pointed out here how easy it becomes for the most shallow and, what is more, most incompetent minds, using a thoroughly simple device, to transform the most profoundly conceived proposition into a false one, when, in spite of the explicit declaration that it should not be taken in that way, they stress *it alone*, and, about what follows from it, say
nothing, be this deliberately or not, which latter certainly happens much more often, because they are entirely incapable of grasping a totality of any kind.

“According to this, then, polytheism would not be false religion, indeed there would, in the end, be no false religion at all?” As far as the first point is concerned, then according to our viewpoint mythology is only not false in itself: subject to the precondition which it has, it is true, just as indeed Nature too is only true subject to a precondition. As far as the other point is concerned, then it has already been explained that each phase of mythology, understood not as such (as a phase) and accordingly understood apart from its relationship to the others, would be false. Now according to what was pointed out earlier, the various mythologies of societies should in fact be seen only as phases, as phases of a process passing through the whole of humanity; to that extent every polytheistic religion which has become fixed within one society and become stationary, is as such, thus as the phase now exclusively continuing to exist there, admittedly a false religion. But we simply do not regard mythology in these isolated phases; we regard it as a whole, in the uninterrupted interconnection of its movement advancing through all the phases. To the extent that humanity, and therefore also to the extent that every part thereof, is still immersed in the mythological movement and as long as it is, as I might say, borne along by this stream, that part is on the way to truth; only when a society secedes from the movement and hands over the continuation of the process to another society does it begin to be in error and in false religion.

No single phase of mythology, only the process as a whole, is truth. Now the different mythologies themselves are just different phases of the mythological process. To that extent, every individual polytheistic religion is admittedly a false one (for example relative monotheism would be false)—but polytheism regarded as the totality of its successive phases is the path to truth and to that extent itself truth. From this it may be concluded that in this way the final mythology, uniting all phases, would have to be true religion. That is how it is, too, in a certain sense, namely as far as in taking the path of the postulated process, which always has as its precondition the alienation of the divine self, truth is attainable at all;
thus the divine self admittedly does not exist within the mythological consciousness, but its identical image does. The image is not the object itself, and yet it wholly resembles the object itself: in this sense the image contains truth; but since it is not, after all, the object itself, to that extent it is also not what is true. In the same way, in the final mythological consciousness, the image of the true god is produced, without thereby the relationship to the divine self, that is to say to the true god himself, being granted, to which relationship access is given only by Christianity. The monotheism to which the mythological process attains is not false monotheism (for there can be no false monotheism), but in comparison to the true, the esoteric monotheism, it is as yet only the exoteric.

Taken individually, the polytheistic religions are the false ones, but false in the sense that every natural thing, in isolation from the movement passing through everything, or to the extent that it has been ejected from the process and has remained behind as lifeless residue, has no truth, does not, that is, have the truth, which it has in the whole and as a phase thereof. It is not only those pagan societies whose existence has continued into our own time, the Hindus for example, who are found in a wholly undiscerning relationship towards the objects of their superstitious reverence; the common Greek too had at bottom no other relationship to the gods of his religion, once it was present and had become stationary. False religion as such is always just a lifeless remnant, become meaningless for that reason, of a process which in its entirety is truth. Every practice which is based on a relationship now no longer known, or on a process no longer understood, is a superstition. People have always wondered about the etymology, that is to say the original meaning, of this Latin word. Some thought that the word was at first only used of the superstition of those who survived in respect of the manes of the departed; there the subjects of the superstition were indicated, but the important thing (the superstition itself) was not expressed. It would be even better to say that every false religion was only a superstes quid, that which remains of something no longer understood. But certain gods, probably part of a mystery religion, were called dii præstites by the
It may thus probably be assumed that the same gods in an earlier form were also called *superstites* with the same meaning (presiding gods).

It could thus probably be said, in accordance with what has just been discussed, that the polytheistic religions were like a whole which has become meaningless, and that they function like the rubble of a system overthrown, but it is not possible by way of such an analogy to explain how they *came into existence*. The oneness should not be sought in an original system which had earlier been understood, it should be sought in the process which is no longer understood, which possesses not merely subjective truth (for humanity caught up in it), but truth in itself, objective truth; and that alone which up to now had been held not to be possible, or rather, had not even been *thought of*, emerges as the necessary consequence of the method of explanation we have proposed, namely that in mythology precisely *as such*—that is to say, in so far it is a process, successive polytheism—there is *truth*.

I am sure it will not be unwelcome if I use this last result to acquaint you with a scheme which affords a short synopsis of the different viewpoints, as they appear if one takes the *objective* truth as the main aspect. I would remark only that it is natural if, in this classification, the viewpoints are assigned a position to some extent different from that which they had in the earlier analysis, which started out from the question of how the mythological ideas were *intended to be understood*, and where therefore only their possible subjective truth could be discussed.

---

You will see for yourselves the *progression* from A through B to C; but the third viewpoint is actually at the same time the union of the other two, to the extent that the first holds fast to the *literal* meaning, but with the exclusion of any doctrinal meaning, the second allows a *doctrinal* meaning, or allows that truth was intended to be understood, but a truth only present in mythology as a concealed or as a corrupted truth, while the third sees, in mythology understood literally, its truth at the same time. But this *viewpoint* has now, as you will recognize, only become possible by way of the *explanation*; for only because we were obliged to accept that in mythology the way it came into existence was necessary, were we also obliged to recognize in it necessary content, that is to say truth.

The truth in mythology is primarily and specifically a *religious* truth, for the process through which it comes into being is the theogonic one, and subjectively, that is to say for the humanity caught up in it, it indisputably has only *this*, namely religious, meaning. But does *mythology*—and does therefore the process through which it comes into existence, regarded *absolutely* as well, have only this particular meaning, not a *universal* one?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.</th>
<th>B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| There is *no* truth at all in mythology; it is:  
1) either intended to be understood *merely* poetically, and the truth found in it is merely accidental;  
2) or it consists of meaningless representations generated by ignorance, later given form and connected together into a poetical whole by literary art (J. H. Voss). | There is truth in mythology, but not in mythology *as such*. The mythological is:  
1) either *cloaking, concealment*  
   a) of a historical truth (Euhemerus),  
   b) of a physical truth (Heyne);  
2) or *misunderstanding, corruption*  
   a) of a *purely scientific* (essentially irreligious) truth (G. Hermann),  
   b) of a religious truth (W. Jones), (Fr. Creuzer). |
| C. There is truth in mythology *as such*. |
Consider the following. Those real (actual) forces by which consciousness is moved in the mythological process, and whose succession is precisely the process, are defined as the same forces through which consciousness is originally and essentially the consciousness which establishes God. These forces, creating consciousness, coming into play, as it were—can these be other than the forces by which Nature too is established and created? Human consciousness is indeed, no less than Nature, something which has come to be, and nothing outside creation, but the end of it; the potences which previously, when distanced from one another and in a state of tension with regard to one another, act so as to produce Nature, must therefore in combination act towards the production of human consciousness as a goal. The forces which, as we expressed it earlier, are resurrecting themselves in the inner nature of consciousness and proving themselves to be theogonic, can therefore be none other than the world-generating forces themselves, and precisely because they come to the fore again, they change from subjective forces, subordinated to consciousness as their unity, back to objective ones, which assume once again, for consciousness, the character of external, cosmic forces, a character which, in their unity, thus when they established consciousness, they had lost. The mythological process, as we have said, can only be the restoration of the destroyed oneness; but this can be restored in no way other than the one in which it was originally established, that is to say when the potences pass through all the attitudes and relationships to one another which they had in the process of Nature. Not that mythology could have come into existence under an influence of Nature, from which influence the inner nature of man was, on the contrary, removed by this process; it is rather that the mythological process following the same law passes through the same stages through which, originally, Nature passed.

It is in itself inconceivable that the principles of a process which turns out to be theogonic could be other than the principles of all existence and of all becoming. The mythological process has, thus, not merely religious significance, it has universal significance, for it is the universal process which is repeated in the mythological; accordingly the truth too, which mythology possesses in the process,
is a truth which excludes nothing, a universal truth. The *historical* truth of mythology cannot, as commonly happens, be denied, for the process through which it comes into existence is itself a true history, an actual series of events. Just as little may physical truth be excluded from it, for Nature is just as necessary a transit point for the mythological process as for the universal one. The content of mythology is no *abstractly*-religious content like that of the ordinary theistic doctrinal concepts. In the middle, between consciousness in its mere essentiality and consciousness in its actualization, between the oneness established in it merely in essence and the oneness actualized in it, which is the goal of the process, there lies the world. So the phases of the theogonic movement do not have meaning exclusively for that movement, they possess *universal* significance.

Mythology is understood in its truth, and hence only truly understood, if it is understood in the process. But the process, which [217] is repeated in it simply in a particular way, is the *universal*, the *absolute* process, and the true science of mythology is accordingly the one which demonstrates the absolute process in it. But to demonstrate this is the business of philosophy; *hence the true science of mythology is the philosophy of mythology.*

The statement should not be twisted, as has happened earlier with similar ones. The idea of the process should not be displayed in some mythology which has been thought up, but in fact in actual mythology; yet it is not enough to recognize merely a general *outline*, what is necessary is to recognize the phases in the fortuitous form which they have unavoidably taken on in actuality; but how would these forms have become known except through the route of historical inquiry, which is thus not misprized by the philosophy of mythology, but assumed as its precondition? Establishing the mythological facts is in the first instance the business of the antiquarian. But the philosopher must be at liberty to check whether the facts were established correctly and in full.

What is more, in the statement that “the *true* science of mythology is the philosophy of mythology” it is only said that the other ways of looking at it do not recognize the *truth* in mythology; but they say this themselves when they deny truth to mythology, either in general or in fact in the form in which it actually exists.
At the very beginning when the concept “philosophy of mythology” was first introduced, we were obliged to acknowledge that it was a problematical one, that is to say one which itself first required justification. For everyone is indeed at liberty to bring the word “philosophy,” with the aid of a subsequent genitive, into association with any subject. In many a land a “philosophy of cookery,” perhaps, would elicit no surprise, just as we ourselves in Germany were presented in earlier times, by an official of the Principality of Thum and Taxis, with a “philosophy of the postal entity,” which treated of the latter in terms of the Kantian categories. A work very serviceable in its day, by the renowned Fourcroy, bore the title “Philosophy of Chemistry,” without being distinguished by any philosophical quality if one has no wish to accept as such simply the elegance of the argument and the logical coherence. But we Germans, to whom a model for the meaning of this combination has been provided by the concepts of philosophy of Nature, philosophy of history, and philosophy of art, shall certainly take care not to apply it where it could express only something like the idea that there is clarity and method in the investigation, or that the desire is to give expression simply to philosophical thoughts in general about the subject named; for clarity and method are requirements which are imposed upon every investigation, and is there in the world any subject about which someone in other respects capable of it could not have philosophical thoughts!

The objective way, independent of human judgement, thought, and will, that it comes into existence gives mythology an objective content too, and with the objective content, at the same time objective truth. But this viewpoint, which decides the question of whether philosophy of mythology is a scientifically possible expression or a merely improper association of words, could not have been assumed in advance. Once we had established it we found that we ourselves were still outside the field of the science I have announced, and looking at it from the standpoint of a mere preliminary investigation, which admittedly—as might be thought in retrospect—could also have reached its goal by a shorter route, if, starting out at once from mythology as a universal phenomenon, the necessary universality of the causes had been deduced; but this deduction would not have led at the same time to the specific nature
of these causes, which is likewise now known to us; besides, this was countered by the explanations according to which the presupposed universality would be no more than an illusory one,

while the relatedness of the content of the various mythologies would be one transmitted merely externally by tradition from society to society; and this method of explanation was not proposed by the first person who came along, but by men with a mind of their own, who have occupied themselves with this subject professionally and in the most thorough way, and whose acuity in other investigations is acknowledged. It was particularly important to overcome the distaste which many people feel in advance for any interference by philosophy, [219] people who, if one wished to describe their viewpoints and explanations as unphilosophical, would simply have replied, “Our viewpoints are not intended to be philosophical, we make no claim to that”; just as the Belgians answered the envoy of Joseph II, “Nous ne voulons pas être libres.”

These people, therefore, had to be persuaded in some other way of the untenability of their supposed explanations. And indeed this undertaking itself was not one which could be called wholly unphilosophical. For if, as Plato and Aristotle say, the philosopher pre-eminently loves that which is deserving of wonder,

then he is certainly in the right calling if he pursues this quality everywhere, and particularly if, where it has been corrupted by false explanations and concealed, he tries to free it once again from these integuments and bring it out in its true configuration. And formally too, since a mere enumeration did not suffice, the undertaking was a philosophical one, in that the method was applied which tries, through successive negation of that which is merely relatively true, but for that very reason is at the same time relatively false, to reach that which is true. The explanation only became the philosophy of mythology for us at the point where no other presupposition remained possible but that of a necessary and eternal relationship within human nature, a relationship which, as it progresses, is transformed, for this (human nature), into a law. And so we have not put forward our concept from a superior standpoint, dictatorially as it were, but, in the only way which is generally convincing, substantiated it from the ground up. In this the other viewpoints have even been obliged to serve as an introduction
to the true one, since there can after all be none among them which had not grasped an aspect of the subject, some single phase which must be part of what is understood and weighed up in the fully developed theory.

Although the standpoint of this first part of our investigation was pre-eminently the historico-critical or dialectic one, no one, however, who knows the value it has for all science if even one single subject is once and for all investigated from first principles and with the exhaustion of all possibilities will judge the time devoted to it to have been ill spent.

The concept “philosophy of mythology” is subsumed under the general concept of a theory of mythology. One and the same field can be the subject of a merely external knowledge, where there is question merely of its existence, but not of its essence; if the knowledge raises itself to the latter, then it becomes theory. From that it is easy to see that a theory is possible only of that in which there is a true essence; but the concept of essence is “principle, source of existence or of movement.” A mechanical contrivance is not something which acts of its own nature, and yet the word “theory” is also applied to a merely mechanical generation of movement, while no one speaks of theory where there is not even the appearance of an inner source of movement, of an inwardly actuating essence.

Such an essence and inner principle is lacking from mythology according to the earlier explanations, which could therefore only very improperly be called theories. But a philosophy of mythology entails of its own accord that the explanation is a theory in the true sense of the word. The theory of every natural or historical subject is itself nothing other than a philosophical examination of it, an examination in which it is simply a matter of discovering the living germ which actuates its evolution, or of discovering in general the true and inherent nature within it.

At first sight no two things seem more disparate than truth and mythology, as is also expressed in the term “fable-doctrine,” which has long been current; and no two things, for that same

---

143 The Greek word “mythos,” as is well known, does not necessarily contain the secondary concept with which, for us, the word “fable” is associated.
reason, more antithetic than philosophy and mythology. But just in
the antithesis itself is found the specific challenge and the task of
discovering reason precisely in this apparent unreason, and
meaning in that which seems meaningless, and not indeed in the
only way this has been attempted hitherto, using an arbitrary
distinction, namely in such a way that anything which one might
venture to assert to be rational or meaningful is declared to be the
essential aspect, but everything else merely accidental, and put
down to the form of words [221] or to corruption. Instead, the
intention must be that the form too should appear to be necessary
and to that extent rational.

Anyone who sees in mythology only that which conflicts with our
familiar concepts, to the extent that it seems to him as it were
beneath his notice, and particularly his philosophical notice, should
consider, however, that Nature admittedly scarcely excites
astonishment any longer in the thoughtless man, dulled by the
familiarity of the everyday scene, but that we can very easily imagine
a spiritual and moral state of mind to which Nature would have to
appear in quite the same way as mythology, and no less incredible,
curious, and strange. Anyone accustomed to live in a state of high
spiritual or moral ecstasy could easily ask, were he to turn his
regard back towards Nature, “Wherefore this substance unprofitably
squandered in the fantastic forms of mountains and cliffs? Could a
god or any moral being take pleasure in such production? Wherefore
these conformations of the animals, which impress us as fabulous
and monstrous by turns, and in whose existence, in which for the
most part there is no visible purpose, we would not believe did we
not see them before our eyes? Wherefore all that is so offensive in
the activities of animals? Wherefore this great physical world in
general? Why is there not a simple, pure, world of spirit, which
would seem completely understandable for us?” Nonetheless we
cannot give up the search, in the Nature which has become
incomprehensible for us, for the original sense, the meaning of its
initial emergence. Assuredly many who see in mythology only a
meaningless and essentially otiose fable-doctrine cannot think worse
of it than many philosophers antagonistic towards Nature-
philosophy, who are capable of applying to Nature predicates such
as: the meaningless, the irrational, the ungodly, and the like. How
many more must there naturally be who judge mythology in this way. Hence it would not be surprising if the philosophy of mythology fared at the beginning in much the same way as Nature-philosophy, which has subsequently come to be generally acknowledged as a necessary element in general philosophy.

There are subjects which philosophy has to regard as wholly foreign to it. Among those, belongs everything which contains no essential reality, which amounts to something only in the arbitrary opinion of men. The mythological process, though, is something which has taken place in humanity independently of what they willed and opined. With everything merely constructed it is the same. But mythology is a natural, a necessary growth; we have admitted that it could be treated poetically and even extended, but in this it behaves like language, which can be used with the greatest freedom, extended, enriched more and more, within certain limits, with new inventions, but whose foundation is something to which human invention and volition has not extended, which was not made by men.

Nor does philosophy deal with anything corrupt or distorted; for it, only what is original has meaning. Although, as in everything which has been put to use by mankind, individual parts which have gone awry may indeed be found in various theologies, mythology itself did not come into existence through corruption, but through the original production of the consciousness striving to re-establish itself.

A third element in which philosophy cannot exist and be perceived, is that which is limitless, unended. But mythology is a true totality, something self-contained and held within certain limits, a world in itself; the mythological process a phenomenon which runs just as complete a course as does, for instance, in the physical world, an illness running its course in an ordered and natural way, eliminating itself, that is to say, by way of a necessary effort and restoring the patient to health; a movement which, passing from a specific beginning through specific intermediate stages into a specific end, is rounded off and completed.

Finally there opposes philosophy that which is lifeless, stationary. But mythology is something essentially mobile, and indeed, in accordance with an inherent law, something which moves of itself, and it is the highest human consciousness which animates it and
(through the very contradiction in which that consciousness is enmeshed, in that the consciousness overcomes the contradiction) shows itself to be *real*, to be true, to be necessary.

[223] You will see that the expression “philosophy of mythology” is understood quite literally, and in the same way as the similar expressions “philosophy of language” and “philosophy of Nature.”

The expression has something awkward about it to the extent that many people already understand “mythology” itself to mean the *science* of myths. This could have been avoided had I decided to say “philosophy of the mythical world” or something like that. Anyway no informed person is unfamiliar with the fact that the word “mythology” is used as well in the objective sense for the totality of the mythological representations themselves.

As long as the idea remained possible of regarding mythology as a totality which had strayed from its context, a totality at the basis of which there had been a primordial philosophy, then “philosophy of mythology” could have been understood to mean that philosophy which had declined within it, and which one would have proposed to bring to light or to reconstruct from its fragments. This misunderstanding is now no longer possible.

If it was only a question of claiming for philosophy a certain influence in the treatment of mythology, then there would have been no need for the detailed substantiation. The influence has long been accepted; it is, however, an arbitrary and superficial philosophy, not a scientific and deep one, whose voice is heard on the question of mythology, at least in reference to the circumstances of the human race to be supposed as prior to it. Philosophy gained a relationship to the *inner nature* of mythology only with its own inwardly-historical formation, only since the time when it itself began to advance by way of phases and was explained as *history*, at least of self-consciousness,¹⁴⁴ CCCXVIII a method which was later extended and has continued to be effective until now; the relevance to mythology became more *real* as Nature was incorporated into philosophy as a necessary phase of the development.

Mythology indisputably has a very close kinship with Nature, with which it has in common, apart from its universality, this too: that it

---

¹⁴⁴ *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Tübingen 1800.
is a self-contained world, and, from our point of reference, a past. From the start, a certain identity of content is unmistakable. It could have been regarded as an acceptable idea to see mythology as a Nature raised to the spiritual by way of intensifying refraction. All that was lacking was the means of making this raising comprehensible; earlier explanations along these lines would indubitably have turned out to be more significant, had there not been such a great lack of ideas genuinely belonging to Nature-philosophy. Unavoidably, though, through a philosophy in which, in a way not anticipated, the natural assumed at the same time the significance of something godlike, mythological research too was obliged to take on a different meaning.

Among the more recent treatments of mythology it is probably possible to distinguish those which received already their first impulse from the philosophy which, because it was the first to take up the element of Nature again, was also in general or indiscriminately (although improperly) called “Nature-philosophy.” This relationship, however, worked to the detriment of the initial endeavours in two ways; firstly because, emanating from a philosophy itself still in the process of coming to be, guided more by the ferment universally stirred up by this than by scientific concepts, they were themselves to some extent carried away into uncharted waters and towards wild unmethodical combinations, and then because they attracted their share of the fanatical hate which that philosophy kindled among a section of those who were earlier presumed to be the leading lights of science and philosophy.

I would have liked to mention earlier a man who will always be counted among the curiosities of a certain transitional period in our literature, the well-known Johann Arnold Kanne, whom I knew as an individual of considerable wit, capable too of the highest ideas, but on whom at the same time, by a strange whim of fortune, the lot had fallen of labouring under the burden of a philological erudition extensive but for the most part over-subtle and selecting from the abundance of great facts only what was actually insignificant. Of course what one understood least was how he thought he could serve with erudition like that the Christianity which is assuredly not furthered in our time by such means if it is not to be portrayed in simple broad strokes as truth victorious over all. In a later mood,
himself, it seemed, affected by the feeling of the vanity of such endeavours, he irritably tried to rid himself of all this flotsam of erudition; but in vain, for in his final works he returned to the same far-fetched analogies (which, should they be true to the same degree as they are for the most part only bizarre, would still in the end prove nothing) and learned compilations. Among his writings, which from the present standpoint one cannot view without a kind of melancholy, and is almost tempted to compare with the riches of a beggar, consisting in the final analysis, despite their great weight, mostly of halfpennies and brass farthings, the *Pantheon of the Earliest Nature-Philosophy*\textsuperscript{145} may be his most significant work dealing with mythology; one which is still purely philological, but valuable because of its many learned observations, is the *Mythology of the Greeks*,\textsuperscript{146} begun earlier but never completed.

It would be welcome if one of those who were close to him attempted to bring out his fundamental view of mythology in a comprehensible way. For me this was impossible, given the known nature of his works; therefore it was not possible to mention his name in connection with any of the viewpoints which were discussed earlier, not even the one which I called the mystical. The only thing which I believe I am justified in taking from the whole context of his earlier mode of thought, in which mode his mythological works were still written, is that he founded mythology on a more profound monotheism, or rather pantheism, than a merely *historical* one. Now for this, in any case, he should not be forgotten, even if no one could have derived any benefit from his portrayal or had the feeling of really having been brought any further forward.

But a particular stroke of good fortune occurred for mythology when, after \textsuperscript{[226]} some ephemeral publications which remained without influence, a spirit like Fr. Creuzer directed his endeavours towards it, a spirit who, through a classically elegant presentation, and through a real and splendid erudition, which was supported by a profound, central insight, disseminated and consolidated, in the

\textsuperscript{145} Stuttgart and Tübingen 1807.
\textsuperscript{146} Part One. Leipzig 1803.
most far-flung circles, the conviction of the necessity of a higher viewpoint and treatment of mythology.

It was inevitable that the uninspired, homespun viewpoint which had still survived in certain scholarly quarters should have risen up in opposition; while it had no hope of still winning converts in our own era, despite all the racket and hullabaloo which Voss in particular knew how to stir up, it could at least, by way of certain time-honoured slanders, have counted on casting suspicion in advance, among the less educated and thoughtful section of the public, on all attempts to look at mythology from higher points of view or to bring it into association with investigations of a general kind.\textsuperscript{147} CCCXX

But such a commotion had, rather, the consequence that now this area of scientific research too, which had until then been kept in dignified seclusion, and for the most part in cliquish isolation, was drawn into the general movement, into the great scientific battle of the day; it was felt that there was more to this question than simply mythology.

The dispute about the origin, meaning, and treatment of mythology showed a too evident analogy with that which was being conducted simultaneously in other disciplines about questions of the highest and most universal import, for the interest which this last excited not to have necessarily spread of its own accord to the former too. If every science may congratulate itself when it begins to be accepted into the circle of higher literature, then pre-eminently after Creuzer’s endeavours mythology can rejoice in the advantage of belonging among the subjects towards the investigation of which it is as it were permitted to no one \textsuperscript{227} to remain indifferent who is capable of and accustomed to the contemplation of the great questions decisive for humanity.

But now, while it has been brought out in the clearest possible way, precisely by previous experience, that with merely empirical or accidental assumptions a satisfying, universally convincing conclusion to this investigation is not to be reached, and that a result independent of any individual mode of thought may only be

\textsuperscript{147} A short piece by W. Menzel is historically worthy of note, to the extent that in it Voss found his master, and was reduced by it to complete silence.
anticipated if mythology is successfully taken back to preconditions of a general nature and derived from such as the necessary consequence: then with that the idea of a philosophy of mythology appears at the same time to be one also justified and called for externally, by the times and by earlier endeavours.

But an advance in one direction is never possible without its being felt to a greater or lesser degree in another. A philosophy of mythology cannot come into existence without affecting other sciences in a way tending to extend them. Of these, the prime examples are the philosophy of history and the philosophy of religion. The influence exerted on these sciences even by the result provisionally gained must therefore be the subject of the following lecture.
WHEN a new science joins the ranks of those which are known and valid, in these themselves it will find that there are points where it connects up and at which it is as it were anticipated. The order in which, out of the totality of those which are possible, individual sciences become prominent before others and are pursued, will not altogether be that of their inner dependence on one another, and a science which is more relevant to immediate needs can be industriously pursued for a considerable time, and can even be elaborated to a great extent in many directions, before, in the face of requirements gradually becoming more rigorous, it makes the discovery that its premises lie in another science until now not in existence, the discovery that another, to which until now no thought has been given, should really have preceded it. On the other hand, no new science can come into existence without extending the area of human knowledge in general, and filling in shortcomings and gaps in the sciences already in existence. Hence it is fitting that for every science, once it has been established as a possible one, its status and its sphere of application within the totality of the sciences, and thus its relationship to these generally, should at the same time be made clear. So it will also be appropriate, then, for us to point out in the philosophy of mythology the side from which it is related to other sciences which have already been researched for some time or which are currently being pursued, the side from which it is even capable of influencing them in such a way that they are extended.

First of all, through the substantiation which the philosophy of mythology has received, at least one great fact has now been gained for human knowledge: the existence of a theogonic process in the consciousness of primordial mankind. This fact opens up a new world, and cannot fail to extend human thought and knowledge in more than one sense. For even at first sight everyone must feel that for history in particular there is no certain beginning as long as the obscurity which surrounds the primal events is not dispelled, as long as the points are not found to which the great enigmatic fabric which we call history was first attached. The philosophy of
mythology is, then, relevant in the first instance to history; and this in itself is not to be undervalued: that we have been placed by that philosophy in the position of being able to fill a space until now, for science, completely empty, the primal era, in which nothing could be made out, and to which a content could be assigned at best through empty inventions, impulsive ideas, or arbitrary assumptions—to fill it with a succession of real events, with a movement full of life, a true history, which in its way, no less than the history commonly thus named, is rich in fluctuating events, in scenes of war and peace, in battles and undoings. In particular the fact cannot remain without effect 1) on the philosophy of history, 2) on all those sections of historical research which are concerned in some way with the origins of human things.

The initial idea of a philosophy of history, and the name itself, came, like so much else, from the French, but Herder’s renowned work already expanded the concept beyond its initial meaning; and Nature-philosophy was from the very beginning contrasted to the philosophy of history, as the other principal division of philosophy, or of applied philosophy as it was termed at that time. Nor was there a lack of formal discussions of the concept during the period immediately thereafter. The idea of a philosophy of history has continued to enjoy great favour: in fact there has been no lack of expositions; nevertheless I do not find that so much as the concept has been properly clarified.

Before all else I would draw your attention to the fact that simply that combination in itself—philosophy of history—already asserts that history is a whole. That something uncontained, limitless in all directions, would, as such, have no relevance to philosophy, was first stated in the previous lecture. We could ask now, first of all, which of the viewpoints hitherto mentioned would see history as something rounded off and concluded. Does not the future too belong to history regarded as a whole? Does there exist, though, somewhere in that which until now has professed to be philosophy of history, an idea through which a real ending—I will not say a satisfactory one—would be given to history? For the realization of a complete body of law for example, the complete evolution of the

---

148 Compare what is said in the first preface to the Outlines of a Philosophy of Nature.
concept of freedom, and everything of that kind, is at the same time
too insubstantial in its exiguity for the spirit to be able to find a
point of repose therein. I would ask whether there ever has been any
question of an ending at all, and whether it does not all come down,
rather, to the fact that history overall has no true future, but
that everything goes on into the infinite like that because progress
without limit—but progress for that very reason at the same time
meaningless—a never-ending progression, without any pause when
something truly new and different might begin, belongs among the
articles of faith of contemporary wisdom. Since it is, however, self-
evident that that which has not found its beginning is also unable to
find its end, we intend to confine ourselves purely to the past and to
ask whether from this side history is for us something whole and
self-contained, or whether instead, according to all the viewpoints
until now implicitly or explicitly asserted, the past just as much as
the future might not be a time stretching steadily back into the
infinite, distinguished and delimited by nothing within itself.

It is true that within the past we distinguish in general between
historical and prehistoric time, and in this way we do seem to
introduce a distinction. But the question is, whether this distinction
is more than a merely accidental one, whether the two eras are
essentially different, and are not in fact, at bottom, just one and the
same era, in which case, therefore, the prehistoric era cannot serve
as a real delimitation for the historical, for this it could only do were
it an era inwardly other than and different from the latter. But is
there really, in terms of the customary concepts, something in the
prehistoric era different from what is in the historical? On no
account; the whole distinction is merely the external and accidental
one that we know something of the historical era, and nothing of the
prehistoric; this last is not truly the pre-historic era, but merely the
pre-chronological. But can there be anything more fortuitous
than the lack of, or the availability of, written, and other, memorials
which inform us of the facts about an era in a credible and
dependable way? There are, are there not, even within the era called
“historical,” whole stretches for which we lack properly
authenticated reports. And even on the question of which of the
available memorials might be assigned historical value there is no
consensus of opinion. Some refuse to accept the Mosaic books as
authentic historical documents, while they grant historical standing to the oldest chroniclers of the Greeks, for example to Herodotus, and others consider these too not to be completely authenticated, but say with D. Hume that the first page of Thucydides\textsuperscript{cccxxv} is the first page of true history. The prehistoric era would be an essentially, an inwardly different one, if it had a content other than that of the historical. But what difference could be established between the two in this respect? In terms of the concepts customary until now I would know of none, except perhaps that the facts about the prehistoric era would be insignificant, but those about the historical significant. This would most likely also be because in terms of a popular analogy, the invention of which admittedly does not amount to a great deal, the first period of the human race is seen as its childhood. Certainly the slight encounters of the childhood of a historical individual are also assigned to oblivion. The historical era would accordingly begin with the significant facts. But what does “significant” mean here, and what \textsuperscript{232} “insignificant”? It must surely occur to us that that unknown land, that region of time inaccessible to chronology, in which the ultimate origins of all history are lost, conceals from us the very events which are most significant, because they are decisive and determinative for the whole future succession.

Because there is no true—inner, that is—difference between historical and prehistoric time, it is also impossible to draw a well-defined line between them. No one can say where historical time begins and the other leaves off, and workers in the field of general history are visibly embarrassed about the point where it should begin. Naturally; for historical time has, for them, really no beginning, but goes back fundamentally, and in accordance with the nature of the subject, into what is wholly indeterminate, and there is everywhere only one kind of time, nowhere delimited nor anywhere susceptible of being delimited.

Certainly reason cannot be discerned in something so uncontained and inconclusive; accordingly there is nothing from which, until now, we have been further removed than from a true philosophy of history. The best part is lacking, namely the beginning. With the empty and shoddy formulas of Orientalism and Occidentalism and the like: in the first period of history, for example, the infinite is said to have dominated, in the second the finite, in the
third the unity of the two; or in general with the mere application to
history of a schema taken from somewhere else—a method to which
that same philosophical writer CCCXXVI who had most loudly
denounced it descended in the grossest way as soon as he himself
came to the real and was left to his own powers of invention—with
everything of that kind nothing can be achieved.

Through the preceding investigations however, directed towards
an entirely different subject, the era of the past too has taken on for
us a different guise, or rather only now taken shape at all. It is a
limitless time no longer, into which the past fades back; it is times
actually and inwardly distinct from one another, into which history is
marked out and subdivided for us. How?—the following remarks
may bring it out in greater detail.

When the historical era is defined as the time of the [233]
completed separation of societies (which begins for every individual
society with the moment when it asserts itself as such and has
chosen), then—even regarded merely from outside—the content of
the prehistoric era is different from that of the historical. The former
is the time of the division of societies or crisis, of the transition to
separation. But this crisis is itself in turn only the external
manifestation or consequence of an inner process. The true
content of the prehistoric era is the emergence of the formally and materially
distinct theologies, thus of mythology in general, which in the
historical era is already something completed, present, and thus,
historically, in the past. Its coming to be, that is to say its own
historical existence, filled prehistoric time. An inverted euhemerism
is the correct viewpoint. Mythology does not, as Euhemerus taught,
contain the events of the earliest history, but conversely, mythology
in its coming into existence, thus, more correctly, the process
through which it comes into existence—this is the true and sole
content of that earliest history; and if the question is raised of what
filled that era, seeming so mute in contrast to the tumult of the later
time, and so impoverished and empty of events, then the reply must
be: this era was filled by those inner processes and movements of
consciousness, which accompanied or had as a consequence the
emergence of the mythological systems, the theologies of the
societies, and whose end result was the separation of humanity into
societies.
Accordingly the historical and the prehistoric eras are no longer merely relative distinctions within one and the same era, they are two eras essentially different, and contrasted with each other, mutually excluding but for that very reason also delimiting each other. For between them there is the essential distinction that in the prehistoric era the consciousness of mankind was subject to an inner necessity, to a process which transported it, as it were, out of the external actual world, while every society which has become a society through inner choice has also, through the same crisis, been set outside the process as such and, free from that, is now left to that succession of deeds and activities whose more external, worldly, and profane character makes them historical ones.

The historical era does not, therefore, continue back into the prehistoric, but is, rather, cut short and demarcated by the latter as a wholly different era. We call it wholly different, not that in the widest sense it too would not be historical as well, for within it too great things happen, and it is full of events, but simply events of an entirely different kind, which are subject to an entirely different law. In this sense we have called it the relatively prehistoric era.

But this era by which historical time is rounded off and delimited, is itself also in turn a specific era, and is thus also for its part delimited by another. This other, or rather third era cannot again be one which is in some way historical, and so can only be absolutely prehistoric time, the era of complete historical immobility. It is the era when humanity was still intact and united, the era which—because it acts in relation to the following only as a moment, as a pure point of departure, to the extent, that is, that in it itself there is no true succession of events, no sequence of times, as in the other two—does not itself in turn require delimitation. There is in it, I said, no true succession of times: that is not intended to mean that nothing at all goes on within it, as one well-intentioned gentleman has understood it. For certainly even in that absolutely prehistoric era the sun rose and fell, men went to bed and got up again, wooed and allowed themselves to be wooed, were born and died. But in that there is no progress and thus no history, just as the individual in whose life yesterday is like today, and today like yesterday, whose existence is an ever-recurring round of unvarying diversion, has no history. A true sequence is not shaped by events which disappear
without trace and leave behind the whole in the condition in which it was before. So for this reason, because in the absolutely prehistoric era the whole at the end is as it was at the beginning, because, therefore, there is in this time itself no longer any sequence of times, because in this sense it is, also, only one, namely the absolutely identical, as we term it, thus basically timeless time (perhaps this inconsequentiality of the passing time is preserved in the memory by the incredibly long life span of the earliest generations); for this reason, I say, it itself does not in turn need delimitation by another, its duration is immaterial, whether shorter or longer it amounts to the same; hence with it there is delimited not merely a time, but time in general, and it itself is as far as it is possible to go back within time. Beyond it there is no further step back except into the suprahistorical, it is a time, but a time which is already no longer a time in itself, but is a time only in relation to what follows; in itself it is no time because in it there is no true before and after, because it is a kind of eternity, as is also indicated by the Hebrew expression (olam) used for it in Genesis.

It is thus a wild, inorganic, limitless time no longer, in which history runs its course for us; it is an organism, it is a system of times, in which for us the history of our race is incorporated; each division of this whole is an independent self-sufficient era, which is delimited not just by a era which went before, but by an era set apart from it and essentially different, as far back as the first era, which no longer needs delimitation, because within it there is no longer any time (no succession of times, that is), because it is a relative eternity. These divisions are:

- absolutely prehistoric,
- relatively prehistoric,
- historical time.

It is possible to draw a distinction between “history” and “chronology”; the former is the succession of events and facts themselves, and the latter the record of them. From this it follows that the concept of history is wider than the concept of chronology. To that extent, instead of “absolutely prehistoric” time, we may
simply say “prehistoric,” and instead of “relatively prehistoric,” “prechronological,” and the sequence would then be this:

[236]

a) prehistoric,
b) prechronological,
c) chronological time.

We must only take care not to think that between the first two there is only the accidental distinction which lies in the word, the distinction that the latter is recorded and the former not.

With a historical time continuing without limit the door is wide open to all kinds of arbitrariness, with no distinction at all between what is true and what is false, between insight and any assumption or fancy one likes. Plenty of examples of that may be pointed out in the very investigation which we have just concluded. Hermann, for example, denies that mythology could have been preceded by a theism invented by men themselves, and he sets great store by the notion that this could not have been so. But he has no objection to, and in fact himself accepts, the idea that such a theism was indeed invented several millennia later, thus in his view it was just that the time was lacking for such an invention prior to mythology. Now at the same time, though, the very same man expresses the hope that, as already happened in the field of the history of the Earth as a consequence of geological researches (which he got to know, however, more probably from Pastor Ballenstädt’s “Primæval World” than from Cuvier), he will see in the same way the history of man further enriched, through archaeological research, with a substantial bonus of an indefinite number of earlier æons. But he who has such a splendid era at his disposal as Hermann has reserved for himself with the explanation just mentioned, cannot lack the time for any possible invention which he might otherwise be inclined to ascribe to the primæval world. Hermann is thus in no position to refute anyone who might assume the existence of a system of wisdom in the primæval world, a system of which, for the few survivors of an earlier race of men (a race overtaken by one of those catastrophes which in Hermann’s view recur from time to time

---

149 Correspondence Relating to Homer and Hesiod, p. 67.
in the history of the Earth—and of which the like awaits us too in the future—
a race which for the most part would have been buried together with [237] its knowledge), only ruins and meaningless fragments would have been left, which would now constitute mythology. While it is right and proper for true science to confine everything as far as possible within definite limits and to include it within the bounds of comprehensibility, on the other hand in the case of a time assumed to be limitless no kind of arbitrary assumption may be excluded; if it is only barbaric societies who content themselves with heaping millennia on millennia, and if likewise it can only be a barbaric philosophy which strives to preserve for history a perpetuation into the infinite, then it can only be welcomed, by him who loves true science, when he sees established such a definite terminus a quo, such a concept to cut off every further regress, as is that of our absolutely prehistoric time.

Taking history in the widest sense, the philosophy of mythology itself is the first, and thus most necessary and least dispensable part of a philosophy of history. It is no use saying that the myths contain no history; they once actually existed and came into being, and as such they are themselves the subject matter of the earliest history, and, if one wishes to limit the philosophy of history too to the historical era, it must still be clearly impossible to find a beginning for it or to make any certain progress within it, if that which this (the historical era) posits as its own past remains completely barred to us. A philosophy of history which knows no beginning to history can only be something wholly baseless, and does not merit the name “philosophy.” And what applies to history as a whole must just as much hold true for each particular historical investigation.

Whatever may be the motive for our researches to go back as far as the primæval times of our race, be it to inquire into its beginnings in general, or into the origins of religion and secular [238] society, or of the sciences and the arts, we always in the end come up against that obscure space, that χρόνος ἄδηλος, which is occupied no longer by anything but mythology. Hence for a long time it has

150 Dissert. de Mythol. Graec. p. x. with reference to the terrestrial globe: “in quo, senescente jam, nos medii inter duas ruinas æternitatem, serius ocius novis fluctibus perituram, inani labore consortamur.”
necessarily been the most urgent requirement, in all sciences touching on those questions, that this obscurity be overcome, and that space made clear and plainly discernible. In the interval, and since philosophy cannot after all be dispensed with in those questions concerning the origin of the human race, a shallow and bad philosophy of history has tacitly exerted on all investigations of this kind an all the more manifest influence. This influence may be perceived in certain axioms which are presupposed everywhere, constantly, quite without a second thought, and as if nothing else were even conceivable. One of these axioms is that all human science, art, and culture must have emerged from the most squalid beginnings. In conformity with this, a well-known historian, now no longer living, makes, apropos of the subterranean temples of Ellora and Mahābalipuram\textsuperscript{CCCXXXIII} in India, the edifying observation “Even the naked Hottentots make drawings on the walls of their caves; from there to the richly embellished Indian temples, what spans! and yet,” adds the learned historian, “these too art must have traversed.”\textsuperscript{151 CCCXXXIV} But according to this view, an Egyptian, an Indian, and a Greek art would, on the contrary, never have been possible, never at any time.\textsuperscript{CCCXXXV} Whatever regions of time one might think up, and were one to reserve the right to append at will further millennia to those thought up: it is in the nature of the thing impossible that art could ever, and in any conjectured time, have achieved such heights from such wholly nugatory beginnings; and certainly even the above-mentioned historian would not have gone as far as to specify the period of time over which art could have travelled such a route. He could as well have stated how much time might be required for something to come into existence out of nothing.

\textsuperscript{[239]} Admittedly it will be objected to us that that axiom cannot be attacked without encroaching upon the great and as it were sacrosanct fundamental principle of the continual advance of the human race. Where there is an advance, though, there is a starting point, a from-where and a whither. But that advance does not lead, as is thought, from the small to the great, but rather the reverse: it makes everywhere what is great and gigantic the beginning, and

\textsuperscript{151} Heeren’s \textit{Outlines of the Politics and Trade of the Ancient Societies}, pt. I, sect. II, p. 311 n.
what is apprehended organically, what is pinned down, follows only later. Homer possesses such greatness that no later era was capable of bringing forth his like; on the other hand even a Sophoclean tragedy would have been an impossibility in the Homeric age. The eras are distinguished from each other not merely by having more, or less, so-called culture; the distinctions between them are internal, they are distinctions of essentially or qualitatively different principles, which succeed each other, and of which each in its own time can achieve the highest level of cultivation. This whole system, which history itself contradicts in the clearest way, which even its supporters in fact really contemplate only in the mind, and which none of them has as yet been capable of putting into practice or has even tried to put into practice, rests ultimately on the view, deriving not from facts but from an incomplete investigation and establishment of them, that man and humanity were, from the beginning, left solely to their own devices, that they sought their way blindly, *sine numine*, and at the mercy of the most malign accident, as it were gropingly. This is, one can say, the general view; since those who believe in revelation, those who look for that directing entity, that *numen*, in divine revelation, on the one hand find themselves in a distinct minority, and, on the other, can point out that directing entity only in the case of a very small section of the human race; and it still remains curious that the people of the true god had to seek out the architects of their temples among the Phoenicians. But how were these other societies nurtured, how saved from losing themselves in the wholly meaningless, how raised to the greatness which we cannot deny in their conceptions? If it was not mere *chance* which led the Babylonians, Phoenicians, and Egyptians to find the way to their constructions, so rich in art, and meriting, some of them, amazement, then here something else must have intervened, *something else*, but still something analogous to revelation. The counterpart of revealed religion in paganism is not a mere negation, but something positive of a different kind. This different and yet analogous entity was simply the mythological process. The forces which prevail in this are positive and real. This process too is a source of inspiration, and only from such inspirations may the productions of that era, some of them monstrous, be understood. Works like the Indian and Egyptian
monuments do not come into being like stalactitic caves through the mere passage of time; the same power which, internally, created the representations, some of them colossal, of mythology, applied externally gave rise to the bold undertakings in art, surpassing all yardsticks of later times. The power which, in the mythological ideas, elevated human consciousness beyond the bounds of reality, was also the first mistress of what was great and meaningful in art, also the force which, like a divine hand, raised humanity above the subordinate stages, logically at all events to be considered prior, and which still inspired the later productions of antiquity with a greatness which has remained until now unattainable for later times. For, at least as long as a heightened and expanded consciousness has not regained a relationship to the great powers and forces, a relationship which antiquity possessed of its own nature, it will always be advisable to keep to that which feeling and a refined sensibility are capable of creating out of immediate reality. It is true that just as we speak of Christian philosophy, we also speak of Christian art. But art is art everywhere and as such, in accordance with its nature and originally, is worldly and pagan, and hence it has to seek out in Christianity too not what is peculiar to it, but that universal element, that is to say that in it which constitutes its relationship to paganism. For the time being it may be regarded as a change for the better when art chooses, among the subjects offered it by revelation, those of a kind which go beyond the limited Christian aspect: occurrences like the confusion of languages, the emergence of societies, the destruction of Jerusalem, and others, in which the grand universal context does not first have to be brought out by the artist.

Although I cannot really remain with this topic now, I nonetheless wish to remark that the philosophy of mythology, just as it has a necessary implication for the philosophy of history, also forms an indispensable basis for the philosophy of art. For it will be imperative for this latter, it will even be one of its first tasks, to deal with the subjects of the artistic and literary depictions. Here it will be unavoidable that a poetry originally preceding all art and literature, namely inventing and generating the material too, be as it were called for. But only in mythology is there anything to be found which may be regarded as such an original generation of ideas,
anticipating all conscious and formal poetry. While it is inadmissible to have mythology itself coming into existence out of literary art, it is for that reason no less evident that for all subsequent free productions it acts as an original poetry of that kind. Hence in every comprehensive philosophy of art one chapter will have to discuss the nature and meaning of mythology, and to that extent also the way it came into existence, just as, in my lectures on the philosophy of art given fifty years ago, I included such a chapter, whose ideas were frequently reproduced in later investigations concerning mythology. Foremost among the factors by which Greek art was so extraordinarily favoured, is indubitably the nature of the subjects characteristic of it, thus especially the nature of those provided by its mythology, subjects which on the one hand belonged to a history higher than and an order of things different from this merely accidental and transitory one from which the later poet has to take his forms, and on the other hand possessed an essential and abiding inner relationship to Nature. That which has always been felt from the standpoint of art, the necessity of actual entities which at the same time—not merely signify, but are, principles, universal and eternal concepts; of that, philosophy has yet to show the possibility. Paganism is inwardly foreign to us, but with uncomprehended Christianity too it is not possible to reach the intimated artistic heights. It was premature to speak of a Christian art, at least among the inspirations of the one-sided Romantic atmosphere. But how much else there is which depends precisely on that, on Christianity comprehended, and in the confusion of today does not everything consciously or unconsciously press forward towards it?

Every work of art gains a higher stature, the more it arouses at the same time the impression of a certain necessity in its existence, but only eternal and necessary content eliminates even partially the fortuitousness of the work of art. The more the subjects in themselves poetical dwindle, the more fortuitous does poetry itself also become; conscious of no necessity, it must endeavour all the more to conceal its fortuitousness through endless production, to give itself the appearance of necessity. The impression of fortuitousness is what we cannot overcome even in the most ambitious works of our time, while in the works of Greek antiquity
there is expressed not merely the necessity, truth, and reality of the
subject, but equally the necessity, and therefore the truth and reality,
of the production. With these it cannot be asked, as in the case of so many works of a later art, “Why, wherefore does it exist?” The mere reiteration of the production cannot elevate a mere illusory life to real life. Nor, in such a time, is it even any longer particularly necessary to promote artistic productiveness, for that which is fortuitous is of its own nature, as I said, predisposed to appear as something necessary, and therefore tends to proliferate into the unmeasured and boundless, and in fact nowadays we do see such a truly endless and aimless output in poetry patronized by no one. [243] Byron looks for that higher world, poetical in itself, he attempts, up to a point, forcibly to enter it, but the scepticism of an era of despair, which ravaged his heart too, does not allow him to arrive at any belief in its manifestations.

Writers of spirit and erudition have long emphasized the distinction between antiquity and recent times, but more in order to legitimize the so-called Romantic poetry than to penetrate into the true profundity of ancient times. But if it is not a mere figure of speech to speak of antiquity as a world in itself, then one will have to allow it a principle of its own as well, one will have to stretch one’s concepts to the point of acknowledging the fact that mysterious antiquity, and indeed the further we go back into it the more clearly is this so, was subject to a different law and to different forces from those by which the present era is governed. A psychology which is drawn merely from the circumstances of the present, and which perhaps even from these has been capable of extracting only superficial observations, is as little suited for explaining phenomena and events in the primæval time as are the mechanical laws which apply in the Nature which has already come to be and is frozen, for being transferred to the time of the original coming to be and the first living emergence. Naturally the easiest solution would be to banish these phenomena as mere myths once and for all into the realm of the unreal; to bypass, with the aid of shallow hypotheses,

---

152 Arbiters of fine art belittled Platen because of what they called his meagre output. They did not know and will never know what was in him, in him whose life was cut short so early, and to whose memory I, not knowing whether I myself will be granted time for anything more extensive, would like in the meantime to dedicate at least these lines.
the most well-founded facts, especially those concerning the religious life of the ancients.

The theogonic process, in which humanity was enmeshed with the first actual consciousness, is essentially a religious process. While the fact ascertained is, from this side, important principally for the history of religion, it cannot remain without a potent influence on the philosophy of religion as well.

It is an admirable characteristic of the Germans that they have applied themselves so avidly and persistently to this science; if it is for that reason no more certain, perhaps even less so, of its concept, scope, and content, than many others, then this (ignoring the fact that in the nature of the matter there are in no science as many dilettantes, and that thus in none, too, is it so easy to go astray, as in the science of religion) may partly be because it has always depended too much on the course of general philosophy, whose movements it compliantly reproduced within itself, while it would certainly have been possible for it to have acquired a content independent of philosophy and so itself to have exerted a reciprocal influence on the latter, in such a way as to extend it.

Such a possibility may now actually have been given the science of religion through the result of our investigation of mythology, in which the existence of a religion independent of philosophy and reason, as well as of revelation, was demonstrated. For assuming the correctness of a pronouncement of G. Hermann, whom, as a man who expresses himself clearly and incisively, we like repeatedly to cite; assuming that there were no religion other than either a religion deriving from a claimed revelation, or the so-called natural religion, which last, however, would only be philosophical religion—a pronouncement whose intent is that there is only philosophical religion: then we would in fact not know how the philosophy of religion could be distinguished and asserted as a particular science (which it should be, though); since the merely philosophical religion would indubitably already have been dealt with by general philosophy, and therefore for the philosophy of religion, if it did not renounce all objective content, nothing would remain but to reiterate in itself a part or a chapter of general philosophy.

Against that pronouncement we have now shown, and indeed without even starting in any way from a philosophy, but as the
outcome of purely historically based deductions, that, apart from the
two religions alone contrasted with each other there, there is one
which is independent of both, the mythological religion. We have
shown additionally and in particular that in respect of time it itself
precedes any revelation (if such a thing is postulated), indeed it is
even the necessary cause of the latter, and is accordingly [245]
undeniably the first form in which religion in general exists; it is for
a certain era the *universal* religion, the religion of the human race,
in contrast to which revelation, even though it does appear so early,
is nevertheless only a partial phenomenon, confined to a particular
race, and remaining for millennia comparable to a weakly glowing
light, incapable of penetrating the obscuration opposing it. We have
then shown further, that mythology, as the religion of the human
race from time immemorial and to that extent also anticipating all
thought, is only comprehensible through the aspect of
consciousness which establishes God *naturally*, and that
consciousness cannot withdraw from this relationship without
succumbing to a necessary process by which it is brought back to
the original position. In that it came into being out of such a
relationship, mythology can only be the *naturally self-generating*
religion, and should alone, therefore, also be called the *natural*
religion, whereas the rational or philosophical religion should not be
given this name (“natural”), as has happened until now because
everything in which revelation plays no part is called “natural,” and
because reason was all that could be set up in opposition to
revelation.

This definition of the mythological religion as the natural one has
here a deeper meaning than in what is nowadays so commonly said:
that mythology is the “natural religion,” by which most people only
mean to say that it is the religion of the man who could not
raise himself beyond creation to the creator, or who has deified
Nature (explanations whose inadequacy has been adequately shown);
but some people even understand by “natural religion” just the first
stage of the mythological one, namely the stage which (where, as
they say, the *concept* of religion, and thus God as the object of this
concept, is still wholly shrouded by Nature) is immersed in Nature.
As far as this explanation is concerned, then we have shown with
reference to the *notitia insita* that mythology could not have come
into existence out of the mere actualization, even if perhaps represented as necessary, of a concept, since it must rather be based on an actual, real relationship of the human essence to God, out of which relationship alone can a process independent of human thought emerge, a process which in consequence of this origin may be called natural to humanity. So in this sense the mythological religion is, for us, the natural one.

We could just as easily call it the religion which grows wild (in the way that the great apostle to the heathens calls heathenism the wild olive tree, and Judaism, as founded on revelation, the domesticated one), or simply the wild religion, in the sense in which in German the natural fire in the sky is called “wildfire,” and naturally warm spas “Wildbäder.”

But no fact is isolated; every newly discovered fact means that others already familiar, but perhaps not understood, appear in a new light. No true beginning is without consequence and continuation, and natural religion brings in its wake, of its own accord and simply due to the antithesis, revealed religion. Earlier, too, we already found this to be so. The religion which comes into existence blindly can be without precondition, but the revealed religion, in which there is a will, an intention, requires a foundation, and can therefore only come second. We have been obliged to acknowledge the mythological religion to be one independent of all reason, and we will be the less able to avoid doing the same in respect of revealed religion, as with this its acceptance is in any case already mediated; the recognition of the reality of the one results in the reality of the other, or at least makes it comprehensible. If revealed religion is declared to be the supernatural one, then through the relationship to natural religion it does itself become natural to some extent, although admittedly the supernaturalism which is entirely direct cannot but appear unnatural.

With natural religion as a precondition, then, the whole status of revealed religion is changed; it is no longer the sole religion independent of reason and philosophy, and if the mode of thought which understands no relationship of consciousness to God other

153 Ro. 11.
than a rational one is called “rationalism,” then the primary antithesis to that is not revealed religion, but natural.

[247] Even in general, no single concept in a system of related concepts can be correctly specified, as long as another is missing or is not correctly specified. CCCXLIX Revealed religion is, in the historical sequence, only the second and thus already indirect form of real religion (where “real” means “independent of reason”). It shares this independence with natural religion, hence the difference between it and philosophical religion is only generic, not a specific difference as has been hitherto assumed; but no concept can be completely specified merely in terms of its generic difference. Revealed and natural religion have in common that they came into existence not through science, but by way of a real process; the specific difference between them is the natural element in the way it happened, in the one, and the supernatural element in the other. But this supernatural element becomes comprehensible through its reference to the natural. The main thing is that it should not consist in mere representation. Now Christianity is devoted to liberation from the blind force of paganism, and the reality of a liberation is measured in terms of the actuality and the force of that from which it liberates. Had paganism not been something actual, then Christianity could not have been anything actual either. Conversely, if the process to which man is subject as a consequence of his withdrawal from the original relationship—if the mythological process is not something merely represented, but something which actually takes place, it cannot, then, be supplanted, either, by something which exists merely in the power of representation, by a doctrine, but only by an actual process, by a deed independent of, and indeed surpassing, human representation; for all that can oppose the process is deed; and this deed will be the content of Christianity.

Their whole science, for the Christian theologians, has almost evaporated into so-called apologetics, which has, however, never got them anywhere, and which they keep on starting again from the beginning; this goes to show that they have not found the point to which, in our time, the lever might be applied with success. This point can only lie in the precondition of all revelation, the religion which came blindly into existence. But even if [248] they wholly refrain from leaving the timid defensive attitude onto which they
have been forced back, and returning to aggressive resistance, their resistance will meet difficulties more easily overcome in the detail if they take note that revelation too has its material preconditions in natural religion. Revelation does not create the substance within which it takes effect, it finds it there independent of itself. Its formal meaning has to be an overcoming of the merely natural, unfree religion; but for that very reason it contains the latter in itself, just as that which transcends contains what is transcended within itself. The assertion of this material identity cannot be esteemed impious or unchristian, if one knows how staunchly the very same thing was at one time in fact upheld by the orthodox viewpoint. If it was permissible to see in paganism corruptions of revealed truths, then there is no possibility of denying the contrary, that in Christianity may be seen a corrected paganism. But apart from that, who would not be aware of how a good deal that is in Christianity appeared, to those who would hear only of a religion of reason, as a pagan element which in their view should have been eradicated from pure, that is to say rational, Christianity? The kinship between the two became apparent, though, simply in their common external fate, in the fact that an attempt was made to rationalize both (mythology and revelation), that is to say to bring them back to a rational sense or one which seemed rational to most people, by way of a wholly equivalent distinction between form and content, between what was essential and the formulation merely appropriate to the times. But precisely with the banished pagan element, all reality, too, would be removed from Christianity. What remains, certainly, is the relationship to the Father and worship of him in spirit and in truth, and in this result everything pagan disappears, that is to say everything which is not in the relationship to God in his truth; but this result, without its preconditions, has itself no empirical truth. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” says Christ, but he adds: “I am the way,” and “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Finally, let us come to a decision about one further fundamental principle. [219] This is, that one actual religion cannot be distinguished from another. Now if natural and revealed religion are both actual religion, then in respect to the final content there cannot be a distinction between the two; both of them must contain the
same elements, only their significance will be one in this, and another in that, and since the difference between the two is only that one of them is the naturally established religion, the other the divinely established one, the same principles, then, which are, in the former, merely natural, will in the latter acquire the significance of divine principles. Without pre-existence Christ is not Christ. He existed as natural potency, before he appeared as a divine personality. In this respect too we can say of him that he was in the world (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν). He was cosmic potency, even though in himself not without God in the way that the apostle says to former heathens: “ye were without God” (you had no direct relationship to God), “ye were in the world” (in that which is not God, in the realm of the cosmic forces).  

154 For the same potences in whose unity God exists and reveals himself—precisely these in their disjunction and within the process are extradivine, purely natural forces, in which there is not, indeed, no trace of God at all, but in which, however, he does not exist in accordance with his divinity, thus not in accordance with his truth. For in his divine self he is One and can neither be Several nor enter into a process. “The hour cometh,” says Christ in the passage already quoted, cccli “and now,” namely subsequently to the beginning, “is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth”; thus until this time even the Jews do not worship the Father in spirit, access to him in his truth was given to both, to them which were afar off and to them which were nigh; 155 to those who were subject to the law of revelation just as much as to those subject to the merely natural law; from which it is then evident that in revelation too there was something by which the consciousness of God in the spirit was held back, and that Christ in his advent is for that very reason the end of revelation, because he removes this God-alienating element.

So much, then, for the relationship of revealed religion to the natural variety. But now, if what has been argued up to this point has been argued consistently, you will understand of your own accord that the first position available for philosophical religion in

154 Eph. 2:12. If ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ means nothing in itself, then it is a wholly empty addition, since in the sense which it has then, the Christians too are in the world.

155 Eph. 2:17, 18.
this historical sequence is the third. What would this philosophical religion have to be? If we apply to it too the fundamental principle already stated, if, essentially and in respect of content, one actual religion cannot be distinguished from another actual religion, then the philosophical religion could only actually be religion if it contained the factors of actual religion, as they exist in natural and revealed religion, contained them in itself no less than do these: only in the way in which it contained these factors could its distinction from natural and revealed religion lie, and this distinction, further, could be none other than that the principles which operate in those religions without being understood, were present as grasped and understood in philosophical religion. Philosophical religion, far from being justified, by its position, in taking the place of the religions which went before, would thus, by reason of this very position, have the task, and, by reason of its content, the means, of comprehending those religions which are independent of reason, and indeed of comprehending them as such, accordingly in their whole truth and intrinsicalness.

And now you will surely see that just such a philosophical religion would be necessary for us, in order to understand also as possible, and accordingly in a philosophical way, that which we find ourselves obliged to recognize as actual in mythology, and so to arrive at a philosophy of mythology. But this philosophical religion does not exist, and if, as certainly no one will dispute, it could only be the final product and the highest expression of a fully developed philosophy itself, then we may indeed ask where the philosophy might be found which would be in the position to render comprehensible, that is to say to demonstrate as possible, that which we recognized in mythology, and indirectly also in revelation—a real relationship of the human consciousness to God, while philosophy knows only of rational religion and only of a rational relationship to God, and sees all religious evolution only as an evolution in the idea, which is where Hermann’s pronouncement (that there is only philosophical religion) also belongs. We agree with this observation in respect of the relationship of our viewpoint to the currently prevailing philosophy, but we cannot see in this any conclusive argument against the correctness of our earlier analysis or the truth of its result. For in this whole investigation we did not
start with any preconceived viewpoint, least of all from a philosophy, and the result, therefore, is one which was found, and which holds good, independently of any philosophy. We took up mythology at no other point than that where everyone comes to grips with it. For us, philosophy was not the standard by which we rejected or accepted the viewpoints which presented themselves. We welcomed every method of explanation, even the one most remote from any philosophy, as long as it did actually explain. Only step by step, as a consequence of a purely historical analysis, plain for all to see, did we reach our result, always presupposing that what Bacon pointed out in respect to philosophy would apply also to this subject: through the successive exclusion of that which is demonstrably in error, and the removal, from what is fundamentally true, of anything false adhering to it, that which is true will finally be confined to such a restricted space that one will, in a way, be obliged to recognize it and express it. Not so much, then, eclectically, as by the route of an advancing critical analysis, gradually eliminating everything historically inconceivable, did we reach the point where only this viewpoint of mythology was left, which it will only now be our task to understand philosophically.

But admittedly—considering the dependence of most people on their philosophical concepts and on their power of understanding in general, it is to be expected that many will find, in the philosophy familiar to them, grounds for dissatisfaction with the viewpoint stated. This does not entitle them to contradict it directly, for indeed this viewpoint is itself a mere result; if they want to contradict it, then they will have to find something in the earlier arguments which provides a justification for a contradiction, and this, also, would have to be no mere incidental matter, not some detail (for how easy it is, where so much, and so much that is diverse, has to be touched upon, to fall short in something like that), it would have to be something which could not be taken away without destroying the whole fabric of our arguments.

Nor, inasmuch as our viewpoint of mythology is independent of any philosophy, is it possible to contradict it, because it is not compatible with any philosophical viewpoint (were it even the one which obtains almost universally), and if no available philosophy measures up to the phenomenon, then it is not the phenomenon,
now it is in existence and irrefutably acknowledged, which must be tailored to fit some predefined philosophy, but on the contrary it is the viewpoint based on fact, whose inevitable influence on individual philosophical sciences we have shown, which should take it upon itself also to extend, or to induce an extension in, *philosophy* and even *the philosophical consciousness itself*, beyond their present limits.
SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This summary of contents is translated from division two, volume one, of the collected works, published in 1856. It was probably prepared by the editors of that edition, and not by Schelling himself, because by no means every turn of the argument is reflected in the summary, and because they did the same for other works (for example the System of Transcendental Idealism). For that reason I have put it after Schelling's text. The page numbers here refer to the 1856 edition. There are five errors in the page numbers given in the original German summary: it has pages 1 instead of 5, 68 instead of 78, 118 instead of 119, 136 instead of 137, and 242 instead of 241.

LECTURE ONE. Title and subject of these lectures [5]. Course of the argument [5]. First method of explaining mythology, as poetry (mythology contains no truth). Development and critical analysis of this viewpoint [10]. Discussion of the passage from Herodotus II, 53: which yields the relationship of Hellenic mythology to poetry [15]. Relationship of the other mythologies, specifically the Indian, to poetry [21].

LECTURE TWO. The allegorical interpretation of mythology (there is truth in mythology, but not in mythology as such): the various sub-types of this interpretation, the euhemeristic, moral, physical [26]; the cosmogonic or philosophical (after Heyne) [30]; the philosophico-philological (after Hermann) [34].

LECTURE THREE. Attempted synthesis of the poetical and philosophical viewpoints (parallels between the co-operation of poetry and philosophy in the emergence of mythology and that in the formation of languages). Result: mythology is at any rate an organic product [47].—That which might explain resides in a third element, above poetry and philosophy [54]. Transition to the discussion of the historical preconditions of mythology [55]. Critical analysis of these preconditions in the case of the types of explanation mentioned up to now: 1) that mythology was invented by individuals [56]; 2) by the society itself [59]. Principal instance in opposition to the latter—apart from the kinship between the different mythologies—the fact that a society only comes into being together with its theogony [61]. Result: mythology not an invention.
LECTURE FOUR. The religious explanations of mythology (there is truth in mythology as such) [67]. Various sub-types of these, sub-types which still cannot be accepted as really religious (D. Hume’s assumption. J. H. Voss) [68]. Explanation which starts out from the religious instinct, where either Nature is brought in (deification of Nature) or polytheism is derived from the notitia insita alone [76]. Assumption of a prior formal doctrine of God, opposed by Hume [78]. Explanation from the corruption of revealed truth, the corruption of a monotheism (Lessing, Cudworth. Euhemeristic use of the Old Testament by G. Voss. Assumption of a primal revelation. William Jones) [83]. Fr. Creuzer’s theory [89]. Transition to the question of the causal relationship between the separation (= emergence) of societies and polytheism.

LECTURE FIVE. The physical hypotheses relating to the emergence of societies [94]. Relationship of this problem to the question of racial differences [97]. Cause of the separation of societies found in a spiritual crisis, proved by the connection between the separation of societies and the emergence of languages (Ge. 11) [100]. Explanation of that crisis and the positive cause of the emergence of societies [103]. Means of countering the dissolution into societies, of preserving the consciousness of unity (prehistoric monuments, tower of Babel) [115].

LECTURE SIX. The principle of original unity: a universal God, common to all mankind [119]. Closer investigation of this, together with comment on the difference between simultaneous and successive polytheism [123]. Resolution of the principal question, of who that shared God was. Concept of relative monotheism and, from this, explanation of mythology as a process, in which at the same time there come into existence, jointly with theology, societies and languages, in an orderly sequence [126]. Comparison of this result with the assumption of a prior pure monotheism [137]. Relationship of relative monotheism to revelation [140].

LECTURE SEVEN. Confirmation in the Mosaic scriptures of what has been said up to now [144]. Significance of the Flood [149]. The monotheism of Abraham not an absolutely unmythological monotheism [161].

LECTURE EIGHT. Further details about the God of the primæval era in his relationship to the true God [175]. Application to the concept of revelation [179]. Analysis of the relationship of prehistoric time to historical time, whence the
conclusion, that polytheism has no historical beginning, which accords with David Hume’s assertion [181]. Suprahistorical process, by way of which relative monotheism came into existence, and the final precondition of mythology in the human consciousness, whose nature it is to establish God [184]. Result: mythology is, regarded subjectively, a necessary theogonic process (going on in consciousness) [193].

LECTURE NINE. On Ottfried Müller’s ostensibly analogous view of mythology [199]. What would remain specific to the philosophy of mythology [202]. At this point, interpolation about the author’s proprietary right in respect of his thoughts. Continuation to the question of the objective significance of the theogonic process [204].

LECTURE TEN. Relationship of the philosophy of mythology to other sciences and its importance for them: 1) for the philosophy of history [228]. 2) for the philosophy of art [241]. 3) for the philosophy of religion [244].
OTHER TRANSLATIONS OF SCHELLING


*On the Possibility of a Form of All Philosophy* (Ueber die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie, 1794)
Of the *I* as Principle of Philosophy, or On the Unconditional in Human Knowledge (Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie, 1795)  
*Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* (Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus, 1795)  


*On the Essence of Philosophical Criticism Generally, and its Relationship to the Present State of Philosophy* (Ueber das Wesen der philosophischen Kritik überhaupt, und ihr Verhältnis zum gegenwärtigen Zustand der Philosophie insbesondere, 1802, possibly partly written by Hegel). Tr. H. S. Harris.  
*On the Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to Philosophy in General* (Ueber das Verhältnis der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie überhaupt, 1802. Definitely not by Hegel although he foolishly tried to claim it was!) Tr. George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris. The two works published together in *Between Kant and Hegel*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985.


There are also two other translations of the present work: an abridged Danish one by A. B. Thorson, Copenhagen 1862, and the following in French: *Introduction à la philosophie de la mythologie*. Tr. S. Jankélévitch, Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1946 (2 vols).
INDEX

A
Abel 147
Abimelech 163
Abraham 116n, 153, 156-7, 161-72, 177
Absolute monotheism 128
Absolutely prehistoric era/time 137, 181-4, 234-37
Absolutely-One 126, 144, 147, 178, 181-2, 190, 192
Abydenos, fragments 102
Accident—see Chance
Accidentally-Eternal 164
Actus 75, 81, 137, 141, 187, 209
Actual religions, impossibility of distinguishing between 249
Actuality 5, 18, 26-7, 31-2, 42, 52, 68, 76-7, 102, 104, 114, 117-125, 127-30,
  135, 137, 141, 149-50, 162, 171, 172n, 176, 179, 182-6, 188-92, 195-8, 200,
  207-9, 215-17, 232-3, 237, 242, 244-5, 247-51
Adam 145-9, 162-3
Adonai 171
Adonis (Syrian God) 86
Æschylus
  his description of the flight of Io 59
  his Prometheus 44n
Æsculapius 33
Æther 38, 44-5
Agamemnon 201
Ahriman 109n
Alchemy 29
Alemanni 159
Alkaios 19
Allegorical interpretations 26, 29-31, 33-4, 196
America, diseases from 96
American native 30n
Ammianus Marcellinus 159n
Angel of Jehovah 164
Animals 60, 63, 68-71, 76, 112-3, 117, 193, 221
Anteriority of revelation, claimed 140-3
Anticipation 177
Antiquity, as a world in itself 243
Aphrodite 29
Apollo (in the Iliad) 201
Apologetics (so-called) 247
Arabic language 50, 106-7, 110-11, 149, 163, 167
Arabs 94-5, 154, 158n, 167
Arbitrariness (see also Chance) 9, 29, 39, 59-60, 91, 197, 220-3, 229, 236-7
Argus, the herdsman 58
Aristophanes 44-5
Aristotle 49, 219
Art 24, 238-43
subject of 240-2
Artistic production 242
Asia 57, 88
Asiatic Religions 88
Atheism 14, 39-40, 74, 81, 141, 188
Athene 28
Atonement, day of 178
Azara, Félix de 40, 63, 72-3, 114-15

B
Babel, Babylon, and Babylonians 25, 105-6, 109n, 117, 153, 161, 239
Bacon, Francis 14, 28, 251
Bailly, Jean-Sylvain 87
Ballenstädt, Johann Georg Justus 236
Barbarian, derivation of the word 106
Barbarians and Greeks 110
Barbarism, impossibility of reversion to 112-13
Beauty 23n, 91
Belgians 219
Blind monotheism 137, 187, 190-1, 246, 247
Bochart, Samuel 86
Brahmins 99
Bread 168
Bushmen 40
Byron, George Gordon, Baron 243
C
Caciques 63n
Cadmus 86
Cain 147, 172n
Calderón de la Barca, Pedro 28
Canaan 157
Caracalla (Aurelius Antoninus) 158
Caste system in India 99
Castor and Pollux 33
Catathars 154
Categories 120, 217
Catholic Clergy 40
Causes 11, 17, 21, 31, 59, 68, 82, 92, 95, 99, 101-3, 105, 107, 108, 119, 121,
124, 129, 131, 138, 148, 164, 207-8, 210, 218, 244
eemanative 121
immediate 103, 105, 164
inner 95
positive 119, 139
pure 210
Central position 49, 91, 129-30, 206
Chaldeans 165
Chance/accident/fortuitousness 9, 15, 22, 27, 48, 53-4, 57-60, 62, 67, 77, 91,
99, 111, 126, 129, 133-4, 163-4, 177, 180, 187, 191-2, 197, 199, 205, 207,
210, 214, 217, 220, 227, 231, 236, 239, 241-2
Chaos 14, 17, 18, 37, 45-6
Charites 46
Charruas 63n
Chemical Action 29
Childhood 231
Chinese 97
language 134-6
Christ 152n, 176-8, 190, 248-50
Christianity and Christians 28, 33, 81, 83, 108, 156, 167-8, 180, 184, 201-3,
212, 224, 240, 242, 247-9
Christian
art 240-2
consciousness 202
doctrine 201
philosophy 240
  theologians 180, 184, 247-8
Chronos 39
Chus (Ethiopia) 157
Cicero, Marcus Tullius 27n, 32-3, 72, 106n
Circumcision 164
Clairvoyance 55, 82
Clericus, Johannes 27
Coeus 39
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 196n
Comets 138
Commandment 177
Communal constructive urge 60-64, 200
abstract 31, 44, 50, 51, 183
actualization of 245
deification of 178
inborn 78
issuing from another 35
moral 28
of chronology 235
of essence 220
of existence 68
of freedom 230
of gods 68, 73
of history 235
of the Kantian school 53
of Nature 59
of polytheism 183, 187
of religion 245
of revelation 141-2, 179-80
of the theogonic process 193, 204, 207, 210
philosophical 45, 48, 51, 251
physical 44
primal 45
scientific 40, 50, 185, 224
secondary 148-9, 156, 220n
speculative 45
spiritual 52, 169
system of 50, 247
universal and eternal 242
Confusion of Language 103, 107-10, 114-16, 132-3, 149, 240
Consciousness
actual 179, 185, 189, 192, 197, 243
Christian 202
formal 187
primal 187
community of 62, 65, 117
inner nature of 207, 215
in its pure substance 189, 191
its liberation 138
mythological 20, 108, 212
of God 75, 119, 141, 185, 187, 249
of self 223
of unity 115, 117
Pelagian 18
philosophical or scientific 43, 52, 252
religious 107, 142
universal 114
Constantly coming to be 165
Content 10, 14, 18, 27, 30-1, 34, 42, 47-8, 53, 77, 79, 81, 83, 84n, 86, 91, 145,
150, 179, 189, 194-5, 197-8, 201, 207, 214, 216, 218, 224, 229, 231, 233, 233,
242, 244, 247-50
Contradiction 9, 23, 48, 62, 69, 86, 88, 89, 132, 146, 159, 176, 186, 190, 222,
239, 251
Copula 50
Coral Reefs 61
Correspondence between myths in different societies 57, 61-2, 87-8, 92, 123,
149, 152
Corruption (see also Error) 43, 78, 79-80, 82-3, 178-9, 205, 208, 214-5, 219,
221, 222, 248
Cosmic
forces 216, 249
potence 249
Cousin, Victor 33n
Creuzer, Georg Friedrich 42n, 89-92, 126, 138, 214, 226
Crisis, spiritual 18, 20, 24, 100-4, 107, 110, 112-13, 116, 128, 131, 132, 155, 181, 233
Critical Spirit 61
Crius and Coeus 39
Cronus 7, 30-1, 39, 46, 85, 120-1, 122-4, 127, 130, 152, 173, 198
Crusades, and the spread of disease 96
Cudworth, Ralph 27, 85
Culture, so-called 239
Cuvier, Georges, Baron de 236
Cyclopean structures 117-8

D
Danaus 86
Darkness (see also Obscurity) 14, 17, 38, 44, 50, 59, 72, 86, 111
David 151, 169, 174n
Deed 6, 198, 233, 247
Definition 127
Deification 33, 178, 207
of Nature 76, 178, 205-7, 245
Delirium 55
Demeter 62
Derceto 152-3
Dialectic 9, 219
Differences
established at a stroke 130
non-natural 100
Dike 46
Diodorus of Sicily 154, 172
Dionysus 34, 37
derivation of the name 149
Diseases/illnesses 50, 96-7, 100, 222
Disintegrated monotheism 91-2, 208
Disintegration of original unity 122, 125, 137-9, 175, 208-9
Disyllabism 133-6
Doctrinal meaning 10, 12, 16, 26, 67, 69, 195, 215
Doctrine 17, 27, 30, 33, 37, 42, 48, 53-4, 57, 67, 69, 78-81, 86-92, 109n, 116,
127, 137-9, 167, 175-6, 185, 198, 199, 201, 202, 220-1, 247
Persian 109n
Doom 192
Dornedden, Karl Friedrich 30n
Dorus 157
Dreams 55, 82, 163, 206
Dupuis, Charles François 76

E
Eastern poetry 88
Eastern religions 88
Eber 157
Ecstasy 221
Education 3, 28, 174n, 226
Egypt and Egyptians 24-5, 30n, 57-9, 62, 65, 86, 87, 99, 108, 111, 116, 153,
157, 158, 171, 238-40
lack of racial difference 99
negroid race (oldest inhabitants) in 99, 111
Egyptian
ancient language 111
art 238-40
deities 25
myths 25, 59, 86-7
priests 25, 116
religion 57, 116
theology 24, 30n, 90-1, 108
Eichhorn, Johann Gottfried 153n
El Elioun 166
El Olam 165-6, 168
El Shaddai 168-70, 189
Electromagnetism and chemical action 29
Ellora, temple of 238
Elohim 121, 142, 145-6, 161-3, 169
Elohim chadaschim 166
Emanation 90, 121
Energy 32, 139
Enos 145-9, 155
Epaphus 58
Epicureans 33
Epicurus 27, 55
Erebus 38, 43-4
Eros 38, 44
Error and Falsehood (see also Corruption) 15, 42, 47, 66, 68, 74, 86, 91, 102, 124, 144, 155, 156, 183n, 204, 205, 207-13, 219, 236, 251
Esau 158
definition of 220
Essential eternity 141
Eternity 49, 141, 147, 155, 164-6, 171, 182, 187, 189, 192, 219, 235, 236n, 242
Ethiopia 157
Ethnology and Ethnogeny 128
Euhemerism 27, 33, 68, 85, 214
inverted 233
Euhemerus 27, 68, 214, 233
Eunomia 46
Euphrates 152, 157, 166
Eusebius (see also Sanchuniathon) 102n
Eve 172n
Existence, concept of 68
Exodus 109
Explanation 251
independent of philosophy 8
its relation to coming into existence 8, 77
F
Fables 6, 13, 14, 58-9, 171, 195, 220-1
Fable-doctrine 220-1
Fact 5, 8, 20, 22, 42, 47, 61, 62, 83, 91, 99, 107-8, 125, 136, 143n, 155, 171, 175, 178, 180, 185, 189, 201, 217, 224, 229, 231, 235, 239, 243, 246, 252
great 62, 176, 224, 229
pure 125
supernatural 83
Færoe Islands 96
Fall of Man 87, 141, 144, 163, 205
Fanaticism 167
Far East (India) 35, 43
Fate 192, 248
Father 7, 30, 51, 85, 151, 154, 158, 161, 166, 169-70, 177, 201, 248-9
god the 248-9
meaning of the word in Hebrew 51
Fear and terror 13-14, 58-9, 68, 81, 112, 115, 116-7, 124, 138-9, 163
Fetishism 178
First race of men 144-9, 160
Flood (see also Water, Noah) 91, 149-55, 160
Folk-Poetry 60
Force 13, 19, 24, 31, 34-5, 39, 42, 64, 103-4, 109, 111, 113, 124, 129, 137, 139,
155, 175, 207, 215, 240, 243, 247, 249
independent of human will and thought 137
of Nature 34-5, 39, 42
spiritual 103
Form 23-4, 28, 31, 35, 38, 48-50, 52-4, 60, 77-8, 81, 88n, 109, 126, 130-1, 133,
140, 145, 188, 190, 193, 195, 200, 204, 205, 209, 214, 217, 219, 220, 229,
233, 241, 248
and content 53, 81, 195, 248
and material—see Material and form
Formal explanation 29
Formation (attribute of languages) 111
Forms of gods 130
Fortuitousness—see Chance
Fourcroy, Antoine-François de 217
Free 3, 24-5, 26, 31, 41, 53, 68, 87, 97, 122, 139, 159, 176, 192, 194, 200, 206,
230, 241, 248
activity = invention 53, 55, 200
-but-necessary 53
knowledge 186
movement 130
philosophy 45
poetry 12, 18, 21, 24, 241
relationship 176, 189-90, 194
French
bishop (Huet) 86
Encyclopædia, article on existence 69n
language 107n, 111n
philosophy of history 229
translation of Creuzer 89n
“translator” of Azara (Walckenaer) 72n
Future 38, 84n, 130-1, 171-4, 176-8, 181, 188, 190, 230, 236

G
Gaul 158
Gæa 38-9, 43, 46
Generic and specific differences 247
Genesis 22, 86, 101, 142-3, 144-53, 157-64, 166-72, 235
Geological
  elevation, hypothesis of 22
  research 236
Germanic languages 135, 158-9
Germans and Germany 70, 196n, 203, 217-8, 243-4
  academic life and freedom in 3, 203
  explanation of the name “Deutsch” 159
  stunting of spirit in 101
German
  language 50, 51, 110
  theology 159
Gesenius, Friedrich Heinrich Wilhelm 109n, 157n
Giants 36, 149-50
Gibbon, Edward 1580n
Gigantic, the 23927
God (see also true god) 74-8, 81, 83-6, 90, 104, 144-73, 175-8, 185-7, 189-90, 198, 208, 210, 215, 245-6, 248-50
God of heaven and earth 166
Gods, the 7, 13-20, 23-27, 40-1, 63, 68-70, 72-3, 197-8, 208
Gods A B and C 126-7, 130, 133, 136-7, 148, 152-3, 164-6
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 12, 22, 23, 23n, 202
Golden Age 175
Gothic language 158-9
Goyim 156
Grammatical personification 36, 41, 45
Grand universal context 160, 174n, 241
Gravity 130
Greece and Greeks 6, 8, 14-21, 23n, 24, 29, 32-3, 43, 57, 62, 73, 110, 117, 131, 212, 231
Greek
   art 124, 238, 241
culture 46
gods 6, 8, 24, 29-39, 42-6, 86, 110, 120, 122-5, 130
gods, 3 races of 30-1, 33, 120-1, 130
language 21, 36, 107, 110-11, 135, 193, 220n
mythology 14, 57, 70, 87, 91, 124, 150, 152-4
Greens, Pelasgians turning into 107-8, 131
Grimm, Jakob Ludwig Karl 159n
Gruter, Janus 213n
Guanas 63n
Guarani language 114
Guigniaut, Joseph-Daniel 89n

H
Hagar 167
Ham 85, 131, 157
Heathenism/paganism 33, 80, 85, 93, 105, 156, 163-6, 174, 176, 179, 195, 205, 212, 240-2, 246-9
Hebraic style 170
Hebrew
   language 50n, 51, 135, 169n
   the name 156-7
   nation/society 145
Heeren, Arnold Hermann 238
Helen 29
Helicon 43
Helios 29
Hemera 38, 44
Hera 28
Hercules 33
Herder, Johann Gottfried 229
Here 58
Hermann, Gottfried 34-46, 53, 56-8, 61, 66, 68, 82, 110n, 127, 197, 214, 236, 244, 251
Herodotus 15-20, 25, 46, 99, 107-8, 110, 111n, 232
Hesiod and the Theogony 15-19, 27, 35-8, 42-6, 49, 57, 58n, 125
saw Cyclopean structures 117
Heyne, Christian Gottlob 30-4, 36, 40, 48, 56-7, 66, 67-8, 71, 197, 214
Hierapolis 152
Hierarchy of languages 110
Hindus (see also Indians) 212
Historical
analysis (Schelling’s method) 9, 251
dialectic 9
era/time 56, 166, 181-2, 205, 229-38
motivation 55
research 5
History 21, 26, 55-6, 65, 85, 91-2, 131, 139, 144, 178-81, 186, 191, 197-8, 216, 223, 225, 229-41, 244
of the earth 153, 236
of the gods 7, 15-20, 26, 33, 67, 85, 122, 125-7, 198, 201
of man 72, 236
of religion 159, 243
Homer 11-12, 15-17, 19-20, 32, 43, 45-6, 60, 71, 117, 239
saw Cyclopean structures 117
Homogeneous humanity 95, 103-4, 112, 129, 155, 175
Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) 4, 70, 96
Horæ 46
Hottentots, naked 238
How far! 49, 238
Huet, Daniel 86
Hüllmann, Karl Dietrich 27
Humboldt, Alexander von 72
Hume, David 69, 74, 78-83, 182-3, 197, 231
Humility 177
Hyperion and Iapetus 39
Hyperphysical 39, 41
Hypothesis 22, 30n, 37, 42, 87, 92, 97, 120, 122, 123, 137n, 140, 163, 179, 180, 191, 197, 199, 243
of revelation 179-80
I
Iao 172
Iapetus 39
Ibri (said of Abraham) 157
Ideal and real, their union 200
Ideas, their unauthorized appropriation 203
Identity 23, 49-50, 105, 127, 182, 212, 224, 235
Idolatry 79-80, 84, 162, 167, 183n
Iliad 60, 201
Ilios 29
Illnesses—see Diseases
Illusion 14, 218, 242
Image 18, 24, 82, 90, 147, 161, 174, 212
   identical, of divine self 212
   of procreation 31, 35
Imagination 68, 73, 79, 123, 150-2, 183, 186, 207
Immersion 186, 189
Immortals 19, 71
Inachus 58
Indian
   art 238-40
   castes 99
   gods 23-4
   myths 23, 87
   poetry, literature, and ideas 21-4
   polytheism 90-1
   temples 238
   theology 90
Indians, their numerousness 97
Individuals and Society 59-61
Infinity 14, 81, 90, 104, 222, 230-2, 237-8
Initial interpretations, their status 15
Inner nature
   of consciousness 194, 207, 215
   of man 95, 101, 111, 151, 199, 216
   of mythology 223
Inspiration 17, 28, 48, 117, 142, 170, 226, 240, 242
Instinct 53, 59, 63, 66, 75-8, 97
Interdependence
  of facts 228, 246
  of phenomena 35, 130
Invention 12, 15-16, 23, 28, 29, 41, 44, 47-8, 53, 55, 56, 59-60, 63, 65-6, 70,
  80-2, 102, 122, 124-5, 150, 164, 191, 193-5, 200, 202, 222, 229, 231-2, 236,
  241
  no time for 65
  unintentional but intentional 53
Io, fable of 58
Ion 157
Irreligious theories of mythology 68, 74, 207
Isaac 161
Isis 62
Islam 167
Israel/Israelites (see also Hebrew, Judaism) 121, 151, 154-8, 166, 172-4, 176-7,
  184, 190, 195, 239, 249
Ixion 13

J
Jacob 158, 161, 169, 172, 177
Japheth and Japhetites 131-2
Japhetic languages 135-6
Jehovah 116n, 145-6, 151, 157n, 161-6, 168-72, 177
  called on by name 145
Jeremiah 154
Jerusalem 154, 241
Jesuits 28
Jews/Jewish nation—see Israel, Israelites
Jones, Sir William 88-90, 214
Joseph II 219
Joshua 166
Judaism 167, 246
Judgement 102, 139
Julius Caesar 159
Juno 13
Jupiter 33
K
Kanne, Johann Arnold 224-5
Kant, Immanuel 30n, 144
Kantian
  categories 217
  school 53
King of Nations 156
Kinship between languages 114
  as free activity 186
  how it becomes theory 220
Kobolds 73

L
Laban the Syrian 163
Language (see also Confusion of) 21, 31, 40, 49-52, 56, 64, 100-3, 106-11, 114-5, 132-6, 222
  and Philosophy 49-53
  and society 64
  like god 133
Laplace, Pierre Simon, Marquis de, his Système du Monde 37
Lares 213n
Latin language 50, 110
Law and legislation 27, 35, 63, 64, 76, 95-6, 97, 113, 117, 125, 129, 153, 154, 168, 173-4, 178, 193, 203, 216, 219, 222, 230, 234, 243, 249
Lecturing 3, 202-4
Legends 6, 35, 46, 59, 60, 117-8, 157, 161, 201-2
Legio Fulminatrix 201
Leibnitz, Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von 51
Lenguas 63n
Lessing, Gottfried Ephraim, his Education of Mankind 83-4
Liberation (see also Free and Salvation) 18, 138, 139, 155, 174, 190, 247
Light 35, 86, 109n, 137n
Linus 35
Literal meaning 26, 34, 43, 88, 143n, 156, 195-8, 215, 223
Löscher, Valentin Ernst 134n
Lucian 116n, 152
Luther, Martin 106n, 146, 152, 166
Lycia 35

**M**
Macrobius, Ambrosius Theodosius 172
Magnetism 203
Mahābalipuram, temple of 238
Marcomani 159
Material and form 29, 38, 52-3, 77, 81, 88n, 118, 130, 133, 140, 188, 193-4, 248
M’bajas 63n
Mechanism 89n, 220
Megara 118
Melchizedek 166-8
Memory 82, 102, 106, 113, 117, 124, 149, 161n, 175, 235
Menzel, Wolfgang 226n
Metaphysics 33, 165
Michælis, Johann David 151n
Misunderstanding 31, 38, 42, 57, 59, 66, 88, 188, 210, 214, 223
Mizraim (Egypt) 157
Mnemosyne 39
Mohammed 167-8
Monolatry 133
Monosyllabism 133-6
Monotheism 83, 90, 140, 144, 148, 161, 164, 167, 170-1, 174, 176, 178, 184-5, 187-8, 190-1, 208-9, 212, 225
absolute 128, 174
historical 119, 208
one-sided 139-40, 177-8
relative 128, 131, 133, 136, 139, 140, 142-3, 173-4, 178, 180, 212
Monuments and relics 5, 9, 116-18, 240
Moritz, Karl Philipp 11
Mosaic
law 173
scriptures 85-8, 101, 105, 144-74, 231
standpoint 150
Moser, Georg Heinrich 89n
Moses (see also Mosaic) 86, 90, 151-2, 169-73
Mosheim, Johann Lorenz von 27
Moslem 167
Mountains 38, 44, 73, 96, 221
Mountain and water spirits 73
Movement 38, 77, 100, 104, 108, 130, 131, 186-7, 191, 192, 197-8, 206, 210, 211-12, 216, 220, 222, 226, 229, 233, 244
Müller, Karl Otfried 199-202
Multitheism (see also Polytheism) 85, 88, 92, 121, 122, 127, 133, 137, 139, 151n, 153, 160, 164, 168, 181, 182-4, 192, 208, 210
Music 89n
Mystical 205, 225
Mystics 186
Mythological
  ideas or representations 10-11, 24, 53, 55, 61-2, 65-6, 86, 125, 193-5, 199, 202, 207, 214, 223, 240
  religion 244-6
Mythology
  meaning of the word 6-7, 223

N
  want to make one for themselves 116
Nations, the (as adherents of false gods) 156
Natural
  monotheism 187
  religion 244-50
  theism 187
  deification of 76, 178, 245
Nature-philosophy 11, 221, 224, 229
Nauplia 118
Necessary process 193
Neo-Platonists 13, 33
New South Wales 97
New Testament 105, 107n, 156, 159
Niebuhr, Carsten 99, 154
Nile 58–9, 111
Noah (see also Flood) 85, 131, 147, 153–6, 160
  becomes a husbandman 153
Nomadic way of life 95, 153, 157, 162, 167
Nominal concept, its inadequacy 6
Nominalism, Aristotle’s 49
Non-societies 155–6
Nose and throat sounds 115
Notitia Dei Insita 75–8, 245
Nyx 38, 44

O
Oannes 153
Objective explanation 207
Objectivity 18, 51, 186, 192, 195, 198, 202, 205, 207–9, 214, 215–6, 218, 223, 244
Obnoxium 180
Obscurity (see also Darkness) 9, 17, 20, 76, 89, 92, 138, 166, 200, 229, 238, 245
Occidentalism and Orientalism 232
Oceanus 39, 58
Odysseus 12, 60, 71
Olam 235
Old German Bards 71
Old Hebraic
  language 156
  poetry 25
Old Testament 85–6, 88, 104, 105, 109, 132, 142, 144–74, 179, 183n, 184
Olen 35
Olympiodorus 33n
Olympus 43
One God 104–5, 119, 121, 125–6
  and inorganic 31, 129–30, 235
  explanation 53
  life 52–3, 76, 130
Original
  events, conforming to laws 97
knowledge, postulated 89, 137n, 139
mankind 64, 66, 100, 112-13, 128-9, 136-7, 137n, 140-2, 164, 184-7, 205-6
meaning 8, 50, 67, 70, 75, 78, 82, 89, 135, 204, 222
religion 132
whole 89, 213
Orpheus 35, 70-1
Osiris (Egyptian God) 86
Ossian 71
Other people 202-3
Outcome (see also Result) 20, 30, 103, 152, 244
Ovid 106, 213n

P
Pallas 137n
Pampas 63n
Pantheism 210, 225
Parallelism 170
Pariahs in India 99
Paul 106n, 108, 110n, 246, 249
Payaguas 73n
Pelagians 18, 23n, 107-8, 131
Pentecost 108
Persephone 37, 87
Persian theology 109n
Personalities 7, 26-8, 31-2, 42, 44-5, 68, 86, 124, 195, 249
Personification 28, 32, 34, 36, 41, 44-5, 52, 59
   grammatical 36, 41, 45
Philosophical
   consciousness 252
   method 8, 219
   process 29
   religion 244-7, 250
   viewpoint 47, 67-8
Philosophy 4-5, 51-3, 219-24, 229-30, 237, 244, 250-2
   begins with question about meaning 8
   individual propositions in 210
   and mythology, their relationship 3-5, 217-220
of art 218, 241
of chemistry 217
of history 178, 218, 227, 229-30, 232, 237, 241
of language 4, 223
of mythology 4-5, 217-18, 219, 223-4, 227, 228-9, 237, 241
of Nature 4, 218, 223
of the postal entity 217
of religion 227, 243-4
and subsequent genitive 217
Phoebe and Tethys 39
Phoebus 34
Phoenicians 25, 123, 153, 239
Physical interpretations 29-30
Pindus 43
Planets, destruction of 137n, 138, 236
Platen-Hallermünde, Karl August Georg Max, Graf von 242n
Plato 32, 219
  his Phædrus 32
  his Politicus (Statesman) 102n, 111n, 175
    his Theatætus 106n
Pleasure and understanding 139
Plural of magnitude 162, 168
Plutarch 213n
Plutus 46
Poetical
  truth 91
  world-epoch 14
Poetry and poetical viewpoint 6, 10-21, 24-8, 32, 34, 46-9, 52-6, 60, 67, 69-71,
     88, 91, 124, 157, 163, 196, 199, 202, 203, 214, 241-3
and Philosophy 48-9, 52-6
in language itself 52
Polysyllabism 133, 136
Polytheism (see also Multitheism) 7, 69, 75-81, 83-4, 88, 91-3, 104-5, 108, 119-22,
   126, 133, 138-9, 148-52, 155, 160, 162, 164, 170-1, 173, 176, 178-9,
   182, 184, 187-90, 192-3, 197, 205, 208, 211, 212, 213
and nationhood 156
as agency for a higher knowledge 138
its spread 132
simultaneous (material) 120-22, 193
successive (formal) 120-22, 125-6, 131, 136, 184, 208-10
successive, requiring explanation 121
Pontus 38
Poseidon 46, 110
Potences 77, 124, 148, 164, 170, 179, 207-9, 215, 249
Power 49, 59, 64, 78, 79, 82, 96, 100, 129, 148, 150, 153, 167, 168, 175, 189,
193, 201, 240
mythological 49
spiritual 100, 175
Prechronological era 231, 235-6
Prehistoric era 6, 9, 41, 59, 80, 110, 113, 116-7, 137, 150, 166, 181-4, 191,
230-7
Prehistoric monuments, gigantic 116-7
Present, the 123-4, 171, 186, 243
Priest
of Apollo 201
of El Elioun 166, 168
Priestly statutes 116
Priests 16
Egyptian 25
power-hungry 56
Primal
consciousness 185, 187
era/time 56, 88, 111, 124, 150, 156, 165-6, 168-70, 176-7, 229, 243
Primordial society 87
Principle(s)
or force 129
Prior
doctrine 78
publishing 204
Process 98, 102, 150, 184, 193-5, 206, 209-12, 216, 233
concept of 193, 210
mythological 207, 209, 212
racial 99
suprahistorical 184
theogonic 198, 204, 207-8, 215, 229
universal (absolute) 216-7
Procreation 31, 35, 54
Prometheus 44n
Propagation 98
Property 113, 203-4
Prophecy 172-4
Proprietorship, scientific 196n, 203
Providence 27, 96, 177
Psychology 243
Pythagoreans 49

Q
Questions 8, 10, 11, 107, 126, 186, 194, 204

R
Races of men 97
Racial process 99
Rational religion 78, 245, 248, 250
Rationalism 183, 246, 248
Really religious
  ideas 68
  meaning 68, 71, 75, 78
  viewpoint 68, 74
Reason/rational 78, 84, 135, 172, 180, 194, 220-21, 232, 246, 248, 250
Rechabites 154, 168
Refraction 224
Relative monotheism 127, 128, 131-3, 136, 139-40, 142-3, 173, 174, 178, 180-81
Relatively prehistoric era/time 184, 234-5
Relatively-One 127-8, 144, 147, 148, 155, 160, 164, 170-1, 173, 177-9, 181-2, 184-6, 190, 192
Relatively-true 139
Religious
  affections, relation to speech 108
  consciousness, alteration in 142
  instinct 75, 78
  meaning 67, 89, 208
Reminiscence and recollection—see Memory
Remote things, bearing on each other 4
Remoteness 96, 129
Rémusat, Jean Pierre Abel 134
Representation and actuality 124-5
Reprints 204
Result (see also Outcome) 3, 16, 19, 37, 66, 89, 93, 119, 128, 137, 138-9, 190, 194, 204, 214, 227, 233, 244, 246, 248, 251
Reunion 172
Revealed
  monotheism 178
  religion 246-7, 249-50
Revelation 81-3, 85, 87, 91, 140-3, 156, 159-61, 169, 178-81, 191, 239, 240, 244-50
  no room for 141
  the last 180
Rhea 39
Rio de la Plata 72
Robertson, William 72
Rosenmüller, Ernst Friedrich Karl 152n

S
Sacrifice 16, 18, 71, 82, 164, 195
Saddik 167
Salem 167
Salvation (see also Liberation) 177, 190
Samuel 158
Sanchuniathon 166, 172
Sanscrit 21-22, 110-111, 135
Saturn 33
Schelling, works of
  On the Antiquity of Cyclopean Constructions in Greece 117n
  Outlines of a Philosophy of Nature 229n
  Philosophy of Art 241
  Philosophy of Mythology 8, 136
  Philosophy of Revelation 109n
  On the Samothracian Deities 23n, 88n, 196n
  System of Transcendental Idealism 223
Schnurrer, Dr. Friedrich 100n
Science
force or power 103, 175
monotheism 139
movements 99-100
Stationariness 100, 222
Stoics 33
Stolberg-Stolberg, Friedrich Leopold, Reichsgraf von 153n
Storr, Gottlob Christian 162n, 169n
Strabo 106
Subject
  of art 240-2
  pure capability 50
Subject-object 196n
Subjective 198, 204-5, 207, 213, 215
  explanations 207
  forces 215
  meaning 204, 207
  necessity 205
  process 207
  truth 213
Substance 17, 29, 38, 48, 83, 85, 118, 133, 135, 165, 185, 187, 189, 191, 195, 198, 221, 248
Successive polytheism 120-7, 136, 179, 181, 184, 189, 208, 210
Sufis 186
Sun 29, 76, 99, 122, 138n, 234
Superstition 33n, 40, 41, 68, 74, 80, 151n, 157, 174n, 212-13
Suprahistorical 184, 191, 193, 205, 235
Synopsis 214

T
Taaot (Phoenician God) 86
Tacitus 159
Tautegorical 196
Tethys 39
Tension 39, 110n, 209, 215
Terror—see Fear
Thamyris 35
Theia and Rhea 39
Theism 74, 78-81, 83, 90, 183n, 187, 188, 191, 236
Théisme raisonné 78-9
Themis and Mnemosyne 39
Theogonic process 198, 204, 207-8, 215-16, 229, 243
Theogony 7, 16-20, 122, 123, 127, 130, 198
Theological viewpoint 205
Theory 220
Things (in the sense of material objects) 68, 206, 207, 210
Thrace 35
Thucydides 231
Time and duration 14, 103-4, 130-1, 234-8
Titans 19, 30, 39, 43
Totality—see Whole
Tradition 32, 33, 86, 90, 98, 113, 142, 150, 152, 161, 218
Transmission 57, 61, 124, 218
Tribes 85, 92, 94-5, 100, 103, 113, 131-2, 154, 155, 159, 175, 178
Troy 29
True god 77, 85, 109, 144-6, 148, 152, 155, 160-1, 164-6, 168-73, 176-7, 182, 185, 187, 188, 190, 212, 239
Trust 45, 177
Turgot, Anne Robert Jacques 69n
Tyrtaios 19

U
Unambiguously polytheism 105, 121, 133, 149, 173, 190
Unconditionally-One 126, 136
Unity
  of descent 94, 110, 112-14
  of human race, original 100
Uranus 7, 33, 38, 43, 85, 120-21, 122, 127, 130, 152, 198

V
Van Diemen’s Land 97
Vedas 90
Versatility 24-5, 122
Viewpoints 252
and subjects 4-5
relation to meaning 8-9
Volney, Constantin François de 76
Voss, Christian Friedrich (Lessing’s publisher) 84n
Voss or Vossius, Gerhard Johannes 86, 179
Voss, Johann Heinrich 69-71, 214, 226

W
Water (see also Flood, Sea) 39, 58-9, 61, 73, 110n, 138, 152-3
Wine and vines 34, 37, 105, 153-4, 168
Wolf, Friedrich August 16n, 60
Wonder, that deserving of, loved by philosophers 219
Wood, Robert 71
World
external 76, 233
higher 243
of the gods 7, 20, 206
history 96, 109, 158
inorganic 30
organic 31, 53
physical 221, 222
primæval 236
of the senses 76
of spirit 221
World-epochs 14, 111n
World-view 62, 64
World-wisdom 60

Y
Yogis 186

Z
Zeus 19, 20, 30-31, 46, 58, 120-21, 122, 127, 130
Zodiac, signs of 30
Zoroaster 86
Lecture One

1 viewpoints and their subjects. The German word translated as “viewpoint” is “Ansicht.” There is a third way here, with the subjects defined in terms of the viewpoints of them. This would make them identical: the subject would be no more and no less than the viewpoint, and vice versa.

II the Horatian precept. Horace, the Roman poet and satirist, whose Latin name was Quintus Horatius Flaccus, lived from 65 to 8 B.C. This is from his Epistle known as the Ars Poetica or Art of Poetry, lines 191–2. (The Loeb edition has nec deus instead of Ne Deus.) In context, in the translation by H. Rushton Fairdough, and with our part italicized, it reads:

Let no play be shorter or longer than five acts, if when once seen it hopes to be be called for and brought back to the stage. And let no god intervene, unless a knot come worthy of such a deliverer, nor let a fourth actor essay to speak.

The god, who should await a knot worthy of him, is otherwise known as the deus ex machina, a god introduced into an ancient Greek or Roman play to resolve the plot.

III actually. The German word is wirklich. In everyday discourse this means either “actually” or “really.” The root, however, is the same as that of English “work,” and has the meaning of “act” or “effect.” For this reason I have, with very few exceptions, translated it as “actual,” “actually,” or even “effecting,” rather than “real” or “really.” Credibility is lent to this policy by Schelling’s use, on page 176 for example, of ein wirklicher realer Gott (an actual real god), and on page 215 of jene realen (wirklichen) Mächte (those real (actual) forces). For a little about the relationship between actuality and potency, refer to the quotations from Schelling and from Aristotle’s Metaphysics in my note to page 77.

IV eliminating itself. Throughout this paragraph the German word corresponding to my “eliminate” is aufheben. This can mean simply “eliminate,” but it also has a sense of retaining in that which eliminates—retaining as an aspect—that which has been eliminated, superseded, transcended, or supplanted; thus in some contexts where, as is the case here, it is used reflexively, it is better thought of as self-transcendence. (A word which has sometimes been used by other translators is “sublate.”) Contradiction comes into this too: the elimination or transcendence takes place through contradiction. Compare the following, from Schelling’s System of Transcendental Idealism [I 3, 392]:

. . . the sole determining root of activity in the ego is a continual contradiction within the ego itself . . . neither may the original contradiction in the essential nature of the ego itself be eliminated without the ego itself being eliminated, nor can the contradiction, in itself and independently, continue to exist. It will continue to exist only through the necessity of continuing to exist, that is to say through the striving which results from it, the striving to preserve it, and thereby to introduce identity into it.

Schelling, following Fichte, also called the seat of this activity the “subject-object”; later (see page 196)
he became disinclined to use that term, but it appears still in the first lecture of the Philosophy of Mythology.

\textit{merely nominal.} Note that this is not the same as “verbal,” since in a sense (understanding the word “word” in the widest sense and allowing for all the various levels) words form everything there is. What is mere about the initial concept is not its verbal nature but the limited number of relations or aspects which have been considered or passed through before we utter the name. Behind the mere name a quality of thought called integrity or sincerity is either lacking or has not yet had time to be fulfilled. Language is not language unless the utterance has been sincerely understood.

\textit{original matter.} German Urstoff. Usually I have translated Stoff as “substance,” but it does not seem appropriate here. Another such instance occurs on page 3, where I translate Stoff as “a lifeless body.”

\textit{phase.} The German word corresponding to “phase” here is \textit{Moment}, and I have consistently translated it thus. I have judged the English word “moment” to be misleading. Schelling uses the word to mean a distinct stage or turning point, or an \textit{element} of a progression; an aspect (of some process) beyond which no further division or analysis is possible. In the German \textit{Moment} the idea of \textit{movement}, consistent with its derivation from Latin \textit{moveo} (move) through \textit{momentum} (moving power, consequence, moment of time), is much more strongly felt than in English. In the Philosophy of Mythology, page [II 2, 50], he says this explicitly: “\textit{Moment, equivalent, as is well known, to movimentum, from moveo.}” Often the progression is purely conceptual and associated with time only when it is analysed. Aristotle has a great deal to say about “movement” in Book three of his Physics, for example “a thing can cause a motion by its potency, and it causes a motion by actualizing that potency.” There is a lot in Plotinus too which is relevant. And note Schelling’s remarks on page 223 about philosophy’s beginning to advance in phases, in reference to his System of Transcendental Idealism.

\textit{the forthcoming science itself.} This refers to the Philosophy of Mythology in twenty-nine magnificent lectures, to which the present work is an introduction. In its final form it dates from the period 1842-6, although parts were written as early as 1815 and it was essentially complete by 1828. It was first published in 1857 in division two volume two of Schelling’s collected works. A translation is currently in preparation.

\textit{poetry, something made up.} The German word here is \textit{Dichtung}, which refers to creative literature in general. It is contrasted with truth not only here but in the title of Goethe’s autobiography \textit{Aus mein Leben—Dichtung und Wahrheit}, literally “From my Life—Fiction and Truth” (meaning something like “Fact and Fiction”). But to translate the word as “fiction” here and in the following paragraphs would not be true to Schelling’s meaning, because while “fiction” in English really has two more or less separate senses (a lie and a work of literature), poetry in fact is not regarded as fiction in either of them, yet it is clear (would you not agree?) that poetry is in Schelling’s mind here. In other words, \textit{Dichtung} has much more to do with \textit{beauty} than the English “fiction.”

\textit{Moritz.} Doubtless Karl Philipp Moritz, 1756-93, German novelist and writer on aesthetics and antiquity; author of \textit{Götterlehre oder Mythologische Dichtungen der Alten} (Theory of Gods, or
Mythological Fictions of the Ancients) of 1790, which, though no longer among his best-known works, is probably the one referred to by Schelling. Moritz regarded the Greek myths as nothing more than the result of the free play of the fantasy of successive poets. Better known among his works is Ueber die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen (On the Creative or Imaginative or Plastic Imitation of the Beautiful). He was professor of ancient studies in Berlin, and a close friend of Goethe, whom he met in Italy. The Theory of Gods is a beautifully written work, which consists of a short theoretical section followed by poetical descriptions of most of the mythological characters. It begins as follows:

The mythological fictions must be regarded as a language of fantasy. Taken in this way, they make up a world of their own, as it were, and are removed from the context of actual things.

In its own field, fantasy follows its inclinations and is nowhere restricted. Its nature is to form and to mould; and for this purpose it creates for itself a broad arena, while it is careful to shun all abstract and metaphysical concepts which might interfere with the things it has fashioned.

It avoids most of all the concept of a metaphysical infinity and permissiveness, because its delicate creations, as if in a barren desert, would there at once be lost.

It flies from the concept of an existence without beginning everything, with it, is a coming into existence, generation and birth, right back to the most ancient history of the gods.

None of the higher beings devised by fantasy exists for ever, none possesses unlimited power. Fantasy shuns, too, the concept of omnipresence, which would impede life and movement in its world of the gods.

It seeks, rather, to link the things it has fashioned as far as possible to time and place; it prefers to be supported by, and to hover just above, actuality. But because the excess of closeness and clarity in what is actual would impair its tenebrous light, its preference is to cling to the obscure history of the primæval world, where time and place are themselves often still wavering and undefined and where it has a field which is all the more free: Jupiter, the father of gods and men, was suckled on the isle of Creté with the milk of a goat and was raised by wood-nymphs.

Now through the fact that in the mythological fictions there lies hidden at the same time a secret trace of the most ancient, long-forgotten history, they become more venerable, because they are no empty dream-image or mere plaything of the imagination, something which falls apart in the wind, but receive from their profound interweaving with the most ancient events a power through which their evaporation into mere allegory is held back.

To wish to change the ancient history of the gods, through interpretations of all kinds, into mere allegories, is just as foolish an undertaking as would it be to try to transform these fictions, through forced explanations of all kinds, into pure and true history.

The hand which desires wholly to draw aside the veil which covers these fictions, destroys at the same time the tender web of fantasy and encounters then, in place of the hoped-for discoveries, pure contradictions and absurdities.

In order to harm nothing in these beautiful fictions, it is necessary at first, without regard for anything they might mean, to take them exactly as they are, so as to encompass, as far as possible, a single view of the whole, and to trace gradually, too, the more distant references and relationships between the individual fragments which still remain to us.

Now a general paragraph about the favourites of the gods:
The fictions about the love-mates of the gods acquire a marvellous piquancy through a kind of faint and melancholy glow which envelopes them. When youth and beauty became prey to death, it was said that some deity had abducted his favourite from the earth. In this way grief became mixed with joy, and the lamentation for the dead one was eased. Hence these fictions are also most commonly found represented on the marble coffins of the ancients.

Finally one of his shorter pieces about individual mythological characters, in this case Cyparissus:

For this love-mate of Apollo too, only a short life was destined.—The beautiful boy had a tame stag, which he loved exceedingly and which had been a joy to him since childhood. This stag he shot by accident in the darkness of the wood, and his too tender heart led him to regret this deed so very much that, mourning unceasingly, he sought out the most lonely shade and within a short time did himself to death. After he had died, Apollo caused to rise from his grave the dark cypress, which immortalized the name of the sleeping boy and remained for ever an image of mourning.—One may see from this, as from the preceding fictions, what an indelible impression was made on those gentle souls by youth and beauty carried off by death.

Homer’s *Odyssey*, of course. Homer’s dates and even his very existence as an individual person are uncertain, but certainly he would have lived before 800 B.C. Herodotus places him in the ninth century. In this passage, Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, has returned to his home after many years, and is speaking to his wife Penelope, who does not recognize him. He is telling stories about a (necessarily fictitious) relationship between his disguised self and his real self as a third person: ἴσκε μεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἑπόταιν ὧμοια, “he spoke, and made the many falsehoods of his tale seem like truth” (translation A. T. Murray).

Juno. It is curious to find the Roman name “Juno” used here, whereas most of Schelling’s other references are to Greek gods, Ixion is Greek, and this fable is usually related of the Greek goddess Hera with whom Juno was identified by the Romans. It may even be that the hand of an editor is visible here, but if so we should be thankful that his zeal flagged so soon. Perhaps he interfered with some of the younger gods listed on page 33; and Jupiter in the same passage, being Roman, should not go with Uranus and Saturn, come to that. As for the Neo-Platonists and pure matter, compare the following, from the *Enneads*, III. 6. 7, of Plotinus (205–270), written in Rome in the Greek language, and translated by A. H. Armstrong:

Matter falls outside all these categories (*body, soul, mind, life, form, limit, potency*), and cannot even rightly be spoken of as being. It could appropriately be called non-being not in the sense in which movement or rest are not being, but truly non-being. It is a ghostly image of bulk, a tendency towards substantial existence; it is at rest, but not in any resting-place; it is invisible in itself and escapes any attempt to see it, and appears when one is not looking; even if you look closely you cannot see it. It always has opposite appearances in itself, small and great, less and more, deficient and superabundant, a phantom which does not remain, and cannot get away either: for it has no strength even for this, since it has not received strength from Nous but is lacking in all being. Whatever announcement it makes, therefore, is a lie. If it appears great, it is small, if more, it is less; its apparent being is not real, but a sort of fleeting frivolity. Hence the things which seem to come into being in it are frivolities, nothing but...
phantoms in a phantom, like something in a mirror which really exists in one place but is reflected in another. It seems to be filled but holds nothing; it is all seeming. “Imitations of real beings pass into and out of it,” ghosts into a formless ghost, visible because of its formlessness. They seem to act on it, but do nothing, for they are wraith-like and feeble and have no thrust; nor does matter thrust against them, but they go through without making a cut, as if through water, or as if someone in a way projected shapes in the void people talk about.

XIII forces. I have consistently translated the German word _Macht_ as “force”; in the sense of an agency, influence, or source of power likened to a physical force. _Gewalt_, on the other hand, I have translated as “power.” _Kraft_, which Schelling does not, in this work, use in such a strict sense, becomes “force” or “power” depending on the content.

XIV the right frame of mind. The destruction of the manifestation by attempting to qualify it or particularize it is exactly the idea behind quantum physics. Specifically, the idea behind the “uncertainty principle” of Werner Carl Heisenberg; defining what it is possible or impossible to know (he says). In a given experimental arrangement, the product of the latitude within which a coordinate is determined and, in that same arrangement, the latitude for the conjugate momentum, must be greater than or equal to Planck’s constant divided by four times pi. The same applies for the respective latitudes in energy and time of observation. To quote Paul Davies, in _Other Worlds_: 

Atoms are so delicate that forces which are, by everyday standards, incredibly minute, can nevertheless produce drastic disturbances. The problems of carrying out any sort of measurement on an object only ten billionths of a centimetre in size and weighing a millionth part of a billion billionth of a gram, without destroying, let alone upsetting it, are formidable. When it comes to studying subatomic particles such as electrons, one thousand times lighter and with no discernible size at all, profound problems of principle, as well as practical difficulties, arise. . . .

Energy and time are incompatible characteristics for a photon, and which of the two is more accurately manifested depends entirely on the nature of the measurement that we choose to perform. We glimpse here for the first time the astonishing role that the observer himself will turn out to play in the structure of the microcosmos, for the attributes possessed by a photon appear to depend on just what quantities an experimenter may decide to measure.

Davies goes on to quote an American called John Wheeler, who supports Bohr’s view (which Einstein opposed) that what a particle is “really” doing can only be discussed in the context of an actual experimental arrangement:

Is the very mechanism for the universe to come into being meaningless or unworkable or both unless the universe is guaranteed to produce life, consciousness and observership somewhere and for some little time in its history-to-be? The quantum principle shows that there is a sense in which what the observer will do in the future defines what happens in the past—even in a past so remote that life did not then exist, and shows even more, that “observership” is a prerequisite for any useful version of “reality.”

The point about the destruction of the manifestation was in essence already stated in Schelling’s previous paragraph, in respect to “pure matter.” Hegel too mentions the same idea at the start of his
introduction to the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, in relation to the use of cognition as an instrument to get hold of absolute being. He adds that the attitude which is called “fear of error” is revealed as being, on the contrary, fear of the truth. Incidentally, in view of his understandably antipathetic attitude even towards molecules, Schelling probably would not have approved of quantum physics. To quote from the *Philosophy of Mythology*, [II 2, 268] True coherence is itself not a physical, but a purely spiritual relationship. True coherence is actually concrescence; not, though, of parts or molecules which are themselves already physical, but of spiritual potencies (spiritual taken to mean, that is, the opposite of that which is already concrete).

XV

Francis Bacon Verulam, Viscount St. Albans, 1561–1626, English philosopher, statesman, and essayist. These words are found in *De Sapientia Veterum*, details of which appear in my note to page 28. They come from Bacon’s preface to that work, and Schelling (who regarded Bacon as the most eminent British philosopher) has abbreviated and altered them somewhat. What Bacon wrote about the Greek myths was:

. . . sed veluti reliquiæ sacrae et auræ tenues temporum meliorum; quæ ex traditionibus nationum magis antiquarum in Graeorum tubas et fistulas incidunt.

In the 1858 edition of his collected works (volume six) this (with a few words preceding it) is translated, by the editor, James Spedding, as:

. . . for so they must be regarded as neither being the inventions nor belonging to the age of the poets themselves, but as sacred relics and light airs breathing out of better times, that were caught from the traditions of more ancient nations and so received into the flutes and trumpets of the Greeks.

XVI societies. The German word *Volk*, which occurs very frequently in these lectures, usually becomes “society” in this translation, because that is what best fits Schelling’s meaning. In some contexts (particularly biblical or rhetorical ones) I have translated it as “nation,” which accords with Hume’s sense in lecture four. (In English “nation” in this sense is rather old-fashioned.) Occasionally it is translated as “a people.” Schelling uses the German Romance word *Nation* only very rarely. The division of the world into nations or societies is one of the principal irrationalities and evils of the present day, but it is also possible to take advantage of it in some ways. There is a summary or definition in Kant’s *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View* of 1798 (part two section C); this will confuse matters, although a certain sort of person might approve:

By the word *Volk* (*populus*) is understood a united multitude of people within one area of land, to the extent that that multitude makes up a whole. That multitude or even a part thereof, which recognizes that it is united, through common descent, into a civil whole, is called a *Nation* (*gens*); the part which repudiates these laws (the wild multitude within this Volk), is called *Pöbel* (*vulgus*) (rabble), whose unlawful union is *Rottiren* (*agere per turbas*) (acting as a mob, rioting).

On page 129 Schelling describes (and to that extent defines) societies as “ensembles of spiritual differences.”

XVII Herodotus, c.485–c.425 B.C., Greek traveller and historian. This is from his *Histories* II, 53. In
the Loeb edition there are the following differences: 1. οὗτοι instead of Ωΰτοι. 2. δε εἰσὶ instead of ἕισιν. The translator of that edition (A. D. Godley) rendered it “these are they who taught the Greeks of the descent of the gods,” but I do not like this. Aubrey de Sélincourt and A. R. Burn (Penguin) say “composed” (“are the poets who composed our theogonies” [sic]). The word ποιησαντες certainly relates to “making” or “poetry,” not “teaching.” Compare the nineteenth-century word “mythopoeia,” meaning the composition or making of myths. My use of simply “made” in the translation reflects Schelling’s German. He defines the word in more detail on page 20.

XVIII Friedrich August Wolf, 1759–1824, German classical philologist, antiquarian, and Homer specialist. He was a close associate of Goethe. His understanding of Hellenism led him to regard it as an ideal for the harmonious education of man, and he encouraged the introduction of the study of classical philology in schools. The reference is to his Prolegomena ad Homeri: an introduction to his edition of the complete extant works of Homer, published in 1795 under the title: Homerus, Opera Omnia. An English translation of the Prolegomena was published in Princeton in 1985. In that edition this footnote, referring to the same line from Herodotus, appears on page 80:

Wesseling wrongly takes the words “These are the ones who made a theogony for the Greeks” in the sense that they are described as the first two to have expounded the theogony in verse, not to have founded it. Clearly ποιεῖν does occur in that sense. But the addition of a dative to the verb used in that sense would need illustration from examples, of a kind completely unknown to me. Athenagoras also agrees with the common view in Apologia pro Christianis 17, citing that passage and twisting it to agree with his opinion.

XIX Herodotus, again Histories II, 53. I have translated from Schelling’s German. It may interest the reader to compare the translation by Sélincourt and Burn:

But it was only—if I may so put it—the day before yesterday that the Greeks came to know the origin and form of the various gods, and whether or not all of them had always existed; for Homer and Hesiod are the poets who composed our theogonies and described the gods for us, giving them all their appropriate titles, offices, and powers, and they lived, as I believe, not more than four hundred years ago.

XX πρώτιστα is from the Theogony of Hesiod (an early Greek poet, probably eighth century B.C.). It begins (after the first 103 lines, containing at least three distinct preludes) with the famous line: Ἡ τοι μὲν πρώτιστα Χάος γένετ’. This is translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White (in the Loeb edition) as “Verily at the first Chaos came to be” and by Dorothea Wender (Penguin) as “Chaos was first of all.” Refer to page 45, where Schelling discusses Hermann’s attitude to this line. Schelling’s German version there (Siehe zuerst war Chaos, “Lo, first of all was Chaos”) has, like Miss Wender’s, just a “was,” not a “came to be” (this difference is the subject of a long-running dispute among the learned), and a “Lo” at the beginning. Note that in the Philosophy of Mythology, on page [II 2, 596] for example, Schelling does translate this phrase as zuerst ward Chaos (first of all Chaos came to be).

XIII enfoldment – Einwicklung; unfolding – Entfaltung or (elsewhere) Entwicklung. This latter usually means “development” or “evolution,” with the implication, sometimes, that the process has run its
full course; it can also mean “argument” or “analysis.” On the other hand, to translate Einwicklung as “implication” or “envelopment” would not be right. Envelopment of something means that something else is wrapped around it, whereas the idea in enfolding is of something still wrapped up in itself and as yet undeveloped. “Involution,” too, would not be right in English as it refers more to complication (but Schelling uses it at [I 3, 268]; “Einwicklung out of an original Involution”). “Enfoldment” or “infoldment” might be considered a technical term in some dialectical logic. (Refer too to my note to page 160 about Schelling’s use of the Latin term implicite).

XXII Herodotus, Histories II, 52. In the translation by Sélincourt and Burn:

In ancient times, as I know from what I was told at Dodona, the Pelasgians offered sacrifices of all kinds, and prayed to the gods, but without any distinction of name or title—for they had not yet heard of any such thing. They called the gods by the Greek word theoi—“disposers”—because they had “disposed” and arranged everything in due order, and assigned each thing to its proper division. Long afterwards the names of the gods were brought into Greece from Egypt and the Pelasgians learnt them—with the exception of Dionysus, about whom they knew nothing till much later. . . .

XXIII at least not real poetry. This is an example of the method of redefinition. Poetry cannot have come first; and if it did, there is a contradiction. We accept that poetry in the sense of the old definition did come first. We redefine the word, therefore, so as to exclude the poetry which could not have come first and did come first, and we use the predicate of “not real” to achieve this. Incidentally this also redefines “real,” as it has had its field of application made more precise. (But that is a little like the pressure of the sun’s light on Jupiter; poetry is very much redefined, reality slightly so.) Poetry still cannot come first, but poetry has been redefined so as to exclude that which (earlier called poetry) did come first. This redefinition was based on observed facts, which are themselves defined in the same way in the moment of observation. Why are they observed (noted)? Because they contain or confront us with a contradiction. Note that, although we were forced to redefine in some way, we had a choice; we could have redefined poetry as being capable either of coming first or not, had this better suited our overall purpose.

XXIV Alkaios and Tyrtaios. Alkaios or Alcæus of Mytilene in Lesbos was a lyric poet of the seventh to sixth century B.C., a contemporary of Sappho. Only fragments of his poems survive; they deal with political as well as personal themes, wine, love, and his sufferings; there are also hymns to the gods. Where public affairs are concerned he shows a passionate energy. Cicero in his Tusculan Disputations describes Alkaios as “singing of the love of youths,” and Horace (Odes I 32) says that he “sang of Lykos, beautiful with his dark eyes and dark hair.” Tyrtaios, Turtaios, or Tyrtæus lived at Sparta about the middle of the seventh century B.C. He encouraged the Spartans with his war-songs and also exhorted them to political peace and order. Again only fragments of his work survive.

XXV In the first passage from Hesiod, the Loeb edition has the following differences: 1. βίηφι instead of βιῇφι. 2. βασιλεύεμεν instead of βασιλεύσεμεν. 3. Γαίης instead of Γάιης. 4. Ὀλύμπιον instead of ὀλύμπιον. 5. Ζῆν instead of Ζήν᾿. 6. ὦ instead of ὅ. 7. ἐδς instead of ἐυ.

Evelyn-White’s translation, with Schelling’s emphasis, runs:

But when the blessed gods had finished their toil, and settled by force their struggle for honours with
the Titans, they pressed far-seeing Olympian Zeus to reign and to rule over them, by Earth’s prompting. 

So he divided their dignities amongst them.

Miss Wender’s translation is:

*But when the blessed gods had done their work*

*And forcibly put down the Titans’ claim*

*To honour, they fulfilled Earth’s plans and urged*

*Far-seeing Zeus, Olympian, to rule*

*And be the king of the immortals. Thus*

*He gave out rank and privilege to each.*

The Herodotus passage (*Histories*, Book II, 53 still), has in Loeb δὲ εἰσὶ, not δὲ εἰσι. Schelling’s dash indicates an omission, and the emphasis is his. Two possible translations are A. D. Godley’s “they who—gave to all their several names, and honours, and arts,” or Sélincourt and Burn’s “—giving them all their appropriate titles, offices, and powers.” (To see this in context refer to the note to page 16.)

The second passage from Hesiod’s *Theogony* is from the end of the prelude. (The Loeb edition lacks the comma after δᾶσσαντο. In context, translated by Evelyn-White:

*Tell how at the first gods and earth came to be, and rivers, and the boundless sea with its raging swell, and the gleaming stars, and the wide heaven above, and the gods who were born of them, givers of good things, and how they divided their wealth, and how they shared their honours amongst them, and also how at the first they took many-folded Olympus."

Miss Wender’s translation is similar.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749—1832, German poet, novelist, dramatist, and scientist. Already very famous in his lifetime, he had his iron in a lot of fires, but can be wearisome in places as well as inspirational. He is most famous, of course, for his large-scale version of *Faust*. What Schelling is referring to is the Cotta edition of Goethe’s works in sixty volumes, published between 1827 and 1842. Volumes 41 to 60 bear the secondary title of *Posthumous Works* and secondary volume numbers 1 to 20. Schelling’s volume XI is thus volume 51 of the complete works, containing Goethe’s writings on “mineralogy, geology, and meteorology,” and it was published in 1833. What Goethe says (in a short section entitled “Assorted Admissions”) is, beginning on page 189:

*Everything which I state here I have observed repeatedly and regularly; in order that the images should not be erased from the memory I arranged for the most detailed drawings to be made, and so, in respect to that part of the Earth which I have studied, I have always found method and order, and consistently, in fact, in many different localities.*

Following this principle of life and research, where only what is stable has come to my notice, since even basalt, which had been so problematic, was in the end obliged to appear well-ordered and thus necessary, I cannot change my way of thinking for the sake of a doctrine which starts out from an opposite viewpoint, where there is no longer any question of anything definite and methodical, but of accidental and unconnected occurrences. According to my point of view the Earth built itself up of its
own accord; here, though, it seems to have everywhere burst asunder and these chasms to have been filled up from unknown depths below.

In making this admission I am not intending at all to put myself forward as an opponent of the more recent doctrine, but here too to assert the rights of my objective (gegenständlichen) thought, and here I will certainly admit that if, like the more recent researchers who maintain their thesis with such great unanimity, I too had long been able to form my view in the Auvergne or indeed even in the Andes, and to have had impressed upon me, as a law, that which at present appears to me as an anomaly in Nature, I too would probably have found myself in complete agreement with the doctrine now current.

Before I found a copy of the Cotta edition I looked at later editions, differently paginated, and made a guess as to what might be on page 190. I came up with this, from a short piece called Draft of an Introduction to Geological Problems, a few pages before. It is not the passage to which Schelling is directly referring, but it is, I think, relevant and rather more interesting and more memorable:

The most appalling thing one has to listen to is the repeated assurance that the entire body of natural scientists share, in this respect, the same conviction. But he who knows men, will know how that comes about: good, capable, and bold minds hammer out a view like that for themselves on the basis of the probabilities; they win over adherents and pupils; such a group acquires a literary power, the viewpoint is rated more highly, exaggerated, and propounded with a certain passionate energy. Hundreds upon hundreds of well-meaning, intelligent men, who work in other disciplines, and who want to see that their own field, too, is lively and effective, distinguished, and respected—what would be better and more sensible for them to do than to leave those others to their field and to assent to that which does not affect themselves? And then that is called universal agreement among scientists.

true, that is to say internal. I read this as a definition of both “true” and “internal” in terms of each other.

The “West-Eastern Divan” was published in 1819-20. There are various pronouncements about the Indians and their religions in Goethe’s notes to this book of poetry inspired by the Persians. (There are also a number of ideas about other subjects which Schelling mentions, subjects about which for the most part Goethe seems to hold the same view.) There is no specific discussion of a relation, or its absence, between ancient Greek theology and Indian. The passage Schelling is probably referring to is the following, from the article on Mahmud of Gasna:

Today the Indian monstrosities are still detestable for any pure sensibility, how ugly must they have appeared to the imageless Mohammedans! . . . The Indian doctrine is worthless from beginning to end; today still, in fact, its many thousand gods, gods indeed not even arranged in a hierarchy, but all equally possessed of unlimited power, simply confuse all the more the accidents of life, encourage the senselessness of every passion and favour the madness of depravity as the highest level of holiness and bliss. And even a higher polytheism, like that of the Greeks and Romans, was still in the end doomed to lose its believers and itself on false paths. In comparison the highest praise is due to the Christian [doctrine not polytheism, presumably], whose pure, noble origin . . . etc.

“expressed there.” This refers to Schelling’s dissertation Ueber die Gottheiten von Samothrace (on the Samothracian Deities), not to Goethe. Another reference is made to the same passage in lecture
four in a note on page 88. The page number (30) cited by Schelling in each case is not that in the collected works, where this dissertation may be found on pages [I 8, 345–422]; there the relevant page numbers are almost certainly [I 8, 362–3]. (The collected edition has additional numbers in the margins, in fact, but they only run from 1 to 20, and do not continue to the extensive notes which follow the dissertation itself. There are further curious numbers in the body of the text, running from 1 to 122, but these are references to the notes. The work was first published in 1815 and had, then, 117 pages.) In translation the passage runs:

One may be tempted to draw another conclusion from that comparison, cursory though it may be, between Samothracian and Old Testament ideas, especially since, taken further, it would lead to deeper correspondences still. One could hope to find in it a new confirmation of the older viewpoint formulated by Gerhard Vossius, Bochart [for these two, refer to my notes for page 86], and other highly regarded researchers. According to that view, the entire theology of paganism is just the misconstruction of the Old Testament story, and of the revelation imparted to God’s chosen people. This revelation, therefore, is taken to be something ultimate and final, beyond which no historical explanation can go. But how is that possible, if this presumption itself were only arbitrary? If, already in Greek theology (not to speak of Indian, and other Oriental theologies), there were to appear the remnants of a knowledge, indeed of a scientific system, which far exceeded the circumference drawn by the oldest revelation known through written relics? If, in any case, this revelation had not so much broached a new stream of knowledge as simply confined the stream already broached by an earlier revelation within borders which were narrower, but for that very reason indicated all the more surely the way forward? If, once corruption and irresistible perversion into polytheism had begun, it had preserved from that original system, with the wisest possible discrimination, only a part, preserved those features, though, which would be able to lead it once again towards the great and comprehensive whole? Yet whatever the truth is about that, those comparisons do at least prove that Greek religion may be traced back to higher wellsprings than Egyptian and Indian ideas. Indeed if the question were to arise of which of the various theologies, be it the Egyptian and Indian, or on the other hand the Greek, had remained closer to the original source; then the unbiassed researcher would scarcely hesitate before deciding for the latter.

xxix lack of form. In German, Unform. The passage quoted above from the Westöstliches Divan does not say this, exactly. Perhaps the following gives a better idea; from a letter, dated the twenty-second of October 1826, written to Karl Wilhelm von Humboldt, the German translator of the Bhagavad-Gita:

I am in no way averse to things Indian, but I am frightened of them, because they draw my imagination towards the formless and irregular, against which I must more than ever be on my guard.

xxx This refers to a passage in Herodotus which mentions the “Linus” song—a dirge for a slain youth or, as Schelling and others think, for a lost god, a young fertility divinity cut off in his prime—which was widespread amongst ancient peoples. Originally the song was perhaps a lament for the harvested crops. (Refer to my note to page 35.) Note that a few pages earlier there are flutes and women singing a hymn to Dionysus. The part about no more being added comes from the sentence before the Linus-song is mentioned. In A. D. Godley’s translation:
They keep the ordinances of their fathers, and add none *sic/* others to them. Among other notable customs of theirs is this, that they have one song, the Linus-song.

In the translation of Sélincourt and Burn this lack of addition becomes a lack of adoption:

The Egyptians keep to their native customs and never adopt any from abroad. Many of these customs are interesting, especially, perhaps, the “Linus” song.

xxx This reference to Egyptian priests is a dig at Johann Heinrich Voss (refer to the note for page 69), who opposed Creuzer (page 89). The following passage from the Philosophy of Mythology [II 2, 278], although necessarily taken out of context, may indicate what is going on:

When Herodotus, whose uncommon accuracy is only confirmed all the more by all more recent investigations, finds in the Egyptian Osiris an essential core related to, and similar to, the Greek Dionysus, and thus admittedly recognizes in Dionysus some higher quality, which Voss calls “mystical,” then Voss describes Herodotus in this regard as a romancer taken in by Egyptian priests.

The passage where Herodotus finds Dionysus in Osiris is in his Historics II, 143–146; II, 42 and II, 49 (which is quoted in my note to page 110) are also relevant.

xxxI I have supplied the words “on the first level”; it looks as though something of the kind may have gone astray during some editing process.

xxxi Johannes Clericus, 1657–1736, also known as Jean Le Clerc of Amsterdam, Dutch theologian born in Switzerland. He was unorthodox in that he interpreted the Bible without resorting to dogma, and because of his strong emphasis on reason as the point of reference in questions of religion. The work referred to is an edition of Hesiod’s works: Hesiodi Ascræi quæcumque extant, Græce et Latine, ex recensione J. Clerici, cum ejusdem animadversionibus, in two volumes, published in Amsterdam in 1701.

xxxiv Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, c1693-1755, German Protestant theologian. He was the first Enlightenment historian of Christianity, and he used the analysis of sources to try to give Church history greater objectivity and free it from the domination of dogmatism. (For an example, see my note to page 201 about the legio fulminatrix.) The commentary referred to was incorporated in the Latin version of Cudworth’s Systema (see below). There is a good edition of Cudworth, published in three volumes in 1845, which includes Mosheim’s very extensive notes and dissertations translated into English by John Harrison. The only reference to mythology is in one of Mosheim’s notes to chapter five, section three, on “the soul’s celestial and ethereal body” (volume three page 293):

It is notorious that those who embodied the dogmas of antiquity in verse, borrowed the colouring and embellishments, by which they sought to gain for them a reader access into the popular mind, from ancient history, and formed a certain discipline called in the present day mythology; compounded of the precepts of ancient philosophers and the legends of their own country. Hence they also obscured with the same ornaments and fictions the most simple doctrine of the state of souls after death, in order to beguile and conciliate the ears of the multitude, who held in firm remembrance the affairs and
exploits of bygone ages as handed down from their ancestors. First of all the subterranean place itself in which disembodied souls were supposed to be confined was depicted by them in such a way as accorded with Grecian conceptions, and the manners of the times in which they lived. In the next place, being aware that that incredible multitude of souls could not possibly dispense with a leader and king, they selected Pluto out of ancient tradition, a certain king probably of Epirus or some other province, well known to the common people for his severity, and assigned to him the sovereignty of the shades . . . although the first authors and inventors of fables obeyed anything other than reason, still I am certain that their discipline is in a certain measure consistent and in keeping with itself, and that nothing has been handed down by them which is repugnant to its first principles.

XXX Ralph Cudworth, 1617‒1688, English philosopher and divine. Author of The True Intellectual System of the Universe, published in 1678. The first Latin version was published in Jena in 1733, and included a commentary by Mosheim (see above). The fourth chapter, which forms more than half of the book, is intended to show that a primitive monotheistic creed was implied in the ancient paganism. Cudworth espoused a Christian Platonism, influenced by Descartes, and opposed this both to the materialism of Hobbes (whom he suspected of atheism) and to Puritan dogmatism or fatalism.

XXXVI Karl Dietrich Hüllmann, 1765‒1846, German historian. He is best known for his works on economic and constitutional history, but did also publish Theogonia (investigations relating to the origin of the religion of antiquity) in 1804, and a discussion of the origin of the Cyclopes in 1826. The work to which Schelling refers, the Anfänge der griechischen Geschichte, was published in 1814.

XXXVII Euhemerus. A Sicilian writer in Greek who lived around 300 B.C. and who advanced, in his “travel novel” Heira Anagraphe (Sacred Scripture), the theory (for which he pretended to have found documentary evidence in an imaginary island, Panchæa, in the Indian ocean) that the gods of mythology had their origin in kings or heroes deified by those they had ruled over or benefited. “The Alexandrian period” commonly refers to the last three centuries B.C., deriving its name from the Egyptian city of Alexandria, rather than from Alexander the Great himself (356‒323 B.C.) who founded the city. Euhemerus was made known to the Romans by Ennius (239‒169 B.C.), but apart from that his work survives only in fragments and in an epitome by Eusebius.

XXXVIII “Occasions” is Ereignisse in German. For a remark on Schelling’s use of this word, please refer to my note to page 102 in lecture five.

XXXIX Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106‒43 B.C., Roman consul, orator, and writer. He is said to have been the inventor of the words moralis, essentia, qualitas, individuum, vacuum, proprium, inducio, elementa, definitio, differentia, notio, comprehendendo, appetitio, and finally of that concept much misused and inflated by mathematicians, infinitus. Although Cicero had Greek models for these words, Voltaire was right to say “He taught us how to think.” (But it may well be time for a review.) The work quoted is On the Nature of the Gods, written in 45 B.C. The Loeb edition has: 1. intellegi in place of intelligi. 2. quicquam instead of quidquam. 3. No commas after quicquam and quæri. 4. possit instead of potest (noted as a variant). Schelling gives the chapter reference; the section reference is I, 43.
The passage is set in the mouth of Velleius, portrayed as a dogmatic and arrogant follower of Epicurus. In Horace C. P. McGregor’s translation it reads:

What race of men or nation is there which does not have some untaught apprehension of the gods? Such an innate idea Epicurus calls “prolepsis,” that is to say, a certain form of knowledge which is inborn in the mind, and without which there can be no other knowledge, no rational thought or argument.

H. Rackham’s translation is worth quoting too, just because it is so different:

For what nation or what tribe of men is there but possesses untaught some “preconception” of the gods? Such notions Epicurus designates by the word “prolepsis,” that is, a sort of preconceived mental picture of a thing, without which nothing can be understood or investigated or discussed.

(I feel happier with McGregor.)

Epicurus, much discussed and quoted by Cicero, was a Greek philosopher who lived from 341 to 270 B.C. He had great personal charm, and after his service as an ephebe, he established a school in Athens in his private garden. He wrote many books, but all his works are lost except three letters and two collections of maxims. The text of these is not at all reliable as they were preserved only in the form of a copy by Diogenes Lærtius, who lived in Cilicia very much later (around 200‒250 A.D.), and wrote in Greek “The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers.” The following passage (sections 76‒77) from the Letter to Herodotus, in the translation by Cyril Bailey, is the one which is usually taken to express Epicurus’s view about the completely idle gods:

Furthermore, the motions of the heavenly bodies and their turnings and eclipses and risings and settings, and kindred phenomena to these, must not be thought to be due to any being who controls and ordains or has ordained them and at the same time enjoys perfect bliss together with immortality (for trouble and care and anger and kindness are not consistent with a life of blessedness, but these things come to pass where there is weakness and fear and dependence on neighbours). Nor again must we believe that they, which are but fire agglomerated in a mass, possess blessedness, and voluntarily take upon themselves these movements. But we must preserve their full majestic significance in all expressions which we apply to such conceptions, in order that there may not arise out of them opinions contrary to this notion of majesty. Otherwise this very contradiction will cause the greatest disturbance in men’s souls.

Of this, Cicero’s Cotta (Of the Nature of the Gods III, 1), deliberately unsympathetic no doubt, says (in the translation by Hubert M. Poteat):

. . . in point of fact, the only consideration that deters him from denying their [the immortal gods’] existence is his fear of denunciation. But when he declares that the gods do nothing and are interested in nothing . . . I cannot but believe he is making game of us . . .

Next, from section 78 of the Letter to Herodotus, what Epicurus actually says of chance:
Furthermore, we must believe that to discover accurately the cause of the most essential facts is the function of the science of nature, and that blessedness for us in the knowledge of celestial phenomena lies in this and in the understanding of the nature of the existences seen in these celestial phenomena, and of all else that is akin to the exact knowledge requisite for our happiness in knowing too that what occurs in several ways or is capable of being otherwise has no place here, but that nothing which suggests doubt or alarm can be included at all in that which is naturally immortal and blessed.

I have transcribed two further passages from the *Letter to Herodotus* in my note to page 55.

Differences between the Loeb edition and Schelling’s version: 1. *enim* is inserted after *cum*. 2. No commas after *aliquo*, *more*, and *est*. 3. *intellegi* instead of *intelligi*. Schelling gives the chapter reference; the section reference is I, 44.

McGregor:

This is not a belief which has been prescribed to us by some authority, or law, or custom: it rests rather upon a firm and continuing consensus of opinion that we must admit the existence of the gods.

Rackham:

For the belief in the gods has not been established by authority, custom or law, but rests on the unanimous and abiding consensus of mankind; their existence is therefore a necessary inference.

Bacon’s *De Sapientia Veterum* (On the Wisdom of the Ancients) was first published in a small duodecimo volume in 1609. Its plan is to recite a number of myths, disclosing the moral, physical, and political lessons supposed to lie latent in them. The hypothesis on which the interpretations rest is of a primæval wisdom and high intellectual cultivation which existed on the Earth and passed out of memory long before Homer, but expressed itself in allegorical symbols. Bacon traces the origin of the myths to a time when abstract nouns had not been invented, and everything was spoken of as a person, assigned a name and a sex. For example, people said “Selene embraces Endymion” instead of “the sun is setting and the moon is rising.” The work was regarded, during his lifetime and for many years afterwards, as next in importance to the *Essays*. Bacon certainly interprets *some* of the myths in a political way, although the relevance to his own age is rather obscure, as is also the question of whether, as Schelling says, he is *using* them. Only the first three (“Cassandra, or Divination”; “Typhon, or a Rebel”; “The Cyclopes, or the Ministers of Terror”) of the thirty-one myths he interprets are treated in a political sense. And here is an extract from his preface, translated into English by Sir Arthur Gorges in 1619:

For who can be so stupid and blind in the open light, as (when he hears how Fame, after the Giants were destroyed, sprang up as their youngest Sister) not to refer it to the murmurs and seditious reports of both sides, which are wont to fly abroad for a time after the suppressing of insurrections? Or when he hears how the Giant Typhon having cut out and brought away Jupiter’s nerves, which Mercury stole from him, and restored again to Jupiter; doth not presently perceive how fitly it may be applied to powerful rebellions, which take from Princes their sinews of money and authority, but so, that by affability of speech, and wise edicts (the minds of their subjects being in time privily, and as it were by
stealth reconciled) they recover their strength again? Or when he hears how (in that memorable
expedition of the Gods against the Giants) the braying of Silenus his Ass, conduced much to the
profligation of the Giants; doth not confidently imagine, that it was invented to shew, how the greatest
enterprises of Rebels are oftentimes dispersed with vain rumours and fears?

Pedro Calderón de la Barca, 1600–81, Spanish dramatist. Of his work, about a hundred and ten
comedias (secular plays) are preserved, and over seventy autos sacramentales (religious plays), to
which genre he devoted himself entirely after 1651. His plays are said to have a Catholic purpose yet
universal significance. The mystical La Vida Es Sueño (Life is a Dream) was written around 1631.
His Mágico Prodigioso (the "Miraculous Magus," or "Mighty Magician"), based on the life of Saint
Cyprian, an analogue to Faust, was written in 1637, published in 1663, and translated into German
in 1816 by Johann Diederich Gries (1775–1842). Schelling quotes from this German translation and
I have translated from that. Cyprian, speaking of a passage in Pliny saying that God is the highest
good, all-knowing and all-powerful, complains that he cannot understand this in the light of the lower
passions of a human kind displayed in the myths of Jupiter, Danæ, and Europa. It is in reply to this
that the demon utters the speech which Schelling quotes. Cyprian is not satisfied with his answer, and
the argument continues.

this—sic. The use of the singular number, here, seems intended to imply that electromagnetism
and chemical action (Chemismus) are different aspects of a single natural phenomenon or process.
Incidentally, there is an English word “chemism,” but I have judged it to be too unfamiliar for the
main text, although I use it in this note. In fact there is a lot behind these apparently innocuous terms,
and Schelling has an extensive theory about the processes they signify, a theory which would be done
disservice were I to try to summarize it here, particularly because of its unfamiliarity. I shall simply
offer the following samples which may arouse interest rather than repel. The unenlightened reader
will doubtless find himself almost wholly at a loss; I can only remind him that the terminology does
not have the same meaning as that customary today.

1. (from the Introduction to the Outline of a System of Nature-Philosophy or concerning the
   Concept of Speculative Physics and the Inner Organisation of a System of this Science, of 1799,
   page [I 3, 317]):

   We have, therefore, the following schema of the dynamic process:
   First level: Unity of the product—magnetism
   Second level: Duplicity of the products—electricity
   Third level: Unity of the products—chemical process

2. (from the same work, page [I 3, 321]):

   Magnetism, electricity, and chemical action are the categories of the original construction of Nature
   (matter)—this withdraws and lies beyond contemplation, and those categories are that which remains of
   it, that which stands firm, is fixed—the universal schemata of the construction of matter.

3. (from the Synoptic Deduction of the Dynamic Process or the Categories of Physics, of 1800,
   pages [I 4, 15–47]):
Magnetism operates purely in the dimension of length . . . electricity operates purely in the
dimensions of length and breadth . . . the chemical process is the representative of the third phase of
construction for experience, or that phase which corresponds, among the processes of the second
order, to the process of weight. Thus of bodies which change in the third phase (the third dimension), it
is said that they change chemically. . . . Light is the reproducing of production itself (just as the other
dynamic phenomena are only individual manifestations of this reproduction).

4. (from the Stuttgart Private Lectures of 1810, page [I 7, 450]):

We distinguish: 1) the processes or forms of activity which still exist more in the physical or in the
product, and 2) the spiritual form of the same processes. The three basic processes of the first kind are:
a) magnetism = first dimension = selfhood, egohood, b) electricity = polarity or opposition between that
which is producing and product, that which is active and that which suffers—two bodies, of which one is
always the sufferer, the other the active body. (It is these two processes which also determine, in respect
of the Earth, the regions of the world.) c) totality of all processes = chemism or galvanism (the latter in
fact simply living chemism, in which electricity is still found to play a part). Finally the process of
combustion.

But as far as the spiritual content of these processes is concerned, then a) in the real, there is the
spiritual process corresponding to magnetism = sound, b) as the ideal, the spiritual process
 corresponding to electricity = the process of light (light is a spiritual material), c) the process
 corresponding to chemism, as long as that which produces remains within the identity with the product
 = the process of heat (penetrating heat). In the decisive reaction against the product = fire (fire thus in
 fact basic substance—Vesta, hence counted among the elements).

In all these processes, then, out of the depth of matter itself, the spiritual is developed, which is
precisely the intention of all creation. Everything is summoned forth out of the obscure principle itself
by the higher creative principle, which we have called æther, but which is the true life-spirit of Nature:
since we have shown that the bond residing in the product, from its ideal side, that is to say in so far as it
is turned towards the absolutely ideal, is equivalent to light, light, then, is actually the direct
manifestation of this life-spirit. Hence light has to be understood as that which universally animates—
instigates evolution—, and there would be no objection were we, instead of opposing æther to
gravitational force, to set light and gravitational force in this relationship.

Schelling relates all this to the work of Newton, Daniel Bernoulli, Coulomb, Faraday, etc.

Immanuel Kant, 1724–1804, German philosopher. He sought to determine the limits of man’s
knowledge, and propounded theories of ethics, cosmology, and anthropology. A bachelor, he
enjoyed the company of two or three young people over his midday meal and for an hour or so after
that. He got up at five o’clock every morning, and went through life without ever having seen a
mountain. His later works contain a large number of humorous anecdotes of the same kind as this
suggestive quotation about the American native. For example, in his 1790 Kritik der Urteilskraft
(Critical Analysis of the Power of Judgement), he speaks of an “Iroquois sachem” who said that
nothing in Paris pleased him better than the food. (Nineteen out of twenty Frenchmen would have
given him the same opinion.) Many of his works describe his own bodily functions and are not
pleasant reading. In his Bestimmung des Begriffs einer Menschenrace (Specification of the Concept
of a Human Race) of 1785 he states as a fact that human blood becomes black when it contains an excess of phlogiston. He then suggests that the powerful body odour of negroes is due to their skin giving off more phlogiston which has been extracted from their blood, and that their skin is dark because a great deal of phlogiston collects at the end of their arteries in readiness to be dephlogisticated through it. The air in the region of the River Gambia is, he says, highly dephlogisticated, due to all the forests and swamps. I trust his philosophy no more than I do all this. It was difficult to track down the probable source of Schelling’s “quotation,” as there was no young American and no mention of phlogiston at all. The subject of paragraph 54 of Kant’s Critical Analysis of the Power of Judgement is laughter, and the alleged view of Epicurus that all pleasure is fundamentally bodily sensation. Kant says:

When someone tells the story of the Indian who, at the table of an Englishman in Surat [port in Gujarat on the west coast of India] saw a bottle of ale open and all that beer, transformed into foam, gushing out, showed his amazement with many exclamations, and to the Englishman’s question of “What is there about that which is so amazing?” replied “I am not really surprised that it comes out, but at how you could have got it in,” then we laugh, and it affords us great enjoyment: not because we feel that we are cleverer than this ignorant man or about anything pleasurable which the understanding allows us to perceive in it; but our expectation had been aroused and has disappeared suddenly into nothing . . .

For if one assumes that with all our thoughts there is at the same time harmonically associated a movement in the organs of the body, then one will very well understand in this way how that sudden displacement of the mind, in observing its object, from one standpoint to another, could correspond to an alternating tension and relaxation of the elastic parts of our entrails, which is communicated to the diaphragm (just like that which ticklish people feel): during which the lungs expel the air in a quick succession of puffs and thus effect a movement beneficial to health, which movement alone, and not something going on in the mind, is the true reason for the pleasure in a thought which fundamentally represents nothing.

So either Kant repeats this rubbish in a different form elsewhere, or the only connection with phlogiston is the implied dephlogistication by way of the exercise of the lungs. (Which would mean Schelling’s memory is playing him tricks, or he himself is having a good laugh.)

Karl Friedrich Dornedden (1768–1840), author of Phamenophis, oder Versuch eines neuen Theorien über Ursprung der Kunst u. Mythologie (Phamenophis, or Outline of a new Theory of the Origin of Art and Mythology), published in 1797, and of three other works about mythology: “On the Demons and Geniuses of the Ancients” (1793), “Outline of a Theory for the Explanation of the Greek Myths” (1801), and “New Theory for the Explanation of Greek Mythology” (1802, possibly the same work as the previous one). Schelling’s spelling is “Pamenophis,” without the “h.” (According to Pausanias in his Description of Greece (I, 42, 3), a tourist guide dating from the second half of the second century A.D., the Egyptians at Thebes said that the gigantic whistling statue there, built in the fifteenth century B.C. and known to antiquity as the “colossus of Memnon” really depicted “Phamenoph”—some even said “Sesostris.” Pausanias mentions only one but there are two, which formed part of the facade of the funeral temple of Amenhotep III—this is the version of the name accepted today.)

Christian Gottlob Heyne, 1729–1812, German classical philologist and bibliographer. Under his
direction the library of the Göttingen university became the leading academic library of Germany. He edited, and made many contributions to, the eight volumes of *Novi Commentarii* (1769–77) and the sixteen volumes of *Commentationes* (1778–1808), from the Göttingen Academy of Sciences. Although Schelling’s reference does not contain the word “Novi,” the dissertation is in fact in the eighth volume of the *Novi Commentarii*, dated 1777, on pages 34–58 of the section on history and philology. (All these commentaries were reprinted in 1973.) The fourth word of its title is spelt *caussis* in the original, whereas Schelling writes “causis”; and the English equivalent is “On the Origin and Sources of the Homeric Legends.” Despite the date of 1776 (a misprint?) on the spine of the reprint of this volume, Heyne’s lecture was first given in September 1777 and the title page bears this date, but also states that the volume was actually first printed in 1778.

There are a few differences in Heyne’s original: 1. “(per fabulas)” (using fables) is lacking and must have been supplied by Schelling. 2. *philosophandi aut narrandi genus* instead of just *philosophandi genus*, such that Heyne’s meaning is “for the purposes of philosophy or narration.” 3. the emphasis on *allegoricum* is Schelling’s. 4. *appelletur* instead of *appellatur*. 5. a semicolon, not a comma, after *allegoricum*. 6. *aliquo* follows *studio*, but the meaning is not really changed. 7. commas after *quod*, *exponerent*, *spiritum*, *luctantem*, *ponere*, *et*, and *modum*. 8. *exponerent* (set out, explain, exhibit) instead of *exprimere* (portray, express). 9. no comma after *propria*. The impression is that Schelling made what he considered improvements as he transcribed it. In translation the passage reads:

Nor, in truth, would it be appropriate to call that kind [of mythology], made (using fables) for the purposes of philosophy, *allegorical*, since it was not so much that intelligent and zealous men were searching for a cloak for their ideas, as that they did not possess another way of expressing what was in their mind. Indeed the difficulty and poverty of their language restricted and straitened the spirit which was as it were striving to break free, and their minds, as if struck by an access of some divine inspiration, and prevented, since both they and the community lacked suitable words, from displaying and representing to the visual sense those vague things themselves, laboured to render visible the facts they had pondered and to reveal them to an audience in the form of a drama.

Plato (c428–c348 B.C.): his dialogue *Phædrus*. I have translated from Schelling’s German paraphrase. The reader may care to compare the following, extracted from Benjamin Jowett’s translation. Socrates, in ironic mood, is speaking to his “divine darling,” the youth Phædrus, as they walk together towards a shady, grassy, and delightful spot under a plane tree:

I might have a rational explanation that Orithyia was playing with Pharmacia, when a northern gust carried her over the neighbouring rocks; and this being the manner of her death, she was said to have been carried away by Boreas. There is a discrepancy, however, about the locality; according to another version of the story she was taken from the Areopagus, and not from this place. Now I quite acknowledge that these allegories are very nice, but he is not to be envied who has to invent them; much labour and ingenuity will be required of him; and when he has once begun, he must go on and rehabilitate Hippocentauris and chimeras dire. Gorgons and winged steeds flow in apace, and numberless other inconceivable and portentous natures. And if he is sceptical about them, and would fain reduce them one after another to the rules of probability, this sort of crude philosophy will take up a great deal of time. Now I have no leisure for such inquiries; shall I tell you why? I must first know
myself, as the Delphian inscription says; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous. And therefore I bid farewell to all this: the common opinion is enough for me. For, as I was saying, I want to know not about this, but about myself: am I a monster more complicated and swollen with passion than Typho, or a creature of a gentler and simpler sort, possessing by divine grace, a nature devoid of pride.

The second Plato passage referred to by Schelling, from the *Republic*, section 391D, is as follows, again in Jowett’s translation. Socrates is speaking to Adeimantus:

And let us equally refuse to believe, or allow to be repeated, the tale of Theseus son of Poseidon, and Peirithous son of Zeus, going forth as they did to perpetrate a horrid rape; or of any other hero or son of a god daring to do such impious and dreadful things as they falsely ascribe to them in our day: and let us further compel the poets to declare either that these acts were not done by them, or that they were not the sons of gods:—both in the same breath they shall not be permitted to affirm. We will not have them trying to persuade our youth that the gods are the authors of evil, and that heroes are no better than men—sentiments which, as we were saying, are neither pious nor true, for we have already proved that evil cannot come from the gods.

The emphasis is Schelling’s. The Academic is Cotta (based on a real person) who in this section does not function (as he did earlier in the work) as an urbane man of the world, but, in his capacity of pontifex, as the devout believer who had no intention of overturning religion, accepting it on the strength of tradition and merely wishing to remove bad arguments for it.

Differences between the Loeb edition and Schelling’s version: 1. No commas after Zeno, Cleanthes, vocabulorum, appellentur; and esse. 2. Comma after Chrysippus. 3. commenticiarum instead of commentitiarum. 4. quidque instead of quiique. 5. appellatum sit instead of appellati sint. 6. se rem instead of rem se. 7. sit; instead of sit:. 8. di instead of Dii. 9. appellatur instead of appellentur. 10. deorum instead of Deorum. Schelling gives the chapter reference; the section reference is III, 63.

McGregor:

But all this was a great and quite unnecessary labour which Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus undertook—this effort to give a rational meaning to imaginary stories and to give reasons for the names by which all the gods are called. And in so doing, you admit right away that the facts are very different from the popular belief, because the beings which are called gods are really natural forces and not personal deities at all.

Rackham:

A great deal of quite unnecessary trouble was taken first by Zeno, then by Cleanthus and lastly by Chrysippus, to rationalize these purely fanciful myths and explain the reasons for the names by which the various deities are called. But in so doing you clearly admit that the facts are widely different from men’s belief, since the so-called gods are really properties of things, not divine persons at all.

Interesting the two translations of *rerum naturas*, as “natural forces” and “properties of things.” The latter is more literal. In the singular, the phrase occurs in the title of Lucretius’s (c99–c55 B.C.)
poem expounding the Epicurean philosophy: *De rerum natura* (On the Nature of Things); it means “the natural order” or “the way things happen,” or even just “the world” or “the universe.” The meaning of the word *natura* was one of the principal points of contention between the Stoics and the Epicureans: the Stoics spoke of Nature as the sustaining and governing principle of the world, which had not merely an accidental structure based on *cohesion*, but contained order, even art. The Epicureans (whom Cicero did not love after he turned twenty-two) called all things “natures” and divided natures into atoms, the void, and the attributes of both.

1 The Roman god Hercules was probably derived from the Greek Heracles, who was exalted by the later Stoics as an ideal of human virtue, and perhaps reflects some real person, a vassal of the great king of Mycenæ. Castor and Polydeuces (Pollux in Latin) are both spoken of by Homer as mortal. “Æsculapius” is the Latin form of the Greek name “Asclepius.” He was the son of Apollo (opinions vary about who his mother was), and was a mortal, deified like Heracles. Using his art of healing, he attempted to revive the dead. Zeus regarded the raising of dead mortals as a dangerous precedent, and killed Asclepius with a thunderbolt. (I quote the words of Edward Tripp.) Apollo, the god of youth, music, and prophecy, is described as a younger immigrant among the Greek gods. In art he is portrayed as the ideal type of young, but not immature, manly beauty, and he was said to have been the real father of Plato.

11 The emphasis is Schelling’s. This passage is set in the mouth of Balbus, represented as a typical Stoic. The Loeb edition lacks commas after *ratione* and *tractatus*. The German text gives the chapter reference “l. c. c. 24,” without pointing out that this is now chapter 24 of book two, not book three, so I have removed “l. c.” and added the “II”. The section reference is II, 63.

McGregor:

A great number of gods have also been derived from *scientific* theories about the world of *nature*. Endowed with human shapes, they have provided fables for the poets and have permeated human life with every form of superstition. This subject has been treated by Zeno and explained at greater length by Cleanthes and Chrysippus, etc. [Schelling’s “etc.” could be intended to cover the following four or five pages, but I shall just continue to the end of Cicero’s paragraph.] For example, it was an old legend of the Greeks that the Sky-God (Uranus) was mutilated by his son Saturn and that Saturn in his turn was made captive by his son Jupiter. These impious tales are merely the picturesque disguise of a sophisticated scientific theory. Those who invented them felt that the high, æthereal and fiery nature of the Sky-God should have no use for those parts of the body which require intercourse with another to beget a child.

Rackham:

Another theory also, and that a *scientific* one, has been the source of a number of deities, who *clad in human form* have furnished the poets with legends and have filled man’s life with superstitions of all sorts. This subject was handled by Zeno and was later explained more fully by Cleanthes and Chrysippus.

111 Victor Cousin, 1792–1867, French philosopher. While in Germany in 1818 he made the acquaintance of Schelling, among others. He later published a spiritual system which he called...
“eclecticism”; it is an attempt to bring together the ideas of Descartes and Kant. In 1834 Schelling wrote a preface to the German translation of his *Philosophical Fragments*. In 1835 Cousin wrote to Schelling offering to arrange for the *Philosophy of Mythology* to be translated—an honourable and useful enterprise, he calls it—by one of his friends, and saying that three months after its publication in Germany a French version would be published in Paris. (This seems an unrealistically short term.) Olympiodorus was a pagan Greek historian and poet of the fifth century A.D., from Thebes in Upper Egypt. He wrote a *History* (really memoirs) in twenty-two books, now lost, relating to the period from 407 to 425. Cousin’s extensive articles on him are reproduced in that volume of his *Philosophical Fragments* entitled *Fragments de Philosophie Ancienne* (Fragments of Ancient Philosophy). The following comes from his article about Olympiodorus’s *Commentary on Plato’s Georgias*, and begins with a passage quoted from Olympiodorus:

“The universe is made up of three things: the celestial, the terrestrial, and the intermediate, which are fire, air, and water. Jupiter presides over the celestial things, Pluto over the things of the earth: the realm of the intermediate is subject to Poseidon. These names designate the powers assigned to these different natures. Jupiter holds a sceptre, symbol of his functions as judge; Poseidon is armed with a trident, as presiding over the three intermediate elements: Pluto bears a helmet, by reason of the shades of his empire. Just as the helmet hides the head, so is Pluto the power which presides over what is obscure. Do not imagine that philosophers worship idols, stones, as deities; but as humanity is subject to the conditions of the sensibility and is unable easily to attain incorporeal and immaterial power, images were invented in order to awaken or recall the memory thereof; when we observe these natural images, when we render homage to them, we have in mind the powers which escape our senses.” *At this point Cousin adds the following footnote:* Is this not a response to the objections of Christianity against pagan idolatry?

Next a passage of Cousin from the same article:

Pagan mythology admitted demons who were offspring of the gods, but we do not believe that before the encounter of paganism with Christianity there had ever been any question of angels. It was in imitation of Christianity that the Alexandrians distinguished between angels and demons, and that they considered the ones as good and the others as evil.

Now a passage from another article, on Olympiodorus’s *Commentary on Plato’s Phaedo*:

The Alexandrians were not pure antiquarians, applying their minds to the study of religious facts in the same way as to the study of all other facts, seeking the most legitimate explication in accordance with the rules of criticism; they were philosophers, statesmen, who had taken sides in the great dispute of the day, and who had no wish at all to accept the new religion, nor could they any longer take seriously the old religion as it stood, and they found themselves led to transform it with the aid of an interpretation which was often ingenious, sometimes profound, and invariably arbitrary. Without doubt there may be found among the philosophers of Alexandria some rare and questionable flashes of insight relating to the ancient religions of Greece; but that is not what should be sought in them. What is important here is not the past, but the present. It is not a matter of knowing whether, in fact, the Alexandrians rediscovered the true meaning of such and such a fable accredited to a certain little town in Greece; one should summon up another scene, that of the elite among the thinkers of an epoch endeavouring to
give the people the most moral and most rational religion possible, while still preserving the old religion, but elevating it to the dignity of philosophy. This enterprise has only been carried through on one occasion, or at least history only offers it to us on one occasion on a grand scale, begun, and pursued, with high illumination, the most noble intentions, and the finest spirit [les plus beaux génies]. It is that which, especially in our time, makes Alexandrian mythology an admirable subject for study and meditation. This new mythology did not last as long as the old, and it never permeated down to the lowest ranks of society; but it had a real existence nonetheless; it reigned for several centuries; and even when vanquished in the political world, it continues in the fourth century to present, in the writings of some philosophers, for example in Proclus, a complete and well-integrated system.

Finally another short passage from the same work, bringing in metaphysics:

Instead of rejecting popular beliefs, the Alexandrian tried to explain them using the three methods which we have indicated, and especially using the last, moral and metaphysical symbolism. In this way they idealized to some degree the grosser cults of paganism, and gave an elevated and honest meaning to beliefs which often contradicted common sense and natural morality.

---

**131** Gottfried Hermann, 1772–1848, German classical philologist. Famous for his analytical editions of classical Greek authors (particularly Homer, Pindar, and Æschylus), as well as for his studies of Greek grammar and pioneering work on ancient metrics.

**131** In German, this is den durchgängig eigentlichen Sinn. A similar phrase occurs later (on page 40), and is there translated as “wholly specific.” Please refer to the note for that page.

**131** “On the Most Ancient Mythology of the Greeks.” This dissertation was included in volume two of Hermann’s collection Opuscula of 1827, at page 167.

**131** Thamyris was a mythical bard, son of the poet Philammon by the nymph Argoipe. The latter, repudiated by Philammon, went from Parnassus to Thrace, where Thamyris was born. He fell in love with Hyacinth before Apollo did; he is said to have been the first man to love a person of his own sex. He became so famous as a bard that he dared to challenge the muses to a contest. He lost and was severely punished for his impudence.

Orpheus was a Thracian minstrel, the son either of a Thracian king, Oeagrus, or of Apollo, and the muse Calliope. He joined the Argonauts and introduced them to the Samothracian mysteries. On his return to Thrace he was killed by raging Ciconian women; one of the reasons suggested for their enmity is that he became the first man to love boys. He came to be credited with the invention of mysteries and the authorship of many poems and mystical books. His cult, Orphism, involving various mysteries that were apparently somewhat similar to those of Dionysus, became prominent about the sixth century B.C. It strongly influenced Pythagorean philosophy.

The earliest mention of Linus is by Homer, and merely refers to the dirge (see my note to page 25), not to a person. A fragment attributed to Hesiod is the first to refer to him as a person, and he is there called a son of the Muse Urania. Later versions of his parentage differ widely, but some call him a brother of Orpheus. It is generally agreed that he grew up as an explanation of the ancient song.

Olen was a mythical epic poet, a Hyperborean or Lycian. He was said to have brought the
worship of Apollo and Artemis from Lycia to Delos, where he celebrated their birth among the Hyperboreans in hymns which continued to be recited there. The Hyperboreans themselves were a legendary people of the distant north, where the sun rose and fell but once a year.

LVII The full title in German is Ueber das Wesen und die Behandlung der Mythologie; ein Brief an Herrn Hofrath Creuzer (On the Nature and Treatment of Mythology; a Letter to Counsellor Creuzer). Schelling quotes just the first part of the title. This work is mentioned often in different parts of Schelling’s work, and I have put the English version of its title in the text. It does not seem to have been translated into English.

LVIII Kottos, sometimes referred to as “Cottus,” the Furious. Κόπτω means “strike,” “smite,” or “pound.” Sons of Uranus and Gaia, these three “mighty, violent, and unspeakable” giants were at first hidden away inside Gaia by Uranus,

Because he envied them their looks and size
And overwhelming masculinity.

They each had fifty heads, as well as a hundred arms. Later Zeus enlisted their assistance in the battle against the Titans.

LIX Schelling’s Greek reads Gyges—the Big-Limbed (probably this is what is unspeakable about him). In English versions he is sometimes called “Gyes,” γύης in classical Greek, meaning the curved piece of wood in a plough.

Briareus or Briareos, the Vigorous, the name of the third giant. The name comes from βριαρός, “strong” or “stout,” with the same root as βριθός, “weighty,” “heavy.” He was given this name by the gods, but by men he was called Ægæon.

This is as close as I can come to Schelling’s second example in German, which, did the word exist in English, might be translated as “The implement with which one ladles (hebt) wine from a barrel is called the ‘ladler’ (Heber).”

LXII This name is derived from the German verb blasen, to blow.

LXIII Pierre Simon, Marquis de Laplace, 1749–1827, French mathematician, physicist, and astronomer. An archetypical determinist, he considered all the effects of Nature to be only the mathematical consequences of a small number of immutable laws. He devoted his whole life single-mindedly to the perfection of mathematical astronomy, and his results appeared in the Celestial Mechanics, published in five volumes between 1799 and 1825. The book which Schelling mentions, the System of the World, in two volumes, was published in 1796, and the German translation already in the following year. It contains a more readable account of his main achievements, without the mathematics. (It would be interesting to find out why Schelling rated it so highly.) He also wrote a definitive treatise on probability, and in 1795 was the first to formulate the idea of a one-way membrane in a very dense gravitational field, an idea which later led to the unfortunate theory of “black holes.” He proposed a cosmogonic hypothesis concerning the origin of nebulæ and the solar system, but different references have different views about whether or not he was aware of that of
Kant (as expressed, for example, in the latter’s *Synoptic History of Nature and Theory of the Universe* of 1755), and whether or not his diverges from Kant’s.

Persephone. The daughter of Zeus and Demeter, carried off by Hades and made his queen in the lower world. Subsequently, Zeus could not release her wholly, as Pluto had given her some pomegranate seeds to eat there, so it was arranged that she should spend part of the year on earth and the rest with Hades. The myth probably relates to the burying of seed in the ground and the growth of the corn.

Dionysus. The son of Zeus and Semele. Homer does not include him among the Olympian gods. He was accompanied by a rout of male and female votaries, dancing in a state of intoxication or possession. Later he appears as a god of wine, who loosens care, inspires music and poetry, and introduces into Greek religion the elements of ecstasy and mysticism that are found in his cult. He is frequently represented as a reposing youth of rather effeminate expression, with luxuriant hair, and in his hand grapes, a wine-cup, or the thyrsus.

χάω or χαίω means “to kindle” or “set on fire.” χαίνω means “to kill.” The OED says that the Greek (meaning “vast gulf, chasm, void”) comes from the verb stem χα- “to yawn” or “gape.” Perhaps Schelling was just noting down suggestions which he intended to investigate further. I do not know whether any lecture notes survive for this work, but if so, this is one of the points which they may be able to clarify.

A verb meaning “say,” “relate.”

πιτνεῖν, which appears also in the form πίπτω, means “to fall.”

This name is introduced rather abruptly, so that one again suspects some corruption. It refers back to “matter,” which follows Chaos two paragraphs before, but there the name Gaea is not mentioned, not even in Greek, although its Greek derivation (pronounced gao, gegaa) is given.

The German word I have translated as “strain” is streben, which more commonly means “strive.” The Greek τείνω means “stretch” or “extend,” as well as “aim at,” “strive,” “rush,” and “refer to.” The suggested derivation is not Schelling’s, but Hesiod’s, in lines 207–10:

> But the great father Ouranos reproached  
> His sons, and called them Titans, for, he said  
> They strained in insolence, and did a deed  
> For which they would be punished afterwards.

Miss Wender, the translator, adds the note: “Titans: ’strainers’ (from teino, I strain), another probably false etymology.”

In German this phrase (*durchaus eigentlich*) is similar to “entirely literal” on page 34, “wholly literal” on page 195, and “literally throughout” on page 15 (and of course also refers to the “literal meaning” on page 26).
Félix de Azara, 1746–1811, Spanish natural scientist, who explored the “La Plata” regions between 1781 and 1802. *Voyages dans l’Amérique Méridionale* (Travels in South America—the two acute accents and the “s” at the end of the first word had got lost in Schelling’s footnote) was first published in 1809, in four volumes together with an atlas. Unlike his earlier works, it was published in French, not Spanish. It is not described as a translation, but as being “publié d’après” (published in conformity with) the author’s manuscripts, by Baron Charles Athanase Walckenær. The latter explains in his preface that Azara had had at least the manuscript which forms the greater part of the book translated from the original Spanish, by persons unknown, under his, Azara’s, supervision, and that Azara’s renowned brother, at that time the Spanish ambassador to France, had revised and corrected it. Both Walckenær and Georges Cuvier (see my note to page 225) appended a number of notes to the work. Walckenær, who lived from 1771 to 1832, was a celebrated French scholar who, as well as novels, published works on literary history, geography, natural history, and the philosophy of history. Here is the complete paragraph (pages 184–7) to which Schelling refers, from Azara’s chapter eleven (“General Reflections on the Wild Indians”):

The first Spaniards who consorted with the Indians or Americans did not see them as men having the same origin as ourselves, but rather as a species intermediate between man and the animals, who, although of similar form, differed from us in other respects, and were not susceptible of the intelligence, the capacity, or the talent which were necessary to understand and practise our religion. Such was the view of the majority of the laity, and even of many of the respectable churchmen among the small number of priests who travelled to America in those times. What is more they could not disguise from themselves the fact that in holding this opinion they were unable to play any religious role in such a vast and rich new land. One of the principal spokesmen for this idea was François-Thomas Ortiz, bishop of Santa Marta. He wrote a long memorandum to the supreme council of Madrid, concluding that the experience he had acquired as a result of many years of consorting with the Indians had led him to regard them as stupid creatures, as incapable as the brute beasts of comprehending our religion and observing its precepts. Other clergy, chief among whom was the renowned François Barthélemi de Las Casas, said on the contrary that the Indians were men of our own species, and as well adapted for Christianity as ourselves. The point was disputed with passion on both sides, and there were also clergy who, in order to reconcile the two opinions, said that in truth the Indians were men of the same species as ourselves, but of such limited outlook that one should be content with baptising them, and refusing them, moreover, all the sacraments. Such was the situation when Las Casas declared himself to be the apologist and fervent protector of the Indians. He put forward all the arguments in their favour which he could find, and, to weaken the cases of his adversaries, he did not lose sight of the common method of lawyers and orators, that is to say he discredited the Spanish, saying that if they so much wanted the Indians to be pure beasts, this was in order to treat them as such, and to excuse the atrocities which they committed against them. This was the way he obtained from Pope Paul III a bull dated the second of June 1537, which declared the Indians to be truly men, and capable of all the sacraments of our religion. This victory brought Las Casas a bishopric and a great reputation, but this was not enough to induce the priests of Peru to administer the eucharist to the Indians. They persisted in their refusal for almost a century, under the pretext of the incapacity of these peoples. To overcome their repugnance the authority of many councils was required, three of which were held at Lima, and the others at Arequipa, at la Plata or Chuquisaca, at la Paz, and at Asunción.
Azara goes on to say that both [again] parties to this dispute had good arguments, that it is an important question, and that he himself makes no claim to be a judge in the matter.

The full German title of this work is Briefe über Homer und Hesiodus, vorzüglich über die Theogonie (Correspondence Relating to Homer and Hesiod, Principally Relating to the Theogony). Schelling always quotes just the first part of the title, and since this, like the other work of Hermann, is very frequently mentioned, I always use its title in English.

meaningless names. About the relationship (at least on some level—see pages 210 and 211 about the necessity of understanding the process or the whole and not relying on a single statement) between names (meaningless or not) and actuality, refer to the note to page 6 about “merely nominal.” The mixture of tenses in this sentence (“are associated” and “possessed”) corresponds to what Schelling wrote, and makes sense despite being a little awkward. There is something similar in the previous sentence: “understands,” “miscarried,” “do impart.”

This is Hesiod again, not Homer; it is line 125 of the Theogony. In the Loeb edition we find κυσσαμένη instead of κυσσαμένη. Evelyn-White translates it (with a line or two before as context):

From Chaos came forth Erebus and black Night; but of Night were born Äther and Day, whom she conceived and bare [sic] from union in love with Erebus.

Miss Wender renders it as:

From Chaos came black Night and Erebos. 
And Night in turn gave birth to Day and Space 
Whom she conceived in love to Erebus.

Miss Wender adds a note to “Space” pointing out that it is “aither, the pure upper atmosphere, as opposed to ær, which we mortals breathe.”

These lines (264‒5) are from Aristophanes’ Clouds. Aristophanes lived from c446‒c383 B.C., and The Clouds was originally produced in 423 but revised later. In the Loeb edition, apart from differences of capitalization (I have retained Schelling’s), there are the following differences: 1. a comma after μετέωρον, 2. λαμπρός instead of Λαμπρὸς.

The Loeb edition differs from this with 1. διὲς or διός, but not διος, and 2. αἰθήρ not αἰθήρ. The translator, Herbert Weir Smyth, is surely being free when he does not translate it as “O divine Äther,” but (with the invocations following) as:

O thou bright sky of heaven, ye swift-winged breezes, ye river-waters, and multitudinous laughter of the waves of ocean, O universal mother Earth, and thou, all-seeing orb of the sun, to you I call! Behold what I, a god, endure of evil from the gods.

This is uttered by Prometheus (whose name means “fore-thought”). Smyth observes that “the Greeks found in the name of a person a significant indication of his nature or his fate.”
The Penguin translation by David Barrett of lines 693 ff. of the play *The Birds* (414 B.C.) reads:

In the beginning there existed only Chaos, Night, Black Erebus and Dreary Tartarus: there was no Earth, no Air, no Sky. It was in the boundless womb of Erebus that the first egg was laid by black-winged Night; and from this egg, in due season, sprang Eros the deeply-desired, Eros the bright, the golden-winged. And it was he, mingling in Tartarus with murky Chaos, who begot our race and hatched us out and led us up to the light. There was no race of immortal gods till Eros brought the elements together in love: only then did the Sky, the Ocean and the Earth come into being, and the deathless race of all the blessed gods.

I suppose the only jocular aspect of this is the egg. Schelling likens the passage to Hesiod’s description of Eros, a description which has a different sequence of gods, and a different sex for Erebo (translation by Miss Wender):

```quote
Chaos was first of all, but next appeared  
Broad-bosomed Earth, sure standing-place for all  
The gods who live on snowy Olympus’ peak,  
And misty Tartarus, in a recess  
Of broad-pathed earth, and Love, most beautiful  
Of all the deathless gods. He makes men weak,  
He overpowers the clever mind, and tames  
The spirit in the breasts of men and gods.  
From Chaos came black Night and Erebo.
```

From Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, line 627. The Loeb edition has one difference: Αναπνοήν instead of Αναπνοήν. Socrates is complaining about his new “pupil” Strepsiades. I can offer two translations: “In the name of Respiration and Chaos and Air” (continuing “and all that’s holy——! I have never met such a clueless stupid forgetful bumpkin in all my life”), by Alan H. Sommerstein. And “Never by Chaos, Air, and Respiration” by Benjamin Buckley Rogers in the (poetical) Loeb edition.

“Poseidon” possibly means consort of Da, which was a pre-Hellenic name for an earth-goddess also preserved in the name Demeter (Mother Da). But see also pages 103–4. “Zeus” comes, some say, from a root meaning “bright,” while others say from a word meaning just “sky” or possibly “bright sky.” Plutus was the god of wealth, born of Demeter, but he remained more an abstraction (just the concept of wealth) than an individualized god. The Horæ were the Seasons, two of which were Eunomia (Order) and Dike (Justice), and they had little mythology. “Charites” was the Greek name for the Graces, and these too had little part in myth except as abstractions. They were worshipped at Boeotian Orchomenus in the form of stones that were evidently meteorites.

Literally “can a language,” meaning “be able to speak a language.”

Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz, 1646-1716, German rationalist philosopher and mathematician. He conceived of the universe as a hierarchy of independent units or monads, synchronized by pre-established harmony. He also devised a system of calculus, independently of
Newton, and had an admirable distrust of atoms (why should they be the same just because they are small?):

Two drops of water or milk looked at under the microscope will be found to be discernible. This is an argument against atoms, which, like the void, are opposed to the principles of a true metaphysic.

The translation is by Mary Morris. Vincent Icke provides what may be the answer: electrons, he writes, are so small that they are by nature indistinguishable. In other words, there is a limit to normal “smallness.”

“It appears to be the daughter of philosophy.” I have not yet found where Leibnitz says this.

I don’t find that such a use of gender differences to express opposites exists in English. So when Schelling says “all languages” it is a good thing he puts an “if” in front of the clause. He would certainly have been aware of this (and one cannot really say that English is not a real language). Rémusat, in the work referred to on page 134, says that in English, as in many other languages, gender is perceived from the nature of the objects. It may still be true that every act of naming is a personification (an assignment of a fixed character), and it may also be true that some spiritual quality is absent from English if it lacks these distinctions of gender. And refer to my note to page 28 about Bacon and the assignment of names and sexes.

In German, durchzuwirken, Schelling’s special use, meaning “to act (or have an effect) by way of (or through).” Literally it does mean “work through,” but it is normally only used as a term in weaving, meaning “interleave.”

Sic, which would imply that the poetical and the scientific aspects are one, at least in this context.

Clairvoyance. Some time before this was written, presumably, Schelling jotted down the following, on the back of a sketch for the continuation of his dialogue Clara:

1. Reality of the spirit-world (of the past)
2. Complete humanity of spirits.
   I. Clairvoyance in general
   II. In particular, what it consists in
      a) Opposite to science; everything immediate, nothing indirect; perhaps something about the gradation of the sciences among themselves. Everything in immediate feeling.
      b) Without struggle—the long rest; also no more sin.
      c) No memory of things as absent. No past.
      d) Inwardness of community from the previous section.
   III. Whether the state of clairvoyance also applicable to damnation and whether no intermediate state between redemption and unredeemedness?
   IV. Concerning the Where?

I am not sure whether he would wish to have this resurrected, considering that he did not, as far as I know, write much about the subject anywhere else, so it should not be taken very seriously. There is
a sentence in the *Stuttgart Private Lectures* of 1810 [I 7, 448]:

Now that—which-produces, or the bond, if it is in unity with the product, is indeed nothing other than the inner life and weaving, the gentle muted flame of life, which burns in every being even in the being apparently without life (clairvoyants see it); but in contrast to and in contradiction with that—which-is-produced it is consuming fire.

I offer two passages from Epicurus’s *Letter to Herodotus*. (Refer to one of my notes to page 27 for a remark about their reliability.) This, about the transient images, is from section 46, translated by Cyril Bailey:

Moreover, there are images like in shape to the solid bodies, far surpassing perceptible things in their subtlety of texture. For it is not impossible that such emanations should be formed in that which surrounds the objects, nor that there should be opportunities for the formation of such hollow and thin frames, nor that there should be effluences which preserve the respective position and order which they had before in the solid bodies; these images we call idols.

Next, nothing among perceptible things contradicts the belief that the images have unsurpassable fineness of texture. And for this reason they have also unsurpassable speed of motion, since the movement of all their atoms is uniform, and besides nothing or very few things hinder their emission by collisions, whereas a body composed of many or infinite atoms is at once hindered by collisions. Besides this [nothing contradicts the belief] that the creation of the idols takes place as quick *sic* as thought.

And this, from section 51, is about the images in dreams:

Now falsehood and error always lie in the addition of opinion with regard to [what is waiting] to be confirmed or not contradicted, and then is not confirmed [or is contradicted]. For the similarity between the things which exist, which we call real, and the images received as a likeness of things and produced either in sleep or through some other acts of apprehension on the part of the mind or the other instruments of judgement, could never be, unless there were some effluences of this nature actually brought into contact with our senses.

Published in 1818, this work, like all Hermann’s dissertations, seems, with its thirty-six pages, very short. The title means “Dissertation on the Origins of Greek History.” It may be found in volume two of his collection *Opuscula* of 1827, at page 195.

Æschylus (c525–c456 B.C.) depicted, in his play *Prometheus Bound*, the wanderings of Io, pursued by a gadfly.

Wolf in his *Prolegomena to Homer*, already cited, does no more than make suggestions, as follows:

But what if the conjecture of some scholars is probable—that these and the other poems of those times were not consigned to writing, but were first made by poets in their memories and made public in song, then made more widely available by the singing of the rhapsodes, whose peculiar art it was to learn them? And if, because of this, many changes were necessarily made in them, by accident or design,
before they were fixed, so to speak, in written form? And if for this very reason, as soon as they began
to be written out, they had many differences, and soon acquired new ones from the rash conjectures of
those who rivaled one another in their efforts to polish them up, and to correct them by the best laws of
the art of poetry and their own usage? And if, finally, it can be shown by probable arguments and
reasons that this entire connected series of the two continuous poems is owed less to the genius of him
to whom we have normally attributed it, than to the zeal of a more polite age and the collective efforts
of many, and that therefore the very songs from which the Iliad and Odyssey were assembled do not all
have one common author? If, I say, one must accept a view different from the common one about all
these things—what, then, will it mean to restore these poems to their original lustre and genuine beauty?

In the original this “out of or within” is in oder unter (in or within). Over the following pages the
expression aus oder unter (out of or within) appears four times. This latter makes sense, but I cannot
make sense of “in or within.” I have therefore assumed that an early editor had a pass at it, changed
his mind the second time he met the phrase, but forgot to remove the change he had made to the
first occurrence. (The only distinction which might possibly be made by in oder unter is that referred
to at the end of this paragraph, between the invention of individuals within (unter) the society and the
instinctlike process. But I do not think this is likely as it would have been brought out more clearly.)

In English the quotation from page 44 reads: “They know no religion, nor cult, nor allegiance,
nor laws, nor obligations, nor rewards, nor punishments.” The emphasis is Schelling’s, and as he
quotes it the word for “punishments” is spelt in the modern way, “châtiments.” The passage comes
from Azara’s tenth chapter, entitled “Of the Wild Indians.” I quote his complete sentence:

For the rest, they cultivate no land at all; they do no labour; they are ignorant of the art of sewing and of
making fabrics; they know no religion, nor cult, nor allegiance, nor laws, nor obligations, nor rewards,
nor punishments, nor musical instruments, nor dances; but they often become intoxicated.

Next the passage on Azara’s pages 90-91, still in chapter ten, about the Guanás (as he usually spells
their name) of Paraguay:

They, no more, know consideration, nor rewards, nor punishments, nor binding laws, nor religion. But
since they consort with Spaniards a great deal, and these last speak to them about Christianity, and
rewards, and the punishments to come, their most common reply, when they are questioned about this,
is to say that there is a principle or a material and corporeal thing which is situated one knows not
where, and which rewards the good and punishes the bad; but which always rewards the Guanás,
because it is impossible for them to be bad, nor for them to do evil. As I say, the small number of these
savages who express themselves thus have taken the basis of these ideas from the Spaniards, because
there is not one single Guaná who worships the divinity or who recognizes him, either outwardly or
inwardly. Thus it is the interested parties who themselves resolve their differences, and as a last resort
they come to terms by means of blows with their fists. They also appear to converse with each other
somewhat more, and even, although rarely, to meet together to chat.

The passage about the Lenguas from page 151 of the same chapter means “They recognize no cult,
nor divinity, nor laws, nor chiefs, nor submission to authority, and they are in every way free.” Again
the emphasis is Schelling’s, and in the original Azara’s sentence continues as follows:
... in every way free; but among themselves they make use of a singular formula of civility, when they see someone again after an absence of some length of time. This is what it amounts to: the two Indians shed a few tears before they address a single word to each other; to act in any other way would be an insult, or at least proof that the visit is not welcome.

On Azara’s page 113, writing of the Mbayás, or the mbayás, as in fact he spells the name, he says:

They do not, as one might think, have a chief, neither in war nor during times of peace; because their government is reduced to assemblies where the caciques, the old men and the best trusted Indians carry the votes of the others. With each expedition, they content themselves with bearing away a single prize. Were this not so, there would today no longer be a Spaniard in Paraguay, nor a Portuguese in Cuiabá.

Azara’s page 43 about the caciques, who are, by the way, not assigned to the Indians from outside, but chosen from among them by outsiders, reads:

I have not seen this inequality of riches in clothing and adornment among other Indian nations at all. They too have chiefs or caciques who, without having the right to give orders, to punish, nor to demand anything, are nevertheless highly regarded by the others who normally adopt all their suggestions, because they believe that they have more talent, finesse, and strength. Every chief lives in a different district, with those of his band (horde); but they come together when it is a matter of making war, or when the common interest demands it. For the rest, they cultivate...

And it runs on into the first sentence quoted in this note. Finally Azara’s page 16, about the Charruas:

It is the parties themselves who resolve their particular differences: if they do not reach agreement, they assault each other with blows of their fists, until one of the two turns his back and leaves the other, without speaking about the matter again. In these duels, weapons are never used; and I have never heard tell of anyone being killed. Blood, however, is often spilled, because they hit each other on the nose, and sometimes they even break a tooth.

Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, baron de l’Eaulne, 1727-81. French statesman and economist. He is said to have founded the political economy of the nineteenth century. The publication of the Encyclopedia was begun in 1751 under the editorship of Diderot and D’Alembert, and continued into thirty-five volumes over twenty-nine years. Turgot contributed five lengthy articles which would in themselves make up a good-sized volume. Their subjects were “etymology” (also relevant to the present work), “existence,” “expansibility” (the first recorded use of this word in French), “fairs,” and “foundations” (in the financial sense). This was in 1755 and 1756. The appearance of the article on “existence,” especially, was a real literary and philosophical event. His readers were struck by the precision and clarity of the style, the originality and depth of the ideas... Schelling’s friend Victor Cousin (see note to page 33) greatly admired it. It was reprinted in Turgot’s collected works of 1913, and has three sections: 1) a short definition. 2) on the concept of existence. 3) on the proofs of the existence of external beings. Turgot begins with sensations (including the “sixth sense,” inner experience), and explains how, through comparison (using memory and extension) of the differences in this tableau, we arrive at the concepts of presence and absence of objects, and
subsequently, by way of the consciousness of one’s self as an object, at the concept of existence. The article does not contain any reference to gods, but near the beginning of the third section there is the following passage:

All men who have not raised their concept of existence beyond the degree of abstraction by which we transpose this concept of objects immediately sensed to the objects which are only indicated by their effects and are extended to distances beyond the scope of our senses, confuse in their judgements these two orders of things. They believe they see, they believe they touch, bodies; and as far as the idea that they form of the existence of invisible bodies is concerned, their imagination depicts these clad in the same sensible qualities, since it is the name which they give to their own sensations, and they do not hesitate to attribute these qualities in a like manner to all beings. These men, when they perceive an object where it is not, believe that false and deceptive images have taken the place of this object, and they do not realize that it is only their judgement which is false. It should be admitted that the correspondence between the order of sensations and the order of things is such, in the case of the majority of the objects by which we are surrounded and which make on us the impressions which are most vivid and most relevant to our needs, that the common experience of life does not furnish us with any remedy against this false judgement, and that thus it becomes in some way natural and involuntary. One should not be surprised, then, that the majority of men cannot imagine that it is necessary to prove the existence of the body.

XCV Part of the first line of a poem (or of part of a poem) attributed to Petronius and given the number 3 in the Loeb edition of his works. The line is quoted by Fulgentius and the thought was reproduced by Chaucher. Petronius (a Roman), whom Tacitus describes as a “professor of voluptuousness,” died in 66 AD, and is best known for his prose romance Satyricon, which has survived in fragments. (Of this work Michael Heseltine writes, perversely in my opinion, “His book is befouled with obscenity, and, like obscenity itself, is ceasing by degrees to be part of a gentleman’s education.”) The first few lines of the poem, together with a translation by this same Heseltine, are:

Primus in orbe deos fecit timor, ardua cælo
fulmina cum caderent discussaque moenia flammis
atque ictus flagraret Athos;

It was fear first created gods in the world, when the lightning fell from high heaven, and the ramparts of the world were rent with flame, and Athos was smitten and blazed.

XCVI 1751-1826. German man of letters, an enlightened and ardent Lutheran, notable for his renderings of Greek and Roman authors and for the intense feeling for Nature displayed in his hexametrical idylls. His most enduring contribution to German letters is his translation of Homer (Odyssey 1781, Iliad 1793). All this sounds very different from the man described by Schelling on pages 70-71 and 226, and in my note to page 152 about Stolberg.

XCVII Horace’s Ars Poetica (The Art of Poetry), lines 391-3. In the Loeb edition there are the following differences: 1. Silvestris, not Sylvester. 2. deorum, not Deorum. 3. tigris, not tigres. The translation by H. Rushton Fairdough reads:
While men still roamed the woods, Orpheus, the holy prophet of the gods, made them shrink from bloodshed and brutal living; hence the fable that he tamed tigers and ravening lions.

XCVIII Robert Wood, c1717-71, English traveller and politician. His *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* was first published in 1769, and an expanded edition, “*with a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade*,” in 1775. A German translation, presumably the one which Schelling mentions, appeared in 1773, and was thus of the first English edition. It was followed in Germany in 1778 by a summary description of the differences between the first and second English editions. This summary was written by C. F. Mihaëlis, the translator of the first edition. Schelling must be citing Heyne, as there is nothing exactly corresponding to these words in Wood. The nearest is the following passage, from the section (in the 1775 edition) on “Homer’s Manners”:

> Of the several proofs which might be alleged in favour of Homer’s knowledge of different countries, his lively delineations of national character must have furnished the strongest and most pleasing to those, who lived near his time; whilst the original features of those peculiarities were enough discernible to bear a comparison, with what we find of them in his writings: where, what he has left of this kind, is marked with too much precision, and supported throughout with too much consistence, to allow us to think that he had acquired his knowledge of mankind at home.

> But while the eastern traveller finds the vestiges of those characterizing circumstances, which once distinguished the inhabitants of particular tracts, either totally obliterated, or at least too faint to be traced with any tolerable degree of certainty; he will discover a general resemblance between the ancient and present manners of those countries, so striking, that we cannot without injustice to our subject pass it over unnoticed. For perhaps nothing has tended so much to injure the reputation of that extraordinary genius in the judgement of the present age, as his representation of customs and manners so very different from our own.

Wood, who is very enthusiastic about Homer, goes on, in this large and interesting work, to relate his own impressions of Greece, Egypt, and Arabia.

XCVII A legendary Irish warrior and bard of the third century A.D. (James Macpherson, 1736–96, published spurious “translations” which aroused great interest for a time.)

This passage comes from Homer’s *Odyssey*, book IX, lines 3 to 8 and 11. Odysseus, the man of many resources, is speaking to King Alcinous. Schelling quotes it in a German verse version, which I have translated. He gives no indication that lines 9 and 10 are absent. I do not know whose German version it is, but I can say that it is not that of J. H. Voss. It may be interesting to compare a typical English translation (including lines 9 and 10), by A. T. Murray in the Loeb edition:

> . . . verily it is a good thing, to listen to a minstrel such as this man is, like unto the gods in voice. For myself I declare that there is no greater fulfillment of delight than when joy possesses a whole people, and banqueters in the halls listen to a minstrel as they sit in order due, and by them tables are laden with bread and meat, and the cup-bearer draws wine from the bowl and bears it round and pours it into the cups. This seems to my mind the fairest thing there is.
Another English translation (by E. V. Rieu) has “banqueters in the hall” (singular). Voss has “guests in the houses.” Were it not for the lines which Schelling omits, one might be tempted to consider his, with “dwellings,” the better version (one visualizes an open space lined by rude huts), but the business with the cup-bearer calls it into question again.

\(^{c1}\) Not exactly a translator, I think. Refer to my note to page 40. Walckenaer’s remarks appear on page 3 of Azara’s book, and are appended to the words *aucune religion* (“no religion”) which end the first quotation reproduced in Schelling’s footnote on page 73. Walckenaer says:

It *is* possible that they might have no idols of any kind; but it is very difficult to believe that they are not subject to the influence of certain superstitious ideas of a more or less rational or irrational kind. Unless one has a perfect knowledge of the customs and the language of a people, it is most difficult to determine precisely what their religious ideas are. We have a very striking example of that in the absurdities recited by Tacitus and the other Roman authors about the religion, the dogmas, and the ceremonies of the Jews; nonetheless the Jews’ cult was public, they spoke the language of the Romans, lived in their midst, and constituted a civilized and enlightened people. The savages of America have nothing in common, neither in language nor in customs, with the civilized Europeans who communicate with them. Even if their numerous languages could be understood, is it credible that it would be possible for them to define with exactitude the small number of ideas which various causes had generated in them, and which are almost all, or perhaps all, necessarily absurd and incoherent. How many educated and civilized nations would find themselves as embarrassed in this respect as these savages!

\(^{c11}\) His *De Legibus* (On Laws) has been preserved only in part; it is a dialogue in the style of Plato, written probably in 52 B.C. The subject of the first book is law and justice in general. Here is the passage at I 8, 24, translated by Clinton Walker Keyes:

For while the other elements of which man consists were derived from what is mortal, and are therefore fragile and perishable, the soul was generated in us by God. Hence we are justified in saying that there is a blood relationship between ourselves and the celestial beings or we may call it a common ancestry or origin. Therefore among all the varieties of living beings, there is no creature except man which has any knowledge of God, and among men themselves there is no race either so highly civilized or so savage as not to know that it must believe in a god, even if it does not know in what sort of god it ought to believe. Thus it is clear that man recognizes God because, in a way, he remembers—recognizes—the source from which he sprang.

In 45 B.C. he wrote the *Tusculan Disputations*, and the subject of the first book is the fear of death. In the translation by J. E. King, the passage at I 13, 30 reads:

Furthermore, as this seems to be advanced as the surest basis for our belief in the existence of gods, that there is no race so uncivilized, no one in the world, we are told, so barbarous that his mind has no inkling of a belief in gods—true it is that many men have wrong notions about the gods, for this is usually the result of a corrupt nature; nevertheless all men think that a divine power and divine nature exist, and that is not the result of human conference or convention \(\text{convention (συνθήκη)}\) as opposed to nature \(\text{(φύσις)}\), it is not belief established by regulation or by statute, but in every inquiry the
unanimity of the races of the world must be regarded as a law of nature.

Later the same year, in his *Nature of the Gods*, he appears to have become more ready to consider the opposite view, as is shown by the argument put in the mouth of Cotta in that work (I 62, translation by Horace McGregor):

You say that it is a sufficient proof of the existence of the gods that men of all races and of all nations believe in them. But such an argument is both false and frivolous. In the first place, how do you know the opinions of all mankind? I would think that there must be many wild and primitive peoples who have no idea of the gods at all. And what about the atheist Diagoras...

This will be William Robertson, 1721–93, the Scottish Presbyterian minister and historian. His works made wide use of the concept of “balance of power.” They are now considered to be inaccurate but written in a fine style (although I am not sure that such a combination is possible). He certainly never travelled there—like Kant he stayed put and gained his knowledge from books—but his *History of America*, published in two volumes in 1777 (and in a German version in the same year, translated by J. F. Schiller), captivated the literary world through its vivid descriptions and philosophical disquisitions on aboriginal society. Keats, who read it with enthusiasm, owed it the suggestion of his famous simile of “Cortez and his men.” The whole of chapter seven in book four of the *History* is about the religious ideas and institutions of the American tribes. Here is the passage about the tribes without religion:

When the intellectual powers are just beginning to unfold, and their first feeble exertions are directed towards a few objects of primary necessity and use; when the faculties of the mind are so limited as not to have formed abstract or general ideas; when language is so barren as to be destitute of names to distinguish anything that is not perceived by some of the senses; it is preposterous to expect that man should be capable of tracing with accuracy the relation between cause and effect; or to suppose that he should rise from the contemplation of the one to the knowledge of the other, and form just conceptions of a Deity, as the Creator and Governor of the universe. The idea of creation is so familiar wherever the mind is enlarged by science, and illuminated with revelation, that we seldom reflect how profound and abstruse this idea is, or consider what progress man must have made in observation and research, before he could arrive at any knowledge of this elementary principle in religion. Accordingly, several tribes have been discovered in America, which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship. Inattentive to that magnificent spectacle of beauty and order presented to their view, unaccustomed to reflect either upon what they themselves are, or to inquire who is the author of their existence, men, in their savage state, pass their days like the animals round them, without knowledge or veneration of any superior power. Some rude tribes have not in their language any name for the Deity, nor have the most accurate observers been able to discover any practice or institution which seemed to imply that they recognised his authority, or were solicitous to obtain his favour. [Here there is a footnote, in which Robertson gives seventeen references.] It is, however, only among men in the most uncultivated state of nature, and while their intellectual faculties are so feeble and limited as hardly to elevate them above the irrational creation, that we discover this total insensibility to the impressions of any invisible power.

Baron Friedrich Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt, 1769–1859, German natural scientist,
explorer, geographer, and cosmographer. He made a vast number of important discoveries, including thousands of new species and genera, in South and Central America, between 1799 and 1804. Neither his travels, nor the fact that he slept for only three or four hours a night, seem to have done him any harm, and in fact in all his portraits he looks ten years younger than his actual age. He climbed to a height of 18,893 feet on Mount Chimborazo in Ecuador, a height which remained a world record for thirty-six years. His Ideen zu einer Physiognomik der Gewächse (Outlines of a Physiognomy of Growth) compared all forms of life and their relations to physical conditions. His major work was the thirty-volume Voyage de Humboldt et Bonpland (1805–34), published in France, where he was based between 1808 and 1827. It comprises seven books with separate titles, and deals with the material he collected on his travels. In Kosmos (five volumes, 1845–62), his idea was to convey not only a comprehensive description of the physical universe, but also an imaginative conception of it (to quote a French biography). The manuscript, with many autograph additions, disappeared in America after being auctioned. He has been called “the modern Aristotle,” and he never got married. He is said to have been sarcastic and very noisy. There is a curious book about him by Douglas Botting, which says that “he was warm and impulsive in his relationships, especially with those who were young, good-looking and in need of help.” The reason I mention this book is that it says that Humboldt’s main reason for lecturing in Berlin in 1827–28 was to attempt to correct the “baleful influence of the so-called nature philosophers. The principal exponents of this singularly cracked school of thought were Hegel and Schelling.” A number of strange examples are listed. On the same page it is stated that “the main perpetrator of this pretentious nonsense was Schelling, who was then established as Professor of Philosophy at Berlin.” This is as untrue and crack-brained as the examples. What can be behind it? The violent refusal to exercise imagination or sympathy is based on fear, I think, more than on a lack of ability. Wyndham Lewis has been treated in the same way. Humboldt “ignored the conventional proprieties” in his relationships with men, and in extreme old age he made over his home to his valet.

There are, once again, many differences in Schelling’s free transcription of this short passage. The emphasis is his. I have retained the first clause of Schelling’s version, but for the rest I have used the original French text. Azara begins by saying that none of these peoples are cannibals. Then he continues with:

On a écrit aussi qu’ils se servaient de flèches empoisonnées, ce qui est une autre fausseté positive. Les ecclésiastiques y en ont ajouté une autre, en disant que ces peuples avaient une religion.

This means “It has been stated, again, that they make use of poisoned arrows, which is a further outright falsehood.” (But I have seen it on the television, surely.) “The clergy have added another to those, in saying that these peoples had a religion.” Schelling’s other differences are: 1. y en ont ajouté instead of y ont ajouté, 2. ce peuple avait (this people had) instead of ces peuples avaient (these peoples had), 3. commas added after Persuadés and l’instant, 4. sur leurs pipes (on their pipes) instead of sur les pipes (on the pipes), 5. Indiens with a capital, 6. brûlèrent instead of brûlèrent, 7. aujourd’hui encore instead of encore aujourd’hui, 8. a comma, instead of a semicolon, after figures, 9. pour amusement instead of par amusement, 10. religion instead of religion (the second time only). As it appears now, the whole passage reads:

The clergy have added another outright falsehood to those, in saying that these peoples had a religion.
Convinced that it was impossible for men to live without a religion, be it good or bad, and seeing some figures drawn or carved on the pipes, bows, cudgels, and pottery of the Indians, they immediately concluded that these were their idols, and burnt them. To this day these tribes use the same figures, but they only do it for their amusement, *since they have no religion of any kind.*

In regard to the second quoted passage, Azara’s spelling is *les payaguás.* Again I have replaced Schelling’s free transcription with the original French. The emphasis is Schelling’s. The differences in his version are: 1. comma after *feu* instead of semicolon, 2. no commas after *D’autres* and *tempête,* 3. semicolon after *en l’air* instead of full stop, 4. *ils en font* instead of Azara’s *Il en font—* here I suspect that Azara has a misprint and it should be *Ils,* 5. comma after *croire,* 6. colon instead of semicolon after *adoraient,* 7. comma after *est,* 8. *ni culte ni adoration* (neither cult nor worship) instead of *ni adoration ni culte* (neither worship nor cult), 9. no comma after *monde,* 10. *religion* instead of *religion.* The meaning is:

When their huts or shanties are blown down by the storm or the wind, they take hold of a few logs from their fire; and they run a certain distance into the wind, threatening it with their burning logs. Others, so as to frighten the storm, make as if to give powerful blows with their fists against the air. Sometimes they do the same when they catch sight of the new moon; but this, they say, is only in order to signify their joy: which has led certain people to believe that they were worshipping it; but in *actual fact* they render neither worship nor cult to *anything at all,* and *they have no religion of any kind.*

**CVI** *God.* This word is introduced without any definition or explanation, and is the first indication in this work that Schelling might be “religious.”

**CVII** David Hume, 1711-76, Scottish philosopher, economist, and historian. *The Natural History of Religion* was first published in English in 1757. These words of Hume are quoted by Schelling in German in the body of his text, and he quotes the French equivalent in a footnote, as follows, together with a commendation of the French translation:

>A bien considérer la chose, cette pretendue Religion n’est en effet qu’un Athéisme superstitieux, les objets du culte qu’elle établit, n’ont pas le moindre rapport avec l’idée que nous nous formons de la Divinité. *Histoire naturelle de la Religion p.* 25. This and the following passages are quoted from the (good) French translation.

The French translation was made by Johann Bernard Merian, a Swiss philosopher (1723–1807), who was professor of philosophy in Berlin from 1748 to 1797. It was published in Amsterdam in 1759, with a preface by Jean Henri Samuel Formey (1711–97, Prussian man of letters of French origin) and a “critical and philosophical examination” of it. A second edition of this translation was published in London in 1764. I am not aware of an instance where Schelling quotes something in English, but his English cannot have been too bad judging from his description of Coleridge’s involved piece on pages 196. All Schelling’s page references to the French version of *The Natural History of Religion,* in his own footnotes, have been changed so as to refer to the 1976 Oxford University Press edition. Hume’s chief claim to fame is that he became extremely fat and got stuck in a bog, whence he was winched by a woman who made him first recite the Lord’s Prayer.

**CVIII** Hume’s original passage is as follows:
For my part, I can scarce allow the principles even of Marcus Aurelius, Plutarch, and some other Stoics and Academics, tho' infinitely more refined than the pagan superstition, to be worthy of the honourable denomination of theism. For if the mythology of the heathens resemble the antient European system of spiritual beings, excluding God and angels, and leaving only fairies and sprites; the creed of these philosophers may justly be said to exclude a deity, and to leave only angels and fairies.

My note about “at least not real poetry” on page 19 should explain this too.

Inborn conception of God.

Actually someone, presumably Schelling’s posthumous publishers and not the man himself, got these two footnotes the wrong way round, and they have remained thus in all subsequent editions. Constantin François de Volney, Comte de Chassebœuf, 1757–1820, French traveller, “philosophical writer” and politician, was the author of Les Ruines, ou Méditation sur les révolutions des empires (Ruins, or Reflections on the Revolutions of Empires), published in 1791. A German translation was published in 1792. I have corrected the order of the notes in the text. Volney saw religion as the main hindrance to the realization of the rule of reason. He writes in a congenial manner, and as a man who knows his subject or his enemy. The following passage, for example, is set in the mouth of an orator speaking “in the name of those who had made the origin and genealogy of religious ideas their peculiar study”:

These gods, for example, who act such singular parts in every system, are no other than the physical powers of nature, the elements, the winds, the meteors, the stars, all which have been personified by the necessary mechanism of language, and the manner in which objects are conceived by the understanding. Their life, their manners, their actions, are only the operation of the same powers, and the whole of their pretended history no more than a description of their various phænomena, traced by the first naturalist that observed them, but taken in a contrary sense by the vulgar who did not understand it, or by succeeding generations who forgot it. In a word, all the theological dogmas respecting the origin of the world, the nature of God, the revelation of his laws, the manifestation of his person, are but recitals of astronomical facts, figurative and emblematical narratives of the motion and influence of heavenly bodies. The very idea itself of the Divinity, which is at present so obscure, abstract, and metaphysical, was, in its origin, merely a composite of the powers of the material universe, considered sometimes analytically, as they appear in their agents and their phænomena, and sometimes synthetically, as forming one whole and exhibiting an harmonious relation in all its parts. Thus the name God has been bestowed sometimes upon the wind, the fire, the water, and the elements; sometimes upon the sun, the stars, the planets, and their influences; sometimes upon the universe at large; and the matter of which the world is composed; sometimes upon abstract and metaphysical properties, such as space, duration, motion, and intelligence; but in every instance the idea of a deity has not flowed from the miraculous revelation of an invisible world, but has been the natural result of human reflection, has followed the progress and undergone the changes of the successive improvement of intellect, and has had for its subject the visible universe and its different agents.

It is then in vain that nations refer the origin of their religion to heavenly inspiration; it is in vain that they pretend to describe a supernatural state of things as first in the order of events the original barbarous state of mankind, attested by their own monuments, belies all their assertions. These
assertions are still more victoriously refuted by considering this great principle, that man receives no ideas but through the medium of his senses: for from hence it appears that every system which ascribes human wisdom to any other source than experience and sensation, includes in it a *usteron proteron*, and represents the last results of understanding as earliest in the order of time.

And from the following page, “on the origin of the idea of God.” The “obscure goal in Nature” Schelling mentions is, if present in Volney’s thought, very obscure indeed:

Man, originally savage, must have learned from repeated trials, the use of his organs. Successive generations must have invented and refined upon the means of subsistence; and the understanding, at liberty to disengage itself from the wants of nature, must have risen to the complicated art of comparing ideas, digesting reasonings, and seizing upon abstract similitudes.

It was not till after having surmounted those obstacles, and run a long career in the night of history, that man, reflecting on his state, began to perceive his subjection to forces superior to his own and independent of his will. The sun gave him light and warmth; fire burned, thunder terrified, the winds buffeted, water overwhelmed him; all the various natural existences acted upon him in a manner not to be resisted. For a long time an automaton, he remained passive, without inquiring into the cause of this action; but the very moment he was desirous of accounting to himself for it, astonishment seized his mind; and passing from the surprise of a first thought to the reverie of curiosity, he formed a chain of reasoning.

At first, considering only the action of the elements upon him, he inferred, relatively to himself, an idea of weakness, of subjection, and relatively to them, an idea of power, of domination; and this idea was the primitive and fundamental type of all his conceptions of the Divinity.

About the *sun* specifically (the speaker is the same):

“That, being put to death by the wicked, he would gloriously rise again, ascend from hell into heaven, where he would reign for ever.”

By these expressions was described the life of the same sun, who, terminating his career at the winter solstice, when Typhon and the rebellious angels exercised their sway, seemed to be put to death by them; but shortly after revived and rose again in the firmament, where he still remains.

These traditions went still farther, specifying his astrological and mysterious names, maintaining that he was called sometimes *Chris* or *Conservator* [here there is a very long footnote about Vishnu, Jupiter, Plato, logos, and light; but the derivations described therein are not those accepted today]; and hence the Hindu god, *Chusen* or *Christna*, and the Christian *Christos*, the son of Mary. That at other times he was called *Yes*, by the union of three letters, which, according to their numerical value, form the number 608, one of the solar periods. And behold, O Europeans, the name which, with a Latin termination, has become your *Yes-us* or *Jesus*; the ancient and cabalistical name given to young Bacchus, the clandestine son of the virgin, Minerva, who, in the whole history of his life, and even in his death, calls to mind the history of the God of the Christians, that is the star of day, of which they are both of them emblems.

The work concludes with the injunction to a group of “legislators”:

Investigate the laws which nature, for our direction, has implanted in our breasts, and form thence an
authentic and immutable code. Nor let this code be calculated for one family, or one nation only, but for the whole without exception. . . . Show us the line that separates the world of chimeras from that of realities, and teach us, after so many religions of error and delusion, the religion of evidence and truth.

In fact (in truth) what is lacking, as Schelling implies, and probably all that is lacking, is a philosophical sense, the sense of mystery or wonder mentioned on page 219. It is evident that this sense is not the same as interest. In the case of the various Indian and Greek religions, for instance, Volney dismisses mystery as a “mere veil.” And the astonishment in my second excerpt is not the same either. I have quoted at such length from Volney because Schelling may not have been correct in thinking him to have presupposed a religious instinct.

Charles François Dupuis, 1742–1809, French scholar, philosopher, and revolutionary politician. His eagerly awaited *Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle* (Origin of all Cults, or Universal Religion) was published in 1794 in three volumes, and in 1795 in seven volumes plus an atlas. In this enormous work he tried to link all religions to astrology. Oddly enough he is very little remembered in the France of today. Here are seven passages translated from his preface:

I shall not mention the revealed religions at all, because no such religions exist, and no such religions can exist. All are the daughters of curiosity, ignorance, partiality, and imposture. The Gods, for me, are children of men; and I, like Hesiod, hold that the Earth gave birth to Heaven.

For me, the first and most universal religion is found to be that one which is the first in the order of our ideas, and the most natural to man. There the empire of the senses precedes the constructs of reflection; and there it may be seen that the notions derived from the sensual order existed for many more centuries and among many more men than the metaphysical abstractions imagined subsequently. Man, for me, begins where others would have him end, and ends where he is vulgarly considered to begin.

We are all born to be sensible of the impression of the truth; and education, which degrades us, delivers us all to imposture. If we dare to think for ourselves, we shall be the true children of Nature.

I have proved . . . that it is to the universe and to its parts that men, primitively and most generally, attributed the idea of the Divinity . . . . This truth, already seen by others, led me to a second, which would seem to have escaped them, although it was, however, a necessary consequence of the first; it is that the primary means of explanation, and that which may be most generally applied, would be to link the ancient fictions about the Divinity to the play of natural causes. The Gods being Nature herself, the history of the Gods is thus that of Nature; and just as she has no events but her phenomena, the events of the Gods are thus the phenomena of Nature turned into allegories. This conclusion, which would seem to me incontestable, led me naturally to the principles of the true system of explanation, which, despite its difficulties, is nonetheless the only one which it would be possible to accept, in accordance with the nature of the ancient world Religion itself, which remains that of the modern world. For almost nothing has changed.

I have set man in the presence of Nature . . . and I have let pass before his eyes the various tableaux which the Universe presents in its most marked divisions, and in the play of its principal forces. The first spectacle which I have presented to him is that of Light and the Shades, which stand in an eternal contrast; that of the succession of days and nights . . . the progressive movement of the Sun from low to high, and from high to low, whence results the variation in warmth, in the length of the days, and the changing temperatures of the air; the succession of the rising and setting of the fixed stars, which mark
the different points of the course of the Sun, while the varying forms, which the Earth assumes, mark here below the same epochs of the annual movement of the Sun . . .

I apply my method first of all to the great Poems whose debris makes up the confused mass of the Egyptian and Greek Mythology. Principal among these are the Poem of the travels of Hercules, of Theseus, of Jason; the journeys or voyages of Bacchus, of Osiris, and of Isis, which are all solar or lunar Poems, of which the Sun or the Moon are the heroes, and of which Heaven is the theatre. Next I seek to recognize the Sun again in other forms and under other names, such as those of Ammon, Pan,Apis, Omphis, Mnevis, Mithra, Thor; in general, in all the borrowed forms, whether those of the Ram, of the Goat, of the Ox. I seek it again in more elegant guise, clothed with all the graces of youth, under the names of Apollo, of Adonis, of Horus, of Atys; then dilapidated by time, it shows the beard of old-age, under the names of Serapis, of Esculapius, of Pluto, and then it becomes entwined with the the mysterious Serpent, which brings the Winters. I also examine the origin of the cult of Animals, of Plants, and of other sacred Symbols, and that of the hieroglyphic Writing.

[A later section], devoted entirely to the examination of the religious system of the Christians . . . contains the explanation of the sacred Fable of the introduction of evil into the world by the famous Serpent of the Hesperides, which seduced Eve, and which made necessary the advent of an Atoner, who could regenerate Nature. This Fable is found in the second chapter of the Hebraic Cosmogony, known under the name of Genesis. [Then it] treats of the Atoner, of his birth, of his death, and of his resurrection; and it offers us the ensemble of all the qualities which are common to him and Mitra, Adonis, Horus, Atys, Osiris, etc., and finally, it is proved according to the available evidence that this Atoner, designated by the name of Christ by the Christians, is nothing but the Sun, or the Divinity worshipped by all Nations, in so many forms and under so many different names.

CXIII Schelling’s word is Potenz, this is primarily derived from the Latin potentia, meaning “power,” “ability,” or “potential.” In Schelling’s usage it always refers to a possibility. Since this concept is much misunderstood, it is worthwhile quoting here the following passage from the Philosophy of Mythology, pages [II 2, 113-116]. He begins by referring to the principles of the “theogonic process,” but continues to say something about potences in general:

We have called these causes or principles “potences,” because they actually behave as such—in the divine ante-concept as the possibilities of existence still in the future, separate from God—in the actual process (after they themselves have been put into effect) as potences of the divine, godlike existence, which is to be brought forth through them. People have been inclined to criticize the expression “potences,” particularly that of a first, second, and third potence, as something which has been taken over from mathematics into philosophy. But this criticism rests on pure ignorance and lack of knowledge of the matter. “Potence” (δύναμις) is an expression at least as intrinsic to philosophy as to mathematics.—“Potence” means that which can exist, τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον εἶναι as Aristotle calls it. Now we have seen that that which can exist, by which we understand specifically: 1) that which can immediately exist, 2) that which must exist, and 3) that which should exist—that all of these that can exist are accordingly potences, just different orders of that which can exist, while that which is specifically named thus is—that which can immediately exist, that which must exist is only indirectly that which can exist, but that which should exist is the doubly indirect, and thus the third order of that which can exist. No other meaning is intended if we speak of an A of the first, an A of the second, and an A of the third potence—no other meaning is intended but that here that which can exist actually appears in a progressive heightening and on different levels. But what certainly makes this
doctrine incomprehensible or unacceptable to many, is the following. Most people understand only what is concrete or palpable, that which, as individual bodies, individual plants, and so on, appears to their senses. [Compare Socrates in my note to page 219.] Now those pure causes are not something palpable, but may only be grasped and comprehended with the pure understanding. Apart from what is manifest and palpable, many find in themselves nothing further than a stock of abstract concepts, which have no claim to an existence apart from ourselves, concepts like: existence, becoming, quantity, quality, substantiality, causality, and so on, indeed a philosopher of recent times [presumably Hegel] even believed he could base the whole of philosophy on a system of these abstract concepts—where, moreover, he even also assumed as its method a successive ascent from concept to concept, a successive heightening, an advance from the most empty concept to the most full. This contrivance of a method ill-applied and hence not even understood, came to grief, though, and foundered ignominiously, as soon as this philosophy was obliged to go forward to actual existence, in the first place to Nature.

The potences of which we speak are neither something palpable nor are they mere abstractions (abstract concepts); they are real, effective, and to that extent actual forces, they lie between what is concrete and the purely abstract concepts to the extent that they are, no less than these latter, only in a higher sense, true universalia, which are however at the same time actualities, not non-actualities like abstract concepts. But this very region of the true, that is to say real, universalia is inaccessible to very many people. Crass empiricists speak as if in Nature there were nothing but the concrete and palpable, they do not see for example that gravity, light, sound, heat, electricity, magnetism, that these are not palpable things, but true universalia, and still less do they remark that just these universal potences of Nature are alone that which is of value to science, and that with which intelligence and scientific research deal. To these universals in Nature (gravity, light), our potences, no longer to be grasped but with the understanding, and in this sense purely intelligible, are related as the universalissima, and the opportunity will no doubt also be found in the present work to demonstrate or at least to point to the fact that those universalia are only derived from these universalissimae. I might take the opportunity to note here, what is more, that those ἀρχαί [archai], potences, or principles are capable just as much of a strict and purely rational derivation, as are they of being derived as they were here, in accordance with the particular nature of the subject, from a standpoint where God is already presupposed.

There will be a more detailed discussion of the potences in my translation of and notes to the Philosophy of Mythology itself. There is also an interesting and accurate section about them, pointing out their religious significance, in McCarthy’s Quest for a Philosophical Jesus (pages 194–196). At the time Schelling wrote the above passage, Potenz, in everyday German, meant “capacity for action or for work,” or “inherent power.” It had three specific meanings: 1) a mathematical power (two to the power of three equals eight). 2) in mechanics, a simple element of a machine, like a lever. 3) in medicine, the power of generation, a sense said to have been introduced by John Brown. Additionally there were two derived verbs, which Schelling sometimes uses: potenzieren (potentiate) and depotenzieren (depotentiate). These relate to a heightening or diminishing of the vital functions; stimulants are potentiating (sthenic) and narcotics depotentiating (asthenic). It is very likely that Schelling had in mind the medical use of the word as well as the mathematical. But the prime source was Aristotle, who had, though, a different view from Schelling about the relationship between what is “potential” and what is “actual.” In his Metaphysics there is a great deal about potence; the whole of Book Nine deals with it, and it is mentioned in many other places. I quote part of his definition, and four other passages relating it to actuality (translated by W. D. Ross, who
uses the word “potency”). Please bear in mind that Aristotle was misled and misleading about many matters:

“Potency” [δύναμις (dynamis: also power, faculty)] means (1) a source [ἀρχὴ (arche: beginning, principle, rule, province)] of movement [κίνησις (kinesis)] or change [μεταβολή (metabole)], which is in another thing than the thing moved or in the same thing qua other, e.g. the art of building is a potency which is not in the thing built, while the art of healing, which is a potency, might be in the man healed, but not in him qua healed. “Potency” then means the source, in general, of change or movement in another thing or in the same thing qua other, and also the source of a thing’s being moved by another thing or by itself qua other. (Book V, 1019a.)

The word “actuality” [ἐνέργεια (energeia: activity, actualization, actuality, actus)], which we connect with “complete reality” [ἐντελέχεια (entelecheia: the actuality resulting from énergiea, actualization)], has, strictly speaking, been extended from movements to other things; for actuality in the strict sense is identified with movement. And so people do not assign movement to non-existent things, though they do assign some other predicates. (Book IX, 1047a.)

We have distinguished the various senses of “prior” [τὸ πρότερον (to proteron: the prior, former)], and it is clear that actuality is prior to potency. And I mean by potency not only that definite kind which is said to be a principle of change in another thing or in the thing itself regarded as other, but in general every principle of movement or of rest. For nature [φύσις (physis: nature, thing, entity)] also is in the same genus as potency; for it is a principle [ἀρχὴ (arche: same as “source” above)] of movement—not, however, in something else but in the thing itself qua itself. To all such potency, then, actuality is prior both in formula [λόγος (logos: sentence, discourse, story, reason, ration, rule, rational principle, definition)] and in substance [οὐσία (ousia: being, substance, essence)]; and in time it is prior in one sense, and in another not. (Book IX, 1049a.)

Actuality is also prior to potency in substantiality; . . . because everything that comes to be moves towards a principle, i.e. an end [τέλος (telos: completion—that sort of end)]. For that for the sake of which a thing is, is its principle, and the becoming is for the sake of the end; and the actuality is the end, and it is for the sake of this that the potency is acquired. (Book IX, 1050a.)

Obviously the potentially existing relations are discovered by being reduced to actuality (the reason being that thinking is the actuality of thought [Hugh Tredennick’s translation is “The reason for this is that the actualization (énergiea—energeia again) is an act of thinking (νόησις—noesis)’’]); so that potency is discovered from actuality (and therefore it is by an act of construction [ποιούντες (poione) from ποιεῖν (poiein: do—see note to page 15)] that people acquire the knowledge), though the single actuality is later in generation than the corresponding potency. (Book IX, 1051a.)

cxiv “Some nations have been discovered, who entertained no sentiments of Religion, if travellers and historians may be credited; and no two nations, and scarce any two men, have ever agreed precisely in the same sentiments.”—The Natural History of Religion, p. 25.

cxv This carries on directly from the passage above: “It would appear, therefore, that this preconception springs not from an original instinct or primary impression of nature, such as gives rise to self-love, affection betwixt the sexes, love of progeny, gratitude, resentment; since every instinct of this kind has been found absolutely universal in all nations and ages, and has always a precise, determinate object, which it inflexibly pursues.”
The universal propensity to believe in invisible, intelligent power, if not an original instinct, being at least a general attendant of human nature, may be considered as a kind of mark or stamp, which the divine workman has set upon his work . . .

Schelling’s whole paragraph is recognizable as a translation from page 27 of Hume’s book. The translation is a little less exact (if such an expression may be permitted) than that of subsequent quotations from Hume, but not to the extent that anything would be gained by giving a back-translation. So I have transcribed Hume’s words and provided the quotation marks.

Again, the whole passage from the beginning of the paragraph to this point is, in Schelling’s text, despite the absence of quotation marks, an exact German translation from Hume’s book, here of a paragraph on pages 28 and 29. I have transcribed the passage from Hume, and added the quotation marks, whose absence from the original, if rather surprising, is not at all the same case as with Coleridge (refer to the note for page 196), and is probably an effect of the posthumous editing. The emphasis is Schelling’s.

Hume regularly uses this phrase without the article.

Once again Schelling’s text is a German translation of Hume’s, and I have supplied Hume’s original words and the quotation marks.

In German: In der Offenbarung ist es aber nicht bloss Gott überhaupt, es ist der bestimmte Gott, der Gott der es ist, der wahre Gott, welcher sich offenbart, und er offenbart sich auch als den wahren. This is explained in more detail in the Philosophy of Mythology, page [II 2, 70]:

Theism is that concept in which god in general (θεός) is established, not the specific god (ὁ θεός), the god which there is.

In a long footnote Schelling points out that this last phrase corresponds to the Greek ὁ ὄν θεός. See also page [II 2, 41].

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1729-1781, German dramatist and critic. In the light of his works on the theory of art and poetry, it can be said that really he laid the foundation for modern German literature. His Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts, chiefly significant for the philosophy of history, was first published in 1780. That this was only a year before his death means that Schelling’s remark in the footnote on page 84 is perhaps not quite apt as it stands. The part which Schelling quotes has a few differences in the original: 1. Lessing has mit einem Begriffe (with a concept), not mit dem Begriff (with the concept); 2. von einem eingen Gott (of a united god), not von einem einzigen Gott (of a single god); 3. in mehrere Ermesslichere (into several, more mensurable, parts), not in mehrere Ermessliche (into several mensurable parts); 4. Lessing has no comma after Ermesslichere, and Schelling has one after Ermessliche; 5. ein Merkzeichen (a distinctive mark), not ein besonderes Merkmal (a particular feature); 6. Schelling’s semicolon before “thus arose” is a full stop and new paragraph (number seven) in Lessing. I have translated Schelling’s version rather than the original, which would begin: “Even if the first man was at once equipped with a concept of a united god.” By the way, the first paragraph of the work says “That which education is in the case of an individual
person, is revelation in the case of the whole human race,” and a lot of what follows bears on the current work.

As far as the letter quoted in the footnote is concerned, it may be found in volume twelve of the 1857 edition of Lessing’s works, and this differs from Schelling only in that the word *doch* follows *Plane*, not *und* (and Schelling has *Plan*). The emphasis is Schelling’s. The letter, to Karl G. Lessing, was sent on the 25th of February, 1780.

CXXIII German *Vielgötterei*. Refer to my note to page 121 for a description of how the meaning of this word, in Schelling’s usage, differs from that of “polytheism.”

CXXIV 

Gerhard Johannes Voss or Vossius, 1577–1649, Dutch Reformation theologian, and prolific writer of textbooks on Greek and Latin grammar, rhetoric, poetry, and history. He was born in Heidelberg but his family moved to Leiden before his first birthday. He was a man of immense learning, described as a polyhistor in the true sense of the word. The same reference goes on to say that his fame due to his literary activity grew from year to year, and flocks of youths desirous of learning streamed into his school, so as to avail themselves of his deep and comprehensive erudition. He went to England in 1629 where someone (some sources say King Charles, others archbishop Laud) gave him a canonry at Canterbury, mainly for financial reasons it seems, as he went back to Holland very soon but had the income sent to him there. The full title of this work was *De Theologia Gentili et Physiologia Christiana, sive de Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ* (concerning foreign theology and Christian natural science, or concerning the origin and advance of idolatry); it was first published in two volumes in 1641 (and again with posthumous additions, which Bochart could not have seen, in 1668). It is a vast repertoire which treats of many diverse forms of pagan theogony; no total system emerges from such a great accumulation of material, but it served as a starting point for almost all subsequent researchers. The spelling of the last word is sometimes *idolatriæ* and sometimes *idololatriæ*; neither is found in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, and only the latter appears in *A Glossary of Later Latin*.

CXXV 1599–1667, French Reformation theologian and Hebraist. His principal work treats of the geography of the bible; the work of his which remains most significant today is a study of its ethnology and zoology.

CXXVI Pierre-Daniel Huet, 1630–1721, French philologist, Catholic theologian, and philosopher, who was appointed Bishop of Avranches in 1689. He defended belief in revelation against Descartes. His *Demonstratio Evangelica* (authentication of the Christian church) was published in 1679.

CXXVII Views rejected in the past.

CXXVIII Jean-Sylvain Bailly, 1736–93, French scholar and politician. He played an important part in the initial stage of the French revolution, and was executed as a result. His *Histoire de l’astronomie ancienne depuis son origine jusqu’à l’établissement de l’école d’Alexandrie* (History of ancient astronomy from its origin up to the establishment of the School of Alexandria) was first published in 1775. His *Lettres sur l’origine des sciences et sur celle des peuples de l’Asie, adressées à M. de Voltaire par M. Bailly et précédées de quelques lettres de M. de Voltaire à l’auteur* (Letters concerning the origin of the sciences and of the peoples of Asia, addressed to Voltaire by Bailly, and
preceded by a number of letters from Voltaire to the author), came out in London and Paris in 1777. The following is from the *History of Ancient Astronomy*:

All these philosophical ideas invented and disseminated in the Orient are the products of a cultivated nation, which must have been older than the Indians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Chinese: it was the original source of all the famous periods of natural astrology and of all the philosophically conceived astronomical rules, which its offspring infected with that plague of foolish astro-mancy. This Asiatic error was not only one of the most ancient which was ever thought up in the world, but it was also common to the whole of Asia, and it has to be regarded, as well, as a proof of that common origin of all sciences and of the existence of that great nation which inhabited the world before all others known to us. For would it ever be possible that such a philosophical error as is astromancy could have been thought up in such a uniform way among different nations? Certainly there are truths which have been discovered at the same time by different philosophers but certainly not elaborate hypotheses or even crude errors. So the reason why more recent nations had the same ideas about the influence of the stars on the hearts of men, was because originally they had jointly inherited the foundations of these ideas from a single nation.

CXXIX This passage, also referred to in Lecture One, is translated in my note to page 23.

Sir William Jones, 1746–94, English Oriental scholar. Regarded in his own time as a prodigy of learning, he was the first English scholar to master Sanscrit. He had an amiable nature, and his sympathy with Orientals and their manner of thought was especially noteworthy. This sounds good, but in *fact* he was an unpleasant moralist and bowdlerizer. In early life he wrote on the history of Persia and its language, and published many poems, both his own and translations from Persian originals; later he wrote a lot about law. He went to India in 1783, and in 1784 founded the *Bengal Asiatic Society*. He contributed eleven discourses to that society’s organ, *Asiatic Researches*, of which the second, which appeared in 1785, is entitled “On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India,” and another from 1787 “On the Chronology of the *Hindus*.” Most of these works consist of detailed analyses of mythological correspondences. It would be interesting to find out how Schelling got to know Jones’ writings on India. (Goethe, in a letter from 1811, had already expressed admiration for him, but only in respect of his version of the *Gita Govinda*.) Probably it was from a German translation of some of the essays from the Bengal Asiatic Society, published in four volumes in 1795–7. The following excerpt, from the “Gods of Greece, Italy, and India,” may give an idea of his “spirit”:

In drawing a parallel between the Gods of the *Indian* and *European* Heathens, from whatever source they were derived, I shall remember, that nothing is less favorable to inquiries after truth than a systematical spirit, and shall call to mind the saying of a Hindoo writer, “that whoever obstinately adheres to any set of opinions, may bring himself to believe that the freshest sandal-wood is a flame of fire.”

It depends what you mean by “system,” does it not? Another excerpt, from the beginning of that essay, shows the scope of the correspondences he observes:

We cannot justly conclude, by arguments preceding the proof of facts, that one idolatrous people must
have borrowed their deities, rites, and tenets from another; since Gods of all shapes and dimensions may be framed by the boundless powers of imagination, or by the frauds and follies of men, in countries never connected; but when features of resemblance, too strong to have been accidental, are observable in different systems of polytheism, without fancy or prejudice to color them, and improve the likeness, we can scarce help believing, that some connection has immemorially subsisted between the several nations who have adopted them. It is my design, in this Essay, to point out such a resemblance between the popular worship of the old Greeks and Italians and that of the Hindus. Nor can there be room to doubt of a great similarity between their strange religions and that of Egypt, China, Persia, Phrygia, Phoenicia, Syria, to which, perhaps, we may safely add, some of the southern kingdoms, and even islands of America: while the Gothic system, which prevailed in the northern regions of Europe, was not merely similar to those of Greece and Italy; but almost the same, in another dress, with an embroidery of images apparently Asiatic. From all this, if it be satisfactorily proved, we may infer a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world, at the time when they deviated, as they did too early deviate, from the rational adoration of the only true GOD.

Georg Friedrich Creuzer, 1771–1858, German philologist and founder of the science of comparative mythology. Volumes 1 to 3 of this work appeared in a first edition in 1810–12; and a second edition of six volumes (of which the fifth and sixth were written by J. Mone), appeared in 1819–23 (Creuzer’s part 1819–21). The third edition in four volumes dates from 1830–43. The abstract mentioned, made by Georg Heinrich Moser, was published in 1822. The meaning of the title of the French version is “Religions of Antiquity, a work translated from the German of Dr. F. Creuzer, recast in part, completed, and expanded.” The translator was Joseph-Daniel Guigniaut, 1794–1876, French Hellenist and archaeologist. (His major work was “The Religions of Antiquity” in ten volumes, 1825–51.) Creuzer himself called this translation “masterly.”

The main point of this is the loss of tempo, for the discords could not arise simply from the mechanical nature of the performance. In my own experience (with music full of feeling) the best possible performance is precisely a mechanical one. This presupposes that what is in the music is capable of being accurately notated. I do not believe in the myth of the necessity of any expression added by a performer, beyond what is decided by the composer. So Schelling’s “mechanicism” does not include any way of co-ordinating the tempi of the different parts.

In German: sich in eine Vielheit endlicher Gestalten einbildet. The verb einbildet can mean, in other contexts, “imagines.”

Compare the following, from Jones’ essay On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India:

I am convinced that a connection subsisted between the old idolatrous nations of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, long before they emigrated to their several settlements, and consequently before the birth of Moses.

And about the age of the Vedas, the following, from the same work:

That the Vedas were actually written before the flood, I shall never believe; nor can we infer, from the preceding story [of the Vedas being stolen by a demon and recovered for Satyavrata after the flood],
that the learned Hindus believe it; for the allegorical slumber of Brahma, and the theft of the sacred books, mean only, in simpler language, that the human race was become corrupt, but that the Vedas are very ancient, and far older than other Sanscrit compositions. I will venture to affirm from my own examination of them, and a comparison of their style with that of the Purans and the Dherma Sastra.

He returns to the subject in the essay On the Chronology of the Hindus. Having quoted an Indian equivalent of the creation, he continues by summarizing part of the eighth book of the “Bhayawata”:

Vishnu appeared to him [Satyavata] in the shape of a small fish, and, after several augmentations of bulk in different waters, was placed by Satyavata in the ocean, where he thus addressed his amazed votary: “In seven days all creatures, who have offended me, shall be destroyed by a deluge, but thou shalt be secured in a capacious vessel miraculously formed: take therefore all kinds of medicinal herbs and esculent grain for food, and, together with the seven holy men, your respective wives, and pairs of all animals, enter the arc without fear; then shalt thou know God face to face, and all thy questions shall be answered.” Saying this, he disappeared; and after seven days, the ocean “began to overflow the coasts, and the earth to be flooded by constant showers, when Satyavata, meditating on the Deity, saw a large vessel moving on the waters; he entered it, having in all respects conformed to the instructions of Vishnu; who, in the form of a vast fish, suffered the vessel to be tied with a great sea-serpent, as with a cable, to his measureless horn. When the deluge had ceased, Vishnu slew the demon, and recovered the Vedas instructed Satyavata in divine knowledge, and appointed him the seventh Menu by the name of Vaivaswata.” Let us compare the two Indian accounts of the Creation and the Deluge with those delivered by Moses. It is not made in question in this tract, whether the first chapters of Genesis are to be understood in a literal, or merely in an allegorical sense; the only points before us are, whether the creation described by the first Menu, which the Brahmans called that of the Lotos, be not the same with that recorded in our Scripture; and whether the story of the seventh Menu be not one and the same with that of Noah. I propose the questions, but affirm nothing; leaving others to settle their opinions, whether Adam be derived from adim, which in Sanscrit means the first; or Menu from Nih, the true name of the patriarch; whether the sacrifice, at which God is believed to have descended, alludes to the offering of Abel; and, on the whole, whether the two Menus can mean any other persons than the great progenitor, and the restorer of our species.

He says he affirms nothing, but in an addendum to this essay, printed at the end of the volume, he has forgotten this, and does affirm the chronology above, specifically mentioning the Vedas and the Flood. The variations in the spelling of “Hindus” and “Satyavata” above are in the original. Vincent A. Smith, in The Oxford History of India (1957), thinks that the oldest of the Vedic sources are from the sixth century B.C. Raimundo Panikkar, in his anthology The Vedic Experience (1977), says “their age has been a matter of dispute. The most probable dates lie between 1500 and 1200 B.C. for the oldest parts, and down to 600 B.C. for the later.” The date of the, or any, Flood is not known, but it may be a memory of the world-wide effects of a volcanic eruption in 1626 B.C. Some say a cloudburst in the Armenian mountains flooded the Tigris and Euphrates in 3200 B.C., and there are many other theories.

Cxxxv The German word is Heidenthum, with the same derivation (referring to the inhabitants of heaths or open country). It would also be possible to translate it as “paganism,” and I have done so in lectures nine and ten. On page 105 there is a discussion of the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek
words for which “heathenism” is commonly used as a translation.

CXXXVI There is an odd and detailed echo of this association of the Arabs and the sea in Hegel’s lectures on the Philosophy of History.

CXXXVII Horace, Odes Book I, Ode III, To Virgil Setting out for Greece, lines 21–4:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{nequiquam deus abscedit} \\
\textit{prudens Oceano dissociabili} \\
\textit{terrars, si tamen impiæ} \\
\textit{non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.}
\end{align*}
\]

My version is translated from Schelling’s German. In the translation of C. E. Bennett (Loeb edition), it reads:

Vain was the purpose of the god in severing the lands by the estranging main, if in spite of him our impious ships dash across the depths he meant should not be touched.

CXXXVIII The actual spiritual and moral differences may not have been those of which Schelling was thinking. “Dying out” would not be the correct way to put it. But that he may have been aware of what did go on is suggested by “not even if they are killed” on page 115. Note that at the time Schelling was writing, New South Wales was larger in area than it is today, and it is probable that there (in distinction to Van Diemen’s Land) a proportion of the aboriginal population survived, despite the activities of the settlers. Their way of life would have been changed, that is certainly true.

CXXXIX I have added this “not,” because without it the sentence does not quite make sense, even in German.

CXL Carsten Niebuhr, 1733–1815, Danish explorer (the Germans say he was German, and they do have a point, as he was born near Hannover). In the capacity of geographer or mathematician, he joined an expedition to the Near East (Egypt, Arabia, and Syria) in 1761, and in fact went as far as India. The sole survivor, he returned in 1767, having travelled through Mesopotamia, Iran, and Asia Minor. He described his journey and its scientific discoveries in two books, the first, Beschreibung von Arabien (Description of Arabia), published in 1772, and another, entitled Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern (Description of a journey to Arabia and other neighbouring countries), in three volumes (four parts), in 1774, 1778, and 1837. The following passage appears on pages 449-50 of volume one of this second book, in the section describing his voyage from Mecca to Bombay:

In my opinion, it is still unproven that the Abyssinians are descended from the Arabs; for the genuine Abyssinians are dark, and I was assured that the progeny of the Arabs who settled on the western side of the Arabian Gulf, and did not mingle with Abyssinian women, have remained white just like all Arabs. At the same time scholars have wished to maintain that the hot climate is the reason why the progeny of the Portuguese who settled on the western coast of Africa are wholly black. I myself saw many so-called Portuguese in India, who were black; but if the hot climate is supposed to be the reason for that, why then are the Brahmans, the Banyans, and other nations, who make no proselytes, and do
not mix with strangers at all, entirely white, although they have lived since time immemorial in just as hot a climate as the black nations in Africa and on the Malabar Coast?

I cannot find in the same book any reference to the nomadic tribe near Jerusalem which Schelling mentions on page 154; which is not to say they are not there, but since the section on Jerusalem which I examined is in the 1837 volume three, it is most likely they are in his first book, not at present available to me. Another possibility is that Schelling is mixing them up with a tribe in the vicinity of Mecca, not Jerusalem, who are known to have claimed in the nineteenth century to be the descendants of the Rechabites. But in fact there are a large number of such claims, in various places, and all thought to be spurious.

The reference is to the March 1825 number of the *Journal Asiatique*, containing a review of the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, volume one, part one, of 1824, and in particular of the *Essay on the Bhills*, by Major-General Sir John Malcolm, contained in this latter. The review was written by Eugène Burnouf (1801-52), the celebrated French orientalist, who rediscovered the meaning of the Zend. He discusses whether the caste system originated in conquest and slavery, or was imposed by the priesthood on a population naturally susceptible to religion. At this point there is a footnote, which reads in translation:

> In favour of the first of these hypotheses, we could cite reasons of some moment, and up to a certain point facts. It is known that, besides the word *jâti*, which means “caste,” the Indian castes bear the name *varna*, or “colours.” If the castes are distinguished by colour, what cause other than conquest could have been capable of bringing the one together with the other, and imposing the same political system on races of diverse origin?

Herodotus in this passage (which is also mentioned on page 111) is writing about the Colchians (inhabitants of Colchis on the Black Sea south of the Caucasus). In the translation by Sélincourt and Burn it reads:

> It is undoubtedly a fact that the Colchians are of Egyptian descent. I noticed this myself before I heard anyone else mention it, and when it occurred to me I asked some questions both in Colchis and in Egypt, and found that the Colchians remembered the Egyptians more distinctly than the Egyptians remembered them. The Egyptians did, however, say that they thought the original Colchians were men from Sesostris’ army. My own idea on the subject was based first on the fact that they have black skins and woolly hair (not that that amounts to much, as other nations have the same), and secondly, and more especially, on the fact that the Colchians, the Egyptians, and the Ethiopians are the only races which from ancient times have practised circumcision.

In view of the footnote earlier about phlogiston and the beer bottle, I suspected that this too was a joke. In fact Dr. Friedrich Schnurrer lived from 1784 to 1833, to the age, that is, of forty-eight or forty-nine. He published a number of works about diseases and their history, for example “Nosology or the Theory of Changes in Diseases in the Various Regions of the Earth, in relation to Physical Geography and the Natural History of Mankind” (1813). Schelling had something to say about a similar subject on pages 96-7. Schnurrer’s last work was about cholera, and he claimed it was not contagious, but I cannot find out whether he, like Hegel two years earlier, died of it. His pa was...
Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer (1742-1822), head of the theological faculty (and later chancellor) of the university at Tübingen. Schelling was accepted as a student there in 1790, at the interesting age of fifteen and a half, and at that time Friedrich Schnurrer would have been a child of six. Schnurrer père was Schelling’s principal lecturer and teacher. He avoided any discussion of the dogmatic content of the bible, but liked to lecture (sometimes in Latin) on philology and textual criticism.

Eusebius, 265-340 A.D., bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, and author of a *Chronicle* in Greek containing an epitome of universal history and chronological tables, the foundation of much of our knowledge of the dates of events in Greek and Roman history up to 325. See also the note to page 166 about Sanchuniathon. Abydenos was a Greek writer whose works included a history of the Chaldean empire, fragments of which work are found in Eusebius and others. There is considerable uncertainty about when he lived but some say it was the second or third century A.D. He should not, apparently, be confused with another Abydenos who was a pupil of Aristotle. The passage Schelling is referring to will be the following:

At that point, becoming insolent, they claimed they were the strongest and tallest of men, to such an extent that they also spurned the gods, and considered them of no importance. They now began to erect an extremely high tower, which they called “Babylon”; indeed they brought it forward very nearly to the celestial abode of the gods, and then it came to pass that the workers were interrupted by the gods, and these ruined that foolish contrivance, and Babylon made its name by having been thrown down to the earth. In truth, until that time they had been of one tongue and the same language; and the gods impregnated them, formerly of one accord, with a manifold confusion of mingled languages. What is more, from that time on Cronus and Titan began a contention among themselves.

The second reference here is to Plato’s *Statesman*. One young lad, the stranger from Elaia, is interviewing another, Socrates the younger. There is an interesting passage in 272A leading up to this (translation by Harold N. Fowler):

> Under his care [that of God himself] there were no states, nor did men possess wives or children; for they all came to life again out of the earth, with no recollection of their former lives.

Then 272B, to which Schelling refers:

> That, Socrates, was the life of men in the reign of Cronus; but the life of the present age, which is said to be the age of Zeus, you know by your own experience.

I suppose the point is that in the state in which men existed in the reign of Cronus neither language nor a society was called for. Both these passages are spoken by the stranger.

The normal translation of the word *Ereignis*, as “event” or “occurrence,” doesn’t seem to be what Schelling has in mind here. In one sense everything has a cause (but he doesn’t seem to take it that way, or even has a different view of the world); in another sense only *unexpected* things have causes. I have not been able to find any special meaning or use assigned to the word in Schelling’s other works. Note that it must refer back, in fact, to the “mere natural events” and “external events” on pages 95 and 96. The word is used in its normal sense of “occurrence” in the discussion of Goethe’s remarks about the hypothesis of geological elevation, for example, on page 22 (“accidental and
unconnected occurrences”). There is another interesting use on page 182, in reference to the transition from the absolutely prehistoric to the relatively prehistoric. Similarly the “succession of real events” on page 229, and the “events of a different kind” on page 234. Another word Schelling uses is Begebenheit; it literally means “historical circumstance,” or “(datum about) what happened,” but I have decided to translate that as “event” too (for example on page 234), rather than “fact,” which I have only used for it on page 235 (“the succession of events and facts themselves”) where Schelling uses the two words together.

The German has “it,” not “the account,” but even given the fact that it is a feminine “it” it is rather a strained reference.

The way the forces interact so as to generate the consciousness of time is another (compare page 14) intimation of modern physics—rather like a spiritual “big bang,” but more convincing.

In Schelling’s text the word for “nations” is of course Völker, which I have normally translated as “societies.” The verse in question, in the AV, reads:

Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

In the NIV, it reads:

Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD’S hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad.

This philosophy of symbols was later used by the Symbolist poets. The fate of the name differs from that of Babel itself. In essence a symbol is an association with other symbols, whose significance derives from the store of associations they have accumulated, however old they are. (The reality is in the relation.) These associations, not strict or literal, are only possible once a strict and literal meaning has been defined; the dividing line, though, is necessarily uncertain and inconstant, as strict literality is an as yet unachievable ideal. Obscurity is kept beyond a well-defined pale, and has always been admitted through symbols. Compare Olympiodorus on the purpose of images, quoted in my note to page 33. Kant, in his Anthropology from a Practical Point of View (1798), writing of the faculty of signification, says:

Forms (Gestalten) of things (contemplations), to the extent that they only serve as means of representation by way of concepts, are symbols, and knowledge gained through these is called “symbolic” or “figurative” (speciosa) knowledge.—Characters do not amount to symbols: for they can also be merely indirect signs, which mean nothing in themselves, but lead to concepts only through association with contemplations and through these; hence symbolic knowledge must be opposed not to intuitive, but to discursive, in which last the sign (character) accompanies the concept only as guardian (custos), so as to reproduce it when required. Symbolic knowledge is thus opposed not to intuitive (knowledge through sensory contemplation), but to intellectual (knowledge through concepts). Symbols are merely means of understanding, but only indirectly through an analogy with certain contemplations, to which the concept of the understanding can be applied, so as to obtain meaning for the understanding through the portrayal of an object.
He who is obliged always to express himself symbolically, has as yet little concept of understanding, and that which is so often admired in the lively exposition which savages (sometimes even the purported sages among a still crude society) evince in their speeches, is nothing but poverty of concepts and hence also of words to express them; for example when the American native says “We want to bury the hatchet,” that means the same as “We want to make peace,” and in fact the old songs from Homer to Ossian, or of an Orpheus up to the prophets, owe the splendour of their diction merely to the lack of means of expressing their concepts.

To maintain (with Swedenborg) that the actual phenomena of the world, present to the senses, are mere symbols of an intelligible world hidden in the background, is an excess of enthusiasm. But in the portrayals of the concepts (called “ideas”) belonging to morality (which constitutes the essence of all religion), and consequently belonging to pure reason, to distinguish the symbolic from the intellectual (divine service of religion), the integument, indeed for a certain period useful and necessary, from the thing itself, is enlightenment: because otherwise an ideal (of pure practical reason) is confused with an idol and the final goal is missed.—It is undeniable that all societies on the earth began with this confusion, and that, if it is a matter of what their teachers themselves actually had in their minds while writing their holy scriptures, one would have to interpret them then not symbolically, but literally: because it would be dishonest to distort their words. But if it is a matter not merely of the truthfulness of the teacher, but also and indeed essentially of the truth of the doctrine, then one can and ought to expound the latter, treating it as a mere symbolic way of expression, by accompanying these practical ideas with additional ceremony and customs: because otherwise the intellectual sense, which constitutes the final goal, would be lost.

That is too straightforward and not very imaginative. I don’t like the “mere,” applied to Swedenborg, at all. Coleridge (following Schelling) said “all symbols, of necessity, involve an apparent contradiction.” Schelling, in the eighth of his 1803 Lectures On the Method of Academic Study, the one On The Historical Construction of Christianity [I 5, 293], said:

A religion which lives like poetry in the genre, has as little need of a historical foundation as does the ever-open Nature. Where the divine does not live in permanent forms, but passes in fleeting appearances, it needs a means of holding onto these and of perpetuating them through tradition. Apart from the genuine mysteries of religion there is necessarily a mythology, which is its exoteric side, and which is based on religion, just as the religion of the first kind was, on the contrary, based on mythology.

The ideas of a religion directed towards contemplation of the infinite in the finite must primarily be expressed in existence, while the ideas of the opposite kind of religion, in which all symbolism belongs only to the subject, can become objective only through practice. In this kind of religion, the original symbol of all contemplation of God is history, but this is infinite, immense, and it must therefore be represented by an appearance which is at the same time infinite and yet limited, an appearance which is not itself in turn real, like the state, but ideal, and which portrays the unity of everything in the spirit as immediate presence which in its separateness is individual. This symbolic contemplation is the Church, as living work of art.

Just as the action which gives external expression to the unity of the infinite and finite can be termed “symbolic,” the same activity, as internal, is mystical, and mysticism in general is a subjective symbolism.

Mallarmé (unreliably translated by Susie [sic] Saunders) said:
The contemplation of objects, the image which takes wing from the dreams they stir up, these are the song: those Parnassians take the objects in their entirety and show them: in that way they lack any mystery; they take back from the spirits which they create the delightful joy of belief. To name an object is to suppress three quarters of the pleasure of the poem which is made to be understood little by little; to suggest it—that is the dream. It is the perfect usage of this mystery which constitutes the symbol: to evoke an object by degrees to show a state of soul, or, inversely, to take an object and separate a state of soul from it by a series of deciphering.

Tzvetan Todorov, in Symbolism and Interpretation (translated by Catherine Porter), says:

A text or a discourse becomes symbolic at the point when, through an effort of interpretation, we discover in it an indirect meaning. Schelling wrote: “The charm of Homeric poetry and of all mythology rests, to tell the truth, on the fact that they also contain allegorical signification as a possibility— one could also allegorize everything.” One could, and that possibility is essential. But we do not do so, for all that; in principle, we require that the text itself indicate to us its symbolic nature, that it possess a series of observable and undeniable properties through which it leads us on to that peculiar form of reading which is “interpretation.” We begin with the answer, with the interpretive reaction, but we go back to the question, which is posed by the symbolic nature of the text itself.

Tzvetan Todorov, in Symbolism and Interpretation (translated by Catherine Porter), says:

A text or a discourse becomes symbolic at the point when, through an effort of interpretation, we discover in it an indirect meaning. Schelling wrote: “The charm of Homeric poetry and of all mythology rests, to tell the truth, on the fact that they also contain allegorical signification as a possibility— one could also allegorize everything.” One could, and that possibility is essential. But we do not do so, for all that; in principle, we require that the text itself indicate to us its symbolic nature, that it possess a series of observable and undeniable properties through which it leads us on to that peculiar form of reading which is “interpretation.” We begin with the answer, with the interpretive reaction, but we go back to the question, which is posed by the symbolic nature of the text itself.

A text or a discourse becomes symbolic at the point when, through an effort of interpretation, we discover in it an indirect meaning. Schelling wrote: “The charm of Homeric poetry and of all mythology rests, to tell the truth, on the fact that they also contain allegorical signification as a possibility— one could also allegorize everything.” One could, and that possibility is essential. But we do not do so, for all that; in principle, we require that the text itself indicate to us its symbolic nature, that it possess a series of observable and undeniable properties through which it leads us on to that peculiar form of reading which is “interpretation.” We begin with the answer, with the interpretive reaction, but we go back to the question, which is posed by the symbolic nature of the text itself.
They hold intercourse in the tongue they share; I must make myself understood by gestures. Here it is
*I that am a barbarian, understood by nobody.*

The references in Schelling’s footnote are to: Martin Luther, c1483-1546, a turbulent and refractory
Germanic priest, who prepared, with some colleagues, a translation of the bible; the *Old Testament*
was published in 1534. The German word he used is *undeutsch*, which can mean both “un-German”
and “unintelligible.” The AV reads:

*Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he
that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.*

The NIV has it:

*If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is
a foreigner to me.*

By the way there are a couple of minor differences in the Greek in the text of “Mill”: the first
*βάρβαρος* is followed by a colon, and it has ἐμοὶ not ἐμὸι

The Latin adjective *disertus* means dexterous or skilled in speaking or writing, skilfully expressed,
clear-sounding, or distinct. Cicero contrasts it with “barbarus” in his early oration, dating from 70
B.C., known as the *Second Speech against Gaits Verres*. The reference is 2, 3, 9, 23. Verres was a
rapacious governor of Sicily, whom Cicero had been retained to prosecute. The passage describes
Quintus Apronius, one of Verres’ so-called tithe-collectors. In the translation by L. H. G.
Greenwood:

*You are aware of Verres’ foul and wicked character: conceive, if you can, a man who can match him in
every branch of unspeakable indulgence in every kind of vileness that man will be the famous
Apronius, who proclaims himself by his life, nay, by his very shape and countenance, a vast devouring
human morass, replete with all manner of villainies and abominations. It is he who was Verres’ right-
hand man in his debaucheries, in his sacrilegious robberies, in his filthy carouses: and to such sympathy
and affection does similarity of character give rise that Apronius, whom all others regarded as an
uncouth savage [inhumanus ac barbarus], appeared to Verres an agreeable and cultivated [commodus
ac disertus] person. Everyone else loathed him and shunned the sight of him: Verres could not live
without him. Others could not drink in the same room with him: Verres would drink out of the same
cup with him, and the disgusting smell of the man’s breath and body, which we are told not even
animals could endure, to him, and to him alone, seemed sweet and pleasant. Apronius sat next his
chair of office, shared the privacy of his chamber, and was the master spirit of his festive gatherings—
notably when, with the governor’s young son present, he proceeded to dance stark naked before the
company.*

The Plato extract is from his *Theætetus* or *Theaitetos*. The Loeb edition has *βατταρίζων*, with a
note saying that other manuscripts have *βαρβαρίζων*. The passage begins with the story of the
Thracian maidservant who jeered at Thales when he was looking up to watch the stars and tumbled
into a well. She thought Thales a fool for being so eager to know what went on in the sky that he
could not see what lay at his feet. Socrates claims that all philosophers are impractical in this way. On
the other hand, a man of the world is incompetent in the philosophical sphere; in the translation of H. N. Fowler, with the words Schelling quotes italicized (Socrates is addressing Theodoros, who is said to have a large following as might be expected from his skill as a geometer):

... when that man of small and sharp and pettifogging mind is compelled in his turn to give an account of all these things, then the tables are turned; dizzied by the new experience of hanging at such a height, he gazes downward from the air in dismay and perplexity; he stammers and becomes ridiculous, not in the eyes of Thracian girls or other uneducated persons, for they have no perception of it, but in those of all men who have been brought up as free men, not as slaves.

CLII Strabo, c63B.C. – c23A.D., Greek geographer and historian, noted for his Geographica (Geography). This has survived almost in full, and consists of seventeen books, probably written around 7 B.C. His principal work was a History in forty-seven books, now lost, to which the Geography probably formed an appendix.

CLIII The AV renders the word as “subvert”:

... we [the apostles writing letters to the Gentiles] have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment ...

CLIV There are three differences in the Loeb edition: 1. no comma after ἔθνος. 2. Ἕλληνας not Ἑλλήνας. 3. μετέμαθε not μετέμαθεν. In the translation by A. D. Godley (italicized so as to show it in context) the passage reads:

... if (I say) we may judge by these, the Pelasgians spoke a language which was not Greek. If then all the Pelasgian stock so spoke, then the Attic nation, being of Pelasgian blood, must have changed its language too at the time when it became part of the Hellenes.

In the translation by Sélincourt and Burn the same passage (to the extent that it is still recognizable) reads:

Granted, then, that these are a fair sample of the Pelasgian race, one may conclude that the Athenians, being themselves Pelasgian, changed their language when they were absorbed into the Greek family of nations.

CLV Friedrich Heinrich Wilhelm Gesenius, 1786-1842, was a German theologian and orientalist, and the first to apply modern scientific lexicography to the Old Testament, with reference to other Semitic languages and Semitic epigraphy. The Halle encyclopedia (Halle’schen Encyclopädie) sounds large but it was difficult to track down because this is a kind of sobriquet; actually it was published in Leipzig. It is the Allgemeiner Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste (All-inclusive Encyclopedia of the Sciences and Arts), a tremendous and still informative work in 167 volumes published between 1818 and 1879. It is unfortunately incomplete (unlike the French Larousse); the 167 volumes only run from A to P. The editors were J. S. Ersch and J. G. Gruber, and because they, like Gesenius himself, were professors in Halle it was called the Halle encyclopedia. Here is a very small part of Gesenius’s article on “Babylon”; he is writing of the author
of the story in Genesis:

So he portrays the differentiation of language as a misfortune which was imposed by the wrathful deity because men misused their united forces in undertakings displeasing to God. To that extent the miracle of Pentecost forms a parallel and a contrast: for in this the differentiation of language, as a hindrance to the spread of Christianity, is removed through the direct intervention of the deity. That the Greeks had the same view of the reasons for the differentiation of language, may be seen from the myth in Plato (Statesman 272), which Philo already compared with the biblical one, and according to which men and animals in the Golden Age spoke one language, and all nations lived in a condition of unrestricted intercourse, but Zeus divided language when men, full of presumption, demanded immortality and eternal youth from the gods.

Schelling’s lectures, thirty-seven in all, on the Philosophy of Revelation, are intimately related to those on the philosophy of mythology. In the form in which they were posthumously published they are the product of the period between 1842 and 1853, although they too were begun much earlier. The passage about Ahriman is found on page [II 3, 524], where Schelling is discussing the hope, contained in all religions, even the pagan mysteries, of a better time to come:

The golden age of concord, which was considered as the beginning, was also in turn to be the end of the human race. A feature of the Persian doctrine, mentioned by Plutarch (de Isid. et Osir., c. 47), one of many examples, shows how profoundly the fate of the separation into societies and languages was felt, when it says that a time will come when Ahriman will be completely driven out and will vanish, that then the earth will become undifferentiated and level, and one life and one form of government will unite men who are blissful and of one language: ἕνα βίον καὶ μίαν πολιτείαν ἀνθρώπων μακαρίων καὶ ὁμογλώσσων ἀπάντων γενέσθαι. As is well known, something similar is said of the Messiah in the New Testament: “Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; the rough shall be made smooth, and the crooked shall be made bad, that is to say straight” [compare Lu. 3:5], and John the Baptist repeats this same thing in his speech to the Jewish people. The mountains in general probably only represent divisive obstacles, but more important is the εἰς βίος, with the μία πολιτεία and especially the ὁμογλώσσια, the same language for all men, which is anticipated after Ahriman has been rendered wholly ineffective and has vanished. The ἑτερογλώσσια too is regarded as an effect of the principle which disunites everything, of Ahriman. I have no need to remark on how necessary, as it were, at the beginning of the history of Christianity as it enters the world, is the miracle of Pentecost, the gift of language which, however else one may regard it, did have the effect that among men in communities which spoke differently and were divided by languages, each believed he heard the same speech in his language.

CLVI The German word is Vorrathskammer, which in itself is more like “larder,” “storeroom,” “holding-station,” or at best “repository.” None of these works in English, but my “antechamber” does not have the reference to provisions, stock, or storage. The meaning seems to be that up to that point the chosen people had, like the others still left in the larder, been occupying their time with consumption (whether conspicuous or not) and perhaps even with other pleasures of the flesh (but eroticism, as Plato knew, is much more spiritual than often thought), and were only now turning to the life of the spirit. Seriously, though, think of it, if you can, as a repository or holding-station for societies. Schelling describes the situation on page 131. Curiously, there is an echo of this in Jaan
Puhvel’s slangy language in his 1987 book *Comparative Mythology* (a book in which Schelling’s contribution is highly praised):

We note a general westward and southward movement of Celts, Germans, and Slavs, but from precisely what prehistoric holding tanks were they unleashed at half-millennium intervals?

CLVII *instar omnium* means “the image (or likeness) of all.”

CLVIII That seems for drinking and is not. *Potile* is an adjective used of something that pertains to drinking, for example a drinking-vessel; *potabile* is an adjective used of something that may be drunk, something drinkable or potable, that is.

CLIX In the translation by Sélincourt and Burn, Herodotus actually says the gods’ names came from *Egypt*, so he is being more specific than Schelling when the latter says he says “barbarians.” Refer also to my note about the Egyptian priests on page 25. Herodotus, writing of the phallic procession in the worship of Dionysus (in book two section 49), goes on:

The names of nearly all the gods came to Greece from Egypt. I know from the inquiries I have made that they came from abroad, and it seems most likely that it was from Egypt, for the names of all the gods have been known in Egypt from the beginning of time, with the exception (as I have already said) of Poseidon and the Dioscuri—and also of Hera, Hestia, Themis, the Graces, and the Nereids. I have the authority of the Egyptians themselves for this. I think that the gods of whom they profess no knowledge were named by the Pelasgians—with the exception of Poseidon, of whom they learned from the Libyans; for the Libyans are the only people who have always known Poseidon’s name, and always worshipped him. Heroes have no place in the religion of Egypt.

These practices, then, and others which I will speak of later, were borrowed by the Greeks from Egypt. This is not the case, however, with the Greek custom of making images of Hermes with the phallus erect; it was the Athenians who took this from the Pelasgians, and from the Athenians the custom spread to the rest of Greece. For just at the time when the Athenians were assuming Hellenic nationality, the Pelasgians joined them, and thus first came to be regarded as Greeks. Anyone will know what I mean if he is familiar with the mysteries of the Cabiri—rites which the men of Samothrace learned from the Pelasgians, who lived in that island before they moved to Attica, and communicated the mysteries to the Athenians. This will show that the Athenians were the first Greeks to make statues of Hermes with the erect phallus, and that they learned the practice from the Pelasgians—who explained it by a certain religious doctrine, the nature of which is made clear in the Samothracian mysteries.

CLX In German: *Stamneseinheit. Stamm* means both “descent” and “tribe,” so this same word is used on page 94 in relation to tribes, where it could possibly be translated simply as “tribal unity.”

CLXI The Larousse dictionary agrees that it came from the Arab *meskin*, but says that it passed through the Italian *meschino*, not Spanish. Its first use in French was in 1611 and its meaning is “petty,” “shabby,” or “niggardly.”

CLXII The AV translates it slightly differently:
When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

The NIV is essentially the same as the AV.

The passage from the Statesman has some differences in the Loeb edition: 1. κυκλήσεως instead of κυκλώσεως. 2. ἤρχεν instead of ἦχεν. 3. θεὸς instead of θεός. 4. ὡς instead of ὡς. 5. δ᾽ αὖ instead of νῠν, but with νῠν noted as a variant. 6. no comma after θεῶν. The passage is part of the story of the world beginning to revolve in the opposite direction, so that the dead come back from the grave, and the old grow young, turn into babies, and disappear. The youth known as the stranger from Elaia is addressing another youth, Socrates the younger. Schelling refers to the same speech on pages 102 and 175. In Harold N. Fowler’s translation (with Schelling’s emphasis) it reads:

For then, in the beginning, God ruled and supervised the whole revolution, and so again, in the same way, all the parts of the universe were divided by regions among gods who ruled them . . .

This passage from Herodotus may be found in my note to page 99.

Schelling here, as in many other places, uses a Romance word, stupiden in this case, and although I have usually been able to transcribe them directly, it is not possible here because of the tone, really, of this popular word more than because of a difference in meaning. His use of the word here was probably intended to be related to the stupor on page 193 (refer to my note to that page).

Another possible reading here is: “an extinction of all unity would be the extinction of the language itself, but thereby of every human quality . . .”

In German, letzte Elemente. Another possible rendering might be “fundamental” elements.

“They normally speak a great deal from the throat and nose, and in fact for the most part it is impossible for us to use our alphabet to express their words or their sounds.” Schelling’s text differs from the original in the following ways: 1. Ils (they) instead of Les indiens; 2. he omits twenty-four words between ordinairement and the second beaucoup; 3. comma after nez instead of colon; 4. comma omitted after même. Azara’s original sentence reads:

The Indians normally speak a great deal more quietly than we others; they do not attract attention by their facial expressions; in order to pronounce, they scarcely move their lips, and speak a great deal from the throat and nose: and in fact for the most part it is impossible for us to use our alphabet to express their words or their sounds: thus it is very difficult to learn such languages, or even to come to know a single one of them well enough to be able to speak it.

On page 14, Azara says of the “charrúas” (he repeats himself a lot):

They know neither games, nor dances, nor songs, nor musical instruments, nor companionship (sociétés) nor idle conversations. Their manner is so serious that it is impossible to discover their passions from it. Their laugh amounts to no more than a gentle partial opening of the corners of the
mouth, without ever bursting out. They never have a gruff or loud voice, and they always speak very softly, without crying aloud, not even to wail when they are killed. This is taken so far that, when they have business with someone who is ten paces ahead of them, they do not call out to him, preferring to walk up and join him. They do not worship any divinity, and have no religion; and as a consequence they are in a state which is more backward than that of the first savage man described by some scholars, since to him they assign a religion. Among them is seen neither action nor word which has any connection at all with respect and politeness. Nor do they have laws, nor binding customs, nor rewards, nor punishments, nor chief to command them.

Page 57 is rather a contrast. Azara says of the “guaraný nations”:

Their language is very different from all the others; but it is the same for all the branches of this nation; so that in speaking it one can then travel throughout Brazil, enter Paraguay, go afterwards down to Buenos Ayres and come back up to Peru as far as the canton of the Chirigians. This language amounts to the most widespread of the savage idioms of America. It lacks, though, a multitude of expressions: in the case of the names of numerals, it is of use only as far as four, without being capable of expressing the numbers five and six, and its pronunciation is nasal and guttural.

CLXVIII Lucian of Syria lived from 115 to about 200 A.D. After a great deal of travelling, he settled, when he was about forty, in Athens, and began writing philosophical dialogues. But before long he renounced this activity and invented a new form of literature, the satirical dialogue. It was not Hegel, but he, who, in his piece The Way to Write History, said that the only true proposition in his history was that it should contain nothing true. Schelling’s quotation is from Lucian’s Goddess of Syria (not a dialogue). The Loeb edition lacks the four commas, and has εἵσασθαι not ἴσασθαι. Because Lucian mimicked an Ionian dialect, the translator, A. M. Harmon, has seen fit to render the whole work in the style of the English translation of Sir John Mandeville’s Travels, and his version of this passage is:

Of alle peples whereof wee known, Egyptysens weren firste, as men seyn, for to taken conceyte of Goddes, and to stablisschen holy places . . . And thei firste knewen holy names and maden holy tales.

CLXIX Ge. 11:4. The emphasis is Schelling’s. There are two differences between Schelling’s version and the Authorized, which reads as follows:

Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

The minor difference is the city instead of the bulwark, and the important difference is that Schelling has the tower built not so much, perhaps, so as to reach heaven, but so that the builders can make the name for themselves. The NIV reads:

Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.

Here it is not clear whether it is the city (which incidentally has a tower), or the tower itself, or the fact that it reaches to heaven, which allows them to make the name for themselves. (My feeling is that it
was a bulwark, not a city, and the tower was a necessary aspect of it, and that they could not have made a name for themselves unless it reached to the heavens.)


This dissertation may be found in Schelling’s collected works, pages [I 9, 336-352]. An editor has added a note stating that the dissertation was printed in the third annual report of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences, not the second as Schelling claims. I don’t yet know which is correct. The title is in fact the subject which Schelling describes here: Ueber das Alter kyklopischer Bauwerke in Griechenland (on the Antiquity of Cyclopean Constructions in Greece). He wrote the dissertation as a rebuttal of the “atomistic rather than organic” view of an unnamed pupil of J. H. Voss that the Cyclopean constructions were entirely post-Homeric and completely unknown to the Homeric era. (Refer to the note below about Megara.) Schelling maintains that they are older than Hesiod and Homer, even though the latter mentions them only by implication. (Of course they both mention the Cyclopes themselves.) The argument and terminology are consistent with those of the present work, as may be seen from the following short extract (page [I 9, 341]):

Now if, for the Hellenic mind, the genuinely historical era begins only with Zeus, then even from this side it will not appear unfounded if I state that the Cyclopes are a personification of the prehistoric time which still projects into the historical, a prehistoric time which in fact Homer sees everywhere still at a small remove from himself. Now after the significance of the Cyclopes themselves has thus been established as that of a relatively prehistoric race, it could certainly no longer be in doubt that in the thoughts of the Hellenes Cyclopean structures too were considered to be prehistoric, and are indeed stipulated to be such as belonged in the transition to the historical era. This transition is mythologically the transition from Cronus to Zeus, and historically the transition from what is pre-Hellenic to what is genuinely Hellenic.

Megara is a town in East central Greece, near the base of the Isthmus of Corinth overlooking Salamis; an ancient Dorian trading city, originally known as Nisa, it founded many colonies in the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. There are ancient walls nearby, probably those of Minoa. Nauplia, now Navplion, is an ancient Peloponnesian port, and two and a half miles to the north, at Tiryns, there are ancient fortifications and two halls known as megaron (singular megaron). These fortifications at Tiryns, and at other cities of the Argolid, are the ones often ascribed to the Cyclopes, and date from around 1400 B.C. (which was long before Homer and Hesiod). Homer has the phrase “wall-girt Tiryns.” Schelling’s parentheses would seem to indicate that Napoli di Malvasia (the Naples of Malvasia) is another name for Nauplia, but in fact Malvasia comes from the name of the little Greek city of Monembasia (now Monemvasia), known as Napoli di Malvasia to the Venetians, who took it in 1464. The wine known as Malvasia was shipped from here (although produced in Tinos and other Aegean islands). Adjoining, there are the partly subterranean ruins of Epidaurus Limera. The town was called “Malmsey” by early English writers. It is in a magnificent setting, much further down the east coast of the Peloponnese than Nauplia. For this reason Schelling’s parentheses should be a comma or an “and,” but I allow them to stand in the interest of authenticity: adherence to the false. Just to confuse matters further, there is, even further south and around the end of the peninsula, another small town, called “Neapolis.”

Simultaneous = gleichzeitige (at an equivalent time); equivalent = gleiche.
The two expressions I am translating are *Göttervielheit* (literally god-muchness) and *Vielgötterei* (much-goddery). According to all the German dictionaries *Vielgötterei* is simply an alternative native version of *Polytheismus* (polytheism), but as may be seen from this passage Schelling is using it in a special sense, more narrow than *Polytheismus*. For while he does indeed state that only successive polytheism is true polytheism, he continues to prefix the adjective “successive” to *Polytheismus* when he is equating it to *Vielgötterei*. I have therefore, without exception, translated *Polytheismus* as “polytheism,” and *Vielgötterei* as “multitheism.” Just as with *Vielgötterei*, the usual sense of “multitheism” (described by the OED as obsolete) is exactly the same as “polytheism.” Only in this book is it used in Schelling’s special sense.

This passage, in all published editions, reads: “so ist gerade das Successive in der Mythologie das, worin das Wirkliche, das wirklich Geschichtliche, also auch das Wirkliche, die Wahrheit derselben überhaupt liegt.” This would mean: “then it is precisely the successive aspect of mythology in which lies what is actual, what is actually historical in it, thus also what is actual, the truth of it in general.” Since I could not make sense of this as it stands, I have taken the liberty of substituting “das Wahre” for the second “das Wirkliche,” so that it reads “what is true” instead of “what is actual.”

In German, *Jedes Element, das kein anderes außer sich hat, von dem es bestimmt wird, bleibt immer and nothwendig sich selbst gleich*. In other words, the definition of “outside” is “that which effects a change or redefinition.” Compare the discussion of man’s existence “apart from himself” on page 189, and that of the potency set apart from itself in the extract from the *Philosophy of Mythology* which I have quoted in the note to page 180.

Schelling’s word in German is *Ethnogonie*, with an “o”, which I presume means the same; it is not found in any German dictionary I have consulted, even Grimm’s (the largest). There is a modern German word *Ethnogenese* which means “ethnogeny.”

Not without divine will or inspiration.

Compare the following passage from *The Ages of the World*, [I 8, 323], written around 1813; the translation is based on that of Frederick Bolman, with some changes:

It is striking that in the whole of nature each particular, individual life begins by rotation about its own axis, therefore evidently from a state of inner antagonism. In the largest as in the smallest thing, in the wheel of planets as in the partly rotary motions of that world which is discernible only to the assisted eye, which Linné, with presentiment, calls the chaos of the animal kingdom, circular movement is seen as the first form of separate individual life, just as if everything that closes itself off in itself and thus apart from the whole, had thereby immediately to become victim to inner contradiction. At least it would already be evident from this remark that the powers of circular movement belong to the oldest potences, active in the first creation itself, but are not, as is the prevailing opinion now, powers added only to what has come to be, added externally and fortuitously.

Now in so far as the existence of such individual rotary wholes rests solely on the elevation and inspiring of the negating power, to that extent those wholes are to be regarded as works of a truly elevating, creating power, transferring [things] from that which does not exist to that which does, and thus as the first creatures.
If that inspiriting of the negating power could abate in them, then they would immediately sink back into universal being. That inspiriting is therefore for them an elevation to selfhood, and the inspired power is henceforth the root of their singularity, since they have in that their own ground (their own B or egoistic principle), independent of the universal ground of nature.

But even now, raised to selfhood (to existence-in-themselves), they are still held by the attracting power. But, precisely because they are now egoistic, and such as to have their own point of rest (centre of gravity) in themselves, they strive by virtue of this very selfhood to avoid the pressure of the attracting power, and to grow away from it through withdrawing on all sides from its centre. It is only here, then, that there comes into being the highest value of the turgor of the whole, since each individual tries to evade the common centre and eccentrically seeks its own centre of gravity or point of rest.

In the matter of the power of free movement, compare the following, from the System of Transcendental Idealism [I 3, 570]:

That which is to be contemplated as exerting an effect on what is real, must itself appear to be real. Hence I cannot contemplate myself as exerting an effect directly on the object, but only through the intermediary of matter, which, though, since I am acting, I must contemplate as identical with myself. Matter, as direct organ of free activity directed externally, is organic body, which must, therefore, appear to be capable of free and seemingly voluntary movements.

Having quoted that, with its “appear” and “seemingly,” I must, although it is really quite another story, include a little bit more context; from the same work, page [I 3, 580]:

Now if we once again summarize the whole course of the investigation hitherto, first of all we tried to explain the precondition of normal consciousness, which, standing on the lowest level of abstraction, distinguishes the object on which an effect is exerted from that which effects or acts itself; out of which the question thus arose of how the object could be determined by that which was acting on it. We replied that the object acted upon and the action itself are one, namely both are only a contemplation. Through this we established that we had in the will only one thing determined, namely that which was contemplating, which is at the same time that which is acting. This objective element which is acting, and the external world, thus do not originally exist independently of each other, and that which was introduced in the one, was precisely thereby also introduced in the other.

CLXXIX These possibilities of shapes or forms again foreshadow quantum theory. Compare the following, from chapter seven of Paul Davies’ Other Worlds (and it is best for all concerned if I let it stand, at this stage, without further comment):

According to quantum physics the state of the microscopic system must be described by a superposition of waves, each wave representing a definite value of some quality, such as position, momentum, spin or polarization of a particle. It is vital to remember that the superposition does not represent a set of alternatives—an either/or choice—but a genuinely overlapping combination of possible realities. The actual reality is determined only when the measurement of these qualities is effected. Here, however, is the rub. If the measuring device is also made of atoms, it too must be described by a wave which is made up of a superposition of all its alternative states. For example, our Geiger counter is in a superposition of states A and B (undeflected and deflected pointer) which, it must be repeated,
does not mean either it is deflected or it is undeflected, but in some strange, schizophrenic way, both. Each represents an alternative reality generated by the decay of the nucleus, but these realities not only co-exist, they overlap and interfere with each other by the wave interference phenomenon.

This word (letzten) could also mean “last.” The paragraph calls to mind the embryo, the development of which is said to pass through remarkably similar stages in all five classes of vertebrates.

It is strange that Schelling doesn’t actually state the meanings of these names. According to the NIV, Japeth sounds like the Hebrew for “extend,” but no meaning is given for Shem and Ham. Japeth is also identified with the Greek god Iapetus. The Encyclopedia Judaica says that the meaning of Shem is uncertain, but that possibly it is a Hebrew word meaning “fame,” or “name.” The Akkadian sumu, which is the same word, means not only “name” but also “son.” As for Ham, no meaning of his name is suggested there. In Psalms 105:23 and 106:22 it is identified, by a play on words, with Kemi, “black,” a name given to Egypt. There is some confusion between him and Caanan. Ham’s son Cush was black-skinned as a result of Ham having had sexual intercourse in the ark. Ham (or Caanan) castrated Noah after coming across him drunk and naked. He then stole the garments God had made for Adam and Eve and gave them to Cush, who passed them on to his son Nimrod. It is quite possible that Schelling is referring to Book 10 Chapter 7 of Herder’s “Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Mankind” (see my note to page 229). Herder states that the meanings of the names are as follows: Japhet—widespread; “Sem”—tribes who remained superior to others; Cham—heat.

Schelling’s word for “in material” is materiell, “materially,” contrasted to formell, “formally.”

German Eingötterei. This word is absent from the largest modern German dictionaries (even from Grimm), and where it does appear in a smaller dictionary it is simply described as Monotheismus (which leads us to conclude that someone has lost a cause). But I am almost certain that it has the same meaning as “monolatry,” that is to say, that many gods may be believed in, but only one is worshipped. This is contrasted with “monotheism,” which is worship of the one and only god. Where Schelling, in this passage, has Eingötterei, Zweigötterei, and Vielegötterei (one-goddery, two-goddery, and much-goddery), I have monolatry, worship of two gods, and multitheism, but note that in respect of this last, Schelling no longer seems to want to point out the successive element, but just to state the equivalence of the German and the Romance words.

Jean Pierre Abel Rémusat, 1788-1832, French Sinologist. He had a remarkable interest in and aptitude for learning Oriental languages, and in this regard was largely self-educated. He became the first professor of Chinese and Tartar at the Collège de France, and founded, in 1822, the Société Asiatique. The Fundgruben des Orients form a collection in six “volumes” (bound as four), containing contributions by various authors writing in German, French, English, Italian, Latin, Persian, etc., published in Vienna in 1813-14. Rémusat’s Latin dissertation “On the Monosyllabic Character Commonly Attributed to the Chinese Language” was first published in this book. It was later translated into French, and in that form may be found in the second volume of his Mélanges Asiatiques (“Asiatic Miscellanies,” Paris 1826, pages 47-61). One of the curious things about Rémusat is that although his erudition is quite genuine there is no record of his ever having travelled
First of all, both aspirated consonants (as p in po-juan shipwreck) and doubled consonants (as z in cun-zai exist) are, he says, divided by an e mute, and in the case of vowels the effect is even more striking, when words terminate in diphthongs (as shuo speak), triphthongs (as huaai bad), or nasal sounds (as shang above). (In all these examples I use modern spelling.) Words (here I use his French notation) like y-a-o, tcha-o, phi-e-ou, ts-hi-a-o, however quickly they are pronounced, are still, he claims, composed of several syllables, in a strict sense. Then he says that all the above may be a bit puérile; every character has a pronunciation consisting of a very short word, often complex, but monosyllabic in the vulgar sense. Often, though, the Chinese characters are combined to express names and simple ideas; such expressions are composed of characters, just as French words are composed of syllables. An example is fang-hu (represent, be alike), composed of two characters which have no distinct independent meaning (although hu is used as an abbreviation of the name of the Buddha), and in which the two characters can be replaced in six different ways by others with the same sound without altering the sense of the combination. He gives five more examples of the same kind. There follows the passage on page 53 about barbarism, which I think Schelling got wrong:

Almost universally the Chinese language is seen as being entirely devoid of grammatical rules. On the basis of this poverty, some have inferred the antiquity of the language, others the barbarity of the nation which speaks it: erroneous conclusions from an assuredly false principle, since the most ancient languages have the most complicated grammar, while the languages of certain primitive peoples, such as the Lapps, teem with rules and difficulties. Additionally, there is nothing more false than the common view that Chinese lacks a grammatical system: the relationships between words, the tenses, persons, are distinguished, to the extent that is necessary, by articles, pronouns, inflections, and verbal prefixes, just as in other languages, and especially by the relative placement of the different parts of the phrase; and although the same terms often serve to represent nouns, adjectives, and verbs, one always distinguishes the parts of the discourse with an ease sufficient to ensure that one is never embarrassed while reading.

Following this, he gives a not very impressive “declension” of Chinese nouns in six cases, using auxiliary particles, but accepts that both here and in the case of verbs the root does not vary. The most common type of combination, where each element possesses a meaning, and the combination possesses a new meaning (like “thoroughfare” in English) he mentions only briefly. Then he gives an example of a third type of polysyllabic word, where essentially meaningless particles are added to another word, for example niu-ren woman, and ge-ge elder brother, mainly so as to distinguish the meaning from other words of a similar sound; demonstrating that in fact the Chinese shun monosyllables. On page 58 we read:

A knowledge of the meaning which each character, taken in isolation, can have in a sentence, is of little help if one does not add the knowledge of the values it acquires as an element in a polysyllabic term; so that a vocabulary of 40,000 words which are only explained by the specific meanings of the monosyllabic radicals, will be, for the purposes of students, greatly inferior to a dictionary of three or four thousand characters where pairs have been taken to make known the new acceptations which the characters can take on when combined in twos or threes.

That is a good piece of advice which even to this day has not been heeded. Rémusat then prints a
passage in Chinese next to its translation into Latin, showing that the number of polysyllabic words is about the same. Finally he remarks that “certain systematic philologists” wished to construct systems without having sufficiently examined the facts on which they are basing them. All this is correct, and as far as the compound words are concerned has been confirmed to me by a Chinese of the present day, who pointed out that some combinations of syllables are familiar and accepted as words, whereas others are inadmissible or meaningless. Whether or not there is a history of “meaning” (defined as) adhering to single characters (as opposed to to words) I had better leave to a native speaker. I have the impression that Schelling did not read this piece very carefully. An interesting recent book which describes the situation in greater detail is The Chinese Language, Fact and Fantasy by John DeFrancis, published in 1984. One chapter of this is entitled “the monosyllabic myth,” and the argument therein follows broadly the same lines as that of Rémusat.

CLXXXVI Valentin Ernst Löscher, 1673-1749, German Protestant theologian. He was among the last significant representatives of Lutheran orthodoxy, and opposed Pietism, Christian Wolff, etc. He wrote on many subjects and composed a number of hymns. De causis linguæ Ebraææ (On the Origins of the Hebrew Language), in three volumes, was first published in 1706.

CLXXXVII This means to be fond of, or be well pleased with.

CLXXXVIII There is one clear error here, which is that the passage is on page eleven (xi), not, as Schelling has it, page two (presumably 11 was confused with ii somewhere). I have corrected this. Schelling omitted some of Creuzer’s words, which point out that he is upholding his proposition in friendly opposition to Hermann and a von Ouwaroff who attempted to mediate. And Es ist die Grundlehre (there exists the fundamental doctrine) is quite different from Schelling’s Er ist die Grundlage (it is the foundation). Also anfänglichen reinen (initial pure) not anfänglich reineren (initially purer); Erkenntniss und Verehrung, not the other way around; and zu dem not zum. The emphasis is all Schelling’s. I have translated Schelling’s version, but here is a translation of the original:

But I stand by my principal proposition through all its implications in opposition to the man [Hermann], and the mediator has also spoken for it. There exists the fundamental doctrine of an initial pure knowledge and worship of one God, to which religion all that come later are related as are fitful and faded rays to the full outpouring of the sun’s light.

In regard to Pallas, Alan White, in his book Schelling, An Introduction to the System of Freedom (page 80), says that Schelling predicted the existence and the orbit of this asteroid, the second largest.

CXXXIX Schelling’s contrast is simply between the two words einseitig (meaning “one-sided”) and allseitig (meaning “universal,” but literally “all-sided”). In the translation I have put “all-sided or universal” for allseitig because only thus could I retain the contrast with the one-sided. Without this, the sentence could be translated as “For a judgement is passed in every case only on the relatively-true and the one-sided which is taken as universal.”

CX The vital, and, as this phrase implies, inevitable, association between understanding and pleasure. (What is satisfied, in the pleasure, would be a sense of importance. And as everyone knows, a certain amount of preparatory effort or education, unpleasant in itself but not in the anticipation, is always required before the advent of the pleasure.)
This Latin word simply means “act” or “action.” In Schelling’s text it is usually printed in Roman letters to indicate that it is Latin; occasionally, though, it is treated as a normal German word, and there I have rendered it as “act.”

The two verses read as follows in the AV:

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Latin “in an undistinguished way,” “unclearly.”

This accords with my own philosophy: the name is redefined each time it is applied, taking into account all the predicates for that object, all the predicates which we bring to a point, relating them together, in memory. (To achieve this bringing to a point or relating, we relinquish everything fixed and take a blind leap, and our faith (or is it still knowledge?—knowledge of the absence of knowledge?) that the new state or knowledge will be achieved relies on a sense of importance. This in turn is more æsthetic than anything else.)

In the AV:

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

This too is important in my philosophy of definition. The name is generated by the need. That is the reason we don’t know everything at once, but have a history.

In the AV “This is the book of the generations of Adam.” The NIV has “This is the written account of Adam’s line.”

The emphasis is Schelling’s. He also omits a phrase; the AV reads: “. . . and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.” The NIV has “. . . he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.”

Ge. 6:4. AV:

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

The NIV doesn’t say “giants,” but “Nephilim,” with no further explanation (thus no mention of the giants):

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterwards—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.
According to the *Encyclopædia Judaica*, the Nephilim were a race of giants said to have dwelt in pre-Israelite Canaan, and were either fallen angels or their children.

The AV says “put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.” Similarly the NIV. Despite a superficial difference between this and what Schelling says, the underlying meaning probably amounts to the same.

Here the AV has “and provoke me and break my covenant.” The NIV “rejecting me and breaking my covenant.”

As always, I am translating Schelling’s version. The AV in fact itself uses the word “imagination”:

... for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware.

The NIV, less imaginatively, has:

I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath.

Here the AV says “and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” The NIV, interestingly, says “and understands every motive behind the thoughts.” The emphasis is Schelling’s.

The AV:

O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.

The NIV:

O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people for ever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.

Johann David Michaelis, 1717-91, German theologian and orientalist. He was the first to use oriental languages as the basis of a comparative study of the *Old Testament*, not only that, he was also, posthumously, one of Schelling’s fathers-in-law. (Schelling married the woman in question in 1803, after dalliance with her daughter. In 1809 she died, and Schelling wrote *Clara oder über den Zusammenhang der Natur mit der Geisterwelt* (Clara, or concerning the relationship between Nature and the spirit-world), a fragment full of speculation about immortality. Then he remarried (definitely in 1812, as is shown by his correspondence with Cotta, although some references say 1810), and fathered three male children—all of whom, in the opinion of Platen, were as extraordinary as Schelling himself—together with three female.) There are five volumes of *Commentationes* listed by Michaelis; I do not know which volume contains the commentary on Ge. 6:2.
ccvii Ge. 6:9. In Luther’s German “without change” is “ohne Wandel.” The AV has “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” The NIV has something completely different again: “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.”

ccviii In the AV:

And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

ccix Schelling says Resultat, which really does mean “result” in German, but “outcome” seems to me to fit better here.

ccx My text says: “Sicht man, welche Gottheiten diese mit der vertilgenden Fluth in Verbindung bringt, so sind es durchaus spätere Gottheiten.” As the verb bringt (brings) is definitely singular, this can only mean “If one looks at which deities this account associates with the devastating Flood, then it is invariably later deities.” As seems clear from the following sentences, though, the subject is the traditions of other societies, not the Mosaic account. So I have taken the liberty of substituting jede (each one) for diese (this).

ccxi This is not the ancient town at Pamukkale in Phrygia (in the western part of present-day Turkey), but another which bore that name in Syria, on the high road from Antioch to Mesopotamia, at the town now called Manbij. Hierapolis, “the sacred city,” was an ephemeral Greek appellation; in ancient times the Syrians called the place Mabhog and Bambuki (Bambyce). Derceto was known under several other names, including “Astarte” and “Atargatis.” Lucian’s detailed account is in his Goddess of Syria, c. 10 ff. In A. M. Harmon’s translation, still in fourteenth-century style, the part about this hole (c. 12-13) goes:

But of that that sewede [followed the Flood], men of the Holy Cytee tellen a tale that is worthy of grete merveylle, how that in here londe opnede a huge hole and receyvede alle the water; and whan this happed, Deucalioun leet maken awteres [altars] and leet bylden over the hole a temple halowed to Iuno. I saughe the hole, that is benethe the temple, a right lityl oon. If whilom it was grete and now is become suche as it is, I wot neer, but that I saughe is smal.

The temple had two enormous phalli, one on each side of the door; and the eunuch priests offered the worshippers services of a kind other than strictly religious. In 1068 the city was captured by the emperor Romanus Diogenes, resisting the Turks. In 1861 (Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography) there were still the scattered ruins of an acropolis and two temples. But according to the modern Guide Bleu, nothing now remains of the ancient town, the temple, or the maw, save the fortifications that surrounded them.

ccxii Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller, 1768-1835, German orientalist and theologian. To an extensive erudition he added an indefatigable energy. He contributed much to the exegesis of the Old Testament. The full title of this book, published in six volumes between 1817 and 1820, reads: Das alte und neue Morgenland, oder Erklär. d. heil. Schrift aus d. natür. Beschaffenheit, den
Sagen, Sitten u. Gebraüchen d. Morgenlandes mit eingeschalteter Uebersetzung von Sam. Burders morgenländ. Sitten u. Will. Ward's Erläuter. d. heil. Schrift aus d. Sitten u. Gebraüchen d. Hindus (“The Ancient and Modern East, or Interpretations of the holy Bible through the natural qualities, legends, customs and traditions of the East, with the addition of a translation of Samuel Burder’s Oriental Customs and William Ward’s Illustration of the Sacred Scriptures through the Customs and Traditions of the Hindus”). This title is curious, by the way, because Samuel Burder’s (1773-1837) book, published in 1802, is called “Oriental Customs: or, An Illustration of the Sacred Scriptures,” whereas William Ward’s (1769-1823), published in Serampore in 1811, is called “Account of the writings, religion, and manners of the Hindoos, including translations from their principal works.” On the face of it, the bit about the illustration has been transposed from one work to the other.

Friedrich Leopold, Reichsgraf zu Stolberg-Stolberg, 1750-1819, was a German man of letters. The German title of the interesting work cited is Geschichte der Religion Jesu Christi, and it was published in fifteen volumes from 1806 to 1818. In early life he passionately supported free ideals, but was later converted to Catholicism, which led to a break with his friend J. H. Voss (see my note to page 69), who sharply attacked him in an essay called “How did Fritz Stolberg become an Unfree Person?” The following is the passage on page 394 to which Schelling refers:

The Chinese, like almost all societies, possess the tradition of the long life of the men of the primal time. And the same for the fall of the angel and the flood.

One of their holy books, the I Ching, says of the dragon: “he groans over his pride.” And: “Pride blinded him, when he wanted to rise into the heavens and he fell down into the bosom of the Earth.”

[**Punctuation sic.**]

The Brahmins have the same conception of Mahasur [Mahesasura], the chief of the evil spirits.

It is known that the Chinese have no true letters, but signs, the number of which reaches 80,000. The sign for a tower means *go away, depart, a son who leaves his father.* How that points, does it not, to the tower of Babel!

This looks like wishful thinking; I have examined the I Ching, and find no reference to pride either in its very compressed original statements or in the various commentaries. Nor does either of the two common characters for “tower” have the additional meanings mentioned, although “three towers” can mean “vagina.”

**ccxiii** Actually the first two references I looked up said that Oannes emerged “from the Persian Gulf” and “from the sea.” Compare the two rather odd references to the Euphrates later in this lecture (pages 157 and 166).

**ccxiv** Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, 1752-1827, German Protestant theologian, introduced the concept of “myth” into biblical research. He was the editor of the *Repertorium für biblische un morgenländische litteratur* (“Repertory of Biblical and Eastern Literature”), published in eighteen parts from 1777 to 1786. (This was immediately followed by a further ten volumes of the “Universal Library of Biblical Literature.”)

**ccxv** In this passage, and in all others where the word “tents” occurs (taken from the AV), Schelling
has Hütte, “huts.” I think it is much more likely to have been tents in which they lived.

**ccxxvi** The AV says “wives,” not “fathers”:

Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters.

The NIV also says “wives.” In fact even Luther says “wives” (Weiber), so Schelling or his editors made a slip.

**ccxxvii** There is an edition (Loeb) of Diodorus in twelve volumes, the last of which contains an extensive index, but these Katatharen (Schelling’s word in German) are not listed in it, nor are they listed in a German edition edited by Dindorf, nor in a Latin edition, nor even in the very extensive indexes of the Heyne edition. (There is a Greek verb καταθαρρέω meaning “behave boldly against.”)

**ccxxviii** das Menscheneschlecht kann nicht an den ersten Gott gebunden bleiben, der nicht der falsche, aber doch auch nicht der schlechtthin wahre—der Gott in seiner Wahrheit ist, von dem es also befreit werden muss, um zur Anbetung Gottes in seiner Wahrheit zu gelangen. This is not well expressed, and a second reading would be: “not God in his truth, that is, from whom (from God in his truth) they must therefore be liberated.” It doesn’t fit the meaning as I read it, but may be worth noting.

**ccxxix** Here, and in all subsequent occurrences, Schelling’s word is Abrahamiden, which could I suppose be translated as “Abrahamites,” but in English that is not very common, and not quite the same.

**ccxxviii** For Gesenius, please refer to my note to page 109. His Geschichte der hebräischen Sprache und Schrift. Eine philologisch-historische Einleitung in die Sprachlehren und Wörterbücher der hebräischen Sprache (History of the Hebrew Language and Script. A philological-historical Introduction to the Primers and Dictionaries of this Language) was published in 1815. Actually it is page nine on which the passage about the contrast with the nations begins. I have translated part of this, and also a further passage, which does indeed appear on page eleven, but states two different points (Dorus and Ion, and coming across the Euphrates) to which Schelling refers later in his paragraph:

On the distinction between the names “Hebrew” and “Israeite,” the following is at once apparent: a) in the writings of the Hebrews themselves this name is used principally only in contrast to other nations of different descent, for example Egyptians and Philistines, or when a non-Hebrew is given a speaking part. b) the foreign writers, Greeks and Romans, seem to know only this name and that of the “Jews,” but have no knowledge of the name “Israeites.”

The biblical table of nations (Ge. 10:24-5, 11:14-15) traces the origin of the name (“Hebrew”) back to a progenitor called “Heber,” and “the children of Heber” (10:21), poetically “Heber” (Nu. 24:24), stands for “Hebrews,” which would accordingly be a patronymicum of “Heber.” Simply the spirit of that whole table of nations, in which everywhere the names of nations, cities, and lands are personified, is enough to lead us to take that Eber [sic] not as a historical person, but a mythical one, whose name was only derived from the name of the nation, just as was indubitably the case with Ion, Domus, and
Æolus

How capriciously the asiatics proceeded here is shown by the example of the Arabs, who, when they repeated that genealogy, substituted, in place of “Heber,” a “hud” or “ghud,” which name they abbreviated from “yehud,” “hudd,” coll. the Jews.

What the true origin of the name might be is naturally more difficult to say, but it may probably be assumed to be established that it is in origin an appellativum. By far the most probable derivation is from “Heber” meaning “the land on the other side,” namely on the other side of the Euphrates, and accordingly “Hebrew” means “on the other side,” a name which the Canaanites very aptly gave to the immigrating horde of Abraham, or which they could already have used of them earlier.

This looks odd, because it is not related to anything earlier in the lecture. In fact it refers to Gesenius, mentioned in the footnote (see above). It also anticipates the next sentence, which discusses the meaning of the corresponding verb. The other references to the Euphrates in this lecture are on page 152 (not relevant), on page 153 in the curious case of Oannes (refer to my note there), and in the quotation from Joshua on page 166.

In the German this is Die Verheissungen . . . erhält, “the promises . . . achieves.” The singular verb is probably an error of transcription introduced in the original edition, and never subsequently corrected.

Luther’s word, used by Schelling, is fromm. This can also mean “god-fearing,” “pious,” “meek,” “gentle.” The AV does not use any of these, but calls him “a plain man, dwelling in tents.” The NIV says “Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents.”

Edward Gibbon, 1737-94, English historian. His History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (in six volumes, 1776-88) was controversial in its historical criticism of Christianity. Amongst a good deal else in his tenth chapter he says:

The hasty army of [Suevi] volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and permanent nation, and, as it was composed from so many different tribes, assumed the name of Alemanni, or Allmen, to denote at once their various lineage and their common bravery.

Caracalla was a nickname for the emperor Aurelius Antoninus, who lived from 188 to 217 A.D., and reigned from 196 to 217. The Alemanni were named for the first time in 213, and defeated by Caracalla in that year in what is now West Germany.

Jakob Ludwig Karl Grimm, 1785-1863, German philologist and folklorist. Hard upon the Fairy Tales (written in collaboration with his brother Wilhelm Karl) he wrote a German Grammar (1819-37), in which he formulated the law that bears his name, stating the rules for correspondences between consonants in different Indo-European languages. In 1835 he published a book called German Mythology, and he wrote a good number of shorter pieces about the same subject. The brothers began work on a German dictionary in 1854, and it was completed in 1971 in thirty-three volumes. (Unlike the OED, it is now available in a paperback edition.)

In the original this reads “then either the Alemanni.” I cannot construe this “either,” so I have
left it out. The “or” which follows the dash almost certainly relates to the “whether” near the beginning of the sentence. The “either” (entweder) could have been inserted by a transcriber who did not look far enough back when he came across the “or.”

CCXXVII Ammianus Marcellinus, born at Antioch about 330 A.D. This is from his History, written in Rome around 390 and covering the period from 353-378. Latin was not his native tongue. The passage is translated by John C. Rolfe:

Hearing therefore that Strasburg, Brumath, Saverne, Seltz, Worms, and Mayence were in the hands of the savages [the “Alamannic horde”], who were living on their lands (for the towns themselves they avoid as if they were tombs surrounded by nets), he [Julianus Caesar] first of all seized Brumath, but while he was still approaching it a band of Germans met him and offered battle.

This is a single-minded and frightening book.

CCXXVIII In German, besondert oder abgesondert.

CCXXIX This is rather like Newtonian (rather than contemporary) theories of gravity, which Schelling describes as having an “immaterial principle,” “metaphysical foundations,” in the 1799 Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie (Initial Outline of a System of Nature-Philosophy), [I 3, 100]:

The operation of the attractive force at a distance can indeed diminish infinitely, but never wholly disappear. Its operation extends thus to every part of matter throughout the entire universe into the infinite.

The universal operation of the attractive force, which that force exerts on every particle of matter into the infinite, is gravitation, and the action of the attractive force in a specific direction is called “weight.”

Schelling doesn’t wholly refute this, but his own gravity is more complicated, like this from the Stuttgart Private Lectures, [I 7, 447]:

Gravity, which compels and binds everything. Gravity in Nature, the night, the dark principle, eternally fleeing before the light, but through this its flight, giving support and continued existence to the creations of light. (Were there not something wholly opposed to light and thought, something which nothing grasps, then there would be no creation at all, everything would be dissolved in pure thoughts.)

This truth, that understanding is possible only in the context of the whole, is referred to several times later in the work (particularly in the rather cantankerous footnote on page 174), and throughout lectures nine and ten.

CCXXX Now my small Latin dictionary just says “intricately” for this, and even the large Oxford Latin Dictionary only says “in a complicated or confused manner,” but I do not believe this is Schelling’s meaning. There is a corresponding verb implico which means “infold” as well as “entangle,” and I believe the first is what he is getting at. Compare my note at the end of page 17, about Schelling’s term Einwicklung, “enfoldment.” (It is just possible that the German tradition interprets Latin in a
Again (compare the note to page 147 above), this philosophy of receptivity and need may explain why we do not know everything at once, and why history advances at the slow and even boring rate it does. It might also give us some information about the future.

Schelling says “gods,” but the AV says “when God caused me to wander from my father’s house.” The NIV translators had the same impression: “And when God had me wander from my father’s household.” This is an important difference, but there is something in Schelling’s suggestion about the idolatry gaining popularity which uncharacteristically does not ring true. (Of course he makes allowance for this sort of thing in his first parenthesis on page 252.)

A plural of magnitude, which designates a single but large thing. Gottlob Christian Storr, 1746-1805, was a German Protestant theologian; an advocate of a biblical-apologetic supernaturalism, according to Meyer’s Lexikon. When Schelling began his specialized theological studies in 1792, he attended Storr’s lectures. The Observationes ad analogiam et syntaxin hebraicam pertinentes (Observations on Hebrew Grammar and Syntax) were published in 1779. draco sed grandis means “a serpent and what is more a large one”; altitudo, sed grandis means “high, but large.”

Was stupefied, was thunderstruck.

Knowledge requires or means naming of distinctions. This is very clearly stated here, and implied (through its use) in many other parts of this work. I see these distinctions as new ones, new definitions.

sic.

Because of the ambiguity of the reference of the relative pronoun, there is another possible reading: “. . . the ground must remain for the manifestation of the first god, in which ground alone . . .”

Somewhat obscure, this passage in German reads: “die Zeit, in der sie sich findet, so wie sie sich findet, die ihr nicht geworden . . . ist.” Perhaps it could be put “the time in which they exist in the way that (or as) they exist, the time which did not come to be for them.” A third reading would be “the time in which they exist in the way that those exist who did not come to be for them.” But my interpretation would seem to be borne out by a slightly different version on page 182. For a further remark about olam see page 235.

Luther’s German is die das älteste Volk gewesen sind. The AV says simply “it is an ancient nation”; the italicized is indicates a word which was not in the original Greek. The NIV says “an ancient and enduring nation,” without a verb.

Ge. 6:4. See my note to page 149.

The AV says “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time.” The NIV puts it “Long ago your forefathers . . . lived beyond the River and worshipped other gods,” but it adds a
note stating that the river was the Euphrates.

CCXLII Der unvordenkliche Gott, in German. Literally “un-fore-thinkable,” this word is usually translated as “immemorial” and refers to something “before which nothing can be thought.” It is also used on page 245. I have included this note because Vincent McCarthy, in his Quest for a Philosophical Jesus, pages 174 and 189, takes unvordenkliche to mean, when applied to revelation, “unthinkable in advance of its occurrence.”

CCXLIII This is not quite what the AV says:

Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell.

The NIV says:

Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living.

Schelling’s “for him” does not make it clear that the wife is intended for Abraham’s son. Luther actually says:

... and swear to me by the lord the God of the heaven and of the earth that you will take no wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I am living.

Incidentally, the translators of both the AV and the NIV have not dared to give a true translation: “put your hand under my thigh” is a euphemism, intentionally misleading, and a correct rendering of this “phallic oath” would be “please take hold of my penis.” It is a remarkable and insidiously pernicious force which prevents them from rendering it thus after such a length of time. Perhaps, after almost two millenia, that force is finally being defeated.

CCXLIV What the AV in fact says (see above) may on the face of it refer to two or even three gods, although it is admittedly not intended that way.

A mysterious Phoenician, who is supposed to have written the mythical history of his country. Philo of Byblos (64-141 A.D.) claimed to have translated this work into Greek, and fragments of this translation of the Phoenician History are found in the first book of Eusebius’s (see note to page 102) De Preparatione Evangelica (On that which Paved the Way for Christianity). Discoveries in Syria of documents from around the fourteenth century B.C. have proved that Sanchuniathon existed. The most widely held view is that he lived before the Trojan War, in the fourteenth or thirteenth century B.C. Others say the seventh century, and Robert Graves, writing in 1963, says he was born in Berytus (now Beirut) in the fourth to third century B.C. In the Philosophy of Mythology [II 2, 312] Schelling says that it is clear from the fragments in Eusebius that either Sanchuniathon himself, or his “interpreter” (probably not a literal translator), endeavoured to give all the Phoenician mythological ideas a euhemeristic form, to present the gods and their activities as ordinary historical human beings
and events. The mythological facts would thus have been corrupted, but the fragments are mostly of such a nature as shows that they cannot be regarded merely as literary efforts, says Schelling. “This name” refers to El Elioun (in German El Eljon), not Melchizedek. The Right Reverend R. Cumberland, DD, did a translation of these fragments, posthumously published in London in 1721, and it too has very much the appearance of an “interpretation” in the sense above. (Cumberland’s “desire was to make every body easy, and to do ’em good.” But this desire, much the same as Cudworth’s, but expressed on a smaller canvas, by no means extended to “Popery and Idolatry,” unless his “good” was their “bad” (definition again). He considered these fragments to be the oldest account of the “original of Idolatry.”) In his notes to the dissertation On the Samothracian Deities, Schelling says (on page [I 8, 398]):

So after Sanchuniathon has spoken of the Corybantes and Cabiri, he continues: “At the time of these there was born a certain Elioun [spelt ’Eljon’ here] with the name of ‘the highest’. . . . Elioun is the real name of the highest god in Genesis 14:18, whose priest is that Melchizedek, emerging miraculously out of the obscurity of primæval time; it is the name of the god who possesses “heaven and earth,” thus of the lord of the universe, of the demiurge. If one may apply here too the remark made pre-eminently by Creuzer, to the effect that the priest represents the god and also probably bears his name, then Melchizedek is the name of the highest god himself . . .

Compare this with Eusebius, De Preparatio Evangelica, Book I, 10, 14-15, quoting Sanchuniathon through Philo:

It is in the epoch of these that there appeared a certain Elioun (Ἐλιοῦμ) called Hypsistos, and a woman called Beyrouth (Βηρούθ), who lived in the region of Byblos. Of their union was born Epigeios Autochthon, who was later called Uranus, and whose name, because of his extreme beauty, was borrowed to designate also the element above us. Of the parents I have indicated, a sister was born for him, who was called Ge, and because of her beauty, the sea was subsequently called by the same name. Their father Hypsistos was deified after he perished in an encounter with wild beasts, and his children offered libations and sacrifices to him.

This verse is quoted earlier, in my note to page 152 about Luther.

An example of the “laggard principle.” This states that even though a discovery may have been made at a certain time, the most significant negative influences on world history are exercised by people to whom, for whatever reason, this discovery has not yet been conveyed. It is the difference between Lancaster and Lancaster Gate. And look at the Empress of China, at the end of the nineteenth century (but in this case she may have been “right”—the definition of the word depends on subsequent history and the history yet to come).—All this is an argument for translation and dissemination.

The AV says “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” And the NIV: “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them,” together with a note that the Hebrew for LORD sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for “I am,” and with a possible alternative reading “and by my name the
LORD did I not let myself be known to them.”

These two quotations certainly sound biblical, but there is nothing exactly corresponding to them in the English versions. The nearest to the first is Isa. 45:5, “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me; I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.” Schelling’s German is closer to Luther’s version of this passage, but still not exactly the same. Schelling, quoting from memory probably, says “ich bin der Herr, und ist kein ander ausser mir,” while Luther has it “ich bin der Herr und ist keiner mehr,” meaning (literally) “I am the Lord and there is no one more.”

This is ambiguous in the original; it could be also interpreted as “even this is a wholly mythological way.”

In German Ich werde seyn der ich seyn werde. It would be less literal to translate this line of Luther as “I shall be that I shall be.” The AV has a significant difference, in that the future tense is lacking

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

The NIV has:

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’.”

This last bit strikes me as rather ridiculous, although it might have been “the I am” meaning “I, the one who is.” The NIV adds an alternative reading: “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE,” which agrees in tense with Schelling’s (Luther’s) version. What Schelling means in this sentence about the name being translated from the third person to the first is that “the one who shall be” is changed to “I, the one who shall be.” (Would it be too simple-minded to suggest that the god said “I am ‘the one who shall be’”? T. S. Gregory, in his introduction to Spinoza’s Ethics, takes “I AM THAT I AM” to mean that God exists from the necessity of his own nature, and is his own cause. Vico, in De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientia, says that God is saying that each and every thing is not in comparison with him. There is a long and important passage about this divine statement in the Philosophy of Mythology itself, pages [II 32-34], where Schelling interprets it in terms of his philosophy of existence, necessity, and freedom; here are two excerpts:

That which shall be, is admittedly for that very reason not yet existing; it is, however, not nothing, and so that itself which exists, considered purely as such, is admittedly not yet something existing but for that very reason not nothing for it is in fact that which shall be. “God is that itself which exists” means, according to what has just been said, the same as God in and for himself, regarded in his pure essence, is merely that which shall be; and here I again call your attention to how, in the most ancient document in which the true god is mentioned, this god gives himself the name “I shall be”; and here it is very natural that the very same god who, when he speaks in the first person, thus of himself, calls himself Ējæh, that is to say “I shall be,” that this god, when it is a question of him in the third person, when another speaks of him, is called Jahwoor Jiwæh, in short, “he shall be” . . .
This ["I shall be the I shall be"] may be translated as "the I wish to be"—I am not that which necessarily exists (in this sense), but am Lord of existence. You will see from this how, simply from the fact that God is stated to be that itself which exists, he is also at once characterized as spirit; for spirit is precisely that which can either exist or not, can either express itself or not, which is not obliged to express itself, like the body (which has no choice about filling its space and is obliged to fill it), while I for example, as spirit, am entirely free to express myself or not, to express myself in one way or another, to express one thing and not something else. You will also see, for that very reason, how a philosophy which goes back to that itself which exists and starts out from that, how this philosophy leads immediately, and simply of its own nature, to a system of freedom, and has freed itself from the necessity which weighs down like an evil spirit on all systems which remain with mere existence and do not raise themselves to that itself which exists, however much they may go on about movement. To go beyond existence, and even to gain a free relationship to it, this is the true endeavour of philosophy. That itself which exists is simply of its own nature also that which is free from existence and in respect to existence, and that itself which exists is all that is important for us. In existence there resides nothing, existence is in every case only an accessory, something being added to that which is.

On a lighter note, possibly, there is extant a scrap in Schelling’s hand (published in 1989 with his Einleitung in die Philosophie ("Introduction to Philosophy")), as follows:

Ich bin der ich war.
Ich bin der ich sein werde.
Ich war der ich sein werde.
Ich werde sein der ich bin

(I am the I was.
I am the I shall be.
I was the I shall be.
I shall be the I am)

In German Jacob is pronounced “Yacob.”

Diodorus Siculus lived around 40 B.C., and wrote in Greek a history of the world from mythical times up to Julius Caesar’s conquest of Gaul. It is an uncritical compilation from the works of earlier writers. Of the forty books of which it consisted, only fifteen now survive. He is one of the important sources of our knowledge of mythology and its supposed origins. The passage Schelling is referring to comes from Book I, 94, 2. In the Loeb edition the word is written as Ἰαὼ. Speaking of the lawgivers who arose in Egypt and established strange customs, Diodorus says (in the translation of C. H. Oldfather):

Thus it is recorded that among the Arians Zathraustes [Zarathustra] claimed that the Good Spirit gave him his laws, among the people known as the Getæ who represent themselves to be immortal Zalmoxis asserted the same of their common goddess Hestia, and among the Jews Moyses referred his laws to the god who is invoked as Iao. They all did this either because they believed that a conception which would help humanity was marvellous and wholly divine, or because they held that the common crowd would be more likely to obey the laws if their gaze were directed towards the majesty and power of
Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius lived in the early fifth century A.D., and was foreign to Italy, possibly African. His *Saturnalia* are a medley taken from writers, Greek and Latin, of all ages, together with a detailed description of the works of Virgil. There is a rather nice little book called *Macrobius or, Philosophy, Science and Letters in the Year 400*, by Thomas Whittaker (Cambridge 1923). On page 24 he says of the *Saturnalia* that “in an oracle of Apollo Clarus [thus named because it was at Claros, near Colophon in Lydia south of Izmir in western Turkey], the same god, Liber [Dionysus], is called *Ἰαώ*, interpreted generally as the highest god, and specifically as the autumnal sun.” The passage is in Book One Chapter 18 of the *Saturnalia*. Macrobius, comparing Apollo, Dionysus, Liber Pater, and the sun, writes (in the translation by Percival Vaughan Davies):

In the line: “The sun, which men also call by name Dionysus,” Orpheus manifestly declares that Liber is the sun, and the meaning here is certainly quite clear; but the following line from the same poet [the mythical Orpheus, to whom these Orphic verses were attributed] is more difficult: “One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus.”

The warrant for this last line rests on an Oracle of Apollo of Claros, wherein yet another name is given to the sun; which is called, within the space of the same sacred verses [no comma sic] by several names, including that of Iao. For when Apollo of Claros was asked who among the gods was to be regarded as the god called Iao, he replied:

“Those who have learned the mysteries should hide the unsearchable secrets, but, if the understanding is small and the mind weak, then ponder this that Iao is the supreme god of all gods; in winter, Hades; at spring’s beginning, Zeus; the Sun in summer; and in autumn, the splendid Iao.”

For the meaning of this oracle and for the explanation, of the deity and his name, which identifies Iao with Liber Pater and the sun, our authority is Cornelius Labeo in his book entitled *On the Oracle of Apollo of Claros*.

The three letters or sounds of Iao have been used, in a similar way to those in the Buddhist AUM, as a formula which concentrates the power of the mind. See for example Crowley’s *Magick in Theory and Practice*, where there is a whole chapter about Iao.

---

CCLIV In Schelling’s German, as printed, the “I have gotten the man the Jehovah” has two accusatives: *ich habe den Mann den Jehovah*, with no comma. In Luther’s *Old Testament* there is a comma: 
*Und Adam erkannte sein Weib Heva, und sie ward schwanger, und gebärd der Cain, und sprach: Ich habe den Mann, den Herrn* (And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she became pregnant, and bore Cain, and said: I have the man, the Lord). In the AV “I have gotten a man from the LORD.” In the NIV “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man,” with two notes saying that “Cain” sounds like the Hebrew for *brought forth or acquired*, and that the passage may read “I have acquired a man.” (It seems that Luther may have made a mistake.)

CCLV In the AV this is rendered “even apparently”:

With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude
of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

The NIV puts it “With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles.”

CCLIII Here the AV does have “face to face”; “And there arose not a prophet since in Isræl like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,” whereas Schelling does not. The NIV has “Since then, no prophet has risen in Isræl like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face . . .” Each of the three versions has a different tense.

CCLIV German gleichartig, “of the same kind.” Schelling uses this interchangeably with homogen. “Homogeneous” means “of uniform nature or character throughout,” but there is a rarer English word, “homogenous,” which means “having a corresponding biological structure or quality due to common descent.” Although this too carries some of Schelling’s meaning, it is something of a technical term in biology, so I have always used “homogeneous.”

CCLV In the Loeb edition of Plato’s Statesman, sections 271E and 272A, there are three differences: 1. ἐνεμεν instead of εὔεμεν, 2. no comma after αὐτοὺς, 3. there are a number of words between ἐπιστατῶν and νέμοντος which Schelling has omitted. The passage is another part of the account of the world in a reverse revolution (refer to the notes for pages 102 and 111), another excerpt from the same speech of the lad known as the stranger from Elaia to Socrates the younger. In context, in the translation by Fowler, and emphasizing the parts Schelling uses, it reads:

But the reason for the story of the spontaneous life of mankind is as follows: God himself was their shepherd, watching over them, just as man, being an animal of different and more divine nature than the rest, now tend the lower species of animals. And under his care there were no states, nor did men possess wives or children; for they all came to life again out of the earth, with no recollection of their former lives.

CCLVI Jn. 4:22.

CCLVII “God is best known in not knowing Him.” From De Ordine, written circa 387, by Augustine (354-430), Latin writer, rather philosophical theologian, Christian bishop and saint, who came from what is now Algeria.

CCLVIII This demand or commandment may be what I call a “sense of importance” under another aspect.

CCLIX Compare the AV, Deu. 6:5. “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Another way I understand these wholes or alls is that there is an imperative to be sincere (and to consider everything which might have some bearing on everything one thinks or does). But any humility that implies is not of the kind which says “I am not able.”

CCLX Ge. 49:18. The AV has the perfect tense: “I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.” The NIV agrees with Schelling: “I look for your deliverance, O LORD.”
CCLXIV In German, zu dem Ersten des Menschengeschlechtes. This could perhaps mean the best thing in the human race.

CCLXV It repays what is due. Compare another use of the word obnoxium in the following profound passage from the second lecture of the Philosophy of Mythology proper, on page [II 2, 37]:

Now, however, it is easy to see that the potence which has become existent in such a way, through direct elevation ex potentia in actum, would be potence no longer, and thus no longer will either, but that which now exists without will and in this sense necessarily; it is the potence set apart from itself, away from itself, which has ceased to be, beyond existence, that which exists: it is indeed, that is, now too that which exists, but in the sense opposite to that in which we called it that itself which exists. There, that is, we thought of it as that which is free of existence, that which is still beyond existence, but here it is that which is encumbered with and seized by existence, that which to that extent is below existence (existentiae obnoxium); it is no longer subject of existence as it was before, but that which exists still merely objectively (just as has always been said and as Fichte already said of the substance of Spinoza, that it is mere object, that is to say that which exists blindly and necessarily)—it is, certainly, that which exists, but taking this word in the sense of the Greek ἐξίσταμαι, from which the Latin existo evidently derives. That which now exists is an Ἐξιστάμενον, something which exists besides itself, no longer in possession of itself, insensible, and necessary in this sense, blindly that is, which has ceased to be the source, within existence, of existence, and becomes blind will-less substance, thus the direct opposite of God, the true un-God, which Spinoza indeed calls causa sui (its own cause), but which in fact has ceased to be causa (cause) and is no longer any more than substance.

CCLXVI In the original text Schelling has der Mensch . . . sie, or “man . . . they,” for which I have substituted “he.”

CCLXVII Compare the similar passage on page 165 and my note there.

CCLXVIII *Natural History of Religion*, page 26. Schelling has abbreviated the original sentence, which may be seen at the beginning of the final paragraph of the following note. Additionally, Hume’s word is “polytheism” but since Schelling’s German version says Vielgötterei I have used “multitheism”; refer to my note to page 121. Schelling is translating the French Polythéisme; I do not think it worthwhile to reproduce his French version of this entire footnote (see below) but the corresponding sentence reads: “Autant que nous pouvons suivre le fil de l’histoire, nous trouvons livre le Genre humain au Polythéisme, et pourrions-nous croire que dans les temps les plus reculés, avant la découverte des arts et des sciences, les principes du pur Théisme eussent prévalu?” Polytheisme is a misprint for Polythéisme which does appear correctly elsewhere in this footnote.

CCLXIX Schelling quotes Hume in French throughout this footnote. Apart from the previous note, all that is worth reproducing of this is the French version of Hume’s “no marks, no symptoms,” which is “on n’y aperçoit plus la moindre trace,” meaning “one no longer sees there the least trace,” and it is after these words that Schelling has inserted his question mark.

CCLXX I have coined a word to correspond to Schelling’s coinage of übergeschichtlicher. (Frederick Bolman, in his translation of *Die Weltalter*, the Ages of the World, used the same word, I now see.)
actu means “through an act.” natura sua means “through (or of) his (or its) own nature.”

In fact it can even be said that we cannot really ask a question to which the answer is not known. One can only reconcile this with page 10 (“If I could take it as truth then I would not have asked how I should take it”) by pointing out that they are different sorts, or rather levels, of question. (I think that the primary level is the one where the answer to a question is stated in the subject of the question.) Compare page 121: “This is the mystery, here lies the problem, but for that very reason the solution too.” Compare also Todorov, quoted in my note to page 106, in respect of symbols: “We begin with the answer, but we go back to the question.”

This double subject (“man . . . he”) is in the original.

“Stand still and think” (in other words, concentrate on a single thing or movement of thought) is an admirable exhortation, but Schelling does not envisage thought in this absence of movement.

German er ist ihm ewig, weil mit seiner Natur geworden. I suppose this could mean “it has come to be eternally for him, because it came to be with his nature.” But I think it is unlikely. (One could simply say “it is eternal for him.”)

In German, nicht von Bewusstseyn des wahren Gottes als solchem (d.h. nicht förmlichem). The “such” refers to the consciousness, not the truth.

That “knowing gives a free relationship” is is a “reason” for being not only scientific (in the sense of understanding or theorizing about what is or will be around us) but creative, a reason for trying to become conscious of everything of which it is possible to become conscious, and by becoming conscious of it incorporating it as distanced past into a future thus even freer.

The word used in both the AV and the NIV is “salvation” (verse 22), but Schelling’s word (Befreiung) definitely means “liberation.” The Greek σωτηρία normally means “deliverance” or “preservation” but does mean “salvation,” however, only in the New Testament. The passage is referred to again on page 249 in lecture ten. Here are verses 22 to 24 in the AV:

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

And in the NIV:

You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

This word, important in this context, is Bestimmung in German. It can be translated as
“determination,” “qualification,” “characterization,” “specification,” “formulation,” “definition,” or “modification.” I was tempted to use this last, but it does not convey the sense in the German of a determination. What is meant is an alteration in consciousness which gives it a more specific character. The word “alteration” in this passage is the same in German, Alteration (one of Schelling’s Romance words). In French this means a change for the worse.

θεόπληκτος [theoplectos] appears in Liddell and Scott as θεόπληκτος and means “stricken of a god” (literally god-struck, since άρκτος [pektos] means “struck,” “beaten”). θεοβλαβής [theoblabes] appears in that dictionary as θεοβλάβης and also means “stricken of a god,” or “infatuated” (affected by a madness sent by the gods); βλάβη [blabe] means “harm,” “damage,” or “mischief.”

Stunned and as if thunderstruck. In Virgil’s eighth Eclogue, stupefactæ means “captivated” or “bemused.” Latin stupor means “numbness” as well as a stunned condition.

In German this clause reads: ob die mythologischen Vorstellungen überhaupt gemeint, nämlich ob sie Gegenstand eines Meinens, d.h. eines freien Fürwahrhaltens, gewesen.

Refer to page 77.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834, English poet, critic, and unsystematic philosopher. The essay may be found in the Literary Remains, volume II, London 1836, on pages 323-359. It is entitled On the Prometheus of Æschylus. Following the title there is the description: “An Essay, preparatory to a series of disquisitions respecting the Egyptian, in connection with the sacerdotal, theology, and in contrast with the mysteries of ancient Greece. Read at the Royal Society of Literature, May 18, 1825.” Coleridge mentions a number of subjects which appear in the present work: for instance South American Indians, Abraham, Abilmelech, Egypt, Mosaic monotheism, Io, Elohim, the derivation of the name “Rhea,” and Providence. I offer five excerpts from the essay. The first, from page 335, illustrates the meaning Coleridge assigns to “myth” and “philosopheme”:

Long before the entire separation of metaphysics from poetry, that is, while yet poesy, in all its several species of verse, music, statuary, &c. continued mythic;—while yet poetry remained the union of the sensuous and the philosophic mind;—the efficient presence of the latter in the synthesis of the two, had manifested itself in the sublime mythus περὶ γενέσεως τοῦ νοῦ ἐν ἀνθρώποις concerning the genesis, or birth of the νοῦς or reason in man. This the most venerable, and perhaps the most ancient, of Graecian myth, is a philosopheme, the very same in subject matter with the earliest record of the Hebrews, but most characteristically different in tone and conception;—for the patriarchal religion, as the antithesis of pantheism, was necessarily personal; and the doctrines of a faith, the first ground of which and the primary enunciation, is the eternal I AM, must be in part historic and must assume the historic form. Hence the Hebrew record is a narrative, and the first instance of the fact is given as the origin of the fact.

Next, how he relates this to tautegory (from page 336)—note that his contrived Greek adjective tautegorikos is not in Liddell and Scott’s Greek dictionary:

In the Greek we see already the dawn of approaching manhood. The substance, the stuff, is philosophy;
the form only is poetry. The Prometheus is a philosophema ταυτηγορικὸν [tautegorikon],—the tree of knowledge of good and evil,—an allegory, a προπαιδευμα ["propædeuma," something for preliminary instruction], though the noblest and the most pregnant of its kind.

Next a passage showing his understanding of German philosophy (pages 343-4):

Now according to the Greek philosopheme or mythus in these [idea and law], or in this identity, there arose a war, schism, or division, that is, a polarization into thesis and antithesis. In consequence of this schism in the τὸ θεϊκόν, the thesis becomes nomos, or law, and the antithesis becomes idea, but so that the nomos is nomos because, and only because, the idea is idea: the nomos is not idea, only because the idea has not become nomos. And this not must be heedfully borne in mind through the whole interpretation of this most profound and pregnant philosopheme. The nomos is essentially idea, but existentially it is idea substants; that is, id quod stat substant is [compare the note to page 50], understanding sensu generalissimo. The idea, which now is no longer idea, has substantiated itself, become real as opposed to idea, and is henceforward, therefore, substants in substantiato. The first product of its energy is the thing itself: ipsa se posuit et jam facta est ens positum. Still, however, its productive energy is not exhausted in this product, but overflows, or is effluent, as the specific forces, properties, faculties, of the product. It reappears, in short, in the body, as the function of the body. As a sufficient illustration, though it cannot be offered as a perfect instance, take the following.

In the world we see everywhere evidences of a unity, which the component parts are so far from explaining, that they necessarily presuppose it as the cause and condition of their existing as those parts, or even of their existing at all. This antecedent unity, or cause and principle of each union, it has since the time of Bacon and Kepler, been customary to call a law.

Now from pages 346-7 his only use of the expression “subject-object”:

On the other hand, idea is so far co-essential with nomos that by its co-existence—(not confluence)—with the nomos ἐν νομίζομενοι (with the organismus and its faculties and functions in the man,) it becomes itself a nomos. But, observe, a nomos autonomos, or containing its law in itself likewise;—even as the nomos produces for its highest product the understanding, so the idea, in its opposition and, of course, its correspondence to the nomos begets in itself an analogon to product and this is self-consciousness. But as the product can never become idea, so neither can the idea (if it is to remain idea) become or generate a distinct product. This analogon of product is to be itself; but were it indeed and substantially a product, it would cease to be self. It would be an object for a subject, not (as it is and must be) an object that is its own subject, and vice versa a conception which, if the uncombining and infusile genius of our language allowed it, might be expressed by the term subject-object. Now, idea, taken in indissoluble connection with this analogon of product is mind, that which knows itself, and the existence of which may be inferred, but cannot appear or become a phenomenon.

Finally, his use of “tautegory” in reference to myths and symbols on page 352:

And here [in the spirit in the history of Christendom as a relic of paganism], too, see the full appropriateness of this part of the mythus in which symbol fades away into allegory, but yet in reference to the working cause, as grounded in humanity, and always existing either actually or
potentially, and thus never ceases wholly to be a symbol or tautegory.

As far as the plagiarism is concerned, there is an article by James Frederick Ferrier in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, volume 47, March 1840, pages 287-299. This goes into great detail and precisely specifies many passages from Schelling (and others) which Coleridge reproduces. “Nineteen full pages, copied almost *verbatim* from the works of the German philosopher.” It shows convincingly, I think:

. . . that one of the most distinguished English authors of the nineteenth century, at the mature age of forty-five, succeeded in founding by far the greater part of his metaphysical reputation—which was very considerable—upon *verbatim* plagiarisms from works written and published by a German youth, when little more than twenty years of age!

(In the same number there is a long article about the war in China and a very early mention of Hong Kong, before the ill-omened treaty.) The article also points out that a poem, even, *To a Cataract*, is copied from *Der Felsenstrom*, written by Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg (see the note to page 152). Ferrier suggests some extenuating circumstances: “we mean his moral and intellectual conformation, originally very peculiar, and further modified by the effects of immoderate opium-taking.” On the other hand, as Schelling says, *he did not mind* this. This would be confirmed, were it necessary, in a letter from Arthur Hugh Clough to the Reverend T. Burbidge (written in 1845 and published in Clough’s *Poems and Prose* of 1869) which says:

Jowett [*Benjamin, aged twenty-seven, the future translator of Plato, in the year he began to lecture on him*] comes hither, having been Stanley’s companion in Germany. They saw Schelling, who spoke to them of Coleridge with high praise, saying that it was an utter shame to talk of his having plagiarised from him, Schelling.

Let me add that, despite his having been accused of obscenity in the first part of his unfinished narrative poem *Christabel*, what I find most distasteful in Coleridge is that in his attitude to Anacreon and Virgil he was a rather sanctimonious prude.

*suum cuique* means “to everyone that which is his,” or “to each his own.”

Schelling does in fact use the word “philosopheme” on several occasions elsewhere in these lectures, for example on page 87. I had thought of translating it as “philosophical statement,” rather than using such an unfamiliar word, but this discussion may indicate that there is a little more to it than that, something akin to “definition” or at least “axiom.”

The German reads *sondern eben die Geschichte selbst ist auch die Lehre*, and it would seem very easy, encouraged by the logic of the “conversely” which follows, to understand the object to precede the subject, making the meaning *but doctrine is also precisely history itself.* But I have let it stand in the original order, and as such it affords an instructive example of the ambiguity of the word “is,” in my mind at least.

On the title page of the first edition of this work the author’s name is spelt *Karl Otfried Müller* with one “t”. Later editions use, like Schelling, two. He lived from 1797 to 1840, and was a celebrated German archaeologist and philologist. His prolegomena are said to emphasize the
fundamental importance and necessity of the symbol in belief and cult. He had “a purity of taste, a talent for exposition, a fineness of judgment, and a variety of knowledge.” His greatest work was the *Geschichte Hellenischer Stämme und Städte* (History of the Hellenic Tribes and City-States), published in three volumes from 1820 to 1824. For a long time he had wished to visit the land whose literature, history, artistic productions, and thought had become so familiar to him. Finally, in 1839, he went there, and flung himself with ardor into archaeological research. His zeal was his undoing because in the heat of July 1840 he was struck down by a fever and expired. A translation by John Leitch of the work from which Schelling quotes was published in London in 1844, under the title *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology*. Not all Schelling’s references to it are in quotation marks, but the following long passage contains all of them, and shows the drift of Müller’s argument. It is from chapter four, entitled “Of the Sources or Origin of the Mythus itself.” (The translations differ from my own, but the passages are readily identifiable. I have not yet been able to compare Müller’s original German.)

... what has been already laid down as to the nature of the mythus in general, applies to it not merely as it was handled by the poets, but holds good of it also in the shape of popular tradition; that the Actual and the Imaginary, the Real and the Ideal, already coexisted even in the original form. There are many who seem to think, on the contrary, that tradition was of an historical nature, and that all sorts of ideas and fancies were blended with it, by the ancient poets, for the purpose of embellishment. They must, then, have made use of the gods as mere machines, in order to give life and interest to their narrations; as was certainly practised at a later, and perhaps also, in many instances, at an earlier, period. But it may be very easily shown, from an examination of the mythi, that the poets were guided by the analogy of those already existing and that, generally speaking, fact and idea, matters of faith and matters of experience, were combined in the mythus, even previously to its poetical modification. That local accuracy, from which we deduced local origin, is also observable even in its ideal constituents, particularly where reference is made to the service of the gods. We know, for example, with certainty, that the fable of HYLAS, the favourite boy of Hercules, who was stolen by the nymphs, and who the hero called for in vain through mountains and valleys, arose from a religious rite which was observed in the neighbourhood of Cios in Bithynia, where a god, who had sunk into the waters, was invoked and bewailed at the fountains amid the hills. For it cannot at all be supposed that this sacred observance had its origin in the fable, especially as the Mariandynians, an aboriginal nation in a remoter part of Asia Minor, practised precisely the same ceremony, and its religious meaning is rendered clear by analogies. Now, if the mythus, then, sprang from the rite, by whom, I ask, was it most likely to have been formed? By the inhabitants of Cios, who themselves heard the lamentations, and would surely be the first to appropriate the tales of the peasantry, and incorporate them with the Hellenic legends of Hercules? or the Laconian poet Cinnaethon, who was probably the first to introduce it into poetry? I think there cannot be a doubt as to the answer. Further, the Ideal is often so closely interwoven, so inseparably connected with the Real, that the mythus must have evidently owed its first existence to their union and reciprocal fusion; and if the Ideal therein should be the work of the poet, we must immediately ascribe to him the Real also. Thirdly, a mythus is often entirely ideal, and contains no history of actual events, although it evidently sprang up in a particular spot, and was formed by the inhabitants of a single district ....

Now, if the peculiar mixture of idea and reality, which forms the characteristic feature of mythology, belongs to the original constitution of the mythus, the question will naturally occur, How can this be reconciled with the fact just established, that it was held to be true, and became an object of faith? “This
Ideal,” some one might say, “is nothing else than poetic fiction and invention, clothed in the narrative form.” But an invention of this kind cannot, without a miracle, be simultaneously made by many individuals; for it would require a peculiar coincidence of design, conception, and execution. “It was surely, therefore, the work of one person.” But how, then, did he convince all others of the reality, the substantiality of his invention? Shall we suppose him to have been an impostor, who contrived to persuade them by all sorts of deceit and illusion—perhaps by forming a confederacy with others of the same stamp with himself, who would testify to the people, that what he had devised was verified by their observation? Or shall we imagine him to have been a more highly-gifted person, a more exalted being, than his countrymen; and that, therefore, they placed reliance on what he said: receiving from him as a sacred revelation those mythi, under which he veiled salutary truths designed for their instruction? But it cannot possibly be proved that such a caste or sect, either of cunning knaves or sublime personages, existed in ancient Greece. Many, indeed, may point at the priests; but they ought first to show that there really was a priesthood so widely separated from the laity, and so strongly contrasted with it, particularly in respect of knowledge. Besides, this artificial system of deception—whether it was clumsy or refined, selfish or philanthropic—is quite at variance with the noble simplicity of those ages, unless the impression made on our minds by the earliest productions of Greek genius be entirely illusory. We come, therefore, to the conclusion, that even a single inventor of a mythus, in the proper sense of the word, is out of the question. But whither does this reasoning lead? Evidently to nothing else than that the idea altogether of invention—that is, of a free and deliberate treatment, by which something, known to be untrue, was clothed in the semblance of truth—must be left out of consideration, as quite inapplicable to the origin of the mythus; or, in other words, that a species of necessity led to that combination of the Real and Imaginary which is observed in the mythus; that its framers were governed by impulses which operated alike on all; that these opposite elements grew up together; and that those who were instrumental to the union, were themselves unconscious of the difference. It is this idea, of a certain necessity and unconsciousness in the formation of the ancient mythi, that we wish to impress. When that is once conceived, it will also be easy to see that the dispute, as to whether the mythus proceeded from one or from many, from the poet or from the people, even where there is otherwise room for it, does not affect the main point. For if one individual,—the relater,—in devising a mythus, only obeys the promptings which act equally on the minds of others,—the listeners,—he is merely the mouth-piece through which they all speak, the skilful exponent who first gives form and expression to what all desire to express. It is possible, however, that the idea of this necessity and unconsciousness may appear dark and even mystical to many of our archæologists: for no other reason than because this tendency to form mythi has nothing analogous in our modern modes of thinking. But ought not history to recognise even what is strange, when we are led to it by dispassionate investigation? Perhaps the subject will be rendered more clear by an example. We shall give the one already quoted from the first book of the Iliad. Let us suppose that the story of CHRYSES was a genuine mythus, a received tradition, and that the possible events contained in it—the rape of the priest’s daughter, and the pestilence among the Greeks—were also real. In that case, it can readily be conceived, that all those who knew the facts, and had faith in Apollo’s power to avenge and punish, would immediately and simultaneously connect them together, and would express their belief, that Apollo sent the pestilence at the prayer of his priest, with as firm a conviction as if it were a thing which they had themselves known and witnessed. Here the myth-forming activity makes but a slight step; but I have chosen this example for that very reason. Perhaps, however, it was in reality greater; for the supposition that everything in this mythus that may be fact is fact, was perfectly gratuitous. In most cases it is far more considerable, and the activity in question more complicated, as more than one circumstance influenced the origin of
the mythus. Thus, to give another example, the mythus of APOLLO and MARSYAS, although by no means one of the oldest, contains two kinds of material blended together.

Note that the interpenetration of the ideal and the real was first mentioned by Schelling himself in the introduction to his early *Outlines of a Philosophy of Nature*.

**CCLXXXVII** In fact Müller’s distinction may be one which does not really exist (except in a more subtle way than usually thought), or one which *should* dissolve.

**CCLXXXVIII** Literally “the thunderbolting legion” (I did not invent this transitive verb, but had it first from a Singaporean, in correspondence). The references I have seen do not use Schelling’s Latin, but call it the *legio fulminata*. They were the twelfth Roman legion, active during the first two centuries A.D. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World* tells us that the legend of the miraculous storm of rain which helped them in the campaign against the Quadi in 172 A.D., if it is not apocryphal, may refer to a vexillation. Larousse is more help in explaining its relationship to Christianity. It says that according to legend (related by Eusebius and others) the name was conferred by Marcus Aurelius (who ruled from 161-180) on a legion formed of Christians, who had been unexpectedly surrounded by the Quadi and were in danger of dying of thirst. In answer to their prayers a storm caused the flight of their enemy, whereupon the emperor was either converted to Christianity, or at least gave an order to stop the persecution of Christians and wrote a letter to the Senate testifying to what had happened. Mosheim, however, showed convincingly that the story was false, because 1. There never was a Roman legion composed entirely of Christians. 2. The legion had this name long before Marcus Aurelius, who in fact attributed the victory to the god Jupiter Pluvius. 3. The claims about the letter and the order do not correspond to the fact that the Christians continued to be persecuted under his rule.

**CCLXXXIX** Another reading would be “the myths, which arise only when a historical fact is associated with a deity.” This would mean that the philosophy relates to no myths at all, whereas my reading means that it relates to some of them.

**CCXC** The active subject. This use of “subject” in opposition to “object” dates only from the end of the eighteenth century; it derives from the logical term for the part of a sentence denoting that of which something is predicated, and was transposed thence to the mind as the subject in which ideas inhere. Before that the word had had the other, more fundamental meaning (from which the logical one arose) of something subject to an action, or something of an inferior status.

**CCXCI** This is one of the best examples of where it might be possible to translate *Bewusstsein* as “mind.” Then the passage would read: “seeking the idea, the seat, the *subjectum agens* of mythology in the human mind itself. This idea of putting the human mind itself in the place of inventors, poets, or individuals in general . . .” But I have stayed with “consciousness” because it is slightly more specific, and fits in with other references to *Bewusstsein*. *Geist*, too, has on occasion been translated as “mind” by others. But I have consistently translated it as “spirit.”

**CCXCII** A proverbial expression literally meaning “say why you are here,” in other words “consider the purpose of your being here,” or “justify your presence.” I find the logic of this whole sentence difficult to follow, beginning with the “good fortune.” And it is not clear whether Schelling thinks that
having fought for one’s country means that one can keep the rights to one’s original work or the reverse. When Platen (see my note at the end of page 242) was called up for military service, Schelling advised him to get a doctor’s certificate, and also wrote to the crown prince in a successful attempt to get the military service deferred. I think that both fighting and countries are bad things and should be abolished, but one goes through life being told that this is “Utopian.”

CCXCIII (Schelling’s word is Sujet, which means the subject or theme of a work of art or literature.) In Goethe’s autobiography Aus mein Leben—Dichtung und Wahrheit (“From my Life—Fact and Fiction,” published in 1811-14), the passage in question is probably the following from part two, book seven. There is, however, an earlier passage, in part one book five, about the misuse of a love-letter he wrote, and a later long one, in part four, book sixteen, which goes into much more detail about a reprint one Christian Friedrich Himburg made of his poems. The difficulty is that there is no single passage which mentions an acquaintance of his youth, the motif not really worth begrudging, and the right to one’s own productions. Anyway I shall quote the following, as it contains two of these three points. The translation is by John Oxenford:

However Horn, who had performed the Harlequin very prettily, took it into his head to enlarge my poem to Hendel by several verses, and then to make it refer to “Medon.” He read it to us but we could not take any pleasure in it, for we did not find the additions even ingenious; while the first poem, being written for quite a different purpose, seemed to us disfigured. Our friend, displeased with our indifference, or rather censure, may have shown it to others, who found it new and amusing. Copies were now made of it, to which the reputation of Clodius’s “Medon” gave at once a rapid publicity. Universal disapproval was the consequence, and the originators (it was soon found out that the poem had proceeded from our clique) were severally censured . . .

CCXCIV Emphatically = nachdrücklich; reprinting = Nachdruck. In writing this passage Schelling undoubtedly had in mind the case in which he himself was involved. A “rationalist,” Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761-1851), published in 1843 the pirated text of the as yet unpublished lectures on the philosophy of revelation which Schelling had given in 1841-2. Paulus added an ironic and polemical introduction and commentary. The full title of this book is “The positive philosophy of revelation, finally revealed; or, the history of the origin, literal text, assessment, and rectification, of Von Schelling’s discoveries concerning philosophy in general, mythology and revelation of dogmatic Christianity, in the Berlin university winter term 1841-42.” It has 803 pages. It was not the first time he had done this with Schelling’s lectures. Schelling took the old nuisance to court but was only partially successful.

CCXCV sic vos non vobis means “like this you are not your own man.” sic reedit ad dominum, quod fuit ante suum means “so he returns to the lord that which existed before him.”

CCXCVI German unwillkürlichen, which is the same word that is used in the previous paragraph. In modern usage, the element of volition in the word “spontaneous” is fading, and to the extent that it is coming to mean its opposite it might even have been possible to use it here. But not just yet, I decided. Refer also to my note to page 222.

CCXCVII The original is ambiguous: “the principles establishing and constituting it itself,” where, on the
face of it, “it” could refer either to consciousness or to the process. But refer to page 215, at “Consider the following.”

CCCVIII This is an interesting “thus,” implying that the forces which bring these ideas into being are of such a nature that when they are represented as the object of those ideas they are represented as a cause of a kind which becomes the object of the representation. Note that it is not said of ideas in general.

CCCVIX In German, the words for “ideas,” “representations,” and “imagine” all have the same root: *vorstellen*, and the idea in that is something like “set up in front of,” specifically in the mind.

CCC With a stroke and through an act.

CCCI The passage could be interpreted as a definition, in terms of each other, of the terms “actual,” “existence,” “understand,” and “objective.”

CCCV This could also be translated “all,” which is God. This would not fit in with “God is all” a few lines later, but it might fit better with the phrase a few lines previously, if that is translated “what can exist which would not be God.” In fact it probably does not make a lot of difference, since the relationship expressed is one of identity with all.

CCCVII This is a good statement of how the truth and falsity of a statement are defined by the context.

CCCVIII In these three phases time would appear to play a part; God is not, it would seem, everything at the same time. But it is not like that; they are not within time, they *form* time. There is a lot more about this in the *Philosophy of Mythology* and, of course, the *Philosophy of Revelation*. By the way, the original has the emphasis on “as” alone, which I think is odd, so I have also emphasized “spirit.”

CCCVII There are whole schools of philosophy (English-speaking, mostly) which this remark would serve to demolish. But they have reasons other than philosophical behind their unpleasant devices.

CCCVII These are Schelling’s own words. In “esoteric” he means a mode of communication, or a type of relationship, which requires some “initiation” or “granting.” An “exoteric” religion is suitable for, or even adapted for, the outer circle, and an “esoteric” only for the inner. There is a lot more about these terms in some of Schelling’s earlier works, for example in the *Lectures on the Method of Academic Study* of 1803, pages [I 5, 293ff].

CCCVII In that it is no longer understood, it has become rigid, fixed, inflexible. Like a fixed personality or mask, there is no life or purpose or even meaning in a restatement of ideas formed earlier and not reconsidered or re-evaluated. Compare Schelling on page 3.

As far as superstition is concerned, the Collins dictionary has it deriving from Latin *superstitio*, dread of the supernatural, from *superstare*, to stand still by something (as in amazement). The OED says “The etymological meaning of the Latin *superstitio* is perhaps ‘standing over a thing in amazement or awe.’ Other interpretations of the literal meaning (to stand upon or over) have been proposed, e.g. ‘excess in devotion, over-scrupulousness or over-ceremoniousness in religion’ and the *survival* of old
religious habits in the midst of a new order of things; but such ideas are foreign to ancient Roman thought.” Cicero, in *The Nature of the Gods* (II, 72), says it originated from *superstes*, a survivor, because people prayed and sacrificed all day long so that their children might live to survive them.

\[cccviii\] *The Roman Questions* of Plutarch (Greek biographer and moral philosopher, c.46-c.120 A.D.), sections 276F and 277A. The emphasis is Schelling’s. In the Loeb edition there are a number of differences: 1. πραιστίτεις not πραιστίτας, and with quotation marks around it. 2. πραιστίτεις not πραιστίτης. 3. the parentheses are absent; there is just an additional comma instead of the opening parenthesis. 4. ἐνιόι not ἐνι. 5. no semi-colon after ἐστι. 6. no commas after φιλόσοφοι and ἐξιχνεῦσαι. 7. καί after χρῶνται, with a note “added by Bernardakis.” 8. ἀνθρώπους followed by a comma, not by “.”. 9. ἐρινυώδεις, not ἐριννυώδεις. 10. οἴκων followed by a semi-colon, not by “.”. 11. κυνῶν instead of νῦν. The translation by Frank Cole Babbitt is:

Why is a dog placed beside the Lares that men call by the special name of *præstites*, and why are the Lares themselves clad in dog-skins?

Is it because “those that stand before” are termed *præstites* and, also because it is fitting that those who stand before a house should be its guardians, terrifying to strangers, but gentle and mild to the inmates, even as a dog is?

Or is the truth rather, as some Romans affirm, that, just as the philosophic school of Chrysippus think that evil spirits stalk about whom the gods use as executioners and avengers upon unholy and unjust men, even so the Lares are spirits of punishment like the Furies and supervisors of men’s lives and houses? Wherefore they are clothed in the skins of dogs and have a dog as their attendant, in the belief that they are skilful in tracking down and following up evil-doers.

Ovid says the following, in his *Fasti* (Calendar), Book Five, lines 129-42 (translated by Sir James George Frazer):

The Calends of May witnessed the foundation of an altar to the Guardian Lares [*præstibus Laibus—præstibus meaning “standing before”*], together with small images of the gods. Curius indeed had vowed them, but length of time destroys many things, and age prolonged wears out a stone. The reason for the epithet [*præstites*] applied to them is that they guard all things by their eyes. They also stand for us, and preside over the city walls, and they are present and bring us aid. But a dog, carved out of the same stone, used to stand before their feet. What was the reason for its standing with the Lar? Both guard the house: both are faithful to their master: cross-roads are dear to the god, cross-roads are dear to dogs the Lar and Diana’s pack give chase to thieves; and wakeful are the Lares, and wakeful too are dogs.

Janus Gruter or Gruytère, 1560-1627, researcher in ancient philology, was born in Antwerp but went to Heidelberg, where he published editions of Latin classics and, in collaboration with Joseph Scaliger, these *Inscriptiones antiquæ totius orbis romani* (Ancient Inscriptions of the Whole Roman World) in 1602. *Jovi præstiti* means “to presiding Jupiter.”

\[cccix\] The German word vorstehender could mean prominent instead of presiding, but refer to the previous note about *præstites*.

\[ccc\] In German this is *die Natur wirken*, literally either “effect” Nature or (an alternative reading)

As yet I have not been able to identify this book or the author with certainty. The most promising candidate is *Über das Gemeine Reichs- u. Fürstl. Taxische Postwesen, gegen Pütter in Göttingen* (On the Joint Postal Entity for the Empire and the Principality of Taxis, in opposition to Pütter in Göttingen) published in Leipzig in 1793. Note that the Principality of Thurn and Taxis had the responsibility for the postal service throughout Germany in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Johann Stephan Pütter himself (1725-1807) is said to have had an obsession with the rational ordering of the most unlikely subjects, and was critical of some of the German princelings, but his *Empfehlung einer vernünftigen neuen Mode teutscher Aufschriften auf teutschen Briefen* (Recommendation for a rational new style for German addresses on German letters), of 1775, was too early to take into account the Kantian categories (which first saw the light in 1781). It is interesting that even to this day the Germans are daft about addresses, particularly foreign ones; they are incapable of simply copying what they see, but try to conform them to their system, and the result is at least half the time simply inadequate and wrong. No doubt this is what Jones, quoted in my note to page 88, meant by a “systematical spirit.” Another example of an odd philosophy which Schelling might have mentioned is the book *Philosophie Zoologique* (zoological philosophy) published in 1809 by Jean Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet, Chevalier de Lamarck, 1744-1829, the French naturalist who opposed Cuvier.

Antoine-François de Fourcroy, 1755-1809, French chemist and statesman. He supported the antiphlogistic system of A. L. Lavoisier. His *Philosophie chimique, ou Vérités fondamentales de la chimie moderne, disposées dans un nouvel ordre* (Chemical philosophy, or fundamental truths of modern chemistry, arranged in a new sequence) was published in 1792. (There is a long description of it, and his reasons for thinking it a philosophy, in the first Larousse encyclopedia—volume 12, page 835, under *Philosophie Chimique*.) In his introduction Fourcroy says:

The particular aims of chemical philosophy are:

1. To apply the general theory of chemistry to the phenomena of nature and the operations of the arts, the cause and the effects of which fall entirely within the province of this science.

2. To make evident the relationships which exist between these phenomena, and the reciprocal influence which they exert on one another; one should consider this genre of philosophy as embracing the totality of the greatest truths which chemistry has discovered.

But, in order to conceive this totality of the greatest truths of chemistry, in order to grasp how they fit together and are connected, in order properly to understand the statements intended to describe them, especially when it is assumed that those who wish to become familiar with them are encountering chemistry for the first time, it is indispensable that they are preceded by an exposition of the first principles of the science, or of the elementary ideas on which their foundations rest.

Note that Schelling does not object to the conjunction of the concepts of philosophy and chemistry; in fact in this passage he is referring back to his early *Outlines of a Philosophy of Nature*, of which the seventh chapter bears the title, “Philosophy of Chemistry in General.”

In German this is ambiguous: *die vorausgesetzte Allgemeinheit nur noch eine illusorische seyn würde.* It could also be translated as “the presupposed universality would still only be an illusory one.”
“We don’t want to be free.” Joseph II (1741-90) was a Holy Roman emperor from 1765 to 1790. He ruled Austria jointly with his mother, Maria Theresa, until her death in 1780.

The German word which I have translated as “wonder” is Erstaunen. This would normally be rendered as “astonishment,” but Schelling himself explains [II 4, 12] that for him it corresponds to the Greek τὸ θαυμάζειν [to thaumazein], which does mean “wonder” or “marvel.” The following is from Plato’s Theaetetus, 155D, in the translation by John Warrington. Socrates is talking to Theaetetus, a young lad of abnormal intelligence, uncommon gentleness, and exceptional virility, who has a snub nose and protruding eyes like a younger version of Socrates himself.

SOCRATES: You doubtless follow me, Theaetetus; at all events I do not imagine that such puzzles are outside your experience.

THEAETETUS: On the contrary, Socrates, it is extraordinary how they get me wondering whatever they can mean. Sometimes the very contemplation of them makes me feel quite dizzy.

SOCRATES: I see. Theodoros did not estimate your nature so badly after all. This sense of wonder is characteristic of a philosopher; wonder, in fact, is the very source of speculation, and he who made Iris the daughter of Thaumas was a good genealogist. Now do you begin to understand the significance of all this which follows from the doctrine we are attributing to Protagoras? Or is it not yet clear?

THEAETETUS: No, not yet.

SOCRATES: Then doubtless you will be grateful if I help you to discover the truth hidden in the thought of a man—or rather, of men—so distinguished.

THEAETETUS: I shall indeed be grateful, very grateful.

SOCRATES: Well, look around and see that none of the uninitiated overhears us. By the uninitiated I mean those who fancy that nothing is real except what they can grasp firmly with their hands, and who deny that actions or processes or anything invisible can share in reality.

THEAETETUS: What hard, repellent folk they sound!

SOCRATES: So they are too, quite without refinement.

Iris, the sister of the Harpies, was the good-natured goddess of the rainbow and the messenger of the gods, particularly of Zeus and Hera. There is no direct connection with speculation; Plato’s implied reference must be to the content of the messages from the gods. Nothing is known of the functions of Thaumas, her father by the Oceanid Electra. Of course his name means “wonder,” and he also bears the epithet “the monstrous.” He was the son of Pontus, the sea, and Gaia, the earth. Now Aristotle (384-322 B.C., pupil of Plato and tutor of Alexander the Great). This is from his Metaphysics I.2.982b, translated by W. D. Ross:

. . . this [the science of Wisdom] must be a science that investigates the first principles and causes; for the good, i.e. the end and aim, is one of the causes.

That it is not a science of production is clear even from the history of the earliest philosophers. For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun, and about the stars and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of Wisdom, for the myth is composed of wonders); therefore
since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end.

CCCXVI German Fabellehre. Whether or not the word had long been current, the only German dictionary in which it is now to be found is Grimm’s, and there it is simply equated with mythologia.

CCCXVII Sic—indicating that they are the same? Or perhaps a mistake in transcription. In German this phrase is “menschliche Erfindung und Willkür hat.” It is important to find out whether or not it was a mistake, because the word here translated as “volition” (Willkür) can also mean “caprice” or “arbitrariness,” as when we make a “free” choice, as well as “spontaneity.” (By the way, it is very odd that it seems not impossible to translate its opposite, unwillkürlich, as “spontaneous”—see the note to page 206. In the present context, using “spontaneous” would point to the freedom from any necessity imposed on the will, and on page 206 it would indicate the freedom from human volition.) Personally I suspect Schelling would agree with me that invention has to have an intended aim, based on a sense of importance. It is this sense which lies at the basis of his “union of freedom and necessity.”

CCCXVIII I offer two passages from the System of Transcendental Idealism of 1800. The first, from a section near the beginning [I 3, 351] on the organ or instrument of transcendental philosophy:

Philosophy is based, then, just as much as art, on the capability of production, and the difference between them is based merely on the different direction of the productive power. For instead of the production being directed outwards, as it is in art, so as to reflect the unconscious through products, philosophical production is directed immediately inwards, so as to reflect it in intellectual contemplation.—The characteristic sense with which this kind of philosophy must be grasped is thus the æsthetic; and for that very reason the philosophy of art is the true instrument of philosophy.

There are only two ways to escape from everyday reality: poetry, which transports us into an ideal world, and philosophy, which lets the real world disappear entirely from our view.

The second passage is right at the end of the work [I 3, 631-634], and summarizes all the levels of self-consciousness:

The whole interconnection of transcendental philosophy is based only on a continual potentiation of self-contemplation, from the first, most simple, in self-consciousness, up to the highest, the æsthetic.

The following potences are the ones through which the object of philosophy passes, so as to bring forth the whole edifice of self-consciousness.

The act of self-consciousness in which first of all that absolutely identical element separates out, is nothing other than an act of self-contemplation in general. By way of this act, then, nothing definite can yet be established in the ego, for it is only through this act that any definiteness in general is established. In this first act that identical element becomes first of all subject and object simultaneously, that is to say it simply becomes the ego—not for itself, but certainly for philosophizing reflection.

(What the identical might be, abstracted from, and as it were before this act, cannot even be asked. For it is that which can reveal itself only through self-consciousness, and can nowhere be separated from this act.)

The second self-contemplation is the one by way of which the ego contemplates that definiteness
established in the objective aspect of its activity, and this happens in sensation. In this contemplation the ego is object for itself, since in what went before it was object and subject only for the philosopher.

In the third self-contemplation the ego becomes object for itself also as sensing, that is to say that which until now has been subjective in the ego is also added to the objective aspect; everything in the ego is thus now objective, or the ego is entirely objective, and as objective, is subject and object simultaneously.

Hence nothing can remain from this phase of consciousness other than that which, after consciousness has come into being, is discovered as the absolutely-objective (the external world).—In this contemplation, which is already a potentiated one, and for that very reason productive, there is contained, apart from objective and subjective activity, which are here both objective, a third, the contemplating activity proper, or ideal activity, the same one which appears subsequently as conscious activity, but which, since it is only the third after those two, can also not separate itself from them, nor be opposed to them.—Included in this contemplation there is thus already a conscious activity, or that which is unconscious and objective is defined by way of a conscious activity, except that this is not distinguished as such.

The following contemplation will be the one by way of which the ego contemplates itself as productive. Now since, however, the ego is now merely objective, this contemplation too will be merely objective, that is to say unconscious once more. There is in this contemplation, indeed, an ideal activity, which has as its object that contemplating activity, likewise ideal and included in the previous contemplation; the contemplating activity is thus here an ideal activity of the second potence, that is to say an activity with a purpose, but unconsciously so. What remains of this contemplation in consciousness will thus appear as a product with a purpose, certainly, but not as a product produced purposively. Organisation in its full extent is such a product.

By way of these four stages the ego as intelligence has been fully developed. It is evident that up to this point Nature keeps step with the ego, and that thus without any doubt Nature lacks only the final element, through which all those contemplations achieve for it the same significance which they possess for the ego. But what this final element might be will become clear from what follows.

Were the ego to continue to be merely objective, then self-contemplation could, all the same, potentiate itself into the infinite, but in that way, though, only the series of products in Nature would be lengthened, but consciousness would never again come into being. Consciousness is possible solely through that merely objective element in the ego becoming objective for the ego itself. But the basis for that cannot lie in the ego itself. For the ego is absolutely identical with that merely objective element. The basis can therefore only lie outside the ego, which, by way of continuing limitation, is gradually reduced to intelligence, and even to the point of individuality. But apart from the individual, that is to say independently of him, there is only intelligence itself. But intelligence itself must (according to the mechanism derived), where it exists, restrict itself to individuality. The basis sought outside the individual can therefore lie only in another individual.

The absolutely objective can become an object for the ego itself only through the influence of other rational beings. But in these the intention of that influence must already have dwelt. Thus freedom is always already presupposed in Nature (Nature does not produce it), and where this freedom is not already present as first element, it cannot come into being. Here, then, it becomes clear that although Nature is up to this point completely equivalent to intelligence, and passes through the same potences together with the latter; freedom, however, if it exists (but that it exists may not be proved theoretically), must be prior to Nature (natura prior).

Hence a new hierarchy of actions which are not possible by way of Nature, but leave it behind them,
begins with this point.

The absolutely objective or the regularity of contemplation becomes itself an object for the ego. But contemplation becomes an object for that which contemplates, only through willing. The objective in willing is contemplation itself, or the pure regularity of Nature; the subjective is an ideal activity directed towards that regularity in itself, and the act in which this happens is the absolute act of will.

For the ego the absolute act of will itself becomes in turn an object, in that the objective, that which in willing is directed towards something external, becomes an object for it as natural instinct, and the subjective, directed towards the regularity in itself, becomes an object for it as absolute will, that is to say as categorical imperative. But this once again is not possible without an activity which is prior to the two of them. This activity is volition, or conscious free activity.

Now if, however, this conscious free activity also, which, in action, is opposed to the objective activity, even though it is destined to become one with the latter, is contemplated in its original identity with the objective activity, and this is absolutely impossible through freedom, then there thereby at last comes into being the highest potency of self-contemplation, which, since it lies itself already beyond the conditions of consciousness, and is rather that consciousness itself which creates itself in advance, must appear, where it exists, as absolutely fortuitous, and that absolutely fortuitous quality in the highest potency of self-contemplation is that which is indicated by the idea of genius.

These are the phases in the history of self-consciousness, phases unchanging and fixed for all knowledge, and described in experience by a continuous hierarchy, which can be demonstrated in and carried through from simple matter up to organization (through which Nature, unconsciously productive, turns back into itself), and from there through reason and volition up to the highest union of freedom and necessity in art (through which Nature, consciously productive, embraces and fulfills itself).

Note that I have translated the word Anschauung as “contemplation.” It has often been translated as “intuition,” particularly in works of Kant, but I do not think this any longer conveys (if it ever did) the presence and awareness, even the visual quality, which form the chief content of the German word. But bear in mind that it means a single representation, not a succession of them. (Since the reality is in the relation, this is difficult. It depends on what exact reflection one can firmly establish in memory, what reflection of the simplest relation involved in that on which we are reflecting, in the circumstances in which one is when at last the flux has moved on to a different region and one has leisure to reflect.)

CCCXIX 1773-1824, German mercenary soldier, poet, playwright, and writer on mythology and religion. He was a theology student at first, but left the university without graduating and began an erratic life determined not by himself but by the great events of his day. There was no point of repose in his life, but he was lucky enough to have a series of benefactors. His Mythologie der Griechen (Mythology of the Greeks) was never finished, but the first part was published in 1805 (not 1803 as Schelling says) as Neue Darstellung der Mythologie der Griechen und Römer (New Presentation of the Mythology of the Greeks and Romans). It uses the same method of exposition as Heyne, but is much more speculative, something like a pantheistic metaphysics of history. It begins as follows:

In the dawn of life man stands in a passive relationship to Nature, just as, in the last stages of life, he will be in an active one. Unbeknown to him, Nature draws his living existence across into herself and that which, outside him, has become living through him, then appears to him to be higher and more
powerful than he, and that in alien beings which is his own and human he necessarily judges to be divine.

(This and the following excerpt may not be particularly relevant, but I have only a few passages available to me, in a book about Kanne by Dieter Schrey, Tübingen 1969, and they will give at least a flavour.) Kanne later discovered striking correspondences between the Greek and Indian cosmogonies, and tried to construct, by comparisons between names, a mythology of primordial mankind. (This etymological method is now discredited but had some influence on Grimm.) He met Schelling on several occasions, most notably in 1805 in Würzburg, when Schelling felt “a reluctance to allow his liking to be seen.” Kanne said that Schelling’s philosophy was “stupid, contradictory, and presumptuous,” but his later work does nevertheless display the influence of Schelling’s 1809 *Investigations of the Nature of Human Freedom*. In 1814, religious experiences led Kanne to burn the manuscript of *Panglossium* in which he had tried to prove the original interrelationship of all languages. From time to time he became a reluctant professor. His *Pantheum der Ältesten Naturphilosophie, die Religion aller Völker* (Pantheon of the Earliest Nature-Philosophy, the Religion of all Peoples) was published in 1811 (again a different date from the one Schelling gives, which is 1807). Here are two connected excerpts, where he writes about the “demiurges of the spirit”:

The deeds of this Light were the Good; but where the free world-essence, not heeding the voice of the world-law, misuses his freedom in self-will and shifts from the central point, when it no longer wishes to be free as universal being, but as a particular being, then Evil arises, and Evil, like Untruth and Error, is called “Darkness.” But freedom like this, to be everything for oneself, instead of being in all things, was given to all created spirits.

But that which had been possible for them, they finally made actual, and they usurped sole governance for themselves. In this way the first sin came into the world: its possibility had been the condition of all life, but its actuality became the cause of all death. For if the spirits had not been given that power together with their existence, then God would have created nothing divine, he would have created nothing at all, and no truer statement can be made but that man has only become devil through having also been God.

---

This was Wolfgang Menzel, 1798-1873, a German author and active member of a student fraternity, who published *Voss und die Symbolik. Eine Betrachtung* (Voss and Symbolism, a Study), which has 56 pages, in 1825. He opposed rationalists like Voss and Paulus, and also opposed Hegel’s philosophy which he compared unfavourably with Schelling’s. Menzel became a literary critic and literary historian, and as a German nationalist came out against the “unpolitical and destructive” Goethe. He is regarded by some as a precursor of the National Socialists.

Johann Gottfried Herder, 1744-1803, German philosopher, theologian, and poet; author of *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Mankind), published in four parts between 1784 and 1791. His thought and method are said to continue to influence and direct German and European spiritual history even to this day. For example, he claimed that every nation has its own specific literary art, dependent on the stage of development of its language, and this in turn depends on the stage of development of its natural and
social circumstances. (Thus he was not an antinationalistic individual like myself.) He said that one and the same human species found its “actualization” in differing nations or societies, according to differences in the climate. His idea of history had to do with the organic evolution of humanity. He also contributed to Nature-philosophy and the study of the Old and New Testaments. Mythology was central to his position; he saw all myths as a creative sensuous symbolic truth, at once poetry, theology, philosophy, and energy.

When Schelling says that the idea came from the French, he indubitably has in mind the *Philosophie de l’histoire* published in Geneva in 1765 by Voltaire, under the pseudonym of “the late Abbé Bazin.” (“Voltaire” was in turn the pseudonym of François Marie Arouet, 1694-1778.) But before that the idea had already been introduced by the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) in his *Principi di una scienza nuova dintorno alla natura delle nazioni* (the Italian wording differs slightly in different versions, but the meaning is “Principles of a new science relating to the nature of nations”—later “common nature”), published in 1725. Vico also wrote a lot about language, primitive people, and mythology.

The German title of this work is *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*, and Schelling first published it, with the preface mentioned, in 1797, when he was twenty-one or twenty-two. The preface begins as follows:

What remains as the pure result of the philosophical investigations of our age until now, is, in brief, the following: “Theoretical philosophy up to now (under the name of ‘metaphysics’) had been a mixture of wholly heterogeneous principles. One part thereof contained laws relating to the possibility of experience (universal laws of Nature), another part contained fundamental principles reaching beyond all experience (genuinely metaphysical principles).”

“It is now agreed that in theoretical philosophy only a *regulative* use can be made of these last. The only thing that raises us above the world of appearance is our moral nature, and laws which in the realm of ideas are of *constitutive* application, become precisely thereby *practical* laws. So that which had been until now the metaphysical element in theoretical philosophy, will in future be wholly and solely left to practical philosophy. What remains for theoretical philosophy consists of only the universal principles of possible experience, and instead of being a science which *follows* physics (metaphysics), it will in future be a science which *precedes* physics.”

But now theoretical and practical philosophy (which one can perhaps separate for educational purposes but which are in the human spirit originally and necessarily one) disintegrates into *pure* and *applied* philosophy.

*Pure* theoretical philosophy is concerned just with the investigation of the reality of our knowledge *in general*, but *applied* theoretical philosophy, under the name of a philosophy of Nature, has the task of deriving from first principles a *specific* system of our knowledge (that is to say the system of the entirety of experience).

That which *physics* is for *theoretical* philosophy, is, for *practical* philosophy, *history*; and so, out of these two principal divisions of philosophy, arise the two principal branches of our empirical knowledge.

Hence, with a treatment of both the *philosophy of Nature* and the *philosophy of mankind*, I hope to embrace the whole of *applied* philosophy. Through the first, the theory of Nature should be given a scientific foundation, and through the second, the same should be given to history.
CCCXXIII The German word here translated as “overall” is überhaupt, which usually means “in general.”

CCCXXIV In German, . . . dass wir von der geschichtlichen etwas wissen, von der vorgeschichtlichen nichts wissen; letztere ist nicht eigentlich die vorgeschichtliche, sondern bloss die vorhistorische. This is an illustration of the sort of shocks to which a translator is exposed when, after rendering vorgeschichtliche as “prehistoric” for two hundred and twenty pages, he suddenly encounters this distinction between vorgeschichtliche and vorhistorische. Luckily in this case, although the distinction is not really explained here, it is explained four pages later (immediately after the little table on page 235). The English word “prehistoric” is said by the OED to have been first used as recently as 1851, and in the OED’s “etymology” it is curiously said “so French préhistorique.” In the Shorter OED this is erroneously translated into “adopted from” the French word. In fact the Larousse and Robert dictionaries agree that préhistorique was first used in 1867. Grimm’s German dictionary lists the date of the first use of vorgeschichtliche as 1822, and of vorhistorische as 1811.

CCCXXV Thucydides was a Greek general and historian who lived c460-c400 B.C., and was thus only about twenty-five years younger than Herodotus, whose work he mentions. His history of the Peloponnesian War, preceded by introductory chapters describing the history of the Hellenic race from earliest times, is written in a condensed literary style, but is notable for its fairness, scientific method, and for the author’s sense of the causal connection between events. He himself described it as “a possession for all time.” Hume makes his unhelpful comment in his essay On the Populousness of Ancient Nations, published in 1752 in the second part of his Essays Moral Political, and Literary. He says:

The first page of THUCYDIDES is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history. All preceding narrations are so intermixed with fable, that philosophers ought to abandon them, in a great measure, to the embellishment of poets and orators.

With regard to remote times, the numbers of people assigned are often ridiculous, and lose all credit and authority.

CCCXXVI Hegel, it could be.

CCCXXVII What Schelling actually says is “the last era.” I suppose this is another consequence of the way he thinks; directing his view always towards the past he is going as far as he can in that direction. I feel that to retain the ambiguity would be unjustified (and perhaps less comprehensible in English than in German), thus I have changed “last” to “first.” See also the following note.

CCCXXVIII Once again, what Schelling actually says is “the last two,” thinking no doubt of their position looking back in time rather than their position in the little table.

CCCXXIX Johann Georg Justus Ballenstädt or Ballenstedt, 1756-1840, a German Lutheran pastor, author of Die Urwelt, oder Beweis v.d. Dasein u. Untergange v. mehr als einer Vor-Welt (The Primordial World, or Proof of the Existence and Destruction of More than One Earlier World), published in three parts in 1817. He tried in this and many other works to explain the biblical creation story scientifically in terms of geology and palaeontology, and was one of the earliest adherents of the theory of evolution (incorporating man). In his time his views were revolutionary. He opposed
Nature-philosophy and Goethe’s idealistic morphology, but his empirical base was too narrow—Cuvier was much more influential. His works were soon forgotten, and only recently has their true worth been appreciated.

Georges, Baron de Cuvier, 1769-1832, French natural scientist, one of the founders of palæontology. He had a “catastrophe theory,” according to which living organisms are periodically exterminated by a worldwide catastrophe, and subsequently have to be created again. (Compare Plato in the note to page 111.) He was very cruel to animals.

I have only been able to see the version on page 178 of Hermann’s Opuscula; there are the following differences between that and Schelling’s: 1. in quo nos senescente iam, mediī instead of in quo, senescente jam, nos mediī. 2. comma after ruinas. 3. no comma after perituram. The translation is: “in which, as it now grows old, we, midway between two catastrophes, eagerly pursue with foolish exertions an eternity fated subsequently to perish in new floods.”

Inscrutable time.

Schelling has the names as Ellora and Mavalpuram. Ellora is in the state of Maharashtra, on the Deccan plateau, nineteen miles northwest of Aurangabad, or a hundred and fifty miles east of Bombay. There are thirty-four Buddhist, Hindu, and Jainist temples there, of which the most impressive is that to Shiva, the Kailasanath, dating from the eighth century A.D., and carved from the solid rock. Mahābalipuram (which the Germans now call Mamallapuram, and the English formerly called Mavalipuram) is in the state of Tamil Nadu on the east coast (specifically, the Coromandel Coast) near Chingleput (Chengalpattu), forty miles south of Madras. Although it is known as the “Seven Pagodas” there are five seventh-century Hindu temples there, hewn from the solid rock. Note that there is at least one place in India besides Ellora which claims the name of Ellore.

Arnold Hermann Heeren, 1760-1842, German historian. He was more interested in the history of the relationships between states than in that of Germany as a nation. He opposed the tendency of individual states to expand, and favoured the “balance of power.” He refused to take part in current affairs, saying that “the historian should live not in the present, but in the past.” The reference here is to his principal work, Ideen über die Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel der vornehmsten Völker der alten Welt (Outlines of the Politics, Communication, and Trade of the most Prominent Nations of the Ancient World), in three volumes, published from 1793 to 1796. Schelling has abbreviated the title. An English translation was published in Oxford in 1833. It may be worth reproducing the relevant passage from that version—I cannot check Schelling’s reference, as the original German is not available to me. It occurs in volume three, entitled “Asiatic Nations, Indians,” and on page 18 in the first chapter thereof, entitled “A critical View of the Antiquities and Literature of India.” The translator is not named. Heeren is not writing about any specific temple, but about subterranean temples in general:

The natives of many other portions of the globe have adopted similar contrivances [underground habitations]; and in proportion to the more extensive scope allowed by them to the introduction of science, so will it appear less wonderful that a people in such a situation, and not deficient in tools, should exercise their ingenuity in this way. [Here the footnote: ] Even the naked Hottentots are in the
habit of sketching rude designs on the walls of their huts. But what a wide interval is there between an African kraal and a Hindu rock temple! and yet the refined artifice observable in the latter, must have previously traced the intermediate steps between the two extremes. An authentic account of the rise and progress of grotto architecture (were sufficient materials at hand), would doubtless lead to new and interesting conclusions respecting the general history of mankind. [End of footnote.] The same kind of habitation which a man would construct for himself, he would also appropriate to his gods.

In German, nie und zu keiner Zeit. The appearance of repetition may be excused by saying that the first nie means “never” in a logical not a temporal sense. The same might be said of the je, translated “ever,” in the following sentence.

This whole system. Sic. The phrase would appear to refer back to the “sacrosact fundamental principle of the continual advance of the human race,” and not to the great preceding, or leading to, what is apprehended organically.

sine numine. Without divine will or command. Numen in the following sentence, Schelling’s “directing entity,” is the accusative case of the same word.

The editor of the 1856 edition adds a footnote here, saying “These lectures dating from the year 1803 are extant in full among the unpublished manuscripts.” They were first given in Jena in the winter of 1802, and repeated in 1804 and 1805 in Würzburg. They were published in 1859 in the collected works, on pages [I 5, 355-736]. (They are also available in the Beck edition in a curious split form (like many other works), part in volume three and part (including the list of contents!) in supplementary volume three.) Not only that, they have very recently become available in English (for details see the list at the end of this book). Under the title of “Philosophy of Art” there is a “General Section” and a “Particular Section.” The General Section contains three chapters:

A) Construction of Art in General
B) Construction of the Material of Art
C) Construction of the Particular in, or the Form of, Art (of the Particular Work of Art).

The second chapter of the general section, the construction of the material of art, consists of two subdivisions:

1) Derivation of Mythology as the Material of Art (pages [I 5, 388-416])
2) Antithesis between Ancient and Modern Poetry in Respect of Mythology; the Evolution of the Philosophy of Religion (pages [I 5, 417-457])

The whole argument of the first sub-division is directed towards establishing that mythology is the only possible material of art; much more emphasis is given to this point there than in the present work.

Either this implies that the higher history and the different order of things are the same entity, or it is a minor grammatical slip.

actual entities. In German, wirkliche Wesen, which might also be translated as “real essences,”
but I do not think this is consistent with Schelling’s terminology. (This allows for contradictions and inconsistencies, but only in the proper place.)

I do not follow this; when I first tried to read the Iliad I was deterred by the fortuitousness of the list of warrior’s names near the beginning (Perithous, Dryas, Cænus, Exadius, godlike Polyphemus, Theseus, Ægus, and so on). For me a work has this necessity if, considering it as a self-contained whole, every part of that whole has some reference to other parts and requires them (hence the necessity); where every part of that organic whole contributes in some way, indeed in as many ways as possible, to that whole; in the manner of Webern, of Bach in many of his works, and of any piece of literature with nothing inessential or incidental (I might be safe perhaps in suggesting The Heart of Darkness as an example). Beauty comes of this necessity; and mystery is involved, made apparent, because other considerations are tidied out of the way.

Karl August Georg Max, Graf von Platen-Hallermünde, 1796-1835, German poet. He made his first trip to Italy in 1824, and from 1826 lived there continuously. Following the model of classical times, he saw beauty as the highest goal. (I, and possibly Schelling, would agree.) But beauty and poetry, he thought, have no existence without love. When Schelling began to lecture in Erlangen at the end of 1820, Platen, who had already met him briefly in Munich, got to know him and his family and became a close friend. There is a lot about this in Platen’s Journals. Schelling recommends intellectual friendship to his students, and suggests that they form small groups and discuss his ideas (Platen says). Platen describes the enthusiasm with which Schelling’s lectures were received at that time:

Schelling’s whole lecture is captivating, in spite of the superficial appearance of dryness. He fills the spirit with an indescribable ardour, which grows with every word. An abundance of vividness and a truly divine charity is disseminated through his whole speech. Additionally, a boldness of expression and a definiteness of will, which arouse admiration. Of his bold way of expressing himself, just one single example from today. He spoke of the subject of philosophy and of the search for its first principle, which could only be reached through one’s returning to a state of complete ignorance, and he quoted the Saviour’s words: “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Not only, he added, should one give up one’s wife and child, as the phrase goes, so as to attain to science; one must give up absolutely everything which exists, yes—I do not hesitate to say, one must abandon God himself. When Schelling said this a deathly hush ensued, as if the whole assembly were holding their breath, until he began to speak again, and explained his meaning, so as to prevent misunderstanding, again using the biblical expression: “whosoever will save all shall lose all; but whosoever shall lose all, the same shall save all.” I was suddenly struck, in this whole exposition, by the words of Hamlet: “to be or not to be, that is the question,” and I felt as though for the first time the true understanding of them had passed through my soul.

(Despite all that, Platen admits a few days later that he finds Schelling difficult to understand.) In April 1821 Platen gave Schelling the very first copy of his first set of “Ghazel Songs,” together with a sonnet. Schelling praised them, saying that they were true oriental pearls; and was consistent in his praise and his friendship over many years. This friendship was in great contrast to the very short-lived kind granted by so many of Platen’s younger objects of passion. In 1824 Platen dedicated his first drama, Der Gläserne Pantoffel (the Glass Slipper) to Schelling.
George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron, 1788-1824. I don’t intend to go too far into the reason Schelling says this of him. No doubt it has something to do with Goethe’s professed very high opinion of him (perhaps Goethe was just cleverly ensuring that those with whom he, Goethe, might be compared were not in his own class), and probably refers to something in Childe Harold. It is rather off-putting that Byron should be the only writer mentioned in this context—surely many other poets, even by this time, had tried to enter that higher poetical world. Perhaps there is a study somewhere of Byron’s attitude to the Greek mind, rather than nation, and of how his “scepticism,” political or not, influenced his poetical endeavours. A great many more writers are mentioned by name in Schelling’s lectures on the philosophy of art. This mentioning of individuals and their work is one of the most difficult aspects of æsthetic theory to get right. Compare the second last note, in which I mention a few.

Another possible reading, significantly different, would be “the religion of man, who,” that is to say, of all men, not only of those particular men who for whatever reason could not raise themselves to a higher religion.

German aus welchem allein, “out of which alone.” This could also be read as “out of which god alone,” but only if the god were taken to be impersonal.

This is what Schelling calls him, following Luther; in the AV Paul describes himself as “the apostle of the Gentiles.”

Wildfire in the sense of will-o’-the-wisp; Wildbäder is the German word for open-air or natural baths—baths in the wild, or literally, of course, wild baths.

Familiar (bekannte), but perhaps not understood (erkannte). The root here, kennen, means “know,” and erkannte would be more commonly translated, but not in this context, as “recognized (to be true).”

There are mathematicians who have played around with incomplete systems during the past fifty years. I think there is more to it than I have yet seen, as definitions (axioms) are flexible.

Jn. 14. The emphasis is Schelling’s. He also has the present tense in the first part: “He that sees me sees the Father,” but since the meaning is the same I have supplied the text of the AV.

Jn. 4:23. This was previously quoted on page 190. For the text in the AV and NIV, please refer to my note to that page.

Schelling’s German is begriffene und verstandene which does really seem to mean little more than “comprehended and understood” or “grasped and understood.” Kant, in his lectures on logic, as written up by Gottlob Benjamin Jäsche, drew a distinction between seven degrees of cognition, of which begriffen was the seventh (corresponding to Latin comprehendere, he said, to cognize through “reason”), and verstandene the fifth (corresponding to Latin intelligere; to cognize or conceive through the understanding by means of “concepts”). It is possible that Schelling had these distinctions in mind.
rational religion. In German, *Vernunftreligion*, very literally “reason-religion.”

“This” may refer either to the philosophy or the observation; I am almost certain it is the observation but have left it ambiguous.

Compare the following passage from his *Advancement of Learning*, Book Two, Chapter Eight, Section Five (“advised,” near the end, means “considered” or “reflected on”):

The registering of doubts hath two excellent uses: the one, that it saveth philosophy from errors and falsehoods; when that which is not fully appearing is not collected into assertion, whereby error might draw error, but reserved in doubt; the other, that the entry of doubts are as so many suckers or sponges to draw use of knowledge; insomuch as that which, if doubts had not preceded, a man should never have advised, but passed it over without note, by the suggestion and solicitation of doubts, is made to be attended and applied.