

On *Anfang* in Hegel and Schelling or, when ‘beginning’ is too much to begin with

First and foremost, German Idealism can be characterised as a philosophical movement caught by the problem of method. Of its many significant contributors, each had its own particular way of pondering how to practice and, more specifically, *write* philosophy *after* Kant? This talk will focus on a crucial aspect of this problem formulated by Hegel in particular, namely that of *Anfang*, or how to begin *überhaupt* – “With what must philosophy begin?”, but also consequentially, “What must philosophy do in order to ask (or even grasp) the question of beginning?” I will discuss how this issue is contemplated throughout Hegel’s *Logik* and *Phänomenologie*, and what he considers to be its broader implications for the task of speculative philosophy. Next, this view will be compared and contrasted to Schelling’s writings in the same period. I will further highlight these different approaches by demonstrating how they bled into both thinkers’ similar, but distinct, philosophies of history. Lastly, I will turn to the present and argue for a reintroduction of this sensitivity into contemporary revitalisations of Hegel and Schelling, particularly of the kind inspired by Lacanian psychoanalysis – not as a theoretical crutch which may be mobilised to bolster an argument, but as a necessary methodological marker in the act of *writing* philosophy *after* German idealism.

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