This paper explores the possible therapeutical applications of Schellingian psychological principles. A Schellingian analysis would enable us to retrieve the largely forgotten heritage of Romantic psychiatry, in particular the dissociationist model of the psyche, which was strategically rejected by Freud and somewhat clumsily revised by Jung, but which has its own intelligibility and applicability. Schellingian analysis would be dissociationist rather than repressivist, and would depart from Freud and Jung in being both a metaphysical and a moral therapy. But the open-ended eschatological nature of the model of the psyche employed would prevent the therapy from dogmatizing or moralizing the inner life of the analysand.

In Western philosophy, the notion of the unity of the personality is as old as Plato, who distinguished three potentially conflicting parts of the soul. The three parts of the self are only fully functional when they are hierarchically ordered, with the rational part governing and directing the two irrational parts. The corresponding political ideal is an absolute dictatorship, where the only one fit to rule—the philosopher king (i.e., reason)—is granted absolute power over the other members of the state. On the basis of such canonical Western texts, the integrity or wholeness of the self is often presumed to be the same as psychological homogeneity. A “healthy” self, like a totalitarian state, is not a sum of disparate entities but an organic whole composed of parts. All of the impulses, values, and attitudes present in the self must contribute to the unity of the self, just as the parts of an organism contribute to the life of the organism. Where there is a plurality of values and attitudes in a personality, a psychological...
heterogeneity, we are inclined to speak of an “unintegrated” self, a sick self, schizophrenic, dysfunctional, etc.

The aim of this paper is to present a different historical model of the self, no less Western, but essentially opposed to the foregoing. The healthy self in this other view does not disallow plurality, e.g., contradictory desires, incompatible values, but presumes it, much like parliamentary systems in Western democracies presume multiple political parties. This self is never a homogenous whole. On the contrary, it is a federation of disparate, often contradictory tendencies, desires and ideals. We will call this the dissociative self. It was first thematized by medical theorists in the early 19th century, as psychiatry evolved from demonology into animal magnetism. The most articulate exponent of the view was F.W.J. Schelling. After an overview of the notion of multiple personality as it emerged from animal magnetism, I will finish the paper with a formal account of why the self according to Schelling must be dissociative. The short answer is, because it lives and develops in time. But before going there, I wish to sharpen the idea of a dissociative self by contrasting it with its better known Freudian alternative, the repressive self.

The Repressive vs. the Dissociative Self

The repressive self is monolithic. It cannot tolerate diversity. Any plurality which it might experience is the result of internal fragmentation, pathology, failure to adapt to reality, etc. To be sure, the repressed self never achieves wholeness. It represses in order to exist. Reality is for the repressive self always too much to bear. In the classic Oedipal scenario, the boy represses the infant, with its titanic pleasures, its boundless appetite for Mommy, its unbridled narcissism, when he enters the world of logos, the father, and becomes

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2 The middle and late Schelling are most important in this regard, especially the celebrated Freedom essay, and its companion, The Ages of the World drafts. See F.W. J. Schelling, Philosophical Inquiries into the Essence of Human Freedom, (tr.) J. Love and J. Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Schelling, The Ages of the World, third draft, (tr.) J. Wirth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as AW. The Schellingian notion of the dissociative self seems to have had little direct influence on the development of Viennese (Freudian) psychoanalysis. On the other hand, its impact on French psychiatry was significant. Schelling played a role in the thought of Bergson and Janet, and through them influenced the dissociationism of Jung and Deleuze. On French dissociationism, see Christian Kerslake, Deleuze and the Unconscious (New York: Continuum, 2007).
morally accountable, an “I.” The injunction precipitating the repression is an act of violence which the personality cannot bear to remember, the horrifying discovery that mommy is not who he thought she was, not an extension of himself, but a sexual agent with interests that precede and exceed him. None of this remains available for the post-Oedipal boy, who normalizes his relations with his parents by repressing his memory of what they once were.

The dissociative self is constitutively plural. It pluralizes itself in every act of becoming conscious. The pluralization of the personality is a law of consciousness. Dissociated personalities do not necessarily repress each other (although they might). When a man becomes a father, not merely physically but psychologically, when he gazes down upon his newborn child and understands for the first time, “I am a father,” he becomes dissociated from his pre-paternal identity. The man who was not a father does not disappear but remains an alternative centre of thought and action, which now for the most part lies latent, but which may under certain circumstances (in a dream, or in intoxication) become active once again. The de-activation of an older model of the personality is not repression in the Freudian sense; it is the result of temporal transformation. The dissociative self thrives in self-opposition, much as a living being only grows by division and self-pluralization. The unity of the personality is a temporary cooperation of distinct centers of consciousness, each with their own unique attitudes, attributes and modes of experience. The unity of the personality can never abolish its constitutive plurality. At any given moment, the number of centers of consciousness which are latent in the personality greatly outnumber whatever might be manifest. For dissociationists, homogeneity in the personality is as much a problem as plurality, the result of social coercion, or an internal fascism that imposes a one-sided ego-ideal unto the self by censoring other aspects. To be a personality is to be inextricably involved in processes of dissociation and identification, dialoguing with difference, consolidating an identity only to have time disidentify the self into an ever increasing number of constituent members. The plurality of the personality is not an obstacle to the integrity of the dissociative self and its freedom. On the contrary, it is only in a situation of plurality, differentiation and dissociation, that freedom is actual.

For the repressive self, the past is unsurpassable. Memories, desires, and thoughts that become lost to consciousness through repression do not cease to exist. They become hidden determinants of the present. For Lacan, consciousness is forced, by virtue of the language without which it could not exist, to expel itself from its pre-
verbal life, and destined to desire its expelled life as that which alone could complete it.\textsuperscript{3} The life from which consciousness withdraws haunts it as the unthinkable “real.” Because regaining what was lost could only mean the extinction of the subject, the psyche is trapped in a no-win situation of fantasy, desire and denial. The subject is doomed to live in a state of constant desire for a wholeness, an integrity, and an authenticity that must always elude it.\textsuperscript{4}

\textit{The dissociative self is future oriented.} What it anticipates in the future are possibilities, which are not limited by past actualities. Centers of consciousness, nexuses of memories, desires and thoughts, become dissociated from each other when the personality develops in some new direction. As Schelling says in many places, to start something new is to eject something else, decisively, irretrievably, into the past. “The person who does not overcome himself or herself has no past, or rather never comes out of the past and lives constantly in the past... Only the person who has the power to tear themselves loose from themselves (from what is subordinate in their essence) is capable of creating a past for themselves.” (AW, 42)

\textit{The repressive self is biographically determined.} It never fully extricates itself from its personal history, never inaugurates a genuinely new beginning, but always returns to the scene of its birth. Everything in it is an expression of what it was. The past persists in its present, either as unintegrated contents that disrupt normal functioning—in which case it needs psychoanalysis—or as sublimated experiences. The roots of the self in this conception are infancy, the crown is mature functional adulthood. The transition from childhood to adulthood is neither arbitrary nor determined by freedom but strictly governed by the unchangeable laws of psychological growth.

\textit{The dissociative self is free.} Its freedom does not consist in an absence of determination from the past so much as in its inexhaustible capacity to distantiate itself from whatever it once was. To be sure, it does not abolish the past when it enters into something new. But the new self is not purely a function of the past. It is an event, an eruption of new being, which is not reducible to its occasioning conditions. The dissociative self is never reducible to what it was.


\textsuperscript{4} “There is no subject without some external ‘prosthetic’ supplement which provides the minimum of his phantasmic identity—that is to say, the subject emerges via the ‘externalization’ of the most intimate kernel of his being (his ‘fundamental fantasy’); the moment he gets too close to this traumatic content and ‘internalizes’ it, his very self-identity dissolves.” Slavoj Žižek, \textit{The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Other Matters} (London: Verso, 1996), 36.
The Constitutive Plurality of the Personality

The birth of the dissociative self harks back to a moment of transition in the history of medicine, when exorcism became psychiatry. We can date this moment with some precision: Mesmer’s defeat of the exorcist Johann Joseph Gassner in 1776. Mesmer decommisioned the Catholic priest and all that he stood for, post-Reformation demonology and witchcraft, not by refuting Gassner’s exorcisms (with hundreds of reported cures) or even debunking his methods, but by repeating his cures and explaining them in modern scientific terms.

In response to those who doubted that he was really casting out demons, Gassner marshalled hundreds of eyewitness reports that seemed to prove the efficacy of his exorcisms. His dramatic battles with fallen angels invading the personalities of innocent people became a public sensation, so much so that an official commission was struck to investigate the matter. Mesmer’s report to the commission effectively relegated demonic possession to the dustbin of discarded ideas. Crucial to Mesmer’s victory was his reproduction of Gassner’s results, which included using Gassner’s techniques. Where the exorcist established a theological rapport with the demons by engaging them in conversation, learning their names, and casting them out in the name of the Trinity, Mesmer established a magnetic rapport with the afflicted, binding to himself the hypnotised “night-side” of the patient’s personality. Where the exorcist choreographed a public liturgical manifestation of the demon, who would prefer to torment the possessed in secret, Mesmer elicited a “crisis” in the magnetised, in which the afflictions and symptoms of the magnetic imbalance became visible. Where exorcism, unique among Catholic rites, emphasized the personality of the exorcist, his faith, charisma, above all his ability to withstand “the wiles of the enemy,” Mesmer made the personality of the doctor key to the treatment. For it was ostensibly the magnetizer’s command of his unique dispensation of the magnetic fluid which gave him power over his patients’ afflictions.

What both exorcism and mesmerism testified to is the existence of a plurality of centres of intellection and volition in the personality.

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For the possessed these other selves were literally occupying forces, the malevolent minds and wills of the fallen, scheming to drag more souls into hell. Romantic psychiatry thematized the plurality as the duality of consciousness and unconsciousness. But this familiar binary does not accurately name the richness of the psyche unearthed by mesmerism, and its successor, animal magnetism. “The first magnetizers were immensely struck by the fact that, when they induced magnetic sleep in a person, a new life manifested itself of which the subject was unaware, and that a new and often more brilliant personality emerged with a continuous life of its own.” (DU, 145) The second personality, showing itself in dreams and under hypnosis, seemed to complete the first. Some, anticipating Freud, argued that the second self was closed, containing only memories, representations that were once conscious. Others, anticipating Jung, held it to be open, in communication with other selves, with other levels of reality, with the inner life of nature, even with the souls of the departed. The Paris magnetist Alexis hypothesised that the history of the human race is preserved in its entirety in memory. In magnetic trance we travel backward through time. (DU, 146) The view was also maintained by Bergson, Janet, and seems to have had a decisive influence on Deleuze’s understanding of the unconscious.  

Armand-Marie-Jacques de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1751–1825) was a French aristocrat trained in Mesmer’s techniques. One of his first and most important patients was Victor Race, a twenty-three year old peasant in the employ of the Puységur family. Race was easily magnetized by Puységur, but displayed a strange form of sleeping trance not before seen in the early history of mesmerism. Puységur noted the similarity between this sleeping trance and natural sleep-walking or somnambulism. He named it “artificial somnambulism.” He broke with Mesmer, not only on the latter’s quasi-physicalist notion of a magnetic fluid, but above all on Mesmer’s pathologizing approach to the unconscious. Mesmer assumed that vulnerability to magnetization was itself a symptom of imbalance. For Puységur, the medium connecting all living things was not a fluid but a psychic energy, which was more manifest in some than in others. The energy was a spiritual principle of connection between living beings, ultimately something quasi-divine, access to which was primarily a matter of belief and will. In Puységur’s practice, the client was no longer merely the sick or the mentally unbalanced. Animal magnetism could connect us to the spirit-world and give us insight into the absolute.

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6 See Kerslake, Deleuze and the Unconscious.
Victor Race originally consulted Puységur because he was suffering from a respiratory disease. Under magnetism, he showed symptoms which had nothing to with his ailment. He seemed to be more awake when magnetized rather than less conscious. He was smarter and brighter than in his normal condition. (DU, 71) He was able to diagnose his own disease, and under direction could diagnose the ailments and cures of others. The “perfect crisis” was no longer Mesmer’s elicitation of pathological symptoms, modelled after Gassner’s summoning forth the possessing demons. It was rather an alteration of consciousness for the better. The effect of artificial somnambulism was lucidity not obscurity and madness. Carl Alexander Ferdinand Kluge, in his classic Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel (Berlin, 1802) argued that “somnambulistic lucidity would enable the human mind to establish communication with the world-soul.” (DU, 78)

Artificial somnambulism was believed to be a privileged glimpse into where we all go when we sleep. Kluge distinguished six degrees of magnetic sleep: (1) waking state; (2) half-sleep; (3) inner darkness [sleep proper]; (4) inner clarity; (5) self-contemplation [“the subject’s ability to perceive with great accuracy the interior of his own body and that of those with whom he is put into rapport”; and (6) universal clarity [“the removal of the veils of time and space”]. (Ibid.) As one descended deeper into the unconscious, one became more aware, not less. Consciousness appeared to be a diminution of awareness, a contraction of the psychic field to matters of immediate concern to the conscious individual and a forgetting of the vast continent of experiences, memories, and ideas, from which these are selected. What was sacrificed for the price of this efficiency was the awareness of the body, of other bodies, of the hidden life of other souls, and the whole of past time. The deep unconscious was the higher state of awareness, the place where we were still connected with the real. Animal magnetism thus formulated a critique of normal reasoning. Consciousness, no longer the pinnacle of natural development, was from a certain perspective, a decline.

Romantic psychiatry received decisive impulse for its non-pathologizing approach to the unconscious from the outbreak of spiritism in the 19th century. Mediums like Katharina Emmerich and Friedericke Hauffe became international celebrities with their apparent abilities to contact other worlds and foresee the future in unconscious states of trance. A wave of outbreaks of multiple-personality syndromes also confirmed the romantic assumption that the personality was a composite. In many of these cases the alternative personalities seem to play a compensatory role for certain...
limitations in the primary personality. In some instances, it was the primary personality that was sick, the alternative personality offering a healthy corrective of certain morbid attitudes. Often the split became a dialectic of affirmation and denial: what one personality affirmed, the other denied, as in the famous case of Mary Reynolds, published in 1815.7

At the age of nineteen Mary was found lying unconscious in a field near her Pennsylvania home. She recovered her consciousness but remained deaf and blind for six weeks. Three months after the first incident she fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke she had lost her memory and could not speak. She gradually regained her memories, but over the next fifteen years began to alternate between two distinct personalities. One was the Mary everyone knew, “a quiet, sober and thoughtful person with a tendency to depression, a slow thinker devoid of imagination.” The other was her opposite, “gay, cheerful, extravagant, fond of company, fun and practical jokes, with a strong propensity for versification and rhyming.” (DU, 127) The handwriting of the one personality differed entirely from the handwriting of the second. Each personality knew of the other, and feared to fall back into its control, but for different reasons. Sad Mary feared the extravagance of glad Mary. Glad Mary feared the dullness and stupidity of sad Mary.

The story of little Estelle was made legendary by Freud’s French rival, Pierre Janet.8 In July 1836, Estelle, an eleven year old Swiss girl, was brought to one Dr. Despine, a physician with some knowledge of magnetism. She was paralysed and had suffered chronic pain her whole life. “No one except her mother and aunt could touch her without causing her to scream. She was absorbed in daydreams, fantastic visions and hallucinations, and forgot from one moment to the next all that was happening around her.” (DU, 129) Despine magnetized her. Under hypnosis a second personality appeared, named Angeline, who prescribed Estelle’s treatment and diet, legislating that Estelle should be allowed to have anything she desired. “Let her act according to her whims,” Angeline told Devine, “she will not take advantage of the situation.” (DU, 130) The patient began to lead a double life: personality one remained immobile and in acute pain, desperately attached to her mother, respectful and deferential

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7 The story was first reported by the physician who treated the case, John Keansley Mitchell. It was made popular in The Philosophy of Sleep, by Robert Macnish (Glasgow, 1836). See DU, 128.
8 Dr. Despine Père recounted the case in his De l'Emploi du magnetisme animal (Paris, 1840). See DU, 131.
to her doctor, whom she addressed with the formal vous. Personality two suffered no paralysis, was intolerant of her mother and cheeky to her doctor, addressing him with the informal tu. Where personality one scarcely ate, personality two ate voraciously and indiscriminately. The romantic psychiatrists who studied the case took note that it was the primary personality that was sick; the latent personality was the healthy one.

Cases such as these lead to various systems of classifying multiple personality syndrome: simultaneous multiple personalities, successive multiple personalities, some mutually cognizant, some mutually amnesiac, others one-way theory, structured on the binary of conscious-unconscious, capitulated before evidence that there were more than two selves in the personality. Mesmerists discovered that by magnetizing an already hypnotized patient, a third personality would appear, as different from the magnetized personality as it was from the waking personality. (DU, 130) The cluster theory proposed that the personality was "a matrix from which whole sets of sub-personalities could emerge and differentiate themselves."9 The term “polypsychism” was coined by Durand de Gros to describe the personality as composed of a plurality of centers, each with an ego of its own, all of them subjected to the ego-in-chief. Each sub-personality was able to perceive and keep its own memories. (DU, 146) Jung’s influential notion of complexes as split-off parts of the personality, differentiated according to their specific “feeling-tones,” is a return to polypsychism.10 The popular Jungian approach to dreams as dramatizations of this psychic community is in fact as old as 1803, when the characters in a dream were held to represent unconscious aspects of the personality.

Psychoanalysis explains multiple personality as the effect of repression. The self must censor itself or sublimate the parts of itself that cannot be integrated into consciousness. To remember everything would paralyze it. Defense mechanisms are necessary and to that degree healthy, for example the infant boy’s suppression of its desire for exclusive possession of the mother: But the ego’s self

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9 DU, 139. Janet discovered that naming the subpersonalities gave them more definition. “Once baptized, the unconscious personality is more clear and definite; it shows its psychological traits more clearly.” P. Janet, L’Automatisme psychologique (Paris, 1889), 318. This was, of course, the tried and true method of exorcism.

defense can go wrong, it can be incomplete, traumatic, and unresolved. If this is the case, the self, which ought to be one, suffers fragmentation. A repressed aspect of the self, either a memory, or a desire incompatible with the ego, returns as an alternative personality. For the dissociative tradition alternative personalities are not repressed memories or attitudes, but varieties of possibilities for consciousness, which for whatever reason remain latent. For dissociationists, this rich plurality which grounds consciousness renders the ego a one-sided determination, a contraction or limitation, necessary but in no way static, ultimate or final. Some of these possibilities are rendered inactive because of the passage of time: what was once a relevant and effective identity is rendered obsolete because of a change of circumstances or a decision to change. Some represent resources for growth and new development, possibilities for the self that have yet to be tried.

Schelling’s Metaphysics of Dissociation

Schelling’s theory of the dissociative personality is rooted in his doctrine of potencies, which he first developed in the years 1809–1813, as an appropriation of the theogony of Jakob Boehme. The self-pluralization essential to the Schellingian self has an eternal analogue in God, the archetype of personality. The Boehmian–Schellingian theogony begins with the notion of the absolute as not a unity of difference but the absence of difference, or what Schelling likes to call “indifference.” “The unground” as Schelling calls it in the Freedom essay (“the Godhead” in the Ages of the World) enjoys unity but at the price of personality. God prior to his self-division into contending wills (an abstraction since there is no prior for God) is neither personal nor self-conscious. The unground is an undifferentiated identity, an absolute, “indifferent” to all distinctions and oppositions, as such wholly without relation, to anything outside it or to itself. If consciousness and personality are to be, the unground must establish a relation to itself, which means it must internally self-divide.

12 The term is originally Boehme’s. See Schelling, Freedom, 68.
13 Here Schelling follows Eckhart in distinguishing the Godhead from the three persons of the Trinity. See AW, 23–24.
The logic of Schelling’s neo-Boehmian theogony could be reconstructed as a kind of transcendental theology. Since God has revealed Himself in the Old and New Testaments as a person, we must inquire into the condition of the possibility of God’s being a self-revealer. We know that the divine is one. But a self-revealer is a being who is related to another. How is this contradiction to be resolved? The unground must have divided itself into two countervailing wills, a will that withdraws from relation, contracts around an internal point of self-assertion, and a will that opens up to the other, renounces itself in an expansive reaching towards another. The opposite directions of the two wills, one centripetal the other centrifugal, are the first two potencies in personality.

We see the polarity concretized in nature, where on the pre-organic level, forces of attraction and repulsion generate substantial forms. On the organic level, the conflict and conjunction of the masculine and the feminine generate living beings. The seeming decline signified by the absolute’s descent into difference, consciousness, subject-object, is justified by the fact that personality (the third potency) thereby comes to be.

While the theosophical origin of this doctrine cannot be ignored, Schelling’s thinking here is also rooted in transcendental logic. The middle Schelling is a fusion of theosophy and transcendental logic, a demonstration of how the former gives content to the latter, even while the latter makes the formal structure of the former clear for the first time. Transcendental philosophy speaks of how nothing can be posited as simply identical to itself. Positing is always self-differentiating. The relation expressed in A=A is not undifferentiated identity. This was a Fichtian point pursued in different ways by Schelling and the early Romantics. “To say that something is the same as something else we have to split what is the same to show it is the same, as in the proposition A=A, where there are two different As.”

In the principle of identity, as in the Kantian law of self-consciousness, A posits A. But that which is posited is different from

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14 There is a direct relation to the Kabbalah through Schelling’s debt to F.C. Oetinger, a connection that has never been deeply explored. On the Kabbalistic notion of God’s contraction of his being in the act of creation (Zimzum) see Sanford Dobb, Symbols of the Kabbalah: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives (North Vale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 2000), 120–54.

that which posits, otherwise there is no positing. Thus the positing of A by A is the negating of A. Schelling expresses the negation implicit in positing by the introduction of another term (B) to distinguish the posited A from the positing A. Thus A=A (A posits A) means A=B (A posits not-A or B). The positing of A is the absenting of A from itself, the substitution of B for A—what Schelling calls first potency, or “the real.” Notice that A is not the first potency. The first potency is the absenting of A, A negated or contracted into nothingness. Difference is older than identity. A never appears as such: it can only be retroactively posited as that which is usurped by B in the first potency, exponentially doubled in the second potency, and exponentially tripled in the third potency.

The self-absenting of A has been described as a figure for Freudi-an repression by Slavoj Žižek in his Lacanian retrieval of German Idealism. I think this is a one-sided reading of Schelling’s meaning. One can only read Schelling this way on the basis of a prior decision concerning the nature of the real and the destiny of human subjectivity, a decision that Schelling does not make. There need be no reaction driving the movement from the absolute to the first potency. Schelling describes it as a free decision, an introduction of lack, nothingness, into an otherwise seamless and exhausted infinity. God does not repress his eternity because he cannot bear it. He rather dissociates himself from it in order to let something new come to be. Schelling agrees with Freud that dissociation is the essence and origin of consciousness; he disagrees that dissociation is always only repression:

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16 The point is a summary of Schelling’s theory of the predicate, which Hogrebe has argued is the foundation of Schelling’s thought. See Wolfgang Hogrebe, *Prädikation und Genesis. Metaphysik als Fundamentalheuristik im Ausgang von Schellings »Die Weltalter«* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989). See Žižek, *Indivisible Remainder*, 28: “As Hogrebe conclusively demonstrated, the endless oscillation between contraction and expansion is propelled by the impossibility of formulating the ‘stable’ relationship between S and P that forms the structure of a propositional judgment: the subject (also and above all in the logical sense of the term) ‘contracts’ itself, withdraws into itself and annihilates its predicative content; whereas in the ensuing gesture of expansion, it passes over into the predicate and thereby loses the firm ground of its self-consistency.”

17 “That God negates itself, restricts its being, and withdraws into itself, is the eternal force and might of God. In this manner, the negating force is that which is singularly revealing of God. But the actual being of God is that which is concealed. The whole therefore stands as A that from the outside is B and hence the whole = (A=B).” (AW, 15)

There is no dawning of consciousness (and precisely for this reason no consciousness) without positing something past. There is no consciousness without something that is at the same time excluded and contracted. That which is conscious excludes that of which it is conscious as not itself. Hence, all consciousness is grounded on the unconscious and precisely in the dawning of consciousness the unconscious is posited as the past of consciousness. (AW, 44)

First potency’s renunciation of otherness calls forth compensation by second potency, the affirmation of otherness, the expansive moment or “the ideal,” A². The tension between these two opposites of negation and affirmation, contraction and expansion, requires (logically) a third potency which both renounces and affirms, contracts and expands, A³. Second potency reasserts the A that had been lost in first potency. Second potency is not self-affirmative but self-diremptive; it does not assert itself but asserts its other. Second potency also fails, however, to simply posit A. For the product of its assertion of A is not A but A re-asserted or redoubled, A². What is manifest in second potency is latent in first potency. (AW, 18) Second potency decommissions the negativity of first potency (renders it “non-active” and “dark”) but only for the sake of focusing its implicit affirmative and productive power. Second potency fills the gap created by first potency; it is the potency which counters the No of first potency with an unequivocal (and equally one-sided) Yes. Second potency is “the outpouring, outstretching, self-giving being” that counterbalances egoism of A=B. (AW, 6) It is A doubled in several senses. First of all it is A reflected back to itself, the successful positing of A, achieved by virtue of the positor’s deliberate renunciation of itself. Thus what A=B means (but does not intend), A² intends. That is, first potency intends A (negatively) but means B. It asserts itself (A=A) and in the assertion loses itself, in effect posits the other (B). Second potency asserts its other and achieves itself. First potency grounds second potency, makes it possible, as the subject of any predication in ancient logic makes the predicate possible.

Second potency is just as finite as first potency, for it stands in essential opposition to it. The point is not only logical, it is also psychological. There is no altruism without a seed of egoism overcome, no self-diremption without a self that is given away. Here Schelling channels Boehme: “If there were not the No, then the Yes would be without force. No ‘I’ without the ‘not-I.’” (Ibid.) Third potency, the moment of synthesis of opposites, which stands for personality, is neither egoism, nor altruism, neither Yes nor No, but “the whole composed of dual forces.” (AW, 33) “That potency, which in accord-
ance with its nature, is spiritual and outstretching, could not persist as such were it not to have, at least in a hidden manner, a force of selfhood.” (AW, 9) Third potency, \( A^3 \), is the unity of the Yes and the No, but not as a coincidentia oppositorum, rather as a third that is in one respect affirmative, in another respect negative.

Schelling’s doctrine of potencies differs from Hegel’s dialectic in maintaining the principle of non-contradiction. The potencies do not “cancel and preserve” each other (aufheben), but persist alongside one another. Personality is the synthesis of opposite tendencies and attitudes, egoism, altruism, self-affirmation, self-diremption. Jung will speak of the basic psychological orientations of introversion and extraversion as constitutive elements of every personality. If one face of the self looks outward toward others, another face of the self turns inward to the unconscious centre of the personality. The plurality is not necessarily schizophrenic; it can be a fully functional polypsychism. When one of the opposites in the self is active, the other is not sublated but slumbering, latent, and grounding.

**Conclusion**

The repressive self is a totalitarian state. Although it can never achieve full and uninterrupted unity, the personality ought to be a seamless whole. None of its constitutive parts represent anything for themselves. They exist as such only as parts of a whole. Anything that is not contributing to the life of the whole detracts from it and needs to be “sublimated,” i.e., re-educated and oriented to the whole. The ego stands to the whole as the totalitarian ruler stands to the state. The unity of the collective is predicated on suppression of diversity. That this suppression is never entirely successful, that the being of the ruler never totally converges with the being of the state, is the source of the tragic nature of totalitarian rule and the nihilistic core of repressive psychologies. One is doomed to assert a homogeneity that is impossible to achieve. The infinity of this task of unification constitutes the life and being of the subject. Unity can only be achieved at the cost of the subject itself.

By contrast, the dissociative self is a functional democracy. The personality is composed of heterogeneous elements which need not be integrated into a single binding ideal. Opposition and division in fact contribute to the psychological health of the dissociative self. The ego may be the “head” of the personality, but its power is limited by other powers in the self. The function of the ego is to symbolize the collective, not by suppressing diversity but rather by representing it or allowing it to be represented. A lively untamable chaos, an
unmasterable diversity at the heart of the community is not only to be expected, it is to be encouraged.

It is clear enough from the history of 20th-century psychiatry that the repressive self won the day. When we speak of the self in a Western context, we usually mean the monolithic “I,” the subject which exists “for itself” and is the autonomous author of its actions. The ontological impoverishment of this notion of the self—its doomed, nihilistic tendencies, its antithetical stance to “nature,” and its tyrannical moral and political life—is often a reason for preferring the non-dualistic “subjectless” models of self based in oriental metaphysics. The Western tradition, however, like the Western self, is far more complex than this and we need not go far to find alternatives.

sjoseph.mcgrath@gmail.com