

F. W. J. Schelling's Political Thinking

The work is a study of F. W. J. Schelling's philosophy, from the point of view of the political philosophy, a presentation of all those elements which can be characterized as political in his great life work. Considering that in the whole of this life work, we can find just a few writings which treats particular themes of the political philosophy or of the philosophy of law, my work deals not only with the philosophical writings, but also with the correspondence and the personal journals of the thinker, which reflect his political attitudes and opinions. In consequence of this facts, my work has two different directions of the research. The first is the research of Schelling's political opinions, which seems to be very important, from two reasons: in the one hand, because the historical period of his life was one full of political and revolutionary events, social and constitutional changes, in the other hand because Schelling is the only philosopher of the representative personalities of German idealism (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel), which has no systematic political thinking, expressed into political philosophical treaties. The present work is structured into three chapters, each of them having several subchapters.

Chapter 1: Political attitudes by F. W. J. Schelling

This chapter presents the historical and political context of Schelling's life, a short history of the period's German States, but also the opinions and attitudes of the philosopher, concerning the ideas of the French revolution, comparing them with the general opinion of Württemberg and of the intellectuals from Tübingen. The work identifies in Schelling's political reactions an enthusiasm for the ideas of the revolution and presents some documents of his correspondence, which attests this revolutionary convictions.

It attempts also to explain the meaning of the “philosophical revolution” or the “revolution of thinking”, concepts with a great occurrence in the German intellectual circles of the time, meaning, first of all, the circulation and the distribution of the critical philosophy and theories of Kant. The chapter gives an

interpretation of Schelling's repeated expressions of his desire to get in France, of his indignation against the feudalism of German education, the aristocracy and the prince's despotism. It also identifies Schelling's sympathy for the idea of a constitutional monarchy. The chapter clarifies also the meanings of concepts like "motherland" or "country" in the thinking of the young Schelling, analyzing also the slow change of his definitions after the French occupation in Württemberg (1796) and the occupation during Napoleon in the states members of the Confederation of the Rhine.

The work attempts to clarify also the meaning of the "speculative nationalism" in Schelling's thinking, in the way it was explained by Bréhier, his return from liberal points of view to conservative opinions and even pacifism. Schelling's speculative nationalism can be described by a few particular aspects: first of all, I must say that it never passed from the theory to the political practice. This nationalism can be interpreted only into the theoretical network of some central ideas: Schelling identifies the specificity of the German nation inside the science and metaphysics, seeing the unity of the people not into the political or geographic unity, but into the unity of the German spirit. The chapter emphasizes Schelling's faith into his role and the purpose of intellectuals for the formation of a new concept of humanity. This chapter includes also the analysis of Schelling's opinions concerning the differences between the Germans and the French people, indicating a first moment of the process called the internalization of the philosophy and of the freedom.

Another subchapter presents the philosopher's views concerning the organization, the politics of the university, the role of the philosophy into the scientific system and into the popular education. It explains also the importance and the influence of Schelling's theories of the identity into the organization of the Humboldt University from Berlin and the thinking of his spiritual father. I also presented Schelling's political attitudes in the revolution of 1848.

Chapter 2. Schelling's political philosophy

This chapter presents the philosopher's conception about the absolute I, and the relation between the absolute and the limited or empirical I, explaining the base of Schelling's transcendental idealism. It also explains the progress inside

this philosophy, the movement of accent from the absolute perspective to the empirical area, and the consequence of this progress for the meaning of concepts as freedom, will or action. About the conception of the natural law, the chapter identifies the following schema:

The point of departure is the tendency of every empirical I to the absolute, to making his own will identical with the absolute will. Doing so, all empirical I find itself against the will of others, realizing that his is not alone in the world, feeling threatened his own individual freedom. Schelling says that the individual will is a moral will, because of this tendency to the absolute. This is the moral imperative for the empirical I: make your will identical with the absolute will. The domain of ethics is the domain of general will, but can be deduced only from the individual will. Otherwise, if the general will defines the individual one, it arrives to a contradiction, because the aim of ethics is only to guaranty the individual freedom. From the conception of morality it can't be deduced directly the domain of law, only including a mediating sphere, the ethics. The general will allows the domain of natural law, but, even so, if the point of departure is the individual freedom, the law can be, for Schelling, only an exercise of the constraint. It can not be founded in a positive way. The positive conception of the law comes only with a work which appeared later, The system of Transcendental Idealism. Only in this work, owing to the change of theoretical perspective, Schelling starts to see the intersubjectivity as a condition for the selfconsciousness, and only now he can say, that the general law, materialized into law, constrains only the negative, selfish part of the I.

The chapter presents also Schelling's conceptions about the meaning and the role of the state and, more generally, the social institutions. Also in this case, as in the case of natural law, we can speak about a negative conception of the State, which considers the state as an external and not authentic form of the unity, which acts only by the constraint and which, because of this inauthenticity, must be surpassed. The state is an attempt of the humans to find the original, authentic unity they loosed long time ago, and this unity was the unity of man and God. This conception starts already with the ideas of the first program of the system of German transcendental idealism (my work considers that the author of this short writing is Schelling), and the most developed expression of this critical conception is in the Lessons of Stuttgart.

A short period (1802-1805) called the philosophy of unity represents an exception in the state-conception, but Schelling speaks only about the idea of the state, the state as it must be, without seeing possible the actual concrete existence of such an institution. In this period Schelling speaks about a state as the possibility of development of the unity inside the scientific system, as a possibility to coordinate the historical existence of this unity of arts, science, philosophy and mythology, as a possibility for the human individual to understand and to achieve this absolute into the spiritual activities. The chapter presents also the conceptions of Schelling's philosophy about history, human society and human action, the role of the genius into the popular education and government, and also the relation between the philosophy of nature (the meaning of individual into this system) and the conception of the philosophy of unity. I intend to explain a specific continuity into the thinking of the philosopher.

Chapter 3. The freedom

The chapter presents the evolution of the concept of freedom in Schelling's different creative periods, starting from the perspective of natural law and arriving to the metaphysical and transcendental perspective of Schelling's greatest work, with a major impact for the history of philosophy. About the freedom, as it appears in the so called *Freiheitsschrift*, we must say a few central things:

-this freedom can be analyzed only in relation with the idea of God and his self-revelation. This freedom explains also the evil, as the possibility of action in the sphere of humanity and as a consequence of the separation between the will of the ground and the will of the center. God itself is, inside this system, a creative and really existing force, that's why Schelling had to do the distinction between the being of God and God as existence. The nature in God is the ground, but the ground never comes to the real, concrete existence, because God is the absolute, the unity of principles, the unity of object and subject, nature and spirit. In this case, it is about a unity which never arrives to differentiation of the antagonistic principles. Only in the human nature separates the will of the ground from the center, trying to make itself another center. But, because man and everything else is God's creation, the man has inside him also the will for the light, the will for the unification with God. The man is born with the deep feeling of the freedom, and

the freedom means here the tendency of man to arrive back to the center, to the light. The highest freedom is the identification of human will to the will of God. This metaphysical conception has some political relevance to: first of all, it means a reinterpretation of the political, by proposing another meaning of the freedom. What Schelling wants to say is that: it is a mistake to see the freedom only from the social or individual and also external perspective, because the concept has another meaning, the interior freedom, and the highest perspective can be given only by the religious point of view.

That's why the state appears to be only a secondary and false imitation of the original unity and that explains also the fact that Schelling doesn't accept as objects for the philosophical research the external problems of human life. It is the end of a road called internalization of the philosophy, proposing another perception of the human life and his individuals, which causes into the political sphere a reinterpretation of his aims and his destination.

In this chapter I made also a short presentation of the meanings of freedom into the German juridical and philosophical thinking, on the ground of which Schelling's philosophy becomes more visible and more easy to contextualize.

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