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Ultimate Concern and Finitude: Schelling's Philosophy of Religion and Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology

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The year 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of the complete *Systematic Theology*, a massive attempt to present in a rational fashion the core of Christian beliefs, myths, and rites in a manner that speaks to its time—a time of profound unbelief and anxiety. As theologian, Tillich feels no lack of warrant, for theology speaks only of things that are of ultimate concern to humans, things that unavoidably interest us because they are a matter of our very being or nonbeing (Tillich 1967, 1: 14, 16).¹ Our experience of being in modern times is one of anxiety, a perceived background of meaninglessness that drives us into collectivism or conformism, or individualism, or despair and deprives us of authentic forms of courage—the ability to confront our finitude, the wormhole of nonbeing in the ontological apple. “Anxiety is finitude, experienced as one’s own finitude” (Tillich 2000, 35). What is Christian in Tillich’s theology is its tie to historical Christianity and to the normative expression of early Christians that in Jesus God manifested the *Logos* or messiah. Tillich’s Christology is not our concern here, nor is the adequacy of his work as a theologian charged with preserving the continuity of Christian doctrine. He comes at things from the other end, examining the whole of contemporary cultural experience to see whether or in what ways religion’s message can still be part of such a world and counteract its secular practice of distraction or despair. He displays wide learning, remarkable intellectual honesty, and keen insight into the demands of his time—on a par with that of the other great expatriate religious and philosophical thinkers who fled Nazi aggression: Simone Weil, Ernst Cassirer, and Hannah Arendt.² He is an exquisite practitioner of the history of ideas, at once able to encode whole eras in generalizations which are apt and pithy and to

characterize individual thinkers with remarkable brevity. Our central concern in this paper is to elucidate how Tillich makes religion a matter of ontology, and how, throughout his career, he follows Schelling's model of ontological questioning—which I will here call the *double-helix*, or the *twisted* structure of being and nonbeing, which results in an expanse of being that is unable to be in any other way than dynamic or shifting, and therefore ambiguous.

In the paper's first section I shall briefly discuss Tillich early Schelling studies and then turn to Schelling's own texts to show that Tillich interpretation is correct. The major part of the paper will be devoted to showing how Schelling's concepts form the structural backbone of *Systematic Theology* as well as the more accessible *Courage to Be* lectures where Tillich argues that the only credible form of religious belief is an absolute one where Christianity criticizes its concrete symbols and embraces a God beyond theism (Tillich 2000, 188-89). While the language of the lectures is more daring, its content is no more disquieting to the professional theologian than the view presented in the final volume of *Systematic Theology* of the ambiguous presence of the Spirit in a spiritual community that across history may or may not dwell in those ecclesial structures that call themselves Christ's church. The frail flame of 'unambiguous life' that is sheltered by spiritual community is fragmentary and anticipatory, at best, and lacks specifically religious teachings, symbols or acts (Tillich 1967, 3:157-58). Tillich's religion, like Schelling's, is ontological, not ecclesial. While its truth is available to any who will reflect on the human condition and the limitations of humankind's capacity to comprehend and reshape itself, it may seem discontinuous with earlier forms of Christianity's self-expression and put off those who have found meaning or experienced solace in those *poetic* or symbolic forms. And the contemporary culture of speed, results, and amusement hardly favors reflection and the leisure

that, etymologically at least, is the life of the scholar or questioner. In both case, the preference for an aesthetic existence overcomes the attraction of truth.³

I.

Tillich's knowledge of Schelling is deep and sympathetic from the very first. In his philosophical dissertation of 1910, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, the young Tillich attempts a sweeping interpretation of Schelling's long journey to the philosophical religion of the late writings, but gravitates toward the philosophy of freedom of the 1809 *Philosophical Investigations*. The essence of human consciousness is God-positing, an intellectual intuition of the identity between finite and absolute consciousness (Tillich 1974a, 122), but at the same time it is estranged from its God-positing substantiality. Tillich agrees with Schelling that essence of the religious picture is that "the formulation of a concept of religion must necessarily include a relationship between God and man that presupposes a definite division between them" (*ibid.*, 124). The tension between identity and action in the human spirit that is the driving motive in Schelling's early philosophical development becomes in the 1809 essay a historical process, a path of development in which the repose of intellectual intuition is sundered when the subject becomes agent.⁴ Finite consciousness posits itself as fallen from the identity of its original God positing, but not as the so-called natural religion of Enlightenment times might picture it: in independence from a rational world-architect and serenely possessing as its own its limited faculties of reason, imagination, and will. That human consciousness is God-positing and at the same time self-separated from the divine is the core of Tillich's view of human reality (*ibid.*, 125-27). There is a struggle at the core of the religious relationship, which

in its most explicit form is the “guilt-accepting acceptance of unacceptability,” viewed in *The Courage to Be* as Martin Luther’s personal or existential experience of Christian grace. In that experience, one comprehends God as the ontological Yes that includes its No, and blessedness is experienced as both bliss and the nameless anxiety it conquers (Tillich 2000, 180).

Tillich’s 1912 theological dissertation, *Mysticism and Guilt-consciousness in Schelling’s Philosophical Development*, identifies the core of all of Schelling’s thought in the tension between the identity of God and the finite and the ‘fall’ (self-separation) of the later—or the otherness of existence, signified by the failure of the ontological proof (Tillich 1974b, 35). While one might want to frame Schelling’s philosophical development in terms of the influence of other philosophers—as if in addition to the philosophy of nature there are periods where Plato, Spinoza, Boehme, Baader, Hegel, and finally Aristotle provide inspiration—Tillich claims there is really only one theme connecting his many works: the identity principle and its relation to moral categories such as separation, fall, and freedom. Tillich prefers the clarity of the 1809 *Philosophical Investigations* to the detail of the positive philosophy (*ibid.* 22-25), the discussion of Schelling’s text that offered in this early work is quite condensed and cryptic. Early essays on Fichtean themes, the various versions of *Naturphilosophie* and the aesthetics of genius that crown the *System of Transcendental Idealism* are each read as a variant of identity theory: ethical mysticism, nature mysticism, aesthetic mysticism (*ibid.*, 45-68). *Philosophy and Religion* (1804) marks a turn toward history, and with the teaching of the self-separation or fall of the ideas into finite existence the ‘mysticism’ (identity) of intellectual intuition is breached. Tillich’s exegesis of the 1809 freedom essay takes the logic of the previous identity theory in a distinctly theological direction; contradiction and self-will are read as ‘sin’ and ‘guilt’, and the cosmic

process of separating good and evil is read as the triumph of 'grace' over 'death and wrath' (*ibid.*, 108-112). But in phrases such as "the identity of sin and grace," Tillich thinks in solidarity with Schelling that evil and the self-will which is its origin remain even in their cosmic resolution. Guilt has its ground in ontology, as Tillich major works assert, and is no more a psychological quirk than the background radiation of anxiety that is its horizon and cradle.

II.

Tillich's theology follows Schelling's philosophy in its insistence that religious questions are ontological, that ontology is a dynamic domain, not an assemblage of things manufactured or arbitrarily brought together. The logos of being follows from the question first posed by Leibniz, *Why is there is something and not nothing?* In its first and highest instance, being is self-realizing, that is, it includes the possibility of nonbeing while it indeed stands out from nonbeing.

Tillich opens *Systematic Theology* with an essay on reason and revelation. In its asking of the first and ultimate questions, reason is driven beyond itself to 'mystery', the ground or abyss that precedes reason. It is of ultimate concern for us because it is about the ground of *our* being, and it is 'ecstatic' because it reaches beyond the subject-object structure for that which is primal. And it involves, says Tillich, an "ontological" or metaphysical shock in that it involves *Why not nothing?*, which carries with it a realization that I or anybody might well not be here to ask the question (Tillich 1967, 1: 110-113). There is something disquieting about the answers such a question can receive, for they are irretrievably symbolic or metaphorical. If one says "the divine life is a dynamic unity of depth and form," and goes on to explain that by "depth" one means the abysmal character of God, the ineffability and inexhaustibility of being itself, by "form" one

means word, logic or structure, and by “dynamic unity” a process of unforeseeable communication or unfolding, it is obvious that these are neither logical nor personal categories (*ibid* 1: 156, cp. 115). Tillich takes both this ontological starting point and the terms for describing the three-dimensional life of God from Schelling

First, let us look to Schelling’s concept of ontology. When Schelling publically inaugurated the Positive Philosophy in 1841/42 with the Berlin Lectures on the *Philosophy of Revelation*, he insisted that the difference between concept and existence (or possibility and actuality) is unbridgeable, that the finite being of the potencies follows from the unforeseeable existence of the absolute *Prius*. In turning to this hyper-conceptual idea of actuality, he deepens and refines two earlier veins of ontological exploration (Schelling 1977, 160-64). The first (explored in the writings of 1795-1800) is the relatively simple concept of God or the absolute as self-existent. The second (explored in the writings of 1801-1815) is the concept of God or the absolute as free over against being, or having an actuality that somehow dialectically combined being and nonbeing, or envisioned existence as involving a power that asserted being over nonbeing. The first line of thought yields a pure essence, the concept of necessary existence whose ontological status is necessary but contingent—a necessary existent, if it exists. The *actus purus* of the second line of thought makes the divine being contingently necessary, relative to the possibility for other-being that it establishes (*ibid.*, 165-171). In a third aspect, positive philosophy stipulates that God is spirit or freedom over against primordial being and realized possibility, an evolution of that which ought to be (*ibid.*, 172-76). This complicated line of thought fundamentally pits the concept of *necessary existence* against *freedom to be or not to be*.

Schelling always showed an interest in the ontological proof, although he was as skeptical as Kant about whether it ‘worked’. In 1795, he argued that in the realm of proof we are always dealing with conditions; the divine being, however, ought to be a matter of rational analysis, hence unconditioned. When we do ascribe being to the absolute, we should not confuse *being* with contingent existence or actuality (Schelling 1856-61, 1: 308, 308n).⁵ In 1802, Schelling uses the analog of the ontological proof to explain the certainty of intellectual intuition; from the very idea of an absolute cognition that one has, one can infer the reality of an absolute wherein form (knowing) and being are the same. What is deficient in the so-called proof is the way it pictures its object as somehow subsisting outside of its actuality-- its cognizing and being-cognized (Schelling 1856-61, 4: 363-68). In 1804 Schelling repeats and amplifies this argument, moving from the self-intuition of reason in intellectual intuition to the conclusion that what is realized in reason is the idea of God. The idea of God is self-realizing in reason—the form of cognition that is self-identical and beyond the all the difference that inhabits discursive knowing (Schelling 1856-61, 6: 150-54). The idea of God, which is self-enjoyed in intellectual intuition, illuminates the ‘why’ of God’s being, i.e., it is modally necessary, not factual, and so forever beyond the reach of nonbeing. Nothing or utter nonbeing is impossible. Says Schelling,

The absolute light: the idea of God, strikes reason like a flash of lightning, so to speak, and its luminosity endures in reason as an eternal affirmation of knowledge. By virtue of this affirmation which is the essence of our soul, we recognize the *eternal impossibility of nonbeing* that can never be known or comprehended; and that ultimate question posed by vertiginous intellect hovering at the abyss of the infinite: ‘Why is there something rather

than nothing?’, this question will be swept aside forever by the necessity of being, that is, by the absolute affirmation of being in knowledge (*ibid.*, 155).

For Tillich’s purposes, though not ultimately for Schelling’s, this dynamic being that both incorporates and excludes nonbeing suffices to get the project of systematic theology underway. God is the affirmation of being, and if being is, as Spinoza realized, *power* or the self-expression of what is essential, the human finds her essential being expressed in the religious relationship. Another way to say this is to say that because the divine-human relationship is at the core of the human being, her fundamental problem (finitude) and her awareness of it (anxiety) pertain to that relationship too (Tillich 2000, 24-28). If modern man experiences life as precarious and his self-awareness is anxiety, anxiety is a religious experience.

Tillich chooses to follow Schelling in calling the primordial or ontological aspect of God “the Abyss.” It is the ground of reality, human and natural; it is ineffable or inconceivable, self-enclosed and manifests itself only as power of resisting nonbeing. The only thing literal or nonsymbolic that one can say of God is that it is being itself, neither *a* being nor the *totality* of being. Various theologies have tried to apply categories of relation to the God-human relationship, but it is only symbolic or non-literal speech if we speak of God as the creator or immanent cause (Tillich 1967, 1: 236-38). All ontological speech is symbolic or analogous—except to say that something is and cannot not be. Ever careful with his words, Tillich notes that “it is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as to deny it. God is being itself, not *a* being” (*ibid.*, 237). About symbolic speech, he thinks a symbol speaks ‘truly’ if it reveals something or

speaks to somebody. But the history of religions is filled with dead symbols, or ways of speaking of the finite-infinite relation that fail to reflect light in both directions.

Tillich adopts a mode of Trinitarian thinking from Schelling that is ontological, prior to any discussion of Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Human intuition has always distinguished the element of power in the divine from the element of meaning, the *logos* or word, and then gone on to distinguish a third principle of communication or expression whereby the finite and the infinite are united, spirit (*ibid.*, 1, 250-251). Schelling displays this Trinitarian way of thinking as early as the *Bruno*, where the three potencies of identity theory are rescued from the dry Spinozism of *Presentation of My System* and put into Neoplatonic and mythic guise, wherein the finite individuals in their apostasy from their organic life in the ideas are seem to be products of self-will or self-temporization (Schelling 1856-61, 4: 283-84). The identity of all or the eternal potency is compared to the Father, the infinite or ideal potency to the Spirit which unifies, while the finite power is by its own will made subject to time and becomes a suffering god (*ibid.*, 252). Trinitarian thinking is found in the 1809 *Philosophical Investigations* as well, with one of the triadic structures (nature, man, and a personal God) used to secure the philosophical account of the possibility of evil and another (*Ungrund*, nature and spirit) used to explain the dynamics of being or the cosmic process of development (Schelling 2006, 62-63, 69-70).

III.

Let us turn to a closer look at Tillich's theology. Generally, we follow the text of *Systematic Theology* for discussions of theological and philosophical method. The contemporary look back at the interface of religion and other forms of culture cannot help but be historical---and critical.

For insight into Tillich's thought about the current state of Christian theology and the possibility of its relevance to the human situation in the age of anxiety, when much of Christian writings, rites, and morality are seen to be worn out and lacking in the power to guide, we look to the more homiletic *Courage to Be* lectures.

Systematic theology operates by what Tillich calls the "the method of correlation." Questions that are philosophical, or really anthropological, receive theological answers, for religion functions as one of the chief repositories of answers about existence that the question-posing animal requires. "Man is the question he asks about himself, before any question has been formulated" (Tillich 1967,1: 62). The method of correlation explains the content of the Christian faith through the interdependence of existential questions and theological answers (*ibid.*, 60-61). A coherentist epistemology is at work here. No inherently true human experiences, miraculous sightings or inerrant writings can be found to validate or invalidate a religious worldview—something that is essentially philosophical (or undecidable)! "Revelation does not destroy reason, but reason raises the question of revelation" (*ibid.*, 81).

The Schelling of the 1809 *Philosophical Investigations* shares with both his major 20th century disciples, Heidegger and Tillich, the conviction that questions about God and world occur in humankind because man is the site of both questioning and self-awareness. Whether or not such questions are answerable, or resolvable through analysis or action, questioning is the human activity par excellence. Tillich remains optimistic about the availability of answers: "Man is able to answer the ontological question himself because he experiences directly and immediate the structure of being and its elements" (*ibid.*, 169). As embodied finite reason, the human

experiences *being* as limited power, *existence* as self-contradictory, and the *life* process itself as ambiguous (*ibid.*, 81). But as subject or self-aware, the human directly experiences being, existence, and life and so has a pre-reflective comprehension of those dimensions of the divine that Christian revelation speaks of as the ground of being, the possibility of new existence, and the life of spirit. When the abysmal ground manifests the *logos*, existence is seen to be not essentially guilt but ‘new being’ and the social and historical dimension of life, with all of its heartbreak and frailty, is seen to promise the seeds of ‘unambiguous life’ (Tillich 1967, 2: 176-77; 3: 401-402, 420-422).

In its first appearance, says Tillich, the ontological question considers the one who poses the question; self and world are presumed, tied together in subject-object structure. Secondly, the question concerns the “elements” that make up the structure of being; thirdly, the difference between essential being and existence, and finally, it involves the categories of being and knowing (Tillich 1976, 1: 164). It is the second consideration that offers the richest field for comment, the vaguely named ontological *elements*, which come in three contrasting pairs:

Individuality – Universality

Dynamics – Form

Freedom – Destiny

All three concern human agency and its environment. The first pair considers the individual or person as the unit of human reality. Though singular in number, by possessing mind, the individual human is connected to others physically and temporally remote. ‘Communion’ or

community is participation in one or more similarly individuated or self-centered selves, and is essential to the life of the individual (*ibid.*, 176). Quantification across this dimension yields an important measure of how persons experience themselves and their world: the contrast between individualism and collectivism. *Courage to Be* uses this measure to distinguish not only political styles of existence, e.g., liberalism vis-à-vis totalitarianism, but to contrast styles of Christian conscience, e.g., Protestant individualism and Catholic or medieval quasi-collectivism (Tillich 200, 101-117). Tillich avoids the stereotypical contrast between Protestantism's freedom of conscience and Catholic authoritarianism, for factors other than religion and individual choice lessen the contrast between individualism and collectivism. Participating in economic production, for example, enforces a quotidian conformism in 'free' societies which makes daily life similar to that in centrally planned economies. The second pair is somewhat oddly named, for 'dynamics' indicates that which is unformed, but endowed with potential, or something relatively irrational in contrast to precise rationality. The tension between dynamics and form indicates a creative way of simultaneously conserving and transcending oneself, or of preserving oneself while transforming self and environing conditions—like the equilibrium of a physical system or the homeostasis of an organism (Tillich 2000, 1: 174-76). Finally, the tension between freedom and destiny indicate the nature of a situated act by a free agent, one that necessarily takes place in a physical context and in a definite matrix of possibilities. "Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility" (*ibid.*, 184). That my act is situated means that destiny informs my freedom; that I *have to* weigh values and choose among competing alternatives means that my freedom participates in shaping my destiny.

These three structures of being together indicate the parameters of human existence that an individual person enacts—the social, biological and mental conditions of finite human freedom. While they give Tillich the tools for much of the critical or destructive work of *Systematic Theology*-- which is an encyclopedic review of the major epistemological, scientific, philosophical, political, psychological, social and religious ideas of our civilization-- they also give him the categories for positively elaborating the Christian ethic that is found in the *Courage to Be* lectures.

The ontological situation for the post-modern human is continuous anxiety, accompanied by a pervasive guilt. Anxiety is object-less fear, fear that persists when fear is the only thing to fear. Guilt is the appropriate response. In earlier times, Western man required pictures and stories of places of punishment and torture by fantastic beasts and malevolent beings. Now the most ordinary human beings in the most secure places imagine themselves objects of surveillance; everyman is Kafka's Joseph K.—or Edward Snowden. The human response is courage, *ontological* rather than soldierly courage, and the various styles of human existence—individualism, conformism, and collectivism—determine corresponding styles of courage to be.

Anxiety is an ontological malady, the awareness of our own finitude or of the fact that we carry nonbeing in our very ontic self-expression. There is anxiety in every fear, and vice versa. The fear of death lurks behind the fear in every anxiety, but close inspection reveals that the human is anxious about being itself. “The basic anxiety, the anxiety of a finite being about the threat of nonbeing, cannot be eliminated. It belongs to being itself” (Tillich 2000, 39). Tillich elaborates three styles or potencies of anxiety: 1) the anxiety of unpredictability (fate) and death, 2) the

anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, and 3) and the anxiety of despair. Uncertainty and lack of control prefigure death, the poverty of the outcome of one's work portends meaninglessness, but the upshot of all our acts, from their moral foundations to their spiritual satisfaction, seems to crumble into dust and leave only a vague residue of guilt. Everything in human life points to despair, except for the petty distractions and evasions which for the most part keep us comfortably numb (*ibid.*, 40-56).

In response to this map of the labyrinth of despair, Tillich offers a slim thread twisted from the varieties of courageous response. The basic binary is to rely upon oneself or to take refuge in the collective. Self-reliance undergirds the romantic, naturalistic, and demonic forms of individualism seen in recent cultural history, and paves the way for the lonely encounter of the resolute person in absolute anxiety (*ibid.*, 148-49). The collectivistic alternative opts for the path of participation and becomes mysticism. The mystic is willing to turn ontology inside out and so finds rest in that her doubt is turned against finite being and negates it, since everything that appears is deceptive and illusory. "Nonbeing is no threat because finite being is, in the last analysis, nonbeing. . . . The anxiety of meaninglessness is conquered where the ultimate meaning is not something definite but the abyss of every definite meaning" (*ibid.*, 158-59). Tillich has limited confidence in the mystic solution, although every individualistic kind of ontological courage involves an element of trusting in the abyss, or the power of being to overcome nonbeing.

Since religion gives answers to questions that philosophy poses, it must be the elemental character of the human situation in which the definitive answer to anxiety can be found. So

Tillich looks again to the *individual-or-participant* structure of the person's selfhood and finds that in the middle between mystic absorption into the ground and personal encounter with a so-called 'divine person' one finds *faith* (*ibid.*, 156-57). Absolute faith—perhaps *naked faith* might be the better term—does not deny or transcend meaninglessness as mysticism does, but embraces it, at least within a skeptical moment of action. The skeptical element cuts against the subject-object structure of personal encounter, so that the modern existentialist hero seems to encounter meaninglessness in its purest or grittiest form (*ibid.*, 177-78). It almost goes without saying that the skeptical element, so exercised, will also sweep away almost all the forms, formulas, and rituals of prior versions of Christianity. Though Tillich speaks more reticently (or professionally) in *Systematic Theology*, there is little asserted in its third volume about the Spirit, the community, and the 'kingdom of God' in history that is edifying or consoling. The presence of the Spirit in a spiritual community that may or may not have much to do with the churches and their muddled histories is everywhere ambiguous, even if spirit is defined as 'unambiguous life' (Tillich 1967, 3: 183ff). As representing the kingdom of God and embodying the spiritual community, the churches both reveal and hide (*ibid.*, 375).

Absolute faith is empty faith, or to say the same thing, ontological faith—trusting in the power of being--which always has to be glossed as the expansion or assertion of being over the contraction of nonbeing. Nonbeing is the element in being which constrains being, which by enclosing its power within limits, forces it to be beyond itself and to open itself as power and love. Speaking in almost as oracular as fashion as Schelling does in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Tillich states,

Nonbeing (that in God which makes his self-affirmation dynamic) opens up the divine self-seclusion and reveals him as power and love. Nonbeing makes God a living God. Without the No he has to overcome in himself and in his creatures, the divine Yes to himself would be lifeless. There would be no revelation of the ground of being, there would be no life (Tillich 2000, 180).

What of the 'believer' (or absolute skeptic, rather) in the situation of absolute faith? The horizon of meaninglessness is not expunged; guilt is not assuaged, for there is no Kantian court of reason to indict or to acquit. One finds, like the anguished Luther, that one is accepted *trotz* one's unacceptability. At the boundary between being and nonbeing, and far beyond all forms of theism which ever and again forget the ontological difference and figure the divine as a being, absolute faith fears no judgment and asks no forgiveness (*ibid.*, 189-90). This is the paradox of Christianity, says Tillich: not irrational, nor absurd, nor reflectively or dialectically rational. The 'paradox' is a new reality and not a logical riddle (Tillich 1967, 2: 91).

Notes

¹ *Systematic Theology* is cited by volume and page number.

² One could compare cultural analyses of *Systematic Theology*, volume I and *Courage to Be* with Simone Weil's view of the human situation in *The Need for Roots*, or Cassirer's in his late *Essay on Man*, or Arendt's vision of human activity in the incomplete trilogy, *The Life of the Mind*. The contrast between the quality of thought and art evoked in ages of great suffering or political repression and that produced by the complacent civilizations of developed industrial 'democracies' driven by consumerism, technology, and endless entertainment is unsettling. Not the least unsettling is the way the intellectual's insight is purchased at the cost of mass suffering.

³ I am assuming with Kierkegaard, but without reciting his argument, that aestheticism or a culture of endless entertainment is a low-grade or unconscious form of despair (Kierkegaard, 1989). Sean McGrath explores Schelling's projection of a third or Johannine phase of Christianity in his 1831/32 *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*, where earlier phases of dogmatic or subjective belief will be sublimated by the critical and revolutionary fire of modernity (Enlightenment) into a new form that integrates lived social experience with the love abstractly represented in bygone forms of Christian belief. McGrath sees the consumerism of late capitalist societies as an inversion of Schelling's hope, with love and sharing replaced by self-improvement and accumulation (McGrath 2014, 69-78).

⁴ Tillich's early essays emphasized the dramatic tension (the inclusion in and self-separation from divine being) between human consciousness and God, while *Systematic Theology* speaks of the groundless divine nature as the impossibility of nonbeing overcoming being. The former approach is epitomized in the 1809 *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, where a 'fall' (or self-separation) from the absolute precipitates a cleavage between spirit and nature, which humankind henceforth takes to be its habitat, while the latter expresses the culmination of the philosophy of identity, as expressed in the 1804 *Würzburg System* (see Vater 2014, 135-43).

A recently published fragment from the same time shows Schelling speaking of both time and human consciousness as effects of a fall or separation of the finite from the embrace of divine absoluteness—caused by the tendency of humanity to assume an attitude of complacency or self-sufficiency vis à vis the creative power (see Patrick Leistner 2014, 208-210). Tillich quietly presumed that all Schelling's texts express more or less the same view: self-consciousness is God-positing (and self-separating); if there is some contradictory in the formulation, it is not the fault of philosophical or theological commentators, but of the self-sundering finite subject itself.

⁵ *Sämtliche Werke* is cited by volume number and page.

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