

# Physics of the World-Soul:

## *Evolutionary Panpsychism in Schelling and Whitehead*

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This course will introduce several important 19th and 20th century philosophical and theological responses to evolutionary theory—responses that remain as relevant as ever to any 21st century person trying to imagine a new mode of life for humankind on planet Earth. Though other relevant figures will also be discussed, we will focus on two thinkers in particular: 1) the German philosopher Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), including his organic re-embedding of mind in Nature as well as his proto-Jungian understanding of the revelation of God through the gradual evolution of the mythic consciousness of human beings; and 2) the British mathematical physicist turned philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), whose panpsychist and process-relational cosmology represents one of the few comprehensive attempts to fully integrate the metaphysical implications of evolutionary theory (not to mention relativity, quantum, and complexity theories). The week will close with an exploration of the potential for a scientifically-informed spirituality responsive to the evolutionary adventure from out of which our species, our living planet, and the wider cosmos have emerged. Our human creativity, intelligence, moral insight, and aesthetic sensitivity are all expressions of a multibillion year cosmic ancestry; acknowledging the cosmic origins of consciousness has profound ramifications for how we relate to ourselves, to our communities, and indeed, how we mould our very civilization.

### **Required readings by Segall:**

- 1) *Physics of the World-Soul: The Relevance of Alfred North Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism to Contemporary Scientific Cosmology*: <https://matthewsegall.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/physics-of-the-world-soul-second-edition.pdf>
- 2) "The Place of Life in the Cosmos: On the Origin of Organism": [https://matthewsegall.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/the-place-of-life-in-the-cosmos\\_feeling-the-origin-of-organism\\_matthew-t-segall\\_7262017.pdf](https://matthewsegall.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/the-place-of-life-in-the-cosmos_feeling-the-origin-of-organism_matthew-t-segall_7262017.pdf)
- 3) "Religion in Human and Cosmic Evolution: Whitehead's Alternative Vision": <https://matthewsegall.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/religion-in-human-and-cosmic-evolution-whiteheads-alternative-vision-publication-copy.pdf>

### **Recommended primary source readings:**

#### **Schelling:**

- 1) *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, transl. by Harris and Heath, Introduction by Stern, pgs. ix-xxiii; Schelling's Prefaces and Introduction, pgs. 3-42: [https://books.google.com/books/about/Ideas\\_for\\_a\\_Philosophy\\_of\\_Nature.html?id=LivpadBub8AC](https://books.google.com/books/about/Ideas_for_a_Philosophy_of_Nature.html?id=LivpadBub8AC)
- 2) *The Ages of the World*, transl. by Jason Wirth, Translators Introduction, pgs. vii-xxii; Schelling's Introduction and the first two sections of "First Book: The Past," pgs. 3-23: <https://books.google.com/books?id=0Jm4SkD9XHEC&dq>

#### **Whitehead:**

- 1) *Religion in the Making* (1926), Ch. 3: "Body and Spirit": <http://alfrednorthwhitehead.wwwhubs.com/ritm1.htm>
- 2) *Modes of Thought* (1938), Ch. 8: "Civilized Universe": [https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Whitehead/Whitehead\\_1938/1938\\_06.html](https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Whitehead/Whitehead_1938/1938_06.html)