

Animal Architecture in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling's *Philosophy of Art*

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“[I]s not the shell of the mollusc
a more perfect artwork than even
the cells of the bees, and don't all
of these appearances have their
common cause in Nature?”

F.W.J. v. Schelling (2004 [1799]: 135–6;
SW I.3: 203)

Within the reflection of philosophy on the subject of architecture (Feldtkeller 2000; Fisher 2016 [2015]; Gleiter 2022), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling's thought emerges for its uniqueness. Indeed, if not the first, he is a thinker that reserves a specific role for architecture insofar as it is conceived through the instance of space. This particular element differentiates Schelling from his contemporary readings that relegated the *ars ædificatoria* to a lower status in their system of art. In fact, authors otherwise dissimilar, such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1975 [1826]: 83–90, 630–700; cf. Whiteman 1987; Kolb 2007; Houlgate 2018; Farina 2019), or Arthur Schopenhauer (2018 [1859³]: 428–35; cf. Schwarzer 1996; Korab-Karpowicz 2012), are significantly closer to this point of view. As Eduard Führ (2009: 55–6) noticed, it was precisely the anomaly of Schelling's aesthetics that allowed later architectural theory to return to this point and reflect philosophically on the *proprium* of building science. For this reason, in this contribution, the reflection

on architecture in *The Philosophy of Art* (1802–1805) and other works by Schelling will be briefly analysed. Starting with the early commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, it will be highlighted how Schelling borrows three metaphors to describe the production of nature: that of the architect, of musical harmony, and the great animal organism. Specifically, in *The Philosophy of Art*, these metaphors return in the proposal of architecture, understood as frozen music. Schelling's cosmology shows how nature develops by degrees, from the most undifferentiated of the anorganic to the threshold of the human. The further one travels along this continuous scale, the greater the distance that the living can establish between their bodies and their architectural productions. As it will briefly be shown, this "artistic drive" (*Kunsttrieb*) is a mode of the "formative drive" (*Bildungstrieb*), contrary to the sexual one. Therefore, in architectural production, it is possible to discern the results of this still pre-thetic and unconscious process. The limits of this approach clash at the extreme points of production, namely in the human, specifically in the reflections on urbanity. Insofar as the city does not allow for a proper distance for analysis, Schelling can only propose two opposing solutions, the praise of the city as a living work of art, in which animality and rationality merge, or a rejection of the urban and a eulogy of rurality. In any case, it seems that the importance of his reflection lies in considering art as a living, animal, natural process. Therefore, his invitation to his readers is to consider the unconscious shaping dynamics of this process.

The System of the *Philosophy of Art* and architecture

In the *Philosophie der Kunst*, Schelling proposed one of the most famous systems of art at the turn of the 19th century. Here, in fact, the classification distinguishes two series of arts, the real one and the ideal one. The first set is those of the formative arts, the *bildende Kunst*, the second those of verbal, the *redende Kunst*, literally the "speaking arts" (Schelling 1989: 18; SW I.5: 371). In accordance with his approach in *Identitätssystem*, the "system of identity", that he was developing at the time, the philosophy of art, like that of nature, and that of history (Schelling 1989: 15; SW

I.5: 368), puts forward two logical categories in a polar relationship, to which a third pole stands as their indifference, their identity, and their potentiation (*Potenzierung*).

As many readers have underlined (Fischbach 2000: 339; Matthew 2011: 258 note and 28; Goudeli 2013: 74 note 5), an anticipation of Schelling's doctrine of powers can already be found in *Commentary* to the Plato's *Timaeus*, specifically in the concepts of *apeiron* (ἄπειρος) and *peras* (πέρας) (cf. *Phil.* 25a⁷-b³; Schelling 2008 [1794]: 231–6; *HkA* II.5: 182–92). Following this theme, in the German philosopher's thought, every element is determinate as an independent form that emerges from an undifferentiated ground, while a true philosophy of nature—according to an indirect Neo-Platonic heritage (Beierwaltes 1972: 83–153; 1982; 2002 [1999]; 2003 [2002])—has the task of considering the link (*Band*) between the supposedly autonomous individual and the substrate from which it comes.

Following this logical setting, *The Philosophy of Art* develops a three-fold articulation of forms for each artistic genre, each for every series. As a result, the actual forms are produced through a process of *Einbildung* (imagination), to be considered literally as a process of formation (*-bildung*), from the universal to the unity of the particular (*Ein-*). It produces an allegory, in which the infinite is received in the finite (Schelling 1989: 32; *SW* I.5: 386). On the contrary, the symmetrical process describes the formation of the particular into the universal One, in which the finite is represented in the infinite. Schelling referred to these dynamics with the neologism *In-eins-bildung*, that Douglas W. Stott (1989: xliii) decided to translate into English as “*informing into unity*”.

For the sake of coherence, the metaphysical system thus described is translated into a system of art in which each artistic genre is placed in polar relationships. Overview tables of the entire system are easily accessible (e.g. Simpson 1989: I; Griffero 1996: 123, fig. 5; 33, fig. 6). Ergo, in the real series music is posed as an allegory of the anorganic, whereby melody is achieved through the unity and indifference of rhythm and modulation (Schelling 1898: 109; *SW* I.5: 491). Colour in painting—art that reproduces the scheme of the organic—is obtained both from the lines of drawing, and from the volumetric effect of chiaroscuro. Lastly,

plastic art is the symbol of reason as a synthesis of the organic and the anorganic. Sculpture, in fact, can be articulated in space, such as in architecture, whilst also escaping from matter, characteristic of relief, whether alto- or bas- (Schelling 1989: 180–1; *SW I.5*: 243–4). Hence, this tripartite structure reinforces in each new phase the same dichotomous categories as the other arts in the same series. For this reason, architecture, placing itself as anorganic arts in plastic ones, will have a relationship of proximity to music (Schelling 1989: 164; *SW I.5*: 574).

Famous is Schelling's designation of architecture as "solidified music [*erstartete Musik*]" (Schelling 1989: 165, 177; *SW I.5*: 576, 593), "music in space" (Schelling 1989: 165; *SW I.5*: 576) or "spatial music [*Musik im Raume*]" (Schelling 1989: 178; *SW I.5*: 595), and—anticipating Pierre Schaeffer (2012 [1952]) in what had become a fundamental trend in the 20th century neo-avant-garde—"concrete music [*concrete Musik*]" (Schelling 1989: 166, 177; *SW I.5*: 577, 593). Just as music is directly produced by matter itself, according to the model of "music of the spheres", Schelling can claim that the planets are themselves the music they produce. As Schelling says in the *Rede* "On the Relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature", the "most sublime art of number and measure is native to the stars and is performed in their movements without the stars having any concept of it" (Schelling 2021 [1807]: 139; *SW I.7*: 299). Similarly, architecture, in its proportionate modules, does not produce the music, but is itself the music (Schelling 1989: 116; *SW I.5*: 502; Schuller 1957; Pareyson 2003 [1977]; Wanning 2011 [2003]; Jacobs 2005; de Moraes Barros 2007; Petersen de Barros 2011; Lydon 2018: 341–4).

Cosmic animal and the music

The principle of harmony that brings architecture closer to the art of sounds—beyond the echo of Schelling's formulas (Tilliette 1978: xxviii)—holds a classic place in reflections on beauty in general, well before Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's canonisation of aesthetics as a discipline (Albert 2011). Schelling, in this regard, takes up an instance peculiar to Pythagoreanism (Schelling 1989: 116; *SW I.5*: 502) which he

inherited through Platonic *Timaeus*, and already wrote about at the age of 19. His philosophical interest in art, therefore, is not due to his contingent attendance at the Jena circle from 1798 to 1800; on the contrary, the problem of production (in the general sense, i.e. absolute) is at the heart of his philosophical interest from the time of his first formal education. His *Bemerkungen* relied on the Edizione Bipontina as a reference text, which contained the Latin version by the humanist Marsilio Ficino, as well as, among others, the studies of Friedrich Victor Leberecht Pleßing. These sources take on additional value as a place where Schelling punctually borrows terms, such as the metaphor of the architect who builds the world on the basis of music patterns, specifically harmonics. In the part of the *Commentary* where Schelling relies on the Pleßing's *Versucht* (1788: 82), he borrows a particular conception of the Demiurge. The *Timaeus*' God is just a mere figure of the nature process that takes place according to necessity and reason. So he obtains the appellative of "world architect [*Weltbaumeister*]" (Schelling 2008 [1794]: 232; *HkA* II.5: 158), a figure that returns in other late works of the German philosopher, such as the *Allgemeine Anmerkung die Lehre vom Verhältniß des Endlichen zum Unendlichen betreffend* at the end of the *Aphorismen zur Einleitung in die Naturphilosophie* (SW I.7: 192: "*Architekt der Welt*"), or the Munich lesson *On the History of Modern Philosophy* dedicated to "Spinoza, Leibniz, and Wolff" (Schelling 1994 [1833–7]: 91: "architect of the world"; SW I.10: 69: "*Weltarchitekt*").

The architect metaphor captures just one aspect of the production process, namely that of the nexus between reason and necessity. The second figure used by Schelling is that of the great *zoon* (ζῶον), which indicates both animality and life in a broader sense. Schelling embraces here an underlying hylozoism, a classical theory, in which the principle of life is considered intrinsic to matter. As Carlos Zorrilla Piña explained, the "Idea is thus generative precisely insofar as its identity is not a logical but a natural—or even better—a *naturung* one". That of a "generative universal containment" is a philosophical story rooted in the "Pythagorean musings of the older Plato, readily available in his notion of a cosmic animal (*κόσμον ζῶον / kósmōn zōōn*) as the organization which comprehends all other organizations", as shown in *Timaeus* 30c, as well as in "his ac-

count of what he calls the divine method or way (*ὁδός / hodós*) which one must follow in order to trace the concretions which the ontogenetic dialectic between unity and unlimitedness is capable of yielding”, as indicated in *Philebus* 16c–e (Zorrilla Piña 2021: 32, and annot. 26). This tradition continues in other thinkers who probably influenced Schelling, whose matrix has to be traced back to Plato. Examples of the epigones of this approach can be found in “Leibniz’s analogy of a garden whose every plant is a new garden, Herder’s postulation of a main organizational plasma at the base of all existing things, Kiemeier’s doctrine of the *ratio* of forces, and even Immanuel Kant’s principle of thoroughgoing determination (minus the organic character of this determination)” (Zorrilla Piña 2021: note 26), to which Baruch Spinoza can be certain added (Follesa 2022: 45).

In observance of the triadic articulation that characterizes his thought, in addition to the architect and the great animal, Schelling borrows a third metaphor to indicate the relationship of individuals produced within the great process of nature. The individual living beings, organs of the great animal that is the cosmos, are instead formed according to the principles of musical harmony. For this reason, Schelling reports a model of schematisation whereby the living forms are *ab aeterno* and eternally formed, inserted into the great life process as spatially limited figures on the universal chaotic background. Music-architecture, thus, is linked to this conception of traits, resonating with each other, over the abyss of universal disharmony (Galland-Szymkowiak 2019; Barbarić 2021; Heller-Roazer 2011). Schelling here is strongly influenced by §65 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* from Kant (1987 [1790]: 251–55; AA5: 372–6), in which it is shown that the recursive system of the organism exhibits a mereological structuring in which no determinative judgment, but only reflective judgment, can prevail. Said in other words, if a relation of proportion can be stable between the single parts, it is not possible to indicate a highest category that can subsume all living individuals, otherwise they fall into *Schwärmerei*. The musical articulation of the living reports as its correlative an animal and pre-thetic reserve of disharmony. As Schelling commented in the *Timaeus* notebooks: “Plato viewed the entire world as a ζῶον, that is,

as an organized being, thus as a being whose parts are possible only through their relation to the whole, whose parts are reciprocally related against each other as means and end, and thus which reciprocally bring themselves forth according to both their form and connectedness". Following Kant, we "must keep in mind that we, according to the subjective orientation of our power of knowing, simply cannot think the emergence of an organized being otherwise than through the causality of a concept or idea"; it is necessary to "think that everything that is contained within a being must be determined a priori and—just as the particular parts of the organized being bring themselves reciprocally in relation to each other and so bring forth the whole—on the contrary, the idea of the whole must be thought as determining a priori and in advance the form and parts in their harmony" (Schelling 2008 [1794]: 213; *HkA* II.5: 158–9). Schelling so concludes that: "Plato now further describes the different proportions according to which God built the world, a harmony that is never to be understood by us!" (Schelling 2008 [1794]: 219; *HkA* II.5: 166).

Animal unconsciousness and the shell

As anticipated, Schellingian aesthetics will never abandon the dynamic described in the *Timæus* commentary through the metaphors of the architect, the animal, and harmony, and, as already advanced, these will return in the German philosopher's reflections. For this reason, any description of an artistic genre for Schelling can only show determined and limited figures, reciprocally articulated according to proportional laws, whose exposed composition emerges from an undifferentiated and unknowable ground.

This tension between figure and amorphous runs through the entire Schellingian system of art, to the extent that it does not develop Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's dichotomy between the arts of space and the arts of time (Lessing 1984 [1766]: 40; Lippert (ed.) 2017), rather it articulates an "antithesis" [*Gegensatz*] between the figurative and verbal arts (Schelling 1989: 18; *SW* I.5: 371). The latter are in fact positioned as polar extremes

with respect to space. The paradigm of logocentrism, as deconstruction has indicated, also pervades German idealism's aesthetics of architecture. Hegel conceives the speaking voice as the paradigm through which he thinks of architecture. In his *Aesthetics* lectures, he produces a dialectic of two contradictory principles, of life and death, represented with the inner pit of the soul, and the Egyptian pyramid, its cenotaph (Derrida 1982 [1968]). Although, even in Schelling, all the arts are based on the model of human language, in contrast to his former Tübingen *Stift* fellow, the dialectic is no longer between two contradictory elements, but between two deictics instances: indeed, the human voice does not deny the inarticulate sound of concrete music or animal verse, but constitutes an element of its individuation, its elevation to power. As Schelling says: "Very few people realize that even the language [*die Sprache*] in which they express themselves is the most perfect work of art [*das vollkommenste Kunstwerk*]" (1989: 9; SW I.5: 358) and the "Language [*Die Sprache*] in itself is the chaos from which poesy is to construct the bodies [*die Leiber*] of its ideas" (1989: 205; SW I.5: 358). For this reason, "in song [*in dem Gesang*], itself music [*wieder Musik*], the identity attained in language [*in der Sprache*] is once again broken down or dismantled, and speech returns to elementary tones [*zu den Elementartönen*]" (1989: 205; SW I.5: 256). The human, in Schelling, never leaves the animal background from which it emerges.

As a consequence, this conception of language is a significant element of Schellingian anthropology, in which the difference between animals endowed with *logos* and those without is determined by a capacity for self-reflection that the latter lack (Formigari 1977: 61–73; Hennigfeld 1984; Whistle 2013). Animals produce, they build, according to an instinct that flows back to the anorganic, and their work can assume consistence at a distance separate from their body the higher their capacity is for symbolism. The further the degrees of nature descend towards the anorganic, the greater will be the indistinction between body, work, and environment [*Umwelt*]. As explained in the 1807 *Rede*, this formative process "clearly appears in the living knowledge of animals, although they themselves cannot grasp this knowledge". The animals, in fact, "perform countless acts as they unconsciously wander along, acts that are far more magnificent than the animals themselves: the bird,

intoxicated by music, which surpasses itself with soulful tones or the tiny artistic creature that executes simple works of architecture without either practice or instruction” (Schelling [2021 (1807): 139; *SW* I.7: 299). For this reason, birds’ nest by retrieving material from long distances, so beavers for their dams. Bees wall up their cells, while spiders and silkworms secrete their warp by extracting it from their bodies. And so, moving further towards the amorphous, the productions resolve into deposits adhering to their own bodies. Schelling’s examples in *The Philosophy of Art* are also the octopuses that inhabit corals and molluscs and oysters dwelling their own shells. Even in the exoskeletons of insects and crabs the architectural work of art is an extroflexed bone structure (Schelling 1989: 163–4; *SW* I.5: 163–4). As 1807 *Rede* explains, the “conflict between life and form really seems to begin in the realm of animals: it conceals its first works in hard shells, and where these were eliminated, the animate world, through the art drive, rejoined the realm of crystallization” (Schelling 2021 [1807]: 142; *SW* I.7: 304). From this point of view, it is clear how critics have been able to advance an appreciation for the aesthetics of Schellingian architecture with more contemporary biomimetic architecture (Galland-Szymkowiak 2022 [2020]).

The animal production process is based on an *Unbewusstsein*: in Schelling, the unconsciousness is animal. The German philosopher asserts that the “artistic impulse [*Kunsttrieb*] of animals is nothing other than a specific direction or modification of the general formative impulse [*Bildungstrieb*]” (Schelling 1989: 163; *SW* I.5: 573). Schelling links a peculiar connotation to the art drive, specifying that the “so-called artistic impulse [*Kunsttrieb*] of animals is nothing other than a specific direction or modification of the general formative impulse [*Bildungstrieb*]”. As proof, he provides that the “artistic impulse in most species emerges as the equivalent of the reproductive instinct”. Therefore, it “is the genderless bees that produce the anorganic masses of their cells externally. In other species the manifestations of the artistic impulse accompany the manifestations of the metamorphosis or sexual development, such that the artistic impulse also disappears with developed sexuality. In other species the expressions of the artistic impulse precede the time of mating” (Schelling 1989: 163; *SW* I.5: 573). As stressed

by Xavier Tilliette (1991: 124–9; 132–3; 1999: 69), starting from the essay *On World Soul* (SW I.2: 533), Schelling is influenced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's studies on plant morphology, thinking of the principle of individuation as a process of sexual differentiation. Consequently, the natural, pre-individual instance of Nature, or the Absolute, is a dimension of sexual indifference. As declared in a note of the *First Outline of a System of Philosophy of Nature*, "Nature hates sex [*Die Natur haßt das Geschlecht*], and where it does arise, it arises against the will of Nature" (Schelling 2004 [1799]: 231; SW I.3: 324 note 4). On this point *The First Outline* is the source of *The Philosophy of Art*: "Sexlessness is equally as little demonstrated in the animal realm, for even in polyps, since the discovery of Pallas, one cannot doubt the sexual functions. Where there actually is sexlessness, there is yet another direction, specific of the formative drive. The sexual drive and the technical drive are equivalent for most of the insects before they have passed through their metamorphoses". As previously reported, the "sexless bees are also the only productive ones, and yet without doubt they are only the mediators through which the formation of the one queen bee is achieved (in which the formative drive of all the remaining bees seems to be concentrated). Most insects lose all technical drive after sexual development" (Schelling (2004 [1799]: 36; SW I.3: 105). Schelling has to assume that animal acts and productions are driven by a "blind exigency" determined by constraints: "Philosophers who deny all rationality to animals have allowed them to be driven not only to their actions, but also to their productions, by the feeling of pleasure. They did not know that instinct and impulse do not exist together in the feeling of pleasure, and at bottom they cancel all instinct, while they carry human baseness into Nature.—It is no better to say that the bees, for example, are driven by *pain* to build their cells" (Schelling 2004 [1799]: 132–3; SW I.3: 199).

On the contrary, the human process of architectural production certainly takes place through the same animal instinct, but it involves externalization, of *Entäußerung*, which leads to a distinction between author and produced object, between maker and buildings, between musician and performer (Schelling 1989: 163–4; SW I.5: 572–4). For this reason, art, in its exposition, in the *Darstellung* of its object, stands as an

instrument of reason, as its *organon*, insofar as it offers the possibility of intuiting the two poles of the production process, conscious and unconscious, animal and human (Schelling 1978 (1800): 219–33). Architecture, therefore, insofar as it establishes itself as a production close to the anorganic, requires a prior spatialisation. Consequently, architecture is space, it is its prior constitution. According to a *mimesis* model that underpin all of Schelling's aesthetics and justifies the analogical dynamic underlying his entire system, architectural shapes reproduce the living forms closer to the formless, that is, those of plants, as already pointed out for some years by Goethe (cf. Robson-Scott 1956; Bernstein 1999; Calhoun 2011; Purdy 2011: 162–92), or Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel (Pisani 2005). Accordingly, it is space that also makes a specific difference to the other *bildenden Künste*, sculpture and painting: if architecture is space, on the one hand, sculpture is positioned as a space within matter that expands to produce the expressive forms of statues: sculpture for Schelling is a restrained explosion (Schelling 1989: 182–201; SW I.5: 602–27). Painting, on the other hand, places the human figure as its first and supreme object and extends the landscape outside of him to stand out, reiterating Schellingian anthropocentrism (Schelling 1989: 126–57; SW I.5: 517–72).

So architecture is that which produces a distance, a hiatus. In this regard, it is interesting to note how Schelling, in the second part of his lectures on the *Philosophy of Art*, proposes the following definition of image: the “image [*Bild*] is always concrete [*concret*], purely particular, and is determined from all sides such that only the definite factor of the space occupied by the original object prevents it from being identical with the object itself” (Schelling 1989: 46; SW I.5: 407). Based on this principle, a specific cosmology arises, in which the degrees between anorganic and organic increase the more distinction is made between bodies and images. The difference between humans and other animals is the wider *Einbildungskraft*, that means ‘power of imagination’, the ability to create a space between us and our products. As a consequence, architecture becomes the first form of the “real” art by human production. To the extent that humans are on the one end of an extreme of natural production with God on the other. As §11 of *The Philosophy of Art* declares:

“Complete revelation of God [*Vollkommene Offenbarung Gottes*] only occurs where in the reflected world itself [*in der abgebildeten Welt selbst*] the individual forms resolve into absolute identity, and this occurs only within reason [*Vernunft*]. Reason [*Die Vernunft*] is thus within the All itself the full reflected image of God [*das vollkommene Gegenbild Gottes*]” (Schelling 1989 [1802–5]: 27; SW I.5: 378).

Humans, extremely distanced from God, intended as animal production, also coincide with the divinity, understood as deployed reason. Animal artistic production show in this way their role as a mirror of affinity and indistinguishability of rationality and *bêtise*.

City and the work of art

And distance is precisely what establishes the pivot and limits of Schelling’s reflection on architecture. The German philosopher, in order to discuss this art as one of the *Beaux arts*, according to an 18th century canon, must necessarily distinguish its utility function from its aesthetic component. He justifies it by explaining that beauty exceeds the specific need, borrowing the category of adherent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*) from the third *Critique* (Kant 1987 [1790]: 76–8; AA5: 229–31). Thus, after indicating that the function of need is mainly fulfilled by interiors, the Leonberg philosopher relies on examples of architecture with a social and symbolic function, i.e. temples, Gothic cathedrals, or castles. This justifies two consequences: on the one hand, his reflection on the aesthetics of architecture cannot consider cases of buildings with other functions, e.g. housing. On the other hand, he does not seem to turn his gaze on the external environment surrounding the cathedral or castle, i.e. the urban context.

It is then necessary to specify that there is no structured reflection on urban aesthetics in Schelling’s writings, but some specific remarks can be found. It is also true that Schelling, using the Greek city-states and their Italian Renaissance analogue as references, spoke of the state in terms of a “work of art” during his lectures *On University Studies*

(Schelling 1996 [1802]: 110, and 151; SW I.5: 312, and 353). As remainder by Edgar Wind (1985 [1969]: 96–7, note 1), this syntagma provoked indignant but direct reaction Hegel (1991 [1820]: 219) —“The state is not a work of art [*Der Staat ist kein Kunstwerk*]” —. Similarly, this position could be extended to Walter Benjamin’s indirect dialectical backlash arguing for political aesthetics against aesthetic politics (Benjamin 2008 [1936]: 42). For Schelling in those lectures, all elements of the state—but in the same years he will also address the Church from a similar perspective (Schelling 1996 [1802]: 90, SW I.5: 293)—should behave like the organs of a living work of art, approaching the idea of a total work of art [*Gesamtkunstwerk*], a concept of which he was the first theoretician, as proposed by Odo Marquard (2003 [1983]). On the basis of political unity, it is no longer possible to distinguish between means and ends, between instruments and objectives.

It is significant that all of Schelling’s reflections on the subject of the city borrow the landscape model. Here, in fact, by placing a figure corresponding to the human at the centre, Schelling should place an open, wide surrounding wideness. In the dialogue *Clara*, the main character asks:

“Why do people usually think that monastic life is so pleasant and beautiful? Is it because everyone likes to think that behind the monk’s habit there lies the ideal of a clear and peaceful person who has found his own equilibrium; an ideal that everyone wants to realize, but which they nevertheless don’t know how to? For certainly only the mob can be influenced by external motivations, the life of luxury, the carefreeness of this state, and similar such things”. (Schelling 2022 [1810]: 15–6; SW I.9: 21–2)

Theresa, another character, answered her: “Only the beautiful location of the cloisters could win me over [...], the hills on which they are so often built, the fertile valleys that surround them” (ibid.: 21–2). Further, Clara responds saying:

“Nevertheless, I answered, the arts and learning would suffer more than a little if all these rich cloisters with their magnificent buildings, their considerable collections of books, their churches with their many altar pieces, their murals, and their artistic wood carvings were to disappear” (ibid.: 22).

Theresa was agreeing:

“[...] the whole area would become dreary. Indeed, I don't know what sight is more beautiful than a magnificent building with towers and domes rising up in the middle of nature's riches, surrounded by rippling cornfields with water, woods, and vineyards in the distance, where everywhere everything is alive with the hustle and bustle of people. The most beautiful town does not have this effect on me; it represses nature such that only at some distance from the city can nature come to be found once more. But the simplicity of mixing the unbounded richness of a country district with what is magnificent and great, this alone is what is true and fitting” (Schelling 2022 [1810]: 16; SW I.9: 22).

This seems to be the challenge of Schellingian aesthetics: insofar as the human is the animal that produces images of itself, its architecture is the primary element through which it produces a distance. Since animal instinct remains unconscious, the production of the work of architecture allows us to achieve the object distance, that reason needs in order to unify reality. But the unknown background remains, just as what lies beyond the cathedral is not considered by Schelling: is this a negligence or an instance that denounces the impossibility of a distance for the analysis? Similarly, one wonders if Schelling abandoned the model of the living work of art. For him, states no longer adhere to the model of the organism, but to that of an imposition from above (Bruff 2021; Habermas 2004 [1961]). It is therefore possible to notice an ambiguity, or an oscillation, in Schelling's reflection on the urban. On the one hand, in his first production, there was the proposal of a model that we might call utopian, in which the city was considered as a living art form. Here we could see how the reflection on art, animality and distance reached a concise and

conciliatory proposal. On the other hand, his second reflection, linked to the themes of melancholy and groundlessness, seem instead to explicate a rejection of the urban and rather an enhancement of isolation and the bucolic. In other words, here Schelling seems close to a sculptural and monumental model. This is certainly the cost to be paid by a reflection that excludes any consideration of the utilitarian function of dwelling. In any case, this oscillation is possible precisely through the polar model that has always been promoted.

Otherwise, using Schelling's philosophy beyond himself, in the extension to urbanity, the human gaze finds itself as if drawn towards the anorganic context, as if to say that it can only run into unconscious elements. Cities, in Schelling's view, can reduce the human to the animal from which it always comes and always is. If Schelling is the one who introduced the value of the unconscious into artistic production, perhaps it can be a building block to start thinking about the development of an "urban unconscious". In Schelling's aesthetics, buildings are organs used to project movements that crawl through the city, a paradigm with some proximities to that used to analyse the post-pandemic city (Latour 2021 [2021], §2). That is the anorganic, vegetal, animals, one positive element out of reason, and its own contrariety (Di Maio 2022). The city, in other words, cannot be a total work of art. Against the risk indicated in Schelling's "identity philosophy" by Marquard (2003 [1983]: 100), the later Schelling is increasingly aware that there is no paradigm that can describe the entire complexity of urbanity. In any case, a work of architectural art can be a good *organ* to intuit it.

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