Article

God, Religion and History: The Significance of Schelling’s Philosophy of Religion for Determining the Concept of Religion

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Abstract: This article discusses Schelling’s contribution to the definition of the concept of religion in post-Kantian philosophy. In three lines of argument, it is shown that Schelling’s late lectures on the philosophy of mythology and revelation place religion in a history of development in which religion is successively understood as religion. Schelling assumes that religion is independent of reason and is based on a real relationship with God that is connected to the nature of man. This makes the philosophy of religion an independent academic discipline. Schelling links the historical development of religion and the history of God in his concept of monotheism. This is the content of Schelling’s formula that God is the Lord of being.

Keywords: Schelling; philosophy of religion; concept of religion; German Idealism

1. Introduction

Schelling’s late philosophy of religion, which he developed in his Munich and Berlin lectures from 1827 onwards, is one of the most important and influential concepts of so-called German Idealism. Like Hegel’s, his reflections on religion did not initially take effect through publications but through his lectures in Munich and Berlin. It was only after the death of his father that Karl Friedrich August Schelling published his lectures on the philosophy of mythology and revelation from 1856 to 1858 in the Sämmtliche Werke, which he edited, making them known to a wider audience.¹ Schelling’s late philosophy of religion presupposes both his own early philosophy and the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. The philosophy of religion only emerged as an independent academic discipline in the 1790s as a result of Kant’s critique of traditional metaphysics and its final idea, the concept of God (cf. Jaeschke 1986, pp. 9–133; Wagner 1986; Feiereis 1965). The philosophy of religion is not a mere continuation of theologia naturalis. With the concept of religious consciousness (religiösen Bewusstsein), the philosophy of religion has its own topic and no longer asks, as theologia naturalis did, about the being and nature of God. As is well known, Kant’s critique of knowledge excluded the latter from the realm of possible objects of knowledge. The point of reference for the philosophical discussion of religion became human consciousness, which functioned as the general foundation of culture. In contrast to the Enlightenment, this created a uniform basis for determining what religion was. As the various philosophies of religion that were developed in post-Kantian philosophy show (cf. Pfeiderer and Matern 2021; Jaeschke 2012, pp. 7–92), religion is now understood as a component of consciousness. It thus belongs to the human condition, even if its classification in the structure of consciousness can be undertaken differently. This framework, created by the Kantian critique of knowledge, lays the foundations for the modern concept of religion, which was further developed in the 19th century on the basis of consciousness theory. One of the possible further definitions of religion in the new field of reference established by Kant is Schelling’s late philosophy of religion. But what is the contribution of Schelling’s later philosophy of religion to the modern definition of religion?

According to Schelling’s thesis, which is the subject of the following considerations, religion is a historical phenomenon. It is subject to a history of development, in the course of
which it is first grasped. In contrast to Kant, but also to Friedrich Schleiermacher, Schelling integrates religion into a history in which it successively comes to itself. This idea of a history of self-consciousness, which the young Schelling formulated programmatically around 1800 (Schelling 1976–2020, I/9,1, p. 24f.), is taken further in his late lectures on the philosophy of mythology and revelation. The model for Schelling’s historical view of religion is—as in his early work—Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s work *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, published in 1780 in the context of the so-called Fragment Controversy (Lessing 1981, pp. 81–103). In contrast to Lessing, however, Schelling transfers the developmental model of religion from morality to the self-relationship of consciousness. For Schelling’s late thesis, however, religion is not only embedded in a history; it is independent of reason and *Wissenschaft* (science). Only if religion has such a principle could the philosophy of religion be an autonomous *Wissenschaft* in its own right. If reason were merely to find itself in religion, a philosophy of religion would also only be a duplicate of general philosophy. The two aspects mentioned above—the historical integration of religion and its independence from reason—are combined by the late Schelling in his concept of God, which he defines as monotheism. God is the All-One (*All-Eine*). But monotheism is not a truth of reason. It is a dogma because it is linked to the history of religion independent of reason.

This is the subject of the following reflections on Schelling’s late contribution to the definition of the concept of religion. It begins with the definition of religion in the lectures on the philosophy of mythology and revelation. The second section outlines the concept of monotheism, which Schelling developed in his late work. The concluding third section focuses on Schelling’s understanding of monotheism as a dogma. Only with monotheism as a dogma are the systematic foundations of the concept of religion laid out.

2. The Principle of Religion in Schelling’s Late Work

Significant for Schelling’s late philosophy of religion is the assertion that religion is not a component of reason. “In order to assert itself as a special science apart from general science and independent of it, the philosophy of religion would have to know how to assert a special, peculiar principle of religion that is independent of philosophy and therefore also of reason.” (Schelling 1996a, p. 189) Only if religion had a principle that was independent of both reason and philosophy would philosophy of religion be a special *Wissenschaft* that would differ from a general *Wissenschaft* of reason, such as philosophy is. With this claim, Schelling refers critically to the religious philosophical debates of his time. Since the philosophies of religion that emerged following Kant’s critique of knowledge understood religion as a component of reason, i.e., they understood religion as a religion of reason, such a philosophy of religion, he argued, was neither an independent science nor capable of grasping historical religions. Schelling put forward this thesis above all in his historical-critical introductory lectures on the philosophy of mythology, which he held repeatedly both in Munich and in Berlin and whose beginnings date back to his time in Erlangen (cf. Schelling 1821; cf. Danz 2021, pp. 241–48). Why, in Schelling’s eyes, does the previous philosophy of religion fall short, and what does he himself understand by this term? To begin formulating a response to these questions, we shall return to Kant.

On the one hand, Kant critically destroyed the foundations of the traditional *theologia naturalis* in his theoretical philosophy, thereby dissolving the possibility of a religion that is a component of reason. However, Kant obscured his critical insight that religion and its object, God, should be excluded from reason by reintroducing religion into practical philosophy. “If one examines the content more closely, one finds even in Kant’s critique, but under the cover of moral philosophy, the remnants of the old natural theology, a part of the metaphysics abolished by Kant, which was introduced and blackened through the Kantian back door” (Schelling 1996a, p. 199). Kant’s own philosophy of religion, according to the critique, was not sufficiently critical of knowledge. Precisely because he introduced the idea of God as a component of the realization of the moral law in his foundation of religion within the horizon of the realization of pure practical reason by human beings, he
established the idea of God as the basis of morality (cf. Kühnlein 2023). In this way, albeit with regard to the realization of moral reason by humans, religion becomes an element of reason. However, this means nothing other than that the normative core of religion is (practical) reason. Religion, then, only exists where human beings have subordinated their individual determinations of will to the general moral law.

Such a concept of religion, as elaborated by Kant on the basis of his critique of knowledge in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, not only renews the enlightened idea of a natural religion or religion of reason, but above all postulates the human universality of religion. The normative basis of religion is practical reason, which is invariably the same in all people. The images with which the religion of reason articulates itself in history are variable and subject to historical change. But the images of historical religions, and thus religions themselves, are merely an expression of the general and invariant religion of reason on which they are based. For the philosophy of religion, this constellation gives rise to the task of distinguishing between the historical forms in which religion appears in history and its substance. However, if the core of religion is identical in all historical religions, namely the moral determination of the will of practical reason, then religion itself is non-historical.

Kant’s construction of a rational religion abolishes the historicity of religions by distinguishing between an unchangeable rational substance and a changeable form of religion. According to Schelling, this dilemma also characterizes the continuations of Kant’s philosophy of religion where they no longer connect religion with practical reason, but—like Hegel—speculatively with the self-relation of consciousness. Here too, because the essence of religion is understood as a component of reason, a distinction is made between form and substance. The actual religion, its essence, consists in a logical event that excludes all history from the concept of religion. But religion is a phenomenon of history. Not only is it subject to change, it is also independent of reason. Consequently, it would be too short-sighted to distinguish between the historical forms of religions, their changeable images and symbols and an invariant core of reason. The latter is a postulate of reason philosophically, the construct of a religion of reason is not sufficient.

In contrast to the enlightened conceptions of a rational religion and their continuations in Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy, Schelling claims that religion is not a component of reason. The latter is “not a peculiar source of religious knowledge” (Schelling 1856–1861, XIII, p. 190). Rather, religion has its own principle, which is independent of reason and philosophy. This in turn presupposes “not merely an ideal, but a real relationship of the human being to God” (SW XIII, p. 191). Consequently, the principle of religion that is independent of reason does not consist in a faculty of consciousness (Bewusstseinsvermögen) but in the essence of a human being. This essence, which Schelling understands as consciousness, is a real relationship with God. Consciousness and God are thus linked in a self-relationship, so that every act of consciousness is already based on the relationship to God. In this sense, consciousness is “the real subject of the Godhead” (Schelling 1996a, p. 191).

What does this mean for Schelling’s understanding of religion? It is a real relationship with God that is based on the nature of human beings. Religion refers to the real God. Therefore, it has a substance that is distinct from philosophy. Since religion, which is independent of reason, is the subject of the philosophy of religion, it constitutes itself as an independent *Wissenschaft*. Schelling intertwines the concept of God and consciousness in one process so that the development of the concept of God is at the same time the constitution of consciousness. Schelling brings together the two aspects just mentioned in his concept of monotheism, to which we must now turn.

3. The Concept of Monotheism in Schelling’s Late Work

For Schelling, God is not an idea of reason. This corresponds to the fact that there can be no religion of reason. Religious knowledge is not already inherent in reason. Rather, it is
based on a separate principle of religion that is independent of reason. Schelling develops this structure in his late works in Munich and Berlin with monotheism. Monotheism is not a concept of reason either. As Schelling formulates it, it is a world-historical concept that only entered history with Christianity. Monotheism is linked to the history of religion. It does not owe its existence to reason or scientific reflection. What does Schelling understand by monotheism? He distinguishes between monotheism as a concept and as a dogma. In the following, we will examine what Schelling understands by monotheism as a concept, while in the concluding third section, we will discuss monotheism as a dogma, which is the focus of his reflections.

Monotheism as a concept implies that God is the All-One. The “only God”, according to Schelling in his lecture Monotheism, could “only be called the one who, according to his concept, is the All-One, who is not unique in the negative, exclusive sense” (SW XII, p. 61). Monotheism is a doctrine of uniqueness (Alleinheitslehre). This distinguishes it both from a merely theistic concept of God, according to which God is a being or a substance, and from pantheism, which understands the world as the determination of God’s being, i.e., expands the theistic substance to allness (Allheit). According to Schelling, God is neither a being nor a substance, God is the Lord of Being.

Schelling’s construction of the concept of monotheism is based on the concept of God. God, according to his concept, is existence itself (Seiende selbst), the universal being (cf. SW XII, p. 25). Being and concept coincide in the concept of God. This concept is not about a real, actual being but about the concept of God, i.e., about what must be thought if God is to be thought. The fact that God is the existent itself or the absolute is a prerequisite without which God could not be God, but not yet the reality of God. Existence itself is, therefore, neither God nor the content of monotheism, but a “pre-concept of God” (ibid.). It contains the concept of what will be. Schelling structures the concept of God by distinguishing between three potencies of being itself: that which will be, the “general subject to being” (SW XII, p. 34), is the being-can-be (Sein-Könnende), the purely existing (rein Seiende) and the being-should-be (Sein-Sollende). It is important to see that Schelling distinguishes between the three potencies and God or the Godhead. The latter is not itself representable. God can only be represented indirectly, namely in and through the triadic potencies structure. In the background of this construction of the concept of God is the distinction between essence and form in the philosophy of identity. Both are equally original and distinct. This means that the absolute identity only comes to reality and revelation in the form. Likewise, the three potencies represent God, who is distinct from them as their unity. They, the three potencies, are the “matter of the Godhead, but not the Godhead itself” (SW XII, p. 25).

Schelling’s construction of the concept of God based on the concept of being itself aims at an absolute self-relation, a self-contained totality (cf. SW XII, p. 60). This self-relation is built up through the explication of the triadic potencies structure. Three times it posits being itself as the subject of being or as “general potentia existendi” (SW XII, p. 35), as that which will be. This cannot be posited directly, but only medially, i.e., by the fact that what can be is held, as it were, in its ability to be by the purely existent. However, the first and second potencies are only differentiated and related to each other in the third potency. This is not a synthesis. Rather, the third potency relates being-can-be and purely existing to each other by distinguishing the two. Only with the third potency is the derivation of the structure of the concept of God achieved, since with it the being itself is set as being-can-be as such, which is free from its being.

The inner connection of the three potencies unfolds the being itself as a subject of being or as a general potentia existendi on the one hand as a self-contained self-relation and on the other hand as a self-referential relation of representation. In the three potencies, the Godhead appears as its unity. But the Godhead itself is independent of and distinct from its form (cf. SW XII, p. 59f.). The three potencies are the matter or the being of God, but not God itself. They are the forms of God’s being in which God appears and, in this medial sense, God itself.
The systematic foundations of the concept of monotheism have thus been outlined to such an extent that its content can now be examined. First of all, God is the All-One (cf. SW XII, p. 60). God is the universal being in the three forms of its being, but God’s divinity is distinct from its three forms or shapes of being. Godself is neither a being nor a substance. For the concept of monotheism, this then means that God is more than one: God in the three forms of its being in their indissoluble connection, in which God is represented. Consequently, the content of monotheism cannot consist in the abstract and tautological statement that God is unique. Rather, God is several forms; only according to God’s divinity is God unique. Monotheism therefore does not exclude a majority in God. Thirdly, Schelling’s concept of monotheism is medially constructed. The unity of God is not a substantial unity. It is supra-substantial (übersubstantiell). But what does that mean? The three potencies, the matter of God, are substantial. But they do not establish the “uniqueness of God as such” (SW XII, p. 29). Godself, or the Godhead, is distinct from the three potencies in which God alone is revealed. The Godhead, as this thought must be understood, is itself a medium. As mentioned, it only comes to reality in forms. Schelling’s monotheistic concept of God is based on a medial model of unity, according to which the unity of God cannot be represented directly. God, who is independent of the forms of its being, appears in them as their indissoluble unity.

Schelling’s concept of monotheism as a self-referential all-unity has thus been developed. The concept of monotheism contains a triadically structured self-relation (cf. SW XII, p. 61). Thus, God is free from being and free to being, i.e., independent of the world. Since God is at the same time the universal being, God’s relation to the world is a component of this self-relation. The fact that there is something apart from God, that God enters into a relation that God constitutes Godself, depends exclusively on God’s will, since God is an absolute self-relation. Monotheism therefore means that God is not only independent of being, but also free to accept being or not. God is the Lord of being. With the concept of monotheism reconstructed so far, however, the construction of Schelling’s concept of God is not yet complete. It merely names the foundations of the concept of God and, as will be shown, of the concept of religion. Monotheism is not only a concept but above all a dogma. Schelling’s construction of the concept of God is aimed at the latter. Finally, we must now look at what characterizes monotheism as a dogma and how it differs from monotheism as a concept.

4. Monotheism as Dogma

Monotheism as a concept implies, as explained, that God is the All-One. The subject of the considerations is the concept and not, as Schelling repeatedly emphasizes, the reality of God. This only becomes the subject of the derivation of the concept of God with monotheism as a dogma. Unlike the concept of God, which is always a philosophical construction, monotheism as a dogma is bound to the history of religion and is independent of the philosophy that is supposed to understand it. In the following, we will first examine the transition from monotheism as a concept to monotheism as a dogma and then the interlocking of monotheism and religious history. Only against the background of this successive and staged development of the concept of God can the question be answered as to what Schelling understands by monotheism and to what extent this is the basis of his concept of religion, which is independent of reason.

Schelling uses the concept of monotheism to describe the unity of the three potencies as a representation of God, who appears in the three potencies as the forms of God’s being. God appears in these forms and is not differentiated from them at the previous stage of the development of the concept of God. The transition from monotheism as a concept to monotheism as a dogma is about separating God from the forms of God’s being, i.e., showing how God, as the unity of the forms in which God presents Godself, is independent and free in relation to them. In the structure of Schelling’s late system, as he conceived it in Munich, this transition has the function of leading from negative to positive philosophy. What does this transition consist of, through which God is separated from the three forms...
of being? It consists of the fact that God places the forms of God’s own being, i.e., the three potencies, in tension. In their unity, the three potencies represent a self-contained self-relation that is detached from all external relations. Consequently, the construction of an external relation can only take place in such a way that this self-contained self-relation is broken up by placing the three potencies that structure it in tension. Since this is a self-relation, this tension cannot be caused by external factors, but only by the absolute self-relation of God to Godself, or more precisely, by a non-derivable act of God. God sets the first potency, the being-can-be, in which God is the ground of the Godhead, into being, so that the other two potencies are also set out of their position and potentialized. Through this act, which puts the unity of the three potencies in tension, God separates Godself from the forms of God’s own being. These forms step out of their divinity and become cosmogonic and theogonic powers. Since the three potencies form a context structured in itself, their tension initiates a process in which the first potency, which has been raised into being, is brought back into its potency by the second potency, which is thereby potentialized.

With the abolition of the unity of the three forms of God by Godself, which Schelling interprets as universio, a process is set in motion through which God’s external relations first arise. In God, the potencies are “the One turned out or turned back (whose inner is outer, whose outer is inner)”, so that the “universe” is nothing other than the One turned back, as it were” (SW XII, p. 90). Only through this tension is monotheism as dogma possible since it can only be an assertion if there is a majority of forms. This is only possible through creation. At this stage in the development of the concept of God, monotheism as dogma thus contains the creation of the world as a natural process brought about by a non-derivable act of God (cf. SW XII, p. 118). In this graduated process of nature, the first potency raised into being is successively overcome back into its potency and ground by the second potency. This is the case in the emergence of consciousness, with which the process of nature comes to a conclusion. The consciousness of the human being is therefore the first potency that has come to itself, consciousness is the subject of God; it is the representation and image of God. For monotheism, this means that it contains an identity of God and consciousness, which is the basis of the concept of religion. The essence of human beings is based ab ovo, i.e., before all action and thought, on God. Religion denotes a real relationship between human beings and God. Its content is monotheism, the self-relation of consciousness as a representation or medium of the All-One, who appears in consciousness in the unity of forms, but at the same time remains distinct from these forms.

Monotheism describes the essence of human beings as the realization of God in consciousness. But this consciousness is not a real, conscious consciousness. It can only be such through a spontaneous actus. But through this actus, consciousness raises the first potency, which has been brought back into its potency, into being again, and thereby puts the unity of the potencies into tension once more. This actus of consciousness is incapable of being. Through it, however, consciousness steps out of its unity and falls prey to a process to which it is at the mercy of and over which it has no power. This second universio marks the transition to the history of religion. It is the process in which the “monotheism that has, as it were, grown into the essence of humans becomes a freely recognized monotheism” (SW XII, p. 126). Unlike the process of creation, the history of religion is realized on the level of consciousness as a repetition of the process of nature. In it, the first potency rises into being through a free act of human beings, which is overcome back into its potency by the second. Consciousness, which is set out of itself, namely its unity with the All-One, is subject to the potencies set in tension within it, to which it relates.
It is only at this stage of development that monotheism contains the history of religion and acquires its actual meaning (cf. SW XII, p. 95). For with the renewed emergence of the potencies from their unity, a majority of theogonic powers is established in consciousness, which is the precondition for monotheism as dogma. What does this mean for Schelling’s understanding of monotheism? The history of religion is the process of the restoration of consciousness and thus of monotheism. Consciousness becomes human by becoming God-setting (Gott setzend) (cf. SW XII, p. 123). The stages of the process of the history of religion are mythology, revelation and philosophical religion. Mythology is a natural process of the restoration of consciousness, in which the second potency returns the first potency, which has been elevated into being, to its potency. Mythology is a natural process, since the theogonic potencies constituting consciousness appear in it as gods. In the mysteries, the mythological process becomes reflexive (cf. Wirtz 2022, pp. 211–79; Gabriel 2006, pp. 442–64). In them, consciousness grasps itself in its unity and thus the gods as manifestations of the one God. The mysteries anticipate monotheism and point to a future religion. Revelation refers to mythology. Unlike the natural religion of mythology, it is supernatural. In revelation, the second potency negates the independence it has acquired through the mythological process in a free act. Through this act, the second potency restores the unity of the potencies and in this way realizes monotheism in history. However, monotheism is only conceptualized at a further stage in the development of religious history, namely philosophical religion. This belongs to the history of religion and is therefore not itself philosophy (cf. Buchheim 2015, pp. 425–45). It does not abolish historical religions, like the religion of reason of the Enlightenment. Rather, it is incumbent on philosophical religion to understand the two religions that precede it, whose succession it owes itself to. This means that philosophical religion is the reflective transparency of consciousness in its religious-historical integration, which presents itself in the monotheistic God to whom it refers. However, according to Schelling, this philosophical religion does not yet exist. It is the goal of the development of the history of religion.

For Schelling, monotheism contains the historical transparency and comprehension of consciousness in its unity and wholeness. Connected in monotheism are the process of the history of religion, i.e., the history of the restoration of consciousness, and the history of God, the theogonic process, which is realized in the history of consciousness. Both dimensions are connected by Schelling in such a way that in the restoration of consciousness God is realized as the All-One. Monotheism arises in the overcoming of the blind being of the first potency by the second. As a result, consciousness becomes the medium of God. Consciousness grasps itself as a representation and image of the forms of God in its unity of past, present and future, in that being is set as past. For Schelling, this is a divine act, the breakthrough of the spirit through the natural process, which becomes historical reality with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This means, however, that monotheism is linked to the revelation of God. The history of religion is the history of God. In this history, God comes to reality in the three forms of God’s being, whereby the unity of God that appears in the restored consciousness is not a necessary but a factual one. For this reason, monotheism is an assertion or, as Schelling puts it, a dogma. Since the unity of the three forms of God itself cannot be represented, since it only comes to reality in the unity of the three potencies in consciousness, monotheism is a judgment “cum emphasi”. “A is subject to B, i.e., it is not itself and by its nature B (in this case the sentence would be an empty tautology), but: A is that which cannot be B either” (SW XII, p. 53). This also makes it clear why the idea of the triune God, which entered history with Christianity (cf. Krüger 2008), is concrete monotheism (cf. SW XII, pp. 75–79). This content of monotheism is independent of reason and philosophy since it owes itself to the history of religion.

Monotheism, as the considerations presented can be summarized, is the content of the concept of religion. God and religion are independent of reason and bound to history, so the historical development of religion represents the realization of monotheism in history. This is Schelling’s contribution to the definition of the concept of religion in the horizon of post-Kantian philosophy. Religion is a phenomenon that develops in history. It is not based
on timeless reason, as in rationalism and supranaturalism. For this reason, the form and content of religious ideas cannot be distinguished. Schelling’s discovery of the history of religion was the starting point for further debate on the concept of religion: the historical theologies of Ferdinand Christian Baur and David Friedrich Strauß in the 19th century and Paul Tillich and others (cf. Zachhuber 2013, pp. 21–130; Kaplan 2006) in the 20th century.

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**Notes**

1. Prior to this, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus published a transcript of Schelling’s first Berlin lecture on the philosophy of revelation in 1843.


4. (Cf. Schelling 1996a, p. 200): “The true result of Kant’s critique is therefore actually this: there is no religion of reason”.

5. (Cf. Schelling 1996a, p. 202): “The trick is the old one known through Kant, Kant wanted the facts that had become unpalatable to reason to be transformed into moral facts; here they are to be transformed into speculative ones”. (Cf. Danz 2018, pp. 118–24).

6. Cf. also the criticism of the young (Schleiermacher 1999, p. 164f.) of the Enlightenment construct of a natural religion.


8. It further develops considerations from his philosophy of identity, in which monotheism already functions as a key concept. Cf. AA I/14, pp. 321–25. The development of Schelling’s monotheism in the history of his works must be disregarded in the following. (Cf. C. Danz 2021, pp. 231–52). In the following, I will limit myself to the presentation of Monotheism in the Sämmliche Werke.

9. Cf. SW XII, pp. 34–61. In the literature on Schelling’s monotheism, the constitutive function of the doctrine of potencies for the concept of monotheism is generally ignored. (Cf. only Franz 2006, pp. 200–16; Hutter 1996, pp. 343–48). The consequence of this is that Schelling’s mediational construction of monotheism does not come into view.

10. With the three potencies that unfold being itself, Schelling takes up the doctrine of potencies in the philosophy of identity (Cf. Danz 2022, pp. 179–205). On Schelling’s theory of potencies, see also (Gerlach 2023; Beach 1994; Buchheim 1992, pp. 116–29; Hogrebe 1989, pp. 79–93).

11. Cf. SW XII, p. 56: “The concept is: the subject posited or existing as such”.

12. Cf. SW XII, p. 80: “So far we have only the concept of monotheism. God, if he is real, can only be the All-One […]. But now the question is about the real being. The specific question is: How can God exist in the way that has now been determined in advance? By this being is understood a real being, a being connected with actus”.

13. This function of the monotheism lecture in the Munich lectures changes in Schelling’s Berlin period with the introduction of negative philosophy alongside positive philosophy. The latter, which now follows on from the Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology and precedes the lecture on Monotheism, is now responsible for thematizing this transition (Cf. Danz 2022, pp. 179–205).

14. Cf. SW XII, p. 90f. 100: “As this Only one, in his Uniqueness, he [sc. God] appears when the potencies are set in tension. For the potencies are = him and yet not himself. If he therefore sets them in tension so that they no longer = him, he now appears as himself and, having as it were expelled the matter of his being from himself, stands there in his absolute nakedness, where the essence = (instead of) being = him”.
Cf. SW XII, p. 120: “The human consciousness is rather originally grown together with God, as it were—(for it is itself only the product of the monotheism expressed in Creation, the realized All-Unity)—the consciousness has God in itself, not as an object before it”.

References


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