I

PREFACE

In this thesis, I have given a critical exposition of Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism. In course of my critical discussion, I have tried to throw some light on the problems and concepts that Schelling introduces in the Transcendental Idealism.

I would like to point out right at the outset that I have not tried to relate this system of philosophy with any other. Of course, Schelling's Transcendental Idealism may be regarded as the connecting link between Fichte's philosophy and Hegel's spiritualism. But I have not treated Schelling's Transcendental Idealism as a mere development of philosophical ideas from Kant through Fichte, as John Watson, for instance, has done in his Schelling's Transcendental Idealism, A Critical Exposition. (Chicago: S.C. Griggs and Co., 1882). I have rather found it worth while to study Schelling's Transcendental Idealism in its own dignity. One may divide Transcendental Idealism in three parts and study them. These are theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy, and the philosophy of art. A deeper study reveals that each of these three parts introduce to us Schelling's original thoughts. In theoretical philosophy Schelling sets out to give an account of our theoretical understanding of the structure of nature, and for this he takes interest not in the a priori conditions of possibility of knowledge (Kant), nor in the mere deduction of theoretical acts from self-consciousness, in which knowledge of nature arises
(Fichte), but he sets out to discuss here the notion of an empirical ego or self-consciousness as it becomes what essentially is related to an outer world, or what becomes conscious of the essence of the outer world, and thereby means to show how objects may be arranged according to the degrees of consciousness that emerge in the objects. In practical philosophy Schelling means to show not that our moral actions are due only to an absolute moral prescription, nor do we seek in them absolute self-consciousness but that we act freely in order to become more and more self-conscious. Hence, every age in history is an advancement upon its preceding other. Schelling's view of art also remains unique, for in art alone is achieved self-knowledge. This is where Idealism develops into romanticism. If these three parts of the Transcendental Idealism are meant to give us a complete account of the life of the pure ego, then one could hold that the notion of the ego itself remains unique to Schelling's thought. One may study Schelling in the background of post-Kantian philosophy, but it would be worth while all the more if one studies his transcendental philosophy as an independent system. If there are references to the works of other philosophers, they are only meant to show that there are certain notions and problems in the Transcendental Idealism that these other philosophers also discuss in their own manner. And our references to them enable us to appreciate all the more the Transcendental Idealism itself.
A new feature of my study of Schelling is that I have kept Husserl's transcendental phenomenology in its background. Although Husserl has not employed any of Schelling's ideas in his transcendental phenomenology, I have nevertheless found it useful to refer to some of Husserl's concepts and arguments. Certainly, Schelling's notion of the transcendental subject is best intelligible in the light of the corresponding notion of Husserl. There is a certain sense in saying that we deal with objects ontologically, distinct from our dealing with objects factually, which, Husserl says, the natural sciences do; the subject of knowledge that we should refer therefore is no more in its first order awareness-of-objects but has reached a state where it is presented as an awareness-of-awareness-of-objects. It wouldn't be out of our why to say that Husserl offers a fuller discussion of this issue, although Schelling made an elaborate effort to introduce this sort of philosophy in the previous century. This is the reason why for developing the conception of 'transcendental philosophy' I have relied so heavily on Husserl. I have made a humble effort to elucidate most of what Schelling says himself. If one sees points in it which I have failed to see, this may be either because they remain outside the scope of my study or because I am ignorant of them. For this I may be excused. I have not found an authentic translation of Schelling's Transcendental Idealism and I have used my own translations, of the passages quoted, and may only hope that I have not been guilty of gross misrepresentation.
In conclusion, I would like to thank Prof. J.N. Findlay, under whose supervision I worked on this thesis for two years at King's College, London University, and also Prof. J.N. Mohanty, Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Calcutta University, without whose constant guidance my work would have never been complete. Prof. Findlay has not only helped my understanding of Schelling's Transcendental Idealism by raising important questions about it but also his continuous assistance while I translated it has been of invaluable help to the completion of my work.

It is, however, mainly because of Dr. Mohanty's guidance that I have been able to formulate most of what I had to say in my critical discussion of Schelling and also to put my writing in its present shape.

E.B.