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David L. Clark [a]
[a] Department of English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

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Schelling's wartime: philosophy and violence in the age of Napoleon

David L. Clark*

Department of English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

After abandoning the philosophy of identity around 1807, Friedrich Schelling's writings take a radical turn towards the question of the enigma of freedom and the perdurability of evil – the "positive," violent, and self-proliferating presence of malice in the world. In their rhetoric and in their arguments, these mournful texts evoke a ruinous universe that suffers uncontrolled egotistical destruction, culminating in the emergence of the phenomenon of absolute enmity, or what Schelling calls spirit's "war against all Being." My wager is that these texts do more than form a critique of German Idealism. They also respond to the horror, brutality, and extremity of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary wars unfolding all around Schelling. How does philosophy bear witness to the obscene specter of the birth of "total war"? Schelling's middle-period texts, I suggest, struggle to answer this question.

> Nobody has imagined war such as we have seen it!
>
> G. W. F. Hegel (*Letters* 117)

> Where does this indiscriminate, never-ending force of death lead? Philosophers may very well say: there is no death, nothing in itself fades away … However, what we others call it still remains, nevertheless, and words can no more explain this than they can explain it away.
>
> F. W. J. Schelling (*Clara* 22)

Press-ganged into the Prussian army, and suddenly finding himself amid the obscene prospect of pitiless battlefield deaths, Voltaire's Candide, we are told, "trembled like a philosopher and hid himself as best he could" (26). In the French satirist's hands, war not only makes one quake, it makes one quake *comme un philosophe* – as if philosophy were a special kind of becoming undone, a shivering will not-to-know in which war's brutality is nevertheless felt in the blood, and felt along the heart. Candide is partly modeled on Leibniz, whose dreams of perpetual peace Kant also regarded with incredulity, indeed, as a form of disguised millennial thinking at odds with the more sober expectations of reason, for which, as he says, peace is an "immediate duty" (*Perpetual Peace* 105). In a world that is ferociously and interminably at war, peace is experienced as pressing and imperative, not as a deferred abstraction: "Morally practical reason pronounces in us its irresistible *veto*," Kant says emphatically: "*there is to be no war*" (*Metaphysics of Morals* 491). Schelling too found Leibniz's influence pernicious; the naively optimistic faith in the explanatory power of the principle of sufficient reason had contributed, he suggests in 1809, to philosophy's collapse into mere "philanthropism," whose most deleterious effect was that it denied the positive presence of evil at the precise historical moment when Europe brimmed to overflowing with the stuff (*Freedom* 39). For all their differences, Voltaire, Kant, and Schelling were similarly impatient with dogmatic thinkers who blithely spoke of human beings as living in the

*Email: dclark@mcmaster.ca

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best of all possible worlds, as if the future were only a measureless continuation of the present, this, after all, while armies laid waste to Europe and to each other in a orgy of violence – an orgy that would only end, if end is what it was, with the defeat of Napoleon.

Voltaire's trembling Candide is an important precursor in a larger narrative of the critique of philosophical quietism, the alleged swerving *from* historical violence that will come to be called "the German ideology." According to this narrative, Kant is said to excuse himself from the fury of war by absorbing its contingent destructiveness into a drama of thought, and by sublating revolutionary hostility into the mere conflict of the faculties. In an analogous fashion, Hegel predicts that the "self-destructive actuality" of the (French) revolutionary wars will finally pass "over into another land," namely the deathless and ennobling territory of (German) spirit.[1] What is telling is that Hegel faults *Schelling* for having turned thought from history, as if anticipating and deflecting the charge of intellectualism and immaterialism that Marx will eventually level against him, the author of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Although fiercely critical of Leibniz's unwillingness to grasp the positive presence of radical evil in the world, as in fact Kant had done late in his life, Schelling thereby finds himself relegated to the margins of philosophy by his erstwhile friend, who infamously suggested that he had withdrawn into the "night in which all cows are black." According to this account, Schelling too passes over into another land, but for Hegel this is the undiscovered country where the particular and the concrete fade into undignified formlessness. Hegel's no doubt unfair slur helped activate a view of the philosopher as an interesting if disengaged obscurantist, a view that has had a long and varied afterlife, whether in the form of conventional histories of philosophy (Habermas, for example, confidently says that "Schelling is *not* a political thinker" [43]), *or* in the guise of more unconventional reassessments (Žižek's illuminating readings make Schelling's work answerable to the injury of history, yes, but the archaic history of the psyche and the trauma of the "Real"[2]). Schelling is sometimes said to be "the first thinker to establish history as a properly philosophical topos, and not simply as a process to be understood philosophically, a movement within which philosophy itself is first to be articulated" (Warnek 177). This is a claim with which I have little disagreement, but here too we find that the philosopher is characterized as largely abstaining from the heat and dust of the world, even while he calls for European philosophy to take on "flesh and blood" (*Freedom* 26). Mortality, violence, and vulnerability remain elemental matters, troubling questions that connect humanity to the nature of things and that are primarily endured in the form of philosophical topoi. For example, David Farrell Krell has taught us to pay attention to the haunting roles that death, disease, and loss play in Schelling; these are the "dire forces" that course through the living universe, unworking and constituting individuality and personality, both divine and human.[3] Or the historical particularities that matter most to Schelling can be Heideggerian or Heideggerian sounding; I'm thinking here of Jason Wirth's elegant analysis of Schelling's masterwork, *Of Human Freedom*, in which the philosopher chastises philosophical modernity for its bloodless generalities, and calls instead for us to think more rigorously about "what is unique to human freedom, to the specific difference that the 'human' makes to freedom" (*Conspiracy* 156).

I don't want to quarrel with any of these readings, each of which, on its own terms, tries to locate Schelling in his time and in a critical relationship with time. They strike me as necessary and important, now more than ever, in our own academic historical and historicist moment, precisely because they remind us that the history of ideas *has* and *is* a history. More: all that is meaningful to history cannot be reduced to the civic and the social – not when philosophers like Schelling insist on the uncanny possibility of idealisms without absolutes, and attempt to do justice to materialities that are neither simply nor even necessarily matter.[4] With Schelling, it can never be a question simply of idealism or realism,

materiality or spirituality, false consciousness or historical engagement, since these are normatively oppositional terms that his thinking unravels. But we get closer to apprehending another historical Schelling when we consider recent arguments about the complex ways in which the philosopher's life – which was marred by terrific personal loss and misfortune – got caught up in his always restlessly searching *philosophy* of life.[5] I'm thinking here of how the deaths of his beloved wife and fellow traveller, Caroline, and before her, Caroline's fifteen-year old daughter, Auguste Schlegel, get written into the rich affective regions of Schelling's texts – texts which dwell so thoughtfully on the nature of loss and the irreducible pervasiveness of the melancholy, and do so in ways that cannot easily be reduced to the autobiographical without significantly revising what we mean by autobiography in the context of philosophy. Yet a great deal remains to be done to re-read Schelling in somewhat larger historical contexts, especially the philosopher's middle period (that is, the work written at the height of the Napoleonic Wars), for it is during this period that the philosopher experiments with an improbable form of "empiricism," or what Tilottama Rajan has described, with reference to Godwin, "a mode of knowing that responds to the revisability of ideas by life" ("Framing" 513).

To this end I want very briefly to suggest that it is not or not only Caroline's and Auguste's untimely loss that presses down on Schelling's extraordinary writing between the publication of the *Freedom* essay in 1809 through to the drafts of the *Ages of the World,* completed during the year of the Battle of Waterloo, but also the deaths of tens of thousands of others – namely the soldiers and civilians that were killed and maimed during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the very period in which Schelling came of philosophical age and in which, arguably, his work as a radical philosopher grew to fruition. Can it be an accident that Schelling turns to the question of freedom, and to the relationship between freedom and the faculty not only of good and evil but also of good and *radical* evil during the same period that sees Europe convulse itself with war, violence, and useless suffering on a scale hitherto never seen before? In the *Freedom* essay, Schelling promises an original investigation into the nature of human depravity, its radical origins and fearsome effects, and what I want to suggest is that this move on the question of evil means both confronting war and being confronted *by* a world at war. And not *ordinary war* (an obscene phrase if there ever was one): this is modern war, war that is exterminatory in its violent intentions and outcomes, war that deforms entire economies and that converts these economies into factories of death, war that drags down victors and losers alike, war that consumes human beings, rendering them into "mere machines or instruments" (Kant, *Perpetual Peace* 95) or worse, as food for the voracious hunger of cannibal kings, war carried to the far reaches of the globe, without regard for the safety and sanctity of the fellow human beings living there, war that threatens to transform the world into a vast graveyard, war so total that it extinguishes not only individuals but also, as Kant glimpsed at the end of his life, the very fact of right itself;[6] war whose perpetrators, including some of its philosophical apologists (like Wilhelm von Humboldt), believed it to be a redemptive and regenerative experience, not the gruesome annulment of Enlightenment but its ultimate and exceptional expression.[7]

My wager then is that armed global hostility makes its chaotic presence known in Schelling's middle work, and not as one problem among many. Indeed, the body of these writings could be said to endure a kind of traumatism of the warring other, symptomatic evidence of which is legible in the disturbed and unruly nature of the texts composed during the height of Napoleon's power and his bloody downfall. War's abyssal touch makes itself felt, for example, in the curious generic experiments and the strange rhetorical obscurities characterizing the material written in the years surrounding the composition of the *Freedom*

essay, material that includes the unpublished *Weltalter* fragments that dwell *with* the question of trauma, but which in their incompleteness and self-truncations also palpably show signs *of* trauma. As Žižek argues, albeit for reasons very different from the ones that I am sketching out in this essay, Schelling's work after 1807 is an "exemplary case of the *non-contemporaneity of a thought to its time*" (*Abyss* 4). The unceasing and proliferating madness of war makes it so. Finally unable or perhaps unwilling to continue publishing his work, Schelling struggles to find a place for philosophy in a world that is increasingly hostile to its claims, to its very existence: a philosophical life, and a philosophy *of* life, then, interrupted by the demonic presence of irrepressible war and death. Indeed, Schelling is forced to confront new forms of political violence that are so amplified and consequential that they pursue the philosopher to the grave. Long after his death, in the midst of another world war (yet a war whose peculiarly modern features can be traced to "the first total war," as David A. Bell vividly describes the post-revolutionary conflict that Schelling also endured), British warplanes will firebomb the University of Munich's archives, and with them a significant portion of the philosopher's manuscripts – while also indiscriminatingly incinerating most of the rest of city and a great many of its civilian inhabitants. If the moral law makes the subject of practical reason tremble, so too does the prospect of mass death on the battlefields and along the byways of Europe, where, as Kant had said, not only are human beings rendered into disposable things to be acquired and consumed; under the fantastically aggressive conditions of military modernity, the perpetrators and their violent acts also face annihilation, as if war could put even death *to* death, leaving nothing – or almost nothing – behind to tell the tale. As Schelling will say, in a phrase to which I want to return, war today (and perhaps for a long time before) has become nothing less than "the most vehement war against all *Being*" (*Stuttgart Seminars* 232).

Schelling's middle period is saturated with an eerie sense of war, and not only because he lived and worked in one of the most pervasively militarized societies on the planet, a region of Europe whose inhabitants had, by the time of the Revolutionary campaigns, already suffered over a century and a half of extraordinary wartime hardships: the dislocation and sickening of communities, the terror and torture of civilians, the enduring disruption and deformation of the economy, the enormous and increasing battlefield casualties – in all, a searing memory of pain and loss that Frederick the Great characterized as "the deadly imprint" indelibly marking the German-speaking lands that he ruled.[8] During the early nineteenth century war of course continues to menace and disfigure the Continent – and well beyond – at every turn, and in doing so it also jeopardizes the very idea of a cosmopolitan Europe. German historians argue that nowhere did the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars overwrite traditional forms of society more than in the southern and southwestern parts of Germany, including Munich, the city to which Schelling moved in 1806. Schelling witnesses the southern states and statelets of the Holy Roman Empire collapse into a war zone for almost twenty years, during which time Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine is welcomed by many Germans as respite from the terrible deprivations of the ongoing hostilities, and from the predatory interests of the Austrians; but this is a hope that was soon dashed by the extraordinary burdens associated with war and occupation – the extortionate taxes, the deformation of the local economies, and especially by the imposition of conscription to feed the insatiable demands of Napoleon's fighting machine. This is the period that saw escalating forms of violence both near and far, and that brought violently home what was also distant, especially if we remember that some thirty thousand Bavarian soldiers marched off to Russia, and never returned. Entire villages were robbed of their men by these disastrous and costly campaigns, a situation compounded by the increasing violence unfolding around Munich. In the battles along the Danube River in 1809, half a dozen of which occurred within

120 kilometers of the city, tens of thousands of soldiers were killed or wounded. Whatever support had remained for Napoleon in southern Germany had in any case mostly dissolved with the slaughter of the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstädt in 1806.[9] Observing that defeat, and remarking upon its unprecedented scale, speed, and ferocity, Schelling's exact contemporary, Carl von Clausewitz, makes this prescient observation: "'one would have to be blind,'" he says, "'not to be able to perceive the difference with our wars, that is to say the wars that our age and our conditions require … The war of the present time is a war of all *against* all.'" As Bell notes, citing these remarks, military conflict now becomes absolutized, its execution dependent upon "the commitment of every possible resource and all possible violence" (241). This is the dreadful parturition of what will come to be called *totalen Krieg* or total war, a limitless hostility extending not only to noncombatants but also to the very idea of a noncombatant (for this kind of armed struggle means that the distinction between soldier and civilian founders, and the insurgent as we know this figure today is born). It is no wonder that when we speak of the German lands at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, as Christopher Clark has recently noted, we are talking about a culture haunted to the core by a "dystopian vision of ambient violence and disorder" (36).

Faced with these unimaginable atrocities and previously unseen levels of violence, it is not a surprise then that, as the historian Ute Planert points out, no issue more preoccupies the letters and diaries of southern Germans or shapes everyday life during this period than the ravages of the "endless series of wars" that they endured through to the end of the Napoleonic conflict – more even than "reform politics or the spread of national sentiment" (676). Similar claims could and should be made about Schelling's middle-period texts, which seem saturated with something like a wartime sensibility, a self-consciously worrisome feeling that the war in its extremity has come home and that home will never be the same because of it. In ways that I can only evoke here, Schelling's writings register what Mary A. Favret calls "symptoms of a history not entirely possessed" (605). They are haunted by the profoundest sense of loss, and are often affectively mournful as much as they are philosophically *about* the irreducible nature of melancholy. Their narratives are troubled by specters unsettling the triumphalist claims of the egotistical Spirit, of which Napoleon was surely the complicated epitome, even as they turn repeatedly to themes and figures of longing, traumatic dislocation, and the incursion of the demonic into everyday life, as they do to nostalgia and the ravages of madness, hunger, violence and indeed an addiction to violence. These are texts that speak to specific philosophical questions, to be sure, and with unparalleled critical power, but they also appear to me to be elsewhere and otherwise, especially when they address the terrible prospect, as Schelling says, of living in a world in which "everything, even the most precious, must perish" (*Stuttgart Seminars* 226). These are texts that evoke a sorrowful sense not only that the time is out of joint but also that Schelling as a thinker is himself at odds with his own time, born too soon or perhaps too late. The philosopher looks about and sees unmistakable signs of an abhorrent efflorescence of human evil, and, much more worrisomely, of "an enthusiasm for evil" (*Freedom* 41, 158), a violence that is not only ravenous, habituating, and self-proliferating, but also a "positive" force in the world. As Schelling argues, evil is a potency that is not without its own genius; it is a non-being that is at the same time perversely assertive and wilful, even "creative" or at least transformative, the surest sign of which is that it can morph into the truly diabolical, or what Joseph P. Lawrence describes as the "psychotic distortion of reality that allows one to will evil *as* one's good" (172). Looking into the dark heart of war, Schelling glimpses the same abyss of selfishness and self-sufficiency that Clausewitz had seen; as Paul Saint-Amour puts it, although "the purpose of war is to serve a political end, the nature of war is to serve only itself."[10] The totality of a war waged against everything is thus measured by its frightening

desire to be its own justification: i.e., to have burned off or spirited away the notion that war is a means to an end, and instead to become radically self-authorizing and to compel everything else to bend to the force of its self-understanding.

When Schelling tells us in a memorable passage from his experimental philosophical drama, *Clara*, that "the whole Earth is one great ruin, where animals live as ghosts and men as spirits" (25), it is difficult not to believe that he is responding to the melancholy spectacle not only of war but also of a *world* at war. As if bearing witness to the threatened destruction of the planet and the spectralization of life, the philosopher struggles to understand war's unnumbered losses, and to find the words to speak of a "nameless Good" (*Freedom* 30) when it is the nameless, liquidated dead that feel more pressing and more sadly "alive" in the minds and lives of the German survivors. Now Schelling turns specifically to the matter of war in the third of his three *Stuttgart Seminars*, this, in a discussion of what he calls "the curse" of the modern state (227). Alluding to the French Revolution, and to German enthusiasts of its Girondin politics, the philosopher remarks – as Habermas points out – that "it is no accident that the most rigorous theorists of the Idea of a completely just order tend to get caught in the worst despotisms" (45). Many years later, by way of contrast, Schelling rather dismally celebrates the state as that which "everyone must be called upon to preserve," no matter what the cost, defending the body politic to the death if necessary.[11] But in 1810, amid the atrocities of the bloody conflict on the Continent, the only thing worse than the state that confuses peace with pacification is the grim scene of countries waging war on each other, a condition Schelling describes as the most "blatant" evidence of the perverse distance human beings have put between themselves and the obscure origins of their true freedom. Freedom must be free to enslave itself, and for Schelling it is war that forms the limit case of this violently auto-immune gesture. In their neediness not only to *be*, but to *be* at the expense of all others, in their hunger for total supremacy not only as a strategic aim but also as its own *raison d'être*, modern states wage war both against the other and against the otherness which they also *are*.

But what is perhaps most interesting is Schelling's translation and dramatic escalation of the question of state sponsored combat, only a few pages later, into what he calls *the war against being*. "It could indeed be argued that evil itself proves to be perhaps the most spiritual [phenomenon] yet," he argues, "for it wages the most vehement war against all *Being*; indeed, it wishes to destroy the very ground of creation" (*Stuttgart Seminars* 232). Such a vivid and curious phrase, this, one that I can hardly begin to unpack here. At the very least, Schelling's military figure captures, as if in a philosophical freeze-frame, a frightful transition in the history of violence, the moment at which the enemy's desire for me not to be *there* (i.e., in strategic or defensive opposition to my attacker) is overcome by his need for me *not to be*. Perhaps Schelling's point is that the latter form of deterritorializing aggression has always quickened the former, and that he lives in an age whose militarized political culture has made the true nature of warring fury evident, all too evident. In his lectures on the history of modern philosophy, delivered more than twenty years later, Schelling will criticize Hegel's carnivorous virility by saying that his *Logic* suffers from a hunger for and impatience with otherness that is so insatiable that it finally, as he says, "completely eats up being" (*Lectures* 153). Here in the *Stuttgart* seminars, though, being endures a somewhat different indignity, in a phrase that literally brings a figure drawn from the contemporaneous hostilities with Napoleon's armies – could Schelling evoke the figure of war and not be thinking of the battles then raging across the Continent? – into a combative relationship with the language of the philosopher's metaphysics of evil. (In an age of *totalen Krieg*, is it possible, strictly speaking, for war violence to be an instance of philosophical and metaphorical "mention" rather than "use" [to remember John Searle's problematical distinction]? From

what imagined pinnacle of peace could one claim merely to "cite" war rather than suffer its effects, write in its shadow, or extend its influence? Perhaps in modernity the becoming-philosophy of philosophy is the reiterated but unsubstantiated claim to evoke war without succumbing to its imperious logic.) And this transposition of the historical and the ontological happens in a passage, after all, that distills Schelling's warning against too easily resorting to the normative dualisms of body and spirit, the very dualisms that inform philosophy's self-description as indifferent to wrenching historical particularities in favour of serenely speaking about universalities. These universalities will of necessity include "Being," the strange, hyperbolic object of the war's destructive *wish*. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that the very notion of a "*war against all Being*" functions as a kind of textual equivalent to what Schelling will shortly call the "demonic" or "essentiated materiality" (*Stuttgart Seminars* 237), a haunted and haunting excess that is neither real nor unreal but the unworking of precisely these kinds of founding philosophemes. Is this what war is or can become *to* or *in* philosophy? How "philosophically" to imagine and to represent the obscene specter of absolute enmity that Schelling sees growing uncontrollably all around him – except perhaps by conjuring a war against the very fundament of creation, and by naming an aggressive force for which the life of the sovereign spirit is claimed to be worth more than the lives of all others and otherness?

Evil is in essence *the war against all being*. Under its totalizing and pernicious influence, as Balachandra Rajan says in another but apposite context, "the world consists only of the enemy and the single available project is the destruction of the enemy" (2). This war is *spiritual*, the *most* spiritual, which is to say, not naively understood as an anarchic force that the mind is expected to subdue, but rather akin to reason; it is as purposive as it is destructive, not merely the absence of light but "self-illuminated" (*Freedom* 55), a perversion that is peculiar to the age of Enlightenment, with its advanced forms of social organization (and thus mass mobilization) and military technology. It is spiritual precisely to the extent that it is motivated by a furious rage to escape the nexus of forces out of which creaturely life, mortal life, including the mortal life of God, emerges; it is spiritual inasmuch as it is governed by a hallucination that all otherness, properly speaking, should offer no resistance to its sublating, incendiary, and nihilating desires because everything that *is* is destined to be *for* it. What are the symptoms of this abyssal conflict? The unchecked imposition and surging of a sovereign will that everywhere shows signs of possessing an evil genius; the desire to swallow up everything, and to do anything to make that happen; the mobilization of all available resources to accomplish this impossible and ultimately self-defeating task; the treatment of everyone as either wartime material, available to be exploited, or as lives not worth living, and thus inimical and disposable. Under these conditions, in which spirit is, improbably, weaponized, war takes on a crazed, self-sustaining and self-annihilating necropolitical momentum, until it collapses under its own weight; as Schelling says, "the hunger of selfishness [or egoism] which, to the degree that it renounces the whole and unity, becomes ever more desolate, poorer, but precisely for that reason greedier, hungrier, more venomous" (*Freedom* 55). In these and numerous other ways, it is hard not to believe that Schelling is speaking in a philosophical register of the advent of something new and frightening in Europe, namely total war, a war against all being: the fateful coming of the age, in other words, of "the world-target."[12]

In a note to his luminous translation of the *Stuttgart Seminars*, Thomas Pfau suggests that Schelling's text is characterized by "emergent, nationalist overtones … as a consequence of the Napoleonic wars" (*Stuttgart Seminars* 267n30). As I've tried to argue, the wars are *with* Schelling, and indeed one might characterize the texts from the middle-period as the philosophical equivalent to Goya's memorable *Disasters of War*, painted and etched

during the same time.[13] And I wonder if, like Goya, Schelling was sensitive to the possibility that while not all perpetrators are equally cruel, evil and its attendant atrocities are possible and made more possible on all sides when all sides wage war on being, and when, therefore, the mere existence of the other is enough to trigger an irrational rage to nullify its life. In this regard, what I think is interesting is the restraint that Schelling demonstrates in terms of nationalist sentiment, the degree to which he does not use the wars as an occasion to legitimize state particularism (as many other German members of the urban educated elite did). That political inhibition exists in an inverse relationship to the extravagance of Schelling's language, suggesting that the two are subtly connected. Perhaps everyday war is etched into the philosopher's work: the notoriously difficult writing characterizing his middle-period texts, which fold theosophical materials into the language of German Idealism; the ways in which Schelling proceeds as if he were "harboring" a kind of secret from his readers;[14] the recalcitrant nature of his argumentation, and his unusual and lively reliance on lurid figures and metaphorical associations. It may be that these gestures are all expressions of a disinclination unequivocally to speak *for* an imagined German nation *against* the French peril. In other words, this cryptic language constitutes Schelling's melancholic refusal to, as it were, write only in the mother-tongue, and to "teach philosophy," as Hegel once said, "to speak German" (*Letters* 107). Schelling thus resists the temptation to align the language of philosophy with the savage instincts of a virilized and militarized State, whatever its nationality, a move that would only risk putting philosophical clarity into the service of yet another aggressive egoism bent on the annihilation of others and otherness. Schelling was hardly immune to such gestures of identification, but he wasn't overcome by them either, not, it seems, while Europe burned and imagined communities bloodied themselves and destroyed each other. One of the things for which wartime calls, and one of the ways in which war becomes everyday war,[15] is for thinkers to become more aware of the politics of language and the language of politics. In the face of war's desolation, Schelling does not flee history like Candide's philosopher, but disavows – in the name of freedom – its necessity.

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Notes

1. Hegel makes this remark in an 1814 letter to Friedrich Niethammer (*Letters* 228), citing claims he had made in the *Phenomenology* (¶595). For an illuminating and important discussion of Hegel and the question of philosophy's negotiation with historical violence, see Rebecca Comay.
2. See especially Žižek's *The Indivisible Remainder* and *The Abyss of Freedom.*
3. As Krell argues, focussing in particular on Schelling, Hegel, and Novalis, "For the so-called Romantics and Idealists in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, *all* the forces of nature were *dire* forces … [W]hatever the *beneficent* powers of nature might be, they could not be separated from the baneful ones" (1).
4. For a useful discussion of nonmaterial materialities in the context of German idealism, see Tilottama Rajan's "Introduction" to *Idealism Without Absolutes*.
5. See, for example, Steinkamp's arguments about the mournful "presence" of Caroline and Auguste in Schelling's *Clara* (xix–xxvii).
6. Kant had made each of these points about the horrors of war in the pages of *Perpetual Peace,* an argument that I explore in a chapter entitled "Imagining Peace: Kant's Wartime and the Tremulous Body of Philosophy" in *Bodies and Pleasures in Late Kant*. See also the brilliant reading by Shell.

7. This is one of the central arguments in David A. Bell's *The First Total War*.
8. Frederick the Great's remarks are cited by Christopher Clark (36).
9. I draw here from both Christopher Clark's discussion of the period in his *Iron Kingdom*, and from the useful exploration of the wartime experiences of the southern Germans developed in the recent special issue of *Central European History* on *Collaboration, Resistance, and Reform: Experiences and Historiographies of the Napoleonic Wars in Central Europe*, edited by Katherine Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann. As Aaslestad and Hagemann note, social histories of the period have "tended to overlook civilian life and evolving relations between martial and civil society" (551). Planert similarly argues that "only a few studies have explored the impact of the wars on the general population" (677). She calls for an analysis of hitherto neglected "archives," including "administrative reports as well as diaries, chronicles, and eyewitness accounts," all of which, she suggests, demonstrate how "warfare itself … determined the [social] conditions of southern Germany" (677). My wager is that Schelling's middle-period work should be included in this archive.
10. Saint-Amour – who is here recalling a discussion by John Keegan – usefully characterizes total war as "utterly centripetal, subjecting the self-understanding of all things … to a military-industrial undertow" (149).
11. Habermas cites Schelling's remarks in *Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie oder Darstellung der rein rationalen Philosophie* (1847–1852) [Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology or Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy].
12. I recall the title of Rey Chow's book, *The Age of the World-Target*. For a superb discussion of the impact (on inter-war modernist fiction) of the world finding itself an indiscriminate object of aerial bombardment, see Saint-Amour.
13. For suggestive discussions of the importance of Goya's work for understanding the historical specificity of the emergence of total war, see Bell (280–281, 291–292) and Baucom.
14. Of the *Freedom* essay, Warnek notes that Schelling often "seems to be harboring secrets, perhaps intentionally, and with a certain irony; often his statements apparently do not serve to clarify what has been said thus far but instead seem only to act as provocations toward further questioning and thinking, as if the clarity of the text can only be achieved through a longer journey, postponed for now but at this point delivering us to the encounter with a necessary and encompassing obscurity" (178). My point would be that Schelling's texts possess these qualities because they are themselves possessed by the specter of worldwide war.
15. I am deeply indebted here, and indeed throughout this essay, to Mary A. Favret's ground-breaking argument about war's absent presences in the novels of Jane Austen.

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