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Freedom, sin and the absoluteness of Christianity: reflections on the early Tillich's Schelling-reception

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the reception of Schelling's philosophy by the young Paul Tillich. During his study on the theological faculty of the University of Halle from 1905 until 1907 Tillich was influenced by the Fichte interpretation of Fritz Medicus. Tillich uses Fichte's philosophy as a theoretical frame for a modern theology. The problems from this Fichte reception lay in the concept of freedom as autonomy. In Schelling's philosophy, especially in his concept of freedom as the possibility to come into contradiction with oneself, the young Tillich finds the solution for these problems.

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On the occasion of Paul Tillich's appointment as Professor of Philosophy and Sociology including Social Pedagogy at the University of Frankfurt am Main in time for the summer semester of 1929, Tillich's former mentor at Halle, Fritz Medicus, wrote an article for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (19 March 1929). The philosopher, who had since been teaching in Zürich, generously recommends Tillich to his readers as the “coming man” in philosophy’ and summarises his academic career.¹ He writes of it, ‘Even as a student he cultivated philosophy as much as theology. His works lie in the field of cultural philosophy. Both dissertations, the philosophical (1910) and the theological (1912), are dedicated to Schelling's doctrine and mark the beginning of the Schelling-renaissance in the philosophical movement of the present; for Tillich himself they signify the culmination of his achievements.’² Whatever Medicus had in mind in his assessment of the young Tillich's dissertations as marking ‘the beginning of the Schelling-renaissance in the philosophical movement of the present’, it is beyond dispute that Schelling's philosophy took on a huge significance for the career of the young theologian. Both Tillich's thesis on *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie* submitted to the University of Breslau in 1910 and his Halle licentiate dissertation, *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*, from 1912 are devoted to him. In his later work, he still speaks many times of Schelling's significance – not without reference to his ‘highly-esteemed teacher and guide through Fichte and Schelling, Fritz Medicus’³ as well – as in his commemorative lecture on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Schelling's death in 1954.⁴ But how did the young Tillich understand Schelling's philosophy and what aspects of this thinking were the focus of his interest?

This is the topic of the following reflections on Paul Tillich's engagement with Schelling's thinking. As early as 1909, the young theologian was concerned with Schelling,⁵ and yet what gave rise to these dissertation themes remains undetermined owing to lacking source material.⁶ In fact, Schelling – the object of his graduate thesis – does not lie very close to his academic formation, in particular his engagement with J.G. Fichte's philosophy during his study residence at Halle between 1905 and 1907,⁷ as well as his examination work,⁸ even if one concedes that during his study Tillich was stamped by the Neo-Idealism that was establishing itself around 1900. Whoever might have brought Schelling to the attention of the young theologian, it is nevertheless clear that this philosophy provided him with the possibility of working through a difficulty which resulted from his earlier theology, which was oriented around Fichte and grounded in Neo-Idealism. It concerns the idea of freedom. Moreover, in addition to the theorisation of freedom, there is another aspect that made Schelling's philosophy of interest to the young theologian. It is the significance of the Christian religion for the philosophy of history, which seemed to Tillich relevant for contemporary controversies over the absoluteness of Christianity. In both of his dissertations, he suggests this himself, when he notes in the 1910 thesis: 'There is a third reason for undertaking this task. As Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* was succeeded by the great systems of the history of religion, so today, emerging from the philosophy of religion influenced by Kant, an idealistic system of the history of religion has appeared in both the theological and philosophical camps (Troeltsch – Eucken). Under such circumstances, it may be fitting to refer anew to that form of idealist philosophy, especially philosophy of religion, which is the culmination of the whole development of Idealism, and which, with its voluntarism, realism and positivism, stands basically nearer to modern thought than any other, notwithstanding the points where it gives great offence.'⁹

To understand the young Tillich's conception of Schelling appropriately, one must look to the history of his works as well as the problems he discusses. For this reason, in the first section, I consider his theology, as it is contained in his Halle seminar work on *Fichtes Religionsphilosophie in ihrem Verhältnis zum Johannesevangelium* and in his theological examination work of 1908. In the second section, I pursue the question of how Tillich's Schelling-reception helps solve problems with his early understanding of freedom. Finally, I present Tillich's conception of Schelling's philosophy of history: building on Schelling's concepts of freedom and spirit it gives the young theologian the intellectual means to answer the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity posed by Troeltsch.

1. Freedom and sin, or Tillich's early theology

We know of Tillich's understanding of theology during and at the end of his study through two texts from the Nachlass: a Halle seminar thesis on the topic of *Fichtes Religionsphilosophie in ihrem Verhältnis zum Johannesevangelium*, which is dated 21 February 1906 and the examination work, *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltauffassung für die christliche Religion?*, which he submitted in Wintersemester 1908/09 to the Königlichen Konsistorium of Brandenburg and penned in Autumn 1908.¹⁰ Both works show acquaintance with German Idealism and particularly with J. G. Fichte's philosophy. Interest in Fichte is further confirmed by an extensive set of notes to Fichte's *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, which is

contained in Tillich's Nachlass and was prepared, it seems, prior to the start of the study.¹¹ What is more, the sequence of the two texts documents an adjustment in his understanding of the conceptions of sin and freedom. How so?

The seminar work of 1906 thematises 'Fichte's relation to the Gospel of John' against the background of the tense relations of philosophy and religion, of *pistis* and *gnosis*.¹² In the Christianity that the young theologian understands as the synthesis of Greek intellectualism and Judaic voluntarism, this opposition is overcome, but only in principle and not in reality. 'It is clear that philosophy, corresponding to its nature, is always in danger of falling into a one-sided intellectualism, and the more it does so, the more freely it opposes religion and the more powerfully it unfolds in speculation.'¹³ The ground of this typology in the history of religion is a theory of spirit. The young Tillich differentiates thinking and willing as foundational functions of spirit. Both are reflected in religious consciousness, 'the most central, all-controlling expression of spirit.'¹⁴

Against this background, the seminar work of 1906 compares the late Fichte's philosophy of religion with the Gospel of John in relation to 'metaphysical foundations', the 'historical significance of Christ and Christianity' and 'ethical-religious implications'.¹⁵ On all these points, it emerges – according to the conclusions of the early Tillich – that Fichte's philosophy of religion remains bound to a 'pure intellectualism' and thus the synthesis of voluntarism and intellectualism which is constitutive for Christianity and which represents the 'most perfect expression' of the fourth Gospel is not attained.¹⁶ Within his philosophy, Fichte understands life teleologically as 'the self-realisation of the absolute'.¹⁷ This has implications for the concept of sin. It is understood by Fichte merely as a transitional moment and thus not as something fully posited.¹⁸ Fichte's intellectualist grasp of the concept of religion means that he can only explain the concepts of sin and freedom inappropriately.¹⁹

A completely different understanding of the concept of sin, however, is found in the examination work written two years later. The very opening passage of the thesis makes this intention clear. For its author, the work concerns a renewal of theology from the speculative spirit of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. 'The necessity of proceeding beyond Kant which is also recognised by most neo-Kantians, is to be seen ultimately as the necessity of proceeding to Fichte.'²⁰ In parallel to the orientation of Fichte's speculative idealism, in his examination work Tillich elaborates an ambitious programme for a monistic philosophy of spirit which will operate dualistically. It is Medicus' teleological I-thought that functions as the principle of construction for the investigation.²¹ True autonomy and personality consists in the self-realisation of the individual I through the act of its self-positing and self-determination, as an aspect of the higher absolute.²² When it comes to the understanding of the idea of sin, a falling short of the self-realisation of the I is at issue. Sin, according to the *Monismusschrift*, 'is the lack of an overcome not-I, or more precisely and factually, the falling short of spiritual personality beneath its *telos*.'²³ If Tillich was still criticising such an understanding of sin in his seminar work written two years earlier on Fichte and the fourth Gospel, he is assuming it now. Sin is the individual's failure of autonomy in the act of his self-determination.²⁴

The early Tillich's account of the concept of freedom, insofar as the findings of these two early works are grasped together, appears erratic at the very least. With Fichte as the conceptual space for a modern theology, sin can merely be understood as a transitional moment on the path of the I. It is precisely this problem of theorising freedom which undergoes a change when it comes to Tillich's reception of Schelling.

2. Freedom as the power to contradict oneself, or Tillich's account of Schelling's philosophy

Tillich's theses on Schelling can be understood as a response to the difficulties in his Fichtean construction of a modern theology as he had elaborated it in his examination work. To sum up the concept of freedom in Fichte's autonomy ethics in one line: it admits an understanding of sin merely as a transitional moment on the way to the self-realisation of the I. Alongside the freedom thematic, there is another focus of Tillich's Schelling-interest: the foundation of theology against the background of the debates over the absoluteness of Christianity. Schelling's philosophy presents Tillich with the conceptual means to work out an original answer to this question. It stands in close connection to his new idea of freedom, as I establish it in the following.

The early Tillich understands Schelling's philosophical development as a whole as uniform²⁵ and reconstructs it completely within the horizon of Kantian philosophy. Schelling's 'philosophy is the "second daughter of critical philosophy", and it never renounces its mother. One problem remains critical from beginning to end: How must the object be secured for it to be able to be an object of knowledge?'²⁶ The 1809 *Freiheitsschrift* is marked by a caesura in Schelling's development.²⁷ The position reached in this work is indeed the result of the preceding philosophy and to that extent the transition to it is 'dialectical',²⁸ but only Schelling II, as Tillich formulates it, is able to deal with the problem of freedom for an ethics of autonomy and so to present a historical philosophy on the foundation of this newly reached standpoint. The background of his reconstruction of Schelling's philosophy, moreover, builds on the understanding, taken over from Medicus, of the I as freedom. The early Tillich repeats this conception of the self-positing I in the ambit of Schelling's philosophy, thereby transforming the Kantian-Fichtean ethics of autonomy.

Already in the elaboration of *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling* of 1910, Tillich notes the difference between Fichte and Schelling's concept of freedom against the background of the Kantian philosophy. While Fichte is bound to Kant's theoretical philosophy, Schelling orients himself to the practical philosophy. 'Fichte remains bound to the first meaning. To be free means to be like oneself, not conditioned by anything else. Schelling's doctrine of freedom is attached to the second meaning. Freedom means to be able to be unlike oneself, to be irrational.'²⁹ Schelling extends the concept of freedom to practical reason through the determination of freedom as being-able-to-contradict-oneself in the act of self-determination. 'The divine cannot posit itself in a living way unless it opposes itself, and it cannot obtain perfect freedom unless it posits itself in a living way, and it cannot be a spiritual personality unless it attains perfect freedom.'³⁰ Tillich assimilates Schelling's thinking, for it offers the possibility both to keep hold of the early considerations of the self-realisation of the I in its act of self-determining and also to grasp the concept of sin as something fully posited and thus not as a mere transitional moment. For determining freedom, a merely material concept is sufficient; it needs to be complemented by a formal one. Accordingly, sin is 'freedom and not lack; disharmony, not lack in harmony; separateness which still aims for unity.'³¹

The early Tillich makes sense of Schelling's concept of freedom in terms of the new theoretical foundations set out by the latter after 1809, particularly the late doctrine of

the potencies.³² It is out of the doctrine of the potencies that emerges a construction of the concept of spirit in the late Schelling, as well as the relation of individual to absolute spirit,³³ which itself forms the foundation of his philosophy of history and religion. This suggests, in turn, a new conception of the self-relation of spirit. It is constructed antinomically by Tillich in terms of Schelling's doctrine of the potencies. That is, spirit refers to itself by means of a contradiction.³⁴ Such are the foundation of Tillich's account of Schelling's philosophy of religion and history, to which, in conclusion, we must now turn.

3. Christianity as consciousness of history, or Tillich's understanding of the absoluteness of Christianity

Tillich's fundamental thesis that Schelling's philosophy is, in comparison to a philosophy of history, a historical philosophy which constitutes the kernel of a history of religion builds on his new conception of freedom as the possibility to contradict oneself.³⁵ This leads him to a new conception of the absoluteness of Christianity in philosophy of history. The basic features and building blocks of this construction of religion in philosophy of history are briefly presented in what follows.³⁶

Its foundations lie in a construction of the concept of religion in which 'absolute' and anthropological elements are entangled. Human consciousness, according to its most basic idea, is God-positing as such.³⁷ Concepts of religion based on theories of the faculties are thus rejected, and instead the self-relation of consciousness is seen as the foundation of religion. As the unity of the potencies, it is, as it were, the unity of God. Religion is therefore God's self-relation. That unity is based on the fact that will, the first potency, functions as the basis and foundation of essence. As it is nothing particular, it stands in identity with absolute spirit. Through its elevation – through the self-determination of the will as such – it comes into contradiction with absolute spirit. On this model, the early Tillich understands history as the contradiction of absolute spirit with the contradiction of individual spirit.³⁸

Christology thematises the historical self-realisation of consciousness in its truth. It is possible only through the self-sublation of the particular. As Christ – the second potency – sublates himself in his particularity, he produces the unity of consciousness once more. 'When this decision has been made, and when consciousness has sacrificed its anti-divine substantiality, it once more becomes God-positing according to its substantial being. The spirit is realised in him who can come only when selfhood has been returned entirely to being-as-ground, in him who is the spirit in truth, the Holy Spirit.'³⁹ The history of religion functions in this way as the structuring of a history of self-consciousness in its reflexive and contradictory relation to itself. Thus is it differentiated from super-historical and empirical histories. Christianity marks the goal of this history. In it consciousness becomes transparent in its inner reflective structure and historicity. It recognises the necessity of the particular and its contemporary inadequacy. In consequence, there is truth in history only as concrete, which is at the same time its error and therefore must again be negated. Consciousness comes to its truth in history only as reflective.⁴⁰

The essence of Christianity⁴¹ consists in a consciousness recognising itself in history. This alone constitutes its absoluteness. Even in the early sketch, *Gott und das Absolute*

bei Schelling from 1910, Tillich suggests that the absoluteness of Christianity consists not in empirical properties, but in the recognition of the historicity of all the contents of self-relation.⁴² The philosophy of history, which is ‘as old as Christianity’, ‘was the first and initially the most important form in which Christianity became conscious of its own claim to absoluteness. The judgment, Jesus is the Christ, contains *in germe* all philosophy of history.’⁴³

If one looks back at the results of the preceding reflections, it becomes clear that his reception of Schelling’s philosophy gave the early Tillich the conceptual means to get to grips with problems bound up with his understanding of freedom which he had developed at the end of his studies. On the foundation of his transformation of the concept of freedom out of the ethics of autonomy to the idea that freedom is the possibility to come into contradiction with oneself, he worked out a new foundation for the absoluteness of Christianity in the philosophy of history – a foundation which answered in an original manner the problems raised by Ernst Troeltsch. Significant here in Tillich’s early philosophy of history is its displacement of empirical history.⁴⁴ The philosophy of history is constructed as consciousness of history, and the stages of history – Paganism and Judaism – structure the path to its self-realisation.⁴⁵

Translated by Daniel Whistler

Notes

1. Medicus, “Paul Tillich,” 564. On Tillich’s relation to Medicus, see Graf and Christophersen, “Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance”; Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 146–155; and Danz, “Freiheit als Autonomie,” 217–230.
2. Medicus, “Paul Tillich,” 562 [‘Aber als Student schon hat er die Philosophie kaum weniger als die Theologie gepflegt. Seine Arbeiten liegen auf kulturphilosophischem Gebiet. Die beiden Dissertationen, die philosophische (1910) und die theologische (1912), sind der Lehre Schellings gewidmet, sie bezeichnen den Anfang der Schellingrenaissance in der philosophischen Bewegung der Gegenwart; für Tillich selbst bedeuten sie die geschichtliche Anknüpfung der eigenen Leistung.’].
3. Tillich, “Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes,” 395. Tillich writes similarly in his autobiography, *Auf der Grenze*: ‘My philosophical teacher was Fritz Medicus, at that time Privatdozent at Halle and later Professor in Zürich. His writings on Fichte gave the impetus to the Fichte-rennaissance in the first decade of this century, which very soon expanded into a renaissance of German Idealism in general.’ (Tillich, “Auf der Grenze,” 31) [‘Mein philosophischer Lehrer wurde der damalige Hallenser Privatdozent und spätere Züricher Professor Fritz Medicus. Seine Schriften über Fichte gaben den Anstoß zu der Fichterenaissance im ersten Jahrzehnt dieses Jahrhunderts, die sich bald zu einer Renaissance des deutschen Idealismus überhaupt erweiterte.’].
4. See Tillich, “Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes,” 392: ‘He was my teacher, although the beginnings of my study and the year of his death lie exactly 50 years apart; never in the development of my thinking have I forgotten my dependence on Schelling [...] My work on the problems of systematic theology would be unthinkable without him.’ [‘Er war mein Lehrer obgleich die Anfänge meines Studiums und das Jahr seines Todes genau 50 Jahre auseinander liegen; niemals in der Entwicklung meines eigenen Denkens habe ich die Abhängigkeit von Schelling vergessen. [...] Meine Arbeit an den Problemen der systematischen Theologie wäre undenkbar ohne ihn.’] See also Tillich, “Auf der Grenze,” 31. On Tillich’s account of Schelling, see Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 146–391; Danz, “L’inconditionnalité en soi et l’existence historique de l’esprit.” For older literature, see O’Hanlon, *The Influence of Schelling*; Sommer, *The*

Significance of the late Philosophy of Schelling; Mokrosch, *Theologische Freiheitsphilosophie*; and Steinacker, “Die Bedeutung der Philosophie Schellings.”

5. See Tillich’s 1909 letter to Alfred Fritz (“Briefwechsel,” 76f).
6. Tillich himself speaks of a ‘chance purchase’ (“Auf der Grenze,” 31), which brought Schelling to his attention. See also Tillich, “Autobiographische Betrachtungen,” 66.
7. See Tillich, “Fichtes Religionsphilosophie,” 4–19, and the correspondence with his friend, Friedrich Büchsel, (“Briefwechsel,” 14–27, 62–74).
8. There are two versions of the examination thesis: Tillich, “Welche Bedeutung,” 28–93, 94–153.
9. Tillich, “Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion,” 158f.; translation: 40 [‘Ein drittes Motiv, diese Arbeit in Angriff zu nehmen, folgt aus der Tatsache, daß in derselben Weise, wie auf Kants ‚Religion innerhalb der Grenzen ...‘ die großen religionsgeschichtlichen Systeme folgten, gegenwärtig aus der kantisch beeinflussten Religionsphilosophie eine idealistisch-religionsgeschichtliche zugleich von theologischer und von philosophischer Seite hervorgegangen ist (Troeltsch – Eucken). Unter diesen Umständen dürfte es angebracht sein, von neuem auf diejenige Gestalt der idealistischen Philosophie, speziell Religionsphilosophie, hinzuweisen, die den Abschluß der gesamten Entwicklung bildet und mit ihrem Voluntarismus, Realismus und Positivismus dem modernen Denken trotz der besonderen starken Anstöße, die sie gibt, im Grunde näher steht als irgend eine andere.‘]. An even clearer indication that this problem lies in the background is the original version of the philosophical dissertation of 1910, which lies in the Tillich-Nachlass of Andover-Harvard Theological Library (Box 101/2). It bears a title that clearly refers to Ernst Troeltsch: *Die Absolutheit Des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte in Schellings positiver Philosophie*. See Schüßler and Sturm, *Paul Tillich*, 5. The 1910 sketch, *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling*, which was published from the Nachlass, also employs the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity as a leitmotiv for reconstructing Schelling. See Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 9–54, esp. 11. See also Danz, “Alle Linien gipfeln.”
10. Until now, the work submitted to the Konsistorium has failed to be identified, just like Tillich’s personal records.
11. From the Tillich-Nachlass in Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., NL Nr.: 114:003#1.f 4. In his autobiographical reflections, Tillich also points to this manuscript and dates it to the end of his university days. See Tillich, “Auf der Grenze,” 31; “Autobiographische Betrachtungen,” 65.
12. Tillich, “Fichtes Religionsphilosophie,” 5. For whom Tillich wrote this seminar work is unclear. The editor suggests that the work originates in a seminar ‘which Medicus ran in the Winter Semester 1905/06 on the topic, “Philosophische Übungen (Fichte)”’ (ibid., 1). However, the work was not reviewed by Medicus, but – as the editor also points out – by Tillich’s mentor at Halle, Wilhelm Lütgert. On Tillich’s account of Fichte, see Neugebauer, “Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip”; Danz, “Theologischer Neuidealismus”; Boss, *Au commencement La liberté*, 341–63.
13. Tillich, “Fichtes Religionsphilosophie,” 5 [‘Es ist klar, daß die Philosophie, ihrer Natur entsprechend, immer in Gefahr stand, einem einseitigen Intellektualismus zu verfallen, und das umso mehr, je freier sie der Religion gegenüberstand und je mächtiger sich die Spekulation entfaltete.‘].
14. Ibid., 4.
15. Ibid., 9. Like Medicus, Tillich differentiates three phases in the development of Fichte’s thinking and understands the ‘concluding period in Fichte’s philosophy of religion’ as ‘Johannine’. See Medicus, *J. G. Fichte*.
16. Tillich, “Fichtes Religionsphilosophie,” 10.
17. Ibid., 11.
18. See ibid., 13: ‘As long as this reality [that is, the self-realisation of the I as a moment of the absolute and thus as freedom] is not reached, man plunges into non-being, sin. Accordingly, Fichte takes evil to be a necessary transitional level of God’s self-revelation. Thus, the concepts of guilt as God’s judgment on sin and retribution as the

- negation of evil through act fall away.’ [‘Solange diese Realität [sc. die Selbsterfassung des Ich als Moment des Absoluten und darin als Freiheit] nicht erreicht ist, steckt der Mensch im Nicht-Seienden, der Sünde. Dementsprechend hält Fichte das Böse für eine notwendige Durchgangsstufe der Selbstoffenbarung Gottes. Damit entfallen natürlich die Begriffe Schuld, als Urteil Gottes über die Sünde, und Strafe, als Verneinung des Bösen durch die Tat, hinweg.’].
19. This corresponds to Medicus’ judgment on Fichte’s account of the Gospel of John. It rests on a flawed exegesis. See Medicus, *J. G. Fichte*, 224f. See also Tillich, “Fichtes Religionsphilosophie,” 9.
 20. Tillich, “Welche Bedeutung,” 28, 98 [‘Die Notwendigkeit, über Kant hinauszugehen, die auch von den meisten Neukantianern anerkannt wird, zeigt sich schließlich als eine Notwendigkeit, in der Richtung auf Fichte hin zu gehen.’].
 21. See Medicus, “Kant und die gegenwärtige Aufgabe der Logik.”
 22. See Tillich, “Welche Bedeutung,” 130: ‘For it is not the individual as such who fulfils the spiritual self-positing, but spirit, the universal life-spirit thought in it as unity.’ [‘Denn nicht das Individuum als solches ist es, was die geistige Selbstsetzung vollzieht, sondern der Geist, das universale Geistesleben als Einheit gedacht in ihm.’].
 23. Ibid., 128 [‘ist der Mangel an überwundenem Nichtich, präziser und der Tatsächlichkeit entsprechender das Zurückbleiben der geistigen Persönlichkeit hinter ihrem *telos*’].
 24. Tillich thus presupposes Medicus’ account that sin is ‘a necessary stage of the self-realising existent’ (Medicus, *J. G. Fichte*, 226).
 25. See Tillich, “Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein,” 14; translation: 22: ‘The requirements of the historical-dialectical method bring us face to face with the widely held view that Schelling’s philosophical development is a more or less disconnected sequence of different periods – of which one would have to distinguish about seven.’ [‘Mit der Forderung der historische-dialektischen Methode treten wir der weit verbreitenden Auffassung entgegen, daß Schellings philosophische Entwicklung eine mehr oder weniger zusammenhangslose Aufeinanderfolge verschiedener Perioden sei, deren man etwa sieben unterscheiden müsse.’] See also Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 12.
 26. Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 12 [‘Philosophie ist die ‚zweite Tochter der kritischen Philosophie‘, und sie hat ihre Mutter nie verleugnet. Die Fragestellung bleibt von Anfang bis zu Ende kritisch: Wie muß das Objekt beschaffen sein, damit es Gegenstand des Wissens sein kann?’]. Fritz Medicus also understands Schelling’s philosophy and its development in relation to Kant. See Medicus, “Review,” 317: ‘Of the great thinkers of the post-Kantian era, Schelling is the one who remained closest to Kant.’ [‘Unter den grossen Denkern der nachkantischen Zeit ist Schelling derjenige, der Kant am nächsten geblieben ist.’] See also 319, 325.
 27. See Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 12; Tillich, “Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion,” 166; and Tillich, “Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein” 15.
 28. Tillich, “Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein,” 15; translation: 23.
 29. Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 26 [‘Fichte knüpft an die erste Bedeutung an. Frei sein heißt sich selbst gleich sein, nicht bedingt sein durch etwas anderes. An die zweite Bedeutung knüpft Schellings Freiheitslehre an. Freiheit heißt: sich ungleich sein können, unvernünftig sein können.’]. In his theological licentiate thesis Tillich presupposes this two-sidedness to Kantian philosophy and pursues it in the second section of the investigation. See Tillich, “Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein,” 24–34.
 30. Tillich, “Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion,” 175; translation: 56 [‘Ohne Selbstentgegensetzung keine lebendige Selbstsetzung und ohne lebendige Selbstsetzung keine vollkommene Freiheit und ohne vollkommene Freiheit keine geistige Persönlichkeit Gottes.’]. See also Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 20, 27; Tillich “Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip,” 61f.; Tillich “Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein,” 76–79.
 31. Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 32 [‘Freiheit und nicht Mangel, Disharmonie, nicht Mangel an Harmonie, Getrenntheit, die doch Einheit sein will.’].

32. See *ibid.*, 28: 'From the duplicity of the principles a trinity emerges: a progress of which Schelling had clearly recognised the significance.' ['Aus der Zweifelt der Principien ist eine Dreifelt geworden: ein Fortschritt, dessen Wichtigkeit Schelling klar erkannt hat.'] On Tillich's account of Schelling's *Potenzlehre*, see also *ibid.*, 28–33; Tillich, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 160–172. See also Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*.
33. See Tillich, "Gott und das Absolute," 28; "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 173–183; and Tillich, "Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein," 79–85.
34. See Tillich, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 167; translation: 49: 'Spirit is to identity as actual unity is to essential unity, as self-understanding mediated by antithesis is to immediate self-understanding.' ['Der Geist verhält sich zur Identität wie aktuelle Einheit zur substantiellen, wie mittelbare (durch einen Gegensatz hindurchgegangene) Selbsterfassung zur unmittelbaren.'] See also Tillich, "Gott und das Absolute," 30. These Schellingian considerations of a contradictory self-relation of spirit are retained by Tillich throughout his writings, notwithstanding all the basic theoretical transformations. In the third volume of *Systematic Theology* it appears as the duplicity of life in the dimension of spirit.' See Tillich, *Systematische Theologie*.
35. See Tillich, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 197; Tillich, "Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein," 100.
36. See also Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 161–192; and Danz, "Zwischen Transzendentalphilosophie und Phänomenologie."
37. See Tillich, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 235; translation: 120: 'The pure substance of human consciousness is by nature God-positing. Human consciousness stands in a real and substantial relationship to God, and this is the religious relationship.' ['Die reine Substanz des menschlichen Bewußtseins ist das *natura sua* Gott Setzende; das menschliche Bewußtsein steht in einem realen, substantiellen Verhältnis zu Gott und dieses Verhältnis ist das religiöse.'].]
38. See *ibid.*, 261; translation: 148: 'Historical philosophy is the domain of freedom, will and act, which, in the final analysis, is religion. The subject of historical philosophy is divine history whose nucleus is the history of religion.' ['Geschichtliche Philosophie ist, wo Freiheit, Wille und Tat herrschen, d.h. aber letztlich in der Religion: Gegenstand der geschichtlichen Philosophie ist eine göttliche Geschichte, deren Kern die Religionsgeschichte ist.']. In his 1911 thesis on Christian certainty, the early Tillich took up these thoughts again to construct a 'geschichtsphilosophischen Geschichtsphilosophie', as it is there called. See Tillich, "128 Thesen," 41: 'The transition from unity to the manifold is irrational; it is best represented as a contradiction of the irrational will with essence and the higher-level reaction of essence against contradiction.' ['Der Übergang von der Einheit in die Mannigfaltigkeit ist irrational; er wird am besten vorgestellt als Widerspruch des irrationalen Willens gegen das Wesen und stufenweise Reaktion des Wesens gegen den Widerspruch.'].]
39. Tillich, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 254; translation: 140 ['Wo aber diese Entscheidung erfolgt ist, wo das Bewußtsein seine widergöttliche Substantialität geopfert ist, da ist es auch seiner Substanz nach wieder Gott setzend: Der Geist ist in ihm realisiert, der nun kommen kann, wo die Selbstheit gänzliche Basis geworden ist, der Geist, der es in Wahrheit ist, der heilige Geist.']. See also Tillich, "Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein," 107f.
40. See Tillich, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion," 271; translation: 157: 'To be historical means to sacrifice oneself in one's naturalness in order to find oneself in one's spirituality. This intuition was given in Christ, and therefore in him God has become personal to man. In this life and death of him who conceived of himself as the son of man and the lord of mankind, the logos created an intuition of the estranged being of every natural spirit that is not free from itself and cannot sacrifice itself. And as he created this intuition, the logos sacrificed himself in his natural dominion over consciousness and caused the coming of the Holy Spirit.' ['Geschichtlich sein, heißt aber, sich opfern in seiner Natürlichkeit, um sich wiederzufinden in seiner Geistigkeit. Diese Anschauung war im Christentum gegeben, und

darum ist in ihm Gott dem Menschen persönlich geworden. Im Leben und Sterben dessen, der sich als Menschensohn und Herr der Menschheit erfaßte und sich für die Menschheit opferte, schuf der Logos eine absolute Anschauung von der Außergöttlichkeit alles natürlichen Geistes, der nicht frei von sich ist, sich nicht opfern kann, und indem er diese Anschauung schuf, opferte er sich selbst in seiner natürlichen Herrschaft über das Bewußtsein und bewirkte, daß der heilige Geist kommen kann.’].

41. See *ibid.*, 253.
42. See Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute”: ‘And this [historical-philosophical] consciousness is nothing other than that of absoluteness.’ [‘Und dieses Bewußtsein ist eben nichts anderes als das der Absolutheit.’].
43. Tillich, “Gott und das Absolute,” 53 [‘war die erste und zunächst wichtigste Form, in der das Christentum sich seines Absolutheitsanspruches bewußt wurde. Das Urteil: Jesus ist der Christus enthält im Keim alle Geschichtsphilosophie’].
44. If nothing else, this is clear in Tillich’s critique of Schelling’s reflections on an empirical becoming-man of Logos: ‘Without the external fact revelation could not occur; but the content of revelation is not the external fact, but the super-historical [i.e. the history of self-consciousness].’ [‘Ohne das äußere Faktum hätte die Offenbarung nicht geschehen können; aber der Inhalt der Offenbarung ist nicht das äußere Faktum, sondern das übergeschichtliche.’].
45. In this philosophy of history, the early Tillich follows his Halle mentor Fritz Medicus, who in his lectures on Fichte had suggested that Fichte constructs history as ‘a history of consciousness’ which ‘points back to the demand to try to show the empirical development of self-consciousness in the sequence of its psycho-genetic main phases.’ [‘Anspruch zurückweist, die empirische Herausbildung des Selbstbewußtseins in der Abfolge seine psychogenetischen Hauptphasen zeigen zu woollen.’] (Medicus, *J. G. Fichte*, 220). On Medicus’ philosophy of history, see Medicus, “Kants Philosophie der Geschichte.”

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