

# HISTORICAL CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYTHOLOGY pdf

## 1: Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology

*This item: Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology (SUNY series in Contemporary by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling Paperback \$ In Stock. Ships from and sold by www.enganchecubano.com*

Schelling, a student and pupil of Fichte and Hegel, was among the more important but often forgotten of the German Romantic philosophers. Correlative to this notion is his belief that myth is fundamental to human nature and evolution. That is, mythology is an expression of nature and emerges out of nature – it emerges with the growth of human subjectivity and consciousness and impacts human consciousness and understanding. That is, after all, what myth is traditionally – an old story passed down generation to generation. That is, mythology was the product of uneducated, illiterate, and ignorant people trying to communicate meaning improperly to each other. For the modern philosophers, their view of myth was that it was something that enchained people and shackled the mind to false ideas and beliefs. He, again, argues that myth is what shaped human existence and consciousness rather than human existence and consciousness in some earlier dark and ignorant form shaping myth and the myth being poor and dark because of the ignorance of early human consciousness. The myths of land and water, the earliest dialectic in human writing, for instance, embody the reality of the dangers of the sea to nascent and primordial man who is a terrestrial animal. It is where he walks. It is where he makes love and reproduces. It is where he settles and farms. But the land is always in danger of being overwhelmed by Tiamat, or the other sea-monsters and sea-gods: That chaotic, uncontrollable, and watery deluge that can be unleashed at any moment. Man, then, is an orderly and flourishing being because man is an expression of these ancient mythological archetypes: Land is orderly with the potential for flourishing. We cannot go back beyond myth, in other words. Because myth is where it all started. Myth is where human consciousness and thought begins. Or it is as far back as our consciousness goes in terms of story-telling, writing, and recollection. Schelling argues, in continuity with older traditions of Scriptural hermeneutics developed and inherited by Christianity, that mythology was always taken in an allegorical sense and that truth exists in the allegory. Truth exists in the meaning expressed in the myth and not the historicity of the myth. There may be historical precedence for the myth, such as the hero warrior confronting the wild forces of nature and the predatory animals in order to save his people, from which he becomes a chief or king, but the truth in the myth is what is being represented in the story. Humans attempted to communicate these truths through these stories we now consider myths. Truths about fate, destiny, struggle, human life and existence, etc. Within his lectures he also draws on how mythology influenced art, and, in many ways, gave birth to art. So it is mythology that gives rise to art and art embodies mythology rather than art creating the mythology and inculcating that mythological notion in us. Poetry was the first written expression of mythology. For without poetry a society is nothing; the lack of poetry represents the death of thought and consciousness. This might also explain why poetry flourished during the German romantic period. This is why poetry often deals with metaphorical and image-soaked language. In the same vein, looking back at the development of Greek philosophy, Schelling notes that philosophy emerged after poetry which sought to understand the truths of stories more concretely than did the poets. This, in part, explains the conflict between the poets such as Aristophanes and the philosophers such as Socrates. Thus, mythology, according to Schelling, embodies deeply intuitive truths. There is something remarkable and wonderful in the genesis and evolution of myth. Myth-making, and I use this term in a non-derogatory way, is something not only to be cherished, it is also something foundational to human nature and existence. It is something people do every day and something we cannot grow out according to Schelling. In fitting with the larger tradition of German Idealism, myths are universal because truth is universal but are also particular to specific peoples, cultures, times, and places as they evolve. This is also why, with specificity to German Romanticism, there was a strong blending of pagan and Christian identity and stories as essential to what it meant to be a Western person. Myth also sparked the search for anthropological origins in Romantic philosophy, which was the pursuit to truly

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understand who we are. Something may be reasonable based on its starting presuppositions but if those presuppositions are not real, then the reasonable argument employed has no bearing on reality itself. This leads us to a question of first principles, or metaphysics, by which understanding is either shown to be true or false. Thus, Schelling makes some very startling claims at least to prejudiced moderns that are worth consideration: Is myth a natural evolutionary process that grew and grows out of nature? Meaning that myth is part of nature. Is myth the beginning of human intellectual and creative endeavors, leading to art and, eventually, to philosophy and religion? If myth is rational, e. Are philosophical concepts that have merited long discussions: Or did philosophy arise in opposition to myth per the modern philosophers? Should myth, and poetry, have an important place in culture? Schelling certainly thinks so.

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## 2: Table of contents for Historical-critical introduction to the philosophy of mythology

*Not only will those seeking a thought-provoking philosophy of mythology find this book rewarding, but also readers with interest in the philosophy of history, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of religion will be quickened by Schelling's forays in these areas.*

This page intentionally left blank. His career as a philosophical Wunderkind had been tempered by scandals, betrayals especially by his ascendant former roommate and philosophical companion, Hegel, and tragedies, including the devastating death of his first wife, Caroline, in 1801. The period after his masterpiece, the essay on human freedom, included repeated announcements of the imminent appearance of *The Ages of the World*, which, despite many drafts and intense activity, was never finished. Indeed, of its three proposed divisions the past, the present, and the future, it scarcely escaped the past. But this time has not yet come. Schelling published little after the Freedom essay. This was the last book that Schelling would publish in his lifetime. This time of reclusion included a series of remarkable lecture courses and public addresses, beginning with his stunning private lectures in Stuttgart, then the October public address *The vii viii Foreword Deities of Samothrace* effectively beginning the work of positive philosophy via the project of a philosophy of mythology, through to his remarkable lecture courses in Erlangen on his own thinking, on the history of modern philosophy, and including early courses on the philosophy of mythology. In 1827 he received the call to teach at the newly founded Munich University, where he gave several important courses, including those on the General Methodology of Academic Study continuing to work on themes going back to his early career, including the call for a reinvigoration and enlivening of our approach to studies, the philosophy of mythology, the philosophy of revelation, the foundations of positive philosophy, and the remarkable *Introduction to Philosophy*. The initial lectures courses, as Mason Richey reminds us in his fine introduction, attracted the likes of Kierkegaard, Engels, Bakunin, and Ruge. The lectures were a kind of celebrity event—or perhaps a circus event—as Schelling returned to the limelight supposedly to take on his former friend. The lectures largely fell upon deaf ears. Walter Otto was right to insist that in an era when mythology was considered a science, and when science itself was becoming increasingly alienated from its own philosophical grounds, the lectures were doomed to be virtually inaudible, as if Schelling were speaking an unknown language. In fact, in many ways, the lectures still retain their strange, unique voice and concerns, although, in their own unprecedented way, they address the question of difference at the heart and the ground of all history. The inscrutable past—escaping the triumph of the idea—nonetheless lives as the groundless ground of the present. Schelling once addressed the living opacity that is the ground of the present: Nonetheless, virtually no material from the Berlin period has ever appeared in English. I have long regretted this, and in a conversation about a half-decade ago, my good friend and colleague Mason Richey agreed to do something about this lacuna. I am proud to offer these few prefatory words *Foreword ix* to and gratitude for both this fine translation and its insightful introduction. In a manner of thinking, one could say that Hegel helped reveal to Schelling the limit of negative philosophy not by merely stealing it but also by perfecting it. Negative philosophy ascends to the absolute, revealing the absolute as the living ground of being. Hegel, however, does not, Schelling argues, fully confront the problem of time. In a way, all of history is a grand march to the revelation of the dialectic, and in this way the end of history can be understood as a theodicy that justifies the slaughter bench of the past. Schelling never dismissed Hegel or his own earlier negative philosophy but argued that negative philosophy cannot proceed from existence itself. Rather it transcends existence to reveal the free ground of existence. It begins with necessity and culminates with freedom. Positive philosophy, however, reverses the direction, beginning with freedom as its starting point. Martin Heidegger once made a decisive claim about the Freedom essay that he designated as a key sentence of his own reading. Freedom not the property *Eigenschaft* of the human but rather: Determinists eliminate freedom as a compelling predicate, while voluntarists celebrate it. For Schelling, the question has nothing whatsoever to do with the nature of

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freedom as a predicate. Freedom is not a property of the human subject. Freedom is not even a property of nature. Rather, it has everything to do with the nature of the human as a predicate of freedom. If the human were a predicate of freedom, what then? Of course, this assumes that freedom itself is a subject, but, while freedom first appears in the subject position, it is a false subject, a dissembling and ironic subject. How could we call it anything else other than the primordial ground or better so the non-ground? Positive philosophy, which is, in its way, always historical philosophy—or more radically, all history is natural history—descends from freedom to the brute facts of existence. As Karl Jaspers felicitously articulates it: A schematic comparison of negative and positive philosophy shows: Negative philosophy concerns itself with necessity while positive philosophy concerns itself with freedom; the former proceeds in dialectical movement while the latter is non-dialectical, narrational. The former is rational a priori science while the latter is an a posteriori science of actuality. In negative philosophy we proceed to the ascent of the highest idea and we attain it only as an idea. Positive philosophy leaves us in actuality and proceeds from actuality. In negative philosophy God is treated as the end while in positive philosophy he is treated as the beginning. In the former God is treated as a mere concept, an immutable God, while in the latter God is treated as an existing God, an acting God. In a sense, they deliver on the System fragment promise for a new mythology and a sensuous religion. Negative philosophy unifies nature in the idea of the absolute, while positive philosophy disperses, multiplies, fragments, and becomes many, heterogeneous. In pursuing the nature of mythology, in delineating what it is, Schelling attempts to proceed from the fact of mythology to the ground of mythology. He is not attempting to proceed in arrears to the ground of a particular mythology but to the mythological as such. To put it more directly: He examines every possible explanation for the fact of mythology, excludes what, upon closer analysis could not be true, but saves in the sense of sublation or *Aufhebung*, XI 8 what is true within every otherwise erroneous view. I think that one could also speak of this method as genealogical in the Nietzschean sense, that is to say, Schelling begins from the fact of the mythological and attempts to retrieve what is unthought—and in some sense inherently unthinkable—at its ground. Schelling retrieves genealogically not more myths about mythology. He establishes that mythology is neither the mere poetic fancy of humans nor a feeble attempt at protophilosophy or proto-science. Mythology is not a human invention. Furthermore, mythology has dispersed into the heterogeneity of peoples and languages. Mythology founds a people and the dispersion of humankind into peoples is the dispersion inherent within mythology itself. It belongs to the ground of the multiplication of languages. These differences—the very heterogeneity of humanity—are not human inventions any more than language is simply a tool at the disposal of humanity. Mythology is subjective in the sense that it happened within humanity as its multiplication, as the dissemination of the One difference into Many the heterogeneity of identities. But this dissemination was not the result of the agency of humanity. The content of the process are not merely imagined potencies, but rather the potencies themselves—which create consciousness and which create nature. The mythological process does not have to do with natural objects, but rather with the pure creating potencies whose original product is consciousness itself. One does not explain the fact of mythology philosophically by arguing that mythology is really something otherwise than what it purports itself to be the infancy of reason, proto-science, archetypes, the despotic musings of power hungry priests, the overarching ambitions of a poetic instinct, culturewide delusional thinking, etc. Rather the fact of mythology is the fact of what Schelling elsewhere calls the tautegorical. Mythology is the fact of the history of the coming of the Gods and the Gods come as themselves. Schellingian philosophy expands into the ecstasy of the fact of a history of divine heterogeneity. Our knowledge of the historical facts of mythology now allow us to see that creation myths extend to virtually all cultures of the world and at levels of heterogeneity that Schelling, who argued that a people is the result of its respective mythology, did not and perhaps could not anticipate. Schelling brings us to the doorstep of the possibility of a philosophical religion. *Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft*, . This course has appeared in the Schellingiana series published by Frommann-Holzboog. Holger Zaborowski and Alfred Denker have also published an important collection of companion essays, *System—Freiheit—Geschichte*: Max Niemeyer

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Verlag, , 9. Ohio University Press, , University of Michigan, , Piper, , This study first appeared in as part of a resurgence of interest in Schelling in the German-speaking philosophical world. Diana Behler, in *Philosophy of German Idealism*, ed. Ernst Behler New York: Continuum, , Schelling, *The Ages of the World* State University of New York Press, Nach der Originalausgabe in neuer Anordnung. Stubbornly, love and her promiscuous cousin passion seldom buckle to knowledge, truth, and rationality, and only a few philosophers equal the attention Schelling lavishes on the love of and passion for knowledge. One result of embracing this juxtaposition of affect and intellect is that his thought often travels the road of excess leading to the palace of wisdom. Schelling, alternately branded a mad Rationalist, Idealist, orâ€”worse still! For Schelling, life being the criterion of truth is another expression of the embracing of the juxtaposition of affect and intellect. Hence the trickiness and difficulty in explaining his thought. And the more they are. His philosophy recognizes that the condition of possibility of truth is error. Thus his thought seeks the creativity, expressivity, and lifeblood of error and false starts, whether their form be in poetry or, as the case may be, mythology; simultaneously he attends to the philosophical requirements of rigor. The synthesis of these dispositions and projects carves a path in his thought that might fruitfully be described as that of the knight errant. He is the Don Quixote of nineteenth-century German philosophy; his philosophy is not beholden to a rule. This has positive and negative effects: Particularly after the discrediting of the ontological proof, is it not mad as a hatter to deduce the existence of divinities, which after all is a task of these lectures? Are these mythology lectures a starcrossed late attempt to synthesize philosophical, discursive knowledge and its other, in this case theology, much as Schelling attempted to synthesize art and philosophical knowledge in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*? Why and how does Schelling continue to insist on thinking systematically about that which undermines systemization: He considered erroneous the content of the historical mythological systems and beliefs that are the topic of these lectures, yet his intent to trace philosophically the paths of errors until revealing the truths buried in them is indicative for the modes of production of knowledge and truth he might have envisioned these lectures exhibiting.

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## 3: Project MUSE - Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology

*Translated here into English for the first time, F. W. J. Schelling's lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology are an early example of interdisciplinary thinking.*

Additional Information In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Thus, this may well be its limit. Therefore there will come a different viewpoint which admits of truth and a doctrinal meaning, which maintains that truth was at least originally meant in it. Now, however, as it is mostly wont to proceed, this view will sacrifice the other—that which is proper and authentic in the matter—in order to make room for the view admitting truth and a doctrinal meaning, and instead of the proper and authentic will introduce the improper and inauthentic sense. Truth is in mythology, but not in mythology as such; especially since it is the doctrine [Lehre] and history of the gods, and thus seems to have a religious meaning. Thus mythology says or seems to say something different than is meant, and the interpretations appropriate to the articulated viewpoint are generally, and taken in the broadest sense of the word, allegorical. There are personalities meant here, but not gods, not superhuman beings belonging to a higher order; rather, human-historical beings and also actual events are meant, but events of the human or civil history. The gods [XI 27] are only heroes, kings, legislators exalted to divinities; or, when, as in today, finance and trade are major considerations, seafarers, discoverers of new routes of trade, founders of colonies, etc. The historical method of explanation is called the eumeretic, after Eumeros—an Epicurean of the Alexandrine period—who appears to have been its most ardent defender, although not the oldest. As is well known, Epicurus assumed real, actual gods, but fully idle ones unconcerned with human affairs. Contingency, alone in force according to his teaching, admitted of no providence or influence of higher beings on the world of human things. Against such a teaching, the popular belief of gods actively intervening in human events and actions was an interpolation that had to be done away with. This occurred when it was said of them that they are not actual gods but only men represented and imagined as gods. You see that this explanation presupposes real, proper gods, whose representation—as is well known—Epicurus derived from an opinion preceding every teaching, from an opinion embedded in human nature, an opinion which for this reason is supposed to be common to all men. This also highlights how unfitting it is when some, in Christian times, indeed in our times, who do not believe in actual gods but perhaps believe in quite a few other things, at least in part purport to be able to apply the eumeretic explanation. A second gradation would then be to say that no gods are meant in mythology at all; neither proper and real nor improper and unreal, no personalities, but rather impersonal objects that are only represented poetically as persons. Personification is the principle of this method of explanation; either ethically customary or natural properties and phenomena are personified. Because the gods are ethical beings, and in each of them some sort of spiritual character trait or trait of temperament is in evidence to the exclusion of another, thereby giving them a status above that of human life, they can be employed as symbols of ethical concepts, as has occurred since time immemorial. Use is made of what already is there, but the use does not explain the emergence into being. The poet, when he has need of a deity that demands moderation and self-control, will call upon the contemplative Athena You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

## 4: Friedrich Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology – Hesiod's Corner

*Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology Schelling, F. W. J., Richey, Mason, Zisselsberger, Markus Published by State University of New York Press.*

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