

Studies in Systematic Theology

Series Editors

Stephen Bevans S.V.D., Catholic Theological Union, Chicago
Miikka Ruokanen, University of Helsinki and
Nanjing Union Theological Seminary

Advisory Board

Wanda Deifelt, Luther College, Decorah (IA)
Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena (CA)
Jesse Mugambi, University of Nairobi
Rachel Zhu Xiaohong, Fudan University, Shanghai

VOLUME 9

Constructing Ethical Patterns in Times of Globalization

Hans Küng's Global Ethic Project and Beyond

By

Aleksi Kuokkanen



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2012

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kuokkanen, Alekski.

Constructing ethical patterns in times of globalization : Hans Küng's global ethic project and beyond / by Alekski Kuokkanen.

p. cm. -- (Studies in systematic theology, ISSN 1876-1518 ; v. 9)

Includes index.

ISBN 978-90-04-20568-0 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Ethics. 2. Globalization--Moral and ethical aspects. 3. Religion and ethics. 4. Küng, Hans, 1928- I. Title.

BJ1125.K89 2012

170--dc23

2011042612

For Meeri

ISSN 1876-1518

ISBN 978 90 04 20568 0 (hardback)

ISBN 978 90 04 22433 9 (e-book)

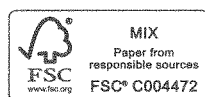
Copyright 2012 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Global Oriental, Hotei Publishing, IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.

Fees are subject to change.



CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ix
I Introduction	1
1. Background	1
1.1 Declaration of Global Ethic in Chicago	1
1.2 Hans Küng.....	2
2. About This Study	4
2.1 The Main Task	4
2.2 Structure and Methods.....	6

PART ONE

THE LIBERAL POTENTIAL OF GLOBAL ETHICS

II Ethics and Religious Faith	19
1. Küng's Basic Argument.....	19
2. The Rational Method: From Kant to Schleiermacher.....	30
3. The Positive Method: From Hegel to Heidegger to Jaspers	43
4. Exclusivism.....	67
III The Nature of Global Ethics	81
1. The Rational Method: Kant Against Consequentialism.....	81
1.1 Consequentialism and Politics	82
1.2 Kant Against Consequentialism.....	90
2. The Positive Method: Hegel Against Consequentialism	102
2.1 Consequentialism and Sociology.....	103
2.2 Hegel Against Consequentialism	113
IV The Content of Global Ethics.....	134
1. The Rational Method: From Kant to Communitarian Liberalism.....	138
1.1 From Kant to Rawls's Theory of Justice.....	138
1.2 From Pogge's Cosmopolitanism to Rawls's Political Liberalism	157
1.3 From Habermas's Discourse Ethics to Communitarian Liberalism.....	185

2. The Positive Method: From Hegel to Postmodernism	199
2.1 From Hegel to Dewey's Pragmatism	199
2.2 From Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach to Walzer's Multiculturalism	210
2.3 From Gray's Value Pluralism to Postmodernism	250

PART TWO

THE POSTLIBERAL POTENTIAL OF GLOBAL ETHICS

V The Rational Method: The Aristotelian Line	303
1. Macintyre and Sandel as Postliberalists.....	303
2. From Homer to Aquinas	308
3. Tradition-Constitutive Rationality.....	324
VI The Positive Method: The Augustinian Line.....	348
1. Transcendental Thomism and Dialectical Theology	348
2. Schelling.....	359
3. Positive and/or Rational Method?.....	379
VII The Postliberal Approach and Exclusivism.....	390
VIII Encountering Exclusive Difference: A Starting Point for Dialogue.....	403
IX Concluding Remarks	423
References.....	427
Index	461

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people who have taken the time to work with my manuscript and to whom I am deeply indebted. Professor Miikka Ruokanen (the University of Helsinki) is unquestionably the first to be mentioned. Docent and university lecturer Ville Päivänsalo (the University of Helsinki) has been reading and commenting on my text for several years and Docent Jyri Komulainen has been encouraging me and providing feedback. In the early stages, Professor Antti Raunio (the University of Eastern Finland) was a crucial figure in guiding me on the right track. His final comments helped me to see the potential of K \ddot{u} ng's *Projekt Weltethos* more clearly than I had ever done before. Docent and university lecturer Pauli Annala (the University of Helsinki) nurtured my abilities with his personal, experienced, and professional style and especially pushed me to deal with the Hegelian and Schellingian aspects of this study.

Right from outset, Professor Jan Klabbers (the University of Helsinki) encouraged me, not only to criticize liberalism, but also to give a (post-liberal) alternative. He and Professors Hans Joas (the University of Chicago), who demanded a more sophisticated analysis of liberalism, and Miikka Ruokanen, as well as Docent Tarja Väyrynen (the University of Tampere) made my research plan decisively more ambitious with their brief, but succinct observations.

I want to thank all those on the staff of the Tampere Peace Research Institute at the time I was working there in 2005, especially Executive Secretary Unto Vesa and Docent Ruth Illman. Moreover, I am grateful to those in the Department of Systematic Theology at the University of Helsinki, who have given of their time to improve my text and offer practical guidance in useful contacts through the years. I would like to mention just four of them, Professor Risto Saarinen, Docent Jaakko Rusama, Docent Olli-Pekka Vainio, and Doctor Timo Nisula.

Beyond these two institutions, there are a number of persons I want to mention by name. I am deeply grateful to Professors Tage Kurtén (Åbo Akademi) and Tapio Puolimatka (the University of Jyväskylä), who diligently and competently examined my entire manuscript. Professor Glenda Dawn Goss has simply impressed me by her effort and proficiency in revising my English. Further thanks go to Professors Francois Bousquet (Institut Catholique, Paris), Stephen Cahn (the

While both means are, in principle, present in the liberal interpretation of PWE's historical argument concerning world religions, it is the postliberal one that will be in a position to yield philosophically more promising results. It is important to observe one thing before proceeding to a positive postliberal rendering, namely, that the degree of *neutrality* in the historical argument decreases as one goes from liberal argument to rational postliberal argument to positive postliberal one. The liberal type of historical argument, in all its forms, attempts either to ignore or to transcend the particular self-identifications of the religious or cultural traditions taken as a whole in order to escape the evident ideological contest for the sake of impartiality or neutrality. It either concentrates narrowly on some 'elementary ethics' or 'minimal *ethos*' instead of on the 'maximal' ethics. Global ethics is here seen as principally independent of any 'comprehensive doctrines' in a Kantian way. Or another kind of liberal historical argument sets out to detect, in a quasi-Hegelian neutral empirical manner, the factual development toward the liberal 'paradigm' of a particular tradition as a whole despite the more or less contradictory, or at least the not so clearly liberal, tendencies found in the factual traditions themselves.

Instead, the rational mode of the postliberal approach does not attempt to deny the indispensable status of the exclusive articulations of particular traditions as a whole, and thus engages openly in the evaluation of 'comprehensive doctrines' as a part of the ongoing ideological contest as the only way to carry out the task of ethically designing the (global) society. But as seen by implication in the previous section, MacIntyre's model as well as Ricoeur's and Sandel's for that evaluation still remains at quite a general level: its focus is to argue for the right general terms of the rational procedure, which will then enable one to decide which tradition is the best. It is not that the latter dimension of engaging in the contest itself would be somehow avoidable, as one would see it from the liberal perspective. Rather the characteristic task of the rational method within postliberalism is merely to articulate philosophically the inevitability and more specific nature of that contest, without yet fully engaging in it.

The use of late Schelling is to illustrate that, to incorporate historical arguments into the *positive* postliberal method is to take the last step beyond formality and neutrality toward engaging in this very contest. It may sometimes seem that Schelling's historical rendering throughout is analogous to the Hegelian type of Idealism within the positive liberal approach; both use their own models to demonstrate objective insight of any historical development, despite and beyond the contrary

self-identification of the many traditions they deal with. But there is a significant difference between the continuum from German Idealism, early Schelling and Hegel included, to such neo-Hegelian figures as Kojève and Fukuyama, on the one hand, and the continuum that begins with late Schelling, on the other.²⁰ The latter, in a characteristically Augustinian manner, acknowledges that a historically particular and exclusive tradition of Biblical revelation *precedes* any opportunity to transcend historical particularity and ascend to an objective view of the factual traditions and their "actual" historical development. The possibility of context-transcending objectivity is substantially subordinated to the possibility of Divine historical particularity. In the liberal rendering of Hegelian tradition the particularity of traditions is transcended *directly*, either by way of rational inference (like Hegel and Kojève) or by empirical observation (like Fukuyama and, it seems, Küng).

2. Schelling

Before turning to Schelling's historical argument in his later years, it is important to introduce Schelling's idealist world of concepts through his earlier philosophical phases. This I will do below mainly with the help of John E. Wilson's presentation of Schelling. As I have already shown by implication, the controversy between the rational and the positive methods in postliberalism is intermingled with the Platonian versus Aristotelian controversy over rationality. Hence, it is important that, from the outset, Schelling is to a considerable extent a Platonian.

One of the three Platonistic ingredients found in Schelling were already noted in Kant, namely, the uncompromising unconditionality of all rational enquiry. It was, however, precisely on this issue that Schelling's teacher, J. G. Fichte, criticized Kant for harboring remnants of subject-independent reality instead of the idealist subjectivism that Kant's overall theory had finalized. The other more or less Platonistic element in Kant which Fichte in turn reinforced was a more concrete unconditional basis for all action and thinking at the noumenal level of

²⁰ I have restricted myself to Schelling without taking up any of his contemporary Protestant and Catholic followers because I have an interest in showing only the rough nature of the potential historical argument within what I call the positive postliberal method.

human freedom, which is grasped by the so-called 'intellectual intuition'. Through 'intellectual intuition' the subject as a spontaneous, completely free and creative will, becomes aware of its noumenal unconstrainedness to conditional reality and even to the transcendental concepts of mind. On the basis of these two revisions, Fichte went on to argue that the active ego, the noumenal and unlimited will, is the sole constructor of reality.²¹

Now, early Schelling's inflection on this is that the creator of a highly complex reality cannot be reducible to finite human subject. Rather human ego must be the reflection or image of an infinite absolute subject, which the 'intellectual intuition' grasps at the level of the noumenal. Because Schelling still cannot but accept Fichte's two principal revisions of Kant, he cannot place the unconditional Absolute outside the human subject. Instead, he reduces every object in the external world to the subjective sphere of voluntary construction and then, in turn, to the Absolute God. Consequently, Schelling ends up arguing the fundamental identity of everything in the Absolute. Through 'intellectual intuition' one is able to see that the ultimate identity of any subject-object distinction is in complete unity in the unconditional Absolute, an Absolute that is "no thing or nothing, yet it is original power or 'potence,' the 'possibility' of an existing world. ... As the possibility of everything the Absolute is the 'ground' of the world."²²

All the same, Schelling sets out to give an account of the existence of external reality in its multiplicity as well. This he does by introducing the potentiality of external multiplicity in the ultimate unity of the Absolute. The first 'potency' of the Absolute is "unlimited, unconditional expansion," and this is countered by a second potency of limitation or condition. The synthesis of these potencies is the third, which unites the two and thereby engenders things that have duration in existence. "It brings into existence inorganic and organic stages of a world constantly in becoming and passing away."²³ It is this last additional aspect of the relationship between the Absolute and the world that Schelling takes directly from Plato rather than Fichte. While this third Platonistic element in Schelling is more exclusively his own contribution than the two earlier ones, it is also the most exclusively Platonian.

²¹ Wilson 2007, 40–42.

²² Wilson 2007, 43–44.

²³ Wilson 2007, 44.

The key here is the radical identity of all external reality with its divine ground.²⁴

The idea of radical ontological identity becomes more understandable on realizing that, for Schelling, divinity is not something 'actual', but 'potential'. The creation is about actualizing the potential. As potencies, the divine trinity naturally moves towards realizing what is potential in its innermost essence. Therefore, there exists an identity between God and reality similar to that between intention and action. Ontological difference can be demonstrated only between actual essences, that is, between the substances of created, external reality. Note that the identity reaches beyond the humanity to nature. And recall that 'intellectual intuition' is the way to grasp that identity. From the perspective of planetarian global ethics we have here an interesting contribution: it is possible to grasp not only the identity between humanity and God, but also the identity between nature and God as well as that between humanity and nature by way of 'intellectual intuition'. Schelling sees this aspect of natural theology in the concept of 'intellectual intuition' as operating in art and religion, whereas the natural sciences objectify nature. But Schelling also claims that Christianity in his time has been distorted such that God is seen as being outside of nature. This has led first Christians and then modernists to view nature as a dead thing that has no essential meaning from a metaphysical perspective; nature only exists. The inevitable result has been that humans feel abandoned, because they have torn themselves away from their home, namely, living nature.²⁵

In Schelling, the instrumentalization of nature through anthropocentrism is now encountered in somewhat the same way as Nussbaum's sympathetic imagination with the help of novelistic literature, but the crucial difference is Schelling's thoroughly holistic, idealistic understanding of all reality as ultimately *one* in the literal sense of the term. This is, of course, what takes Schelling out of the dispute in which Nussbaum and others are criticized for being anthropomorphic in their considerations of species that are ultimately something *other* than human. Although Schelling's early formulations radically changed over time, he never fully abandoned this peculiar idea of identity. Significantly, Schelling's identity philosophy is a remarkable contribution to

²⁴ Wilson 2007, 44.

²⁵ Wilson 2007, 50–51.

the discussion about the planetarian ambitions of PWE. Through Schelling's natural philosophy we may see how the Platonistic 'intellectual intuition' provides an alternative to the natural philosophy of the Aristotelian ecologist potential presented in the previous chapter through MacIntyre. Similar to what has been said of MacIntyre, it is the recourse to metaphysics instead of an escape from metaphysics, that makes Schelling's planetarianism more plausible than the liberalist suggestions.

While identity philosophy, a dimension that provided one of the underlying ideas of Schelling's later philosophy as well, gives a powerful counter-force to Kantian transcendental philosophy and lays the foundations for the Romantic objection to the Enlightenment, clear problems also emerged, which would influence not only some of Schelling's critical colleagues, but also Schelling himself. The problem is, naturally, the downplaying of particularity and external reality. Identity philosophy best illustrates Schelling's extremist Platonist enterprise in its ambition to escape the cave of material multiplicity and particular reality²⁶ to an extent that led Hegel to his famous critical description of 'intellectual intuition' as the "night in which all cows are black."²⁷

It is remarkable, however, that Schelling was later able to transform the direction of his thinking so fundamentally that his own early formulations as well as Hegel himself are put into question. In fact, there are two stages of development that call for particular attention. The first is Schelling's radical invocation of contingency and freedom. In his view none of the idealists had been in a position to pay the necessary attention to a concrete reality that was marked by unpredictability, particularity, and the absence of rational explanations. The problem with idealism had been first and foremost that *thinking* was considered to be the ultimate way to account for metaphysics. This had amounted to a rather abstract enquiry, which hovered in the air without a touch of reality, no matter how rationally coherent it was in itself. "Were God for us only a logical abstraction, then everything would follow from God with logical necessity."²⁸

²⁶ Wilson 2007, 44.

²⁷ Wilson 2007, 51.

²⁸ Schelling, "Über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit." In *Werke*, 7:333–416. 7:394. Quoted in Wilson 2007, 61. Wilson's translation.

Instead, Schelling attempts to reconcile the contingency of concrete reality with his earlier account of the Absolute by ascribing to it the ambivalent potential not only for expansion and limitation as the basis for external reality, as in his early phase, but also with the potential for freedom and limitation as the basis for human freedom and its distortions. The first principle of the Absolute is now seen by Schelling as the unconscious 'dark principle', that is, a pure will without limits and thus also without specific direction. The second principle, potency of understanding, is that which limits and directs the formless will toward a certain content. Again, while these are only potencies, they are actualized in the free creation of the world guided by good will as love. After all, while the dark principle of will and the light of understanding endure in harmonious unity in God through the third potency, spirit, this is not the case in the creation. The human spirit as the image of the Absolute is ultimately incapable of preventing the first potency's conquest of the counter-force provided by the second potency. What is more, in humans there is a natural disposition toward radical evil in a Kantian sense, which Schelling essentially takes to be the hubris of the first potency – free will desiring to be its own ground, instead of viewing itself only as an image of the balance with the second potency, which is found in the trinity of the Absolute.²⁹

After all, the above described self-revision proved to be insufficient for Schelling. The problem that Schelling obviously struggled with after the publication of *On Human Freedom* was that he was still *reasoning* about God in a manner that rested on no ground that would provide the final truth of the matter. In the third and final stage of his philosophical development, Schelling set out to introduce a dichotomy between negative or rational philosophy, on the one hand, and positive philosophy, on the other. This marks his skepticism of any post-Enlightenment philosophy, including his own, with regard to their ability to provide a plausible metaphysical argument in reality.

Negative philosophy concerns rational inference and is marked with the requirement of logical coherence. It is by nature abstract. Therefore, for Schelling, it is never in a position to get to the question of how things are in reality. Instead, it is positive philosophy that has the ability

²⁹ Wilson 2007, 60–63. Tillich (1967, 149) explains Schellings conclusions: "In the creature freedom can turn against its own divine substance, its own divine ground. ... This fall is the breaking away from the creative ground form which we come in the power of freedom."

to address this question because its focus is on the existence of reality instead of on the abstract logical coherence of the arguments. Late Schelling's discovery is that reality-orientedness must be prior to the logic of reason. The most striking corollary of this claim from the point of view of negative philosophy is that thought itself is an existential category, which entails the idea that thinking cannot be a judge of matters that concern the actual existence of things. To do this, thinking itself would have to rise above ordinary existential categories, which it cannot do. Reason is able to operate within its own framework and determine *what* the *possible* modes of existence are – anything that exists must exist in logically possible ways. But reason cannot say *that* something actually exists among those many logical possibilities.³⁰

With the help of the reality-oriented approach, one can immediately say that certain things exist in the world, among them, reason and thought. But within the same pattern of positive philosophy one must also conjecture that everything that exists must have come into existence by a free act of a transcendent being who is not part of the existing reality that we are able to observe. Moreover there is, of course, no access to determine this transcendent source of existence more precisely by way of thoughts as such; this will be possible only through the free act of revelation by the transcendent origin as God, an act by which God is willing and capable of communicating metaphysical truths to human beings on their own terms, that is, in effect, through human language. *This* source of existence is the sole source of metaphysical knowledge, of how the world actually is, what is its essence, meaning, and so on. "In fact revelation is the true source for the knowledge of all reality."³¹ The metaphysical truths endowed by divine revelation are, again, not discovered by rational thinking, but by faith. What is more, confidence in the truth of revelation is not to be gained outside of revelation, but "the only convincing proof of the Scripture's truth is the testimony of the Holy Spirit that works the faith that the testimony of Scripture is true ..."³²

In expressing these theses, Schelling retains, rather than relinquishes, the status of rational philosophy, although he simultaneously relativizes that status to a significant degree. The positive role of reason is

³⁰ Wilson 2007, 64–65.

³¹ Wilson 2007, 65.

³² Wilson 2007, 64–65.

already present in the above note on Schelling's appreciation of reason as the judge of possible ways of existence in a *prospective* sense of the quest for truth (the 'what'). Related to this, however, Schelling also attributes a *retrospective* role to rational thinking. He sees the essential task of Christian theology to be engaging in the rational and scientific realm to conceptualize doctrines received from supernatural revelation in such a way that they are not only understandable, but also plausible according to the strictest rules of reason: he speaks of 'the scientific mind of the church' and 'a system of Christian insights', which truly 'edify' a believer.³³ Here the term 'insight' is no doubt related to what I have earlier mentioned in the case of Hegel as the internalization of an ideal for general logical reasons.

In articulating this alliance of philosophy and faith, Schelling seems to go even further than Brunner. There is not only a need to attach faith to some preliminary surface of reason, but also a genuine need to articulate the objects of faith in a philosophically plausible manner. Indeed, Schelling goes even further: he advocates the classical religious self-consciousness of German Idealism in a way that the contents of revelation are to be conceptualized through Idealism in a comprehensive philosophical system, as it were, as the final word of philosophical enquiry.³⁴ This Schelling himself accomplished in his quasi-apologetic method of uncovering the ultimate essence of religious history from the beginnings of the world to his own time, albeit solely in light of divine revelation.³⁵

The idea underlying Schelling's history of religions is his early, thoroughly Idealist rendering of history as a context for the gradual and evolutionary emergence of human consciousness; what is new is that he now justifies and revises that account completely on the basis of Biblical sources.³⁶ Schelling's extraordinary contribution to all philosophy

³³ Wilson 2007, 66.

³⁴ Tillich 1974, 114–115.

³⁵ Tillich 1974, 65.

³⁶ Wilson 2007, 66: "Schelling contrasts a rationalized Christianity of general concepts to Christianity 'in its complete concreteness' or conditionedness ... as expressed in the New Testament. His method in the 'philosophy of revelation' is to proceed from this concreteness to the general understanding of the truth of the world and to this truth as the center of all sciences: Christ is the key to understanding the truth of all things, and so also of history"; Wilson 2007, 68–69: "... through the power of the Holy Spirit [the church] recognizes the sinful belief systems in itself and the world and knows the truth of their being overcome in Christ. Therefore according to Schelling the

in general and to German idealism as the philosophy of progressively evolving consciousness in particular is to invoke the idea of *unconsciousness* – akin to Freudian sub-consciousness and contrary to mere ignorance or obliviousness in Hegelian fashion – as the counter-pole of consciousness.³⁷ This was already present in Schelling's middle-phase voluntarism but it is now developed further.

Schelling views the beginning of history as we understand it as the result of the supra-historical 'Fall' of humankind. At that point the original harmony in the human spirit between the first potency as will and the second potency as understanding in the image of divine harmony was broken, and the first potency began to dominate. This resulted in the emergence of irrational and wanton unconsciousness, because the first principle, without the balancing power of the second, is 'the dark principle', that is, a pure will without consciousness; and without consciousness the will is without firm direction. With the Fall the human spirit lapsed into a condition of complete unconsciousness. Hence, there resulted only an apparent or external unity with God, fellow humans, and rest of creation; there were no intentional actions whatsoever that would have ultimately broken the harmony.³⁸

Nonetheless, the disharmony of the human spirit actually separated the world from the unity with God and human will was its own god, as it were, the spurious source of its own being. Therefore, when the second potency of God began making its way back to its place within the human spirit, the mutually incompatible multiplicity of idolatry was finally revealed. This free act of love by God's second potency to begin restoring the balance in human spirit by making itself known is the beginning of consciousness and the end of 'pre-history'. When rays of consciousness arrived in the sinfully disorganized human spirit, the potential of the dark principle was revealed: unconscious arbitrariness and self-affirmation ruled over the authentic conscious striving toward the fulfillment of consciousness in unity with God. This resulted in the characteristically mythological nature of world history; the ultimate aim of history is the victory of spiritual religion over mythology by the second potency, which progressively realizes this

only viable apologetics of Christianity is the philosophy of mythology: the analysis and disclosure of sin."

³⁷ Tillich 1967, 151–152.

³⁸ Tillich 1974, 78.

victory only as a cosmic potency through these very mythologies before finally revealing itself fully as the opposite of all mythologies. It was only through this gradual unmasking of human sinfulness as self-affirmative idolatry against its true ground that the second potency could regain its place in the human spirit. For Schelling, the whole history of religions reflects the progressive resistance of the second potency to the first in order to restore full consciousness by restoring the balance of the human spirit and the unity of God with its creation.³⁹

Because the arbitrary self-affirmation of individuals is the unconscious motive behind the radical plurality of mythologies, the crucial stages in overcoming mythology are monotheism and universal moral law. Both are placed opposite the multiple ways of individual self-affirmation that operate somewhat deceptively in the name of religion. Monotheism and moral law are found in Greek mysteries and Judaism before the Diaspora but only in embryo. According to Schelling, in ancient Greece monotheism and universal morality gained its superior status somewhat in the same way that MacIntyre outlines it (albeit with the strong stoic flavor of Schelling): individual self-affirmation conflicts with natural order between humans and nature as a whole, creating a need for state control over individuals in the name of morality. *Polis*-centered morality in turn cannot be sustained, because the need arises to transcend the external constraints of one particular *polis*,

³⁹ Tillich 1974, 78–79. Ibid., 79–80: "Inasmuch as the potencies have trinitarian significance, this process, occurring in human consciousness, is theogonic, as was the natural process, and it is analogous to it in its outcome. 'The primary task of philosophy of mythology is ... to identify in the successive mythologies of the races the different moments of theogonic process, that process which generates mythology.' ..." See also p. 164 n.24: "In [Schelling's] presentation of the doctrine of the trinity the following points are worthy of note: 1) the peculiar synthesis of economic and immanent aspects of the trinity that the concept of potency makes possible; 2) the conquest of the opposition of the immanence and transcendence of God by emphasizing the unity of cosmic and trinitarian events without weakening the transcendence of the divine self; 3) the joining of an empirical (economic trinity) and a speculative (immanent trinity) element based upon the character of the positive philosophy; 4) the founding of the triad in a three-fold act of will, cf. Thomasius, 1:105: 'There are three absolute acts of will by virtue of which God ... posits himself ... threefold, and just because they are acts of will they establish a real distinction'; 5) the affinity with the kenotic formula which, e.g., according to Hofmann, must be shown to be directly dependent upon the trinitarian construction, cf. *Schriftsbeweis*, Lehrgang 2: 1: 'The trinity that has become unequal to itself has posited along with its first act of self-manifestation the beginning of the historical realization of the eternal will of God.'"

which then encounters the moral law that governs the universe as a whole.⁴⁰

The same process of universalization happens by and large contemporaneously in post-captivity Judaism. It is here that what Schelling calls rational process emerges. He evidently believes it to have taken place not only in the philosophy of ancient Greece, presumably with Plato or Aristotle, but also in his own time, indeed in his own earlier philosophy. And while seeing his own philosophical development up to its third and last point as reflecting this process, Schelling states that rational philosophy of the last type is the idealism operating through 'intellectual intuition', but after necessarily recognizing identity philosophy or the philosophy of nature as insufficient to embrace the ultimate principle, it proceeds to deduce all the possible potencies of that principle, finally discovering the history of the whole world as a gradual unmasking of the mythological process.⁴¹

In this way rational philosophy itself provides elements for unmasking the mythological process. Monotheism and universal moral law were indeed the discoveries, not only of ancient Greece, but also of the Enlightenment and German Idealism, which Schelling took to be the death blow to mythology. Yet the principal work of unmasking introduced a new problem, namely, that there was no real possibility to live according to this discovery – to reach ultimate freedom, which would not be constrained by anything, not even by moral law, and yet would be simultaneously attuned to inescapable moral law. Moral law remained an external force that restricted human freedom precisely because in the light of it man necessarily recognizes a natural lack of allegiance to it.⁴²

⁴⁰ Tillich 1974, 99–100.

⁴¹ Tillich 1974, 98.

⁴² Tillich 1974, 99–100: "Liberation from the predominance of the selfish principle, which lives in consciousness as a sense of freedom, can occur only by means of a power that outwardly destroys individuality, and that brings along with it a sense of coercion. Under the protection of the power of the state, a conscious, free, and spiritual attitude toward the natural potencies develops in inner correlation with the progress of mythology. It gives rise to values that raise the individual above the state. The state becomes known in its purely external significance for the restoration of ideal humanity. ... Thus this construction of the rational process cannot remain at a standstill; it progresses toward an inward and individual relationship to the law that breaks through the barriers of national culture. 'No one becomes the property of the state, but every one belongs unconditionally to the moral law' ... But now it can be clearly seen 'what happened to the ego when it escaped from God. ... Its initial and natural attitude is hatred and

Again, for the rational process, a chance emerges to escape from this desperate paradox into the world of contemplation. Here contemplation obviously alludes to Schelling's attempts in his earlier philosophy as well as ancient philosophy. This is what can be detected from Schelling's description of the contemplative escape, among other terms, as characteristically reflecting the Platonistic vocabulary of German Idealism in the term 'intellectual intuition'. However, the fundamental problem of the rational process as contemplation, according to Schelling, is that, while it no doubt apprehends the metaphysical truth in principle in order to realize the distorting effect of previous mythology, it still does not grasp in reality the ultimate source of being. Here in effect, we have come full circle back to Schelling's distinction between negative and positive philosophy: rationally-oriented metaphysics endorses the Absolute ground merely as an ideal possibility, but cannot become convinced or take advantage of the divine source as a power that would actually counteract the moral distress at hand. This is the final paradox that the rational process is bound to leave, a paradox that cries for a solution beyond the resources that paganism affords.⁴³

rebelliousness toward the law. ... For, being universal and impersonal, the law cannot avoid being harsh. ... Whoever wills to be himself shall see himself subject to the universal."⁴³

⁴³ Tillich 1974, 100–102: "A turning point is reached at the moment when the curse of the law becomes known: 'The possibility exists for the ego not to annul itself in its unholy situation outside God, but nevertheless to annul its active nature, to renounce its selfhood.' With this step from the active to the contemplative life, the ego also comes over to the side of God. Without knowing God it seeks a godly life in this ungodly world. And because this quest takes place in conjunction with the abandonment of selfhood, the ego regains its connection with God, for on account of its selfhood it had become separated from God' ... The transition described here occurs in three stages: mystical, quietistic piety; aesthetic intuition; and contemplative science culminating in intellectual intuition ... Now once more the ego possesses God and, in him, an ideal by means of which it becomes free from itself. 'But the ego has only an ideal relationship to this God... for contemplative science leads only to God who is the goal, therefore not to the God who actually is ... not to the living God who is near' ... 'This is the ultimate crisis: That God who has at last been found is excluded from the idea, and himself forsakes rational science' ... That which truly is, is more than the idea ... [here Tillich uses Aristotle's Greek conception that refers to positive theology: God is greater than thought, my addition] This is what the ego demands: "It wants to have Him, and Him only, the God who acts, who is providential, who being himself actual can oppose the actuality of the Fall, in short, the ego desires Him who is Lord of being" ... 'For person desires person'; it does not want a God who is confined to the idea, 'in which it cannot stir.' Rather, the ego desires a God 'who is outside of and above reason, to whom is possible what is impossible to reason, who is equal to the law, that is, a God who can set one free from the law' ... The ego finds its salvation only when it possesses God in actuality, and when it is united (reconciled) to him, that is, when it is

While Schelling here describes the paralysis of rationality in reaching for the essential metaphysical truths in reality, it is important to note that for Schelling, just as for Augustine, this paralysis is first and foremost caused by a sinful will that still directs human inference in a false direction. The Platonistic kind of contemplative rationality is indeed the original medium for metaphysical truths in general, for Schelling as it is for Augustine. But in light of revelation, it proves to have lost its positive function once the unconscious distorted will has entered the picture – aside, of course, from purely formal logic and mathematics. In other words, ‘intellectual intuition’ was the way to the divine ground of being before the Fall, but thereafter, the external world as actualized potencies of God, embodied in necessary realizations of every will in concrete action, was detached from its ontological ground in the Absolute potency of being. After the dissolution of the unity between potential ground and actual creation, there has been no way to embrace God by directly contemplating the realm of potencies from the realm of actual existence.⁴⁴

An additional, a somewhat contradictory observation is that Schelling all the same would seem to give some positive role to the rational process in grasping the divine truth, at least at an ideal level. One related element not directly stated in Schelling’s general account, but which nonetheless would appear to be important in relativizing the capacity of reason even at an ideal level is how Schelling describes the results of the Fall through humanity’s linguistic fragmentation. Schelling refers to the Biblical account of the mixture of tongues in the aftermath of the construction of the Tower of Babel as an example of what happened when arbitrary will in the abyss of unconsciousness began to

united to him by means of religion, that is, by means of a voluntary, spiritual, personal religion that brings the old world in its entirety to an end ... The catastrophe of the rational process is the true end of paganism.”

⁴⁴ Tillich 1974, 101: “If it could remain in the contemplative life, the ego might find refuge with this merely ideal God. ‘But the ego must be permitted to act ... and with that the former despair returns, for its duality is not annulled’ ... It is not annulled because the act by which potential will becomes actual will cannot be taken back. Everything that happens in this estranged world is nothing else but the realization of the act of will. But the mystical intuitive relationship to God rests upon the immediate apprehension of the divine in the finite, which indeed was justified in the original order of nature in which God was immediately realized in the process of nature. But ever since the potencies of nature received a reality outside God, leaving that original world with only an ideal significance, nature has been unable to guide the ego to the divine itself.”

guide the conscious life of humans: communicative unity was effectively lost because of human pride as unconscious self-affirmation.⁴⁵

Now, as we have seen earlier, this dimension of linguistic fragmentation is precisely what receives the paramount role in the later articulation of Schelling’s idea by Heidegger, the structuralists and the poststructuralists. After all, one may now think in Schellingian terms: without the final knowledge provided by revelation, it is possible to realize the linguistic fragmentation of humans, although not the unconscious source of it in the first potency. It is precisely by virtue of that *self-consciousness* of one’s own mythological fragmentation that Heidegger as well as Derrida is in a position to relativize even the identity philosophy of earlier Schelling. It is not that the latter is not rationally defensible, but rather that the identity philosophy can be proved rational only within one finite horizon opened up by a particular system of language. While Schelling does not hold open the possibility that the confusion of tongues could function as the basis for relativizing the epistemological importance of the rational process in general, including German Idealism,⁴⁶ this is nevertheless a possible application of his overall theory. In any case, the very relativization of reason is

⁴⁵ Tillich 1974, 78–79: “Prehistoric time came to an end as soon as the second potency began to have an effect upon consciousness in order to break the predominance of the first. Then came the time of transition, which was fulfilled ‘by that tremendous vibration of human feeling and knowledge that produced the images of the folk-gods’ ... – folk-gods, because corresponding to the religious confusion that was just beginning, there was a dissolution of the unity of mankind into nations, tribes, and races. Nothing can separate a race or a nation from another except mythology, which defines the inmost essence of the spirit ... Even language, the direct expression of spirit, depends upon mythology. This is typically portrayed in the story of the Tower of Babel, which manifests a genuine recollection of that moment when the second potency appeared from afar to consciousness, and mankind was seized by a fear of the loss of unity ... Paganism, like folk-culture, is a confusion of tongues ... The transition to history was now complete, so that every race broke away from the common humanity and identified itself with that stage of the mythological process whose representative it was destined to become ...”

⁴⁶ This type of anti-relativistic element is, of course, related to Schelling’s progressive view of theogonic history; see Tillich 1974, 79: “However, the mythological process is not confined to the primary bearers of its development. With every advance there is a common vibration in the entire consciousness of mankind, whose traces can be found everywhere among races that either represent a higher stage of the mythological process or among those who do not participate in the principal development of history. This development itself is conditioned by the successive advances of the potencies that were united in original consciousness and are being progressively reunited. ... Moreover, there is an incessant struggle of the second, forward-driving potency against the first that resists it, a struggle that will not end until the third potency is fully realized.”

present all the same in Schelling, resulting in roughly the same conclusion as in the Heideggerian line of thought: the rationality of metaphysics does not guarantee its truth in reality.

From the Schellingian perspective, what Heidegger has lost sight of by denouncing the philosophy of revelation is the ultimate rationale for the radical fragmentation of 'Being' within finitude. Now proper theologians must show, in light of the divine revelation, that what Heidegger, and for that matter Derrida, ascribes to humans *qua* humans is, in effect, the work of the unconscious abyss of uncontrolled freedom. To be sure, there is no denial, but rather a reinforcement of the primordial role of unconsciousness in both existentialist and structuralist lines of thought, both of which draw more or less on Heidegger.⁴⁷ What neither of these liberally-oriented approaches is ready to assume is unconsciousness as a non-essential aspect of humans in general, that is, as being the fruit of the Fall and not of existence as such. In this way the positive method is able to confirm the fragmentation of humanity in the manner described by Heideggerian thinking, yet at the same time identify this fragmentation as an ineradicable, but terminable condition. Here Schelling's and Augustine's "rejoinders," to use an anachronistic term, are that radical finitude is the mark of sin, and in the original unity with its divine ground, humanity would itself be united as well. This is Schelling's peculiarly Augustinian contribution: addressing the *moral* problems behind unconsciousness and finitude. "Through

⁴⁷ Tillich 1967, 151: "So here we arrive at a great turning point of philosophical thinking. Now Schelling as a philosopher described man's existential situation. We are then in the second period of Romanticism. The unconscious has pushed toward the surface. The demonic elements in the underground of life and of human existence have become manifest. This can even be called a kind of empiricism. Schelling sometimes called it higher empiricism, higher because it takes things not simply in terms of their scientific laboratory appearances, but in correlation with their essential nature. Thus he arrives at all these categories now current in existentialistic literature. We have the problem of anxiety dealt with, the problem of the relation between the unconscious and the conscious, the problem of guilt, the problem of demonic etc. Here the observation of things, and not the development of their rational structure, becomes decisive"; Matthews 1996, 139: "Structuralism marked a revolution in philosophy because those who adopted it could no longer consistently think of the philosophical project in the same way. Philosophy could no longer take the high a priori road, ignoring the empirical conditions of human experience and reasoning to what must be so if human beings were to have the kind of experience they do. It had to treat human beings as simply empirical individuals in the world, whose own thoughts were not necessarily transparent to themselves, but whose behaviour and responses were shaped by underlying and largely unconscious structures of thought."

the power of the Holy Spirit [the church] recognizes the sinful belief systems in itself and the world and knows the truth of their being overcome in Christ. Therefore according to Schelling the only viable apologetics of Christianity is the philosophy of mythology: the analysis and disclosure of sin."⁴⁸

However, one might think that there is an element of the 'fullness of time', as Schelling terms it, in a Heideggerian interpretation and even more, in a paradoxical Derridean rendering, both of which reflect the Kierkegaardian indissoluble tension between the finite and infinite, at least when supplemented with Schellingian moral element. Schelling describes the 'fullness of time' as the historical advent of the final unmasking of mythologies and the simultaneous incapability of transcending them: man's actual captivity in the externality of mythology, despite the principal denouncement of its truthfulness, creates a condition of guilt and despair and a consequent demand (*Forderung*) for freedom in full unity with the real God.⁴⁹ "The first principle is not cut off at its root; its right to be is not annulled. It is the right of this principle, aroused by man, to have the power over him to destroy him. And God's righteousness does not allow this right to be taken from it."⁵⁰ This paradoxical "half-heartedness" brings forth the 'fullness of time' in which divine second potency is in a position to appear as the Son of God rather than mere cosmic potency, as has been the case during the evolutionary mythological process. Finally, the divine act of salvation sets the world free from the bondage of self-affirmation by the unconscious first potency in the relatively classic manner of redemption. As Tillich explains it:

But the power and right of the potency of selfhood culminate in the destruction of the creature. Therefore, both its power and right are exhausted when it has killed him who has become lord of being, and in whom everything finite is sacrificed to the infinite. Because Christ is the Lord of being, his death is a sacrificial death in behalf of being. Because Christ makes possible the existence of all creatures, and because all life is comprehended within him, so that light is wrought out of darkness, therefore his death signifies the complete exhaustion of the principle of darkness ... The power of darkness, which was unleashed by the Fall, possesses the right of divine wrath against that victorious [second] potency which had reached the summit of natural and spiritual dominion

⁴⁸ Wilson 2007, 68–69.

⁴⁹ Tillich 1974, 107–108.

⁵⁰ Tillich 1974, 110.

over the principle of nature [that is, over the mythology] at the end of the pagan period [as unmasking the mythological dynamics and enabling the rational process]. The power of the selfhood was shattered upon the self-sacrifice and self-surrender of all lordship external to God, upon the personal act of the logos, which surpasses all that is natural.⁵¹

Now, how Schelling treats the distortions of the rational process after the 'fullness of time,' that is, after the redemptive work of Christ and the restoration of unity between God and creation, is also important. One aspect of this particular history was dealt with earlier in the context of Schelling's self-criticism. But there is another aspect, and that is that Schelling offers a crucially different account of the historical development that led to modernity's predicament from what was suggested in the previous chapter from the viewpoint of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism. Schelling's historical interpretation is first of all based on the criticism of the view of rationality endorsed not only by Kantians and Hegelians, but also by Aristotelians and Thomists. He treats *both* groups similarly, as rationalists aspiring to natural knowledge after having fled from super-rational revelation as the only grounds for true knowledge. Rightly understood, reason is indeed the enemy of the divine Spirit: the nearest the rationalists can get – by trying to embrace God by way of reason – is only a (logical) idea of God, but not the God who actually must exist. For this reason, Schelling sees it as a necessary stage of the world process towards God, when Kant and others destroyed the hopes of rational philosophy, be they Thomistic or modernist hopes: "As Hamann said of Socrates, Schelling said of Kant's Critique: 'The seed of corn of our wisdom must die and must disappear in unwisdom, so that from this death and this nothingness the life and being of a higher knowledge may spring forth and be created anew' ..."⁵²

In fact, one finds, in Schelling's personal development a resonance of the reverse dynamics from Platonism to Aristotelianism to Augustinianism vis-à-vis what MacIntyre proposes outright for these three classical figures. To be sure, there are elements in that development that are crucially different in the Schellingian perspective vis-à-vis MacIntyre's. Nevertheless, a significant similarity remains, at least for my purposes. Briefly put, Schelling's own intellectual journey may be placed parallel with the development from Plato to Aristotle to Augustine so that the final victory is ascribed to the *latter*. It has already become clear how

⁵¹ Tillich 1974, 110–111.

⁵² Tillich 1974, 113–114.

Schelling's early phase is tantamount to Plato in this comparison. Also the presence of Augustinianism is quite clear in the last phase of the philosophy of revelation as a positive philosophy. What is most illuminating is that the intermediary period of Schelling, the one marked by *On Human Freedom*, may be seen roughly in the same way as having proved to be unsatisfactory as would be true of Aristotle's dialectics seen from Augustine's point of view. What Schelling set out to do in the years he wrote *On Human Freedom* was to give an account of reality by means of reason, to proceed from particulars (the fact of human freedom and the world's contingency) to a more general level (the supposed potential element of contingency in divine substance and the rendering of divine trinity accordingly). This inductive method would be generally rather Aristotelian. Furthermore, from Aristotle's general point of view as outlined by MacIntyre, this might in principle have been a sufficient argument in the face of Aristotelian dialectical requirements as the best theory available, or, in MacIntyre's terms, a rationally consistent tradition of thought without having to face an epistemological crisis. In the final analysis this was not enough for Schelling because inductive reasoning from a particular level toward more general truths still actually embodies the *same* formal rationality present in more deductive models, such as in Plato or Enlightenment liberalism, contrary to MacIntyre's contentions. Reason does not add anything *decisive* or *secure* to the facts of empirical reality. This is a serious deficiency of reason and, from Schellingian point of view, would also be the problem with MacIntyre's tradition-constitutive rationality: there is no way to evaluate different rationalities by way of reason itself. One needs transcendent revelation that comes from outside human thought.

Thus, Schelling is in a position actually to invoke a very different understanding of the theologic- and philosophic-historical process leading to the contemporary moral predicament. From that perspective, while it is true that the liberalist type of formal Aristotelianism indeed results in internal contradictions, as MacIntyre has aptly pointed out, it is still possible that Aristotelianism or Thomism does not do any better and that both of these rationalistic counter-parts are parasitic upon each others' defects. While there might after all be rational plausibility in the claims of MacIntyre to a particular non-formal ethics, that is, Thomism, another kind of formality still remains that is akin to what has been considered in the case of Hegel: rationality of a metaphysical system is not tantamount to its being true in reality.

What is true of Hegel also applies to Aristotelian Scholasticism: metaphysics is jeopardized by remaining at a decisively ideal level.

To summarize what has been said, Schelling represents the original critique of Hegel in the manner akin to Heidegger, as discussed in the first chapter, to which Heidegger is but the heir. But while Heidegger shares the critique of rationality with Schelling, he does not follow the Schellingian-Kierkegaardian root, which ultimately provides a remedy, not only for Hegel, but also for Heidegger as well as for Derrida. Where the Schellingian and Kierkegaardian lines differ from either Sartre or Derrida is not the radicalizing of the Heideggerian idea of finitude – this is the ambition of both. Instead, the Schellingian line not only takes this radicalization to its most devastating conclusion, but also, and even more importantly, introduces a dimension with which the self is able to transcend its finite condition. Neither of these last two is present in Heidegger, Sartre, or Derrida.

Schelling's conviction throughout his career was that one has to take seriously not only the challenge of Kantian epistemology, but also the rejoinder from German Idealism. From Kant to Fichte to Hegel, German Idealism, in some form or another, embraced the idea of the objective identity of all things – but this only as an idea and not as reality; in order for this idea to become concrete reality, empirical analysis, that is, a positive philosophy, is needed.⁵³ Hegel did have some sort of combination of these two, but it was insufficient and in a confusing and inarticulate form.⁵⁴ His emphasis on the rational system led him in practice to downplay positive philosophy, that is, concrete history and particularly its radical contingency. Along Schellingian lines one could also argue that Hegel downplayed the individual personality and the consequential significance of love and evil – all of which are also related to the Kierkegaardian later criticism of Hegel.⁵⁵ It might be thought that late Schelling is not the only plausible corollary of these general notions. There is also what I would call a liberal version of this Schellingian critique of Hegel represented by the so-called Young Hegelians, such as Feuerbach and Marx. I have already mentioned, that Young Hegelians represented a selective understanding of the late Schelling.⁵⁶ Marxist hostility to the metaphysical aspects in Schelling's

⁵³ Tillich 1974, 64–65.

⁵⁴ Tillich 1974, 65.

⁵⁵ Tillich 1967, 164–166.

⁵⁶ Wilson 2007, 70.

late theory was, however, shown to reflect the hopeless effort to find a consistent articulation of the second formulation of the categorical imperative directly at the 'horizontal' level. Hence, it is indeed worth taking the postliberal type of late Schellingian position as a *more plausible* alternative to Hegel than the leftist Hegelian position.

For Schelling, the estrangement of God from himself and the related fatalistic scheme for reconciliation in Hegel did not give sufficient reason either for the origin of this estrangement or for a rationale for accomplishing the reconciliation. The indisputable achievement of German Idealism for Schelling was no doubt the discovery of objective idealism with its inherent appeal to both the ultimate identity of all things and the related presupposition of ultimate being as the source or substance of that identity. But in order to combine the personal, contingent, and ethical elements that Hegel downplayed or misconceived, Schelling outlined a Trinitarian structure of God arising from the postulate of radically free will. The observation of reality by positive philosophy as a contingent embodiment of human free will had to have effects on conjectures about God, owing to the additional presupposition of negative philosophy, that is, the ultimate identity of God, man, and the world. This interplay of identity and contingent difference lays the foundation for Schelling's late philosophy;⁵⁷ there he finally set out to prove the divinity of this God through the empirical history of religions after having inferred that all history is religious in its nature.⁵⁸

Thus, Schelling's is an intriguing endeavor to combine the rational and positive methods – a task which the Part One showed liberalism to be incapable of accomplishing. Moreover, the combination is a one that does not resort exclusively to supernatural explanation, but rather prepares the way and gives every reason to make the required leap of faith. Schelling proceeds from supra-historical creation to a temporary history of religions. Only then does there arise the deadlock of rational philosophy and the resulting requirement of a leap of faith. This Schellingian understanding would then be one plausible way of articulating philosophically Küng's 'rational trust'. Along these lines Schelling might indeed offer an entire theological middle way between Hegel and Barth, which Küng sought during his earlier ecumenical period. Kuschel points to a theological synthesis of these two in Küng in a way

⁵⁷ Tillich 1967, 141–150.

⁵⁸ Tillich 1974, 65.

that raises the question of whether Schelling might be the needed mediator between these two counterpoles, despite the apparent ignorance of Schelling on the part of Kuschel and Küng.⁵⁹

On the other hand, the understanding of rationality in Schelling remains crucially at a retrospective level, and in this he reflects the essence of positive philosophy. For one thing, one might ask Schelling the reasons why God does not unite all people with himself through Christ instead of uniting only those “who sacrifice their self-will” in faith through the gift of justification.⁶⁰ The Schellingian rejoinder would be to refer to the radicality of personal free will as the result of the empirical inference of positive philosophy. God does not coerce anyone in Schelling’s model as opposed to Hegel’s. Moreover, it is empirically too obvious to deny that many humans do not use their will to subscribe to the gifts endowed by Christ. The personal ethical accountability of this choice is also experientially considered inevitable. Another issue is how is it possible that certain people are convinced of the divine revelation, while others are not. It seems logical that, since God will have all the credit for acts of reconciliation, including the emergence of faith and personal conversion, why is it that he does not convert everyone? Notably, at this point Schelling does not claim that positive philosophy is able to account for every mystery. In this sense he shows some affinities to the *via moderna*: “... God as absolutely transcendent being is the principle of positive philosophy. ... It does not belong to positive philosophy to prove the prius of the divinity itself; ‘it is beyond proof, it is the absolute beginning known only by itself’ ... God can be proved only if he proved himself, and whether he proves himself depends upon his will.”⁶¹ The positive philosophy in general can be seen as somewhat analogous to nominalism as well as to the *via moderna*, but the noteworthy Schellingian peculiarity, no doubt related to his Idealist heritage, is the interplay of the idea of ontological identity and negative philosophy, with its corollaries concerning the possibility of natural theology and rationality of faith.⁶²

⁵⁹ Kuschel 1993.

⁶⁰ Tillich 1974, 111.

⁶¹ Tillich 1974, 65.

⁶² In light of what has been said, it is possible to discern an Augustinian-Schellingian line of thought distinct from that of Kierkegaard and Barth in that the former is principally more on the side of the Thomist, Romanus Cessario O.P., in his criticism of nominalism, which in turn is identified more with Kierkegaardian-Barthian fideism: “There are historical reasons that persuade the moral realist to describe eternal law as

3. *Positive and/or Rational Method?*

The main point in introducing an Augustinian type of alternative within a postliberal paradigm is that it may be argued that rational enquiry remains too half-hearted. As with Ricoeur and Sandel, the same also applies to MacIntyre in that introducing the dialectical relationship still does not – and indeed cannot⁶³ – show *how* it is possible to arrive at any particular understanding of the good in a rational manner. The proposal remains to a significant degree at a formal level. And what is more, it is not easy to see why this kind of proposal would differ substantially from the formal virtue-ethics by such Aristotelians as Nussbaum. To call for particular virtue-ethics, which would be justifiable by way of antecedent reasoning, without *articulating* it or showing the precise chain of reasoning leading to it, is somewhat self-refuting, or at least unsatisfactory for the very same reasons according to which MacIntyre has judged Plato.⁶⁴

how God knows the world to be. For example a realist theologian wants to avoid interpreting eternal law by appeal to the distinction between divine “absolute” and “ordained” powers that late fourteenth-century Nominalists such as Gabriel Biel introduced into Western theology. Biel defines the *potentia absoluta Dei*, the divine absolute powers as God’s power to do whatever does not imply a contradiction, without regard to whether God has in fact committed himself to this activity – that is, without regard to *de potentia ordinata*, to the ordained power. In contrast to the infinite range of possibilities which the *potentia absoluta* foresees, the “ordained power” signifies that course of action to which God has in fact freely committed himself. While voluntarism represents a basically Christian phenomenon, born on meditation upon a God who acts freely and a Christ who announces the will of the same God, its unlimited volitional emphasis does not afford an appropriate context for understanding eternal law as an expression of the divine creative wisdom that comprehends but transcends the practical order of human willing.” (Cessario 2001, 60.) Conversely, along the lines of nominalism, Kierkegaard “does not extend certain idealistic conceptions’ use into theories about God whose ‘infinite qualitative difference from human being makes such speculation impossible’ in contrast to what Schelling contends.” (Wilson 2007, 79.) The same is evident in Barth in his denouncement of natural theology of whatever sort. (See for example Tillich 1967, 241.) See also Tillich 1974, 171 n.25: “Schelling is a nominalist insofar as he gives priority to the absolute individual, to the primordial ‘that.’ The infinite idea has reality only because it is the absolute individual. However, he is also a thorough-going realist because he maintains that the principles of being, in which God has placed his will, comprise what is actually real in all events and because he regards the particular products of the natural and historical process as only conditioned reality.”

⁶³ I argued that the other side of the dialectics is always the retrospective dimension of rationality.

⁶⁴ Concerning MacIntyre’s charge of the formalism of Plato, see MacIntyre 1988, 82–84. My claim that Ricoeur, Sandel, and MacIntyre remain too formal supports Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Heideggerian types of arguments, not only against the