AFTER CONTINGENCY: TOWARD THE PRINCIPLE OF SUFFICIENT REASON AS *POST FACTUM*

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This essay argues for the contingency of necessity. The thesis is that contingency constitutes the possibility of necessity, which is always subsequent to contingency, only contingent necessity, a mere modality of contingent being. This study posits the contingency of necessity through a reading of Quentin Meillassoux and the late lectures of F. W. J. Schelling. While Meillassoux argues for the necessity of contingency, Schelling seeks to uncover the contingency at the heart of what is necessary. Although the principle of sufficient reason provides the necessary conditions for something and reason itself derives necessary truths, the fact that there is reason rather than unreason is but the contingency of a fact.

Meillassoux on Metaphysics and Facticity

Meillassoux contends that everything is contingent. While this leads him to relinquish the idea of the absoluteness of God as the *ens necessarium*, he abandons neither the thought of the Absolute nor of God as such. He rather posits that contingency itself, what he calls Hyper-Chaos or Time, is absolute being. He does not, therefore, reject the idea of an *ens realissimum*, but such a being would only be a fact, unsurpassable in ultimacy but not necessarily existent. Everything is contingent, says Meillassoux, and so everything is a *fact*.

Meillassoux's *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* contributes to the Continental project of the overcoming of metaphysics. He does not simply follow what he takes to be the customary distinction whereby metaphysics is a thinking of presence that seeks a foundation in a fixed entity or structure. Heidegger, for example, contends that metaphysics becomes manifest in the god of ontotheology, the *ens necessarium*. This demarcation of metaphysics, according to Meillassoux, is too narrow, unduly allowing figures such as Heraclitus, Nietzsche or Deleuze, who posit a necessary structure of becoming, to escape. For them everything repeats according to the necessities of πόλεμος, will to power or repetition respectively.

Meillassoux instead suggests that metaphysics is "defined by its belief in the determinate necessity of entities *or* processes."[1] Accordingly, even these theoreticians of difference, who attempt to elucidate the *necessity* of becoming, have not eclipsed metaphysics. Metaphysics is rather determined through the principle of sufficient reason, which, whether things be static or in process, is always able to elucidate why things are as they are. The principle of reason states that everything has its *raison d'être*. It is a law of being and a generator of necessity.

Yet, Meillassoux says that the only necessity is that everything is contingent. He insists that "...the project of non-metaphysical speculation would be established thus: our inability to prove why there is something rather than nothing."[2] Why must every entity be resolvable into a "why?" Why must there be a ground? If it is because thinking and being belong together, then one must still admit that this co-belonging—what Meillassoux terms correlation—while necessary *if* there would be something instead of nothing, is at bottom factical rather than necessary. There is no reason why there has to be anything at all. Thinking and being could have not belonged together, *i.e.*, there could have been nothing instead of something. Their co-belonging or correlation can only be a conditional necessity, *i.e.*, a *factical* necessity. Only given the *fact* that there is something rather than nothing is it necessary that they must be in correlation.

According to Meillassoux correlationism states that "there are no objects, no events, no laws, no beings which are not always-already correlated with a point of view, with a subjective access." (TB, 1) While this view may overcome naïve realism, Meillassoux does not believe it surpasses metaphysics because the correlation itself is thought as necessary. It is necessary that the correlation subsists in order for it to be possible that there be beings rather than nothing. Admittedly, *if* there should be something rather than nothing, *then* the correlation is necessary, but that treats the correlation as a conditional necessity. Meillassoux, however, as a "speculative materialist" (TB, 6), seeks that outside the correlation. Meillassoux writes:

> Correlationism...is not anti-realism but anti-*absolutism*. Correlationism is the modern way of rejecting all possible knowledge of

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[1] Quentin Meillassoux, "Time without Becoming," (May 8, 2008), 10. [http://speculativeheresy.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/3729-time_without_becoming.pdf]. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as TB.

[2] Quentin Meillassoux, "The Immanence of the World Beyond," *The Grandeur of Reason* (SCM Press, 2010), 446.

> an absolute…. There are *two* main forms of the absolute; the real-
> ist one, which is that of a non-thinking reality independent of our
> access to it, and the *idealist* one, which consists on the contrary in
> *the absolutization of the correlation itself*. (TB, 7)

He certainly breaks with the tradition of absolutism as a search for
the *ens necessarium*, but this does not preclude the possible affirma-
tion of an *ens realissimum* considered not as a conditional necessity
but as factical.[3] The question is whether one can absolutize the
correlation without grounding the correlation itself upon the neces-
sity of subjective reality. In other words, perhaps the correlation can
be thought *realistically* rather than idealistically if it is thought as a
fact that could have not been but factically is, a *contingent* fact.

What precludes one from absolutizing the correlation by thinking
of it as the "first accident [*das Urzufällige*]" or "original contingency
[*der Urzufall*]"[4] as Schelling deems it? This would not be an idealist
absolutization of the correlation, which still treats it as a conditional
necessity, but an absolutization of contingency, the contingency of
the correlation itself. This would posit the correlation as a fact rather
than as a ground or condition. It is not then thought as a conditional
necessity, but it is considered in advance of that for which it could
only subsequently, *i.e.*, in a belated sense, be retroactively posited as
necessary. For itself it is a fact and not a condition. Meillassoux too
writes, "I call 'facticity' the absence of reason for any reality." "We
can only attain conditional necessity, never absolute necessity." (TB,
8) Meillassoux, then, seemingly does not banish necessity *tout court*,
admitting the *possibility* of conditional or factical necessity, *i.e.*,
subsequent rather than prior necessity. He precludes only *a priori*
necessity, *i.e.*, *absolute* necessity. While it may be true that the corre-
lation must be *if* there is to be something rather than nothing, this
imputes only conditional necessity to the correlation. The correlation
itself, however, as anterior to the being of the world, is not neces-
sary. One can speak of it as a necessary condition only subsequently,
i.e., *post factum*. This essay attempts to think the correlation in-itself,
i.e., as an *absolute*, and not relatively as the pre-condition of what

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[3] The term "factical" has already been employed a few times when it might seem
that the term "factual" would be more appropriate. "Factual," however, shall be
reserved for empirical facts. Not all facts are factual; many are factical. To
absolutize the correlation is to treat it as a mere given but yet not as an empiri-
cal given, not as something factual.

[4] F. W. J. Schelling, "*Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie
oder Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*," in *Sämtliche Werke* II/1, (ed.) K.
Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856), 464.

follows from it. If one absolutizes the correlation by confronting its lack of reason, *i.e.*, its facticity and contingency, one eclipses metaphysics, *i.e.*, the principle of sufficient reason.

Meillassoux on Contingency

The principle of reason or reason itself possesses only conditional or posterior necessity. Prior to the subsequent necessity of reason, one finds not other conditions, reasons or grounds, but unreason. Meillassoux controversially hypothesizes, "The irrationality of things thus discloses to us being *qua* being, and this being of all things consists in a chaos subordinate to no reason whatsoever."[5] Unreason is primal chaos, nothing but pre-rational and accidental facticity. According to Meillassoux, however, the contingency of chaos is itself necessary. He writes, "Contingency, and *only* contingency, is absolutely necessary; facticity and only facticity, is not factual, but eternal." (TB, 9) Evidently, nothing non-contingent, *i.e.*, necessary, may be. Apparently, it is not a fact after all, but it is necessary that there is no necessity. Meillassoux formulates the necessity of facticity under the rhetoric of the "factial." "Factiality is not facticity, but the necessity of facticity, the essence of facticity." (TB, 9) Meillassoux now suggests that the correlation of thinking and being is not only not necessary, but, given factiality, it *cannot* be so, yet this would not be a fact. The issue concerns his thesis that "to be is to be factual — and *this* is not a fact." (TB, 9) Is reason itself or the principle of sufficient reason factical or factial?

Meillassoux terms the principle of contingency "hyper-chaos." "Hyper-Chaos: its contingency is so radical that even becoming, disorder, or randomness can be destroyed by it, and replaced by order, determinism, and fixity." (TB, 10) In apparent opposition to the foregoing, it seems that Meillassoux's contingency—Hyper-Chaos—does not, in fact, render its opposite impossible, namely, the subsequent accrual of *reason*, the haven of *necessity*. He affirms, "If facticity is the absolute, contingency no longer means the necessity of destruction or disorder, but rather the equal contingency of order and disorder…", something only describable as "surcontingence, supercontingency." (TB, 10) Hyper-Chaos seemingly does not preclude order, reason and necessity after all. Why, then, does he erect the notion of factiality, *i.e.*, the necessity of contingency, if Hyper-Chaos does not preclude the necessity of reason?

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[5] Meillassoux, "Immanence," 446.

He argues, fallaciously, that Hyper-Chaos—primordial facticity—can make compatible the principle of factiality and his rationalism through his interpretation of the principle of non-contradiction. He proclaims, "[N]on-contradiction is a condition of contingency, for a contradictory reality couldn't change since it would already be what it is not." (TB, 11) Whatever is contingent can be otherwise than it is whereas the principle of non-contradiction states that something cannot be its opposite, at least not at the same time and in the same respect. Certainly a contradictory reality cannot be because it would "already be" what it is not. Meillassoux here forgets his tenses. Something is only a contradiction and impossible if one affirms that it both is what it already *is* and what it already *is not*, *i.e.*, these must be affirmed at the same *time*. Nothing precludes, however, that something can already be presently the opposite of what it *may* be in the future. Meillassoux himself explicates Hyper-Chaos along the lines of the possible, *i.e.* the "may-be [*peut-être*]" (TB, 11), which makes his forgetting of tenses quite striking. Certainly, the boy who is presently sick is the same boy that in the future can become healthy. Non-contradiction, contra Meillassoux, only precludes that something cannot "already be" its opposite, but this does not exclude that it "may-be" its opposite. Meillassoux's *peut-être* translates literally as the "perhaps," a contingency that does not even preclude that necessity may-be. A contradictory being *cannot* be—which he understands to imply that contingency, therefore, *must* be—but how does it follow from his premises that the opposite of contingency cannot come to be, *i.e.*, that it perhaps may-be or can-be?

For Meillassoux, whatever Chaos has not yet precluded is not yet possible as an actual potency, but it is only that which has not yet been excluded, *i.e.*, rendered im-potent or im-possible. All that is excluded is that Chaos would *already* be in contradiction, *i.e.*, already positively contain two contradictory potencies. In Chaos nothing is factically excluded and, therefore, nor has anything yet been determinately included or formed as a potency within it. Chaos signifies possibility prior to potency, a dense possibility or the "virtual."[6] The

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[6] Meillassoux, "Immanence," 463. See also Quentin Meillassoux, "Potentiality and Virtuality," *Collapse II* (2007), 72. Meillassoux's "Immanence of the World Beyond," just quoted in the body of the text, encapsulates his "Spectral Dilemma," *Collapse IV* (May, 2008), which is poorly translated, egregiously speaking not of a god that "does not yet exist" but of one "no longer existing." "Immanence of the World Beyond," on the other hand, is not much better, translating God's "inexistence" as "non-existence," apparently unaware of the heritage of this as a technical term inherited from Alain Badiou. The inexistent is a latent, *i.e.*, not yet potent, possibility that still lies dormant in a situation.

virtual knows only dense-possibles—the virginal future of the may-be—but not real potentialities.

Time, Meillassoux proclaims, renders all laws contingent. He contends:

> I accord to time the capacity to bring forth new laws which were not "potentially" contained in some fixed set of possibles...*which were not at all contained in precedent situations*.... We must then understand that it follows that such cases irrupt, properly speaking, *from nothing*, since no structure contains them as eternal potentialities before their emergence.[7]

Hyper-Chaos does not contain a determinate set of potentialities that would unfold according to the necessary structure of time. It is not even necessary that time bring forth any set of potentialities from its virtual state. If time does bring forth novel possibilities, then such is completely contingent. It is not necessary that there be something instead of nothing. Time itself is not the unfolding of any other prior substratum of reality, even Chaos, nor does it constitute a substratum itself, lest one lapse into the necessity of metaphysics and time as its *ens necessarium*. To posit time as the unfolding of Chaos would be to posit Chaos as a substrate and time as the necessary law of its presencing.

Schelling's Ontology of the Unprethinkable Advent

The contention of the latter half of this essay is that the late Schelling's speculatively empirical method culminates in an "ontology of the fact" or a "factical ontology." The difference between Schelling's principle of non-contradiction—or the Law of the World as a prescriptive law of being—and Meillassoux's account of non-contradiction is that while both view the virtual, the "may-be" or the can-be (*das Seinkönnende*), as not excluding anything possible, Schelling suggests that exclusion/decisiveness must occur, even if it decides for nothingness. God, the being whose essence or *modus operandi* would be necessary, may or may not exist, but if a being with a necessary mode of operation would be existent, then it could neither have passed into being nor ever pass out of being, but it must be *definitively* excluded or not. God would exist in a necessary manner, *if* only he exists. In other words, Schelling distinguishes between

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[7] Meillassoux, "Potentiality and Virtuality," 72.

the "manner of existence [*Art der Existenz*]," which is necessary, and "existence as such [*Existenz überhaupt*],"[8] which is perfectly contingent. God would not necessarily exist, but He would exist necessarily, *i.e.* according to a necessary modality.[9] God's essence would be necessary, but the existence of such a necessary essence would be contingent. Schelling states:

> [T]hat God is determined to exist through nothing else in or outside himself, what more does this mean than that he exists groundlessly? Do we not name such existence contingent and must we not consequently say of God, according to this assumption, that he is a being existing with the utmost contingency since no reason is seen in his being?[10]

He concludes, "For this reason nothing more is said, however, than that God, if he is, can only necessarily and not contingently be."[11] At any rate, the permanence and even *eternity* of the necessity that would be God's essence is a virtuality that God's reasonless existence (Hyper-Chaos) surely cannot exclude!

What comes to be cannot in the same instant pass out of being. That, however, is precisely the description of the happening of Chaos. The question as to why there is something rather than nothing is the same as to why there is meaning rather than chaos, permanence rather than impermanence, regularity rather than irregularity. *Given* that there is something rather than nothing, so constancy and rule must have come to be. Yet, there is no law that says something must be constant and orderly. There is no law that might ground the uniformity/necessity of nature. There is no explanation for this fact, because it is just that, a contingent *fact*. That uniformity came into

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[8] F. W. J. Schelling, "Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie: Münchner Vorlesungen," in *Sämtliche Werke* I/10, (ed.) K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1861), 16.

[9] Note that the modalities of necessity, namely that which must be (*das Seynmüssende*) and that which ought to be (*das Seynsollende*), both follow rather than precede the modality *can* be (*das Seynkönnende*) or even the "magic" of pure possibility (*Mögen*) for Schelling.

[10] "*…daß Gott durch nichts anderes in oder außer sich zur Existenz bestimmt sei; was heißt dies mehr, als daß er grundlos existiere? Nennen wir nicht gerade eine solche Existenz eine Zufällige, und müßten wir nicht konsequenterweise von Gott dieser Voraussetzung gemäß sagen, er sei ein höchst zufällig existierendes Wesen, da sich ja von seinem Sein kein Grund einsehen läßt?*" F. W. J. Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, (ed.) W. Ehrhardt (Frommann-Holzboog, 1989), 23.

[11] "*Damit ist aber nicht mehr gesagt als Gott, wenn er ist, kann nur das notwendig, nicht zufällig Seiende sein.*" (*Ibid.*)

being out of non-uniformity indicates that being stands still for thought. There is a correlation between being and thinking, but this correlation is only a fact to be narrated, not sufficiently explained. This fact is im-possible or unthinkable prior to its advent, its coming-to-be. As Schelling phrases it, "Nothing further is said of the event itself than just that it has happened, that it has bechanced; it is, so to speak, the primal deed itself (the beginning of history), the factum— the happening *par excellence.*"[12] This is the primordial accident, an anarchic deed without ground or reason, primordial contingency [*das Urzufällige*].

Schelling on Chaos and the Law of the World

Schelling does not ground the facticity of the world upon reason.

> It is a necessary question: Why is there sense at all, why is there not nonsense instead of sense?... The whole world lies as it were entangled in reason, but the question is: How has it come into this net, 'because there is manifestly still something other and something more than mere reason in the world, even something that strives beyond these borders.'[13]

The world is without a *prior* reason. "[The world] contains a preponderant mass of unreason, so that one could just as well say that the rational is only the accidental."[14] There is not something rather than nothing due to the principle of sufficient reason, but groundlessly so. Schelling expands, "The question is whether one can say that philosophy has actually comprehended a fact when one explains that it is

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[12] "*Von dem Vorgang selbst läßt sich nun weiter nichts sagen, als eben, daß er sich ereignet, daß er sich begeben hat; er ist, daß ich so rede, die Urthatsache selbst* (*Anfang der Geschichte*), *das Factum – das Geschehene κατ' ἐξοχήν.*" F. W. J. Schelling, "*Die Mythologie,*" in *Sämtliche Werke* II/2, (ed.) K. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856), 153.

[13] "*...ist eine notwendige Frage: warum ist Sinn überhaupt, warum ist nicht Unsinn statt Sinn?... Die ganze Welt liegt gleichsam in der Vernunft gefangen, aber die Frage ist: wie ist sie in dieses Netz gekommen, <da in der Welt offenbar noch etwas Anderes und etwas mehr als blosse Vernunft ist, ja sogar noch etwas über diese Schranken Hinausstrebendes>.*" F. W. J. Schelling, *Die Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie: Münchner Vorlesung WS 1832–33 und SS 1833* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1972), 222.

[14] "*Sie enthält eine überwiegende Masse von Unvernunft, sodass man beinahe sagen könnte, das Rationale sei <nur> das Accidens.*" (*Ibid.*, 99–100).

rational."[15] Schelling, not unlike Meillassoux, begins with Hyper-Chaos, which he explicates as Duas prior to Monas or the *Daβ* prior to *Was*, *i.e.*, unprethinkable actuality prior to potency.

Schelling's chaos is "erratic/unstable [*das Unstete*]."[16] It is not (yet) One; it is bereft of uniformity and irreducible to the order of reason.[17] What proceeds from chaos is not something whose possibility could be seen in advance but "unprethinkable [*unvordenklich*]." The unprethinkable signifies Chaos/Duas/unprethinkable existence as such before it has become a Monas, *i.e.*, thinkable as an essence. As unprethinkable, Schelling's Chaos precedes (in a ontological rather than temporal sense) the correlation between thinking and being; it is "the outer-logical fact."[18] It is not yet thinkable, though it may subsequently be supplemented with thinkability, *i.e.* a necessary essence. It is unprethinkable—and so pre-correlational![19]—but that does not preclude that it "may-be" *post*-thinkable. Prior to the correlation with thinkability it simply is nought. Chaos, apart from its ordering (as time) is nothing at all. The real question is about its timing, the event that correlates *Daβ* to *Was,* being and thinkability. Time itself is the unprethinkable event/advent that supplements Hyper-Chaos with its thinkability and identity.

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[15] "*Die Frage ist, ob man sagen kann, das die Philosophie eine Sache wirklich begriffen habe, wenn man erklärt, das sie vernünftig sei...*" F. W. J. Schelling, *Die Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*, (ed.) W. Ehrhardt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), 20.

[16] F. W. J. Schelling, *Das System der Weltalter*, (ed.) S. Peetz (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), 132.

[17] Note two passages from Markus Gabriel: "Schelling stresses the fact that reflection necessarily indicates the brute facts of existence, which is *per se* inexplicable (indeterminable) in logical terms. Reflection is therefore by no means the unconditional. It ultimately depends on 'that which is unequal to itself' (*das sich selbst Ungleiche*)" Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, *Mythology, Madness and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism* (London: Continuum, 2009), 20. He further writes, "Schelling locates *total* inconsistency which is not even a multiple at the basis of consistency by introducing his concept of 'that which unequal to itself (*das sich selbst Ungleiche*).'" (*Ibid.*, 54)

[18] Manfred Frank writes, "First when the outer-logical *actuality* of the principle is secure can, as a result, a dialectical movement acquire reality. [*Erst wenn die außerlogische* Wirklichkeit *des Prinzips gesichert ist, kann in der Folge eine dialektische Bewegung Realität erwerben.*]" Manfred Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein: Schellings Hegelkritik und die Anfänge der Marxschen Dialektik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1975), 168.

[19] Note Meillassoux: "We now have an absolute that is, I believe, able to resist correlationism, but this absolute seems to be the contrary of a rational structure of being: it is the *destruction* of the principle of reason...." (TB, 11)

Chaos or the "the Duas first becomes Duas through participation with the Monas."[20] In itself, *i.e.*, absolutely, it is only anarchic contingency.

> One can only say of it that it Is, not that it necessarily Is. In this sense, it is primordial contingency, the primordial accident itself, whereby a large distinction is to be made between the accidental which is through another and that which is accidental *through itself*, which does not have a cause outside *itself* and is inferred from the accidental in everything else.[21]

Hyper-Chaos has not actually articulated anything at all until it comes to be as the factical correlation between thinking and being. Time itself is the generator of both Hyper-Chaos *as* chaos and the order/necessity that ensues from it. The identity of Hyper-Chaos itself is only acquired through its supplementation or correlation with essence, order and necessity. Only then is it a ground and a selfsame. One cannot offer any reason why this grounding occurs, because the unidentifiable *Ungrund* entails precisely the faltering of the principle of reason. Schelling writes, "…[T]he foundation of all philosophical rationalism, *i.e.*, every system, which raises reason to a principle, is destroyed."[22] The only explanation for this *fact* is the principle of non-contradiction itself as the Law of the World [*das Weltgesetz*].

Hyper-Chaos/unprethinkable existence is the absolute indifference of every *virtual* possibility, a virtual contradiction or coexistence of opposites, which cannot be and therefore must be decided. Hyper-Chaos does not even exclude its opposite: order and necessity. Accordingly, it does not yet even have the identity of a contradiction proper; for, it both is and is *not* its opposite. It is nothing, not even a contradiction, decisively and determinately because, since it has not yet excluded anything, it also does not yet contain

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[20] "*…die Dyas erst durch die Theilnahme an der Monas zur Dyas werde.*" (Schelling, *System*, 99)

[21] "*Man kann von ihm nur sagen, daß es Ist, nicht daß es nothwendig Ist; in diesem Sinn ist es das Urzufällige, der Urzufall selbst, wobei ein großer Unterschied zu machen zwischen dem Zufälligen, das es durch ein anderes ist, und dem* durch sich selbst *Zufälligen, welches keine Ursache hat außer* sich selbst *und von dem erst alles andere Zufällige sich ableitet.*" (Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke* II/1, 464)

[22] "*Damit ist allem philosophischen Rationalismus, d. h. jedem System, was die Vernunft zum Princip erhebt, das Fundament zerstört.*" F. W. J. Schelling, "*Die Philosophie der Offenbarung: Erster Theil,*" in *Sämtliche Werke* II/3, (ed.) K. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1858), 248.

any determinations, not even contradictory ones. Contrary to Meil-lassoux, it cannot (yet) even properly exclude its opposite, because in order to actually *be* as chaotic non-uniformity and non-identity it would have to exclude in *fact* the possibility of order, necessity, identity and uniform succession. In order, however, already to *be* what it is, Chaos can exclude nothing, not even its opposite (non-contradiction), and so it remains nothing at all, only what *may*-be. It does not contain any being, but it is only that which *may*. It cannot *be* the contradictory being. As Albert Franz suggests, "If this would be possible, then τὸ αὐτό would no longer be identifiable as such, as inner contradiction it would have lost its identity and nothing more could be said of it with the standard of truth. For this reason the principle of contradiction is for Aristotle also shown as a law of being."[23] Hyper-Chaos only truly comes into being *as* Hyper-Chaos or the Duas once it has already been supplemented with the *potency* of the Monas. Only then does it accrue its identity as the necessarily contradictory being that can*not* be its opposite, which, as virtual, it still *may-be*. It only first steps into its identity in correlation. Before-hand, it is but the *facticity* of the principle of non-contradiction itself, the Law of the World. Schelling asks and answers, "How can one put forward a law for something that can in no way be? When it is known that a contradiction cannot be, it must be known that it nevertheless in a certain way is."[24] If contradictions cannot be, then they demand to be resolved. The principle of non-contradiction or the Law of the World demands that contradictions cannot be tolerated, that they must be decided and supplemented with identity. Prior to decisive correlation Hyper-Chaos is nothing, indeed not even a contradiction which *is*, because in order for it to be a contradiction it would first necessarily have to be τὸ αὐτό and not its opposite, *i.e.*, also not non-contradiction. As Hyper-Chaos it is neither contradiction nor non-contradiction, but the undecidability between these two! The law of non-contradiction as a *demand* that contradictions be resolved or that everything acquire a decided identity is thus not descriptive, saying nothing of what *is*, but a prescriptive law of being.

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[23] "*Wäre dies möglich, dann wäre das τὸ αὐτό nicht mehr als solches identifizier-bar, es hätte als innerlich Widersprüchliches seine Identität verloren, und es könnte nichts mehr mit Wahrheitsanspruch von ihm gesagt werden. Damit ist für Aristoteles das Widerspruchsprinizip auch als Seinsgesetz erwiesen.*" Albert Franz, *Philosophische Religion: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit den Grundlegungsproble-men der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 164.
[24] F. W. J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World: Third Version*, (tr.) J. Wirth (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 12.

The law of non-contradiction as the prescriptive Law of the World demands that a correlation between thinking and being *ought* to advene or not, but one or the other. Nothing could always have held sway instead of something. Hyper-Chaos could have secured its identity by deciding against being/identity and for nothing-ness/ambivalence. The Law of the World demands that whatever is or is *nought*, be or *not* be decisively and determinately. Though tolerable of nothingness, it "tolerates nothing accidental."[25] Super-contingency could have persisted, but only as long as it persisted by positively excluding non-contingency, determinacy and necessity. Contrary to Meillassoux, who suggests that Hyper-Chaos can bring about anything *except* what is necessary, Schelling asserts that it cannot even bring about itself as something which is instead of is nought until it stands in opposition to, *i.e.*, in correlation with, some-thing self-identical, something necessarily itself, something which cannot be its opposite. This does not mean that it is necessary that there be something, even the correlation itself, rather than nothing, but, to be precise, it means that the dense-*possibility* of the correla-tion must arrive.[26] This *possibility* must be decided for or against. Chaos must either be or not-be, but it cannot ambivalently and indecisively straddle the fence between being and non-being.

God as the *Ens Necessarium*?

For Schelling, God would not be a necessary *existent* but the neces-sary *essence* which supercontingency has contracted for itself. God's mode of being (*modus operandi*) or essence is necessary even if God's existence is only factical and contingent. God is an original and eternal facticity. There is no reason to think that the eternal must be necessary rather than a fact which could have not been. In any event, one can only proclaim the existence of God as an empirical fact. God is not empirical in the sense of something sensible, a possible object of perception. There is a large difference between sensibilism and empiricism. The assertion that God, in *fact*, exists is a statement of a

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[25] "*…das nichts Zufälliges duldet…*" (Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke* II/2, 143)

[26] As Vladimir Jankélévitch explains, "*Everything possible must arrive.* (The phrase) is, understood well, less Spinozistic than it appears: because with Spinoza nothing *arrives*… [*Tout le possible doit arriver. (La phrase) est, bien entendu, moins spinoziste qu'elle n'en a l'air : car chez Spinoza rien n'*arrive…]." *L'Odyssée de la Conscience dans la Dernière Philosophie de Schelling* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1933), 198.

non-sensible or "*speculative* empiricism,"[27] and a possible tenet of "factical ontology."

Schelling is a speculative empiricist who does not give up a rationalist side. Meillassoux too writes that "...because the metaphysical principle of reason is absolutely false, the logical principle of non-contradiction is absolutely true." (TB, 12)[28] Schelling practices "empirical a priorism,"[29] a method that is neither *a priori* nor *a posteriori*, but one that functions *per posterius*. Speculative empiricism excludes nothing experiential, a domain inclusive of much that is supersensible, *e.g.*, the will of a person, which is only known through one's empirical consequents, namely, one's words and deeds. A person is un-*pre*-thinkable and so, if thinkable at all, only *post*-thinkable, thinkable through their *posterius*. A person is known neither a *priori* nor *a posteriori*, neither through reason alone nor through the sensible *qua* sensible, but the supersensible person is known *per posterius*, through their posterior words and deeds. In like manner, one could only proclaim the existence of God as a contingent, yet primordial and eternal, facticity *per posterius*. On the one hand, the assertion is *a priori* insofar as one does not seek a ground or condition for the posterior—the words and deeds, or God's history—but one seeks and speculates about the meaning of the *prius*. On the other hand, the assertion is *a posteriori* insofar as it is a speculatively *empirical* claim. One does not seek the meaning of the *posterius* though, but the meaning of the *prius*; one only argues *through* the *posterius*.[30] Schelling confirms:

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[27] This term is to be used as both an allusion and counterfoil to the speculative materialism of Meillassoux and others.

[28] Nathan Brown, a commentator of Meillassoux, has argued, "If many of us have found Meillassoux's volume invigorating, that is because it opens the promise of a new relation between rationalism and empiricism..." See "The Speculative and the Specific: On Hallward and Meillassoux" in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, (ed.) L. Bryant et. al. (Melbourne: re.press, 2011), 146. Perhaps, it is actually Schelling who first opened this new relation.

[29] "*empirisher Apriorismus.*" F. W. J. Schelling, "Einleitung in die Philosophie der Offenbarung oder Begründung der positiven Philosophie" in *Sämtliche Werke* II/3, (ed.) K. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1858), 130.

[30] Be it the person, God or the facticity of reason itself, the most appropriate method operates *per posterius*. Schelling is a speculative empiricist that does not relinquish the rationalist side, because reason and the necessity of reason are indeed efficacious, but only as a posterior and contingent facticity itself. Reason is not self-grounding; reason itself is not founded upon the principle of sufficient reason. One must ask: Why is there reason rather than unreason? One must speculate beyond reason, a facticity which just as easily could have not been.

> The absolute prius should not be proved (this is beyond all proof, it is the absolute beginning, which is certain through itself); it itself (the absolute prius) should not be proved, but the *consequent* of this, this must be *factically* proved and, thereby, the *divinity* [Gottheit] of that prius — that it is *God* and thus that *God* exists.[31]

The point is not to prove the existence of Hyper-Chaos and its contingency but rather the necessary essence, the divinity, of primordial contingency. One does not *begin* with God as the *ens necessarium*, but that does not preclude that one might *end* there. That the absolute *prius*, Hyper-Chaos, may-be Godly, that it may exist with a necessary and uniform *modus operandi*, is not to be excluded. That it does, in *fact*, exist in this manner, however, is only to be known *post factum*; God is only post-thinkable because God's existence is un-*pre*-thinkable. The divinity of the *prius*, that it is in fact God, would reside in the consequent and not in the *prius* itself; it would reside in the essence and not in the existence of the *prius*. The *prius*, arbitrary chance and disorder, is certainly not divine. There is no divine substrate. If there is a God, then he is a God who has eternally advened as the supplementary order or cosmetics of chance and disorder.

Commensurate with this contingent God Schelling offers an open-ended or running proof. Schelling explicates as follows:

> This proof does not at all just go to a determinate point, thus not just to the world for instance, which is the object of our experience, but rather as I myself, concerning human individuals who are important to me, do not find it sufficient only in general to know that they are but demand perpetual proofs of their existence, so is it also here.[32]

God must perpetually prove and reprove himself, *i.e.*, his divine character and not just his existence. He must continue to exist *as* God or with a Godly *modus*. He must prove his identity, *i.e.*, his divinity,

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[31] "*Nicht das absolute Prius* selbst *soll bewiesen werden (dieß ist über allem Beweis, es ist der absolute, durch sich selbst gewisse Anfang), also nicht es selbst (das absolute Prius) soll bewiesen werden, sondern die* Folge *aus diesem, diese muß* faktisch *bewiesen werden, und damit die* Gottheit *jenes Prius – daß es* Gott *ist und also* Gott *existirt.*" (Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke* II/3, 129)

[32] "*Es geht dieser Beweis keineswegs bloß bis zu einem bestimmten Punkt, nicht also etwa bloß bis zu der Welt, die Gegenstand unserer Erfahrung ist; sondern, wie ich, selbst bei menschlichen Individuen, die mir wichtig sind, nicht genügend finde, nur überhaupt zu wissen, das sie sind, sondern fortdauernde Erweise ihrer Existenz verlange, so ist es auch hier…*." (Schelling, "*Darstellung*," in *Sämtliche Werke* II/1, 571)

just as a person must perpetually prove their character. This proof is not a syllogism, but as open-ended, it is the only sort of argument appropriate for speculative empiricism and factical ontology.

For both Meillassoux and Schelling[33] time does not reveal what already existed in advance as concealed, but it brings something forth, *e.g.*, God's necessary essence, that simply was nought, the manifestation of a dense-possible, an im-possible. Schelling, however, by absolutizing neither the correlation nor reason as such, but the contingency or facticity of the correlation and reason itself, avoids factiality, *i.e.*, the necessity of contingency. He rather espouses the contingency of necessity.

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[33] Peter Gratton rightly surmises that in concluding that contingency is necessary Meillassoux also concludes that there is no necessary being. God does not exist, but God may exist at an unspecified date in the future. Meillassoux's God, unlike Schelling's, is not an *actual* contingency, but a *possible* contingency. God may-be at a future time. In tune with Richard Kearney's similarly *possible* God, however, Gratton offers this evaluation of the suggestion that God is a necessary being. "If this were the case it would come at the cost of thinking God as unfree." "Meillassoux's Speculative Politics: Time and the Divinity to Come," *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 4 (2012), 8. More poignantly, however, he also offers the following condemnation. "It is not clear why this outcome"—that God might possibly come to be in the future—"would come over any other: why not a life born by a Demiurge who resurrects us only to provide us with greater evils?" (*ibid.*, 14). While it is true that no dense-possible can be excluded in advance, that also means that there is no sense in arbitrarily speculating about which of these dense-possibles may actually come to be since none are any more probable than any others. Schelling's speculative empiricism, however, does not speculate about possibilities *simpliciter*, but it begins with the *actually* given. This protects it from *ad hoc* speculations of the kind one sees in Meillassoux. Schelling only affirms what is possible by beginning with what is actual. This, in fact, is what he deems the nature of originality, which is "that which we first conceive as possible in that it is *actual*; from which we thus first conceive the possibility through the actuality. [*Originell ist das, was wir als möglich erst begreifen dadurch, dass es* wirklich *ist; wovon wir also die Möglichkeit erst durch die Wirklichkeit begreifen*.]" (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 128)