Returning to Tillich

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Returning to Tillich

Theology and Legacy in Transition

Edited by
Russell Re Manning and Samuel Shearn

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Abbreviations

EGW = *Ergänzungs- und Nachlaßbände zu den Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillichs*, 19 vols. Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1971–1983; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994–2016.
GW = Albrecht, Renate, ed. *Gesammelte Werke*, 14 vols. Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerke, 1959–1975.
MW = Ratschow, Carl Heinz, ed. *Main Works / Haupt Werke*, 6 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987–1992.
ST = *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951–1963.

Russell Re Manning & Samuel Shearn

Introduction: Returning to Tillich

Paul Tillich (1886–1965) was nearly a British theologian. Whilst Tillich was in England to participate in the Oxford Ecumenical Conference, his great friend and fellow exile from Frankfurt the economist Adolf Löwe, "sought unsuccessfully to lure Tillich" to Manchester, where Löwe was then teaching.[1] Instead, encouraged by Reinhold Niebuhr, Tillich was persuaded to stay at Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he in time he became America's leading public theologian. Since his death in 1965, Tillich has been a source of inspiration for and seminal influence upon generations of Christian thinkers in both his European homeland and his adopted American continent; his reputation bolstered by scholarly societies, book series, and academic conferences: all dedicated to the ongoing enquiry into his thought.[2] His status in Britain, however, has been somewhat more ambiguous.

Commenting on philosophy of religion 1955–65, but writing in 1988, Alan Sell claims:

> "Tillich's influence in North America is considerable – indeed, it has been said that to this day the number of doctoral candidates who are writing on Tillich outnumbers those who are writing on Barth – though how reliable a measure of influence this is, or which of the two thinkers derives the greater benefit from the alleged fact is not made clear. Equally, there can be no doubt that as far as British secular philosophers are concerned Tillich's labours have produced very little by way of positive or negative response. He did not become a significant talking-point between philosophically inclined theologians and their secular counterparts in the way, for example, that Wittgenstein, and to a lesser extent in Britain, Whitehead did. It is more than likely that Tillich's underlying idealism, and even more his indebtedness to existentialism served to dampen any enthusiasm British secular philosophers might have had for him."[3]

1 Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich. His Life and Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 72.

2 In the United States, the *North American Paul Tillich Society* is an active group with a quarterly *Bulletin* and an Annual Meeting as a Related Scholarly Organization of the American Academy of Religion. In Germany, Tillich scholarship is supported by the *Deutsche Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft*, which organizes an annual *Tagung* and biennial *International Kongress*, and by the *International Yearbook for Tillich Research* and the *Tillich-Research* series, both published by de Gruyter. The francophone *Association Paul Tillich d'Expression Française* supports scholarship in French.

3 Alan P.F. Sell, *Philosophy of Religion 1875–1980* (London: Routledge, 1988), 167.

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Whatever the reasons for Tillich's relative neglect in Britain, his thought has not passed completely without notice. Somewhat peculiarly, Tillich is a household name for thousands of English school children studying the topic of 'religious language' for A Level Religious Studies and Philosophy. In juxtaposition to 'Aquinas on analogy', 'Tillich on symbols' is as established a feature of the English exam season as Wimbledon and rain-soaked strawberries. More significantly (but perhaps no more accurately), Tillich's work is also likely to be found indirectly on the bookshelves of many in the form of John A. T. Robinson's 1963 *Honest to God*, in which the then Bishop of Woolwich scandalised his generation by suggesting (drawing on Tillich, along with Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, and the situation ethicist Joseph Fletcher), that the time had come to give up on a the traditional, Biblical image of God "out there."[4] However, much like its transatlantic cousin, 'death of God theology', Robinson's "reluctant revolution" (and Tillich's contribution to it) failed to capture either the public or the professional theological imagination and instead Tillich is perhaps best known in British theology for being the subject of Donald MacKinnon's scathing critique in light of revelations about Tillich's personal life, written in 1975 in 'Tillich, Frege, Kittel: Some Reflections on a Dark Theme.'[5] MacKinnon's engagement with Tillich is subtle and complex just as it is resolutely dismissive of Tillich, his lifestyle and his theology: for many in British theology, the result for Tillich's legacy has been simple, summarised in Diarmaid MacCulloch's questioning in the course of his 2012 Gifford Lectures, "how far any of Tillich's theological work can be taken seriously."[6]

On 14th and 15th July 2014, a conference took place at Ertegun House, Oxford: *Paul Tillich, Theology and Legacy*. This was, as far as we know, the first Tillich conference to take place in the United Kingdom since the small conference organised by John Heywood Thomas in 1986. In part, the conference responded to the increased interest within the UK in Tillich's thought, as well as providing an opportunity to reflect on Tillich's legacy and the development of his theology in a contemporary context very different from that which he himself encountered and diagnosed in either pre-second world war Germany or post-war America. In what follows, this Introduction will briefly outline the contributions to the present volume, all of which originated in one way or another in the Oxford confer-

4 John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

5 Donald MacKinnon, 'Tillich, Frege, Kittel: Some Reflections on a Dark Theme,' in *Explorations in Theology* 5 (London: SCM Press, 1979): 129–137.

6 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence. A Christian History* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 202. For a fuller discussion of MacKinnon's critique of Tillich, see Russell Re Manning, 'Life, Sex, and Ambiguity' in *Les ambiguïtés de la vie selon Paul Tillich*, eds. Marc Dumas, Jean Richard and Bryan Wagoner (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017): 39–50.

ence, before suggesting some emerging themes that may well guide the future reception of Tillich in Britain and beyond.

Overview of the papers in this volume

Marc Boss's instructive and thorough essay *Which Kant? Whose Idealism? Paul Tillich's Philosophical Training Reappraised* guides the reader through various ways of understanding just what kind of philosophical transitions Tillich underwent as a student, and beyond. Boss shows that against the common thesis of a turn from idealism to existentialism after the First World War, Tillich remained consistently committed to a particular form of idealism.

Boss thinks that recently published material from the Tillich archives sheds important light on Tillich's early position, which held Kant's concept of the unconditioned in the second critique to be most fruitful for philosophy of religion. As such, Tillich's system "rests ... on a Fichtean construal of Kant's moral philosophy". Furthermore, Tillich's position did not move from the early to the late Schelling, as is often said. Rather, Tillich read Schelling I and II in light of each other, emphasising their mutual dependence. Thus "it is thoroughly in vain to search for an 'existential turn' in Tillich's work."

Participation is central to Tillich's systematic theology. **Douglas Hedley** therefore describes Tillich as "one of the most striking contemporary exponents of Christian Platonism since Nicholas of Cusa". Hedley offers a rich contextualisation of the concept of participation within the Western philosophical tradition.

Although participation, as a distinctly metaphysical and Platonic expression, fell out of fashion from the 17th Century, we find the preacher and theologian Tillich using the term to get to the heart of religious symbols, the relation between God and the world, and our relation to Christ, the New Being. Therefore, says Hedley, Tillich should be rescued out of the corner of ecstatic naturalism and radical theology in which many of his critics have left him. Tillich is "less radical than he still seems to those critics who view him as the epitome of desiccated liberalism or even crypto-atheism."

Marijn de Jong and Ulrich Schmiedel investigate Tillich's notion of correlation and find it wanting because it fails to give an account of the compromised character of both situation and tradition: the situation contributes to the tradition and vice versa. Furthermore, Tillich's notion of ultimate concern, say the authors, entails a formalized concept of experience (without content) that is therefore empty. Instead, Tillich needs "a concept of experience in which the formal

'that' and the material 'what' co-constitute the encounter [between the transcendent and the immanent]". Karl Barth thought of the God of Tillich's theology as a frosty monster (*frostiges Ungeheuer*) and Oswald Bayer also follows this route. De Jong and Schmiedel, coming from a quite different theological angle, end up seeing Tillich's concept of religious experience as cold, formal and anaemic: "We cannot relate to the ultimate without the concrete. Only through the concrete can we access the ultimate."

While not all will agree with this characterisation of Tillich, De Jong and Schmiedel's coining of the phrase 'compromised correlation' is a fruitful intervention. It expresses Tillich's view – perhaps more clearly than Tillich – that the infinite is always present in the finite.

Julia Meszaros explains Tillich's account of love against the background of late modern critiques of Christian love as stifling human self-fulfilment, focussing on Sartre. She shows how Tillich denies the incompatibility of freedom and dependency on the other and instead calls us to embrace the self's necessary participation in the world, and in the other, for self-fulfilment.

Eros and *agape*, much divided in Christian theology, share at their root the desire for the union of what is separated, and are as such one, even when, under the conditions of existence, they become separated and spoiled. Meszaros argues that Tillich enables a rehabilitation of selfless love through a revisioning of such love as indeed life-giving. Self-fulfilment requires *eros*, which prepares us to receive God's love – to accept being accepted. This self-acceptance enables true selflessness. Thus, selfless love does not destroy or overcome the self.

Sven Ensminger's chapter makes use of Barth's understanding of revelation to illuminate Tillich's position. Tillich's notion of *Kairos* is put into its historical setting and his understanding of revelation explored in the context of competing religious claims. By distinguishing between the means of revelation and revelation proper, Tillich guards against idolatry. By defining revelation broadly as that which concerns us ultimately, Tillich makes it a universal experience. Ensminger argues, against McCormack, that Tillich remains herein Christocentric. The difference between Barth and Tillich is one of approach or emphasis: that "Tillich starts from the epistemological question of "how can God be known?" whereas Barth begins with the ontological question of "where does God make Godself known?" ... the Christological focus remains in both cases nonetheless intact."

In the second paper in this volume dealing with Tillich and Sartre, **Kate Kirkpatrick** gives an overview of Tillich's reading of Sartre, drawing out just how highly Tillich regarded the French philosopher's psychological acuity, even if Tillich

probably omitted to read some central works first-hand (perhaps due to late translations). She also shows how in particular Tillich's treatment of the threat of meaninglessness in *The Courage to Be* is a processing of Sartre's challenge. Sartre's notion that "the essence of man is his existence" is for Tillich "the most despairing and the most courageous sentence in all Existentialist literature." The experience of freedom as a destroyer of identity, and thus the anxiety of the loss of meaning is considered by Tillich to be a central question in his cultural situation, and for which his theology is a response.

Tillich's theology also works with Sartre's repudiation of the judging gaze of the other and the corresponding counter-attack strategy of self-definition. In the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich agrees with "Sartre's assertion of the mutual objectification of human beings in all their encounters" and believes only the point of view of a "vertical dimension" can offer a way forward. Tillich offers some criticism of Sartre, believing Sartre to indeed harbour some essentialism in his commitment to defending human freedom.

Anne-Marie Reijnen offers an introduction to Tillich's green side, particularly in the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*, some sermons and the article 'Nature and Sacrament'. Reijnen contends Christian theology has always been a mediator of green consciousness. Thus, long before talk of eco-theology, Tillich also was concerned with the connection between salvation and nature, and "the religious significance of the inorganic". Despite affirming an anthropocentric worldview, Tillich qualifies hierarchical understandings of nature by emphasising relatedness and porous boundaries. Drawing on Schelling's poetic philosophy of nature, he encompasses all of creation in the drama of redemption. Furthermore, Tillich views anti-Christian naturalism as the bad fruit of Christian devaluation of nature and sees sacramental thinking – the affirmation of the presence of the divine, its transparency in nature and history", as an antidote to what can become a very abstract monotheism.

Tillich is moved by the thought that the possible destruction of life lies in human hands, and the disturbing thought that the history and future of humanity seems so short against the background of cosmic time. For Tillich and his generation, it is the fear of nuclear disaster that forces this reflection. Perhaps for us it is the ecological crisis. Tillich's response is fragmentary and perhaps unsatisfactory, but he does offer a way forward when he urges us to grasp opportunities "for creation of life and spirit" in the lives we lead – lives existentially united with plants and animals.

Andrew O'Neill argues that theologians who take heed of Tillich's approach can see the decline of the church as an institution as neither "failure, nor as aberra-

tion, but as an outworking of God's continued Spiritual Presence." Such hope-filled ecclesiology is founded firstly in Tillich's Protestant principle and his concept of theonomy, which insist on the church being self-critical, secondly in Tillich's understanding of the Spiritual Community in the third volume of his *Systematic Theology*, and thirdly in showing how Tillich's theology shows affinity with Douglas John Hall's notion of an *ecclesia crucis*, a church which sacrifices institutional privilege for the sake of a renewed understanding of the Gospel. "Only a church which stands with the afflicted, ... from a position of humility, is capable of communicating and embodying a new reality."

Matthew Lon Weaver's essay is a fine primer on Tillich's theology and philosophy of education from a seasoned educator. Weaver tells us that Tillich thought education should be about "evoking, empowering, and enlivening the creativity of students", helping them to find the courage to resist 'patternization' and conformity. However, this does not mean leading students to an "imprisoning autonomy". Education, being accompanied by the Spiritual Presence, can be an instance of the reconciliation of estrangement when the person-to-person communion at the heart of every educational encounter evokes that courage that Tillich says is "rooted in the true, unfathomable depth of every human being."

Weaver writes that in any classroom or lecture hall "we are to plant and nurture the seeds of courage within the hearts and minds of vulnerable, anxious students by exuding self-giving acceptance." Weaver's vision of pedagogy as creating a sacred space of "living en-couragement" is stimulating and should be of interest to anyone interested in the relation of spirituality to pedagogy.

Alexander Blondeau offers a creative hermeneutic of the phenomenon of risky, adventurous travel. Using Tillich's concepts of "structure" and "depth" as an interpretive framework, he suggests that in a "world made shallow by the prioritizing of technical control", our everyday life is dominated by merely structural awareness. Therefore, he argues that adventure, though not without its own ambiguity (the demonic), does serve as an opening to the depth of life. Risky, gratuitous adventure travel is pointless, but meaningful, as it confronts us with our mortality and the abundant unknown.

Reinhold Bernhardt's essay opens with Tillich's distinction between two ways of approaching God: by overcoming estrangement or as a stranger. The latter could characterise both Barthian and natural theology. God is thereby encountered as an external object and a great 'other' who is a source of estrangement – or as an abstract matter of probabilities. In the way of overcoming estrangement,

however, man [*sic!*] "meets something which is more himself than *he* is and which, at the same time, infinitely transcends himself" – overcoming estrangement through participation in being-itself.

Bernhardt then gives an overview of Tillich's encounters with Buddhism, in particular his discussions with Zen master Hisamatsu and the journey to Japan in 1960. He argues that Tillich's encounters with Buddhism were informed and motivated by this distinction concerning ways of approaching God (and correspondent types of philosophy of religion). Yet the same time, Buddhist thinking challenged his first way of approaching God because it characterises ultimate reality in terms of nothingness rather than being. While drawing out remaining key philosophical and theological differences between Buddhist and Tillichian thought, Bernhardt emphasises the significance of the visit to Japan as a cultural and existential transformation that had repercussions for Tillich's late theology.

Robert Meditz offers an account of Tillich's idea of Judaism in the history of religion, claiming that for Tillich, Judaism "maintains an unusual relationship of parity with Christianity". Two types of dialectic are manifest in Tillich's history of religion: one historical dialectic of progression and another ontological dialectic of balance. The former entails the superiority of Christianity; the latter entails parity.

Meditz argues that in Tillich's 1912 dissertation, Christianity is superior though Judaism remains the foundation for Christianity. However, in *The Socialist Decision*, Jewish prophetism provides a resource for cultural transformation because prophecy in the context of exile breaks the idolatry of nationalism. Tillich's 1952 lectures on the Jewish question reflect upon the theological roots of anti-Semitism and develop the notion that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is marked by a polarity and tension between the priestly and the prophetic in the manifestation of the Holy. In Tillich's final lecture on the history of religion, however, he encompasses all religions into a revelatory framework. This, says Meditz, reflects a shift in Tillich's thought following his journey to Japan. Thus, while a historical dialectic remains the underlying framework for Tillich's understanding of Judaism, in the end all monotheisms are subjected to the ontological dialectic of the Holy.

In contrast to Meditz, **Gorazd Andrejč** approaches Tillich's view of Judaism by way of a comparison with Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher's supersessionism and unflattering remarks about Judaism fit well into contemporary German anti-Semitism, but Schleiermacher may have also gained such thoughts from the secularized *Haskallah*-Jewish tradition of his friend Henriette Herz. Furthermore, we find explicit rejections of anti-Semitism and affirmations of Jews as full

and equal German citizens. Nevertheless, his philosophy of religion could have provided the potential for a more affirmative view of Judaism than is the case in his writings. Tillich, on the other hand, emphasizes strongly the continuity between Christianity and Judaism in his battle against Nazism. However, supersessionist themes remain, for the historical revelation in Christ is the criterion against which all religions are judged. Andrejč therefore sees both Schleiermacher and Tillich's views on Judaism as neither anti-Judaistic nor entirely fruitful for contemporary 'post-pluralist' theology, for it is too easy to remain a Christian triumphalist. While recognising historical and theological continuities, Christians should not make their approach to Judaism overly reliant on these. Instead, Christians should respect Judaism in its difference: as theologically independent and with distinct grammars of central concepts, while being awake to the anti-Semitic demons of the past and present.

Ankur Barua offers a fascinating analysis of the shared concern of Tillich and Vedantic pantheism to navigate between monism and personalism. His analysis surveys Tillich's own scant appreciation of Vedantic thought and yields an intriguing defence of Tillich, against the dismissive claim that his notion of divinity is impersonal, by way of Advaita metaphysics. Barua provides a useful and concise introduction to two key Vedantic schools of thought based around *'Saṅkara* (ca. 800 CE/AD) and *Rāmānuja* (ca. 1100 CE/AD) and shows how the Christian doctrine of creation is fruitfully illumined by viewing it from the perspective of debates in Vedantic theology.

Stefan Jäger compares Tillich with the Spanish Carmelite monk St John of the Cross, showing how Tillich's concept of absolute faith can be brought into fruitful dialogue with John's pure faith (*pura fe*), which emerges out of the experience of the dark night. Jäger finds important differences between the two thinkers, but also deep parallels, for the experience of the dark night is akin to Tillich's description of existential anxiety, and both Tillich and John use metaphoric or symbolic speech and the notion of participation to express our relation to ultimate reality. Jäger is already known for his impressive study comparing Tillich's concept of faith and theology of preaching with corresponding terms in Japanese Buddhism. He therefore also gestures to the possibilities emerging from a comparison of Tillich and John for interreligious dialogue, illustrated by the concept of faith (*shijin*) in Shin-Buddhism.

Christoph Schwöbel's dinner speech, held in the dining room of St Benet's Hall, Oxford, was a perfect end to our conference and forms the epilogue to this volume. Schwöbel considers how Tillich's theology fits into various trends

in the theological scene, but concludes that the most valuable legacy of Tillich's theology is his ability to transition – from place to place, from time to time, and to other cultural spheres and pressing contemporary questions. Such a theology involves the belief that religion and God relate to all spheres of life. Such a belief gives theology a strong diagnostic potential. Yet at the same time it involves risk, willingness to adapt and a sense that our theology is transitory. Schwöbel leaves us with the challenge to not merely ask about the genealogy of Tillich's theology but to interpret him teleologically: How did Tillich use his intellectual ancestry to meet new challenges and pursue goals? In this sense, one cannot be a Tillichian: Tillich encourages the kind of theological work where one takes leave of the theologians from whom one has learned so much, in order to respond to contemporary questions with theological responsibility.

Emerging themes

The call for papers for our conference was broad, and the essays here represent a selection of some of the most interesting papers we heard at the conference, now developed into longer articles. Despite the eclectic nature of the collection, we find that the papers do converge on some shared themes. Some papers are concerned with a characterisation of Tillich's theology, and several point toward a more conservative Tillich: Boss believes Tillich remains consistently within the tradition of German idealism – that there is no existential turn in later years. Hedley emphasises that Tillich, through his dependence upon the notion of participation, remains far more classical and far less radical than many appreciate. Ensminger shows that Tillich's theology has a Christological focus. Yet, as Bernhardt and others mention, Tillich's journey to Japan right at the end of his life set his thought once again in motion as he tried to work through the implications of experienced religious pluralism. As Schwöbel emphasises, Tillich's theology is a theology in transition, which, rather than being constrained by its influences, made use of its roots to deal with contemporary challenges.

One such challenge to which Tillich's later theology responded was just this dialogue with non-Christian religions. Here Tillich was a pioneer, and several essays in this volume explore the connection between Tillich's theology and the religious 'other'. Buddhism (Bernhardt, and to some extent Jäger), Judaism (Med-

itz, Andrejč), and Hinduism (Barua) are explored. Obviously, Islam and other regional religions are missing.[7]

A further challenge to which Tillich responded in his time was existential philosophy. It is a happy coincidence that two essays in this volume, those by Meszaros and Kirkpatrick, deal with Tillich and Sartre. Some readers might wonder how Boss's claim that there was no existential turn fits together with Kirkpatrick's claim that Tillich was significantly influenced by Sartre and existentialists in general. We do not think there is a contradiction here: Tillich's philosophy of religion and theology hang together as a system because of the notion of participation (cf. Hedley) and the principle of identity from German idealism (cf. Boss). However, when it comes to talking about the human condition, Tillich finds existentialist thought to be most amenable and illuminating in expressing self-alienation. Perhaps this explains the disagreement between Tillich scholars on this issue: the existential turn many have previously discerned is semantic rather than systematic. Tillich discovered Kierkegaard as a student, Nietzsche while a graduate student and pastor, and Heidegger and Sartre while an academic theologian and philosopher. All these influenced his theological inflection and articulation of themes concerning the human condition, but not the underlying ontology.

Several other essays in the collection demonstrate the diagnostic potential of Tillich's theology, to which Christoph Schwöbel alludes. While De Jong and Schmiedel take issue with Tillich's concept of correlation for missing the mutual compromise of both situation and Christian tradition, several others find him instructive, as a theologian of culture, for analysing and responding to contemporary issues, including the ecological crisis (Reijnen), ecclesiology (O'Neill), educational practice (Weaver) and even, most originally: big, crazy, unnecessary travel adventure (Blondeau).

We hope that these essays will serve to kindle interest in Tillich's theology, demonstrate its potential for fruitful conversations in theology and across disciplinary boundaries, and make a contribution to Tillich scholarship, not least in the United Kingdom, where we hope cooperation with continental Europeans still has a promising future.

7 See, however, Sylvester I. Ihuoma, *Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture in Dialogue with African Theology: A Contextual Analysis*, Tillich-Studien 11 (Münster: LIT, 2004).

Werner G Jeanrond

Foreword

The German-American theologian Paul Tillich (1886 – 1965) has remained an important point of reference for students and teachers of theology. Despite shifting intellectual concerns, developing academic methods and emerging global horizons, even in our postmodern world, Tillich continues to attract new readers, while many of the once great names in western Christian theology have vanished from university courses and personal recommendations. Why is this so? I wish to suggest three explanations for Tillich's continuing presence in today's theological discourse.

First, as a person and as an intellectual, Tillich remained open to new manifestations of both God and culture. His move from Nazi-Germany to the United States and from the German to the English language exposed him to new challenges and influences and thus kept his eyes open for ever new manifestations of otherness. Although shaped by a particular German philosophical environment, Tillich remained in dialogue with many of the dominant philosophical movements of his time, not least the different expressions of existentialist thinking. Moreover, unlike other theologians, Tillich expected God to make God-self known not only in the traditional ecclesial spaces but also in the manifold cultural manifestations of human existence. Thus, throughout his career, Tillich remained a genuinely dialogical theologian with a sharp eye for the human condition and the emergence of ultimate meaning.

Second, his theological method was a method of correlation. Human questions and the Christian message were brought together constructively. Although he did not develop a "mutually critical correlation" in which, according to David Tracy, the Christian message and human experience enjoy an equally challenging and enriching status as theological sources, Tillich already saw the need for interpretations of Christian faith to be explicitly related to cultural developments. Like many of his fellow theologians on both sides of the Atlantic, Tillich reflected upon God's sovereign creative and redemptive nature, but always as revealed in this universe. Tillich's insistence that the Protestant principle needs catholic substance was not, in the first place, an ecumenical confession (although even in this regard it clearly has potential); rather it originated in his insight that no pure experience of the divine Word was ever available to us human beings. The hermeneutical challenge, then, is to defend God's divinity in the valleys of this world and not to imagine divinity outside of the world. For Tillich, this was the very point of the incarnation and the revelation of New Being in Jesus Christ.

Third, in line with his methodological convictions, Tillich produced several sharp analyses of the human condition for both academic and more general audiences. His sermons as well as some of his essays continue to be read widely today. For instance, his approach to a theology of love – always related to concerns of justice – has remained inspirational for many current works on love by Christian authors. Moreover, Tillich's openness to interreligious conversations and reflections has encouraged many Christian thinkers to become engaged in this outreach, so important in our global and pluralist age. Tillich's work can be built on, however critically; that is what distinguishes him from many other theologians of his generation. People still respond critically and constructively to his initiatives. In that sense, he has retained the status of a true theological classic.

The present collection of articles in dialogue with and inspired by Paul Tillich illustrates this point. The wish to relate to Tillich's thought today invites current thinkers not merely to follow historiographic trajectories, but to forward constructive and systematic analyses of both the Christian gospel and our own time, seeking appropriate theological responses to the challenges of the day. To be sure, Tillich's work does not name all the challenges, nor does it provoke all the adequate responses necessary when we face up to our global and radically pluralist context. But it offers both encouragement for such an intellectual engagement and advice on how to shape an ever more critical and self-critical systematic theology.

Finally, Tillich's success in communicating with his contemporaries – believers and non-believers alike – challenges us today to try and do likewise. This book presents exciting attempts of theological reflection and communication in dialogue both with this remarkable theological voice from last century and with the complex experience of women and men today.

Werner G Jeanrond
Master of St Benet's Hall and Professor of Theology in the University of Oxford

Marc Boss

Chapter 1

Which Kant? Whose Idealism? Paul Tillich's Philosophical Training Reappraised

Which Kant? Whose Idealism? In an essay on Tillich's early connections with classical German philosophy, the first of these two questions can hardly be separated from the second. Anyone who claims to be indebted to German Idealism, as Tillich repeatedly did, is by the same token indebted to Kant.[1] As Chris Firestone perceptively observes, "the German Idealists generally" thought of themselves "as the true heirs of the best of Kant," they were all "responding to problems left in the wake of Kant," and they all relied on Kant's work for help in resolving them.[2] Moreover, since the so-called neo-Kantian reaction to German Idealism displays the very same characteristics, Firestone's observation proves relevant far beyond the circle of philosophers it is meant to describe; the fact is that almost every German intellectual born in the nineteenth or early twentieth century might be considered as indebted to Kant in one way or another. So the question is: which way was Tillich's way?

In the past twenty years various attempts have been made to show that, like Rudolf Otto—and in close intellectual kinship to him—Tillich has appropriated Kant's philosophical program as it applies to religion in a way that essentially rests on the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. This claim was notably made, in different but convergent ways, by the late Adina Davidovich in 1993 and by Brandon Love in 2012.[3] In a quite opposite vein, Claude Perrottet has recently claimed that Tillich looked for the Kantian philosophy of religion "where no one had looked for it before", namely in "what appears to be the most secular

1 See Paul Tillich, "Autobiographical Reflections," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, eds. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964): 10; Paul Tillich, "On the Boundary. An Autobiographical Sketch", in *The Interpretation of History* (New York/London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936): 60 – 61.

2 Chris L. Firestone, "Tillich's Indebtedness to Kant: Two Recently Translated Review Essays on Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, vol. 35/2 (Spring 2009): 3.

3 Adina Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Brandon Love, "Tillich on Eros and Logos and the Beauty of Kant," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, vol. 38/4 (Fall 2012): 10 – 14.

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part of Kant's work," the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[4] I shall contend that both claims are partly misguided insofar as they neglect the neo-Fichtean frame that shapes Tillich's early reception of Kant's philosophical program as a doctrine of freedom rooted in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. It is true that Tillich's affiliation with neo-Fichteanism has not yet received much attention, but if we look at the course of his philosophical training up to 1916, a period now well documented by the considerable amount of archival material published in the past fifteen years,[5] it becomes unmistakably clear that Tillich's early writings, including his two doctoral dissertations on Schelling, find their impulse and purpose in the so-called Fichte-Renaissance introduced to Halle by his philosophical mentor Fritz Medicus.[6]

This chapter has four sections. The first three sections are mainly concerned with Tillich's evaluation of the trilogy formed by the *Critique of Pure Reason*

4 Claude Perrottet, *Au-delà du criticisme kantien. La méthode critique-intuitive dans la première philosophie de la religion de Paul Tillich* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2012): 140 and 172 (translation mine).

5 EGW IX; EGW X; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, Alf Christophersen, eds., "Die Korrespondenz zwischen Fritz Medicus und Paul Tillich," *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte* 11 (2004): 126–147; "Anhang," in Georg Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie. Eine Untersuchung zu Offenbarung und Geschichte bei Tillich vor dem Hintergrund seiner Schellingrezeption* (Berlin/NewYork: Walter de Gruyter, 2007): 392–422.

6 Fritz Medicus greatly contributed to awake a new interest for Fichte in German philosophy and theology by publishing a six-volumes edition of his work, *Fichtes Werke. Auswahl in sechs Bänden* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1908–1912) and a biography, *Fichtes Leben* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1914). But he already started to illustrate himself as an innovative interpret of Fichte in 1905 with a series of thirteen lectures published under the title *F.G. Fichte, Dreizehn Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Halle* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1905). Tillich attended Medicus's lectures as he was an undergraduate student at the University of Halle, from 1905 to 1907. In the *Curriculum Vitae* he later wrote for his doctoral graduation at this same university (1912), Tillich noted that his "philosophical views" were "profoundly influenced" by "Dr. Medicus," who "introduced [him] to Fichte and to German Idealism in general" (Neugebauer, "Anhang" [*op. cit.*]: 402; translation mine). Some four decades later, in his essay "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes" (1955), Tillich still called Medicus his "highly revered teacher and guide toward Fichte and Schelling" (GW IV, 137). For a detailed account of Tillich's involvement in the neo-Fichtean movement initiated in Halle by Medicus, see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and Alf Christophersen, "Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance. Paul Tillich und sein philosophischer Lehrer Fritz Medicus," *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte* 11 (2004): 52–78; Marc Boss, *Au commencement la liberté. La religion de Kant réinventée par Fichte, Schelling et Tillich* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014): 34–55, 341–378; *idem.*, "Paul Tillich and the Twentieth Century Fichte Renaissance: Neo-Idealistic Features in his Early Accounts of Freedom and Existence," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, vol. 36/3 (Summer 2010): 8–21.

(1781), the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790); they sequentially argue that neither the *Third* nor the *First*, but the *Second Critique* had the deepest impact on Tillich's assessment and reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of religion. Finally, the fourth section reappraises the perplexing issue of Tillich's alleged "existential turn" in the light of his early interpretation of Fichte's "doctrine of science" and Schelling's "positive philosophy" as two contending and yet complementary realisations of Kant's philosophical program as it pertains to religion.[7]

1 The *Third Critique* hypothesis

In his 1926 book *Die religiöse Lage*, Tillich gives a colourful description of the change that occurred in the German philosophical landscape during the first decade of the twentieth century, as the neo-Kantian slogan *zurück zu Kant* (back to Kant), which dominated the second half of the nineteenth century, suddenly gave way to the neo-idealistic watchword *über Kant hinaus* (beyond Kant): "It was naturally suggested," Tillich says, "that in seeking a way beyond Kant one trace the same path which his immediate successors pursued."[8] This is how the German Idealistic philosophy on which the older generation had "heaped its scorn" was reappraised and "won increasing influence" on the younger generation to which Tillich himself belonged; in this new generation, he says, "Fichte, Hegel, Schelling and Fries won disciples and continue to win them."[9] It is worth noticing that alongside the three canonical authors of German idealism, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling, Tillich also mentions the name of Jacob Friedrich Fries, Hegel's chief rival at Jena. Tillich furthermore praises "the brilliant manner in which Fries, while remaining very close to Kant, made the transition to intuition."[10] Again it is worth noticing that while Tillich daringly counts Fries among the classical heroes of German idealism, he still underscores the particular position Fries holds within this group by insisting on his close proximity to Kant, a quality which has led some advocates of the "back to Kant" movement to celebrate Fries as an early champion of their cause.

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7 The fourth section is a revised and expanded version of the final paragraphs of "Paul Tillich and the Twentieth Century Fichte Renaissance" (see note 6).

8 Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation*, trans. H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Meridian Books, 1956 [first edition: 1932]): 72.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

The question of how Tillich relates to the Friesian or neo-Friesian tradition has gained major significance in recent discussions about his reading of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Before we examine the issue at stake in these discussions, it seems appropriate to say some words about Fries's so called *Third Critique* centred reading of Kant and about the school that claims his philosophical legacy.

1.1 Jacob Friedrich Fries and the neo-Friesian school of Göttingen

Fries owes his reputation as a philosopher of religion to his 1805 book *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung*[11]. In this seminal work, he looks at the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* for conceptual resources and guidelines to bridge the gap between "knowledge" and "faith" implied in the Kantian dichotomy of theoretical and practical reason. The divide Fries ambitions to overcome is well known and vehemently discussed among Kant's early commentators. While the *First Critique* imposes drastic limitations to religious knowledge within the theoretical sphere, the *Second Critique* explains the beliefs in "Immortality, Freedom, and God" as "postulates of practical reason," attempting thereby to reestablish some rational justification for religious faith within the moral sphere. This sort of faith, it must be reminded, is supposed to rest on our absolute conviction of duty and on our no less firm confidence that, insofar as morality is no chimera, we are justified in assuming a suprasensible world, a world in which accomplished duty would be ultimately rewarded with bliss. In Kant's life-time this doctrine of the postulates of practical reason has been highly admired by some of his interpreters, for instance the theologians of the so-called older Tübingen school,[12] but it has also perplexed many others, for instance Schelling, who sarcastically wondered how the God thrown out of the front door of Kant's theoretical philosophy could be allowed to return through the back door of his practical philosophy.[13]

Fries saw himself as a respectful disciple of Kant in many ways, but he was hardly more impressed than Schelling by the *Second Critique*'s case for religious

11 Jakob Friedrich Fries, *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung* (Jena: Göpferdt, 1805).

12 See Gottlob Christian Storr, *Bemerkungen über Kant's Philosophische Religionslehre*, trans. Friedrich Gottlieb Süskind (Tübingen: Cotta, 1794 [Latin original: 1793]): 1–4, 22–25.

13 See *F.W.J. Schelling. Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* (HKA), (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fromann-Holzboog, 1976-) I, 3, 55, and III, 1, 15–17. See also *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart & Augsburg: Cotta, 1858), II, 3, 84: "Hatte doch selbst Kant das Positive, das er aus der theoretischen Philosophie ganz eliminirt hatte, durch die Hinterthüre der praktischen wieder eingeführt" (the original spelling is maintained here).

belief based on the postulates of practical reason. Instead he made an alternative case based on the *Third Critique*. According to Fries, the twofold discussion of aesthetic judgment and teleological judgment, which form the two main parts of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, provide some of Kant's deepest insights into what a true philosophy of religion might or should actually be. The central argument of this philosophy is that "the power of judgement alone can grasp the Eternal in the Finite."[14] Friesian Kantianism has justifiably been labelled "romantic Kantianism"[15] insofar as it construes the power of judgment as a power of "pure feeling" (*reines Gefühl*).[16] This pure feeling provides a particular kind of religious knowledge that is meant to overcome the limitations of discursive reason by an intuitive grasp of the divine order and purposiveness concealed in the beauty and sublimity of nature. Fries has a special name for this "knowledge by pure feeling" (*Erkenntnis durch reines Gefühl*);[17] he calls it *Ahndung*, an old form of the German word *Ahnung*, which can be translated by a variety of English terms such as "presentiment," "inkling," "intimation," "surmise," "presage," or "divination," but whose technical content in Fries's philosophy is perhaps best rendered into English by the expression "aesthetic sense," as Kent Richter's translation suitably suggests.[18] By way of this presentiment proceeding "from the union of knowledge and faith in the same consciousness" we contemplate the Eternal in the Finite, the Eternal as manifesting itself in the Finite, and thereby we recognize, in a deep but ineffable way, the essential nature of the world, its unity and necessity as well as its ultimate aim.[19]

As Fries died in Jena in the Summer of 1843, the so-called First Friesian school gathered around his disciple Ernst Friedrich Apelt, who became the main editor of the journal *Abhandlungen der Fries'schen Schule (Proceedings of the Friesian School)*.[20] After two years of existence, from 1847 to 1849, the journal disappeared, and the school itself soon faded into oblivion. But in 1904, the philosopher Leonard Nelson created the *Abhandlungen der Fries'schen Schule, Neue*

14 *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung*, 175 (unless otherwise noted, all translations from the German are mine).

15 Frederick Gregory, *Nature Lost? Natural Science and the German Theological Traditions of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992): 39.

16 *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung*, 175.

17 *Ibid.*, 175–176.

18 *Knowledge, Belief, and Aesthetic Sense*, trans. Kent Richter (Köln, Verlag für Philosophie Jürgen Dinter, 1989).

19 *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung*, 176.

20 *Abhandlungen der Fries'schen schule*, Ernst Friedrich Apelt, Matthias Jakob Schleiden, Eduard Oskar Schmidt, Oskar Schlömilch, eds. (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1847–1849).

Folge (Proceedings oft the Friesian School, New series),[21] whose edition lasted until 1937. Nelson became one of the chief promoters of the so-called new Friesian school of Göttingen. Next to Nelson, Wilhem Bousset and Rudolf Otto, who illustrated themselves for their contributions to the so-called school of the history of religion, played also a major role in the development of the new-Friesian school of Göttingen. After the First World War Otto became by far the most eminent representative of this school in Germany as in the rest of the world. His widely acclaimed book *Das Heilige* (1917) was rendered into English in 1923 as *The Idea of the Holy*,[22] and an English translation of his earlier book *Kantisch-Fries'sche Religionsphilosophie und ihre Anwendung auf die Theologie* (1909) followed in 1931 under the title *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*.[23]

In his own systematic account of the nature and purpose of religion, Otto explicitly endorses Fries's claim that the *Third Critique* "offers a far sounder basis for a philosophy of religion than is afforded by the strained and artificial products of the theory of the Postulates."[24] In *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*—as later in *The Idea of the Holy*[25]—he discusses at length another *Third Critique* centred interpretation of Kant, namely Friedrich Schleiermacher's early philosophy of religion based on an "intuitive perception of the universe [*Anschauung des Universums*]."[26] But Otto notes that this expression and the various equivalents it receives in *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*[27] catch but "passing glimpses of Fries's clearly formulated theory;" in their "muddled terminology," Otto suggests, Schleiermacher's *Speeches*

21 *Abhandlungen der Fries'schen Schule. Neue Folge*, Gerhard Hessenberg, Karl Kaiser, Leonard Nelson, eds. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1904–1937).

22 Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1917); *idem.*, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923).

23 Rudolf Otto, *Kantisch-Fries'sche Religionsphilosophie und ihre Anwendung auf die Theologie: zur Einleitung in die Glaubenslehre für Studenten der Theologie* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1909); *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*, trans. Ernest Barratt Dicker (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1931).

24 Rudolf Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*, 143–144 (note 1).

25 Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, chapter 18, "The Manifestations of the Holy and the Faculty of Divination," 147–158.

26 Rudolf Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*, 143 (note 1).

27 F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799), in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* I, 2 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984): 185–326 ; *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

express "in a confused way" what Fries has precisely identified as *Ahndung* of the "eternal and God-appointed 'unity' and 'finality' in the real nature of things."[28] Among all early interpreters of Kant, it is Fries who, in Otto's view, provides the sharpest account of how the "aesthetic judgment" spreads itself over the world in nature and history: "By aesthetic sense I gain real knowledge of the universe in a quite particular way, following the supreme laws of its unity and necessity. [...] I gain an obscure comprehension of the unity and connection of true reality in the world of appearance, of this reality in its essential nature; and in so doing I also reach an obscure comprehension of its teleology."[29]

1.2 Fries, Otto and Tillich

In her 1993 book *Religion as a Province of Meaning : The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology*, Adina Davidovich suggests that Tillich, just like Otto, walked in the steps of Fries by looking for Kant's implicit philosophy of religion in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Tillich too, she claims, praised the *Third Critique* for providing "a contemplative conception of religion"[30] that is neither theoretical nor practical; and Tillich too opposed this implicit philosophy of religion concealed in the *Third Critique* to what is commonly hold to be Kant's own explicit philosophy of religion, the one exposed in the *Second Critique*, the famous but controversial doctrine of the postulates of practical reason. Davidovich stresses that the reason why this official version of Kant's philosophy of religion remains inconclusive in the eyes of so many critics, including Fries, Otto and Tillich, is that it provides no "essential bridge" for the divide between (theoretical) knowledge and (practical) faith, leaving thereby unsolved—and even untouched—the central problem of the unity of reason; by contrast, she claims, the implicit version discovered by Fries in the aesthetic and teleological arguments of the *Third Critique* allows both Otto and Tillich to raise the status of religion as

28 Rudolf Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*, 143 (note 1).

29 *Ibid.*, 141 (translation slightly modified). On Otto's reception and use of these topics, see also Christian Danz, "From the religious *a priori* to intending the absolute: Reflections on the methodological principles in Otto and Tillich against the backdrop of their historical problematic", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 69/1 (2013), p. 4, Art. #1980, 7 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1980.

30 Adina Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, xi.

such to that of a "necessary principle" whose function is to restore the broken unity of nature and freedom, facts and values, theoretical and practical reason.[31]

As far as Otto is concerned, this claim calls for no special comment. As we have already noticed, Otto's involvement in the so-called neo-Friesian school of Göttingen is a well-known and massively documented fact. Far more contentious is the suggestion that Tillich, in close intellectual kinship with Otto, takes part in this very same tradition of interpretation. Tillich knows this tradition, and he knows it rather well. In his 1925 essay entitled *Denker der Zeit: Der Religionsphilosoph Rudolf Otto*, he gives a remarkably detailed account of Otto's position in the internal debates of the neo-Friesian school; he mentions for instance how, in Nelson's interpretation, Fries's "doctrine of intuition" tends to lose itself in "abstraction," while in Otto's interpretation it becomes "fertile soil for the reception of an abundance of living, historical-religious views."[32] Needless to say, Tillich sides with Otto in this particular debate. Yet, the question remains: does Tillich find himself in agreement with Otto's neo-Friesian or *Third Critique* centred interpretation of Kant? Two studies published in the *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* seem to make this hypothesis plausible. In the Spring edition of 2009, Chris Firestone's paper entitled "Tillich's Indebtedness to Kant" makes a strong case for what he calls "Tillich's grand appreciation of Otto's work,"[33] and in the Fall edition of 2012 Brandon Love's paper entitled "Tillich on Eros and Logos and the Beauty of Kant" ambitions to advance Firestone's argument in showing that the aesthetic theory of Kant's *Critique of the Power of judgment* underlies and unites various aspects of Tillich's conceptual framework.[34] Both authors are certainly right in stressing the high esteem in which Tillich holds Otto's work. But they draw from this undisputable premise the more disputable conclusion that Tillich and Otto must have shared a common or at least similar interpretation of Kant. Tillich does admire Otto's work. There is no doubt about that. In the introduction of his 1925 essay, he emphatically describes the "internal thrill" and "passionate approval" with which, in the Fall of 1917, he read for the first time Otto's book *The Sacred*. But can we claim that Tillich considered

31 *Ibid.*, xv. The first part of Davidovich's book shows how this neo-Friesian concept of religion can be deduced from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*; the second focuses on its reception in the works of Otto and Tillich.

32 Paul Tillich, "Denker der Zeit: Der Religionsphilosoph Rudolf Otto," *Vossische Zeitung* 308 (1925), GW XII, 179–183; "Thinkers of Today: Rudolf Otto—Philosopher of Religion", trans. Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, Appendix B in Chris L. Firestone, *Kant and Theology at the Boundaries of Reason* (Surrey: UK/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009): 175.

33 Chris L. Firestone, "Tillich's Indebtedness to Kant," 4.

34 Brandon Love, "Tillich on Eros and Logos and the Beauty of Kant," 10.

himself a disciple of Fries, as Otto unambiguously did? Can we claim that Tillich's reading of Kant uses the *Third Critique* as a hermeneutical key for his entire work, as both Fries and Otto consequently did?

Claude Perrottet has recently argued that such claims find very little support in Tillich's German work, and even less in the newly edited archival material dealing with Tillich's early philosophy of religion. This is why Perrottet rejects the *Third Critique* hypothesis promoted by Davidovich in favour of a *First Critique* hypothesis. What are his arguments?

2 The *First Critique* hypothesis

The most elaborate form of Perrottet's argument is to be found in his 2012 book *Au-delà du criticisme kantien. La méthode critique-intuitive dans la première philosophie de la religion de Paul Tillich*.[35] Perrottet's purpose is not to contest the accuracy of Davidovich's interpretation of the *Third Critique*, but he doubts Tillich's reception of Kant can be correctly understood in this neo-Friesian perspective of hers.[36] Still, Perrottet perceives in Tillich's reading of Kant an interpretive strategy similar to the one described by Davidovich, a strategy postulating that Kant's work contains an implicit philosophy of religion that forms an alternative to the one he formulated himself in his doctrine of the postulates of practical reason. But Perrottet argues that the alternative offered in the *Third Critique* is not the one Tillich is looking for. He grants that some passages of the *Systematic Theology* could perhaps be construed as making this hypothesis less implausible for Tillich's later work.[37] Yet, Perrottet methodically shows that in Tillich's *System of Sciences* of 1923, the work Davidovich used as one of her major proof texts, nothing accredits the view that Tillich adopted a neo-Friesian or *Third Critique* centred interpretation of Kant, not even the passages quoted by her.[38]

As Perrottet convincingly argues, for Tillich's German period at least, this interpretation is not an option at all. The main source on which he founds this argument is a course entitled *Religionsphilosophie* that Tillich gave at the University of Berlin in the Summer Semester of 1920. Discovered in the Tillich archives of Harvard in the 1990s by Erdmann Sturm, the manuscript of this

35 Claude Perrottet, *Au-delà du criticisme kantien*, 107–114.

36 *Ibid.*, 108.

37 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951): 72–77, 82 (note 7).

38 Claude Perrottet, *Au-delà du criticisme kantien*, 111–112.

course has been published for the first time in 2001.[39] In this course, Tillich explicitly rejects the *Third Critique*'s attempt to overcome the opposition between theoretical and practical reason. "Kant's threefold division is illusory," he says, for there is no third term beyond the opposition of "thought that is determined by being," and "thought that determines being."[40] In other words, there is no third term beyond the opposition of the theoretical and the practical. Where then does Tillich find an alternative philosophy of religion in Kant's work? Perrottet's response is that Tillich sees Kant's philosophy of religion intrinsically at work at the cutting edge of his critical agenda, namely in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The course *Religionsphilosophie* interprets the Kantian concept of the "unconditioned" elaborated in the *First Critique* as "the absolute limit of our mind, as what is absolutely given".[41] Now, by detaching this concept of the unconditioned from the doctrine of the things in themselves, Tillich's construal of the *First Critique* brings a decisive corrective to Kant's own views about the necessary location of the unconditioned amongst the things in themselves. Once this correction is done, so Perrottet argues, it becomes possible for Tillich to conceive religion as a category required for the "constitution of the phenomenal world," and thereby to grant a religious warrant to the "unity of consciousness" on the sole basis of the *First Critique*.[42]

This argument founded on a text entirely ignored for about eighty years provides undoubtedly new insights into the discussion about Tillich's indebtedness to Kant. As we shall see, other recently edited archives corroborate Perrottet's conclusions to a large extent. Undoubtedly his book provides a substantial contribution to our understanding of Tillich's reception of Kant.

Yet, as I shall argue, this reception is not quite as direct as Perrottet assumes. Fichte and Schelling on the one hand, and the twentieth century Fichte Renaissance on the other, form a chain of mediations, a tradition of interpretation on which Tillich's reading of Kant heavily relies. The *Religionsphilosophie* of 1920 which is so central in Perrottet's argument tends to undervalue the significance of these mediations, but their importance is distinctly observable in various essays Tillich wrote between the age of 20 and 30, from 1906 to 1916.

39 Paul Tillich, "Religionsphilosophie (1920)," EGW XII, 333–584.

40 *Ibid.*, 421.

41 Claude Perrottet, *Au-delà du criticisme kantien*, 38.

42 Paul Tillich, "Religionsphilosophie (1920)," 383; Claude Perrottet, *Au-delà du criticisme kantien*, 115.

3 The *Second-Critique* hypothesis

Tillich's early writings confirm many of the elements Perrottet highlights on the basis of the *Religionsphilosophie* of 1920. Most notably, they confirm the central importance of the concept of the unconditioned in Tillich's reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of religion. They also confirm that Tillich, as a consequence of this interpretive option, rejects both the official version of Kant's philosophy of religion enclosed in the so-called moral proofs of the *Second Critique and* its implicit version located by Fries in the aesthetic and teleological developments of the *Third Critique*.

But Tillich's early writings make clear that this interpretive option rests in reality on a Fichtean construal of Kant's moral philosophy. From this vantage point, Kant's implicit philosophy of religion finds its firmest foundation in the *Second Critique*. It is true that Tillich emphatically rejects the *Second Critique*'s doctrine of the postulates of practical reason. Yet, he holds this doctrine to be but a minor and inconsequential element of this work. The central and decisive worth of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, as he reads it in the wake of Fichte, lies in the new developments it brings to the concept of the unconditioned. This concept, which Tillich sees as the very principle of Kant's implicit philosophy of religion, is certainly present in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but its religious import and significance reveals itself only retrospectively, when the *First Critique* is read in the light of the *Critique of Practical Reason*; it is only in the *Second Critique* that the unconditioned becomes more than a heuristic concept; it is only in the *Second Critique* that the unconditioned accesses to "reality" as "moral autonomy;" and this moral autonomy, as Tillich argues, is but another name for what he calls the "freedom of unconditioned self-determination."[43] In a 1910 essay about Fichte's system of freedom Tillich notes that this concept of the unconditioned was already at work in the *Critique of Pure reason*, but in a way that was obscured by the "psychological" idiom of the "deduction of the categories."[44] It was only from the later standpoint of the *Critique of Practical Reason* that the full meaning of this concept could be rightly understood: insofar as the principle of the deduction must escape all empirical determination, it cannot be posited, but must be the very act of positing. Therefore, Tillich argues, the unconditioned is freedom, and "freedom is self-positing."[45] As we can see in this 1910 essay on Fichte, the part Tillich assigns to Kant's *Second Critique* in his

43 Paul Tillich, "Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte", EGW X, 57.
44 *Ibid.*
45 *Ibid.*

early writings is considerable. In the wake of Fichte and the young Schelling, these writings use the concept of the unconditioned as the principle of an intrinsically religious system of freedom. And just like Fichte and the young Schelling, Tillich finds the outline of this system in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, with the avowed ambition of "understanding Kant better than he understood himself."[46]

Similar accounts of this position can also be found in various footnotes of the doctoral dissertation Tillich defended in the Summer of 1910 at the Faculty of philosophy of the University of Breslau, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*.[47] There Tillich affirms that "it is the great insight of Fichte and the young Schelling that the unconditioned, which is the principle of the system, is nothing but freedom, the free act that posits itself as beginning."[48] He further argues that Fichte and the young Schelling have realized a possibility "inaugurated by Kant" in the *Critique of Practical Reason:* "the possibility of joining morality and religion."[49] This should not be dismissed too quickly as just another kind of reductionism in which religion would be absorbed into morality. The "joining [*Verknüpfung*]" of morality and religion means here something quite different, for the system of freedom and its foundational principle are both inherently religious: "This freedom, Tillich says, must be required from everyone who wants to understand religion."[50] Philosophy of religion, if well understood, is precisely at one with this system of freedom whose principle is the unconditioned. As Tillich puts it: "Freedom is the unconditioned, the beginning of the system and its highest goal."[51]

One of the most astonishing expressions of Tillich's reception of these ideas is his so-called Kassel lecture of 1911.[52] In this lecture, he boldly identifies the unique principle on which Christian dogmatics must be grounded with the principle that Fichte and the young Schelling placed at the foundation of their "sys-

46 The formula was notably used by Schelling in his correspondence with Fichte. See HKA III, 1, 224.

47 Paul Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien*, EGW IX, 154–272; *The construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy, Its presuppositions and principles*, trans. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974).

48 Paul Tillich, *The construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, 167 (note 2).

49 *Ibid.*, 166 (note 1).

50 *Ibid.*, 167 (note 4).

51 *Ibid.*, 167 (note 4).

52 Paul Tillich, "Die Christliche Gewissheit und der historische Jesus (128 Thesen)," MW VI, 21–37.

tem of freedom," i.e. the system of "idealism" as opposed to "dogmatism," the "system of necessity."[53] This system of freedom rests on the first principle of Fichte's so-called "doctrine of science" defined by the proposition I = I (*Ich = Ich*).[54] Fichte's *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* claims that "the absolutely first and utterly unconditioned principle of every human knowledge [...] must express the act [*Thathandlung*] by which any conscience is grounded and made possible."[55] This first principle expressing the radically original "act" by which the I posits itself in a living unity of subject and object can be described indifferently as "identity of consciousness" or as "autonomy." As the young Schelling puts it in *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt* – which Fichte praised as a good introduction to his own work[56] – "nothing can be radically posited if it is not that by which everything else is first posited; nothing can posit itself if it is not an original self, radically independent."[57] Such radical freedom or autonomy is only to be found in the I that is originally posited by itself. This is how Fichte and the young Schelling appraise and reconstruct what they consider to be the true purpose of Kant's *Second Critique*. This is how they understand Kant's principle of the unconditioned whose other names are freedom or autonomy. The young Tillich unmistakably follows the same path. In his Kassel lecture, he takes the proposition "I = I" to be the ultimate criterion with which any claim to certitude is to be evaluated. By considering the proposition I = I as the highest principle of certitude, he makes no mystery of his debt toward Fichte: "Insofar as the proposition I = I, or the identity of consciousness, constitutes the principle of certitude, no cognitive principle can be higher than the autonomy of the I which posits itself."[58] How do these statements fit—if they do—into the widely accepted description of Tillich's intellectual journey as a move from Idealism to Existentialism?

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53 "Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre," *Gesamtausgabe der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (GA), (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fromann-Holzboog, 1962–2012): I, 4, 188–189.

54 The same proposition is indifferently formulated *Ich = Ich*, *Ich gleich Ich* or *Ich bin Ich*.

55 GA I, 2, 255.

56 GA I, 2, 165.

57 HKA I, 1, 279–280.

58 MW VI, 31.

4 Fichte, Schelling, and the perplexing question of Tillich's "existential turn"

Associated with Tillich's autobiographical statements about his experience of the tragic in World War I,[59] his so-called "existential turn" has been time and again construed as a shift from "Schelling I" to "Schelling II," from "negative philosophy" to "positive philosophy," from the sort of "Idealism" the young Schelling shared with Fichte to the sort of "Existentialism" the old Schelling opposed to Fichte. Initiated some six decades ago in Stephen Crary's dissertation *Idealistic Elements in Tillich's Thought* (1955),[60] this classical explanation of Tillich's alleged conversion from Idealism to Existentialism has already undergone significant revisions in subsequent scholarship. Yet these revisions provide a puzzling account of how and when he might have departed from his Idealistic starting point. Gunther Wenz, for example, rightly stresses that Tillich was already concerned with "Schelling II" in his doctoral dissertations of 1910 and 1912,[61] but then he seems embarrassed to explain why the Kassel lecture of 1911 still exhibits Tillich's "unbroken dependence on the philosophy of transcendental idealism."[62] By suggesting incidentally that the influence of "Schelling I" fades pro-

59 "Die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart" (1926), GW X, 29; "On the Boundary" (1936): 35.

60 Stephen Crary, *Idealistic Elements in Tillich's Thought* (Dissertation [Ph.D], Yale University, 1955): 124.

61 Gunther Wenz, *Tillich im Kontext. Theologiegeschichtliche Perspektiven* (Münster: Lit, 2000): 217. See also "Rechtfertigung und Zweifel. Tillichs Entwurf zur Begründung eines theologischen Prinzips von 1919 im halle-wittenbergischen Kontext," in Christian Danz and Werner Schüßler, eds., *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft* (Münster: Lit, 2008): 87 (note 5): "Es ist der späte Schelling, der den jungen Tillich vor allem beeindruckte."

62 Gunther Wenz, *Tillich im Kontext*, 222 : "Nun legt sich die Vermutung nahe, daß die Absage des frühen Tillich an das Historisch-Faktische im Christentum veranlaßt ist durch seine damals noch ungebrochene Abhängigkeit von der Philosophie des transzendentalen Idealismus, die sich bereits in den Schriften zur Philosophie Schellings zu lockern scheint." A similar account of Tillich's putatively growing distrust toward idealism in his pre-war writings is provided by Wenz's essay "Metaphysischer Empirismus. Der späte Schelling und die Anfänge der Tillich'schen Christologie," in Peter Haigis, Gert Hummel and Doris Lax, eds., *Christus Jesus – Mitte der Geschichte!?/Christ Jesus – the Center of History?* (Münster: Lit, 2007): 27: "Anfang des zweiten Jahrzehnts des 20. Jahrhunderts war der Bruch des allgemeinen Bewusstseins mit der idealistischen Tradition weitgehend vollzogen, um 1914/18 definitiv und endgültig zu werden." Reading Tillich's early work in the light of later autobiographical accounts, Wenz presupposes that a neo-idealistic construal of Tillich's pre-war writings would be incoherent with his early appropriation of Schelling's positive philosophy (*Rechtfertigung*, 87 [note 5]). But the decisive question, here, is whether Schelling's positive philosophy does or does not belong to the specific kind of idealism the young Tillich calls for. As I shall argue, it does.

gressively while the influence of "Schelling II" grows, Wenz shows that his revision of the Tillich-Schelling relationship is only concerned with the chronological location of Tillich's "existential turn," not with the more basic assumption that there must be such a turn. It is my contention that it is thoroughly vain to search for an "existential turn" in Tillich's work.

In a letter he writes to his friend Emanuel Hirsch on February the 20th 1918, Tillich mentions his earlier turn from one Schelling to the other, but not in the way nor in the order Crary or Wenz have assumed. Tillich declares quite unexpectedly that in the years of his theological training he enthusiastically discovered "Schelling I" *after* "Schelling II" and that he consequently decided to interpret "Schelling II" in the light of "Schelling I." First there was "the obscure force of the 'positive philosophy'"; and "then came the ratio."[63] The letter to Hirsch does not specify at what moment exactly this process took place, but as early as 1910 Tillich claims that "Schelling I" provides the hermeneutical key to "Schelling II" insofar as "autonomy", the principle of "rational" or "negative philosophy," is a "precondition" for the doctrine of freedom upon which "positive philosophy" is meant to rest.[64]

From that time on, Tillich started to construct his theology as a "system of freedom" in which two rival, and yet complementary, interpretations of Kant's legacy stand in tension: the one interpretation conceives of freedom in the terms of Fichte and the young Schelling as a fundamental self-positing by reason (in line with Kant's doctrine of the autonomy of the will); the other conceives of freedom in the terms of the older Schelling as an abysmal power of self-contradiction (in line with Kant's doctrine of radical evil).[65] While holding in high es-

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63 "Paul Tillich an Emanuel Hirsch. 20. Februar 1918," GWE VI, 114. Tillich goes on to say that after having left Schelling II for Schelling I he went to Hegel and finally to Nietzsche. His famous lecture "Uber die Idee einer Theologie des Kultur" (1919) confirms this latter statement and explains how Hegel and Nietzsche influenced Tillich's account of the "task of theology" toward the end of the war: "Es ist orientiert an Nietzsche's Erfassung des 'Schöpferischen' auf dem Boden von Hegels 'objektiv-geschichtlichem Geist'" (GW IX, 15).

64 "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie," EGW IX, 248 (note 369): "Aber die negative Philosophie ist durch die Erfassung des Autonomiebegriffs notwendige Voraussetzung der positiven. In dem richtig gefaßten Autonomiebegriff liegt schon das Prinzip der positiven Philosophie, die Freiheit." Xavier Tilliette (*Schelling. Une philosophie en devenir*, vol. I [Paris: Vrin, 1970]: 34) and Günther Wenz (*Subjekt und Sein. Die Entwicklung der Theologie Paul Tillichs* [München: Kaiser, 1979]: 70–71) have rightly observed that Tillich's two Schelling dissertations provide a dialectical understanding of the relationship between negative and positive philosophy that is formulated in terms remarkably close to those Walter Schulz would use half a century later in *Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in Schellings Spätphilosophie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955).

65 "Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte" (1910), EGW X, 62.

teem this concept of freedom that Schelling establishes as the principle of his "positive philosophy", Tillich construes this as a deepening – not a revocation – of Fichte's thoroughly rational understanding of freedom as the fundamental principle of his Doctrine of science.[66] Highlighting the dialectical continuity of these two views, Tillich argues that the old Schelling's praise of positivity entails no surrender of critical reason to the heteronomy of a religious revelation.[67] And by the same token Fichte's praise of autonomous reason implies neither antireligious pathos nor Promethean hubris, but rather a startling "extension to the realm of thought" of the principle of justification by grace alone.[68]

This does not mean that Fichte and "Schelling I" are being given the last word on "Schelling II." Tillich refuses to subordinate the negative philosophy to the positive, or the positive to the negative. If he insists that the positive philosophy must be read in the light of the negative, it is not to reduce "Schelling II" to "Schelling I" but to affirm their mutual dependence. This can be observed for example in "Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling," an essay written in 1910 that remained unpublished until 1999. While Tillich's first Schelling dissertation stresses the importance of "autonomy" in the positive no less than in the negative philosophy, this essay symmetrically insists on the decisive part played by justification by grace in the negative no less than in the positive philosophy: "If by justification we mean the exclusively divine activity upon our salvation, Schelling's religion is faith in justification in both periods of its evolution," the "grace of the intellectual intuition" being the counterpart in the first to what the "grace of the personal God" is in the second.[69] Interestingly enough,

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66 This unusual combination of Fichte's "doctrine of science" and Schelling's "positive philosophy" can be interpreted as Tillich's original contribution to the neo-Idealistic movement. In an article published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 1929 (March 19) under the title "Zu Paul Tillichs Berufung nach Frankfurt" (GW XIII, 562–564), Medicus, who followed the career of his former pupil with great attention, proudly introduced him to his Swiss readers as the initiator of the contemporary "Schelling Renaissance" (562). As Neugebauer persuasively suggests, Tillich's effort to expand the Fichte Renaissance promoted by his mentor into a "Schelling Renaissance," which was meant to be its critical counterpart and complement, might well have been encouraged from the very beginning by Medicus himself (*Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 154).

67 "Mystik und Schluldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung" (1912), MW I, 27; "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion" (1910), EGW IX, 188 (note 129) and 235.

68 "Die Christliche Gewissheit und der historische Jesus (128 Thesen)" (1911), MW VI, 33.

69 "Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling," EGW X, 51: "Wenn unter Rechtfertigung die ausschließlich göttliche Aktivität auf unser Heil verstanden wird, so ist Schellings Religion in beiden Perioden seiner Entwicklung Rechtfertigungsglaube. In der ersten Periode von der Natur entnommen, gipfelt er in der Gnade der intellektuellen Anschauung und ist im Leben die innere Gelassenheit des Rechtfertigungsgläubigen; denn Gott ist das Absolute. In der zweiten Periode

Tillich uses the term "positive philosophy" in reference to Schelling exclusively whereas he applies the term "negative philosophy" to Fichte as well.

In *Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte*, the lecture he pronounces on August 22, 1910 for his promotion as Doctor in philosophy at the university of Breslau, Tillich distinguishes two contrasted sides in the philosophy of German idealism.

> On the one side we find Fichte and the principle of his system, freedom as the self-positing of reason. On the other side we find Schelling and the principle of his philosophy of religion, freedom as the power to contradict oneself. [...] The one is explanation of the "what" (*Was*) or negative philosophy; the other is explanation of the "that" (*Dass*) or positive philosophy.[70]

In his works of maturity, Tillich has often described Schelling's distinction between negative and positive philosophy as the conceptual matrix of his own distinction between essentialism and existentialism. Yet, his early formulation of the distinction between negative and positive philosophy reveals at least two remarkable contrasts with his later accounts of the distinction between essentialism and existentialism: in 1910, it is Fichte – not Hegel – who embodies with "Schelling I" the standard representative of essentialism or negative philosophy; and the existentialism or positive philosophy advocated by "Schelling II" is clearly *not* construed as a break away from German idealism. When illustrated by Fichte's definition of freedom as autonomy or identity of consciousness, "negative philosophy" is not to be equated with German idealism as such but only with its "rational" side, the "system of reason which can explain the "what" of the world, but not its "that." On its "rational" or "negative" side, German idealism shows that *if* there is a world, its history must be the process of the self-positing of the I.[71] On its "irrational" or "positive" side, German idealism is concerned with the "that" of the world, it meditates the not deducible evidence that there is a world and "elevates" this irrational given "from the sphere of reality (*Tatsächlichkeit*) into the sphere of freedom." Tillich insists, however, that both sides are held together by the principle of "freedom as act" and that "this is Fichte's work."[72]

The "rational" and "positive" sides of German idealism are furthermore held together by the principle of identity – whose intimate connection with Fichte's

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aus der Geschichte entnommen, gipfelt er in der Gnade des persönlichen Gottes, der sich als Person der Person hingibt und von sich aus die Kluft zwischen Gott und Mensch aufhebt."

70 "Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte', EGW X, 62.

71 EGW X, 61.

72 EGW X, 62.

concept of freedom we have already noticed. In the preface of *Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen*, the dissertation Tillich wrote for his habilitation at the University of Halle (1916), the "principle of identity" is defined as the "basic epistemological principle of the living unity of subject and object, concept and intuition, absolute and relative."[73] Tillich argues that this principle characterises the philosophy of German idealism from its origins in Kant's criticism to its late developments in "Schelling's second period." A sharp distinction must therefore be drawn between the "philosophy of identity" – which is but the culminating point of negative philosophy – and the "principle of identity" which is operative in both negative and positive philosophy.

These are the reasons why the very notion of an "existential turn" in Tillich's intellectual trajectory seems highly doubtful to me. Since he wrote his first doctoral dissertation on Schelling, Tillich has always taken negative and positive philosophy to be the two complementary sides of German idealism correctly understood. Since 1910, he combines in a single system the two concepts of freedom he traces back to Kant: the abysmal concept of freedom "Schelling II" conceived as power of self-contradiction in the light of the doctrine of radical evil *and* the foundational concept of freedom Fichte and "Schelling I" conceived as autonomy of reason in the light of the *Second Critique*. How, then, are we to understand the harsh disapprovals of German idealism that are displayed throughout Tillich's later work? What he later castigates as the shortcomings of idealism (its unilateral essentialism and its corollary blindness to the givenness of existence and history, its *hybris* and its delusive ambition to speak from the point of view of the end of history, etc.) is what he criticizes already in his pre-war writings in the name of idealism itself.[74] To the young Tillich and to his friends the end of the story of German idealism has not yet been written. Its crisis and downfall are but sobering and purifying episodes in a grand narrative whose heroes are not only Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, but also Medicus and his pupils. Tillich's pre-war essays do not provide a mere descriptive account of what German idealism used to be in the systems of its historical proponents; they rather articulate Tillich's own theological vision of what idealism as a living tradition ought to be.

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73 "Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen, sein dialektischer Charakter und das Prinzip der Identität – dargestellt an der supranaturalistischen Theologie vor Schleiermacher (1915)," EGW IX, 442.

74 See, for example, "Die Grundlage des Gegenwärtigen Denkens" (1912–1913), GWE X, 83–84: "Aus dem freien Denken folgt das niemals ruhende Recht der Kritik, die Notwendigkeit des Weiterarbeitens. Tritt ein System mit dem Anspruch auf, das Ende der Wege des Denkens zu sein, so folgt Rückschlag mir doppelter Gewalt. Das war die Tragik des deutschen Idealismus."

Douglas Hedley

Chapter 2

Tillich and Participation

'ut deus sit omnia in omnibus'
I Cor 15.28

In *The Courage to Be* Tillich describes the courage to be as self-affirmation. This self-affirmation "presupposes participation in something that transcends the self."[1] "To be is to participate in Being itself". These simple words express a clear commitment to metaphysics. It is often remarked that Tillich insisted upon the identity of the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Far from being an oddity of Western culture, and especially the poisoned chalice of Plato, speculative philosophy emerged in Greece and India at about the same time (6th century BC) with abstract concepts like Being or questions like 'what is the primary element in reality' and how can we know it?

> Come now, I will tell you–and bring away my story safely when you have heard it – the only ways of inquiry there are for thinking:
> the one, that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be,
> is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon Truth),
> the other, that it is not and that it is necessary for it not to be, this I point out to you to be a path completely unlearnable, for neither may you know that which is not (for it is not to be accomplished)
> nor may you declare it.[2]

In the *Upanishads* we find the same 'ultimate concern' as in the Hellenic tradition stretching back to Parmenides and Plato.

> In the beginning, my dear, this [universe] was Being (*Sat*) alone, one only without a second. Some say that in the beginning this was non-being (*asat*) alone, one only without a second; and from that non-being, being was born.[3]

1 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (Hew Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 165.

2 Parmenides, "Fragment 2," in *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy. From Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd and C.D.C Reeve (Hackett Publishing, 2000): 37.

3 *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6.2.1–3 in S. Radharkrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), 447–449.

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Heidegger tries to readdress the ancient question of Being through an attack on Platonism and his often curious and sometimes tendentious readings of pre-Socratic philosophers, and of Eckhart and Hölderlin. Tillich however attempts to reinvest the Platonic tradition with contemporary intelligibility. In his essay 'Participation and Knowledge' of 1955 Tillich writes:

> Without accepting the basic assumption of Husserl's phenomenology, viz. the bracketing of existence, I believe that the Platonic Tradition in all its variations is right in asking a question which empiricism never can answer, namely, the question of the structural presuppositions of experience.[4]

1 The context of modern metaphysics and theology

Yet how can metaphysics survive the emergence of the new science emerging from Galileo, Descartes and Newton? Unlike his erstwhile Marburg colleague Heidegger, Tillich wants to breathe life into this metaphysical tradition. He does this in part though reinterpreting the ancient inheritance in terms of early and mid-twentieth Century expressionism and psychoanalytic theory. Here we touch the radical Tillich popularised in Britain by John Robinson – the somewhat notorious Tillich of bohemian provenance, the denizen of intermittently tortured and decadent interwar Germany. This is the Tillich for whom Faith is our 'ultimate concern', the sins of our Fathers 'estrangement', the Tillich fascinated by Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard and varieties of *Angst*. The Barthians will say that this language lets the 'cat out of the bag'. Is this any more than the language of piety disguising little more than 'ecstatic naturalism'? Does Tillich's theology amount to much more than the cosmic piety of a twentieth century Emerson?

In this chapter I wish to point to another side of Tillich. It is a dimension of Tillich who is meditating upon the philosophical explication of St Paul's claim about God in I Corinthians 15.28 as the "*omnia in omnibus*" – Tillich as one of the most striking contemporary exponents of Christian Platonism since Nicholas of Cusa, Leibniz or, in his odd manner, Schelling. Consider the radical sound of "God beyond God" in the *Courage to Be* or the central claim of the *Systematic Theology:* "God does not exist. He is being itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore to argue that God exists is to deny him."[5] The 9th century Platonist John Scot Eriugena speaks of God as *Nihil per excellentiam*. Meister Eckhart employs

4 MW I, 384.
5 ST I, 205.

the same paradoxical language when he refers to God as distinquished by his indistinction: *quanto distinctius, tanto indistinctius; et quanto indistinctius, tanto distinctius.*[6] This parallels the dialectic of transcendence and immanence from Neoplatonism. As absolute unity, God transcends distinction. As the most indistinct, he is the most distinct. Thus '*in deo non est aliud*'.[7] In Eckhart's pupil Nicholas of Cusa – *non aliud* become a Divine name, an enigmatic title of God. Behind this lies the Neoplatonic dialectic of the One. We should remember that the language of the Ultimate reality identified with ultimate value. That language suggests German Idealism – remember that *Absolutum* goes back to Cusa as the *ipsum absolutum esse: idem absolutum ab omnibus participari.*[8] Tillich insists that "[a] conditioned God is no God".[9] To be is to participate in being. Tillich is a Christian Platonist because it is Christ who is the supreme instantiation of the New Being: "The Christian participates in the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus the Christ."[10]

2 The puzzle of the concept of participation

The concept of participation has a long and complex history. It is also inextricably linked to other cognate issues like the nature of universals, analogy, perfect being theology or the problem of evil. It is a central concept of Thomism and yet marginal in much post 17th century Western philosophical thought. Like many core – and ostensibly familiar – concepts in philosophy, it is deeply puzzling. Elucidating both its history and possible relevance today for both philosophy and theology is the challenge.

Participation can refer to the instantiation of universals or forms. Since we can re-identify particulars as belonging to kinds, possessing traits or properties, participation emerges out of fundamental philosophical questions about 'carving nature at its joints' (*Phaedrus* 265). Tillich says "The element of participation

6 Eckhart, "Expositio libri Sapientiae." in *Meister Eckhart. Die lateinischen Werke*, vol. II ed. Konrad Weiß, Heribert Fischer, Josef Koch and Loris Sturlese (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992): 490, 4 ff. On the general theme see Werner Beierwaltes, "Unterschied durch Un-Untershiedenheit," in *Identitat und Differenz* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1980): 97–104.

7 Eckhart, "*Sermo* XXIX" in *Meister Eckhart. Die lateinischen Werke*, vol. IV, eds. Ernst Benz, Bruno Decker and Josef Koch (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), 270, 7 f.

8 Cusa, "*De genesi*" (114, 15) in *Nikolas von Kues. Werke*, vol. I, ed. Paul Wilpert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967): 203. .

9 ST I, 275.

10 ST I, 177.

guarantees the unity of a disrupted world and makes a system of universal relations possible."[11]

Plato famously presents the physical cosmos as 'participating' in the ideas (*Phaedo* 99c6ff). In the *Timaeus*, the world of becoming is a 'likeness' of its intelligible archetype. In the Republic V 480a or the Symposium 211c we find the celebrated ascent to 'absolute beauty. The various terms in Greek for participation are not much clearer than their English counterparts but the term has been taken since (especially through the enormous influence of the *Timaeus*) as expressing the connection between sensible and intelligible world – the visible '*kosmos aisthetos*' as the '*eikon*' of the '*kosmos noetos*'. Aristotle, in rejecting the language of participation, dismissed this as merely a poetic manner of speaking (*Metaphysics* 987b7–14; 991a20–22; 1079b24–26). Unlike Plato's relatively inchoate and suggestive theology, Aristotle has a clear conception of the Divine mind. The God of Aristotle is a final cause and not an efficient cause of the physical cosmos. Moreover, Aristotle's deity is not the basis for any exemplarism. It is with the Neoplatonists, however, that we find a clearly *causal* view of participation, whereby the imperfect domain is dependent upon a perfect transcendent source for its being. The idea of 'participation', through the influence of Neoplatonism, was a pivotal aspect of late antique and medieval thought, e.g. Avicena, Maimonides and Aquinas. The distinguished American Thomist W. Norris Clarke S.J. (1917–2008) offered the following definition:

> Participation (in the order of real being) = a structure or order of relationship between beings such that they all share in various degrees of fullness in some positive property or perfection common to them all, as received from the same one source: all finite beings participate in existence from God. A Neoplatonic (not Aristotelian) doctrine adapted by Aquinas to express his own essence/existence metaphysics.[12]

The idea of the world participating in its transcendent source is criticized explicitly in the modern era by various figures. Consider Francis Bacon:

> For as all works do show forth the power and skill of the workman, and not his image; so it is of the works of God, which do show the omnipotency and wisdom of the maker, but not his image: and therefore therein the heathen opinion differeth from the sacred truth; for they supposed the world to be the image of God, and man to be an extract or compendious image of the world; but the Scriptures never vouchsafe to attribute to the world that hon-

11 ST I, 176.

12 Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysic* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 318.

> our, as to be the image of God, but only the work of his hands; neither do they speak of any other image of God, but man.[13]

Bacon is claiming that for the Christian the world is like an artefact, like the 'work of his hands' but need not bear any relation of likeness to its source. His target may not be explicitly Neoplatonic but it fits well. In the Neoplatonic account of participation, the effect bears the image of cause. Plotinus thinks of the cosmos as a mirror-reflection of the divine rather than as a picture or artificer-image. The polished metal mirrors of the ancient world (*katoptra*) were murky by modern standards. Nevertheless, as Arthur H. Armstrong often remarked, the language of reflection suggests intimate and unmediated relation of becoming to Being: the closeness of the image to its archetype and thus the presence of the Divine in the physical cosmos. The lower is an image, shadow, dream or trace of the higher: 'sensations here are dim intellections: intellections there are vivid sensations'.[14] Thus, for Plotinus there is continuity between sense and intellect. Vision is not a metaphor for a Platonist! Rather, sensation and intellection belong on a continuum.

It is upon such a metaphysical basis that Augustine can say '*aspice quae vides, et quaere quem non vides*' in his *Sermon 126* ('Look at what you see, and seek what you do not see'), and link this to St Paul's reference in Romans 1.20 of the invisible things of Creation. Augustine is drawing on the Platonic doctrine of creaturely participation in the Divine intellect: visible beauty and order point to its invisible source. Anselm follows this line of thought in Augustine when he argues for Perfect Being as the basis of degrees of perfection. The existence of imperfections presupposes a principle of perfection that is self-sufficient: unlimited being itself. These a posteriori reflections are not, of course, unrelated to his conceptual argument for the '*id quo maius cogitari nequit*'.

What is the relation of eternal objects to traditional universals or Divine ideas? Augustine in *On Eighty Three Different Questions*, qu. 46.2. notes that in Latin the Platonic Ideas are called '*formae*' or '*species*'. These, he tells us, are *logoi* and explicitly identifies them with immutable forms within the Divine mind. These are the archetypes of the created order (cf. *Free Choice of the Will*, book 2). The brilliant early medieval thinker John Scot Eriugena developed a theory of the ideas as creative energies rather than abstractions, i.e. '*causae primordiales*'.

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13 Francis Bacon, "*Advancement of Learning*," in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 3, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1858): 349.
14 Plotinus, *Ennead* VI 7 (38) 7.30 – 31.

3 The legacy of Participation?

Outside scholasticism, it is difficult to find much explicit reference to participation after the 17th century. Does it becomes part of what C.S. Lewis famously described as the 'discarded image'? It is a central concept for the theologian Richard Hooker (1554–1600) and the remarkable hymns of Charles Wesley (1707–1788). It was important for the Cambridge Platonists: John Smith writes:

> God is the First Truth and Primitive Goodness: True religion is a vigorous Efflux and Emanation of Both upon the Spirits of men and therefore is called a participation of the Divine nature.[15]

The great New England Divine Jonathan Edwards insists in full Platonic vein:

> [A]s there is an infinite fullness of possible good in God, a fullness of every perfection, of all excellency and beauty... And as this fullness is capable of communication or emanation *ad extra*; so it seems a thing amiable and valuable in itself that is should be communicated or flow forth, that this infinite fountain of good should send forth abundant streams, that this fountain of light should diffusing its excellent fullness, pour forth light all around. And as this is in itself excellent, so a disposition to this in the Divine Being must be looked upon as a perfection or an excellent disposition; such an emanation of good is, in some sense, a multiplication of it.[16]

The language of the communication or emanation of the Divine diffusing its 'excellent fullness' is unmistakably the language of participation. Somewhat later, S.T. Coleridge (1774–1832) writes of the symbol as 'the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal. It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is the representative'.[17] Coleridge clearly builds on a conviction that the symbol has an ontological foundation. Even Baudelaire seems to assume something quite close in a beautiful sonnet when he writes of:

> *La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers*
> *Laissant parfois sortir de confuses paroles;*

15 John Smith, *Select Discourses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1859), 390.

16 Jonathan Edwards, "Dissertation," in *Works* 8: *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 433.

17 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Statesman's Manual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 30.

L'homme y passé a travers des forêts de symbols
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers[18]

In Jonathan Edwards and S.T. Coleridge we are within a clearly Platonic tradition. Amongst philosophers who are not so clearly 'Platonic' and avoid the language of participation, we can find hints of the idea. In Leibniz's *Monadology* there is the famous theory of limited participation of each monad in the Divine perfections (*chaque substance simple... est... un miroir vivant perpétual de l'univers*) and Hegel's concrete universal looks a version of participation – linked to his theological dimension of his *Logik:* the process of the Divine mind unfolding in the world. A.N. Whitehead (1861–1947) uses the terms ingression', 'inclusion', 'realization', and 'functioning'. These are all expressions for eternal objects in existing finite items. The same eternal object can have differing modes of ingression. Is this a version of participation? Eric Voegelin (1901–1985) is a recent philosopher who wrote much about participation and 'metaxy'.[19]

In conclusion, the findings are rather puzzling. The *Begriff* 'participation' seems to have fallen into relative desuetude since the 17th century. Yet philosophers and theologians repeatedly turn to the idea, even if sometimes coining new terms or developing the idea in directions that Plotinus or Aquinas would have barely recognized.

4 Participation and Tillich's Concept of the Symbol

In relation to participation Tillich parts company from the Thomists in that he prefers symbolic to the analogical. "A symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes". Symbols are figurative expressions of a non-figurative reality.[20] The most important distinction between sign and symbol rests in the fact that symbols bears the power of the Unconditional. Hence the *via eminentiae* and *via negativa* are dialectically related in *via symbolica*. There is identity between divine and human and difference; there is a dialectic of negation and affirmation in the symbolic. In the transparency or translucency of the symbol, e.g. water for baptism, the symbol cleanses physically while representing a spiritual fact.

18 Charles Baudelaire, "Correspondances" in *Selected Poems from Les Fleurs du mal*, trans. Norman R. Shapiro with engravings by David Schorr (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 12.
19 See Jerry Day, *Voegelin, Schelling, and the Philosophy of Historical Existence* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2003). Voegelin was deeply critical of Hegel but a profound admirer of Schelling.
20 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 169

Wine or bread bridge in a similar manner the physical with the spiritual. Yet note that such a concept of the symbol is not merely figurative: its very power presupposes participation in another realm.

> There is another order to which we, as human beings, belong, an order which makes man *always* dissatisfied with what is given to him. Man transcends everything the historical order, all the heights and depths of his own existence. He passes, as no other being is able to pass, beyond the limits of his given world. He participates in something infinite, in an order which is not transitory, not self destructive, not tragic, but eternal, holy, and blessed.[21]

In the *Systematic Theology* Tillich notes that 'philosophers like Cusanus and Leibniz have asserted that the whole universe is present in every individual, although limited by its individual limitations. There are microcosmic qualities in every being, but man alone is microcosmos. In him the world is present not only indirectly and unconsciously but directly and in a conscious encounter. Man participates in the universe through the rational structure of mind and reality.' [22]

The language of the microcosm is another indication of Tillich's deep Platonism.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to appreciate the grasping of ideas as intuitive (although most analytic philosophers deny this). If one views the grasping of ideas as intuitive, then the symbol provides a medium of intuitive vision

5 Estrangement and Participation in the New Being

Depth psychology shows the nature of our estrangement in making the unconscious conscious. Tillich explores the structures of a neurotic-psychotic society. Fallenness is analysed (rather in the mode of Kierkegaard) as a structural feature of existence. It suffices to note the presence of the Demonic – being possessed – is stronger than the individual. Here we are contemplating ambiguous structures that possess trans-personal power.

Alongside the idea of 'acceptance' in the psychoanalytic mode, Tillich also draws upon the ancient Platonic doctrine of the eros, the longing of the soul for God. Depth psychology attributes healing powers to insight, meaning not a detached knowledge of psychoanalytic theory, or of one's own past in the

21 Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 31.
22 ST I, 176.

light of this theory, or simply a repetition of one's actual experiences with all the pains and horrors of such a return. Insight in this sense is a reunion with one's own past and especially with those moments in it which influence the present destructively. Such a cognitive union produces a transformation just as radical as that presupposed and demanded by Socrates and Paul.[23] (One might think of the *daimonion* of Socrates and his ecstatic state at the beginning of the *Symposium*, esp. 175b and the report of Alcibiades of the astonishing motionlessness at Potidaea in 220d).[24]

Persons can grow only in the communion of personal encounter.[25] Perhaps Tillich remembered Schelling in the Freiheitschrift: 'Denn nur Personliches kann Personliches heilen, und Gott muss Mensch werden, damit der Mensch wieder zu Gott komme'.[26] Tillich says that when asked to sum up the Christian faith, he says that it is the message of a New Creation. Here we encounter the preacher fused with the metaphysician and theologian in Tillich:

> There is no excuse which permits us to avoid the depth of truth, the only way to which lies through the depth of suffering...Religion and Christianity have often been accused of an irrational and paradoxical character. Certainly much stupidity, superstition, and fanaticism have been connected with them. The command to sacrifice one's intellect is more daemonic that divine. For man ceases to be man if he ceases to be an intellect. But the depth of sacrifice, of suffering, and of the Cross is demanded of our thinking. Every step into the depth of thought is a breaking away from the surface of former thoughts. When this breaking away occurred in men like Paul, Augustine, and Luther, such extreme suffering was involved that it was experienced as death and hell. But they accepted such sufferings as the road to the deep things of God, as the spiritual way, as the way to truth. They expressed the truth they envisioned in spiritual words – that is, in words which were contrary to all surface reasoning, but harmonious with the depth of reason, which is divine. The paradoxical language of religion reveals the way to truth as a way to the depth, and therefore as a way of suffering and sacrifice. He alone who is willing to go that way is able to understand the paradoxes of religion.[27]

But Tillich insists that the end is joy, which is deeper than suffering. And this joy is 'ultimate'- but it cannot be reached by 'living on the surface'.[28]

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23 ST I, 96.

24 I am grateful to John Bussanich for this point. See his "Socrates' Religious Experience," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Socrates*, eds. John Bussanich and Nicholas D. Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2012): 276 – 300.

25 ST I, 177.

26 F.W.J. Schelling, *Über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit* (Stuttgart, Reclam, 1964), 96 (379/380).

27 Tillich, *Shaking the Foundations*, 69.

28 *Loc. cit.*

Conclusion

How can estrangement be overcome? 'Love is the infinite which is given to the finite'.[29] Through appearance of a new reality New Being and the Courageous affirmation of being- most visible in Jesus as the Christ. Those who participate in Christ participate in the New Being. It is his symbolic transparency that counts.

This means that God is a participant. Tillich writes:

> The principle of participation drives us one step further. God himself is said to participate in the negativities of creaturely existence. This idea is supported by mystical as well as by Christological thought.

He continues:

> God as creative life includes the finite and, with it, nonbeing, although nonbeing is eternally conquered and the finite is eternally reunited within the infinity of the divine life. Therefore, it is meaningful to speak of a participation of the divine life in the negativities of creaturely life...the confidence of every creature, its courage to be, is rooted in faith in God as its creative ground.[30]

Admittedly, quite how this participation of God in the world is developed in detail remains mysterious for this reader. One can, at least, remark that the centrality of this key Platonic/metaphysical term 'participation' shows that Tillich was much more than an ecstatic naturalist. Tillich was perhaps less innovative or radical than he appeared to some of his contemporaries; or indeed less radical than he still seems to those critics who view him as the epitome of desiccated liberalism or even crypto-atheism. One may reasonably trust, however, that Tillich would have preferred that which is true to that which is merely new.

29 Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1955), 173.
30 ST I, 270.

Marijn de Jong & Ulrich Schmiedel

Chapter 3

Compromised Correlation? Experience in Paul Tillich's Concept of Correlation

Paul Tillich conceptualised correlation as the unity of "dependence and independence" between situation and tradition.[1] Through the inter-in-dependence of what the situation asks and what the tradition answers, he attempted to respond to a dilemma which has haunted theology since Friedrich Schleiermacher – the dilemma of mediation.[2] How can a theologian relate situation and tradition to each other? If theology conceives of situation and tradition as inter-independent, Tillich responded, the situation might contribute to the tradition as much as the tradition might contribute to the situation, without deducing or reducing what is asked to what is answered. But as John Clayton argues in his compelling critique of correlation, Tillich failed.[3] Prioritising 'independence' over 'dependence', he was ultimately unable to mediate between situation and tradition. Thus, even theologians who adopt his correlational concern abandon his correlational concept.[4] It seems that the concept of correlation cannot be retrieved for theology today.[5]

In what follows, we will address what the critics of correlation left unaddressed – the concept of experience.[6] We will argue that experience is crucial for both the critique and the construction of correlation. We aim to advocate a concept of experience through which correlation can be retrieved as a *compro-*

1 ST II, 13. In *ST* II, 13–16, Tillich responds to the comments and the critiques of the concept of correlation which he characterised in ST I, 59–86.

2 See John P. Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation: Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 34–86.

3 See *ibid.*, 31–33.

4 David Tracy is crucial for the reception of Tillich in theology today. However, already in *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1975]), 45–46, he criticised Tillich, calling for a 'mutually critical correlation'. See also Werner G. Jeanrond, 'Correlational Theology and the Chicago School', in Roger A. Badham (ed.), *Introduction to Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 137–153.

5 For a comprehensive account of the critiques of the method of correlation, see David Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived: Catholic Theological Method, Modernity, and Postmodernity', *Theological Studies* 50 (1989), 548–570.

6 Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 57, note 12, criticises Tillich's concept of experience, yet without connecting the critique to correlation.

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mised correlation. By 'compromised correlation', we mean a correlation which concentrates on the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent. In contrast to correlation, compromise highlights that the transcendent and the immanent cannot be nicely and neatly distinguished, because the transcendent 'compromises' the immanent as much as the immanent 'compromises' the transcendent in the experience of encounter. Both the transcendent and the immanent have to make concessions, so to speak.[7] What theology can correlate, then, are the *ambiguous* experiences of the compromise between the transcendent and the immanent expressed in both situation and tradition.

We will advance our argument in three short steps. (1) We will analyse Tillich's concept of ultimate concern. For Tillich, ultimate concern captures the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent. Yet he conceptualises the encounter formally rather than materially, thus accounting for the 'that' but not for the 'what' of the encounter. But if correlation revolves around a formal rather than a material concept of encounter, it empties the experience of the encounter of any concrete content. (2) Responding to this formalisation of the encounter, we will hint at a concept of experience in which the formal 'that' and the material 'what' co-constitute the encounter. Drawing on the notion of trust which Tillich introduced into theology, we will analyse how experiences of encounter might entail both the impact of the transcendent on the immanent and the impact of the immanent on the transcendent. Eventually, our exploration will lead us to (3) a combination of our critique and of our construal of correlation. In conclusion, we will chart the contours of a compromised correlation, rooted in a hermeneutics of experience which allows theology to explore the dynamics between the 'that' and the 'what' in the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent.

Of course, our compromised correlation cannot solve the dilemma which has haunted theology since Schleiermacher. But by stressing that theology cannot separate situation and tradition (in order to subsequently correlate what it has separated), our compromised correlation might provoke theologians to look at mediation as the problem *and* as the solution to the problem at once. Thus,

7 We borrow the concept of compromise from Ernst Troeltsch in order to highlight that in the experience of the encounter both the transcendent and the immanent are inextricably interwoven. Troeltsch, however, never defined his 'conception(s!) of "compromise"' (John Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation*, 48–60 [51]). For his use, see especially the lectures which he prepared for England and Scotland, Ernst Troeltsch, "Christian Thought (1923)," in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 17, ed. Gangolf Hübinger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006): 133–204.

our provocation might be a promising point of departure to start solving Schleiermacher's dilemma.

1 Experiencing A Correlation

'Ultimate concern' is a core concept of Tillich's theology.[8] Through the concept of ultimate concern, he conceives of revelation as the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent. However, we will argue that Tillich's concept prioritises the formal dimension of the encounter at the cost of the material dimension of the encounter. Accordingly, he formalises the concept of experience – which is to say, he empties it of its concrete content.

Tillich assesses experience not as the theological source, but as the *medium* to the theological source.[9] Through experience, the theologian gains access to revelation, which he describes as "the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately".[10] According to Tillich, ultimate concern is itself a correlation since "'concern' points to two sides of a relationship" – the relationship between the immanent subject, on the one hand, and the transcendent object, on the other.[11] But for Tillich, ultimate concern is marked by a reversal of roles: the object is subjectified because it is what concerns the subject, and the subject is objectified because it is what is concerned by the object: "that which is ultimate gives itself" to the person who is concerned with the ultimate.[12] In Tillich's terminology, then, the object 'grasps' and the subject 'is grasped'.[13] He understands the reversal of roles as the "ontological shock" which provokes the "experience of ecstasy",[14] the experience in which a person is simultaneously subject and object.[15] The person's response to the revelation which is received with the attitude

8 Martin Leiner, "Tillich on God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 37–55; 50, points to a subtle shift in Tillich's theology from the concept of 'the unconditional' (das *Unbedingte*) to the concept of 'the ultimate concern' (*das, was uns unbedingt angeht*) which emphasises the relationality between the concern and that which concerns the person.

9 ST I, 40–46.

10 ST I, 110.

11 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), 9.

12 ST I, 12.

13 ST I, 108–111.

14 ST I, 113.

15 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 7. See also ST I, 112–113, where Tillich refers to Rudolf Otto's phenomenology of the holy in order to explore how ecstatic experiences inspire fear and fascination alike.

of ultimate concern is faith – a faith which is articulated in Tillich's famous formula of the "acceptance of acceptance": "There is nothing in man which enables God to accept him. But man must accept just this. He must accept that he is accepted; he must accept acceptance".[16] When a person has an attitude of ultimate concern, then, the ultimate *is* subject and the person concerned with the ultimate *is* object. The person who accepts acceptance participates in the ground of being which accepts her.[17] Accordingly, Tillich – building on Martin Luther's concept of justification by faith – emphasises the sole efficacy of the ground of being, the ultimate. God, understood as being-itself, grounds the courage to be.[18]

It could be concluded that this grounding leads Tillich to prioritise dependence over independence in the concept of correlation. But Tillich's theory of symbols casts doubt on such a conclusion. According to Tillich, the experience of the encounter with the ultimate is simultaneously inside the subject-object structure of language and outside the subject-object-structure of language – "present as both and beyond both".[19] The symbol captures this simultaneity. For Tillich, it is built on the analogy between the finite and the infinite which is required to think and talk about the transcendent.[20] The symbol "participates" in the symbolised in spite of the difference between the symbol and the symbolised.[21]

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16 ST II, 179.

17 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 160. The participation of the immanent in the transcendent is the core characteristic of mysticism for Tillich. He distinguishes between two notions of mysticism: conceptually, mysticism is in each and every experience of faith; concretely, however, mystical forms of faith can be distinguished from non-mystical forms of faith (*Ibid.*, 156–160; 171–178). Leiner, "Tillich on God," 39–41, demonstrates that the principle of "the identity of absolute and individual spirit" is the centre around which Tillich's theology revolves.

18 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 163–167. Oswald Bayer, "Tillich as a systematic theologian," in Re Manning, *Cambridge Companion:* 18–36; 30–31, criticises the loss of concreteness in Tillich's reception of Luther's notion of the justification by faith.

19 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 11.

20 ST I, 131. For Tillich, statements about God are always already symbolic. Only "the statement that God is being-itself is a non-symbolic statement. ... However, ... nothing else can be said about God which is not symbolic." (ST I, 238–239).

21 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 42. The fact that the symbol participates in the symbolised distinguishes the symbol from the sign. However, from the examples which Tillich offers to explain this participation it is not clear whether he conceives of it in ontological terms or in epistemological terms, or in both. For Tillich's concept of participation, see Douglas Hedley's contribution to this compilation.

Thus, the symbol, pointing beyond itself, allows that which is ultimate to manifest itself.[22]

Within religion, the central symbol is God.[23] Re-working the distinction between *fides qua* and *fides quae*, Tillich distinguishes between the 'that' and the 'what' in the symbol of God.[24] God is experienced as a concrete concern. Analytically, however, the 'that' and the 'what', the concern and the concrete, can be distinguished.[25] The distinction is drawn through the concept of the symbol. When Tillich explains that the symbol of God points beyond the symbol of God to God, his explanation implies that the concrete points beyond the concrete to the concern – which is to say, to the ultimate. The linguistic leap by which the concrete subject-object structure points beyond the concrete subject-object structure might be described differently as *fides qua* above *fides quae*, 'that' above 'what', concern above concrete, or "God above God".[26] According to Tillich, the concern must constantly criticise the concrete, for if the concrete is interpreted as the ultimate concern, it is idolatrous – distortive, destructive, and demonic.

Against the idolatrous interpretation of the concrete as the concern, Tillich argues that *the* "criterion of the truth of faith" is the criticism of the concrete through the ultimate concern.[27] He coins the concept of the 'Protestant Principle' to capture this criterion of self-critique.[28] Hence, whether faith is true or untrue depends on whether it criticises itself. Self-critique shifts faith from the non-absolute to the absolute. Tillich defines *absolute faith* as "a faith which has been deprived by doubt of any concrete content, which nevertheless is faith".[29] But however much the critique of faith through faith ought to be appreciated as caution against intra- and inter-religious conflicts, the shift from non-absolute to absolute faith runs the risk of emptying the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent of – as Tillich pointedly puts it – "any concrete content".[30]

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22 For Tillich's concept of symbol, see *Dynamics of Faith*, 41–54, where he draws a distinction between non-religious and religious symbols. Also see Paul Tillich, "The Religious Symbol," *Daedalus* 87/3 (1958): 3–21.

23 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 44–48. Leiner, "Tillich on God," 45–48, offers a succinct summary of Tillich's conceptualisation of the symbol of God.

24 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 8–10; 46–48.

25 *Ibid.*, 102–103.

26 The 'God above God' is a central concept for Tillich. See Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 186–190.

27 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 97.

28 See ST I, 37; 133–134; 140–143. Tillich's de-historicised confessionalisation of self-critique, however, is misleading as the 'Protestant' Principle has been applied both inside and outside of Protestantism. See Bayer, "Tillich as a systematic theologian," 25–26.

29 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 177.

30 *Ibid.*

What remains from the encounter, after the criterion of self-critique is applied, is the concern without the concrete, the 'that' of transcendence without the 'what' of transcendence.[31] Tillich would argue that the encounter is nonetheless *not* empty because the "content of absolute faith is the 'God above God'" who transcends the difference between theism and atheism.[32] "It is obvious that such an understanding of the meaning of God makes the discussion about the existence or non-existence of God meaningless. It is meaningless to question the ultimacy of an ultimate concern".[33] Yet he admits that the content could be characterised as content-less content when he adds that absolute faith "is the accepting of the acceptance *without somebody or something that accepts*".[34] Tillich's conceptualisation of the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent, then, prioritises the 'that' over the 'what', thus turning the material relation between the transcendent and the immanent into the formal relationality between the transcendent and the immanent – a relationality without relation.

Crucially, what we call the turn from relation to relationality is at the core of Tillich's concept of correlation. The centre around which correlation circles is the ultimate concern. For the theologian who engages in both situation and tradition – with one foot here and one foot there, so to speak – the engagement is conditioned by her ultimate concern.[35] Correlation is a "theological assertion".[36] Tillich emphasises the combination of situation and tradition through the ultimate concern, yet the combination is a formal(ised) combination.[37] *Materially*, what the situation asks and what the tradition answers are independent be-

31 See Ingolf U. Dalferth, "The Idea of Transcendence," in *The Axial Age and its Consequences*, eds. Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 146–188; 173–175.

32 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 182.

33 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 46.

34 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 185, emphasis added. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 18, exemplifies how Tillich struggles with the distinction between the concern and the concrete: "And every faith has a concrete element in itself. It is concerned about something or somebody. But this something or this somebody may prove to be not ultimate at all. Then faith is a failure in its concrete expression, although it is not a failure in the experience of the unconditional at all. ... Faith risks the vanishing of the concrete god in whom it believes." See the account of absolute faith in Mary Ann Stenger, "Faith (and religion)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 91–104; 95–97.

35 See ST I, 8–11 and ST II, 15.

36 ST I, 8.

37 Clayton, *Concept of Correlation*, 155; 191–249, analyses how Tillich uses two notions of correlation: the correlation between what is asked and what is answered as well as the correlation between the formal and the material. He argues that whenever these notions are combined, independence is prioritised over dependence. See *ibid.*, 227.

cause, for Tillich, the concern must not be compromised by the concreteness of either situation or tradition.[38]

Overall, Tillich's concept of experience prioritises the 'that' of transcendence over the 'what' of transcendence. Thus, his concept of correlation runs the risk of mediating two forms without content. Emphasising the formal at the cost of the material in the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent,[39] Tillich's concept of experience casts doubts on correlation as a response to the dilemma of mediation. Whatever a theologian says about the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent, she has always already said too much.

2 Experiencing A Compromise

Wolfhart Pannenberg credited Tillich for introducing the notion of 'basic trust' (*Grundvertrauen*) into theology.[40] The faithful courage discovered and described throughout Tillich's work is one of the resources for Pannenberg's theology and terminology of trust. Although it is impossible for us to delve into the controversies stirred up by the concept of trust in theological and non-theological discussions today, we will argue that the notion of trust exemplifies how experiences of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent are co-constituted by the 'that' and the 'what' of the other, irrespective of whether the other is transcendent or immanent.[41] Trust, then, emphasises how the concern compromises

38 See the critique by Edward Schillebeeckx, "Correlation between human question and Christian answer," in *The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx: Vol. V The Understanding of Faith*, eds. Ted Mark Schoof and Carl Sterkens (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014): 84–90.

39 Arguably, Tillich's distinction between '*Form*', '*Inhalt*' and '*Gehalt*' cannot account for a relation between the transcendent and the immanent either. Since the formal and the material are both 'shattered' by *Gehalt*, the triangle reproduces the binary distinction between the concrete and the concern. See Clayton, *Concept of Correlation*, 196–197.

40 Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 229, n. 101, argues that Tillich's concept of courage is closely connected to Erik H. Erikson's concept of trust. Pannenberg considers it "a concrete manifestation of basic trust". Simon Peng-Keller points out that Pannenberg refers to Tillich when he introduces the terminology of '*Grundvertrauen*' into theology. See the comprehensive but concise historical account by Simon Peng-Keller, "Grundvertauen, Seinsvertrauen, Lebensvertrauen: Begriffsgeschichtliche Erkundungen im Hinblick auf die theologische Diskussion," in *Grundvertrauen: Zur Hermeneutik eines Grenzphänomens*, eds. Ingolf U. Dalferth and Simon Peng-Keller (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013): 33–64; 52.

41 By 'other', we mean the one who signals and singularises difference. For conceptualisations of the other in theology and philosophy, see Pamela S. Anderson, "The Other," in *The Oxford*

the concrete and how the concrete compromises the concern in experiences of encounter.

If basic trust – trust in the 'basics' of our life and our life world – is rooted in encounters, Tillich's understanding of the experience of the encounter is instructive to interpret trust in the transcendent.[42] Tillich is concerned with our openness to the other's otherness, openness which is constitutive for encounters through which trust can be established. Only if we are open to the other, can we trust her. If we confine ourselves to ourselves, trust is turned into its opposite – closure and control – because the other cannot transcend and transform our concepts of her.[43] What Tillich's criterion of self-critique captures convincingly is that our concepts of the other must be open for correction by the other as the other is always already other than we assume.

However, through the shift from non-absolute faith to absolute faith, Tillich pushes the criterion of self-critique to the extreme. The concept of otherness is lost in the concept of openness. Arguably, Luther would criticise Tillich's understanding of the acceptance of acceptance 'without somebody or something that accepts' because for him the concrete and the concern are inextricably interwoven.[44] If we cannot conceptualise the other, she remains *totally* other – the other who is non-relational and non-related. Here Tillich comes close to a trajectory in contemporary philosophy and theology in which symbols fulfil only a pragmatic function, pointing to the 'that' instead of the 'what' of transcendence. The concrete content of these symbols is rendered irrelevant for the philosophical or the theological account of the encounter.[45] But what is left of the relation between the immanent and the transcendent if the concrete contents characterising

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Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought, eds. Nicholas Adams, George Pattison and Graham Ward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 83–104.

42 For current concepts of basic trust see the contributions to Dalferth and Peng-Keller, *Grundvertrauen*, as well as the contributions of Arne Grøn and Claudia Welz to the compilation they co-edited: *Trust, Sociality, Selfhood* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 13–30 and 45–64. Without explicit recourse to Tillich, both explore the reversal of roles in the ecstatic experience of trust.

43 See Ulrich Schmiedel, "Vertrauen verstanden? Zur Vertrauenstrilogie von Ingolf U. Dalferth und Simon Peng-Keller," *NZSTh* 56/3 (2014): 379–392.

44 Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele, "*Fiducia* bei Martin Luther," in *Gottvertrauen: Die ökumenische Diskussion um die fiducia*, eds. Ingolf U. Dalferth and Simon Peng-Keller (Freiburg: Herder, 2012): 163–181, argues that when Luther uses *fiducia* without *fides* he always adds 'God' as the one who is trusted.

45 See Lieven Boeve, "Theological Truth in the Context of Contemporary Continental Thought: The Turn to Religion and the Contamination of Language," in *The Question of Theological Truth: Philosophical and Interreligious Perspectives*, eds. Frederiek Depoortere and Magdalen Lambkin (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012): 83–85.

this relation are neglected?[46] Despite his identification of the transcendent and the immanent in the concept of encounter,[47] Tillich increases the distance between the transcendent and the immanent to the extent that the transcendent is turned into the total other. 'God', in Tillich's famous formula of the 'God above God', is the other who has lost her features and her face.[48]

Trust, however, is about the dynamics between the 'that' of the other and the 'what' of the other, between the unconditional and the conditional. When we trust in the other, we trust in *this* other or *that* other without confining her to this or that.[49] Because Tillich neglects that the other encounters us *concretely*, his concept of the encounter between the infinite and the finite cannot account for the cases in which the medium of the encounter turns out to be the message of the encounter, cases in which we cannot distinguish between our experience and our expression of our experience.[50] These cases require a hermeneutics which works inside language rather than outside language, interpreting both experiences and expressions of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent.[51] Language is not only the obstacle in our relation to God. Instead, it is both its contamination and its condition. Hence, it is necessary to engage in a hermeneutics of symbols which critically and creatively attends to their concrete contents.[52] Building on the experience of the encounter which follows from the concept of trust, correlation might be reconceptualised. In these experiences, the 'that' and the 'what' co-constitute the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent. Consequently, theology cannot be reduced to the hermeneutics of a 'pure' or 'purified' revelation, but must be prepared to take detour after detour through language.[53] Through such detours, the theologian engages in a

46 See *ibid.*, 82.

47 See Bayer, "Tillich as a systematic theologian," 30–31.

48 See the critique of Emmanuel Levinas' notion of the other by Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 188–189.

49 See Arne Grøn, 'Trust, Sociality and Selfhood', in Grøn and Welz, *Trust, Sociality and Selfhood*, 13–30 (21); and Arne Grøn, "Grenzen des Vertrauens: Kritische Bemerkungen zur Rede von "Grundvertrauen"," in Dalferth and Peng-Keller, *Grundvertrauen*, 145–158.

50 For the famous formula 'the medium is the message' see Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 7–21.

51 Hans Joas explores the complex interplay of experiences of self-transcendence and expressions of self-transcendence in *Do We Need Religion? On the Experience of Self-Transcendence*, trans. Alex Skinner (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007). He argues that the experience of self-transcendence can begin at both ends: experiences might generate expressions as much as expressions might generate experiences.

52 See Boeve, "Theological Truth," 93.

53 Of course, it was Paul Ricoeur who advocated for the 'long route' of hermeneutics. See especially *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 6–11.

hermeneutics of the accounts of experiences of encounters between the transcendent and the immanent in both situation and tradition. When we encounter God, we encounter God concretely.

Overall, Tillich analyses faith as the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent, characterised by both the concern and the concrete. But his criterion of self-critique runs the risk of obscuring the material dimension in favour of the formal dimension. The concept of compromise, however, clarifies that these dimensions cannot be separated: the transcendent is compromised if it is expressed; the immanent is compromised if it is experienced – experienced as open to the transcendent. The experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent entails a compromised and compromising combination of the formal and the material. The double compromise is not static but dynamic, continuously configured and reconfigured. The task of theology, then, would be to use traditional expressions of compromise in order to articulate situational experiences of compromise and to use situational experiences of compromise in order to interpret traditional expressions of compromise. Thus, the tradition could become instructive for the account of the situation and the situation could become instructive for the account of the tradition. The transcendent and the immanent would be inextricably interwoven in both of them.

3 Experiencing A Compromised Correlation

To summarise, we have argued that the concept of experience is crucial for both the critique and the construction of correlation. If Tillich's attempt to mediate between situation and tradition failed, it failed because of his concept of experience. For Tillich, the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent is formal rather than material. Consequently, he *formalises* the concept of correlation. Through this formalisation, correlation is emptied of its content, it operates before, behind or beyond language. Building on the concept of trust, we have argued that the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent prioritises neither the 'that' over the 'what' nor the 'what' over the 'that'. Rather, the opposite is the case: the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent entails a compromise in which the transcendent is compromised by the immanent and the immanent is compromised by the transcendent – a compromise which is continuously configured and re-configured through the dynamics between the 'that' and the 'what'. Hence, the concept of a compromised correlation, rooted in a hermeneutics of experience which captures this continuous re-configuration of the transcendent and the immanent,

assumes a double dynamics: like Tillich, it emphasises that the ultimate criticises the concrete; unlike Tillich, it emphasises that the concrete contributes to the ultimate. Tillich's critique that revelation cannot be completely or conclusively captured in the experience of the encounter between the transcendent and the immanent is convincing. Yet since the experience impacts revelation both formally and materially, his distinction between the source and the medium to the source of theology is puzzling. We cannot relate to the concern when it comes without the concrete. Instead, access to the ultimate requires mediations of the concern through the concrete. If theology operates with the concept of a compromised correlation, it reflects simultaneously on the situation and on the tradition, both of which are always already mediations of the immanent and the transcendent. Thus, mediation is interpreted as both the problem and the solution to the problem of Schleiermacher's dilemma. Pushing Tillich beyond Tillich, theology can correlate the compromises between the transcendent and the immanent in situation and tradition.

It is telling that experiences of encounter provoked Tillich to revisit his theology. In conversations with other religions and religious others, he emphasised neither the 'that' against the 'what' nor the 'what' against the 'that', but the 'what' *and* the 'that' of immanent and transcendent others.[54] Drawing on these conversations, he planned to revise his theology.[55] We can only guess what Tillich's theology would look like today if he had put his plan into practice. Our guess is that he would have drawn critical and creative conclusions from the dynamics between the concrete and the concern in the experience of encounter – which is to say: the experience of compromise.[56]

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54 See Marc Boss, "Tillich in Dialogue with Japanese Buddhism: A Paradigmatic Illustration of his Approach to Inter-Religious Conversation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 254–272, who traces how Tillich emphasises the dynamics between the concrete and the concern in conversation with Buddhism. See also Reinhold Bernhardt's contribution to this compilation.

55 Mircea Eliade, "Paul Tilich and the History of Religions," in *The Future of Religions*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper, 1966): 31–36; 33.

56 Tillich's reception of Troeltsch's theology changed throughout his career. His account in *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), 526–529, demonstrates that he appreciated Troeltsch's thinking more and more, albeit without adopting the concept of compromise (*Ibid.*, 504–505). See also John Clayton, "Paul Tillich – ein "verjüngter Troeltsch" oder noch "ein Apfel vom Baume Kierkegaards"," in *Umstrittene Moderne: Die Zukunft der Neuzeit im Urteil der Epoche Ernst Troeltschs*, eds. Horst Renz and Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1987): 259–284.

Julia Meszaros

Chapter 4

Tillich's Account of Love. Re-visiting Self-less Love

The Christian gospel tells us that we must lose our life to find it (Mt 10:39). It calls us to deny ourselves and take up our cross (Mt 16:24), and to love even our enemies (Mt 5:43–48). As a result, Christianity has traditionally connected love with selflessness. In late modernity, this interpretation of love comes under heavy critique. More or less explicitly, influential thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud and Jean-Paul Sartre argue that the Christian understanding of love promotes weakness, pathology and bad faith.

Having witnessed (and, initially, participated in)[1] the political exploitation of the Christian association of love and selflessness during World War I, Paul Tillich felt compelled to listen to the critics of Christian understandings of love. The kind of one-sided account of love to be found in Anders Nygren's highly influential and now infamous *Eros and Agape* was, as Tillich came to recognize, misguided and barren.[2] The late modern sensitivity to the needs, desires, and capacities of the individual had a much more intuitive appeal for Tillich, and seemed to call for a theological refocusing on Christianity's faith in God's love for the concrete human individual. Against this background, and faced with increasingly prominent rejections of Christian love, Tillich set himself the task of developing an understanding of love that honours the individual's needs and desires, as well as the Christian emphasis on selflessness. In particular reference to Tillich's engagement with Sartre,[3] I now attempt to sketch how Tillich went about

1 See e.g. Tillich's sermons on the battlefield, wherein he exhorted soldiers to welcome the opportunity to imitate Christ's example even unto death. Paul Tillich, *Frühe Predigten (1909–1918)*, EGW VII, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993 (e.g. 'Von der Kraft Gottes', 'Meine Gnade soll nicht von dir weichen', 'Vom Opfer für die Brüder und der Freundschaft Gottes').

2 For the argument that Tillich developed his account of love, and especially his emphasis on eros, in response to Nygren (as well as Freud) see Alexander Irwin, *Eros Toward the World: Paul Tillich and the Theology of the Erotic* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004). A similar argument has, more recently, been made by Crétin Acapovi, who points out that Tillich in one instance explicitly criticises Nygren's account of love and refers to his own *Systematic Theology* as a response to Nygren. See Crétin Magloire C. Acapovi, *L'Être et l'Amour: une étude de l'Ontologie de l'Amour chez Paul Tillich* (Münster: LIT, 2010), 284–287.

3 Compared to philosophical figures such as Plato, Schelling and Fichte, Sartre's influence on Tillich's thought may seem negligible. However, it is difficult to underestimate the popular pull and pervasiveness of Sartre's existentialism in the Western intellectual climate of the 1950's and 60's. Given Tillich's correlative methodology, the existentialism of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*

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this. To this end, I first give an account of Tillich's understanding of the self and of love. I then examine the links between the two, and how Tillich's thought on the self shapes his notion of self-love and selfless love especially. I conclude by arguing that Tillich's account of love is a valuable resource for understanding how and why selfless love can, as the gospels suggest, legitimately be seen as life-giving.

1 The self

On Sartre's account in *Being and Nothingness*, common understandings of the 'self' as a stable and autonomous ontological substance must be considered illusory, the result of 'bad faith'. The human being does not simply *have* a self. Indeed, human reality lacks being altogether: '[it] is before all else its own nothingness' and must be understood primarily in terms of consciousness, which amounts to absolute freedom.[4] This means that insofar as we can obtain anything like legitimate 'selfhood' at all, we must first come to terms with what we are or—better—with what we are not. That is, we must liberate ourselves precisely from our delusional understanding of the human self as a given entity that possesses stable being and is coincident with itself. Only on this basis can we gradually and freely *create* a self, in the form of what Sartre calls an 'individual project', a free choice of our own values, which constitute who we 'are'.[5] Sartre's idea of the self as a project, on the one hand, indicates his embrace of a self-transcending and self-affirming process, in which we rid ourselves from the self of 'bad faith' and commit ourselves solely to what we have freely determined ourselves to be. On the other hand, Sartre's understanding of the self as project entails a concession of the human being's dependency on others: we can effectively constitute ourselves through our project only insofar as this is freely recognized and affirmed by the other: for, '[a]s I appear to the Other, so I am'.[6] This creates a tension which Sartre cannot sustain, and which thus issues in despair: on Sartre's terms, our dependence on the other, without whom we cannot realise our individuality, at the same time compromises what we are, namely absolute freedom.

(first published in English in 1956) was thus an obvious conversation partner—both as resource and as opponent—for Tillich's thought.

4 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness. An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel Barnes (London: Routledge, 1969), 88, 439.

5 Sartre, *Being*, 407.

6 Sartre, *Being*, 237, 351, 364.

Tillich shares Sartre's sense that the self is no *a priori* possession but the outcome of an ongoing process of self-transcendence and self-affirmation. He is, moreover, known to have admired Sartre's courage to affirm himself even in the face of his own perceived nothingness or non-being. At the same time, Tillich recognizes that Sartre cannot adequately integrate these insights and strengths with his crucial awareness that true selfhood emerges in relation to others. Tillich, I argue, seeks to bridge this gap.

Tillich begins his enquiry into the human self with the observation that 'man experiences *himself* as having a *world* to which he belongs'.[7] Following Kierkegaard, he argues that 'world-consciousness is possible only on the basis of a fully developed self-consciousness' (which implies self-relatedness).[8] With Sartre, who observed that we can only be conscious (and hence conscious of ourselves) in relation to an object, Tillich adds that the inverse is equally true. Without awareness of the world, 'self-consciousness would have no content, for every content, psychic as well as bodily, lies within the universe'.[9] We have to be conscious of ourselves in order to relate to the world, and we must relate to the world in order to become conscious of ourselves.

According to Tillich, the above signifies not merely that the human being creates itself *in* a given environment but that he can only create himself as a part of, and in harmony *with* this environment, which thereby becomes his 'world'. Thus, where Sartre juxtaposes the human being and his surroundings in terms of two forms of being ('being-for-itself' and 'being-in-itself'), Tillich integrates them, while remaining sensitive to their distinctness. In contrast to Sartre, who portrays the individual's self-creation as involving a conflict with the other, Tillich argues that we can become full individuals only in and through *participating* in the other (which, in turn, is possible only on account of our individuality). In order to escape Sartre's desperate tension between absolute freedom and utter dependency, Tillich thus posits a dialectic that cannot be split up into a logical sequence: the freedom of the individual is no *a priori* possession but itself interdependent on that individual's willing participation in—and thus, to some extent, acceptance of or even submission to—the other. Sartre's insight that the human self is an ongoing project must, so Tillich seems to say, be qualified: the self is a project whose individuality is developed not through self-assertion but through participation in the world.

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7 Emphasis added; ST I, 188.

8 Tillich in David Kelsey, *The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 68.

9 ST I, 189.

We can state, then, that Tillich, in principle, considers Sartre and others right to endorse the individual's urge towards personal development and fulfilment, as implied in Nietzsche's advocacy of a will to power, in Freud's embrace of the libidinal instinct, or in Sartre's notion of a self-determining project. Yet, Tillich also insists that the effectiveness of such a drive is tied to its integration with what might be described as a more Nygrenian turn away from self. Tillich's attempt to bring modern secular thought and classical Christianity to bear on one another thus leads him to ground human flourishing in a balanced unity of 'centred personality, self-transcending vitality, freedom of self-determination' (power) on the one hand; and in these elements' constraining counterparts, 'universal participation, forms and structures of reality, limiting and directing destiny' (meaning) on the other.[10] We must strive for freedom and individuality but can do so successfully only if 'passion' is tied to 'truth', 'libido' to 'surrender', and 'will to power' to 'justice'.[11]

In a sense, Tillich thus appreciates both Sartre and Nygren—only to turn them on their head. Contra Sartre, he argues that it is precisely because we lack the boundaries of a unified, stable self that we must enter into a participatory relation with the world: the flourishing of the self is inseparable from the flourishing of the other. And, contra Nygren, he argues that it is precisely so as to receive God's love into ourselves that we must *affirm* our individual selfhood.

2 Love

Tillich's account of love builds on his understanding of the inter-dependency of self and world. It takes recourse to the familiar terminology of eros and agape, yet insists that where these are placed in 'absolute contrast', agape is 'reduced to a moral concept', and eros becomes 'profanised in a merely sexual direction and deprived of possible participation in unambiguous life'.[12]

10 ST I, 276.
11 ST I, 277.
12 ST III, 146.

2.1 Eros and agape

Up to a point, Tillich follows conventional interpretations of eros. He understands eros as the existential human being's 'desire for self-fulfilment by the other being'.[13] Eros seeks greater degrees of personal freedom and individuality, but the gratification for which it strives is not of a superficial nature. Indeed, eros seeks personal self-fulfilment through unification with the ground of being—a unification which enables the revelation of a knowledge that 'transforms and heals' the existential human being, and which conquers 'want and estrangement'.[14] As a 'movement of that which is lower in power and meaning to that which is higher', eros prevents human love of God from becoming 'the opposite of love', from degenerating into meaningless 'obedience to a moral law, without warmth, without longing, without reunion'.[15]

With the above defence of eros, Tillich intends to incorporate into his account of love (non-hedonistic) versions of Freud's libido, Nietzsche's will to power, as well as Sartre's drive for free and individual selfhood. Yet Tillich's understanding of eros as pushing for unification with the ground of being already indicates his association of personal fulfilment with participation in the other. Tillich reinforces this point by insisting, further, that eros intrinsically calls for a more other-centred, or agapic, form of love. For insofar as self and world are interdependent on one another, their fulfilment is too. The personal fulfilment eros seeks is, as we saw, tied to the fulfilment of the other, such that eros can hope to reach its goal only in combination with a genuine concern for the other qua other. Eros cannot, properly speaking, seek self-fulfilment through a competitive and selfish struggle with the other (as envisaged by Sartre) but, in Tillich's words, only 'as an "I" to a "thou"'.[16]

While Tillich's account and appreciation of eros derives from his existential perspective, his understanding of agape is based on revelation. He considers agape to refer first and foremost to the love of God, or 'being-itself'. Agape 'af-

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13 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 114; see also Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 30.

14 ST I, 106 f.

15 ST I, 311; Tillich, *Love*, 31; Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 115.

16 Tillich, *Love*, 31. Tillich is clearly influenced by Martin Buber here. His account of eros moreover lives up to challenges to the conventional portrayal of Platonic eros as purely self-seeking and acquisitive. See e.g. Catherine Osborne, *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 56–57; Elizabeth Pender, "Spiritual Pregnancy in Plato's *Symposium*," *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992): 72–86; Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing. On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 29 f.

firms the other unconditionally' and seeks their flourishing without calculation.[17] It is universal, preferring or excluding 'no-one with whom a concrete relation is possible (the neighbour)', and is able to 'suffer and forgive'.[18] It seeks the good of the beloved, yet 'neither forces [...] nor leaves him', but 'attracts him and lures him toward reunion'.[19] In human existence, agape needs eros in order to be received, for without eros 'life would not move beyond itself'.[20] Yet, as the love of the creator and saviour, agape is also both the precondition and the fulfilment of eros.

In their interconnectedness, agape and eros are two sides of the same coin—the desire for the reunion of what is separated, which Tillich defines as the essence of all love.[21] Reunion between God and the human being is premised and sustained through a *mutual* rapprochement and therefore involves both the more existential eros, which emerges from the human being's separation from God and self, *and* the more divine agape, which is grounded in God's self-identity, his perfect unity with himself.[22] We can already note that, notwithstanding their different grounds, each of these modes of love is associated with a different kind of selflessness: eros is the mark *of* selflessness in the literal, ontological sense; it is a function of the existential human being's lack of, and desire for, a self. Agape by contrast is marked *by* selflessness in the figurative, spiritual-moral sense. It is a love in which the lover surrenders his sense of autonomy and self-interest and joins himself with the other, seeking his or her good.

In continuity with his affirmation of the interdependency of self and world, Tillich thus argues that 'no love is true love without the unity of eros and agape'.[23] Love is, essentially, one. Tillich also claims, however, that just as the human being's existential estrangement from his ground causes the existential rupture of the self-world polarity, so this same estrangement also prevents the unity of eros and agape from being realised in existence. In existence, eros and agape are consequently distorted and ineffective. They are reintegrated and become fruitful only where the human being is reunited with his divine ground and where the agapic love of this ground becomes the 'criterion' for

17 ST I, 311.
18 ST I, 311.
19 ST I, 314.
20 Tillich, *Love*, 116; ST I, 311.
21 ST III, 146.
22 The reunion of human beings affects all parties involved and is therefore, similarly, premised both on the desire for the fulfilment of self *and* on the desire for the fulfilment of the other.
23 Tillich in Udo Kern, *Liebe als Erkenntnis und Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit. "Erinnerung" an ein stets aktuales Erkenntnispotential* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 98.

all human love.[24] This happens when the love of being-itself, or the 'Spiritual Presence', breaks into existence from without and, upon being received by the human being, transforms the various forms or modes of love by taking them into itself. In thus giving the divine agape of the Spiritual Presence a certain primacy over eros, which, apart from agape, becomes 'evil', Tillich clearly pushes beyond a simple interdependency of eros and agape.[25] As he here insists, the erotic desire for the fulfilment of self can reach its goal only where it is guided and informed by a love that goes out from self and seeks the good of the other—that is, by what, above, we referred to as a figuratively selfless love. In order to clarify what this implies for the workings of eros, we must briefly consider agapic love in relation to the self.

2.2 Agape and the self

It is obvious that, in asserting the primacy of agape, Tillich does not want to subordinate the human individual to a heteronomous power but intends, rather, to *em*power him by putting him in touch with that theonomous ground of his being which constitutes the source and foundation of his personal fulfilment. Indeed, it is precisely on account of, and in response to, the erotic desire for the fulfilment of self that the human being must place his loves under the criterion of a (divine) selfless kind of love. Tillich hereby stresses that the human being's surrender to the divine agape does not amount to a total 'resignation of power'.[26] Where Christian thinkers have associated love with sheer powerlessness, they have, as Tillich portrays it, misunderstood power in compulsory terms, and falsely conceived of love as a purely emotional or ethical rather than an ontological reality.[27] Tillich also points out that, in order to receive the divine love, the human being must not only sacrifice his 'human potentialities' to the Spiritual Presence but also have the courage to accept acceptance.[28] Receiving God's agape thus requires a basic posture of self-affirmation.

Tillich is clear that divine agape builds up, rather than undermines, the individual human self. The most important indicator of this arguably lies in the fact that Tillich identifies the divine agape, which is to be the criterion for all love,

24 ST I, 313.
25 ST I, 313.
26 Tillich, *Love*, 11.
27 *Ibid.*
28 ST III, 289; Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 164.

with perfect self-love. Classical theological descriptions of the Trinitarian *personae* are, Tillich argues, 'a statement about God loving himself'.[29] The Trinitarian nature of God symbolises, on the one hand, an element of 'separation' *within* the divine life,[30] which constitutes the core of God's love of himself. On the other hand, the Trinitarian nature of God symbolises God's separating *from* himself by granting the human being creaturely freedom. This in turn gives rise to God's love of 'that which is estranged from himself', a love by which God 'fulfils his love of himself'.[31] The Trinitarian nature of God, Tillich thus argues, indicates both that God loves himself by loving the other *within* God-self (another Trinitarian person), and that God fulfils his love of himself by loving the other *outside of* God-self (the creature). The divine agape thus undoes the commonly held binary opposition between self-love and other-love insofar as it is always directed to the other and their good, yet simultaneously loves *itself* in doing so. As this divine love teaches, the self can be loved not directly but, to play with a Ricoeurian phrase, only as—and in—another.[32]

This has important ramifications also for *human* self-love. In keeping with his insistence that all human love must be placed under the criterion of the divine agape, Tillich argues that it is only insofar as 'the human being joins himself to God's Trinitarian love' and loves himself agapically that he or she can be said to genuinely love himself at all.[33] In and of themselves, more direct forms of human self-love, such as 'self-affirmation, *libido*, friendship and eros', by contrast collapse into a 'selfishness which is always connected with self-contempt and self-hate'.[34] In order to truly love himself, the human being must love himself as another—he must love 'himself as the eternal image in the divine life'.[35] Only then is he united with the ground of his being, and is his love rescued from existential estrangement and its distortions.

Though Tillich by no means obliterates it, he thus blurs the distinction between eros and agape. If eros desires the fulfilment of self, it must orientate itself away from the existential self and towards the self 'as the eternal image in the

29 ST I, 313.

30 This must be distinguished from the existential separation of estrangement.

31 ST I, 313. Tillich arguably fails to make sufficiently clear what exactly he means by saying that, in loving the creature, God 'fulfils his love of himself'. He does not, in any case, seem to suggest that God needs the creature for his own fulfilment (Tillich insists, for instance, that we can speak of a divine eros only metaphorically). See ST I, 312.

32 Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. ST I, 313.

33 ST I, 313.

34 ST I, 313.

35 ST I, 313.

divine life'—an image that is encountered in and through relationship with the o/Other. Precisely in its self-concern, eros, too, is therefore other-oriented. At the same time, the agapic concern for the other facilitates precisely the fulfilment of self desired by eros.

3 Towards a rehabilitation of 'selfless love'

We can conclude that on Tillich's account the Sartrean push for self-creation and self-fulfilment is most effectively realised through various forms of 'selfless' love. Self-fulfilment, or a flourishing self depends, firstly, on the impetus of eros, a mode of love that derives from the human being's *ontological* or *literal selflessness*. Being unable to facilitate human fulfilment in and of itself, this literally selfless eros prepares the human being to, secondly, receive the figuratively *selfless* love of God. This, in turn, reunites the human being with the ground of his being and thereby enables him, thirdly, to love himself truly and *selflessly*, namely by turning away from self and towards the other (understood as God, the world (especially other *persons*), and himself as the eternal image of the divine life).

In none of these senses does Tillich consider selfless love to be of a calculating kind. Indeed, such love entails what Tillich describes as a 'traditionally Lutheran' readiness for 'holy self-waste' that does not count the cost.[36] At the same time, Tillich's selfless love does not undermine or consume the self. On the contrary, Tillich's insistence on the primacy of the divine agape is an insistence also on the existential human being's need to receive love before being able to give love. The human being must be loved (and allow himself to be loved) by an unambiguously other-oriented love before himself being able to love. Tillich illustrates this human need for receiving, and accepting, love in his sermon, 'The New Being'. Here, he argues that one is naturally 'hostile, consciously or unconsciously, toward those by whom one feels rejected'.[37] Where this is the case, the human person is likely to extend this hostility also to others and even to herself, such that self-love becomes impossible. This mechanism can be broken not by attempting to make oneself likeable to the other but only by allowing oneself

36 Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 47. Somewhat controversially, Tillich argues that human beings today suffer not only from receiving too little love but also from their lack of possibilities 'to waste themselves'. Tillich thereby relates even the notion of self-waste back to a concern for human flourishing.
37 *Ibid.*, 20.

to be taken up into the divine self-love, which reaches out even into estranged existence, and which is fully accepting in doing so.[38]

Tillich's account of love is doubtlessly not without difficulties. Despite his emphasis on the polarity of self and world, and despite the privileged status he gives to love relations with other persons, he arguably fails to sufficiently value the place of reciprocity and communion in love. Tillich casts the individual's relationship with God in strangely impersonal terms, which seem to compromise its mutuality. He furthermore fails to fully spell out how the individual's erotic-agapic love relationship with God opens up to third parties,[39] and how it thus reshapes his or her relationships in the world.

Nonetheless, Tillich's thought on love provides us with valuable tools for developing an understanding of how and why, as Christianity suggests, selfless love might be life-giving even in the face of the legitimate and important modern concern for the vital impulses, needs, and well-being of the individual human person. Following Tillich, we can state that a Christian account of love neither need nor should dismiss Sartre's drive towards self-realization, or Nietzsche's will to power and Freud's libido. Instead, it should recognise in these important 'symbol[s] for man's natural self-affirmation' that are indicative of man's 'power of being'.[40] At the same time, human flourishing requires also a modification of these principles. Because human selfhood is rooted in an essential ground, modernity's goals of 'centred personality, self-transcending vitality, and freedom of self-determination' can only be obtained in relation to these elements' constraining counterparts—participation, form and destiny.[41] I have sought to show that, with respect to love, the need to sustain such a tension issues in an understanding of love as both selfless and conducive to human flourishing. Tillich, in short, helps us see how and why selfless love remains central to human flourishing. It remains central because power is inseparable from meaning, which is to be found outside of one's existential self.

38 *Ibid.*, 21–22.

39 I thank Christoph Schwöbel for drawing my attention to this latter point.

40 ST II, 63.

41 ST I, 276.

Sven Ensminger

Chapter 5

Kairos, History, and Religion. Some Insights on Tillich's Understanding of Revelation in Dialogue with Karl Barth

Introduction

In the following, I discuss some aspects of Paul Tillich's understanding of revelation. Revelation, i.e. referring "both to the act of God's self-disclosure to humanity and to the knowledge of God which results from such divine action"[1] will be discussed here in the following two broad areas: first, revelation in the context of history and second, revelation in its relationship to religion. For this purpose, the following will fall into two distinct parts: I will begin with an examination of Tillich's understanding of the *Kairos*, the decisive moment in history, and how it is understood against the background of the rise of the Nazi regime in the Germany of the 1930s. Secondly, I will put revelation into the broader context of different religions, and examine the distinctiveness of Christian revelation in a multi-religious setting with different competing revelations. There are two aspects uniting both of these sections: First, the argument in each case will be made using a distinction and contrast between means/carriers of revelation and revelation proper. Second, Tillich's contemporary Karl Barth will function as the conversation partner throughout. By doing so, there is no intention to weigh both thinkers against one another or to disprove and disvalue either one's contribution to the field. Instead, as it will be seen, what is the case is much rather that Barth provides a helpful challenge to Tillich in these two areas, illuminating Tillich's approach and, as it will be seen, supporting its Christian shape.

The task before us now is to examine revelation against the background of history, as well as revelation in the context of religion. While these are not to be seen as mutually exclusive, it will be seen that, in a complementary fashion, the two aspects will serve to strengthen the conclusion of the Christological form and shape of Tillich's understanding of revelation.

1 John B. Webster, "Revelation, concept of," entry in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Alister E. McGrath (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 557.

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1 Revelation in history

In this first section, I discuss the relationship between revelation and history with respect to Tillich's notion of the *Kairos*. The term *Kairos* describes for Tillich the decisive moment in history in which God intervenes. It needs to be kept in mind that the *Kairos* is interpreted against two forms of religious-absolute forms of the philosophy of history, the conservative-absolute form, which "subordinates the epochal differences to the ongoing struggle running throughout history,"[2] and, on the other hand, the revolutionary-absolute form which is, "solely determined by the tension of the last time, the decision is in front of us, the grand Kairos has appeared."[3] Tillich himself subscribes to a philosophy of history that stands between these two forms, challenging both the absoluteness of one relative moment in history and the relativizing of all moments. Thus, for Tillich, it is important to emphasize that, "*one* reality has been set absolutely."[4] As it will be argued throughout this essay, this reality is Jesus Christ. Yet Tillich is faced with the relative intangibility of revelation: "revelation appears thus in natural things and processes. These become carriers of revelation (*Offenbarungsträger*) through making the shaking and turning visible in which the Unconditionally-Hidden realizes itself as revealed. They are thus not carriers of revelation by themselves, by their way of being. Rather, because something appears which is not from them, but in them and always also against them."[5] This leads Tillich to the conclusion that, "it is the character of 'transcendental meaning' which makes them carriers of revelation, but not [the character of] the transcendental being."[6] The question now becomes whether the affirmation of these carriers of revelation implies multiple sources of revelation. In order to answer this question, we turn briefly to a parallel argument in the thought of Tillich's contemporary, Karl Barth.

Barth, known for his focus on the person of Jesus Christ in all of his theology, includes the following surprising passage in the first volume of his magnum opus, Church Dogmatics: "God may speak to us through Russian Communism, a flute concerto, a blossoming shrub, or a dead dog. We do well to listen to Him if

2 See Paul Tillich, "Kairos," in MW IV, 56.
3 *Ibid.*
4 *Ibid.*
5 Tillich, "Offenbarung, " in GW VIII, 43. The quotation is also found in MW IV, 239 – 40.
6 *Ibid.* (also in MW IV, 240).

He really does."[7] Thus, Barth offers an argument for carriers of revelation being distinct from revelation proper similar to that of Tillich.[8]

Trevor Hart maintains the following in this regard: "the relation between the two natures (or, correspondingly, the form and content of revelation) [cannot] be entirely arbitrary or merely tangential: otherwise it would be a matter of sheer caprice for God to 'reveal' himself in the man Jesus rather than Ivan the Terrible or a dead dog. That God *could* do so is not really the point."[9] For Barth, however, the primary purpose of asserting the existence of different media of revelation is to illustrate God's sovereignty in all of creation. The form and shape of the carriers of revelation might very well be capricious – denying this would be an infringement on divine freedom. Thus, Barth does not deny the existence of these media, yet refuses to assert them without affirming the divine authority to which they are subject.

Does this mean that God speaks through anything and everything? One might argue that for both Tillich and Barth this is indeed *possible*, yet under no circumstances should this position be taken for granted or take centre-stage. Indeed, God has spoken, according to the witness of the Scriptures, through a donkey, and a gentle whisper. It could be argued that God *can* speak through a pen, or a Scottish castle in ruins. However, that does *not* mean that God *does* this by default, and it certainly does *not* mean that God does so *all the time* and, probably most importantly, it does *not* mean that we are called to proclaim this. Arguing that God speaks through everything at all times runs the risk of making God subject to the human ability to hear. Instead, I am suggesting that we can – and should – affirm that God *can* speak through all media. I do, however see a problem with stating that God indeed *does* so by default.[10] Put differently, despite the fact that everything can become a carrier of revelation, revelation cannot be asserted as occurring everywhere by default. The

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7 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. and trans. G. W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance. 14 volumes. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956 – 1975), abbreviated hereafter as *CD*, vol. I/1, 55.

8 With regards to the terminology used here, the terms 'carriers' and 'media' of revelation are to be considered as synonymous.

9 Trevor Hart, "Revelation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 52. Hart does not give a reference to *Church Dogmatics* here; the example of the dead dog obviously comes from the passage just quoted, whereas Ivan the Terrible is Hart's own example.

10 As suggested in David Brown, *Tradition and Imagination – Revelation and Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 374: "God defies our desire for tidy categories, and so in trying to tell the revelatory story we need to recognize a God at work everywhere in his world in helping to shape our comprehension of his purposes." Brown acknowledges that God might not be at work *equally* everywhere, yet the emphasis remains on this "everywhere."

point is therefore more one of potential and capability, and less one of fact and self-evidence. In Barth's own words, if God speaks through unfamiliar media, "we do well to listen to Him if He really does"[11] –be it ever so capricious to our sensibilities.[12] Certainly, there is a very real possibility that revelation might occur in familiar and unfamiliar contexts,[13] however, it seems equally clear that, "there can be no doubt that, together with the commission which it may seek to obey by listening and responding in these other functions, the Church known to us has a *special* commission of proclamation, and therefore not merely of listening and response but decisively of *talk* about God both to men and for them, and that it neglects this commission if it seeks to proclaim what it has no commission to do or where it has *no* commission to do so."[14]

How does this compare to Tillich?[15] While asserting that there are different carriers of revelation, he also cautions that there is a, "concrete norm, by the aid of which it can be used critically against foreign demands of revelation."[16] This concrete norm is, "taken out of the Christian *proclamation of the 'Cross of Christ' as process of revelation* and contains the following: Each revelation, in which the carrier of revelation claims for itself unconditionality is demonized revelation."[17] The issue becomes particularly palpable in the context of history, and, more precisely still, against the background of the rise of the Nazi regime. Tillich resolves the issue of mixing the carriers of revelation with revelation proper by stating that, "[w]hat happens in the kairos should be absolute and yet not absolute, but under the judgment of the Absolute."[18] More explicitly, in exchange

11 Barth, *CD* I/1, 55.

12 See also a variation on this theme, examining Barth's subsequent statement: "God may speak to us through a pagan or an atheist, and thus give us to understand that the boundary between the Church and the secular world can still take at any time a different course from that which we think we discern." (Barth, *CD* I/1, 55).

13 For a discussion of this, see Sven Ensminger, *Karl Barth's Theology as a Resource for a Christian Theology of Religions* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 32–38 and the discussion of Barth's theory of lights there.

14 Barth, *CD* I/1, 55–56.

15 For this section, see also Michael Beintker's insightful discussion in the essay, "Die Quellen der Offenbarung im Spiegel theologiegeschichtlicher Entwicklungen zwischen 1918 und 1934," in his *Krisis und Gnade – Gesammelte Studien zu Karl Barth*, eds. Stefan Holtman and Peter Zocher (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013): 55–58. I am indebted to Beintker's essay for pointing me to some of the sources with which I engage here.

16 Tillich, "Offenbarung," 44. See also MW IV, 240.

17 *Ibid*. See also MW IV, 240.

18 Paul Tillich, "Kairos (1948)," in MW IV, 335. This is a revised version of Kairos I (*op cit.*). While parallels to the original document are very noticeable, this should be read independently from the original.

with another thinker of the time, Emanuel Hirsch, he finds strong words to illustrate that, "the Kairos, the historical hour, can...never in and of itself be revelation. It can only indicate the entrance into a new correlation of revelation."[19] Thus, the accusation aimed at Hirsch: "You have adapted...the main terms of the religious-socialist thinking, especially the Kairos teaching, and have simultaneously by exclusion of its prophetic-eschatological element, distorted and emptied it."[20] In this sense, Tillich maintains the distinction of revelation proper from the carrier of revelation, a point to which we shall return in the conclusion.

2 Revelation in Religion

I now turn to the second part of my argument, the question of revelation in the context of different religions. For this purpose, this section compares and contrasts Barth's approach to different revelations with that of his contemporary Paul Tillich.

Tillich criticized Barth for having his doctrine of revelation so strongly rooted in the threefold Word of God (i.e. the Word of God as revealed, written and preached).[21] Instead, Tillich was open to revelation occurring in different contexts, and most certainly also in different religions. Tillich's concept of revelation is undoubtedly a complex question in this regard, particularly due to the unusual language being used to describe it in his *Systematic Theology*. There, revelation is a "mystery," always accompanied by "ecstasy" and "miracle."[22] In sum, "[r]evelation is the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately. The mystery which is revealed is of ultimate concern to us because it is the ground of our being."[23] Tillich moves on to distinguish between the subject of revelation ("the revealer"), and the medium of revelation. The revealer is the "ground of being", the answer to what is, to religious questions.[24] Considering revelation from the standpoint of religion, Tillich claims: "All religion is based on revelatory

19 Paul Tillich, "Die Theologie des Kairos und die gegenwärtige geistige Lage – Offener Brief an Emanuel Hirsch," *Theologische Blätter* 13 (1934): 305–328, 318. This is also printed in EGW VI, 142–176. The quotation is found on page 161.

20 *Ibid.*, 307 (=EGW VI, 145).

21 ST I,122.

22 See ST I, 108–118.

23 ST I, 110.

24 See Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 61.

experiences, even the lowest sacramental ones ... at the same time, every religion is a distortion of the revelation on which they are based."[25] For the discussion here, there are two aspects of particular relevance: first, we need to probe the basic claim of the Christocentric understanding of revelation, and, second, examine once more the argument for different carriers of revelation.

First, Tillich understands the Word of God as symbol, and argues that Barth's starting point leads to a doctrine in which "'word' must either be identified with revelation and the term 'word' must be used with such a wide meaning that every divine self-manifestation can be subsumed under revelation, or revelation must be restricted to the spoken word and the 'Word of God' taken literally instead of symbolically."[26] As we have just seen, for Tillich, revelation entails a much broader definition: "revelation is the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately."[27] Tillich maintains that experiences of revelation are present in all religions; it is a universal experience that the Christian religion cannot claim exclusively for itself.[28] Barth disagrees: revelation is not bound to the Christian religion; however, any "light" will have to be tested in relation to the one Light of Jesus Christ.[29] Does this mean that the claim for a Christocentric understanding of revelation does not hold in Tillich's context? What might speak against this is that Tillich introduces a "dynamic typology", a typological undertaking in active tension that, "drives both to conflicts and beyond the conflicts to possible unions of the polar elements."[30] It is statements like these which lead Bruce McCormack to maintain that, "all Tillich really needs is that there be *a* personal life of some kind behind the transforming event by which that faith was awakened and there expressed in biblical symbols."[31] Yet, this betrays Tillich's emphasis on the Christ event.

Again, this is disputed by McCormack, who argues for Barth's theology to be preferred to Tillich's for reasons of Christocentricism. Within the discussion of Tillich's Christology, McCormack argues as follows: "The question of the final

25 Paul Tillich, "Christian and non-Christian Revelation," in Paul Tillich, *The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-religions*, ed. Terence Thomas, Toronto Studies in Theology 37 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon, 1990), 70.

26 ST I, 122.

27 ST I, 110. One should note here also that in Tillich, revelation reveals *something* rather than *someone* as in Barth.

28 Tillich, "Christian and non-Christian revelation," 73.

29 See Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 1–165.

30 Tillich, "Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions," in MW V, 310.

31 Bruce L. McCormack, "Why should Theology be Christocentric? Christology and Metaphysics in Paul Tillich and Karl Barth," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 45:1 (Spring 2010), 42–80. The quotation here is to be found on page 60.

revelation is the question of a medium of revelation which 'overcomes its own finite conditions by sacrificing them, and itself with them.'"[32] McCormack concludes, thus: "in the relation of historical fact and believing reception, it is believing reception which does all the heavy-lifting."[33] In many ways, we are entering here into the complex dynamic between divine address and the human response, which would lead us too far within the constraints of this paper. While it is certainly true that the philosophical language and concepts can at times obscure divine action in Tillich, it does not mean that Tillich's theology does not remain Christocentric.[34] The result, thus, is thereby less one of Tillich losing, Barth winning,[35] but more one of different emphasis. The comparison illustrates that the key question Barth asks in his doctrine of revelation is of an ontological nature. For Tillich, by contrast, the question is much rather an epistemological one. McCormack's critique serves here as an illumination of Tillich's Christocentrism. Consequently, the emphasis on the unique character of the revelation of Jesus Christ is only properly understood when also considering the all-encompassing quality of this revelation.

Second, regarding the medium of revelation, Tillich says: "there is no reality, thing, or event which cannot become a bearer of the mystery of being and enter into a revelatory correlation."[36] In a different context, Tillich argues: "media of revelation are those things and happenings in the history of religion which have been considered holy, holy object, holy person, holy book, holy word and so on."[37] Against the background of Barth's theory of lights, this points to an interesting implication of Barth's approach to revelation: On the one hand, Barth affirms the possibility that anything can function as a medium of revelation – we have seen this above in the case of the dead dog. Barth's concern in this elaboration is to avoid a human restriction imposed upon God's freedom should one deny God the possibility to speak through a dead dog. However,

32 See for this McCormack, "Why should Theology." 59. The internal quotation is from ST 1, 133.
33 McCormack, "Why should Theology," 61.
34 See for a parallel argument in Barth's theology that revelation would not be revelation without an addressee, Ensminger, *Karl Barth's Theology*, 18 – 20. Cautiously, it might be remarked here that McCormack arrived at his conclusions because of the writings of Tillich's that he uses (e.g. only Tillich's *Systematic Theology* is featured prominently in the sources). While this selection of writings might allow for such a conclusion, the material with which I have engaged here sheds a different light on Tillich.
35 This is McCormack's conclusion, arguing that Barth's theology, "by not attaching itself to any one philosophy or psychological model, has proven to have greater staying power." (McCormack, "Why should Theology," 80).
36 ST I, 118.
37 Tillich, "Christian and non-Christian Revelation," 66.

on the other hand, Barth's emphasis on the supremacy of the revelation in Christ keeps him from saying that knowledge of God can be gained through other revelations occur apart from Christ. Tillich takes the step against which Barth warned in the immediate context of the example of the dead dog: he moves on to "proclaim" that God speaks, to stay with our earlier example, through dead dogs.[38] Put differently: Tillich starts from the epistemological question of "how can God be known?" whereas Barth begins with the ontological question of "where does God make Godself known?" While these are different questions, the Christological focus remains in both cases nonetheless intact.

Another way to illustrate this could be found in the following application of the first article of the Barmen Declaration from 1934. There, it says:

> Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in holy scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death.
>
> We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.[39]

Neither from the perspective of history, nor from the perspective of religion is this contradicted implicitly or explicitly by Tillich. With regards to history, it has become particularly obvious that the rejecting part of the first thesis of Barmen does not reject Tillich's Kairos philosophy. "We have here," as Michael Beintker states, "a type of theology before us, which does not have to be refuted by the first article of Barmen and its rejecting part."[40] With specific reference to the rise of National-Socialism, Tillich states: "Protestantism has to maintain its prophetic-Christian character as follows: it actively puts the Christianity of the Cross to the heathendom of the swastika... Protestantism has to witness to the fact that in the Cross, – nation, race, blood, sovereignty are broken by its holiness and put under judgment."[41]

The comparison between Barth and Tillich serves thus to illustrate Barth and Tillich's unwavering emphasis on the centrality of Jesus Christ. While both Barth and Tillich concede in their own ways the various media of revelation in the con-

38 Barth, *CD* I/1, 55 – 56.

39 Quoted e.g. in Eberhard Busch, *The Barmen Theses Then and Now: the 2004 Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary*, foreword Daniel Migliore, trans. and annot. Darrell and Judith Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 19.

40 Beintker, "Die Frage nach den Quellen der Offenbarung," 58.

41 Paul Tillich, "Zehn Thesen," in MW III, 270. See here also more broadly John P Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation – Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1980), 191 – 222.

text of religion, they are also both determined not to move from the subject of revelation – Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

I set out at the beginning of this paper to gain some insights into Tillich's understanding of revelation. I have done this by examining revelation against the background of history, and in the context of religion.

In summary, the brief exploration into Tillich's understanding of revelation has shown that both against the background of history as well as in the context of religion, Tillich remains centred on the person of Jesus Christ. While it is undoubtedly true that this Christological focus is at times hidden behind concerns for the setting or device in or through which this revelation occurs, it remains nonetheless clear that Tillich does not depart from the Christian framework in which he operates. "Each statement that goes beyond into the concrete, into the symbolic, does not speak about but *out of* revelation, is prophecy, is theology."[42] It is therefore exactly the task of the theologian to maintain this, and do so always in the awareness of the tension that, "revelation is only revelation insofar as it concerns us, approaches us."[43]

42 Tillich, "Idee der Offenbarung," in: GW VIII, 35.
43 *Ibid.*, 37

Kate Kirkpatrick

Chapter 6

Answering Sartre. Paul Tillich and the 'Socrates of Nothingness'

Introduction[1]

Jean-Paul Sartre has been dubbed *the* philosopher of the twentieth century.[2] His output was prolific – the *Economist* notes that it was 'once calculated at 20 published pages a day over his working life'[3] – and diverse, including plays, short stories, novels, philosophical treatises, essays and reviews. His first novel, *Nausea* (1938), sold more than 1.6 million copies in his lifetime, and his play *Dirty Hands* (1948) nearly 2 million. Even his 700-page tome on phenomenological ontology, *Being and Nothingness*, first published in 1943, went through five editions in its first three years and has never been out of print since. Indeed, although by the time of Sartre's death in 1980 his fame had faded (or perhaps, in light of certain political decisions, turned to infamy), there were still 50,000 mourners following his casket through Paris to its resting place in Montparnasse.

It is no surprise, therefore, that Paul Tillich – whose theology was insistently 'apologetic' and whose 'method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence' – would have viewed Sartre's thought worthy of serious consideration.[4] But to what extent, if any, can Tillich's theology be said to answer distinctively Sartrean questions? In what follows, I will argue that the threat of anxiety in Tillich – and in particular, the anxiety of meaninglessness – owes a clear conceptual debt to Sartre.

Sartre appears by name in several of Tillich's works: twelve times in *The Courage to Be*, three times in volumes one and two of *Systematic Theology*,

1 The author wishes to thank Bloomsbury T&T Clark, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, plc, for permission to republish material from Kate Kirkpatrick, *Sartre and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), chapter 6: 'Sartre and Protestant Theology: Barth and Tillich'.

2 Bernard-Henri, Lévy, *Sartre: The Philosopher of the Twentieth Century*, trans. Andrew Brown (London: Polity, 2003).

3 *The Economist*, "Hands across a century: Review of *Sartre: The Philosopher of the Twentieth Century* by Bernard-Henri Levy," (28th August 2003).

4 ST I, 6 and 68.

https://doi.org/9783110533606-007

and once in volume three.[5] In these passages Tillich demonstrates knowledge of several of Sartre's works, both philosophical and literary: in addition to references to *Being and Nothingness*, 'Existentialism is a Humanism', and the *Transcendence of the Ego*, one also finds the play *No Exit*, and the novel *The Age of Reason*.[6] However, the number of index listings does not accurately reflect the importance of Sartre's philosophical question for Tillich's theological answer. For, in addition to instances of Sartre's name there are several discussions of 'existentialism'[7] or 'existentialist' themes such as anxiety, freedom and destiny, loneliness and estrangement.

Of course, Sartre is far from being the only existential philosopher who influenced Tillich – so these latter passages might reasonably be claimed to have ambiguous ancestry.[8] In particular, for those readers who see Sartre as more philosophaster than philosopher, and his work as derivative of Heidegger, it is important to establish that Tillich himself differentiates between the two. This distinction is significant; Sartre introduces a difference in Tillich's approach to existentialism which can be observed by comparing a text such as 'The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy' (1939) to the later works like *The Courage to Be* and *Systematic Theology*.

In 'The Theological Significance of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis', Tillich describes Sartre's philosophy as 'pure existentialism' and praises his 'sensitive psychological analysis'.[9] Indeed, while his claim that Sartre's greatness consists in being 'the psychological interpreter of Heidegger' could be construed as diminutive, Tillich is emphatic that Sartre's 'psychological insights are profound'.[10] And in chapter VIII of *Systematic Theology* volume 1 (entitled 'Being,

5 It is worth reminding the reader that Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* was published in 1943. The fact that the proportion of references to Sartre decreases with distance from this date is unlikely to be coincidental (with *The Courage to Be* published in 1952 and the three volumes of *Systematic Theology* published in 1951, 1957, and 1963 respectively).

6 For *The Transcendence of the Ego*, see discussion of the *sum* behind the *cogito* in Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 132; for *No Exit*, see ST II, 86.

7 Although the term 'existentialism' was coined by Gabriel Marcel to refer to Sartre's philosophy and eventually rejected by others such as Heidegger, Tillich does not seem to follow this nomenclature rigorously. See Ann Fulton, *Apostles of Sartre: Existentialism in America, 1945–1963* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 12–13.

8 Tillich's intellectual debt to German idealism – especially Schelling and Kant – goes without saying; so where 'existentialist' content can be found in these thinkers a further possible line of influence emerges.

9 Paul Tillich, "The Significance of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis," in *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 120.

10 *Ibid.*

finitude and the question of God'), Sartre is described as extending the 'threat of nothingness' to the threat of meaninglessness.[11] In the context of introducing the question of being, which is produced by 'the shock of non-being', Tillich writes that 'man, who is this being, must be separated from his being in such a way as to enable him to look at it as something strange and questionable'.[12] On this subject it is worth quoting at length:

> Recent existentialism has "encountered nothingness" (Kuhn) in a profound and radical way. Somehow it has replaced being-itself by non-being, giving to non-being a positivity and a power which contradict the immediate meaning of the word. Heidegger's "annihilating nothingness" describes man's situation of being threatened by non-being in an ultimately inescapable way, that is, by death. The anticipation of nothingness at death gives human existence its existential character. Sartre includes in non-being not only the threat of nothingness but also the threat of meaninglessness (i.e., the destruction of the structure of being). In existentialism there is no way of conquering this threat. The only way of dealing with it lies in the courage of taking it upon one's self: courage! [13]

It is this distinction – the threat of meaninglessness – that I believe makes Tillich's 'answer' a response to Sartre's question. For Sartre, whose stated aim (and indeed definition of existentialism) was 'an attempt to draw all the consequences of a coherent atheistic position', the separation of essence and existence results in an analysis of the human condition which some commentators have called 'pathologically negative';[14] we find in his philosophy an alienation from self and other which, from a theological perspective, might be viewed as a realized eschatology of damnation. There are several passages in Sartre that support such a reading, but due to constraints of time we shall restrict our focus to two themes: the impossibility of identity (which, in Tillichian terms, we might call the source of spiritual anxiety), and the impossibility of community (or the source loneliness or moral anxiety).

11 ST I, 210.

12 ST I, 207–208.

13 ST I, 210. The text referred to here is Helmut Kuhn's *Encounter With Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism* (Hinsdale, IL: Henry Regnery Co., 1949), reviewed by Jean Wahl in *Ethics* 60/3 (1950): 215–217.

14 Indeed, Tillich notes that 'existentialism has been criticised as being too "pessimistic"' (ST II, 31).

1 The impossibility of identity

In one of his earliest writings, *The Transcendence of the Ego*,[15] Sartre set out to correct what was, on his view, a problem in the phenomenology of Husserl. On Sartre's understanding, Husserl had a faulty understanding of the ego as somehow behind each consciousness and part of its necessary structure. But Sartre believed this challenged one of the basic insights of phenomenology: the intentionality of consciousness. Sartre does not deny the existence of an ego altogether, but he does deny that there is an ego which is *behind* (or part of) consciousness as a subject. Instead, he sees the ego as an object known by consciousness, rather like other objects in the world. In Sartre's own words, 'the consciousness which says "I think" is precisely not the consciousness which thinks'.[16] As the philosopher David Jopling puts it, 'To know oneself is to make oneself other'.[17]

To give an example, when I am engaged in my daily activities there is no ego involved. If I am writing a paper, I am conscious of the words I see, the sound of the keyboard as I type, the scent or stuffiness of the room, perhaps, but no 'I' can be said to *inhabit* this consciousness.[18] The 'I' only comes into it when I reflect on the activity and see it as mine. With the reflective step, the ego comes into existence as the intentional object of consciousness. In the language of selves, the self-*known* (ego) presupposes a self-*knowing* (consciousness).

This distinction between self-known and self-knowing is important because, on Aristotle's classic definition, identity is 'the fact that a thing is itself'.[19] This is a helpful fact which, as Aristotle put it, allows for 'a fixed constant nature of sensible things'. It provides the world with useful uniformities, such that when someone tells me 'this is a rock', I know not to eat it. But if I am told 'that person is trustworthy' the matter is less straightforward. In what sense can this or any other adjective be said to be part of 'who-or-what I am'? Human beings are conscious and free and do many different things, leading us to question *why?* What explains my doing this, or your saying that? Most answers to such questions resort to 'motives' or 'reasons' or 'causes' as the explanatory antecedents of ac-

15 Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Andrew Brown (London: Routledge, 2011); written in 1934, published in 1937. Cf. Contat, Michel and Michel Rybalka. *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, 2 vols (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 47 ff.

16 Sartre, *Transcendence*, 10.

17 David Jopling, "Kant and Sartre on Self-Knowledge," *Man and World* 19.1 (1986): 73–93; 76.

18 Sartre, *Transcendence*, 11 ff.

19 *Metaphysics* Book VII, Part 17.

tion.[20] Frequently these answers fit into one of two categories: situational or personal.[21] In the first category you might find explanations like 'I got out of bed because my conference session starts in an hour'. In the second category, 'he kept my secret because he is trustworthy'. Human action, accordingly, is often understood as a response to circumstantial demands or an expression of personal identity.

Sartre finds both of these ways of thinking dissatisfying and backwards. On his view, it is *by* acting that we establish an identity and allow external demands to shape our action. Sartre insists that we call someone trustworthy *because* they have kept our secrets. And getting out of bed implies a prior choice to assign value to going to the conference session. In slogan form: 'existence precedes essence'. But the kind of 'essence' – or, if you like, 'identity' – that follows existence is ambiguous and insecure. Unlike rocks – whose identities are not challenged by themselves or others – on Sartre's view the identity of human beings is beyond challengeable: it's impossible. This is because human beings perpetually 'nihilate' themselves. In the exercise of freedom saying yes to one action entails the negation of others: it closes off innumerable other possibilities (or alternative identities, or beings) I might have. But the nature of human freedom is such that there is no guarantee that my present desires and values will still be desired and valued by myself in the future. Consciousness is free but consequently incomplete – we are 'haunted' by being, always wondering if we should be other than we are.[22]

In the introductory chapters of *Being and Nothingness* we find that this concept of consciousness provides the basis for Sartre's revision of Heidegger's famous description of *Dasein*. On Sartre's formulation, "*consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself.*"[23] Here the being of the *for-itself* is defined 'as being what it is not and not being what it is'.[24]

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20 Stephen Wang, *Aquinas and Sartre: On Freedom, Personal Identity, and the Possibility of Happiness* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 23.

21 In Sartre's words, "the situation as acting on the man or the man as acting on the situation." In Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (London: Routledge, 2003), 53.

22 Sartre, *BN*, 111–113. Consciousness is 'always predisposed to find something lacking'. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre describes freedom as 'really synonymous with lack' (586; see also 109 ff., 124, 222). To be conscious is to exist in a state of perpetual knowledge of nothingness, of falling short, of exclusion from being. Sartre explicitly (and famously) refers to this state as one of condemnation: we are 'condemned to be free', and consciousness is a 'fall from' or 'frustration of' being (160).

23 *Ibid.*, 18, italics in original.

24 *Ibid.*, 21.

For Sartre the freedom of consciousness – the radical indeterminacy of the self – is apprehended in the experience of anxiety, which reveals 'freedom as being the possible destroyer in the present and in the future of what I am'.[25] Because the human being is both the questioner and the questioned – the self-knowing and the self-known, there is a 'fissure' or 'fundamental asymmetry' between one's being and one's selfhood (or existence and essence, if you prefer).[26] This is why Sartre describes humanity as a 'useless passion'; because despite the evidence of this gaping blind spot in self-knowledge, we nevertheless have a tendency to reify ourselves. We wish to impute characteristics to ourselves; to define our essences and escape the anxiety of indeterminacy.

But we cannot escape it. On Sartre's account, negation is the 'original basis of a relation of man [*sic*] to the world'.[27] He writes that 'The necessary condition for our saying *not* is that non-being be a perpetual presence in us and outside of us, that nothingness haunt being'.[28] Consequently, we are anxious; indeed, he calls anxiety the 'reflective apprehension of the self'.[29] Even in *The Transcendence of the Ego* he writes that 'It is this absolute and irremediable anguish, this fear of oneself, that in my view is constitutive of pure consciousness'.[30]

For Sartre, every negation – every exercise of freedom – is an *estrangement* from being. Sartre asserts that 'Anguish as the manifestation of freedom in the face of self means that man is always separated by a nothingness from his essence'.[31] Without recourse to divine grace, there is nothing that can 'ensure me against myself, cut off from the world and from my essence by this nothingness which *I am*'.[32] Any meaning I now claim for my life today may be meaninglessness tomorrow.

In *The Courage to Be*, where Tillich outlines the differences between and history of the 'existentialist point of view', 'existentialist protest', and 'existentialist expression', Tillich demonstrates familiarity with Sartre's *Transcendence of the Ego*. He writes that Descartes' writings have an 'anti-Existential bias, where exis-

25 *Ibid.*, 61.

26 Jopling "Kant and Sartre," 77.

27 Sartre, *BN*, 31.

28 *Ibid.*, 35. See also 36, 40, and 45. 'We set upon our pursuit of being, and it seemed to us that the series of our questions had led us to the heart of being. But behold, at the moment when we thought we were arriving at the goal, a glance cast on the question itself has revealed to us suddenly that we are encompassed with nothingness. The permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within us, conditions our questions about being. (29)

29 *Ibid.*, 54.

30 Sartre, *Transcendence*, 48 – 9.

31 Sartre, *BN*, 59.

32 *Ibid.*, 63.

tence of man and his world is put into brackets. Man becomes pure consciousness, a naked epistemological subject; the world (including man's psychosomatic being) becomes an object of scientific enquiry and technical management'.[33] He goes on to say that 'recent philosophical Existentialism showed that behind the *sum* (I am) in Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* lies the problem of the nature of this *sum* which is more than mere *cogitation* (consciousness)—namely existence in time and space and under the conditions of finitude and estrangement'.[34]

For Sartre, the anxiety-arousing impossibility of identity – the estrangement of the self from its essence – is the consequence of the radical freedom of consciousness. And on Tillich's view the duality of 'essential and existential', which Tillich explicitly associates with Sartre in the first volume of *Systematic Theology*, is seen in all ontologies.[35] He continues to say that in all ontologies the question of the relation of essence to existence is being asked, and that its answer is found by the polarity of 'freedom and destiny on the second level of ontological analysis. However, freedom as such is not the basis of existence, but rather freedom in unity with finitude. Finite freedom is the turning point from being to existence'.[36] In Tillich's hamartiology (as expressed in the second volume of *Systematic Theology*), 'the transition from essence to existence is the original fact'.[37]

In the *Courage to Be* Sartre is described as carrying

> through the consequences of Heidegger's Existentialist analyses without mystical restrictions. This is the reason he has become the symbol of present-day Existentialism, a position which is deserved not so much by the originality of his basic concepts as by the radicalism, consistency, and psychological adequacy with which he has carried them through. I refer above all to his proposition that "the essence of man is his existence." This sentence is like a flash of light which illuminates the whole Existentialist scene. One could call it the most despairing and the most courageous sentence in all Existentialist literature. What is says is that there is no essential nature of man, except in the one point that he can make of himself what he wants. [...] Man is what he makes of himself'.[38]

Clearly, for Sartre and for Tillich, the consequence of the separation of essence and existence is anxiety. But it is also clear that anxiety is not solely a Sartrean theme, and that Tillich wrote on it before Sartre rose to prominence.[39] Although

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33 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 131.
34 *Ibid.*, 132.
35 ST I, 183.
36 ST I, 183–184.
37 ST II, 41.
38 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 149–50.
39 See Paul Tillich, "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy" *The Journal of Religion* 19/3 (1939): 201–215; 208.

Tillich's discussion of anxiety in *Systematic Theology* vol. 2 focuses on the term's use in German and Danish philosophy (which is to say Kierkegaard and Heidegger), his discussion in *The Courage to Be* has a distinctly Sartrean inflection, where the threat of meaninglessness looms largest.[40]

There he writes that 'we need an ontological account of anxiety'.[41] On Tillich's view, there are three types of anxiety which correspond to three ways in which nonbeing threatens being: 'Nonbeing threatens man's ontic self-affirmation, relatively in terms of fate, absolutely in terms of death. It threatens man's spiritual self-affirmation, relatively in terms of emptiness, absolutely in terms of meaninglessness. It threatens man's moral self-affirmation, relatively in terms of guilt, absolutely in terms of condemnation'.[42]

Tillich's second, 'spiritual' anxiety – the 'anxiety of meaninglessness' – is described as 'anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings. This anxiety is aroused by the loss of a spiritual center, of an answer, however symbolic and indirect, to the meaning of existence'.[43] It is this anxiety that Tillich believes to be 'dominant' in his age.[44] He writes, that 'We are under the threat of spiritual non-being. The threats of moral and ontic non-being are, of course, present, but they are not independent and not controlling'.[45]

At the end of the book he repeatedly emphasizes the dominance of this anxiety of meaninglessness.[46] This is the question his theology sought to answer:

> [T]he anxiety which determines our period is the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness. One is afraid of having lost or of having to lose the meaning of one's existence. The expression of this situation is the Existentialism of today. Which courage is able to take nonbeing into itself in the form of doubt and meaninglessness? This is the most important and most disturbing question in the quest for the courage to be. For the anxiety of meaninglessness undermines what is still unshaken in the anxiety of fate and death and of guilt and condemnation'.[47]

40 ST II, 39 ff.
41 Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 65.
42 *Ibid.*, 40 – 41.
43 *Ibid.*, 47.
44 *Ibid.*, 62.
45 *Ibid.*, 62. See also 56 on the prominence of the anxiety of meaninglessness.
46 *Ibid.*, 171 – 73.
47 *Ibid.*, 173 – 4.

2 Impossibility of community

So far, I have concentrated on the impossibility of identity from the perspective of an isolated consciousness' experience of freedom. But a third of the way through *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre turns from considering individual consciousness to the existence of others. This is because, on Sartre's view, the self is 'syncategorematic': it has no meaning without others. As Thomas King puts it, 'In order to think of myself, I have to implicitly think of the Other for whom I am that self.'[48]

In order to demonstrate the important role the other plays in the distance between consciousness and the ego, consider one of the adjectives that most of us might like to use to describe ourselves: 'intelligent'.[49] What others tell you about yourself is what you are in respect to them. But statements like 'you are intelligent' are not soluble in consciousness. In your consciousness you can know that you are thinking; you can know it with certainty. But knowing you are *intelligent* – or charming, or lovable, or what have you – is always more or less doubtful: it is dependent on the estimations of others.

There are, therefore, two different sources of information where 'knowing thyself' is concerned: consciousness and the judgments of others. But these have irreconcilable natures, for in the case of the latter we can feel we have been misjudged. While we may not object to being 'defined' by others if the adjectives are positive, Sartre argues that we should: pride, on his view, is a form of bad faith. Whether positive or negative, the objectifying gaze of others poses a danger to my consciousness, in providing the possibility of ascribing greater reality to what is said about me than to my own consciousness. Others' eyes have the potential to become, as Ralph Waldo Emerson described them, 'the lenses through which we read our own minds'.

On his own definition Sartre's project was to 'draw all the consequences of a consistent atheist position'. For Sartre, God is logically impossible, and the impossibility of God results in the impossibility of sin 'before God', as Kierkegaard put it. But instead of therefore being responsible to a clear-sighted and omniscient being, we are subject to the objectifying gaze of the human other, to oscillations between mastery and slavery. Attempts at self-definition thus become counter-attacks in a 'battle to the death' for my identity – my essence may follow from my existence, but I am not its sole creator. The consciousness of 'being

48 Thomas King, *Sartre and the Sacred* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 76.

49 Sartre discusses this in *Saint Genet. Actor and Martyr*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); cf. King, *Sartre and the Sacred*, 77.

seen' by another as other than we desire to be gives rise to the experience of others as 'hell'; we realize that we are not merely subject to the nihilating power of our own freedom but to that of others. Our acts become sources of salvation or damnation; in other words, they take on hamartiological significance in the tribunal of others' gazes.

But this too provided a question Tillich sought to answer. In the third volume of *Systematic Theology* Tillich writes that the 'ambiguity of self-determination is rooted in the fact that the self as subject and the self as object are split and that the self as subject tries to determine the self as object in a direction from which the self as subject is itself estranged'.[50] Here he echoes Sartre's view of the non-coincidence of the self, writing that 'No centred self under the conditions of existence is fully identical with itself.' What is needful is that 'the split of the self into a controlling subject and a controlled object' be overcome through 'the vertical dimension'.[51] If one remains on the horizontal plane, he writes, any effort to overcome the split between subject and object in interpersonal encounters will result in defeat, in surrender: either of 'oneself to the other one or by taking the other one into one's self'. But 'both are failures', because 'they destroy the persons they seek to unite'.[52] In this context, indeed, we read that 'Sartre's assertion of the mutual objectivation of human beings in all their encounters cannot be denied except from the point of view of the vertical dimension'.[53]

On both levels of human existence, therefore – individual and relational – Sartre portrays the human subject as divided. On the first level we are divided from ourselves by time and the freedom of consciousness. On the second, we glimpse identity, but it is the identity of the syncategorematic self – a self with no meaning in isolation, and which, given meaning by others, may be a demeaning imprisonment. A harmonious self – and harmonious relations with others – are mirages: like the fruit held just beyond Tantalus' reach.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing that there are textual and conceptual reasons to think Tillich's later theology intentionally answers Sartre. In concluding, howev-

50 ST III, 276.
51 ST III, 276.
52 ST III, 277.
53 ST III, 278.

er, a final difficulty must be noted. Owing to Tillich's style of scholarship it is challenging to ascertain precisely when or what he read of 'the Socrates of Nothingness'. His discussions of Sartre, as we have seen, suggest familiarity with several works, including *Being and Nothingness*, 'Existentialism is a Humanism', *The Transcendence of the Ego*, *No Exit*, and *The Age of Reason*. But did he read *Being and Nothingness? L'Etre et le néant* came out in French in 1943, but it was not available in German until 1952 and in English until 1956.[54] Although some of Sartre's works were published in English in the USA in the mid-1940s, it is probable that Tillich came to Sartre through less scholarly media.[55] Like most American academics at the time, Tillich is likely to have become acquainted with Sartre 'through newspapers, popular magazines, and journals of opinion'.[56]

Sartre's popularity was such that he was published in the pages of *Atlantic Monthly* and *Vogue* (twice) in 1944–6, and Beauvoir (writing on Sartre) was published in *Harper's Bazaar*.[57] As Jean Wahl wrote in his 'Existentialism: A Preface' – an essay in the *New Republic* which was intended to distinguish Sartre's ideas from those of other existential philosophies – 'There is much talk in Paris, in Greenwich Village, even in the center of Manhattan, about existence and existentialism.'[58] When Sartre visited New York in 1946, *TIME* magazine wrote that 'the literary lion of Paris bounced into Manhattan last week'.[59] And when *No Exit* premiered in America in Manhattan in 1946, reviewers recommended it as 'a phenomenon' that 'should be seen whether you like it or not'.[60]

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54 The 1952 German translation published by Rowohlt Verlag was an abbreviated edition, which omitted the section on the phenomenology of the body, among other things. See F. H. Heinemann, "German Philosophy," *Philosophy* 28 (1953): 355–358; 356.

55 Sartre delivered two lectures at Yale in 1945: the first on philosophy, and the second on literature. Many of Sartre's plays and novels were available in English: *The Flies* (1947), *No Exit* (1947), *The Age of Reason* (1947), and *The Reprieve* (1947), but only two of his philosophical works were published in English in the '40s: *Existentialism* in 1947 (*Existentialisme est un humanisme* was published in France in 1946) and *The Imaginary* in 1948 (translation of *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*, from 1940). See Fulton, *Apostles*, 22–23.

56 Fulton, *Apostles*, 27.

57 Jean-Paul Sartre "Paris Alive: The Republic of Silence," *Atlantic Monthly* 174 (Dec. 1944): 39–40; "The New Writing in France: The Resistance "Taught That Literature Is No Fancy Activity Independent of Politics"," *Vogue* 105 (July 1945): 85; "Portraits of Paris," *Vogue* 107 (June 1946): 152–162.

58 Jean Wahl "Existentialism: A Preface," *New Republic* (October 1945): 442.

59 *TIME* "Existentialism," *TIME* 48 (28 January 1946): 28–29. See George Cotkin, *Existential America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) chapter 5 for more on 'The Vogue of French Existentialism'.

60 Stark Young, "Weaknesses," *New Republic* 9 (9 December 1946): 764.

As Tillich defines it in the first volume of his *Systematic Theology*, the task of theology is to interpret the Christian message in such a way that it was 'relevant to the present situation'.[61] And in his present situation he believed it was

> not an exaggeration to say that today man experiences his present situation in terms of disruption, conflict, self-destruction, meaninglessness, and despair in all realms of life. This experience is expressed in the arts and in literature, conceptualised in existential philosophy, actualised in political cleavage of all kinds, and analysed in the psychology of the unconscious. It has given theology a new understanding of the demonic-tragic structures of individual and social life'.[62]

In a sermon on 'Salvation', Tillich writes that "the words which are most used in religion are also those whose genuine meaning is almost completely lost and whose impact on the human mind is nearly negligible".[63] Such words, he continues, must be either reborn or thrown away. The "gift" that existentialism gives theology is "a rediscovery of the word sin" – "especially in the description of hell and purgatory, and of the inner self-destructiveness of man in his estrangement from his essential being".[64]

However Tillich discovered Sartre, the latter's 'profound psychological insights' demonstrated the threat of meaningless under the conditions of estrangement from self and other. But Tillich does not leave it at that; he also argues that Sartre's account of existentialism is contradictory:

> Sartre says man's essence is his existence. In saying this he makes it impossible for man to be saved or to be healed. Sartre knows this, and every one of his plays shows this too. But here also we have a happy inconsistency. He calls his existentialism humanism. But if he calls it humanism, that means he has an idea of what man essentially is, and he must consider the possibility that the essential being of man, his freedom, might be lost. And if this is a possibility, then he makes, against his own will, a distinction between man as he essentially is and man as he can be lost: man is to be free and to create himself.[65]

It is the view of this author that Tillich's objection holds. As I have argued elsewhere, Sartre's account of the radical freedom of consciousness – including the

61 ST I, 59.

62 ST I, 55.

63 Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (London: SCM Press 2002 [1963]), 94.

64 Tillich, "Significance," 122.

65 *Ibid.*, 120. See also Paul Tillich, "The Nature and Significance of Existentialist Thought," *The Journal of Philosophy* 53/23 (1956): 739 – 748, where he writes that 'It is the basic shortcoming of Sartre that he did not acknowledge this dependence [of positive philosophy on negative philosophy], although his own writings confirm it on every page' (742).

claim that mankind *is* anxiety – closely resembles certain Christian accounts of fallenness, but departs from them in depicting sin from a graceless position.[66]

Sartre, on this reading, is a 'hidden theologian' of original sin, and Tillich's encounter with the Sartrean threat of meaninglessness was theologically significant.[67] Whereas in 1939 Tillich could write of 'existential philosophy' that '[w]e know a feeling in which the very fact that we are able to face our nothingness includes the certainty that we are beyond it', after Sartre it became more difficult to claim such certainty.[68] Sartre's 'threat of nothingness' went further than that of his predecessors: for there is no possibility of redemptive grace, and belief in such a notion must be rejected as bad faith. This rejection required of Tillich a different – or at least differently inflected – answer.

66 Sartre, *BN*, 67. Further, see Kate Kirkpatrick, "Sartre: An Augustinian Atheist?," *Sartre Studies International* 21.1 (2015): 1–20..

67 ST I, 29.

68 Tillich, "Conception of Man," 210. It is also interesting to compare what Tillich writes about freedom and reason in the 1939 piece (203) to his discussion of freedom and destiny in *Systematic Theology* volume 2 – in the latter, destiny could be read as a revised version of Sartrean facticity, which (contra Sartre) includes the divine and grace (ST II, 72–73).

Anne-Marie Reijnen

Chapter 7

Is Green the Colour of our Redemption?

Introduction

Why on earth connect redemption with the colour green? At first sight, the relation seems unnatural. Is it an attempt to replace the gospel with a secular agenda? Or the futile endeavour to attach a Christian appendage to the commonsense political imperative to protect the environment? Another argument for caution is the extreme heat of the debate around eco-theology. Preposterous and excessive claims and counterclaims proliferate on the frontier between ecology and theology. Is it perhaps the very scope of the question – the survival of all life on the entire planet Earth, no less – which triggers the extreme responses (ridicule, priggishness, mutual intolerance)? I owe the incentive to speak of the colour green in connection with matters of faith ('our salvation') to a ferocious critic, John Milbank, who writes:

> In the false spring of our times, everything painted green: it has become the appointed liturgical colour for our post-historical sabbath. [...] The colour has a utopian hint, or rather that of a puritan arcadia, but at the same time it soothes the passages of capitalist exchange [...]. Capitalism has already incorporated, in the interests of profit, the new religiosity of our times, which takes the form of transcending one's humanity in order to celebrate nature or animality as the 'other' with which one nonetheless seeks to become united. [...][1]

In this paper I argue that before the current growing (albeit embattled) consensus, Paul Tillich was grappling with the connection between salvation and nature, at a time when this topic was almost a taboo, having been marginalized in most Protestant theology. I contend that there is sufficient evidence, in his systematic work, in his shorter writings, e.g. about 'nature and sacrament 'and in two sermons ("Nature Also Mourns for a Lost Good"; "Man and Earth") to construct a theological discourse that is informed by ecology.

I will avoid the name 'eco-theology' for this discourse. This is not because of an agreement with the mistrust evinced by John Milbank and some others who see in eco-theology "the Christian manifestation of Green consciousness, ecolog-

1 John Milbank, "Out of the Greenhouse," in The Word Made Strange (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 257.

https://doi.org/9783110533606-008

ical new-ageism".[2] Rather, it is because I contend that Christian theology has always been a bearer of what is called nowadays a 'green' consciousness. Theology is by definition 'ecological', just as it is pneumatological, but like the dimension of the Holy Spirit, the consciousness of solidarity with all living beings is sometimes obscured, forgotten or repressed. "Eco-theology", thus, is a pleonasm and somewhat of an anachronism: the word "*Ökologie*" was only minted in 1866 by Ernst Haeckel to account for a subsection of biology, the study of the relationships between (mostly very small) organisms and their environment, their *Umwelt*. There is another epistemological argument against 'eco-theology': as Tillich explains in 'Reason and Revelation', the first part of his *Systematic Theology:* "Knowledge of revelation does not increase our knowledge about the structures of nature, history and man".[3] The neologism 'eco-theology' is best avoided, since it allows a blurring of the distinction between faith and facts, resulting in an unwholesome hybrid; it may be replaced by the more precise, though cumbersome, phrase 'ecologically informed theology'.

1 Tillich's Legacy: a Theology of 'Human and Earth'

Tillich examines the dimensions of life and matter in the fourth part of his *Systematic Theology,* called "Life and the Spirit". In the opening chapter, "Life and its Ambiguities", we find the following axiomatic statement: "[t]he religious significance of the inorganic is immense, but it is rarely considered by theology".[4] He then distinguishes levels or dimensions within the inorganic realm. Regarding the infinitesimally small and the exceedingly large – the subatomic and the astronomic— the common understanding of time, space and causality seem to fall short in explaining them. There is a similar need to distinguish in the organic world between the vegetable realm and the animal realm, because self-awareness of life appears only in the latter. Yet the difference between the two realms is not absolute, because of "the indefiniteness of the transition between them".[5] Tillich combines the vocabularies of Aristotle and of natural science (biology and bio-chemistry) to describe the emergence of this self-awareness. "Potentially, self-awareness is present in every dimension; actually, it can appear only under the dimension of animal being".[6] The attempt to identify psychic life

2 Milbank, "Out of the Greenhouse," 261.
3 ST I, 129.
4 ST III, 18.
5 ST III, 20.
6 ST III, 20.

among plants cannot be discarded on principle but neither can it be accepted, and "under these circumstances it seems wiser to restrict the assumption of inner awareness to those realms in which it can be made highly probable, at least in terms of analogy, and emotionally certain in terms of participation – most obviously in the higher animals".[7] Life's forms, then, are viewed within a hierarchy; but they are also related to one another, through porous boundaries; these connections qualify the hierarchical model and make it anything but absolute. "Constellations of conditions make it possible for the organic to appear in the inorganic realm".[8] It seems that Tillich is rebutting the Cartesian dichotomy between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, for there are three, not two, dimensions in Tillich's analysis: the inorganic, the organic and the historical. He affirms the traditional anthropocentric interpretation of Western thought, based on the scriptural reasoning of Jews and Christians: "the historical dimension [...] of life comes to its full actualization only in man, in whom as the bearer of the spirit the conditions for it are present. But the historical dimension is manifest – although under the predominance of other dimensions– in all realms of life."[9] It is commonplace to oppose nature and culture/history, assigning to the former a cyclical movement while linearity belongs to the latter. Not so according to Tillich: all life is characterized by the creation of the new.[10] The drama of redemption is a drama that involves the inorganic, the organic and the historical dimensions. They participate in the aspiration that may be called self-transcendence. "Life, in degrees, is free from itself, from a total bondage to its own finitude. It is striving in the vertical direction toward ultimate and infinite being. The vertical transcends both the circular line of centeredness and the horizontal line of growth. In the words of Paul (Romans 8, 19 – 22), the longing of all creation for the liberation from the "subjection to futility" (RSV) and "the shackles of mortality" (NEB) is described with a profound poetic empathy."[11]

This enigmatic passage of Paul's epistle speaks of the pains of the entire creation (*ktisis*). Tillich uses the words "thraldom to decay" in his famous sermon for the Lenten season, a profound meditation on the drama of creation, entitled " Nature also Mourns for a Lost Good". "Who is redeemed? asks the preacher —

> "some men alone; or mankind, including all nations; or the world, everything that is created, including nature, the stars and the clouds, the winds and the oceans, the stones and

7 ST III, 21.
8 ST III, 25.
9 ST III, 25.
10 See ST III, 26.
11 See ST III, 86–87.

> the plants, the animals and our own bodies? The Bible speaks again and again of the salvation of the world, as it speaks of the creation of the world and the subjection of the world to anti-Divine forces. And world means nature as well as man."[12]

Drawing on "the half-poetic, half-philosophic words" of Schelling, Tillich continues, "[a] veil of sadness is spread over all nature, a deep unappeasable melancholy over all life.... This, mainly, creates the sympathy of man with nature." Hence the pithy statement that has rightly become famous: "Nature, also, mourns for a lost good". Tillich reflects on Romans 8, writing "man and nature belong together in their created glory, in their tragedy, and in their salvation" and insists that "there is no salvation of man if there is no salvation of nature, for man is in nature and nature is in man". Tillich then pleads forcefully for an understanding of redemption that is embodied, not ethereal. "The bodiless spirit is not the aim of creation; the purpose of creation is not the abstract intellect or a natureless moral personality. Do we not see everywhere the estrangement of people from nature, from their own natural forces and from nature around them? And do they not become dry and uncreative in their mental life, hard and arrogant in their moral attitude, suppressed and poisoned in their vitality? They certainly are not the images of salvation. As one theologian has justly said, 'Corporal being is the end of the ways of God'".[13] Toward the end of his sermon Tillich appeals to his audience directly: "[a]re we still able to understand what a sacrament means?" The question is rhetorical, for the answer is no: "[t]he more we are estranged from nature, the less we can answer affirmatively. That is why, in our time, the sacraments have lost so much of their significance for individuals and Churches. For in the sacraments, nature participates in the process of salvation. Bread and wine, water and light, and all the great elements of nature become the bearers of spiritual meaning and saving power. Natural and spiritual powers are united, reunited in the sacrament".[14] A parallel to this reflection of the first volume of published sermons, The Shaking of the Foundations, is found in a scholarly piece of writing called "Nature and Sacrament" published in The Protestant Era (1948/1951). In the preface of this book intended to make his thought more widely available to the English speaking

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12 Paul Tillich, "Nature, also, Mourns for a Lost Good," in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribner's, 1948).

13 Tillich, "Nature, also, Mourns," 85. I have attributed the saying "Das Ende aller Wege Gottes mit den Menschen ist der Leib", to Martin Buber. See Anne Marie Reijnen, *L'Ombre de Dieu sur terre. Un essai sur l'incarnation* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1998), 215. A very similar sentence, "Leiblichkeit ist das Ende der Werke Gottes" is attested already in Friedrich Christoph Oetinger's work, *Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch, dem tellerischen Wörterbuch und anderer falschen Schrifterklärungen entgegen gesezt* (Heilbronn am Neckar, 1776), 407.

14 Tillich, "Nature, also, Mourns," 86.

public, Tillich explains the presence of a chapter on sacramental thinking in a Protestant book. The sacramental element is "the one essential element of every religion, namely the presence of the divine before our acting and striving".[15] I would like to suggest that this interpretation of the meaning of sacrament provides an analogy for the 'sacramental' experience of nature as the reality that precedes and exceeds human beings. The great mountains and the oceans inspire such awe. Tillich identifies "the basic principle of all sacramental thinking" as "the affirmation of the presence of the divine, its transparency in nature and history." The conclusion of Tillich's dense article "Nature and Sacrament" explores how Protestantism might be able to attain a more affirmative attitude toward nature and suggests how Christian theology often contains both the theological injury and the antidote to that injury.

> The lack of such an (affirmative) attitude has greatly contributed to the rise of an anti-Christian naturalism which has not only scientific but even stronger emotional roots: the religious devaluation of nature has been answered by a naturalistic devaluation of religion.[16]

For our purpose, this passage is especially helpful. The topic under discussion is the loss of authentic sacramentalism within Protestantism, a loss that could mean the demise of Protestant churches. But the basic principle of sacramental thinking provides a strong argument for the validity of the current question "Is Green the Colour of Our Redemption?". If indeed the presence of the Divine transpires in nature and history, then it follows that a destruction of the 'natural world' represents not only a loss in itself, but also a loss that would affect the Divine. Tillich went to surprising lengths to heal the theological injury of the "*Kosmosvergessenheit*", the a-cosmism which has for too long been the blight of the Protestant mainstream. Indeed I suggest that Tillich preferred to be accused of pan(en)theism rather than to be an accomplice in '*Kosmosvergessenheit*'. In an audacious statement in the third volume of his *Systematic Theology* (1963), he shows his willingness to take the risk of being misunderstood.

> Actually, mankind encountered the sublimity of life, its greatness and dignity, but he encountered it in ambiguous unity with profanization, smallness, and desecration. The ambiguities of the polytheistic gods represent the ambiguities of the self-transcendence of life. This is the lasting and irrepressible validity of polytheistic symbolism. It expresses the self-transcendence of life under all dimensions against an abstract monotheism which, in order

15 Paul Tillich, "Author's Preface," in *The Protestant Era*, trans. and ed. James Luther Adams (London: Nisbet, 1951): xxxviii.

16 Tillich, "Nature and Sacrament" in *The Protestant Era*, 120.

to give all honour and power to one god, transforms everything into mere objects, thus depriving reality of its power and its dignity.[17]

2 Space and the end of history in the contemporary predicament

The topos of the precariousness of existence on the planet Earth gained a new urgency with the advent of the nuclear arsenal. This consciousness raises some difficult questions. Was the fear justified at the time? If it was, why has it disappeared from mental radar screens, even though today the risk of a nuclear attack is greater, objectively, with more and smaller rockets easily available for "rogue states"?

The fear that has succeeded the nuclear anguish, this time related to the heating of the planet Earth, is widespread, profound and controversial: some critics still deny its factual basis, contending that the climate has changed all throughout the history of the planet and that human engineering will cope with unwanted effects such as rising sea-levels. John Gray reminds us of one the tenets of the traditional faith in progress: "[n]o human problem is in the long run insoluble. Marx declared in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) that 'humanity sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve'."[18]

Will there be a man-made solution to the man-made problem of the ecological crisis ('the Anthropocene era')? The wealth of statistics and divergent opinions concerning the state of the planet bewilders and confuses. To order one's reflection and action in the way suggested by Kant may no longer be sufficient. He wrote "[a]ll the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions: What can I know, what ought I to do, what may I hope for?"[19] Each verb opens up a province of the human spirit: cognitive, moral/ethical, religious/symbolical.

In Tillich's "post-nuclear" 1963 sermon 'Man and Earth' the question "What may I hope for" by far outweighs the other queries. It is found in the third volume of sermons, *The Eternal Now*, which came close to receiving the title The Spiritual Presence. This collection (1955 – 1963) is like a companion to the last parts of the *Systematic Theology*, "Life and the Spirit" and "The Kingdom of

17 ST III, 90. Emphasis added.

18 John Gray, *The Silence of Animals. On Progress and Other Modern Myths* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2013), 70–71.

19 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781 – 1789), chapter 126 in the first edition of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

God". Tillich bases his meditation on Psalm 8:4: "[w]hat is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" With great empathy, the preacher describes a new form of collective fear that he calls 'dread'[20]. He does not ask "What can I know? Is it true?", rather he accepts the reality of the threat: nuclear warfare, and in its wake the mutual destruction of the Soviet Union and their Western adversaries. A novel science of survival is born, the "survival of civilized mankind, or of mankind as a whole, or even of life altogether on the surface of this planet"[21]. Unlike "the story of the Great Flood, found in the Old Testament and also among the myths and legends of many nations", it is not the "gods or God who bring or who brings about the destruction of life on earth because men have aroused divine anger. [...] Today, the destruction and survival of life have been given into the hands of man."[22] Tillich here echoes the words of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the seminal book begun in 1958, which is often considered to have started the ecological movement. In the chapter called "Fable for tomorrow", an indictment of the nefarious effects of pesticides on the countryside, she writes: "[n]o witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves".[23]

For Tillich, there is no rejoicing in the power of the ones made a "little less than God". Rather, there is tormenting anxiety:

> When we look deep into the minds of our contemporaries, especially those of the younger generation, we discover a dread that permeates their whole being. This dread was absent a few decades ago and is hard to describe. It is the sense of living under a continuous threat [...]; the greatest of these is the imminent danger of a universal and total catastrophe.[24]

Tillich describes the contradictory reactions: the passionate longing for security in daily life, or the exaggerated show of boldness and confidence in humankind, based on the conquest of earthly and trans-earthly spaces – this is also the era of the Soyouz and Sputnik space flights. The reactions of mitigated joy surrounding this conquest prompt the following probing query by a fellow refugee from Nazi Germany: "[s]hould the emancipation and secularization of the modern age, which began with a turning away, not necessarily from God, but from a god who was the Father of men in heaven, end with an even more fateful repudiation

20 Paul Tillich, "Man and Earth," in *The Eternal Now* (London: SCM Press, 2002 [1963]), 67.
21 *Ibid.*, 66.
22 *Ibid.*, 67.
23 Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), 3.
24 Tillich, "Man and Earth," 67.

of an Earth who was the Mother of all living creatures under the sky?"[25] For Tillich, indeed, "[o]ur former naïve trust in the 'motherly' earth and her protective and preserving power has disappeared. It is possible that the earth may bear us no longer. We ourselves may prevent her from doing so".[26] Tillich personifies the Earth, as many others do when they call the planet "Her". This is taken to extremes by Matthew Fox – in his image of the crucifixion of our Mother Earth– and by James Lovelock in his writing of the revenge of Gaia.[27]

Surprising though it may seem, we find evidence for the notion of retribution by the earth in the work of Hildegard of Bingen. According to the Benedictine Abbess, the entire creation is given by God to humankind, in order that they make use of the creation. But if they abuse their privilege, God's justice will allow creation to punish humankind. Only a slight shift has occurred between the injustice-retribution paradigm of the twelfth century and today's dire visions of the Earth's 'revenge': the theocentric pattern has been slightly tweaked to make room for a geocentric one, where the agent is understood to be the earth "herself".[28] Tillich asks his audience:

> What has the Christian message to say about this, our present predicament? What has it to say about life on this planet, its beginning and end, and man's place on it? What has it so say about the significance of the earth, the scene of human history, in view of the vastness of the universe? What about the short span of time allotted to this planet and the life upon it, as compared to the unimaginable length of the rhythms of the universe? Such questions have been rarely asked in Christian teaching and preaching. For the central themes of Christianity have been the dramas of the creation and fall, of salvation and fulfillment.[29]

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25 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Prologue, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 2.

26 Tillich, "Man and Earth," 68.

27 Matthew Fox, *The Coming Christ. The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), especially chapter 2: "Jesus as Mother Earth Crucified and Resurrected", 144–149 and James Lovelock, *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is Fighting Back – and How We Can Still Save Humanity* (London: Allen Lane, 2006). However, Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock do not consider the earth, "the symbiotic planet", to be actually like one great living mechanism. 'Gaia' is a shortcut, coined by James Lovelock's friend, the writer William Golding. Margulis and Lovelock really mean "the dynamical physiological system that has kept our planet fit for life for more than three billion years".

28 Anne Marie Reijnen, "Maître ou parasite. Habiter la terre en toute conscience," *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 2 (2000): 172. This paper was given at a colloquium in Istanbul organized by the "Green" Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew, in September 1998.

29 Tillich, "Man and Earth," 68.

Tillich refers to the unease one feels in coupling categories such as "greenness" or "ecology" with the traditional concepts of scriptural reasoning such as "redemption". But because for many people the question "Human and Earth" has become a matter of life and death, Christianity cannot escape by withdrawing into "the deceptive security of its earlier questions and answers". Since our planet is a mere speck in one of the galaxies and furthermore on the brink of destruction, "what about the high destiny claimed by man in past ages?" More precisely, "[w]hat about the idea that the divine image is impressed in his nature?" and what about Jesus whom we confess as the Christ: "what about his history that Christianity always considered to be the point at which salvation for all beings took place?" And: "[w]hat about the Christ who, in the New Testament, is called the Lord of the universe?"[30]

In my view, Tillich resembles a "scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven [...] a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." (Matthew 13:52, RSV). His sermon has a cosmic breadth, quite new in its scope; yet the key to unlock the meaning of the destiny of humankind and Earth remains the old message of salvation: the meaning is found in the history of the redeeming actions of God, starting (in Tillich's sermon of 1963) with Noah, and culminating in the Christ. Tillich, toward the end of his sermon, returns to a familiar and unpalatable truth: "the meaning of history lies above history; therefore, its length is irrelevant to its ultimate meaning"[31]. Yet this answer demands a qualification, lest it become a fundamentalist claim. "Its [length] is not irrelevant with respect to the innumerable opportunities time affords for creation of life and spirit, and it is for these that we must fight with all our strength".[32] In a more systematic vein, Tillich wrote, reflecting on "Life and its Ambiguities": "[t]he inviolability of living beings is expressed in the protection given to them in many religions, in their importance for polytheistic mythology, and in the actual participation of man in the life of plants and animals, practically and poetically".[33] Since the mid-twentieth century, theology has been finding its way toward such a biocentric approach.[34]

30 *Ibid.*,70.
31 *Ibid.*, 75.
32 *Ibid.*, 75.
33 ST III, 93.
34 See my contribution "Seeing the World, Hearing the Word. Cosmos and Creation in Protestant Theology", in *Protecting Nature, Saving Creation*, eds. Pasquale Gagliardi, Anne Marie Reijnen and Philipp Valentini (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 101–111.

3 A Fragment of Cosmic Theology

The great mountains of the Alps have for many generations come to embody the experience of nature in its overwhelming '*fascinosum et tremendum*'. Nowadays, the giants which were deemed ageless and unchanging are in fact changing: global warming has started to write graffiti on their faces, black on white, for the glaciers are receding visibly. One is tempted to remember the proverbial 'writing on the wall' of Belshazzar's banquet: "*mene, mene thekel upharshin*": "you have been weighed and found wanting" (Daniel 5:27). But a temptation it may be indeed: must we join the chorus of overdrawn, fanatic statements about the imminent catastrophe? Should we not rather satisfy ourselves with the wisdom of the prayer asking "[t]hat we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not hold on things eternal"? Such wisdom could be construed as indifference to the beauty of the world. The detachment surely cannot be obtained without a sincere plumbing of the fear of nothingness. Pascal expressed it eloquently in his famous fragment, "The Eternal Silence of these Infinite Spaces Frightens Me". He wrote:

> It is a horrible thing to feel all that we possess slipping away. Between us and heaven or hell there is only life, which is the frailest thing in the world. [...] Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclination; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens up to abysses.[35]

It is difficult to contemplate one's own extinction, to say nothing of the dread of losing a beloved partner, a sibling, one's child. How can one extrapolate from one's own (half-hearted) acceptance of mortality to the eventuality of the sudden disappearance of all, or almost all, living beings? In this paper, the 'elephant in the room' has been Kant's fourth question: "what is human being?" The dread of seeing one's beloved world disappear is, for sure, another symptom of anthropocentrism. But it need not be selfish. As Tillich wrote, "[t]he divine self-love includes all creatures; and proper human self-love includes everything with which man is existentially united".[36]

"Green" is the colour of our redemption.

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35 Blaise Pascal, *The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal*, trans. C. Kegan Paul (London: George Bell and Sons, 1901), 12, 23.

36 ST I, 282.

Andrew O'Neill

Chapter 8

Tillich for Today's Church. Self-critique, Self-transcendence, and the New Reality

According to Paul Tillich, the unconditioned truth of revelation is always communicated into the frail and finite human situation. Theology is responsible both for interpreting the message of revelation and for ensuring that this interpretation is responsive to its social and political "situation". However, Tillich also warns that the task of theology is "neither preaching nor counselling"; it is concerned with humanity's creative self-interpretation and its cultural expressions.[1]

This poses a challenge for the church, which is historically responsible for communicating the message of revelation, and nurturing faithful practice and ethical action in response, but is also an institution of the culture in which it operates, and is therefore subject to the critique of revelation. This suggests that constructive critique of the church is an essential theological task, especially in relation to discussions of mission and method.

In recent decades, critique of the church has taken on two dominant expressions, at least in the West: a popular, vocal and varied atheism, and a more passive, but no less unsettling, decline in church adherence. Though there is some debate about the validity of attendance and membership figures as the sole indicators of the status of the church in society, there can be no doubt that, with some exceptions, the data clearly indicate declining religious adherence in the West.

Literature concerned with the decline of the institutional church is voluminous, and there is no interest in rehearsing its arguments here. Tracing the genealogy of challenges to and changes in church authority is helpful, but cannot on its own provide a positive description of the identity and mission of the contemporary church as the Body of Christ. The task of this paper is to perceive the decline of the institutional church not as failure, nor as an aberration, but as an outworking of God's continued Spiritual Presence.

To do this, I will first explore how Tillich's concepts of theonomy and the Protestant principle encourage the church in every age, even when in crisis, toward self-critique. Second, I will consider how his theology of the Spiritual Community does not obviate the role of the historical church, but defines it in terms of transcending particularity. Finally, I will consider Tillich's critical approach in

1 ST I, 4.

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light of Douglas John Hall's concept of the *ecclesia crucis:* a church which sacrifices institutional privilege in order to reveal, and perhaps recover, its identity and mission.

1 Self-critique: theonomy and the Protestant principle

Jean Richard has helpfully called attention to two different ways in which Tillich describes the role of theology in cultural history. In *The Religious Situation of the Present Time* (1926), amid despondency following the First World War, Tillich wrote optimistically about the possibility of the *kairos* moment – an eruption of the new within history, but unconditioned by it – which can bridge the gap between what is and what ought to be.[2]

Later, in 'The World Situation' (1945), Tillich wrote that optimism in an epochal moment in history had yielded to an existential void.[3] Economic depression and a return to war had caused the hope of *kairos* to give way to crisis, what Tillich calls the anti-*kairos*. The anticipated eruption of the unconditioned is replaced with the very real possibility of history coming to an end through a complete dissolution of society.[4]

In subsequent post-war writings, Tillich takes aim at theological approaches which insist on the authority of the Church in changing times, but which are ultimately unable to respond to the deep currents of crisis. The *Systematic Theology* is devoted to articulating a theological response to crisis, not only as a feature of his historical situation, but as a condition of existence. To do so, theology must declare the universal meaning of revelation without usurping human reason and experience with supernaturalism.

Tillich had previously established his critique of the "so-called" dialectical theology, which he identified chiefly with Karl Barth. He argued that theology which offered a supernatural understanding of revelation, equating erring, or finite, knowledge of God with ignorance, rendered human reason and experience redundant.[5] The result for the church, when trying to act constructively out of

2 Jean Richard, "Tillich's Analysis of the Spiritual Situation of his Time(s)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 126.

3 Paul Tillich, "The World Situation" (1945), MW II, 165–196.

4 Richard, "Tillich's Analysis," 132.

5 Paul Tillich, "What is Wrong with "Dialectic" Theology?," *Journal of Religion* XV/2 (April 1935): 127–145.

such a theology, is a "relapse into the mere reiteration of tradition," or neo-orthodoxy.[6]

In his essay 'Religion and Secular Culture,' Tillich describes the results of the Church attempting to assert its message over and against human reason and experience in the wake of the First World War. When churches rejected cultural and political revolutions as rebellious expressions of secular autonomy, in return churches were repudiated as expressions of transcendent heteronomy.[7] The result was mutually destructive of both religion and culture.

As opposed to the self-grounded autonomy of reason, or the imposed heteronomy of religious or state law, Tillich offers theonomy as reason united with its own depth. Theonomy unites "the demand that everything relative become the vehicle of the absolute and the insight that nothing relative can ever become absolute itself."[8] It is "the innermost law of man himself, rooted in the divine ground which is man's own ground."[9]

In the first volume of *Systematic Theology*, Tillich distinguishes theonomy from the authority of religion or of the church. Revelation judges religion – as well as history, culture and reason – because it ultimately seeks the sacrifice of conditioned manifestation to its unconditioned truth. In the second volume of the *Systematic Theology*, he identifies this with Jesus, who is described as "the Christ... the one who sacrifices what is merely 'Jesus' in him" in favour of revealing the unconditional in God.[10]

God's self-revelation in Christ offers the shape and possibility of estranged humanity with its unconditioned ground of being.[11] However, the nature of God's revelation neither overwhelms human reason and agency, nor minimizes the chasm between the world as it is and the world as it should be. Consequently, the church is identified as being accountable to the message of revelation rather than anointed with earthly authority on its behalf. The challenge for the Church is how to proclaim a critique of culture and of religion while remaining subject to that critique.

The exemplar of theonomy manifest in the Church, for Tillich, is the Protestant Reformation, during which the crisis of a particular confessional and cultur-

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6 MW II, 193–194.

7 Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture", in: *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 55; MW II, 201–202.

8 Tillich, "Kairos", in *The Protestant Era*, 47; MW IV, 338. Note that this essay is the 1948 revised version of an essay originally written in 1922.

9 Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture", in: *The Protestant Era*, 57.

10 ST II, 134.

11 Frederick J. Parrella, "Tillich's Theology of the Concrete Spirit," in *Cambridge Companion*, 74.

al identity was transcended through a self-critical, and no less faithful, examination of revealed mission and purpose.[12] Although identified with a particular historical context, the principle of a self-critical theonomy is not limited to the Reformation, nor to any one religious form or period, but arises whenever a stand is taken "against the attempts of the finite and conditioned to usurp the place of the unconditional in thinking and acting."[13]

Admittedly, this "Protestant principle" is one which the Church, a thoroughly human enterprise, has, inevitably and often, failed to embody. For example, according to Tillich the inter-war church lacked the power to respond to spiritual and cultural crisis because it had become an instrument of nation and economy.[14] He asserts that, historically, the church has often consecrated aspects of its culture, including participation in the feudal order, nationalism, war, the illusion of peace, and the bourgeois ideal of property, without transforming or transcending them.[15] Thus, "the first word... to be spoken by religion to the people of our time must be a word spoken against religion."[16]

Yet, despite the difficulties of embodying and communicating an unconditioned revelation, religion is still "the state of being grasped by something unconditional, holy, absolute."[17] It is still concerned with essentialization – the reunification of existence with essence, symbolized by the Kingdom – and the implications of eschatology for the human situation. A theonomy which is critical of the church is not merely interested in debasing it according to its flaws, but in repairing it according the ultimate *telos* of revelation.

2 Self-transcendence: the church and the Spiritual Community

The immanence and transcendence of God is a paradox which defines many of Tillich's central theological symbols.[18] God as being-itself roots human existence within the unconditioned ground of being, yet this is revealed within history,

12 Tillich, "The Protestant Principle", in *The Protestant Era*, 162–163.

13 *Ibid.*, 163.

14 MW II, 192.

15 Tillich, "The Word of Religion", in *The Protestant Era*, 185.

16 Ibid., 185.

17 Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture", in: *The Protestant Era*, 59.

18 Mary Ann Stenger, "Being and Word in Tillich's Doctrine of Spiritual Presence," in *Being versus Word in Paul Tillich's Theology?*, ed. Gert Hummel and Doris Lax (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999): 287–288.

under the conditions of existence, in Jesus the Christ.[19] The Kingdom of God is a symbol which expresses both the inner-historical transformation of life and history, and also the transhistorical, transcendent *telos* or fulfilment of life and history.[20]

The immanent experience of the divine within life and history is the province of the Spiritual Presence, the mediator of humanity's continued spiritual experience of transcendence.[21] The Spirit transforms even conditioned and fragmentary moments of transcending finitude into opportunities for spiritual freedom, diminished reliance on law, and other-mindedness.[22] Such spiritual experiences inevitably call people into community.[23]

The community called by such experiences, however, is not synonymous with the Church. What Tillich calls the Spiritual Community is concretely "manifest" in the Church and its churches, but it is also "latent" wherever and however individuals and groups seek holiness, truth and justice.[24] The Church can be both a concrete-historical location of transcendence, and that which must, by times, be transcended. "The Church, properly conceived is not a religious community but the anticipatory representation of a new reality."[25]

The primary symbols of this new reality are the Christ and the Kingdom. Together, these symbols shape the self-critical and self-transcending identity of the Church by speaking to the transformation of life and history without being subject to their distortions.[26] "A church which raises itself in its message and its devotion to the God above the God of theism without sacrificing its concrete symbols can mediate a courage which takes doubt and meaninglessness into itself. It is the Church under the Cross which alone can do this...".[27]

The kingdom to which the cross points stands outside of history as an image of reconciliation, of existence reunited with essence, where estrangement and ambiguity have been subsumed. It also stands within history as the eternal future of the church: faith which does not deny doubt and meaninglessness, but pronounces them reconciled within the self-transcending Christ, and the ongo-

19 ST III, 144.
20 ST III, 358–359.
21 ST III, 144.
22 Stenger, "Being and Word," 291–292.
23 Parrella, "Tillich's Theology," 79.
24 ST III, 152ff.
25 ST III, 243.
26 Paul Tillich, "The Problem of Theological Method," *Journal of Religion* XXVII/1 (January 1947): 16.
27 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 178.

ing work of the Spiritual Presence in community. It is through these symbols, and not according to whim or trend, that the church can both be aware and critical of its mission and faithfully communicate hope in the midst of crisis and change.

3 *Ecclesia crucis*: the New Reality

Like Tillich, contemporary theologian Douglas John Hall also describes his cultural era as being in crisis. However, for Hall, the crisis is not entirely tragic. He describes the decline of the church, at least in the West, as occurring over a much longer period of time than merely recent decades. The loss of institutional and narrative privilege is the result of centuries of challenges to claims of intellectual and ethical authority. He describes a church mired in denial and disbelief. The church of today is struggling to come to terms with a reversal of expectations, not so much concerning its message, but of its mission and methods of shaping community.[28]

For Hall, this is a task of great hope and possibility. The church which does not deny its loss of privilege, but participates in it knowingly and joyfully, is liberated to the Gospel and to renewed mission. Death and renewal are the shape of the *ecclesia crucis:* the church shaped by sacrificing the conditioned in favour of revealing what is unconditioned.

In his development of the concept of the *ecclesia crucis*, Hall notes that neither Jesus of Nazareth nor the cross of the Christ claim finality for themselves, but inevitably draw the individual out of self-concern, into relationship with the community.[29] The Cross ultimately reveals "God [who] suffers with the world", thereby expressing God's compassion for and solidarity with the world, and concern for the world's future.[30] Only a church which stands with the afflicted, not from a position of privilege, but from a posture of humility, is capable of communicating and embodying a new reality.

The church of institutional privilege – membership, authority, establishment, influence – is less exposed to the scandal of this message. While it may reach out to those in need, a privileged church risks less than those with whom it stands. The church of diminished privilege is compelled to reflect crit-

28 Douglas John Hall, *Confessing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 201.

29 Douglas John Hall, *Waiting for Gospel: An Appeal to the Dispirited Remnants of Protestant "Establishment"* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 101.

30 Hall, *Waiting for Gospel*, 83.

ically on its mission and purpose, to seek partnerships with other groups who also manifest justice and peace, and to stand with society's victims.

One example of this is the United Church of Canada's 1986 Apology to Aboriginal victims of a state-sponsored and church-operated school system which, for most of the 20th century, sought to rid Aboriginal peoples of their culture and identity. The potential legal and financial cost of issuing an apology for Residential Schools was uncertain, but predicted to be grave. The Apology, however, initiated conversation in Canada, resulting in the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose official mandate will be complete in 2015, and whose recommendations carry far-reaching implications not only for churches, but also for Canadian society.

Seen from this perspective, the decline of the institutional church is not a failure in its mission, but a theonomous critique of the inherited privilege that has brought it to this point. Consequently, the church's decline is not an anti-*kairos*, a dissolution in the face of an existential void or absolute end. Rather, it can be understood as a *kairos* moment. As the church surrenders its particularity and transcends the last vestiges of membership, authority and privilege, it finds courage in its concrete symbols of transformation and self-transcendence. The religious situation of our day is not one of tragedy, but of hope.

There remains an even larger picture beyond the church, as well. As was true for Tillich's late-career interest in inter-faith dialogue, the unique surrender of particularity to the universal in the *kairos* of the Christ can also be found among many *kairoi*. What happens in the cross "also happens fragmentarily in other places, in other moments, (and) has happened and will happen even though (these moments) are not historically or empirically connected with the cross."[31] Not only must the church continue genuine exchange with other faiths, it must also welcome the *kairoi* which will almost surely emerge completely outside of religious contexts.

At a time when it appears that the Spirit is working through many churches in decline, it is essential to once again assert that the Christian identity is not found in finite institutions, but in Christ and the Kingdom he reveals. As Tillich notes, "This is the meaning of faith as the state of being grasped by that which concerns us ultimately and not as a set of beliefs, even if the object of belief is a divine being."[32]

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31 Mary Ann Stenger and Ronald H. Stone, *Dialogues of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), 88.

32 ST III, 243.

Matthew Lon Weaver

Chapter 9

The Sacred Art of Teaching. Paul Tillich on Place, Boundary, and Pedagogy

Introduction

On a large bulletin board in my classroom, I tend an ever-growing garden of quotations: thirty-one of them at last count. They are in large font and clearly visible to students interested in reading them. Mary Oliver seeks to persuade them that "...the world offers itself to your imagination...."[1] Eudora Welty assures them that "...all serious daring starts from within."[2] Anne Sexton challenges them, "Put your ear down close to your soul and listen hard."[3] These words—and those of other great ones—are part of my practice of the art of teaching. Here, I will argue that teaching is the sacred art of en/couragement, calling each one forward out of a myriad of anxieties to offer the world a unique gift: her deepest self; his most creative presence.

1 Tillich on Education in General

I attended a university in which the offices of campus ministry were right outside the boundary of the main campus, seemingly apart in space and significance. At present, I am a chaplain and ethicist at a private preparatory school that contrasts with the situation of my university days: my classroom is near the heart of the campus. I am located in a hallway connecting the science and information technology wing with the humanities wing. All my students come to class with laptops, and the use of sources and tools accessible only by means of the Internet are a daily part of our classroom experience.

All of this has provoked me to consider how Tillich might have considered such an arrangement and my role in it. His self-awareness as a person and thinker on the boundary, his deep interest in the gifts and curses of technology, and

1 Mary Oliver, "Wild Geese," in *New & Selected Poems: Volume One* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 110.
2 Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983/1984), 114.
3 Anne Sexton, *The Poetry Archive*, http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/anne-sexton (2 July 2014).

https://doi.org/9783110533606-010

his perpetual practice of cross-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration provide rich resources for pursuing reflections on what teaching and learning mean amid the arrangements I have described.

One place where one might begin is his late article, "The Decline and the Validity of the Idea of Progress."[4] There, he concedes the undeniable and continuous progress in the expansion of human knowledge. Simultaneously, he asserts that the moral question at each point of human decision always poses the possibility of success and failure: ambiguity remains. Thus, while we can continually increase the data we gain from observing and examining existence, each gain poses questions of yes and no, right or wrong in both the implications and the use of the newly gained knowledge.

The year before "The Decline and the Validity of the Idea of Progress," Tillich published the third and final volume of his *Systematic Theology*. He pointed to education as one of the four areas manifesting progress, the other three being technology, science, and "the conquest of spatial divisions and separations within and beyond mankind."[5] He saw progress manifested in education "by training for skills, by the mediation of cultural contents, or by introduction into given systems of life...in individual education which directs the progress of a person toward maturity...[and in] social education, by which every generation is heir to the gains of preceding ones."[6]

Some of these statements seem to ignore the ambiguity of the movement through history—the tenacity of existential separation, the steps backward when generations forget or otherwise lose sight of the gains of their foremothers and –fathers. However, Tillich addresses other aspects of the ambiguity of education earlier in the volume, connecting education to the nurturing of personhood: "working toward the growth of a person is at the same time working toward [that person's] personalization. Trying to enhance a subject as subject makes it into an object...the extremes of totalitarian indoctrination and liberal unconcern...authoritarian discipline and liberal permissiveness, although rarely practiced to the full, appear as elements in the educational process and tend either to break the person as person or to prevent [the person] from reaching any definite form. In this respect the main problem of education is that every meth-

4 Paul Tillich, "The Decline and Validity of the Idea of Progress (One of the Edwin and Ruth Kennedy Lectures at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 19 May 1964)," in *The Future of Religions*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper and Row, 1966): 64–79 (Westport, Conn., 1966). See also ST III, 333–334.

5 ST III, 338–339.

6 *Ibid.*, 339.

od, however refined, increases the 'objectifying' tendency which it tries to avoid."[7]

Lest one be put off by this pessimistic generalization, note that Tillich is describing education apart from the grace-bearing Spirit Presence: a humanistic education imprisoning students within an imprisoning autonomy. A little further on, he continues, education means "leading out from something—that is of from a state of 'rudeness,' as the word 'e-rudition' indicates. But neither these words nor present educational practice answer the question: Leading into what? Unqualified humanism would reply: Into the actualization of human potentialities."[8] The problem for him is that humanistic education often takes place as the isolation of individuals in a way that defies the embodiment of community that is a part of the humanistic ideal.[9] The depth of the Ground of Being is what is missing.

As he notes later in the volume, "Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence [,] the educational act creates theonomy in the centered person by directing [that person] toward the ultimate from which [one] receives independence without internal chaos."[10] With a phrase almost hidden within the text, Tillich offers a glimpse of his theology of education: "If the educational or guiding communion between person and person is raised beyond itself by the Spiritual Presence, the split between subject and object in both relations is fragmentarily conquered and humanity is fragmentarily achieved."[11] Education, for him, is "guiding communion between person and person" where the grace-born reconciliation of estrangement is experienced for a time.[12] With these comments on Tillich's general thoughts on education, I turn to the connections he drew between these thoughts and the process of becoming a creative being.

7 *Ibid.*, 76

8 *Ibid.*, 85.

9 *Ibid.*, 86.

10 *Ibid.*, 261.

11 *Ibid.*

12 It strikes me as an unnecessary and contradictory distraction for Tillich to comment elsewhere that "Education does not initiate into the mystery of being to which religion points but introduces people only into the needs of a society whose needs and ends remain finite in spite of their endlessness" (ST III, 101).

2 Tillich on the Cultivation of Creativity

From his notion of the teacher-mentor relationship as the "communion between person and person," Tillich understood education's role as one of evoking, empowering, and enlivening the creativity of students. The creative use of knowledge—by which I mean the ethical use of any expansion of the substance of knowledge—requires courage. Paul Tillich's standard for a sound relationship of spirituality to pedagogy is the insistence that teaching evoke the courage within students to nurture and offer their power of being through creative acts of freedom within existence. One of creative action's significant barriers is conformity.

In his 1957 article, "Conformity," Tillich observed that conformity is not negative *per se*. However, it becomes so "if the individual form that gives uniqueness to a person is subdued by the collective form... [resulting in] *patternization*... Patternization is what determines our own period, both in learning and in life."[13] Tillich sought out both the paths of patternization as well as forces that resisted them. Tillich identified the causes of conforming patternization to be technical civilization, mass manipulation by powerholders in "economics, advertising and mass culture," and the yearning for security among the young that leads to the surrender to acceptance by the group at the expense of maintaining individual dignity.[14] The forces of resistance to patternization include, first, simple boredom of the audience that compels manipulators of the masses to innovate, second, artistic exposure of patternization, and, third, " the spirit of rebellion... that in its best manifestation is the courage to say yes to one's birthright as a unique, free, and responsible individual."[15] Tillich insisted that the courage to resist "is one rooted in the true, unfathomable depth of every human being. Out of this depth arises the courage to resist patternization. In religious language one would call it the prophetic spirit."[16] This unfathomable depth is each person's connection to the infinite, the eternal. A year before, he had already diagnosed the cultural malady of this disconnection to the eternal in the industrialized world. In "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," Tillich offered this indictment: "[As seen by] the spirit of industrial society...reality has lost its inner transcendence...its transparency for the eternal."[17] One of his favourite

13 Paul Tillich, "Conformity," 1957, in *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society*, ed. J. Mark Thomas (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988), 145.

14 *Ibid.*, 146–7 149.

15 *Ibid.*, 149.

16 *Ibid.*, 150.

17 Paul Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," (1956) in *A Theology of Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 43.

poets, Rilke, pointed to the importance of this connection to the eternal for the sometimes difficult and painful mission of the creative person:

> From infinite longings
> finite deeds arise...
> But in these dancing tears,
> what is often withheld can be found:
> our strength.[18]

Thus, it is not surprising that Tillich would eventually come to address courage as a fundamental element of achieving mature personhood. In his popular book, *The Courage to Be*, Tillich combines reflections on the understanding of courage in different stages of history—from Socrates and Seneca to Spinoza and Nietzsche—with an analysis of the different sources of deep anxiety—fate and death, emptiness and loss of meaning, guilt and condemnation. He understood them within a framework of personhood that sees the human condition as one lived within the trialectic of individual, communal and transcendent beings. He assembled all of this to paint the path of courage as "the self-affirmation of being in spite of non-being" through an "absolute faith" that "is the existential acceptance of something transcending ordinary experience" experienced in every "divine-human encounter" with the "God above God."[19] This absolute faith "is always a movement in, with, and under other states of mind. It is the situation of the boundary of [human] possibilities...the courage in and above every courage."[20] This is not a lonely courage, the courage of the isolated individual. This is the courage given "in the God above the God of theism."[21] This is the offering of self to the world by the one "en-couraged" by the grace of the ineffable, an ineffability captured by the closing words of the book, "*the God who appears when the God of theism has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.*"[22]

In perhaps his best-known sermon, having described the estrangement characterizing all levels of human relationships—individual and social—and the estrangement characterizing humanity's relationship to God, Tillich speaks of the empowerment that can break through dis-couragement when we're swept off our feet by accepting en-couragement of divine grace:

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18 Rainer Maria Rilke, "Coming to Be," in *A Year with Rilke* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 79.
19 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1952), 172–73, 186–87.
20 *Ibid.*,188–89.
21 *Ibid.*,190.
22 *Ibid.*

> "Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life...when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual, because we have violated another life, a life which we loved, or from which we were estranged...when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us... when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know... *Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!*"[23]

3 Tillich Correcting Tillich: Reclaiming Education as Sacred Space

In this concluding section, I suggest that Tillich's own thought can correct Tillich's ideas about space such that we can reclaim education as the sacred use of space as living en-couragement. For the significant part of the interwar years, Tillich spent a good bit of time arguing about matters of time and space and the dangers of sacralizing space. In certain places, he wrote of the Jewish people as a sort of archetype for the central importance of the prophetic critique offered by a people characterized by time toward people for whom spatial identity becomes sacred. This is most strongly expressed in *The Socialist Decision*. There and elsewhere he contrasted the "world historical mission of Jewish prophetism" with cultural trends—prevalent in many places in existence and found throughout time—that sacralize space, giving holy significance to people's connection to "the soil, possessions, the family, the tribe, the class, the nation, and politicocultic hierarchy."[24] In *The Socialist Decision* (1932), the prophetic functioned as the antithesis to myths of origin. This led him to his initial opposition to the need for a Jewish homeland and an almost grudging concession to it: it seemed to undercut the historic function of a special people. When Tillich did concede its significance, he hoped "that the space Israel has found as its own

23 Paul Tillich, "You Are Accepted," in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1948), 161–62.

24 Paul Tillich, "Basic Principles of Religious Socialism (1923)," in *Political Expectation*, ed. James Luther Adam and trans. James Luther Adams and Victor Nuovo, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 73. See *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman, intro. John R. Stumme (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1977).

space may lead to new embodiments of the prophetic spirit, and that from this new impulses will arise for Israel."[25]

This concession leads me to conclude that the time-space contrast of *The Socialist Decision* required maturity into a dialectic to succeed. My own construction of a Tillichian ethic—originally applied to the relationships among nations—is relevant to both the micro and macro levels of relationships. This is an ethic from the perspective of a dynamic boundary versus a static one, that calls for a sense of timing (*kairos*) regarding how creative, self-giving loving action (the embodiment of *agape*) should take shape as such action works to move history in the direction of justice, the latter understood through the eyes of the prophetic tradition, the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and the liberation movements with their occasionally acknowledged roots in Tillich's thinking.[26] When space—be it large or small—is filled with those qualities and with that sort of behaviour—qualities and behaviours to which Tillich himself refers—it becomes holy. When relationships have that quality—whether they occur in the interplay of nations or the friendship of five-year-olds or the electricity of effective teacher-student encounters—the relationships experience holiness. In such space, penultimate agendas driven by parochial exclusion are overwhelmed by the ultimate concerns of love and justice and acceptance sustained by a Spiritual Presence we can barely describe in our finitude but fragmentarily and incomparably experience in our infinitude.

Conclusion

In his essay, "Self-Reliance," Emerson exhorts the reader, "Whoso would be a complete person must be a nonconformist."[27] A few pages later, he cautions, "For nonconformity, the world whips you with its displeasure."[28] Yet, unrelentingly, and near the end of the piece, he encourages, "Insist on yourself; never imitate."[29] Only that last quote is on my bulletin board. I am not seeking to conceal from students the difficulty of offering their true and creative selves: they

25 Paul Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 1953, trans. Marion Pauck, *North American Paul Tillich Society Bulletin*, 30/3 (Summer 2004): 12–13.

26 Matthew Lon Weaver, *Religious Internationalism: The Ethics of War and Peace in the Thought of Paul Tillich* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2010), 277.

27 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance (1830–1841)," in *The Portable Emerson*, eds. Carl Bode and Malcolm Cowley (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 141.

28 *Ibid.*, 144.

29 *Ibid.*, 160.

know that difficulty. However, they also experience enough moments with me in which they have permission to step back from the high competitiveness and obsessively time-saturated schedules of their lives, to calm down and offer their true selves. In my teaching space, I seek to point to Rilke's wisdom:

> All this hurrying
> soon will be over.
> Only when we tarry
> do we touch the holy.[30]

In any teaching space, we are to plant and nurture the seeds of courage within the hearts and minds of vulnerable, anxious students by exuding self-giving acceptance. When that happens, courage flourishes and teaching space becomes holy space.

30 Rilke, "This Press of Time," in *A Year with Rilke*, 237.

Alexander T. Blondeau

Chapter 10

Paul Tillich, Salvation, and Big, Unnecessary, Crazy, Travel Adventure

Introduction[1]

Not long ago, two friends of mine returned to the United States after spending two years riding their bicycles across Europe and Asia. They are now in the process of building their own timber frame home and living off the grid in rural Vermont, with plans to grow their own food and learn to play the violin and cello. It was from these two delightful people that I first heard the name of a similarly delightful person. The name was Alastair Humphreys, and when I finally got around to looking him up, he had recently finished walking across most of Iceland while carrying an inflatable raft, which he then used to float the rest of the way down the Þjórsá river.

Now, Humphreys is a professional adventurer—a label not, as we shall see, without a certain tension.[2] But as I began to learn more about his various journeys across Greenland, India, and, well, his bicycle trip around the entire planet, it occurred to me that I didn't realize this was a viable career path; but apparently, it's a thing to do. There are several such individuals out there. I think, for example, of Rob Lilwall, a friend of Humphreys', and from back home, Andrew Skurka.

But what really grabbed my attention was Humphreys' recent efforts to encourage people to embark on what he calls "microadventures." You see, Humphreys, like all these adventurers, is an evangelist. And like all evangelists, he

1 For the delightful ring of the title of this paper, I must credit Phillippa Stewart. Phillippa Stewart, "The Rise of the Big, Unnecessary, Crazy, Travel Adventure " CNN, http://travel.cnn.com/rise-big-unnecessary-crazy-travel-adventure-910186. I would like to thank Peter Susag for carefully reading earlier drafts of this paper and offering very valuable feedback. In addition, I would also like to thank Kiara Jorgensen, Derek Maris, David Smoker, Dana Scopatz, Paul Greene, Thomas Watson, Josh de Keijzer, Lois Malcolm, Tyler Kellen, and Tara Alan for some very helpful conversations about to this paper.

2 Adventurer Rob Lilwall points to this tension when he says, "Although I have declined to enter the rat race of climbing a conventional career ladder, maybe I am just in a different sort of rat race to become a daring explorer. I wonder what the actual point of my journey is." Rob Lilwall, *Cycling Home from Siberia: 30,000 Miles, 3 Years, 1 Bicycle* (New York: Howard Books, 2011), Kindle Edition, 1466.

https://doi.org/9783110533606-011

is used to encountering resistance to his message of salvation. Microadventures are his tool to deal with this resistance. Sure, he grants, you may have a 9-to-5 job and therefore find it difficult to knock off and walk across Iceland. But what about that space of life between 5-to-9? Then, before his audience has a chance to muster an excuse, he tells them to grab a train, climb a hill, sleep under the stars, jump in a lake, then get back to one's normal job... which will—owing to the previous night's activities—no longer feel quite so normal.

In this paper, I am interested in exploring this ability of adventure to deepen everyday life. And it is by way of this metaphor of deepening that I will be making use of Paul Tillich's thought throughout. My contention will be that the experience of adventure can be an opening to the *depth of being* within the *structure of being*, or, to put it in less Tillichian jargon, that adventure is an opening to the experience of God—to *salvation*—in normal, everyday life.[3]

To do this, I will begin by briefly touching on the ambiguity of adventure and relating a positive interpretation of the idea to Tillich's notions of structure and depth. I will then proceed to illustrate these meanings by way of first painting a picture of merely everyday life as an existential problem, then I will move on to illustrate the salvific dimensions of adventure by way of the experience of adventurer Rob Lilwall. Next, the objections that adventure is escapism, consumerism or nihilism will be briefly addressed. The paper will then close with the suggestion that Tillich's conception of depth as both *abyss* and *ground* nicely correlates with the way that Humphreys has come to think of his own adventuring.

1 Orienting Some Silly Words

With that said, let us now move to consider the ambiguity of adventure. What are we to make of the phrase "big, unnecessary, crazy, travel adventure?" On the one hand this is a rather silly string of words. I came across the phrase in a CNN ar-

3 This idea is an extension of the thinking of Sebastian Moore, who lists four openings of desire to its ultimate cause. He says that "Desire launched on the unpredictable is headed for the ultimate mystery of desire." The four examples of this he lists are: 1) an intimate relationship, 2) taking initiatives with many others by extending intimacy to them, 3) creative solitude and inner silence, and finally, 4) listening to the voice of conscience. Sebastian Moore, *Let This Mind Be in You: The Quest for Identity through Oedipus to Christ* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1985), 55–6. This paper is an attempt to add a fifth example of desire launched on the unpredictable: the practice of adventuring. Here it should be noted that for Tillich, where there is revelation (what I'm roughly calling "the experience of God"), there is salvation. "Revelation can be received only in the presence of salvation, and salvation can occur only within a correlation of revelation." ST II, 144.

ticle describing how among a growing number of people, riding one's bicycle around the world is no longer interesting. To be worthy of conversation these days, "you have to do it on a unicycle."[4] Putting such zaniness in conversation with the idea of salvation might strike one as rather juvenile, but from another perspective (the one I hope to advocate for), these terms are uncannily well suited to describe the vision of salvation I'm interested in articulating.

Viewed from the first angle, big, unnecessary, crazy, travel adventure, might be understood as an ego-fuelled attempt to prove something to one's self or others by way of an irresponsible casting aside of societal norms, combined with a sort of geographic dilettantism. However, when viewed sympathetically in conversation with soteriological themes, the bigness of these adventures speaks to an enlarging of one's awareness and desires beyond narrow contexts and commitments. Their unnecessary nature connects with themes of gratuity, giftedness, and grace. The element of craziness speaks to the way the sanctified hold their values and live their lives in ways that seem utterly out of joint with the typical patterns of human behaviour. And finally, travel suggests an ever-moving spiritual non-attachment to temporal realities that is birthed from an eternal security. I maintain that these are plausible interpretations of spiritually positive aspects of these terms.

As a mindset, I see adventure as being near to what C.S. Lewis called *joy:* "... an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction".[5] Adventurous desire risks failure, endures hardship, and sacrifices well-laid plans. In so doing, it makes possible an intensity of life that would otherwise be missed if one stayed safely within the walls of one's usual expectations, routines, and satisfactions. Adventure, I claim, has the potential to shake us, transform us, and even to heal us.[6] I will address a few of the negative interpretations of some of these terms later in the paper. These positive qualities of adventure, however, I will be placing in contrast to an idea of normal everyday life, which will receive its treatment in the following section.

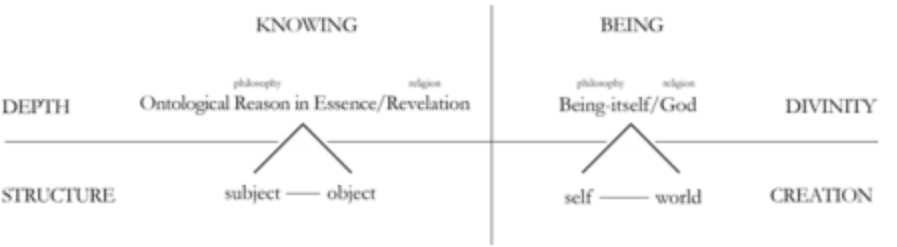
The next set of terms we will be interacting with are Tillich's notions of structure and depth. Depth is the highest level of Tillich's ontology of both reason and being. In symbolic language, depth is *revelation* and *God* respectively. Structure, on the other hand, is the second level of both reason and being. It is characterized by the subject/object structure of reason and the self/world structure of being. In symbolic language, structure is the realm of creation, both in rational

4 Stewart, "The Rise of the Big, Unnecessary, Crazy, Travel Adventure."

5 C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), 17–8.

6 ST II, 166–7.

and ontological terms. The relation of structure to depth can be stated simply enough: depth is the transcendence, or union, of the subject/object structure of reason and the self/world structure of being. Salvation, in Tillich's terms, is the dynamic union of structure and depth, the substance of which is love.



However, the simplicity of these preceding statements belies a difficulty that bears directly on our topic. Creation longs for depth. Yet, the stage upon which all our strivings for depth takes place is always that of structure. The difficulty is that to the extent that structure purports to grasp depth as either a rational object or as an element within one's world, the structural transcendence of depth is lost. Depth is mistaken for structure. God, thusly profaned, becomes one of our gods, and, at least potentially, a demonic power.[7] For this reason, depth can never be directly approached within structure. It remains inconceivable to reason and ungraspable in all other dimensions of life.

The relationship I wish to suggest between my adventurous terms and these Tillichian concepts can now be stated. The salvific potential of adventure is the cultivation of a desire for depth without ever resolving that desire into a merely structural satisfaction. It is a practice in growing the capacity for encountering newness, the unknown, and the unknowable in joy and in love. With these parts roughly sketched we can now move on to illustrate these terms by way of two images: normal everyday life, and Rob Lilwall's adventure.

7 One of Tillich's most penetrating analyses of this dynamic can be found in his essay "The Demonic" where he says, "Form of being and inexhaustibility of being belong together. Their unity in the depth of essential nature is the divine, their separation in existence, the relatively independent eruption of the 'abyss' in things, is the demonic." Paul Tillich, "The Demonic," in *The Interpretation of History* (New York: Scribner, 1936), 84.

2 Normal Everyday Life: Structure

There comes a point in everyone's life where it dawns on us that not only is everyone around us working for something, but that we are to become someone who works for something too. For many of us, the net seems finally to start to close around us once we consider heading off to university.

At this point, the question is asked to the now just barely differentiated personality "what do you want to do with your life?" Since it appears to be a serious question, one then begins scanning the horizon for role models. "Just what *do* we do around here anyway? And which of those things do I want to do?" The original generic desire of childhood is encouraged to be funnelled into something definite, a desire for *something particular:* a job, a relationship, a place to live. Upon choosing the thing which we will do, we find ourselves, just like that, now comfortably slotted into a system of promises and demands that are more or less ready-made to receive us. From now on, our energies, our time, and our money will be put towards the end of doing and protecting this thing that the wisdom of our fifteen-year-old self thought most fitting to its occurrent desires.

We are now in the realm of what I'm calling "normal everyday life." Normal everyday life is characterized by the pursuit of clearly defined desires, the avoidance of pain and suffering, and conditions that make possible the formation of expectations that are regularly met. This is the realm of the known and the knowable.

Tillich's thought is immensely helpful when it comes to framing this mode of being. He often spoke of "ordinary experience," usually in the context of contrasting technical activity with religious consciousness.[8] What Tillich means by "ordinary experience" is experience predominated by what we might call *structural awareness*. Structural awareness is ordinary because, in Tillich's thought it is the basic condition of all existence: the separation between subject and object, between self and world. All ordinary acts of knowing and desiring therefore assume this basic separation, for to seek to know something assumes that what is sought is not already a part of the one who seeks it. The same also applies for desire.

As such, this concept of structure might appear so altogether ordinary that it completely exhausts reality. To live in the real world, then, would be to live wholly within structural awareness, absolutely separated from all other subjects and objects in reality. Yet even from within structural awareness, what Tillich calls

8 ST III, 59.

"the drive toward reunion" is operative.[9] This drive toward the reunion of that which is separated is the metaphysical picture he uses to characterize the phenomena of all human desiring and knowing. However, to the extent that structural awareness dominates the human psyche, reunion becomes *consumption*.[10] If the separation between subject and object is deemed absolute, there is no reunion. Fulfilment can then only be understood in spatial or temporal categories of personal increase or attaining a long life. Otherness becomes a medium to be merely taken into oneself, or a threat to be guarded against.[11]

What I want to point out at this stage is that, because of the dynamics of separation and the drive toward reunion, normal everyday life has a curious way of making promises that it can't keep. It is assumed that the culturally supported ideal associated with the *something particular* that we are working towards will bring fulfilment. It can be years before we realize that the expectations of fulfilment associated with a clearly defined particular something, fail to meet the hype. This is so because, to use Pauline terms, it is, like everything in the world, subject to futility. Like all particular things that exist, such a goal is marked by a melancholic running out, a slipping away.[12] Even if the particular end towards which we had aimed is brilliantly met, it is not long before it is rec-

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9 For example, see his description of the ontological structure of knowledge for one prominent example of this *erotic* element of life. ST I, 94–5.

10 Historian Patrick French sheds light on this degeneration to mere consumption. "I remember a moment in a pristine shopping center in southern England. There were clean metal elevators, themed shops, designed spaces, corporate brands, and coffee bars. As I rose sleekly from one floor to another, looking down through the glass and light, I felt that few people in this shoppers' paradise seemed content. There was an air of anxiety, as if time was running out for all of them. It brought me back to a moment in Tibet, to a memory of a group of men and women sitting, laughing, on the edge of a field of barley after a morning's harvest, wearing wide-brimmed hats to keep off the strong sun, each one spinning wool on a spindle or carving a wooden peg, telling a joke, passing the day. *In the free world, the invented world, there is little time for being.* Each step is managed, and you have to work ever harder to get the money to buy the things that will keep you from falling out of the system. The people in the shopping center had everything, but all they wanted was more, because having everything did not make life easier for them; they had to run just to stand still." Patrick French in Lilwall, *Cycling Home*, 34–48. Emphasis added.

11 Tillich's description of sin as *unbelief, hubris, and concupiscence* is a penetrating analysis of this dynamic. ST II, 47–55.

12 Augustine provides us with a classical example: "Things rise and set: in their emerging they begin as it were to be, and grow to perfection; having reached perfection, they grow old and die. Not everything grows old, but everything dies. So when things rise and emerge into existence, the faster they grow to be, the quicker they rush towards non-being. That is the law limiting their being." Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), IV, x, 15, 61.

ognized that even the most successful ambitions within structural awareness come to naught in death.

We see this realization often in the typical midlife crisis and the concomitant uptick in behaviour that flaunts the demands and promises of previous efforts to attain fulfilment within merely structural awareness. We quit our jobs, start looking up old boyfriends or girlfriends, get divorced, travel to far-flung countries, and start playing the banjo. The question "What do you want to do with your life?" at last becomes "What have I done with my life?" Up until now, everything in life has had a point to it. We knew what we were after. But what is left for us when the point is exposed as pointless?

Therefore, what I have been calling "normal everyday life," that is, structure as merely structure, runs itself out. The culturally supported quest for a fulfilled life on the basis of mere structural awareness ends ultimately in a question mark.[13] As much as we may roll our eyes at the rambunctious behaviour of the midlife crisis, it is on to an important truth. The embrace of unpredictability and spontaneity are *themselves* the answer to the question that normal everyday life leaves us with. The answer to the question that everyday life raises is depth, and adventure can be an opening to that terrible and fascinating reality.

3 Adventurous Life: Depth

In 2004, at age 27, Rob Lilwall quit his job as a geography teacher, caught a plane from London and took it east, almost to Alaska, but stopped just short in the Siberian city of Magadan, Russia.[14] The plan was as simple as it was vague: ride his bike home. Joined by his friend Alastair, who was in the midst of his own unnecessary journey, the two of them set about racing winter south (a race that was swiftly and decidedly settled in favour of winter).[15]

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13 For those alive to the occurrence of this reality in their lives, it can be an extraordinarily painful place to be. The only mode of operation they have ever been aware of now becomes their trap. These dynamics are often seen in religious communities whose concepts of self and God do not transcend a structural construal. For an account of spiritual direction as the task of helping individuals recognize the strength to transcend structural self-absorption see William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, revised and updated ed. (New York: Harper One, 2009), esp. 51.

14 Lilwall, *Cycling Home*.

15 Alastair Humphreys, *Thunder & Sunshine* (London: Eye Books, 2009). *Moods of Future Joys* (London: Eye Books, 2009).

They began their journey by way of a route known, optimistically, as "The Road of Bones," so named due to the fact that the bodies of the countless Gulag prisoners who built it were simply incorporated into the road upon their death. But for Rob, the route quickly came to have more personally threatening connotations. In Magadan, everyone who heard of his plans immediately set about providing him with their own personal theory as to the precise manner by which he would die. Assuming he survived the bears, the top contenders were the sub-zero cold, starvation, wolves, or the wild inhabitants of the land itself. In the midst of all these grim images, a new realization merged in his mind. He said, "It was the realization, for the first time in my life, of my own mortality. I grasped that, one day, I too would die."[16]

This realization was not to be an isolated experience, but rather, the threat of death was to be an ever-present companion for the next three years, during which he would separate from Alastair in Japan, cycle/carry his bicycle through the jungles of New Guinea, cycle around Australia, through China, over the Himalayas, across war-torn Afghanistan, and through the Middle East, before finally arriving back in England. He would spend countless nights in unfamiliar lands with unfamiliar people, be robbed at gunpoint, contract malaria, and be nearly crushed under a vehicle.

Measured by the standards of normal everyday life, which prioritizes safety, predictability, clearly defined desires, and the known and knowable, Lilwall's journey was utterly crazy. Every step of the journey was marked by danger, unpredictability, and the unknown. Desire was driving him, but even at the end of his journey he could not identify just what it was he desired. There was nothing *in particular* that he could point to; there was no *object* of desire, and yet his final appraisal of the experience was that, in all this, he "came alive."[17] However, this experience of coming alive by way of adventure was difficult for him to make sense of. Arriving home, he felt a "strange emptiness." He said, "I have enjoyed some good adventures on this journey..., but what is the point of adventure?"[18]

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16 Lilwall, *Cycling Home*, 280–281.

17 This theme of longing for "that which we know not what" *as an end* is not readily understood in our time, but it is a classically Augustinian theme captured in his phrase "*desiderium sinus cordis*" ("It is yearning that makes the heart deep.") in Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 150. C.S. Lewis much later picks up on the same theme in his description of his own mystical experiences and resulting concept of joy. Joy, he says, is "...an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 17–18.

18 Lilwall, *Cycling Home*, 1462.

4 Some Objections[19]

Lilwall's question provides me with an opportunity to respond to some objections that might be levelled at my suggestion that adventure can be an opening to depth, and therefore salvation. Either adventure has a point or it does not. If it has a point worthy of the existential doubt in Lilwall's question, that point is salvation, the fulfilment of human potential, the acquisition of grace.

But this idea is faced with a powerful criticism articulated by Mike Grimshaw who, in his work pertaining to travel and religion, has been critical of the tendency of contemporary quests for authenticity via travel and tourism to locate authenticity or grace as always "elsewhere." "The critique," he says, "is against all theologies of tourism, travel and exile. It is against all attempts to locate the rupture of grace anywhere but where we find ourselves."[20] Grimshaw points to the tourist's belief that if life is not deemed meaningful where one presently lives out their everyday life, significance can be bought (consumed) from elsewhere.[21]

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19 During my talk Reinhold Bernhardt raised an important objection that does not easily fit into the way I structured this section. He asked what the salvific dimension of adventure means for someone who is trapped in an oppressive situation. To this I must confess that adventure is probably not the most apt metaphor to speak of salvation in such a context. The idea that adventure has salvific potential fits most naturally into contexts where life has been profaned, rather than in contexts where life is under the grip of the demonic.

20 Mike Grimshaw, *Bibles and Baedekers: Tourism, Travel, Exile and God* (Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2008), 11.

21 "There thus exists a strong sense of nihilism in the Western pursuit of geopiety that is exotic and different, that is 'authentic' because it is so different to where we are. For the geopiety of travel and tourism is never where most of us live. Therefore, what the merging of tourism, travel, religion, and spirituality alert us to is the degree to which vast numbers of Westerners view their everyday locations and possibilities therein as ultimately unsatisfying. They are, in Marxist terms, alienated and seek the opiate of constant travel to elsewhere to cover the pain of this alienation." Mike Grimshaw, "Sheilas on the Move? Religion, Spirituality, and Tourism," *Journal of Religious History* 37, no. 4 (2013): 546. Wendell Berry advances a similar critique in his essay 'Writer and Religion,' where he faults Mark Twain's conclusion of Huckleberry Finn, in which Huck's final decision is to escape being civilized and, instead, setting off for parts unknown: "[W]e are asked to believe," he says, "...that there are no choices between the 'civilization' represented by pious slave owners like Miss Watson or lethal 'gentlemen' like Colonel Sherburn and lighting out for the Territory." The symbol of "Lighting out for the territory" strikes Berry as a continual deferment of adult responsibility and the absence of any imagination of a healthy communal reality. Wendell Berry, "Writer and Religion," in *What Are People For?: Essays* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990). Much like Grimshaw's critique, Berry does capture an ambiguity of adventure. These examples make clear that not all that goes by the name "adventure" is salvific.

Grimshaw's critique gets at the difficulty I mentioned earlier, the difficulty of not resolving depth into another sort of structure, in this case, an "elsewhere." In this sense, I reject the idea that the point of adventure is to attain salvation. In the terms that I am developing here, significance or grace, do not reside in mere structure, but in depth as manifest *through* structure. For this reason there is an indirect truth contained in the tourist's efforts to attain significance "elsewhere," for *the unknown* implicit in "elsewhere" remains an opening to the *unknowable* that is the transcendence of subject and object in depth. The mistake of Grimshaw's tourist is to imagine that depth is another sort of structure that can be attained if only one can get there. But salvation is a new relationship between structure as such and depth, not the mistaking of structure for depth, understandable though it may be.[22]

On the other hand, if adventure has no point, this can be understood two different ways. The first way is nihilism. Adventure, understood thusly, has no significance. It points to nothing. This is the logical end of structure as merely structure. The second way that adventure might have no point is to sublate the question. In this way, adventure in its salvific mode has no point because the depth consciousness that emerges in adventure relativizes the very idea of "having a point." It also points to nothing, but in the sense of the eternal super-abundance that is no-thing. The means-ends relationship in which having a point makes sense is a merely structural reality. The appearance of depth within structure sublates the quest for a point in the awareness of an unfathomable depth.[23]

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22 The same can be illustrated by what Tillich says about the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of the spirit: "The self-transcendence of life under the dimension of the spirit cannot become alive without finite realities [structure] which are transcended. Thus there is a dialectical problem in self-transcendence in that something is transcended and at the same time not transcended [depth]. It must have concrete existence, otherwise nothing would be there to be transcended; yet it should not 'be there' anymore but should be negated in the act of being transcended." ST III, 97–8.

23 An unrelated criticism is that adventure is inherently narcissistic and does not free one to the service of the other. On this, two brief points: First, narcissism is perhaps best characterized as the clinging to an image of self at the expense of reality. Authentic adventure, I would argue, is in this sense iconoclastic. The abundant unknown in self and world are constantly sought over the limitations of cherished images. Secondly (and this warrants a paper in its own right), I am convinced that there is enough of an analogy between an adventure of, say, exploring some unknown mountain range, and entering into a relationship with another human being as to make a strong case that authentic adventure has the potential greatly to enlarge our capacity for intimacy with others, not stifle it.

Conclusion: Seeing the Face of God

To conclude, it has been my contention that in a world made shallow by the prioritizing technical control in all realms of life, adventure, though not free from ambiguity, is well suited to be an opening to depth, and for that reason the experience of salvation. Though not all adventure is salvific, all salvation is adventure, for it is in the shaking of our complacency and transformation of our awareness that the healing power of New Being takes hold.

I will close by considering a remark Alastair Humphrey's made after traversing the Greenland icecap: how should several weeks of tremendous physical hardship in freezing conditions be characterized, he reflected? "Pointless, but meaningful."[24] In those two terms I can't help but hear the twin concepts Tillich used to describe depth: "abyss" and "ground." As "abyss," depth swallows up all particular beings and meanings in its inexhaustible abundance. As "ground," depth is that from which all particular beings and meanings have their source.[25] For that reason, the one who describes their experience as pointless but meaningful sounds to me like one who has seen the very the face of God. And to that limited extent, adventure is salvation.

24 Alastair Humphreys, "Greenland," http://www.alastairhumphreys.com/adventures/greenland/.

25 Depth is "the 'ground' which is creative in every rational creation, or the 'abyss' which cannot be exhausted by any creation or by any totality of them." ST I, 79.

Reinhold Bernhardt

Chapter 11

"One can distinguish two ways of approaching God: the way of overcoming estrangement and the way of meeting a stranger." Paul Tillich's Engagement with Buddhism

1 Two Ways

"One can distinguish two ways of approaching God: the way of overcoming estrangement and the way of meeting a stranger." This is how Paul Tillich begins his essay "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion", published in 1946.[1] It refers to an earlier article, "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought."[2] There, he unpacks the difference between the two ways. They stand for two types of thinking about God, for two methods philosophers and theologians used and use to try to attain "knowledge" or – as he prefers to say – "awareness" of God. Let us take a closer look at these two ways. I will start with the second way: The way of meeting God as a stranger.

Tillich characterizes this way as follows: "I approach God as one 'unknown' who happens to come in my orbit. I make statements about him in terms of doubt and possibility and perhaps probability. I am at first suspicious, then friendly towards him, and may even become his friend. And he, as the more powerful and more perfect one, may give me support, direction and mercy; he may reveal himself to me within the limits of our remaining alienation. But all this is accidental for both of us."[3]

This slightly ironical description implies a critique of theism. God is portrayed like a human being who appears "in my orbit". He comes from an outer world, reveals himself in the cosmic reality or in his external word. Meeting God as a "stranger" means not standing in an *essential* relationship to him. God is regarded as an *external* being who has to be approached not at the centre of the human self, but by a kind of "externalizing" of the subject. Thus meeting God as a stranger leads to self-estrangement.

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1 Paul Tillich, "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion (1946)," in Paul Tillich, *Ausgewählte Texte*, ed. Christian Danz, Werner Schüßler and Erdmann. Sturm (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 289–300, 289.

2 Paul Tillich, "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought (1944)," in MW VI, 255–272.

3 Tillich, "Estrangement," 258.

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Interestingly, Tillich would have to classify both Barth's theology of the Word of God and so-called natural theology as approaches which follow the second way. He does not refer explicitly to those theological movements but he may have been conscious of them when writing the essay. He also may have been conscious of Barth's distinction between the "dogmatic", the "critical" and the "dialectical" way of understanding and proclaiming the gospel from Barth's famous article, "Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie."[4]

Tillich says that if God is met as a stranger he is only encountered by chance before slipping away again. That way of achieving knowledge of God does not lead to certainty – only probabilities.

Thus Tillich prefers the first way of approaching God: the way of overcoming estrangement. For this way,

> man meets himself and not a stranger. But in himself he meets something which is more himself than *he* is and which, at the same time, infinitely transcends himself. What he meets is so to speak the *prius* of himself, and consequently it is present even in the most radical self-estrangement and enmity against oneself and God. The basic certainty cannot be lost.[5]

Human life always stands in the tension between existence (factual life) and essence (the actual destination of life). These are the "main qualities" of human life. Tillich denotes the difference between existence and essence as self-alienation. In this kind of estrangement, subject and object are not two different persons but one and the same person. The person is alienated from him- or herself, that is to say from the essence of his or her being. But because "essence" means being rooted in the ground of being, self-alienation also is alienation from God, who is beyond the difference of essence and existence.[6] Metaphorically speaking, essence is the original image *(imago dei)* of the human being: the human being as it was and is intended by God. When humans discover themselves as estranged from their original image, they recognize God as the original ground and ultimate point of reference of this original image. Thus overcoming estrangement is a way of approaching God. In centring my being in being-itself, I overcome estrangement and discover God.

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4 Karl Barth, "Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie," in *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1922–1925, Gesamtausgabe III, vol. 19* (Zurich: Theologische Verlag, 1990), 144–175. It would be interesting to compare Tillich's twofold scheme with Barth's distinction of three ways, but that would exceed the scope of this article.

5 Tillich, "Estrangement," 258.

6 ST II, 205.

This is a discovery of unity and difference, simultaneously. The human being discovers his true being as "something that is identical with himself, although it transcends him infinitely."[7] And in this true self the *ground* of being is disclosed to him, *being-itself* and the *power* of being.

We find a similar connection between self-knowledge and God-knowledge in the first lines of Calvin's *Institutes*:

> Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other.[8]

According to Tillich, this is the first way to God: The way of realizing one's *essential* relationship to God by way of realizing one's self-estrangement from the essence of being: God not as a being besides me, but as the essential ground of existence.

In the essay "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion" he further elaborates on this distinction. Using the two ways as symbols for two types of philosophy of religion, the ontological and the cosmological, he proposes that the ontological method should be given priority.

"The ontological principle in philosophy of religion may be stated in the following way: Man is immediately aware of something unconditional which is the prius of the separation and interaction of subject and object, theoretically as well as practically."[9] The *immediate awareness* of the Unconditioned is the core of the ontological method. It is impossible to become aware of it as an observer who stands over against it. One only can become aware of it by realizing that one already is conditioned by it in one's whole being. It is only possible to become conscious of God as the ground of being by means of existential involvement, and not through recognizing within the scheme of the separation of subject and object.

Tillich refers to Augustine as the theological authority who has laid the foundation for the ontological method, assuming that the religious absolute is presupposed in every philosophical question, including the question of God: "God is the presupposition of the question of God."[10] The affinity between Tillich

7 Tillich, "The Two Types," 289.

8 John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2002), http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.html), I,1,1

9 Tillich, "The Two Types," 296. (the second part of the quotation is printed in italics).

10 *Ibid.*, 290.

and Calvin in this respect – which I mentioned just before – should not surprise us, because Calvin is also deeply rooted in Augustine's theology.

The cosmological type, on the other hand, relies on the perception of the senses and abstraction from perceived experiences. It leads to knowledge about reality but does not lead to an awareness of the *principles* of reality and truth. It leads to a *mediated* knowledge of God by means of empirical experience, rational reasoning and reference to authorities. The cosmological type shows reality in the created light of perception, rationality and belief, but it does not allow one to see the uncreated light – the source of light – itself. And that is what Tillich wants to see.

What does the distinction of the two ways of approaching God have to do with Tillich's encounter with Buddhism? I am convinced that one can find the intellectual seeds for his interest in that encounter on the one hand in his understanding of the ontological model, and on the other hand in the provocation of that model by the Buddhist way of thinking about the Absolute. He strives to see not only *in* the light, but the light itself. And that was what Buddhism promised to achieve in its own way. Thus the essay on the two types of philosophy of religion – even if written years before Tillich got interested in an encounter with the Eastern Religions, in particular Buddhism – can be understood as a signpost that points to the opening for that encounter. However, when he engaged in the dialogue with Japanese Buddhism he discovered that the first way of approaching God – the way of overcoming estrangement by participating in being-itself – is challenged by a philosophy that in certain ways critically questions his concept of "being-itself," in that it regards ultimate reality not as the ground of being but as absolute nothingness.

One can say that the second way of approaching God – the way of meeting a stranger – received a second meaning. Tillich wanted to go beyond theological provincialism, the focus on the occidental tradition of theology and philosophy.[11] He wanted to overcome the mainly apologetic attitude of Christian theology towards other religions and enter into a "creative dialogue," which provokes and inspires one's own way of thinking and facilitates constructive transformations.

11 Paul Tillich, "On the Boundary Line," *Christian Century* (December 7, 1960): 1435–1437, quotation 1435, in extracts reprinted in *The Essential Tillich. An Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich*, ed. F. Forrester Church (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987): 209–213, 210.

2 Tillich's Encounter with Buddhism

In autumn 1957 Tillich engaged the Japanese Zen Master Hisamatsu Shin'ichi in three discussions at Harvard University that deeply influenced him. He was particularly impressed by Hisamatsu as a person.[12] Reflecting on these encounters he said in April 1958 that "if you meet a person who really has the qualities of a saint, which this man has, then the simple reality of this being gives you more insight into the nature of that for which he lives than any external knowledge."[13] This encounter thus can be related in a certain way to both ways of attaining knowledge: the way of acquiring "external knowledge" and the way of becoming aware of the essence of being, through exposing oneself to the ground of the own existence ("the simple reality of this being gives ... insight into the nature of that for which he lives").

Tillich had already encountered Buddhism at the beginning of the 1950's. The psychoanalyst Karen Horney established the contact between Tillich and Daisetsu T. Suzuki. Tillich was teaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York when Suzuki was appointed to teach at Columbia University. It is not possible to say exactly when the two met. Suzuki was not an ordained Zen teacher and represented a western orientated form of Buddhism which was in part regarded as unorthodox. Heidegger is said to have stated after his study of Suzuki's work that "if I understand this man correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings." [14]

However, the basis for Tillich's openness to the spiritual world of Buddhism does not lie in the more or less chance meeting with Suzuki. It lies in Tillich's search for existential forms of meaning ("*Sinnformen*") during the crisis of meaning ("*Sinnkrise*") after the Second World War. This search for new patterns of

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12 Documented in: *The Eastern Buddhist* 4 (1971), 89–107; 5 (1972) 107–128; 6 (1973) 87–114; reprinted in: Paul Tillich, *The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-Religions*, ed. by T. Thomas (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 75–170. See also Carl Olson, "Tillich's Dialogue with Buddhism," *Buddhist-Christian-Studies* 7 (1987): 183–195; Langdon Gilkey, "Tillich and the Kyoto School," in *Papers from the Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, Boston, Massachusetts, December 1987 (Charlottesville, VA: North American Paul Tillich Society, 1987), 1–10, reprinted in Robert P. Scharlemann, ed., *Negation and Theology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 72–85; Werner Schüßler and Erdmann Sturm, *Paul Tillich. Leben – Werk – Wirkung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 150–162 (especially 158–163), and 244–246.

13 Paul Tillich, "The Protestant Principle and the Encounter of World Religions," reprinted in Tillich, *The Encounter*, 1-56; 28.

14 *Zen Buddhism, Selected writings by Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki*, ed. William Barrett (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), xi-xii.

meaning led him through engagement with existential philosophy, psychoanalysis and contemporary literature to an interest in Buddhism. While the experience of meaninglessness was discerned and analysed in the streams of western culture referred to above in order to *overcome* it, in Zen Buddhist thinking he found a fascinating alternative to this. Here, the extinguishing of the self in emptiness was envisaged as the *goal* of the spiritual path. One can say that in existential philosophy, the experience of the void or emptiness was regarded as the "question" in the sense of the method of correlation. In Buddhism, this experience was the "answer".

Tillich's deeply influential encounter with Zen Buddhism first took place in 1957. As mentioned before, in the Autumn of that year he had engaged in three discussions with Hisamatsu Shin'ichi. In 1958 he gave the lecture "The Protestant Principle and the Encounter of the World Religions."[15] The most significant experience, however, was his journey to Japan from 1st of May to the 10th July 1960. The insights he gained there flowed into his lecture "Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions," given in New York in autumn 1961.[16] Until his death in 1965 he engaged intensively with this theme.[17]

Through this openness to Zen Buddhist thinking, a transformation of Tillich's theological thinking occurred. Reflecting on this, he said "(I) felt an immense enrichment of substance ever since my trip".[18] The word substance in this case "means more than new insights and certainly more than a better knowledge of another section of the world. It means being somehow transformed through participation."[19] This transformation – as far as one can reconstruct it – consisted not so much in specific new insights as in a broadening of the horizons of his thinking. Not so much *what* is thought, but the *thinking* as such has changed, not so much the content as the framework. Tillich described this as a "volcanic experience."[20]

One can easily appreciate why Tillich was so fascinated by the Zen Buddhist cultural world and spirituality. Above all it was the paradox of an "ontology of

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15 Paul Tillich, "The Protestant Principle and the Encounter of the World Religions," in *The Encounter*, 1–56.

16 Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York / London: Columbia University Press, 1963), reprinted in: MW V, 291–325.

17 Paul Tillich, "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian," in *The Future of Religions*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 80–94.

18 Tillich, "On the Boundary Line".

19 *Ibid.*

20 Wilhelm Pauck and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought*, Vol. I: *Life* (London: Collins, 1977), 260.

nothingness", already mentioned, that he encountered there. According to the Kyoto School of Zen Buddhism as it was expounded by Keiji Nishitani, (who wrote his dissertation thesis on Schelling and Bergson, studied Heidegger intensively, and had been teaching philosophy at Kyoto since 1943), the "field of *śūnyatā* (emptiness)" is the ultimate ground of being and of nothingness, of the self and the not-self. The "standpoint of emptiness" opens up "an absolutely non-objective knowing of the absolutely non-objective self in itself."[21] This was exactly what Tillich was looking for. Nishitani, however, went further and claimed that the *self* is not the gate to the ground of being. Rather, the self has to be transcended:

> The standpoints of conscious and discursive (discerning) intellect and intuitive intellect are broken. The standpoints of the subject that knows things objectively, and likewise knows itself objectively as a thing called the self, is broken down. This not-knowing is the self as an absolutely non-objective selfness, and the self-awareness that comes about at the point of that not-knowing comes down to a 'knowing of the non-knowing'. This self-awareness, in contrast with what is usually taken as the self's knowing of itself, is not a 'knowing' that consists in the self's turning to itself and refracting into itself. It is not 'reflective' knowing. What is more, the intuitive knowledge or intellectual intuition that are ordinarily set up in opposition to reflective knowledge leave in their wake a duality of seer and seen, and to that extent still show traces of 'reflection.'[22]

An epistemology like that must have been a stimulating provocation for Tillich. It took "the way of overcoming estrangement" beyond the point which Tillich focused on: the self ought not to reflect on its ground which is the ground of being. Rather, the self has to leave itself behind in order to enter into a ground which is not being itself but absolute nothingness.

The discussion with Hisamatsu focused on the place beyond the division between subject and object, beyond that division in which objective recognition takes place. It is a placeless place, an extensionless point that Tillich had described with the concept of "absolute faith." "Absolute faith" has no particular content, it consists of a pure being taken hold of by the divine power of being in a pure "state of being" ("*Zuständlichkeit*"; that means: being without any action, perhaps one can understand it also as pure relationality). "Absolute faith ... is without the safety of words and concepts, it is without a name, a church, a cult, a theology. But it is moving in the depth of all of them. It is the power of being, in which they participate and of which they are fragmentary expres-

21 Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 154 f.
22 *Ibid.*, 154.

sions."[23] "Absolute faith" does not refer to a religious fulfilment of the human person but rather to an awareness of the presence of the power of being, whose power preceded any awareness of it.

According to Tillich, the symbol of the cross poignantly brings the presence of the "absent God" to expression. In his cry of God-forsakenness Jesus turns to God, "who remained his God after the God of confidence had left him in the darkness of doubt and meaninglessness."[24] It is no longer about the *content* of faith but the pure presence of God.

Faith is realized only in a particular concrete content (symbolizations). But this content may not be absolutized, otherwise the content of faith *closes* rather than *opens* the way of becoming aware of the ground of being. Tillich found that Zen Buddhism gives central significance to this impulse to transcend all religious content and forms of appearance. What is described in Zen Buddhism as the liberation from all attachment to religious concepts is encountered in an analogous form in Tillich's theological (more precisely, prophetic) critique of religion.

Masao Abe, who accompanied Tillich as translator on his journey to Japan, sets the central Mahāyāna Buddhist concept of *śūnyatā* (emptiness) in relationship to Tillich's critique of religion as he (Tillich) summarized it in the so called "Protestant principle".[25] Tillich sets this principle against every form of the self-absolutization of religion which he labels as the "demonization" of religious phenomena. This critique also affects conceptions of God, which ought not to become absolutized. Again and again Tillich admonishes one to transcend *theistic* perceptions of the absolute in particular. In Buddhism he encountered a non-theistic religion that also highly valued the self-critique of all religious forms and perspectives.

In the teaching of Buddha this is expressed in the parable of the raft:

> A man traveling along a path came to a great expanse of water. As he stood on the shore, he realized there were dangers and discomforts all about. But the other shore appeared safe and inviting. The man looked for a boat or a bridge and found neither. But with great effort he gathered grass, twigs and branches and tied them all together to make a simple raft. Relying on the raft to keep himself afloat, the man paddled with his hands and feet and reached the safety of the other shore. He could continue his journey on dry land. Now, what would he do with his makeshift raft? Would he drag it along with him or leave it be-

23 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 189, reprinted in MW V, 141–230; 229.

24 *Ibid.*, 188; MW V, 228.

25 Masao Abe, "Review of Tillich's "Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions"," *The Eastern Buddhist* 1 (1965): 109–122.

> hind? He would leave it, the Buddha said. Then the Buddha explained that the dharma is like a raft. It is useful for crossing over but not for holding onto...[26]

The teachings, doctrines and instructions of the religions are like that raft. One can make use of them to cross the river, but then has to leave them behind, to transcend them. Here as there – in Christianity as in Buddhism – as in all authentic religion Tillich finds the impulse to distinguish the symbolic forms of the religion from the level of meaning to which the symbol points, between the "sense" and the "meaning" of the symbol, the signifier and the signified. He calls on the religions to understand their symbol-systems as being transparent to the absolute at which they hint und thus not to deify them, that means to give absolute validity to them. In this way, Tillich identifies within Buddhism the element he calls the "prophetic." He applies his typology of the three or four fundamental dimensions of experiencing and contextualizing the Holy – the sacramental, the prophetic, the mystical and the ethical – to Buddhism. These elements are present in all religions even when they take on different forms.

Hisamatsu named the Absolute the "Formless Self" – the overcoming of all forms and all shapes that being and the self have taken on; so that in a certain manner they are stripped of all their symbolizations and pure being and the pure self remain. Everything that is concrete and particular, all forms of being, forms of perception, all forms of thought must be stripped away to arrive at the formless self. But this path – according to his understanding – does not lead away from the finite beings to a *transcendent* being; rather it leads to the *ground* of all being which is nothingness.

The Absolute does not stand over against being and the human self, it rather *is* their being and their presence. It is not a reality for its own sake. In a certain way it can be understood as the "thing in itself" but this must not be thought of as something substantial beyond the thing. Hisamatsu illustrates the "Formless Self" through the distinction between two perspectives: the conscious observation where the subject stands over against the object in the division of subject and object and the pure seeing through which the observer and the observed become one. In the first perspective the objects that stand *in* the light are seen. In the second perspective an enlightenment occurs through the light itself: a "pure seeing." To achieve this "*Lichtung*" – getting enlightened –, to reach this state of non-duality in subjectless and objectless concentration is the goal of Zen meditation. And as we heard before, this pure seeing – not seeing something *in* the

26 Quoted from http://buddhism.about.com/od/sacredbuddhisttexts/fl/The-Buddhas-Raft-Parable.htm

light but seeing the light – was what Tillich strived for. It comes close to the ontological method of philosophy of religion, but transcends it.

3 Distinctions

Tillich encountered Buddhist spirituality and reflected philosophically upon it fully aware of its fundamental distinction from Christian spirituality and theology. At no point does he equate them.[27] He does not seek a common foundation for determining the relationship with Buddhist thinking. Rather he focuses on the characteristic peculiarities. I would like to note four points that describe significant distinctions that stand between Tillich and Hisamatsu. The first point relates to the transcendence of the Absolute, the second to the relationship between the Absolute and the human self, the third to the forms and shapes in which the Absolute appears in being and the fourth to the understanding of nothingness or emptiness.

3.1 The transcendence of the Absolute

According to Tillich the divine ground of being is present in a dialectic of immanence and transcendence. It remains the Wholly Other while in the presence of its Spirit it is present in the reality of the world. According to the Zen Buddhist opinion the Absolute is not to be seen *as a transcendent reality* which constitutes being and the self and stands in an essential relationship to them. Rather, the Absolute is deeply *immanent*.[28] It is not a centre of activity which discloses or reveals itself, but a (rather, the basic) dimension in all human and non-human being, which can be discovered by becoming aware of it. While according to Tillich God is beyond essence and existence, according to Hisamtsu the Absolute is the essence of existence and being. It is the formlessness of existence and being. The Absolute is the immediate presence of being and the self. The "field of emptiness" – according to Nishitani – is the "absolute near side."[29] "It opens up ... still closer to us than what we ordinarily think of as ourselves. In other words,

27 See in this regard the brilliant study of Stefan S. Jäger, *Glaube und religiöse Rede bei Tillich und im Shin-Buddhismus. Eine religionshermeneutische Studie*. Tillich Research 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

28 Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, especially chapter 4, 119–167. See also Gilkey, "Tillich and the Kyoto School," 72–85.

29 Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 151.

by turning from what we ordinarily call 'self' to the field of *śūnyatā*, we become truly ourselves."[30]

If one relates this Buddhist understanding of the Absolute back to Tillich's two different ways of philosophy of religion it seems that according to the Buddhist understanding, both ways run like asymptotic lines toward the groundless ground of being and nothingness. Not only the way of reflecting on the essential ground of human existence but also the way of discovering the essence of non-human entities in the "outer world" can lead to an awareness of the Absolute. The Absolute is not to be discovered there as a stranger, but as the innermost principle of all being, human and non-human. Accordingly there is no sphere of the stranger. Awareness of the Absolute can be attained just as well in the reality of the world as in the existential constitution of the human being. Both can disclose the inner mystery of being. Thus it is not necessary to integrate the cosmological with the ontological way as Tillich recommends.

3.2 The relationship between the Absolute and the human self

Hisamatsu discovers the ground of being *in* beings; his starting point is an ultimate *identity*. Tillich's starting point on the other hand is a *relationship* between God and the human being. This relationship is made possible by a God-given participation in the power of being. After his journey to Japan, Tillich summarized:

> "The discussions with Buddhists have shown me that their main points of difference with Christianity are always: the different valuation placed on the individual, the meaning of history, interpersonal relations, religious and social reformation, and finitude and guilt. It is the contrast between the principle of identity and the principle of participation."[31]

Hisamatsu's principle of identity stands in contrast to Tillich's polarity of identification and participation. It cannot be resolved into a total identification of the human self (and the worldly being in general) with divine being itself. The reason for this lies on the one hand in the infinite qualitative difference between God and humanity. On the other hand, it lies in the brokenness of the existential human constitution, that is, in the alienation of human beings from the essence of being – in traditional language, in the sinfulness of human nature. Only in

30 *Ibid.*

31 Tillich, *Christianity*, 99.

Jesus Christ is the true essential being manifested under the conditions of existence without being overwhelmed by them.[32]

The difference between the Christian determination of the relationship between God and humanity through the principle of participation and the Buddhist striving after the extinguishing of the person through which it becomes identical with the emptiness as ultimate reality, is reflected according to Tillich in the central symbols of both religions. The "kingdom of God" places the ontological principle of participation in the foreground and "nirvana" places the principle of identity in the foreground. Both, however, include the other principle. This is the reason why they do not exclude each other mutually in the last instance.[33]

3.3 The forms and shapes in which the Absolute appears in being

For Hisamatsu, every shape must be exceeded, every form must be left, and one must break through to formlessness. According to Tillich, in contrast, the ground of being is always manifested in symbolic forms. There is no formlessness, rather there is only the dialectic of taking shape and transcending that shape, of symbolization and protest against the absolutizing of the symbols. The Absolute only gives knowledge of itself through self-mediation in the power of its Spirit. This applies to both ways of approaching God and of philosophy of religion: not only to the cosmological way but also to the ontological way. One needs a kind of divine enlightenment to become aware of the essence at the ground of one's own existence. On the one hand one may not identify the means of mediation with the Absolute itself. On the other hand one cannot remove the symbolic forms in order to break through to what Hisamatsu describes as "pure being." The "new being" must in a certain way come to and grasp the human person from beyond. "Beyond" does not mean as a stranger, but in terms of immanent transcendence.

For Tillich under the condition of existential alienation one can grasp the essence of existence and being only in a *fragmentary* way. The "pure seeing" corresponds to the eschatological vision that human persons, in the brokenness of their existence, are not able to realize. The difference between present faith and

32 ST II, 94.

33 Tillich. *Christianity*, III/4. See Pan-Chiu Lai, "Kingdom of God in Tillich and Pure Land in Mahayana Buddhism," in *Internationales Jahrbuch für die Tillich-Forschung / International Yearbook for Tillich-Research 5/2009: Religionstheologie und interreligiöser Dialog*, eds. Christian Danz, Werner Schüßler and Erdmann Sturm (Münster: Lit, 2010), 151–172.

the eschatological vision cannot be resolved, even if the entire striving of the Zen Buddhist way to knowledge is to overcome it in the here and now.[34]

3.4 The understanding of nothingness or emptiness

Hisamatsu illustrates the difference between the Christian and the Buddhist understanding with Meister Eckhart's discussion of the "holy abyss." Eckhart does not use this to portray emptiness as the goal of the spiritual path. Overcoming emptiness by becoming "filled" with God's grace is the goal. Even in Tillich's religious interpretation of "emptiness," which he developed after the Second World War, emptiness is neither the starting point nor the goal but the *transit stage* in the search for meaning. Emptiness is for Tillich a spiritual vacuum in which the human strives for fulfilment and as such it becomes the condition of the possibility of this fulfilment. It is a condition of waiting and longing, a not-yet, in a certain way an Advent time, that goes to meet the coming of the new being.[35] Hence emptiness still stands for a creative *deficit* of meaning, for the *hidden* presence of God. To this extent and only to this extent is it a holy emptiness.[36] Nothingness according to Tillich stands over against being as the negative condition that lacks any power of being. It is that which destroys being, whereas for *Hisamatsu* it is the liberation from any attachment to being and so leads into the field of the emptiness. According to Tillich being has priority over non-being and encloses it, while the representative of the Kyoto School rather assumes, that being and non-being belong together like two poles, which both are grounded in the "absolute nothing."[37]

4 Tillich in Japan

Up to now I have referred to the "intellectual dialogue" that Tillich engaged in with Hisamatsu before he went to Japan. The discussion focused on philosophical questions. The emphasis changed when Tillich went to Japan – in a context

34 See also the difference that Tillich describes in the report on his journey in GW XIII, 504.
35 See Paul Tillich, "Religion and Secular Culture (1946)," in MW II, 197–207.
36 Schüßler and Sturm, *Paul Tillich*, 112f.
37 See the precise summary in Schüßler and Sturm, *Paul Tillich*, 245. Hans Waldenfels, *Absolutes Nichts. Zur Grundlegung des Dialogs zwischen Buddhismus und Christentum* (Freiburg / Br.: Herder, 1976).

shaped by Buddhism and Shintoism.[38] The philosophical and theological questions still accompanied him when he was in Japan, however now they were examined as to how Buddhism influenced the religious praxis of its adherents, or to use a Christian concept, their praxis of piety, and more generally: How does Buddhism determine people's lives? How do Buddhists pray? How does Buddhist spirituality express itself in daily life, in politics, and society? Are or were there religious renewal movements that worked against an established Buddhist movement comparable to the Reformation in Christianity? He was told that Shin Buddhism and Zen Buddhism were such movements. Perhaps the most important question was: How does Buddhism influence the flux of history? Does it have an impact on the current state of affairs in the social and political arena? Does it break open hardened structures and bring forth new forms of life? In Christianity he sees this power portrayed in the symbol of the kingdom of God. Is the foundational attitude of Buddhism, in contrast, more "conservative" (in terms of conserving the status quo), detached from the world, disinterested in history? What is the value of the individual, when the goal of the spiritual path consists in the extinguishing of the individual?

Hisamatsu had already clearly said to him that the individual and the particular are not extinguished in the Formless Self. Rather, they come to their authenticity here. What does this mean? To find one's authentic self in the not-self? What about ethics? Does Buddhist spirituality remain at the level of mere compassion for the sufferer or does it give rise to a practiced love for one's neighbour?

The encounter with Japanese culture and religions not only produced many fascinating insights but also brought before his eyes the deep differences between the cultural worlds. In the Matchette lectures, Tillich looked back and summarized once more the differences between the Eastern and Western ways of thinking in relation to the ethical significance of the individual, the personal character of the divine over against the transpersonal Absolute, the infinite distance between the individual person and the personal divine being brought about by human guilt, and the necessity of forgiveness over against the elevating of the spiritual human to the formless self.[39] Furthermore, Tillich refers to the doctrine of creation and the meaning of history. Again and again he poses the question of the ontological status of the particular and/or the individual.

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38 See Marc Boss, "Tillich in Dialogue with Japanese Buddhism: A Paradigmatic Illustration of his Approach to Inter-religious Conversation, in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 254 – 272.

39 Tillich, *The Encounter*, 27 f.

Critics have accused him of approaching his encounter with Buddhism in a way that was too strongly shaped by Western categories and for making use of a far too schematic set of differences and contrasts. Furthermore they criticized that he only got to know a small section of Buddhism and then mainly from its philosophical side, although doctrine and life in Buddhism is diverse. Despite these criticisms, one cannot expect from a pioneer more than pioneering work. In his time, in which the encounter with foreign cultures and religions was not yet a theme for theology, Tillich made this excursion and through this made a significant contribution to theology.

The genuine significance of his encounter with Buddhism in Japan does not lie in the theological and philosophical discussions but rather in his immersion in a foreign cultural world and its life forms. As Tillich indicated in his retrospective reflections, his trip brought about a profound transformation. The transformation was no longer on an intellectual but rather on a cultural and ultimately on an existential level, and had repercussions for his theology. According to Mircea Eliade, Tillich stated shortly before his death that he intended to rewrite his Systematic Theology in the light of his encounter with other religions.[40] In this way the sentence from 1946 gained a new and unexpected meaning: "There are two ways of approaching God, the way of overcoming estrangement and the way of meeting a stranger."

40 Mircea Eliade, "Paul Tillich and the History of Religions," in Brauer, *The Future of Religions*, 33–35.

Robert E. Meditz

Chapter 12

Two Forms of Dialectic within Tillich's History of Religion

Paul Tillich was raised in a late 19th century Lutheran household, the son of a prominent minister. Many years later, he recalled that religious instruction possessed some vividly anti-Jewish elements, which led to the belief that Jews were foreign, un-German, or even sinister.[1] Some Lutheran theologians, such as Gerhard Kittel, Emanuel Hirsch and Paul Althaus, became tacitly or explicitly supporters of the Nazi government and its racist policies.[2] However, Tillich opposed these policies and emigrated to the United States in 1933.[3] Tillich's ecumenical activities with Jews are fairly well known, but how his theological method may have contributed to this has not been fully explored.[4]

1 Glenn David Earley, *An Everlasting Conversation: Judaism in the Life and Thought of Paul Tillich*, PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1983, 35 – 36, and Appendix, 434. The Appendix is Earley's translation of Tillich's 1952 Berlin lectures, *Die Judenfrage, ein christliches und ein deutsches Problem*, see Note 9 for full citation: "I can remember vividly from my own youth the impression which anti-Jewish instruction makes on Christian youth. One felt that what was Jewish was sinister (*unheimlich*) and was inclined to see in every Jew an aid to the crucifixion of Jesus. From this often unconscious anti-Judaism of the Christian churches, the conscious antisemitism of the last hundred years has drawn its nourishment."

2 See Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians Under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

3 "A Theology for Protestants," *Time*, March 16, 1959, 48; also, Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 132 – 136. See, for example, Tillich's November 1938 speech at Madison Square Garden denouncing anti-Semitism, in the wake of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. See Michael Berkowitz, "*Kristallnacht* in Context: Jewish War Veterans in America and Britain and the Crisis of American Jewry," in *American Religious Responses to Kristallnacht*, ed. Maria Mazzenga (Houndsmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009): 69 – 70, notes 67, 82. Additionally, the subject matter of Tillich's first Voice of America speech broadcast into Germany in March of 1942 was left to his discretion, and he chose to talk about the problem of anti-Semitism. Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver, eds., *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany*, trans. Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1986), 1, 2 and 13.

4 The only sustained analysis of Tillich and Judaism that I am aware of is Earley's *An Everlasting Conversation*, cited above. Two other books that provide important thematic treatments are Ronald L. Stone's *Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1980) and Matthew Lon Weaver's *Religious Internationalism: War and Peace in the Thought of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010).

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In attempting to answer the question, "*How* did Tillich maintain continuity between Judaism and Christianity?," substantial insight can be gained from examining his theological method, in particular how his idea of Judaism[5] functions within the history of religion. Tillich's dialectical and inclusive history of religion manifests a polarity between the metaphysical concepts "Is" and "Ought," which reflect the priestly and prophetic aspects of religion. Over the course of Tillich's career, this becomes more explicit and enables Judaism to maintain an unusual relationship of parity with Christianity, in contrast to some of his peers.

In several works that span Tillich's career, the history of religion persists as the vehicle for divine revelation and two distinct but complementary types of dialectic are manifest.[6] The first is a "historical dialectic of progression," in which Christianity is superior to Judaism, although Judaism is the unique foundation for Christianity. This is a conventional view, but it is important when one recalls that the so-called "German Christians" sought to diminish or eliminate the Jewish foundations of Christianity.[7] This was graphically described in Susannah Heschel's 2007 book, *The Aryan Jesus*. Among others, Heschel discusses William Wrede of Breslau, and Wilhelm Bousset and Walter Bauer, both of Göttingen.[8] The second type of dialectic is an "ontological dialectic of balance," in which there is a relationship of parity between Judaism and Christianity. The latter position sets Tillich apart from some of his contemporaries, a topic that should receive more scholarly scrutiny.

These two types of dialectic are useful because they isolate Tillich's idea of Judaism, enabling us to see how it functions within his theological history of religion. The following primary sources will be briefly discussed: i) Tillich's 1912 dissertation on Schelling, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development;* ii) *The Socialist Decision* from 1933; iii) the 1952 Berlin lectures on "the Jewish question;" and iv) Tillich's final public lecture, "The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian."[9] The *Systematic*

5 The term "idea of Judaism" comes from Earley *An Everlasting Conversation*, and was used to criticize Tillich for limiting his representation of Judaism to the prophetic dimension.

6 James Luther Adams identifies four types of dialectic in Tillich's thought, logical, ontological, historical and religious. See "Tillich's Interpretation of History," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich: A Revised and Updated Classic*, eds. Charles W. Kegley and Robert Bretall, 2nd ed. (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), 330–355 (1st ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1952).

7 Recently discussed in Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

8 Heschel, *Aryan Jesus*, 58–60.

9 Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, trans. and intro. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1974). Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman, intro. John R. Stumme (Washington, D.C.: University Press

Theology will not be discussed; while it provides the most detailed exposition of Tillich's theological history of religion, it does not display the most distinctive aspects of this topic.

1 The 1912 Dissertation on Schelling: The Emergence of the Dialectical Structure of the History of Religion

In his 1912 dissertation on Schelling, Tillich observes that there are two fundamental, common expressions of the collective religious consciousness that have been present throughout human history.[10] These two expressions occupy opposite poles in a dialectical relationship and come into conflict and drive the *forward movement* of the history of religion. The first expression is the individual's attraction to the divine, described philosophically as "identity," and described religiously as "mysticism."[11] Tillich sometimes refers to this as "paganism," in which some religious expressions seek to appease divine wrath through sacrifice. The second expression is fear of the holy, or the experience of repulsion from the divine. This is described philosophically as the contradic-

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of America, 1977). Originally published as *Die Sozialistische Entscheidung* (Potsdam: Alfred Protte Verlag, 1933). Paul Tillich, "The Jewish Question: A Christian and a German Problem." Four lectures delivered at Der Deutsche Hochschule für Politik, summer 1952. First published in *Schriftenreihe der Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* (Berlin: Gebruder Weiss, 1953). Subsequently published in GW III, *Das Religiöse Fundament des Moralischen Handeln: Schriften zur Ethik und zum Menschenbild*, ed. Renate Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1965), 128–170. Translated into English by Marion Pauck, *North American Paul Tillich Society Bulletin* 30/3 (Summer 2004): 3–24; and by Earley, *An Everlasting Conversation*, 418–491. Paul Tillich, "The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian" was published as an Appendix to *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*; Bampton Lectures in America 14, Columbia University, 1961 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963). According to editor Krister Stendahl, this lecture was taped and then transcribed and edited by Jerald C. Brauer. It also appeared in Brauer's *The Future of Religions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

10 This analysis assumes that Tillich's appropriation of Schelling, not just his exposition of Schelling, influenced his later view of Judaism. The notion of "Tillich's appropriation of Schelling" having normative significance for Tillich has been argued by Russell Re Manning, *Theology at the End of Culture: Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture and Art*, Studies in Philosophical Theology (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005); 78 – 79, note 63.

11 Tillich, *Mysticism*, 27: "Mysticism and guilt-consciousness, the feeling of unity with the absolute and consciousness of opposition to God, the principle of the identity of the absolute and individual spirit and the experience of contradiction between Holy Lord and sinful creature: this is the antinomy for whose solution religious thought in the Church in every age has struggled and must continually struggle."

tion between self-interest and obligation, and described religiously as "guilt-consciousness."[12] Within Tillich's history of religion, this expression is uniquely found in Judaism, which seeks to appease divine wrath through obedience to the Mosaic law. The individual is confronted by a personal, holy God, resulting in guilt-consciousness.

For Tillich, both paganism (attraction) and Judaism (repulsion), are at opposite poles of the dialectic. Both are inadequate to convey the fullness of divine revelation. Each expression "goes to ruin" on its own form of "one-sidedness" and failure to achieve balance.[13] However, the personal God of Judaism that delivers the law of Moses transcends both nature and the individual, unlike paganism which tends to collapse the divine into nature and into the individual. This transcendent element is retained and contributed to Christianity, which is the successor to Judaism. Therefore, although Christianity is superior to Judaism, Judaism is the essential foundation for Christianity, and it cannot be eliminated from the history of revelation, in contrast to the anti-Jewish "German Christians." This is an example of the historical dialectic of progression.

2 *The Socialist Decision:* Jewish Prophetism and the First Pole of the Ontological Dialectic of Balance

After World War One, Tillich rejected the religious nationalism of his early adulthood and by the 1930s sought an alternative to Weimar German socialism, which had failed to counter international capitalism and Nazism.[14] The basis for this alternative was "Jewish prophetism," which was discussed most thoroughly in Tillich's ill-fated *The Socialist Decision* of 1933.[15] In this work, Tillich explicitly

12 Tillich, *Mysticism*, 27–28: "The holy and exalted God of Israel, whose look is like a consuming fire, before whom no man can stand (cf. Isaiah 6)."

13 Tillich, *Mysticism*, 123.

14 As noted by Ron Stone in *Paul Tillich's Radical Social Thought* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980).

15 Based upon what Tillich had told them, Tillich's biographers say that the book was banned by the Nazi government, and then burned in the May 1933 Frankfurt book burnings; see Pauck and Pauck *Tillich*, 132. Ron Stone states that numerous copies were destroyed when the Allies bombed the publisher's warehouse during World War Two; see "Paul Tillich: On the Boundary Between Protestantism and Marxism," *Laval Theologique et Philosophie* 45 (October 1989): 393–417, especially 397. Stone does not say whether the bombing of the Alfred Protte warehouse was intentional, or collateral damage. However, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf argues that the book was neither banned nor burned in the Frankfurt book burnings. See "'Politische Romantik' und 'Sozia-

draws an analogy between Jewish prophetism and socialism. While Tillich is clear that Jewish prophetism, or "the spirit of Judaism," is not to be equated with historic or contemporary Judaism, Jewish prophetism has its unique and incontrovertible foundation in historic Judaism.[16] Tillich's concept of Jewish prophetism provides a basis for a liberating, humanistic and a critical, eschatological form of socialism, able to confront the twin problems of capitalism and religious nationalism.[17] Similar to the 1910 and 1912 Schelling dissertations, *The Socialist Decision* has a dialectical structure and the history of religion is the vehicle for Tillich's constructive project.[18] Jewish prophetism provides the basis for how a culture can transcend what "is" and seek what "ought to be."[19] The metaphysical categories of "Is" and "Ought" first appear in this work, but are more fully developed in the *Judenfrage* lectures, to be discussed below.

In *The Socialist Decision*, Jewish prophetism is based on Tillich's view of the Exile. God destroyed the Israelites' idolatrous relationship to the promised land, the priesthood, the Temple cult, and the monarchy, which together constituted Israel's distinctive identity as the chosen people of God.[20] Tillich called this

listische Entscheidung'. Eine freundschaftliche Annonce für Heinrich Meier zum 8. April 2013," *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 19/2 (2012): 247–268.

16 Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 22.

17 *Ibid.*, 20–23, 110–112. On the one hand, according to Tillich, Weimar German socialism tried to disassociate itself from revolutionary and atheistic forms of communism, but therefore lost its eschatological dimension. At the same time, it assumed destructive characteristics of bourgeois capitalism, including a reductionist form "economic atomism," in which the human person was reduced to impersonal, perpetually conflicting economic units. For Tillich, this meant that German socialism lost its humanistic dimension.

18 The 1910 Schelling Dissertation is entitled, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles*, trans. and intro. by Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1974).

19 Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 19–20. Jewish prophetism was an outgrowth of patriarchal Israelite culture, which enabled Judaism to reflect upon itself, transcend the naturalistic pagan cycle of birth, development and death, and derive a form of justice based upon the equality of persons, in the form of an "I" – "Thou" relationship. The emergence of the "primordial demand" is mysterious, but Tillich also discusses it in *The Interpretation of History*, trans. N.A. Rasetzki and Elsa L. Talmey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 208–209 and to a lesser degree in the 1910 dissertation, 99–100. The primordial demand represents the "unconditional demand" of justice. For Tillich, this unique ontological basis and derivation of justice is the only appropriate response to the "powers of the myth of origin," which found their expression in religious nationalism, in particular Nazism. The specific term Tillich uses is "political romanticism." *The Socialist Decision*, 4–6.

20 Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 20. "It is the significance of *Jewish prophetism* to have fought explicitly against the myth of origin and the attachment to space and to have conquered them.

the idolatry of space. This view of the Exile led Tillich to assign existential and ethical significance to space, or the metaphysical "Is," and also to "time," the metaphysical "Ought." In this way, the Exile provided the basis for "the new," a way of transcending bondage to the powers of soil, lineage and social group – which found their modern expressions in racist, anti-Semitic, German nationalism.[21] For Tillich, Jewish prophetism was uniquely able to criticize the pagan, i.e. nationalistic, elements in Christianity.[22] Tillich's understanding of the Exile also led to the notion of "expectation" and resulted in a dynamic, teleological and eschatological view of time.[23]

The polarity between "Is" and "Ought" became the framework that allowed the second form of dialectic to emerge, the ontological dialectic of balance. This dialectic enabled a relationship of parity between Judaism and Christianity. Tillich developed this tension between the "Is" and the "Ought" into a full-fledged permanent polarity in the 1952 *Judenfrage* lectures.

3 The *Judenfrage* Lectures: The Permanent Theological Importance of Judaism in the "Dialectic of the Holy"

Tillich's 1952 *Judenfrage* lectures represent the high point of his idea of Judaism. They were delivered in five parts, with an introduction and four lectures. This discussion will focus on those aspects that elucidate Tillich's concept of "the Holy," which is most fully discussed in the third lecture.

In the first lecture, Tillich argues that theological anti-Judaism was the root of racist and political anti-Semitism.[24] In the second lecture, Tillich introduces two "structural analogies" that pertain to Germans and Jews, attributing to

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On the basis of a powerful social myth of origin, Jewish prophetism radicalized the social imperative to the point of freeing itself from the bond of origin. God is free from the soil, the sacred land, not because he has conquered foreign lands, but precisely because he has led foreign conquerors into his own land in order to punish the 'people of his inheritance' and to subject them to an unconditional demand. The bond of origin between God and his people is broken if the bond of the law is broken by the people. Thus the myth of origin is shattered – and this is the world-historical mission of Jewish prophetism."

21 *Ibid.*, 18 – 23.

22 *Ibid.*, 22 – 23. In addition, Tillich adds that Jewish prophetism is also a guard against "excessively critical" aspects of Judaism, which not only critique bondage to the powers of origin, but seek to eliminate the powers of origin entirely. Tillich says this occurred in east European Judaism (22).

23 *Ibid.*, 20.

24 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 429 – 437.

each a "spirit" or, in my words, a corporate personality. Corporate personalities are identified by their ability to explain the "inner drive" of a phenomenon. A similar notion will be seen later in the analysis of the "religion of the concrete spirit." By introducing these structural analogies, Tillich is adding psychological and sociological dimensions to his idea of Judaism. The first structural analogy is that Jews and Germans both experience "territorial anxiety" with respect to geographical space; for Jews, this comes from the Exile and living in *diaspora*; for Germans, this is caused by the yearning for national identity emerging in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. The main temptation arising from attempts to resolve this anxiety is the idolatry of ethnic and/or religious nationalism. The second structural analogy is that both Jews and Germans exhibit a potent self-critical streak, caused by collective insecurity. This has led to an unusual and destructive relationship of mutual attraction and repulsion between the two peoples. The temptation for Jews is to self-destruct, exemplified by Jewish assimilation in America. The temptation for non-Jewish Germans is to lash out in a raw will to power, as exemplified by Nazi Germany.

In the third lecture, Tillich responds to the question of how Christian anti-Judaism arose in the first place, and assumes that a fully theological answer must be found beyond psychological and sociological analyses.[25] It is not entirely clear how he justifies this assumption, but he clearly proceeds by using his concept of "the Holy" as the starting point for his theological solution. For Tillich, the Holy is something that "concerns us unconditionally," which possesses "the ground and meaning of our Being," is not limited by time or space, has an irresistible quality, and presents to us an "unconditional demand," similar to what was found in *The Socialist Decision*.[26]

In addition, the Holy has two sides, or poles, which exist in perpetual tension, the priestly and the prophetic. The priestly side manifests "that which is,

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25 *Ibid.*, 455–456. Tillich asks two related questions: "For though it is possible to apply all the well-known sociological categories to the history of the Jewish people, after this history is given, a more deeply penetrating discussion of the question 'why could there be such a history?,' is still needed. Surely a group such as the Jews – once they are there and have survived through a 3,000 year history – can be used as a mechanism of diversion. Judaism can be typologically caricatured, and psychological conflicts can originate within it. But the decisive question is: how does it come about that such a group is there? We have spoken of Christian anti-Judaism which runs from the New Testament through all of Church history. But there is no satisfactory explanation for this fundamental fact. Christianity also fought against other minorities. In no case, however, did something originate which would be at all comparable to Christian anti-Judaism."

26 *Ibid.*, 456. This language is used elsewhere by Tillich to characterize God, as in the ST I, 155–157.

that which is present, as what grasps us, as what precedes all acting and thinking."[27] The prophetic side is never completed, always demands, requires perfection and promises fulfillment.[28] The emergence of "the demand" was first developed by Tillich in *The Socialist Decision*, where he coined the maxim, "justice is the true power of being."[29] According to Tillich, the tension between the two poles, of "Is" and "Ought," is the framework that undergirds all of reality:

> The Holy contains within itself the tension between that which is and that which should be, a tension which reaches to the deepest roots of being. This tension of both elements in the Holy has a polar character. One pole conditions the other. As soon as this reciprocal dependence is called into question conflicts originate ... The 'is' and the 'ought' struggle with each other. To be sure, this struggle can never lead to a total separation, since the sphere of the Holy would itself cease to be if one of the poles would completely disappear.[30]

If the priestly dimension obscures the prophetic, then the sacramental becomes magic, and if the prophetic dimension obscures the priestly, then legalism results.[31] For the Holy to be present, neither pole is obliterated. Therefore, only if both poles are in some way effective is the Holy real.[32] For Tillich, this polarity fundamentally determines the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and the relationship of both to Germany.[33] The ideal tension found in this polarity is the exemplary instance of the ontological dialectic of balance. The Holy is part of the deep structure of Tillich's thought.

4 The Religion of the Concrete Spirit: the Enduring Influence of "the Holy"

Ten days before he died, Tillich gave his final public lecture titled, "The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian."[34] In "Significance," there are three aspects that relate to this argument. First, a dialectical

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27 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 456. In terms of the is–ought polarity, this can be assigned to the "is."

28 *Ibid.*, 457. In terms of the is–ought polarity, this can be assigned to the "ought."

29 Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 6.

30 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 457.

31 *Ibid.*, 457.

32 *Ibid.*, 457–458.

33 *Ibid.*, 458.

34 First published as an Appendix to *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*; see Note 9 for full citation.

history of religions remains the underlying framework for Tillich's comparative analysis of Christianity and non-Christian religions. Second, he employs the principle of justice, as derived from the Hebrew prophets Amos and Hosea, as an essential critical principle within his dialectical framework. This prophetic, critical principle was introduced and associated with the Exile in *The Socialist Decision*, but it was not until the *Judenfrage* lectures that Tillich expounded upon the importance of Amos.[35] Third, his dialectical framework provides criteria that, if occurring in the right combination, constitute Tillich's optimal, non-Christocentric, form of religion, the "religion of the concrete spirit." In the third part of "Significance," Tillich establishes a method to integrate all religions into a theological and revelatory framework.[36] "Significance" reflects the shift in Tillich's thought, after his trip to Japan, to attribute theological significance to non-Christian, non-theistic religions such as Buddhism.

Tillich concludes that the inner *telos* of the history of religion is the religion of the concrete spirit, which reflects the dialectical unity of the sacramental/mystical and prophetic/ethical elements, respectively, the dialectical unity of the "Is" and the "Ought."[37] This is yet another manifestation of Tillich's dialectic of the Holy. His method for deriving the religion of the concrete spirit possesses several steps: i) the proper attitude of the theologian must be a balance of detachment and objectivity, in creative tension with existential participation; ii) "religious question(s)" within history and culture are identified by current experiences of the Holy; and iii) the development of a phenomenology of religion captures

35 For example, Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 20. Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 467–468. For Tillich, Amos is important in five ways: i) he was the first prophet to warn Israel of its destruction for breaking the covenant, presumably the Mosaic law, which was the basis for divine justice; ii) the Exile forced a break between the divine and a national/ethnic boundary, which had devolved into the idolatry of space; iii) the priestly cult was deprived of any automatic, unquestioned revelatory power, with the office of the prophet becoming the vehicle for God's revelation, another shift of revelatory capacity from space to time; iv) the shift from space to time was an expression of true monotheism, described above as subjection to the God of time; and v) the destruction of God's people through the Exile was not a nullification of the covenant, because a righteous remnant was preserved as a testimony to God's faithfulness.

36 Tillich, "Encounter," 34–35. Tillich's comparative, theological analysis of the history of religion changed over time, as he struggled to interpret the diversity of historical phenomena to discern the "inner telos" of the history of religion. In the 1960 Bampton Lectures, his mature methodological formulation is "dynamic typology."

37 Tillich, "Significance," 71–72.

the symbols, ideas, texts and rituals of current experiences of the Holy.[38] Tillich's goal is to apply these presuppositions in his analysis of the history of religion.[39]

In Tillich's final normative religious expression, the religion of the concrete spirit, the dialectic of the Holy remains a fundamental component. Yet, he has subordinated the monotheism of Judaism and Christianity to this new construct. If it is the case that this a new and important insight into Tillich's method and his theology of Judaism, does this insight suggest that the method of other Protestant theologians of the Weimar period need to be re-examined? At a minimum, I suggest that the potential anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic uses of the history of religions needs to be re-examined, as discussed by Heschel.

38 *Ibid.*, 77; the final two steps include: iv) an analysis of these religious phenomena to understand their interrelatedness to one another, and to traditional forms; and v) the historian of religions applies the reinterpreted concepts to the present religious and cultural situation.

39 *Ibid.*, 77–78: "in the context of the history of the human race and into the experiences of mankind as expressed in the great symbols of religious history."

Gorazd Andrejč

Chapter 13

Schleiermacher and Tillich on Judaism: A Structural Comparison

Introduction

It has been argued that German Liberal Protestant theologians of the 19th and the early 20th Century, despite their affirmation of the freedom of religion and their support for the emancipation of Jewish people, remained strongly anti-Judaic.[1] The 'father of liberal theology', Friedrich Schleiermacher, is accredited with launching a particular neo-Marcionite brand of anti-Judaism which introduced a radical break between the Old and the New Testaments, and accordingly, between Judaism and Christianity.[2] Paul Tillich, standing at the other end of the German Liberal Protestant story – more exactly, 'on the boundary' between Liberal and Neo-Orthodox theology – is often seen as effectively ending (together with Barth) this particular version of anti-Judaism by systematically re-stressing the continuity between the Testaments, and between Judaism and Christianity.[3]

In this essay, I will problematize this understanding by comparing Schleiermacher's and Tillich's views of Judaism. Comparing Schleiermacher and Tillich on this issue makes sense for several reasons. Both were politically engaged, addressing Christian and general public attitudes towards Jews in Germany – most prominently, Schleiermacher with his *Letters on the Occasion* and Tillich with his "The Jewish Question" lectures and his wartime public addresses to the Ger-

1 See, for example, Martin Buber, *Israel and the World: Essays in the Time of Crisis* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 191–194; Charlotte Klein, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (London: SPCK, 1975); Christian Wiese, *Wissenschaft des Judentums und protestantische Theologie im wilhelminischen Deutschland: ein Schrei ins Leere?* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish studies and Protestant theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) and Yaakov Aariel, "The One and the Many: Unity and Diversity in Protestant Attitudes Towards the Jews," in *The Protestant-Jewish Conundrum: Studies in Contemporary Jewry, Vol. XXIV*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15–45.
2 Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism. German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder to Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 61; 64 and Christine Helmer, "Mysticism and metaphysics: Schleiermacher and a historical-theological trajectory," *Journal of Religion* 83 (2003): 517–538.
3 Glenn Earley, "Tillich and Judaism: An Analysis of the 'Jewish Question'," in *Theonomy and Autonomy: Studies in Paul Tillich's engagement with Modern Culture*, ed. John J. Carey (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984): 213–242, 232.

https://doi.org/9783110533606-014

mans.[4] In different but historically related social and political contexts, both spoke and fought against anti-Semitism and traditional versions of Christian anti-Judaism. On the other hand, both have expressed varieties of anti-Jewish views, even if one might be tempted to call them "milder versions" when compared with the traditional Christian ones, and especially, of course, the "Aryan" anti-Semitic views of the theologians in the Nazi-dominated Germany of 1930s and 1940s.[5]

I will examine the ways in which the central theological and philosophical ideas of Schleiermacher and Tillich have informed (or not) their views of, and attitudes towards, Judaism and Jewish people, respectively. This comparison is made possible by the fact that both thinkers had deeply philosophical and systematic ways of doing theology. Their positions tend to be guided by distinctive guiding ideas, which may be epistemological, metaphysical or historical-theological, and which are interwoven with their Christian commitment to the 'kerygma' in different ways. Finally, I will suggest what contemporary lessons this comparison in Christian thinking about Judaism we might be able to learn from it for today.

1 Schleiermacher and Judaism

Many have noted that Schleiermacher's stark anti-Jewish statements sound awful and somewhat out of tune with his otherwise relatively positive attitude towards 'religion' which he finds beyond Christianity as well. Consider this remark from the *Speeches,* "...Judaism is long since a dead religion, and those who at present still bear its colours are actually sitting and mourning beside the undecaying

4 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Briefe bei Gelegenheit der politisch theologischen Aufgabe und des Sendschreibens jüdisches Hausväter,* ed. Kurt Nowak (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1984); cf. Richard Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between* Enlightenment *and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 123–139. Paul Tillich, "The Jewish Question (1953)," trans. Marion Pauck in *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* 30/3 (2004): 3–24; cf. Erdmann Sturm, "Die Zugehörigkeit Paul Tillichs zum Judentum als feststehende Tatsache... Über Paul Tillichs 'Geist des Judentums' und eine antisemitische Polemik (1933–1935)," in *Grenzgänge. Menschen und Schicksale zwischen jüdischer, christlicher und deutscher Identität,* ed. F. Siegert (Münster, LIT Verlag, 2002): 255–269.

5 Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 2010).

mummy and weeping over its demise and its sad legacy."[6] Such statements have been read in very different ways. On the one hand, sympathetic readers play down their anti-Jewish edge, often by attributing the anti-Jewish views expressed in them to the influence of the secularized, *Haskallah*-Jewish circles around Henriette Herz.[7] On the other hand, critics often go to the other extreme: like Newman, who reads Schleiermacher's descriptions of Judaism as "undecaying mummy" and "dead fruit" as stemming directly from his endorsement of the anti-*Semitic* (not merely anti-Jewish) view that Jews do not have real human feelings![8] Both of these approaches lack in balance. *Pace* Pickle, we have to point out that there were plenty of *Christian* anti-Judaic, supersessionist views around on which Schleiermacher could build and has built upon (either consciously or not), while *pace* Newman, we have to point to Schleiermacher's forceful argument for inclusion of the Jews into full and equal German citizenship *as Jews*, as well as his explicit criticism and rejection of anti-Semitism (both ignored by Newman), described by Schleiermacher as a "very widespread" but erroneous view that a supposed "inner corruption of the Jews... [makes it]... dangerous to accept them into civil society."[9]

Schleiermacher's *Letters on the Occasion*, where we find this condemnation of anti-Semitism (and not only *The Speeches*, *Christian Faith*, and other philosophical-theological works) also reflect certain kinds of anti-Jewish views, of which more will be said bellow. But there is a significant agreement in the literature that Schleiermacher's political/civic argument for full inclusion of the Jews into German citizenship is grounded in his philosophy of religion, i. e. in his "romanticist view of positive religions as virtually organic entities," and that, "[to] understand his views [on Judaism and the Jews,] one must look at Schleiermacher's overall perspective."[10]

At the centre of Schleiermacher's understanding of non-Christian religions and Christianity's relationship to them is, of course, his concept of "*religion*," which stands for a genuine impulse and an experiential aspect in all actual re-

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6 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers*. 2nd edition, ed. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114. German original: (1969) *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Stuttgart: Reclam).

7 Joseph W. Pickle, 'Schleiermacher on Judaism', *Journal of Religion*, 60/2 (1980): 115 – 137; Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*.

8 Amy Newman, "The Death of Judaism in German Protestant Thought from Luther to Hegel," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61/3 (1993): 455 – 485.

9 Quoted in Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 130.

10 Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 132; cf. Pickle "Schleiermacher on Judaism," 123 and Gerdmar, *Roots*, 63.

ligions. "[Religion's] essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling," namely, "the basic feeling for infinite and living nature."[11] This *ur*-feeling is the ground of being that cannot be thought but only experienced. The interpretive trend in recent studies of Schleiermacher has moved decidedly away from the "perception-model" of Schleiermacher's "feeling," according to which God can be *perceived* directly through feeling (e.g. Brandt 1968).[12] Instead, Schleiermacher's emphasis on feeling should be read as fully post-Kantian – or, on the other hand, as close to classically Christian like Aquinas', one could argue – building on the commitment that "there is no such thing as an isolated perception of deity" either through any kind of sense perception *or* by way of feeling, since "any possibility of God being *in any way given* is entirely excluded."[13]

Schleiermacher claims that only particular, historical religions can include actual elements of "religion" or God-consciousness.[14] That is, only in a historical particularity of Judaism, or Christianity, or any other religion, "a marriage of the infinite with the finite" is possible.[15] A universal, generalized religion cannot be realized or experienced by anyone, since "[religion] never appears in a pure state."[16] As Jacqueline Marina puts it, each religious experience is for Schleier-

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11 Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 22; 24.

12 For example, Christian Albrecht, *Schleiermachers Theorie der Frömmigkeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); Eilert Herms, *Menschen im Werden: Studien zu Schleiermacher* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003); Jacqueline Marina *Transformation of the Self in the Thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Andrew Dole, *Schleiermacher on Religion and Natural Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Kevin W. Hector, "Attunement and explication: a pragmatist reading of Schleiermacher's 'theology of feeling'," in *Schleiermacher, the Study of Religion, and the Future of Theology*, eds. B. W. Sockness and W. Gräb (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010): 215–42; Kevin W. Hector, *Theology without Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Richard B. Brandt, *The Philosophy of Schleiermacher* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1968 [1941]).

13 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Dialectic or, The Art of Doing Philosophy: A Study Edition of the 1811 Notes*, ed. and trans. T. Tice (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996), 31 and Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, eds. H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 4.4; cf. Manfred Frank, "Metaphysical foundations: a look at Schleiermacher's Dialectic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, ed. Jacqueline Marina (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 15–34. In my contribution to this discussion, I recognize occasional inconsistencies in Schleiermacher's views on "co-positedness" of God in feeling, while offering additional arguments against the "perception-model" of interpreting Schleiermacher's view: Gorazd Andrejč, "Bridging the Gap Between Social and Existential-Mystical Interpretations of Schleiermacher's 'Feeling'," *Religious Studies* 48/3 (2012): 377–401.

14 Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 104; 106.

15 *Ibid.*, 107.

16 *Ibid.*, 97–99 and 21.

macher "a *situated experience* of the transcendent; that situatedness cannot be abstracted from experience."[17] The same methodological emphasis on the particularity of each religion which we find in *The Speeches* also underlies Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith*. While the dogmatics of the *Christian Faith* is Protestant Christian, written for the Christian audience and celebrating Christian triumphalism, "it never occurred to Schleiermacher, as it did to the neo-Orthodox, to deny that Christianity is one religion among others."[18]

Arguably, this implies a particular kind of pluralist (instead of exclusivist or inclusivist) matrix to view religions, despite Schleiermacher's insistence that Christianity is superior to all other religions.[19] If we accept that Schleiermacher's philosophy of religions includes a pluralist aspect, the question we need to ask is whether his philosophy of religions influenced, or failed to influence, his understanding of Judaism, and (if yes), how. Why did he also express strongly denigrating views on Judaism if he held such a potentially affirmative view of all "historical" non-Christian religions, including Judaism?[20]

Schleiermacher's enigmatic description of Judaism in *The Speeches* as having a "beautiful, childlike character" with a "properly religious element in it" seems to encapsulate the tension in his overall view of Judaism.[21] On the one hand, it is clearly condescending, especially when contrasting Christianity as "more glorious, more sublime, more worthy of adult humanity" in comparison with "childlike" Judaism.[22] On the other hand, Schleiermacher also expresses deep respect and affirmation of the "religious core" of Judaism, especially of "the gift of prophecy" which has developed within Judaism, in respect to which "Christians are merely children" in comparison.[23] So, while the negative

17 Jacqueline Marina, "Schleiermacher on the outpourings of the inner fire," *Religious Studies* 40 (2004): 125–143; 133.

18 B. A. Gerrish, *Continuing the Reformation: Essays on Modern Religious Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 210.

19 See Marina's argument that Schleiermacher's account is more suitable for developing a contemporary version of religious pluralism than, for example, John Hick's appropriation of Kant for this task: Marina, "Schleiermacher on the Outpourings" and *Transformation of the Self*. Another contemporary appropriation of Schleiermacher's philosophy of religions is that by Reynolds, who develops a pluralist position by modifying Schleiermacherian perspective and combining it with elements of Charles Taylor's thought: Thomas Reynolds, "Reconsidering Schleiermacher and the Problem of Religious Diversity: Toward a Dialectical Pluralism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 37/1 (2005): 151–181.

20 Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 97–112.

21 *Ibid.*, 114.

22 *Ibid.*, 115.

23 *Ibid.*

connotations of Schleiermacher's use of "childlike" should not be ignored, we should also read this remark in the context of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics: i.e. his romantic emphasis on the "spontaneity" and the "boldness" of children (in contrast with most adults) by which they "divinate" the meanings of, for them, *new* words and phrases.[24] "Childlikeness," then, implies a spontaneous, genuinely religious source of Judaism as a unique, particular religion, in contrast with the Enlightenment-Jewish portrayals of Judaism as "religion of reason."[25]

The "Marcionite rift" between Old and New Testaments, which Schleiermacher has "opened up" in Christian theology is often considered to be his gravest theological sin, even by sympathetic interpreters (e.g. Gerrish, Helmer). Schleiermacher explicitly states that he doesn't consider Judaism as "somehow the forerunner of Christianity," and even says that he "hates" "that type of historical reference in religion."[26] The weakening of the continuity between "Mosaic Judaism" and Christianity is obvious also in *The Christian Faith*. In the context of his expressions of anti-Jewish theological views there, Schleiermacher attempts to ground his supersessionism on the presupposition that the *religious consciousness* of Abraham could not be the same as Christian consciousness.[27] As Christine Helmer explains, the source of this move to dissociate Judaism from Christianity stems from Schleiermacher's understanding of religions as unique outworkings of religious ur-feeling; Schleiermacher does not deny the historical continuity of both traditions.[28]

Since Schleiermacher rejected the traditional Christian continuity-cum-replacement view of supersessionism, he faced a theoretical challenge to come up with arguments to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity in relation to Judaism which would be independent from traditional supersessionism.[29] His attempt in the *Fifth Speech* to identify particular feelings (not merely the universal "ur-feeling" which is the essence of "all religion(s)") as "mystical core", different

24 Andrew Bowie, "Introduction," in Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, ed. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vii-xxxi; x-xi.

25 Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 131–139; cf. also Christiane Ehrhardt, "'Erwachsen' oder 'kindlich'? Religionspädagogische Aspekte des Verhältnisses Christentum/Judentum bei Schleiermacher," in *Christentum und Judentum: Akten des Internationalen Kongresses der Schleiermacher-Gesellschaft in Halle, März 2009*, eds. R. Barth, U. Barth & C.-D. Osthövener (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012): 368–385.

26 Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 114.

27 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 8.4; 9.2; 12.2; 27.3; 77.2; 94.2; 132.2; cf. 12.2.

28 Helmer, "Mysticism and Metaphysics," 236.

29 Cf. Pickle, "Schleiermacher on Judaism," 119.

for each religion, strikes us as "outlandish" today.[30] It is an unnecessary and odd addition to his philosophy of religions expressed in the rest of the book. The same has to be said for his identification of the feeling of "universal immediate retribution" as the core of Judaism.[31]

In the light of all this, it becomes even clearer that Schleiermacher's supersessionism and his denigrating remarks of Judaism have been (in)formed by several factors beyond his philosophical theology and political philosophy. Among these are, doubtless, the tribal need to contrast Christianity as the "noblest and highest" religion with its "closest other," Judaism; the popular German anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic sentiments; negative views of (traditional) Judaism present within the Haskalah circle; Schleiermacher's strong objection to the Kantian/Enlightenment attempt to reduce religion to morality; his traditional pietistic emphasis on the "spirit/law" dichotomy; and also his Germanic-Christian concept of pedagogy.[32] Structural factors of his philosophical theology/philosophy of religion(s) clearly had some, if limited effect on his overall attitude towards Judaism. Its potential for a more affirmative understanding of Judaism seems to have been thwarted by other factors.

2 Tillich and Judaism

Despite defending and building upon aspects of Schleiermacher's approach to theology – for example, his defence of the relevance of extraordinary "feelings of being" for religious belief against the neo-orthodox accusations of the same – Tillich rejected Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence" as central (or, as he puts it, as "a point of departure") for systematic theology.[33] While writing that "theology is necessarily existential," Tillich nevertheless puts the *historical event* of Jesus at the centre of his systematic theology.[34] This is reflected in his theological reading of history, although the influences

30 *Ibid.*, 118.

31 Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 114.

32 Matthias Blum, "Ich wäre ein Judenfeind?," in *Zum Antijudaismus in Friedrich Schleiermachers Theologie und Pädagogik*. Beiträge zur Historischen Bildungsforschung, Band 42 (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2010) and Ehrhardt, "Erwachsen."

33 For Tillich's affirmation-cum-criticism of Schleiermacher's emphasis of the experiential in religion, see ST I, 40–46, 172–173.

34 ST I, 32 and 42.

of German idealism on his philosophy of history even later in life cannot be disputed.[35]

This difference between Tillich and Schleiermacher is relevant for our concern. In fact, the crux of Tillich's distancing from German Liberal Protestant tradition as a whole might be seen in his attempt to get away from the perceived Liberal-Protestant neo-Marcionism, by strongly re-affirming the historical continuity between Old and New Testaments.[36] For Tillich, this also meant affirming a continuity between *Judaism* and Christianity, although he recognized that contemporary Judaism cannot be *equated* with the one before or of the times of Jesus and the early Church.[37] Denying the Jewish roots of Christianity in any way disables the possibility of understanding the New Testament and the Christ event itself: "Without a group of people who were indoctrinated by the paradoxes of Jewish propheticism, the paradox of the Cross could not have been understood and accepted."[38] Tillich emphasises that, if the continuity between the Jewish prophetic tradition and the New Testament faith is broken, the "New Testament becomes invalid."[39]

Tillich related this understanding to the experience of the loss of spiritual and moral identity of the German Church under Hitler.[40] In a daring analogy, he likened the threat of National Socialism for the German Church to the existential danger that Gnostic syncretism posed for the early Church: the appropriate answer to both existential dangers, according to him, was a strong emphasis on the continuity between the "prophetic Judaism" of the Hebrew Bible and Christianity. Prophetic Judaism is the only spirit "which can protect the church" from religious nationalism and a loss of its Christian character.[41] Tillich's affirmation of the value of Judaism, then, needs to be read against the background of his very personal and intense, both Christian and civic, battle against Nazism.

However, in combination with other structural features of Tillich's theology, Tillich's way of affirming Judaism also reveals its own brand of triumphalism over against Judaism. In soteriological and revelatory terms, Judaism is still seen by Tillich as essentially unfulfilled, i. e. as *preparatio evangelica*. The histor-

35 See Robert Meditz's essay in the present volume. His analysis concludes that the deep structure of Tillich's understanding of the history of religions exerted a decisive influence on Tillich's view of Judaism.

36 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 8–9; Earley, "Tillich and Judaism," 232.

37 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 8–9 and Meditz in this volume.

38 ST I, 142

39 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 9.

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Ibid.*

ical revelation in Christ is understood by Tillich as "final and definite" in contrast with anything present in other religions, including Judaism.[42] It would seem that, if one takes Tillich's theological-historical views of salvation and revelation as a starting point, supersessionism follows, as well as some form of Christian inclusivism (perhaps even exclusivism).[43] This was a central issue of the argument against Tillich by several of his disciples who, partly in critical response to this feature of Tillich's theology, became religious pluralists, like Langdon Gilkey, Tom Driver, and Paul Knitter. From their perspective, Tillich stopped at the crucial point where a revision of the doctrine of the finality and absoluteness of the Christ-event was needed.[44]

One crucial structural element of Tillich's theological framing of Judaism we need to keep in mind here is his "protestant principle," i.e. the "prophetic protest" against anything finite and historical, if that is as if it was the unconditional itself.[45] Now, Tillich clearly affirmed Israel's *continuing* salvific function as a corrective for the Church.[46] But, while this manifests genuine openness for Christian self-criticism, it may be also seen as a peculiarly Church-centred affirmation of Israel and Judaism. In fact, Tillich sounds surprisingly like Schleiermacher when claiming that the peak prophetic period of Judaism came *before* Christ, and that, with the Christ event, universality broke into Jewish particularism in order to overcome particularism. This reveals that Tillich was also in the business of recycling – somewhat differently but not entirely unlike Schleiermacher – and re-packaging the old supersessionist themes from the Christian tradition.

Another, even more problematic structural element of Tillich's thought that determined his view of Judaism as well as Zionism was his "ontology of the space/time struggle" (corresponding to sacramental and prophetic aspects of re-

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42 I am focusing here on the considered and clearly expressed views Tillich held for the most of his mature period as a theologian – at least until his trip to Japan and the discussions with Buddhist interlocutors there which came quite late in Tillich's life (1963). Terence Thomas (1995) argues that Tillich has moved from soteriological inclusivism to pluralism as a result of his dialogue with Buddhists, but some, including Marc Boss (2009), dispute this interpretation.

43 Kayko Dreidger Hesslein, "The (Dis)Integration of Judaism in Tillich's Theology of Universal Salvation," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, 36/3 (2010), 32–36; 35.

44 Langdon Gilkey, "Tillich: The Master of Mediation," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. C. Kegley (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1983), 25–69; Langdon Gilkey, "Plurality and its Theological Implications," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, eds. J. Hick and P. F. Knitter (London: SCM Press, 1987), 37–52; Tom F. Driver "The Case for Pluralism," in Hick and Knitter, *Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, 203–218 and Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward World Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985).

45 Earley, "Tillich and Judaism," 230.

46 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 8–9.

ligion, respectively, which, Tillich claims, are struggling within all religions).[47] This framework predisposed him to see Judaism as a "religion of time" and not of space, and Jewish people as the "people of time" and not of space. Accordingly, Tillich claimed that Jewish people are permanently in a "diasporic existence," which predisposed him negatively towards Zionism.[48] Now, whatever our attitude towards Zionism, it is difficult to sympathize with such an abstract and sweepingly generalized grounding of negative attitude towards a rather complex contemporary political question.

We need to note that despite these systemic predispositions towards theological anti-Judaism in Tillich's thought, he has laboured hard against German (neopagan, political) anti-Semitism, both as a Christian socialist and as a humanist.[49] And, as we mentioned above, he clearly recognized, criticized and disapproved several forms of traditional Christian anti-Judaism (including the biblical anti-Judaism in St John's Gospel), rarely recognized by Christians at the time, both before and immediately after the Second World War.[50] The version of anti-Jewish theology which Tillich continued to endorse was a conscious but, to his mind, an unavoidable choice for a Christian theologian. It was a simultaneous "Yes" and "No" to Judaism which he saw in the Apostle Paul and which, according to Tillich's deep conviction, is entailed in the central affirmation of Jesus as the Christ without which Christianity simply ceases to be Christianity.

3 Comparative reflection and contemporary lessons

It is tempting to sum up this comparative exploration by writing that Schleiermacher's pronounced anti-Judaism persisted *despite* his affirmative philosophy of religions (including Judaism), whereas Tillich's insightful awareness and criticism of anti-Judaism found its expression *despite* Tillich's Christocentric and metaphysico-historical view of religions (including Judaism). But the multi-layered complexities in the systems of thought, as well as the complicated (different

47 Paul Tillich, "The Struggle between Space and Time," in *Theology of Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959): 30 – 39.

48 Tillich, "The Jewish Question"; cf. Earley, "Tillich and Judaism," 233 – 234. Tillich changed his views on Zionism during the late 1950s and became moderately supportive of Zionism and the new expressions of Jewish faith in Israel. See Paul Tillich, "My Changing Thoughts on Zionism," in GW XIII, 403 – 408.

49 Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

50 Tillich, "The Jewish Question," 6 – 7.

but historically related) historical contexts of both, make it impossible to take this crude simplification as a definite summary of the comparison between Schleiermacher's and Tillich's attitudes toward Judaism.

It can hardly be denied that the tendencies towards Marcionism which Schleiermacher introduced into Protestantism have, more than a century later, become part and parcel of a very different, virulent anti-Semitic rhetoric which Schleiermacher would never approve.[51] It is also clear that dislocating early Christianity out of its Jewish historical context is bound to cause misunderstandings of both Christianity and Judaism, as Tillich understood and argued very well.[52] However, this doesn't mean that Schleiermacher's de-emphasis on the *theological* continuity between Judaism and Christianity entails anti-Judaism, let alone anti-Semitism. Schleiermacher's view that each religion is a unique outworking of a different and original religious awakening, as well as his understanding that the plurality of religions is to be celebrated and not lamented, still has the potential to enable Christian theology to see *contemporary* Judaism as a living and valid embodiment of divine interaction with humanity.[53]

However, in today's post-pluralist theological landscape even this positive potential within Schleiermacher's philosophy of religions may sound "unusable" for Christian theology. For those who remain unimpressed with the post-liberal hard incommensurabilism, and the corresponding "don't speculate, don't tell" strategy for Christian thinking about non-Christian religions, Tillich's simultaneous and emphatic "Yes" and "No" to Judaism may seem as a somewhat more promising theological forerunner of a possible contemporary Christian attitude. But, as several scholars have noted, Tillich's theological emphasis on the continuity between "Jewish prophetism" and Christianity is a double-edged sword. His historico-theological view of religions which keeps his anti-Judaism alive is also based on what today seems a rather dated framework: an all to simple theological philosophy of history within which Tillich placed his affirmation of Jesus as the Christ. But that affirmation need not be placed in this particular interpretation of history.

So what are the lessons which contemporary Christian attempts to "think Judaism" can draw from this comparison? It will always remain important for Christian thinking and self-understanding to be aware of the continuities between (Ancient) Jewish and Christian traditions – especially, of course, of the Jewish character of Jesus and the whole conceptual and ritual heritage which

51 Cf. Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 123–139.

52 Tillich, "The Jewish Question."

53 Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 96 and 101.

New Testament and the early Church have inherited and build upon. However, a theological interest in and affirmation of contemporary Judaism *on the basis of that continuity* is a risky enterprise, full of intellectual, ethical and theological traps. This can be nicely seen in the case of Tillich's position. It shows us how easy it is to remain a Christian triumphalist over Judaism even while simultaneously overcoming many forms of anti-Judaism.

After much scholarship on Jewish-Christian relations, it still seems that Judaism and Christianity indeed are a bit "too close for – *theological* – comfort". In the interreligious arena, respecting contemporary Judaism as historically close but theologically independent and fully its own – indeed, as "one among many" religious traditions which deserve respect and Christian dialogical engagement in its own right – appears to be a better starting point for interreligious understanding than emphasising the continuity between pre-Christian Jewish tradition and Christianity. This holds, I contend, from the Christian perspective regardless whether one leans towards soteriological pluralism or not. In this, Schleiermacher's philosophical-theological affirmation of Judaism as part of his affirmation of *religions* continues to include a lesson for the ongoing Christian search for the best attitude, both theologically and practically, towards Judaism.

Of course, contemporary Judaism remains conceptually the closest relative to Christianity among all religions.[54] But the different grammars of even the central concepts in religious discourses of both traditions – take "salvation" and "the law" as examples – demand a continuous respect for this difference when communicating interreligiously, as well as an honest, learning, and self-critical attitude in relation to Christianity's own anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic demons. This does not mean that we have to ignore the importance of the analogies and shared cultural deposits (post-Biblical as much as Biblical) between Judaism and Christianity, on which contemporary Jewish-Christian relations will continue to build also.[55] What we need not think is that this depends on a strong historical-theological doctrine of continuity between Judaism and Christianity.

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54 I cannot go into discussion of the concept 'religion' here. See, however, Gorazd Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement: A Philosophical and Theological Perspective* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016) for such a discussion, where I engage especially with a Wittgensteinian-pragmatist perspective on the concept of religion.

55 For two different approaches to Jewish-Christian theological communication which acknowledge both the grammatical difference as well as significant analogies between Christianity and Judaism, see David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: the Inter-Religious Dialogue*. Louvain: Peeters, 1990) and David B. Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1993).

Ankur Barua

Chapter 14

Paul Tillich, Being Itself, and the Structure of Vedantic Panentheism

An integral aspect of Paul Tillich's theological endeavour is his attempt to interweave the notion of 'Godhead above God' with biblical personalism, and thereby hold together his view that the divine reality is not *a* finite being with the biblical revelation of God who acts at decisive moments in history. Tillich's attempts to combine in creative tension the search for the 'ground' of reality with the 'personalism' of biblical religion resonates with certain inter-Vedantic controversies in classical Indian thought. Both Śaṁkara (c. 800 CE) and Rāmānuja (c. 1100 CE) grappled with the notions of supra-theism and personal theism against the background of the Upaniṣadic theme of Being-Itself. In particular, in this chapter I shall highlight the resonances between Rāmānuja's argument that the ultimate divine reality is not merely *a* finite self alongside, beside or with the phenomenal world but is rather its innermost personal controller, and Tillich's insistence that God is the creative ground which embraces all finite reality in such a manner that the world is not an external entity over and against God. A comparative analysis of their theological systems can highlight the tensions in Tillich's thought between, on the one hand, his notion of the supra-personal divine which is not a mere cosmic 'ego' or 'Thou' confronting humans but includes all reality as its creative power, and, on the other hand, his development of a biblical theism in which God encounters human persons in and through their response of faith, prayer, and worship.

Tillich scholars have overlooked his comments on Vedantic thought which indicate the parallels that he himself perceived between his theological system and Vedantic attempts to speak about the divine. He reports that a Hindu explained to him that 'he stood in the transpersonalistic thinking of India's classical tradition but that, as a religious Hindu, he would say that the Brahman power makes itself personal for us. He did not attribute the personal element in religion only to man's subjectivity. He did not call it illusion; he described it as an inner quality of the transpersonal Brahman power'.[1] In another place, after pointing out that Being can be understood as the power of being which resists non-being, he notes: "In this sense the notion of being was understood

1 Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (London: James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1955), 26.

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alike by such people as Parmenides in Greece and Shankara in India."[2] The first remark is picked up by Terence Thomas who claims that if Tillich "had more information [about Indian Religions] he would have found himself closer certainly to Ramanuja than he would have dreamed, and nearer to Shankara than he would have liked."[3] In the following sections, I will illuminate Thomas' remark through a discussion of (a) Tillich's doctrine of God, (b) the conceptual tension in Vedantic systems between the transpersonal ultimate and the personal God, and (c) Tillich's understanding of God in the light of the excursion into Vedantic thought.

1 Tillich and the 'Personal' God

As he tries to weave the 'ontological question' into 'biblical theism', Tillich points out several oppositions that are supposed to exist between the two. Ontology, on the one hand, speaks of the identity of the finite with the infinite, and seeks the ahistorical structures that ground the world of change and the most general aspects of reality.[4] Biblical religion, on the other hand, denies that human beings participate in any substantial manner in God, deals with concrete individuals, and speaks of human beings in the flow of historical change.[5] Tillich responds that 'religion' and 'ontology' in fact meet when we enquire into the meaning of the assertions that God is *in* and *above* the world, because when we try to understand the use of these spatial metaphors we have, in effect, asked an ontological question.[6] Therefore, the ontological quest is not a betrayal of biblical religion, for God can be our unconditional concern only if God is the ultimate reality, the true 'object' of our trust, which implies that "[f]aith includes the ontological question, whether the question is asked explicitly or not."[7] Indeed, since the question of being is not the question about a particular being, but the question of what it means to *be*, we can see that God, who unconditionally *is*, cannot be a finite object beside, or even most supremely exalted above, the empirical world. In language that, as we will note shortly, is highly resonant of Vedantic vocabulary, Tillich claims that as we search for the 'really real,' we move from one level to another till we reach "a point where we cannot speak

2 ST II, 12
3 Terence Thomas, *Paul Tillich and World Religions* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1999), 119.
4 Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, 36.
5 *Ibid.*, 39.
6 *Ibid.*, 74.
7 *Ibid.*, 59.

of level any more, where we must ask for that which is the ground of all levels, giving them their structure and their power of being."[8]

At this stage, we can examine a dialectic that runs through Tillich's understanding of God. On the one hand, for Tillich, God is not a being, a thing, a power, a cause, a reality or somebody, a part of the totality of events, the most powerful being, or the highest being. Rather, God is the ground of being, the power of being and being-itself. He emphasises that the "concept of a 'Personal God', interfering with natural events, or being "an independent cause of natural events", makes God a natural object beside others, an object among objects, a being among beings, maybe the highest, but nevertheless *a* being."[9] In the tradition of medieval Christian mysticism, Tillich argues that God is the 'supra-divinity' beyond the 'highest names' that are used in theology; God is in fact "beyond any possible highest being."[10] On the other hand, Tillich is aware that some of his critics object to the word 'Being-Itself' because of its impersonal tone, and responds that God is properly understood to be supra-personal.[11] Therefore, just as the notion of a finite God who is *a* being is transcended by that of God who is Being-Itself so the notion of a personal God is transcended by that of God who is the "Personal-Itself, the ground and abyss of every person."[12] That is, while God is not *a* person, God is not less than the personal, for God is the ground of the personal and carries "the ontological power of personality."[13]

We may phrase the dialectic in slightly different terms in the following manner. On the one hand, the world is not 'external' to God if such externality implies that God confronts the world as *a* being or *a* divine Thou, but, on the other hand, neither is the world to be 'assimilated' to God through an ontological identification between the finite and the infinite. To begin with the first arm of the dialectic, if transcendence is understood in terms of a direct opposition with the non-divine world, the deity is reduced to a (finite) object by this very opposition; hence an emphasis on God's transcendence must go simultaneously with a parallel accent on the divine involvement with the world and immanent presence in it. Kathryn Tanner therefore argues that "[i]f Christians presume that God is somehow beyond this world and is therefore not be identified with it in

8 *Ibid.*, 13.

9 Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 130.

10 Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, ed. Carl Braaten (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 92.

11 ST II, 13.

12 Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, 83.

13 ST I, 271.

part or in whole, the theologian in the interest of Christian coherence adds that this non-identity must not amount to a simple contrast."[14] Along these lines, we find Tillich arguing that in true prayer, God is both the divine destination to whom we direct, through our finite freedom, our prayer and the divine source who prays through us as we surrender our human will to God.[15] Therefore, the notion of God as *a* person would negate the religious assertion, ultimately derived from Augustine, that God is more intimate to the ego than I am myself to it.[16] However, to move to the other arm of the dialectic, the emphasis that God is not *an* object or *a* partner but rather the divine Thou who 'encompasses' the human ego pushes Tillich in the direction of 'pantheism', as he himself was aware: "The question of how my criticism of traditional theism drives me in the direction of a Spinozistic monism is certainly justified and I have often considered it myself. My answer is the doctrine that man [*sic*] *is* finite freedom ... But this does not make him ontologically independent."[17] That is, finite reality, which is separated from the Creator by an 'infinite distance', is absolutely dependent on God: "there is no substance, divine or antidivine, out of which finite beings receive their being."[18] Tillich argues that the word 'nothing' in the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is not to be understood as a subtle material substratum out of which the world is produced.[19] Therefore, finite beings have the power of being only to the extent that they participate in Being-Itself which transcends all beings.[20] Even if we say that God participates in everything that is, we must add that God creates these finite beings in which God participates.[21]

In short, Tillich seeks to affirm the suprapersonal divine without, however, slipping towards a 'Spinozistic monism'. He argues that the word 'ground' is particularly suitable for his doctrine of the divine because it "oscillates between cause and substance and transcends both of them. It indicates that the ground of revelation is neither a cause which keeps itself at a distance from the revelatory effect [that is, God is not merely 'external' to the world] nor a substance which effuses itself into the effect [that is, God is not the Substance of a Spinoz-

14 Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 47.

15 Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, 81.

16 S. Rome and B. Rome eds., *Philosophical Interrogations* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 381.

17 Rome and Rome, *Philosophical Interrogations*, 384.

18 Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, 35–6.

19 *Ibid.*, 74.

20 ST I, 263.

21 *Ibid.*, 272.

istic monism]..."[22] We can now see that Tillich's doctrine of God is structured by a deep tension between two affirmations: on the one hand, God is the creative ground infusing all finite beings with the power of being, and on the other hand, the creature which is in a state of ontological dependence on God is also characterised by finite freedom.

2 Śaṁkara and the Trans-Personal Ultimate

Tillich's attempts to steer a middle course between a 'monarchical theism' in which God controls a world in the manner of a distant Lord and an 'emanationism' in which God undergoes an outflow into the world strongly resonate with certain conceptual tensions in the structures of Vedantic thought. On the one hand, we find the Tillichian emphasis that the divine is not *a* limited entity, or even a 'monarch' controlling the world, but the unconditioned 'really real' (*satyasya satyam*), which is the substratum and the innermost reality of the phenomenal world. On the other hand, Vedantic theologians also emphasise, in Tillichian fashion, that the ultimate reality does not 'overflow' into the world, and that the empirical negativities of the world should not be attributed to its unconditioned ground on which it is ontologically dependent. A crucial divergence between Vedantic thinkers emerges, however, when we enquire into the nature of the ultimate reality and the metaphysical status of the finite world. Our examination, in this section and the next, of the dialectic between trans-theism and personal theism in the theological systems of Śaṁkara and Rāmānuja will illuminate, from a somewhat unexpected angle, the tensions in Tillich's theology between ontology and biblical theism.

One of the most vexed questions in the scholarship on Śaṁkara, and more generally the Advaitic tradition, is the relation between the 'personal God' (*īśvara*) and the 'transpersonal ultimate' (*Brahman*) in his theology.[23] Without seeking to provide an exhaustive survey of the literature I will simply outline the broad consensus on this question. The Advaita (literally, 'not two-ness') tradition, of which Śaṁkara is the most well-known exponent, holds that the true import of the Upanishads is that the ultimate reality, which is trans-categoreal (*nirguṇa Brahman*), and the finite world, which is characterised by numerous distinctions, are substantively not-different (*advaita*). That is, the various differ-

22 *Ibid.*, 173.

23 Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, *Divine Self, Human Self. The Philosophy of Being in Two Gītā Commentaries* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

ences that we encounter in our phenomenal experiences are ultimately insubstantial appearances (*māyā*) and the true ontological foundation of all finite reality is the one, eternal, impartite and qualityless *Brahman*. The Advaita tradition accords some measure of provisional reality (*saṁvṛtti satya*) to our everyday wakeful experiences, treating our phenomenal distinctions as useful fictions inasmuch as they facilitate social existence. However, we fail to see through these layers of conventionalised reality and to realise that they are substantially not-different from the ultimate reality (*pāramārthika satya*) which is the trans-personal Brahman.[24] In other words, the world has only a provisional reality and is not a self-sufficient entity that exists independently of the ultimate foundational reality; consequently, what is 'illusory' is the perception that the realm of plurality is self-existing and has a finality of its own.[25]

The crucial question, of course, is how the world of plurality 'emerges' out of the indivisible *Brahman* which is beyond all change.[26] The Advaita tradition has, in response, sometimes drawn a distinction between a 'real' transformation and an 'apparent' transformation, and argued that the transpersonal *Brahman* only seems to our finite minds to have undergone this transformation – at the deep level of reality, however, there is no 'emanation' from the ultimate into the world.[27] According to this reading of Śaṁkara, therefore, it is not the case that there are two ontologically distinct realities, one the personal Lord of a finite world and the other the transpersonal divine, but that there is ultimately only the trans-theistic ultimate which, however, is provisionally apprehended and worshipped by human beings as the personal Lord.[28] Therefore, after receiving proper instruction from the scriptural texts, we should embark on a voyage of self-enquiry, and break through the layers of empirical reality till we realise that the true self is ontologically not-different from the ineffable transpersonal ultimate. We can now see, through this detour into Advaita metaphysics, that the persistent criticism that Tillich's 'God' is an impersonal divinity is inaccurate. For both Tillich and Śaṁkara, the ultimate reality is not 'below' the personal but rather 'transcends' the personal in the sense that the ultimate reality is not *a* person but the ground of personal reality. However, Tillich does not go as far as Śaṁkara who claims that the finite world is ultimately an insubstantial appearance superimposed on the foundational ground of the eternal *Brah-*

24 Anantanand Rambachan, *The Advaita worldview: God, world, and humanity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

25 S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1927), 47–48.

26 T. M. P. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita* (London: Luzac and Co., 1957).

27 K. H. Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 109.

28 P. T. Raju, *Structural Depths of Indian Thought* (Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1985).

man; even when Tillich emphasises that we should not view the individual-divine encounter in terms of an external relation between an ego and a cosmic Thou, he is insistent that the ego is a creature separated by an 'infinite distance' from the Creator. The precise distinction between Tillich and Śaṁkara in their understanding of the divine is therefore a subtle one, and it is likely that had Tillich engaged with Shankara, he "would have found himself ... nearer to Shankara than he would have liked."[29]

3 Rāmānuja and the Personal Divine

In contrast to the Advaita tradition, which views the empirical world as ultimately an apparent manifestation of the transpersonal Brahman, Rāmānuja's realist interpretation of the Upaniṣads presents the personal Lord, Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, as the ultimate reality with innumerable auspicious qualities (*saguṇa Brahman*), the ontological ground and the innermost reality in the finite world.[30] Rāmānuja's theological universe contains three distinct kinds of 'entities': 1. the Lord Viṣṇu-Nārāyana, the supreme Person, 2. the conscious self (*cit*) and 3. the mutable physical objects (*acit*), and all of these are metaphysically real. The latter two are differentiated from each other by the fact that whereas physical objects, such as the human body, are subject to mutability and decay, the selves are imperishable and have always existed; the Lord is ontologically distinct from both non-conscious and conscious beings since the Lord is free from all worldly afflictions and has attributes such as omniscience which finite beings do not possess. At the heart of Rāmānuja's theology lies his distinctive understanding of a 'body' (*śarīra*) as any substance which a conscious being is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purposes, and whose essential form is to be the accessory of that being. Therefore, Rāmānuja argues that the Lord, who alone is utterly beyond transmutations of any kind, is 'above' the world, which is the divine body, in the sense that all finite beings are dependent on the Lord for their proper nature, subsistence and activity.[31]

Rāmānuja's understanding of the world as the divine body allows him, across theological boundaries, to strike the key Tillichian note of the immanent

29 Thomas, *Paul Tillich and World Religions*, 119.

30 C. J. Bartley, *The Theology of Rāmānuja: Realism and Religion* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

31 Julius Lipner, *The Face of Truth: A Study of Meaning and Metaphysics in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja* (Basinstoke: Macmillan, 1986).

presence of the divine while rejecting a 'pantheistic' absorption of the finite into the divine. According to Rāmānuja, the Lord, *Brahman* qualified with distinctions, is at once the substantial cause and the efficient cause of the world. For him, the crucial scriptural text in this context is: "[i]n the beginning, my dear, this was Being [*Sat*] alone, one only without a second ... It thought, May I be many, may I grow forth."[32] He points out that the first statement which states that *Brahman* is the substrate out of which the world is produced might seem to imply that it is some other cause which produced the effect, that is, the world. This is why the second statement is added so as to emphasise that it is *Brahman* who is also the efficient cause in the production of the world.[33] This understanding of the Lord's 'originative causality' is based on the theory of *satkāryavāda* according to which the effect lies latent in a potential form in its cause. This is how Rāmānuja explains this theory: "the effect is not a substance different from its cause, but is the cause itself which has passed into a different state."[34] There can therefore be no ontological 'gap' between the Lord and the world as the latter, the 'effect' of the former who is its 'substantial cause', depends on the Lord for its very existence and rests on an ontological continuum with Him. However, while the Lord is the supporter (*ādhāra*) of all beings the Lord does not derive any help from them at any time. The Lord supports them not in the way in which a jug supports the water that it contains but entirely through His will (*saṁkalpena*) which sustains all the modes (*prakāra*) which constitute the divine body.[35] Rāmānuja further emphasises the Lord's transcendence over the world by insisting that the Lord does not have to depend on it when manifesting it; the Lord, who possesses powers that cannot be fathomed by human thought, does not stand in need of any external instruments when producing the world. Using language that mirrors the Christian doctrine of creation on this point, he says that unlike embodied selves such as human beings who are able to form new things only through their connection with physical objects, the Lord produces the entire universe simply through the divine wish and sends it forth while remaining essentially disjoint from all materiality.[36]

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32 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VI, 2, 1–3 in S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), 447–449.

33 George Thibaut, *The Vedānta-Sūtras: With the Commentary by Rāmānuja* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1971), 80.

34 Thibaut, *The Vedānta-Sūtras*, 398.

35 M. R. Sampatkumaran, trs. *The Gītābhāṣya of Rāmānuja* (Bombay: Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, 1985), 226.

36 Thibaut, *The Vedānta-Sūtras*, 236.

In the light of this survey of Rāmānuja's theology, I return to Thomas's claim that Tillich "would have found himself closer certainly to Rāmānuja than he would have dreamed."[37] When Tillich argues that 'being' and 'person' should not be seen as contradictory concepts: "Being includes personal being; it does not deny it," he echoes Rāmānuja's criticism of Śaṁkara that none of the means of knowledge, whether perception, inference or scriptural revelation, indicates *Brahman* as the transpersonal ultimate, but rather point to *Brahman* as the supreme Person who is untouched by any worldly imperfections.[38] Further, in a Tillichian vein, Rāmānuja argues that the Lord is not *a* person confronting the substantively real finite world, but is rather the transcendently perfect supreme Person who is at the same time the immanent ruler (*antaryāmī*) of every conscious and non-conscious reality which constitute the divine body.[39] While Rāmānuja does indeed depart from the mainstream Christian tradition in holding to a doctrine not of creation *ex nihilo* but production *ex Deo*, Rāmānuja's doctrine that the world is the metaphysically real body of the Lord cannot be labelled as 'pantheistic' because Rāmānuja emphasises the Lord's utter categorical distinction from all finite reality which is completely dependent on the Lord. Rāmānuja argues that just as the spatio-temporal attributes of the physical body such as 'infancy' and 'youth' do not touch the finite human self in its essential nature, the imperfect attributes of the embodied self do not touch the supreme Person, whose body it is.[40]

4 Rāmānuja, Tillich and the Doctrine of Creation

This discussion of certain key themes in Vedantic thought can illuminate, from a somewhat unconventional perspective, Tillich's statement that there "is no saving ontology, but the ontological question is implied in the question of salvation."[41] For both Vedantic theologians and Tillich, the proper understanding of the structures of being, and a radical re-orientation of fallen being to the ground of being, is part and parcel of the processes of 'salvation.' However, as we have indicated in the previous section, a crucial divergence across these theological boundaries is the doctrine of 'creation': while Tillich affirms the traditional

37 Thomas, *Paul Tillich and World Religions*, 119.
38 Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, 83.
39 Thibaut, *The Vedānta-Sūtras*, 278 – 281.
40 *Ibid.*, 228 – 229.
41 Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, 85.

Christian doctrine of creation out of utter nothingness, Rāmānuja affirms a more substantial 'participation' of the world in the divine.

The Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* emphasizes that the world is 'produced' not out of the substance or inner being of the divine but purely through the divine will.[42] Consequently, 'emanationism', 'pantheism' and the notion that the world is the divine 'body' are usually opposed by mainstream Christian theologians because they are believed to negate the free, gracious initiative of the Trinitarian God in creating the world, and thereby 'depersonalize' the creative will. However, some recent Christian theologians have claimed that the notion of 'emanation' is not entirely alien to the traditional doctrine of creation and can in fact be woven into it to emphasise that the divine is in some sense in the world and the world is in the divine. John Macquarrie, for instance, argues that if the image of 'making' is overemphasized the creative will becomes an arbitrary fiat and the world is relegated to an 'external' reality over against the divine. Therefore "we need ... a dialectic embracing both 'making' and 'emanation', each of these analogies complementing, and if need be, correcting the other."[43] The dialectical intertwining that Macquarrie indicates can also be observed in Rāmānuja's understanding of the manner in which the Lord produces the divine body, the world of finite realities. For Rāmānuja while the world does indeed 'participate' in the divine Lord, whose body it constitutes, the world is not 'assimilated' into the inner being of the supreme Person who remains its inner controller. The Lord who is ever self-satisfied in that the Lord has no desires that are unattained may find a certain activity delightful not because the Lord stands to gain something out of it but simply because the Lord finds this activity inherently delectable. For Rāmānuja, the production of the world is precisely such an activity, an activity which is the Lord's sport or play (*līlā*). The only 'motive' that drives the Lord to the production, sustenance and destruction of the world-orders is that of play which is not necessitated in any way.[44]

Rāmānuja's distinctive understanding of the production of the world out of *Brahman's* sport can illuminate a vexed issue in Christian theology of whether God is under any 'necessity' to create the world. For instance, Keith Ward argues that God is uniquely self-determining and is not limited by anything that God does not create, but that the perfection of God lies not in self-satisfaction but in self-giving love.[45] Therefore, "one cannot say that God must necessarily create

42 David A. S. Fergusson, *The Cosmos and the Creator: An Introduction to the Theology of Creation* (London: SPCK, 1998), 30.

43 John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity* (London: SCM, 1984), 37.

44 Thibaut, *The Vedānta-Sūtras*, 477.

45 Keith Ward, *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 82.

some world, on pain of failure to be God. But one can say that God can only determine his own being as self-giving love if he [*sic*] both creates and responsively relates to some world."[46] We can see that Rāmānuja attempts, from within his Vedantic context, to emphasise that the Lord is under no necessity and 'freely' produces the divine body. While Christian theologians have, by and large, not explored this possibility of viewing divine creation as the play of the Trinitarian God, Jürgen Moltmann is an interesting exception to this generalization. He grapples with the following dilemma: if creation is 'necessary' for God, then God cannot a free creator, while if creation is merely an accident, the free creator is a 'capricious demon'. Therefore, we must say that when God "creates something that is not god but also not nothing, then this must have its ground not in itself but in God's *good will or pleasure*. Hence the creation is God's play, a play of his groundlessness and inscrutable wisdom."[47] A development of this Moltmannian idea would enable a Tillichian to highlight simultaneously the creaturely dependence of a finite world and its inclusion within the divine on the horizons of an 'eschatological pan-en-theism' where God shall be everything in everything.[48]

Conclusion

My comparative analysis of certain Tillichian tensions and their counterparts in the structure of Vedantic theology has revealed that both Tillich and Rāmānuja attempt, across theological boundaries, to weave together two propositions – first, that the world is 'internal' to the divine (a thesis which moves their systems in the direction of 'pantheism') and second, that finite reality has some measure of ontological independence (an affirmation that, unless properly balanced by the former, would lead to the alleged classical theistic picture of the world 'outside' a monarchical God). Tillich develops this tension when he argues, on the one hand, that between the finite and the infinite there is no proportion or gradation but rather an 'absolute break', and, on the other hand, that the finite participates in the infinite which transcends all finite reality.[49] Thus Tillich argues: "[e]very relation in which God becomes an object to a subject, in knowledge or in action, must be affirmed and denied at the same time. It must be af-

46 Ward, *Rational Theology*, 85.
47 Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Play* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), 17.
48 ST III, 450.
49 ST I, 263.

firmed because man [*sic*] is a centred self to whom every relation involves an object. It must be denied because God can never become an object for man's knowledge or action."[50] Therefore, both Tillich and Rāmānuja wrestle, from within their theological locales, with highly specific forms of panentheism, an investigation of which highlights Tillich's attempts to integrate 'pantheistic' sounding statements with those which are more reminiscent of the 'classical theism' that he usually opposes.

50 *Ibid.*, 301.

Stefan S. Jaeger

Chapter 15

Paul Tillich and the 'Dark Night of Faith' as Mystical Experience

Tillich's philosophical theology draws upon the tradition of an apologetic mediating theology (*Vermittlungstheologie*). With its focus on a *mystical a priori* as its basic assumption it also exhibits strong traits of mystical theology with its fundamentally apophatic notion of experience.[1] This is especially true of Tillich's theory of faith and its corresponding meta-theistic conception of ultimate reality. Tillich's apologetic considerations culminate in the possibility of what he called the experience of "absolute faith" and the "God above God" when all concrete content is lost. It seems more than coincidental that about 400 years earlier the great Spanish monk of the Carmelite Order and mystical teacher St. John of the Cross (Juan de la Cruz) expressed his experience of the "Dark Night" (*noche oscura*) in similar terms and with concepts like *pura fe* / pure faith. As far as I know, these aspects of similarity have not yet been explored. Therefore, in this short paper I will ask how religious experience is conceptualised in the work of Paul Tillich and Juan de la Cruz, comparing their respective concepts of faith against today's context of secularism, and with respect to their potential for interreligious dialogue. As an example I will refer very briefly to the Pure-Land tradition in Mahāyāna Buddhism as it is represented by *Jōdo Shinshū* 浄土真宗 in Japan and its central experience of *shinjin* 信心, which is often translated as faith.[2]

1 The notion of *absolute faith* in Tillich

In his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich defines faith as "...the state of being *grasped* by the transcendent unity of unambiguous life – it embodies love as the state of being *taken into* that transcendent unity."[3] This famous definition has a

1 ST I, 9. On Tillich's relation to the mystical tradition cf. also Gert Hummel, Doris Lax, eds., *Mystical Heritage in Tillich's Philosophical Theology. Proceedings of the VIII. International Paul-Tillich-Symposium Frankfurt/Main 2000*. Tillich-Studien 3 (Münster: LIT, 2000).

2 For a comprehensive study of this subject cf. Stefan S. Jäger, *Glaube und Religiöse Rede bei Tillich und im Shin-Buddhismus: Eine religionshermeneutische Studie*, Tillich Research Vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2011).

3 ST III, 129 (emphasis in the original).

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long history and many implications that are impossible to explicate in this short paper, even though its diachronic and synchronic perspectives remain in the background. However, if we want to keep in mind just the most important aspects we should think of Tillich's basic apologetic approach, his idealistic ontology with its dynamic non-dualism of being, non-being and being-itself and his philosophy of life as fully developed in the third volume of his *Systematic Theology*.

Tillich writes for the context of secularization, trying to demonstrate the relevance of the Christian message for the 20th century – the century of the anxieties of doubt, emptiness and meaninglessness. His understanding of faith is right at the centre of his apologetic undertaking, his attempt to create structures of plausibility, and constitutes a continuum from his early writings to his last publications. Even the term "*Gott über Gott*" (God above God) as he introduces it in *The Courage to Be* (1952) is already present in the 1919 draft of his essay "Rechtfertigung und Zweifel" (justification and doubt).[4]

The beginnings of his concept of faith may date back to his early times as candidate of theology in Berlin in 1912 when he had to teach the youth. The twelve and thirteen year old boys in his class had only one answer to every question. It was "*Glaube*." So Tillich banned the word "*Glaube*" from this class because it had become emptied of any meaning and thus not only useless but even counter-productive to any progress in true understanding.[5] Tillich fought against the misconception of "*Glaube*" as belief in something that is unbelievable and therefore inacceptable and irrelevant.

When Tillich had to reformulate his system in English, he distinguished clearly between faith and belief, a distinction which the German language, with only the one word "*Glaube*", does not make. Tillich always lamented this fact. He uses belief with regard to the special contents of a religious system and its propositions. Faith however means the "state of being grasped by an ultimate concern." This correlates roughly to the classical distinction of *fides qua creditur* and *fides quae creditur*.[6] But in the work of Tillich it refers back to his early work in philosophy of religion and his lectures in Dogmatics of 1924/25, when he was an Associate Professor at Marburg University. Tillich introduced the distinction between *Grundoffenbarung* (revelation of the ground / foundational revelation) and *Heilsoffenbarung* (revelation of salvation / saving revelation). *Grundoffenbarung* means the apophatic breakthrough (*Durchbruch*) of

4 Editorial note to "The God above God (1961)" in: MW VI, 169, cf. EGW X, 432ff.

5 EGW V, 61.

6 Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematische Theologie*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1966), 204.

the absolute, whereas *Heilsoffenbarung* means the cataphatic content of a concrete religion generated by *Grundoffenbarung* in history. The two kinds of revelation are to be distinguished but not separated from each other. This distinction enables Tillich to hold fast to a mystical *a priori* and understand religion as experience of transcendence and at the same time explain the contingency and relativity of the concrete contents of any given religion as symbolic representations of the ultimate. In his *Systematic Theology* this distinction reappears in the difference between the *formal* and *material* definition of faith, although the perspective shifted somewhat as Tillich elaborated his understanding of faith in *Dynamics of Faith* (1957). Here, the "formal" definition of faith is what he termed theonomous philosophy of religion and the "material" definition is the concrete Christian content within this framework.

The shift from his early terminology of revelation to the later distinction between faith and belief is caused by his focussing on the subjective side of revelation, rather than its objective side. This focus was in accordance with his apologetic approach, moving from existence toward essence. But even the distinction of faith and belief dates back to 1929 when he wrote: "*Entweder ist Glaube reines, d.h. transzendentes Ergriffensein, oder es ist gegenständliches Erkennen.*"[7] Here, we already find the concept of absolute faith as pure transcendent being grasped, the ecstatic element in the experience of faith.

In *The Courage to Be*, Tillich introduces the concept of "absolute faith" against the backdrop of his ontology of *Angst*/anxiety, which is the inevitable consequence of the threat of non-being in the ontic, moral and spiritual dimensions. Absolute faith then is introduced as the possibility that appears in the middle of the desperation of doubt and meaninglessness, in the "*Grenzsituation*" or boundary situation (a term coined by Karl Jaspers). Absolute faith contains no propositional statements but it is not without content. According to Tillich it is an experience that consists of three elements:

1) The experience of the power of being-itself as manifest in vitality (which is in proportion to intentionality) that resists despair;
2) The dependence of the experience of nonbeing and meaninglessness on the experience of being and meaning;
3) The acceptance of being accepted.[8]

7 Paul Tillich, *Religiöse Verwirklichung* (Berlin: Furche 1930), 48. ["*Glaube*' is either pure, i.e. transcendent being grasped, or it is objectified / object-related cognition." My translation.]
8 MW V, 223.

These three elements are of course already interpretations that are shaped by Tillich's ontology. Acceptance or self-affirmation is possible through participation in the power of being-itself that overcomes non-being and anxiety by integrating them into itself. To accept acceptance, Tillich's reinterpretation of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, is the genuine religious element in absolute faith.[9]

In his material definition of faith in *Systematic Theology*, Tillich also distinguishes three elements regarding its content:

1) being opened up (*Geöffnetwerden*) by the Spiritual Presence (receptive, mere passivity; "regeneration");
2) the element of accepting it (*Aufnehmen*) in spite of the infinite gap between the divine Spirit and the human spirit (paradoxical; "justification");
3) the element of expecting (*Erwartung*) final participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life (anticipatory; "sanctification").[10]

These three elements are not to be understood as a chronological order, but rather as three aspects of faith that are intertwined. They also reflect, as Tillich writes "...the basic theological truth that in relation to God everything is by God."[11]

2 Tillich's understanding of mysticism

Before we now outline the experience of pure faith as Juan de la Cruz describes it, we need to take a closer look at Tillich's understanding of mysticism. Tillich distinguishes between "Mysticism as a quality of every religious experience" which is "universally valid" and "Mysticism as a type of religion."[12] In the first sense, faith is a mystical experience. Tillich writes "in spite of all antimystical tendencies in Protestantism" and states:

> ...there is no faith (but only belief) without the Spirit's grasping the personal center of him who is in the state of faith, and this is a mystical experience, an experience of the presence

9 "*Selbstbejahung*" – saying yes to oneself or self-affirmation is a term already used in 1809 by F. W. J. Schelling, *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände*, ed. Thomas Buchheim, Philosophische Bibliothek Bd. 503 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner 1997), 23.

10 ST III, 133; Tillich, *Systematische Theologie*, III, 159.

11 ST III, 133.

12 *Ibid.*, 242.

> of the infinite in the finite. As an ecstatic experience, faith is mystical, although it does not produce mysticism as a religious type.[13]

For Tillich, faith transcends mysticism as well as a personal encounter between God and man. His leading interest is to prove that faith is universal and necessary for the self-affirmation and self-acceptance that integrates anxiety and overcomes desperation, putting thus the integrated and centred self in the context of the life-process. Therefore, Tillich has to reject any kind of self-negation for the sake of identity with the absolute, though the goal is the experience of transcendent unity. From Tillich's point of view, this self-negation characterizes mysticism as it is particularly represented in Asian mysticism (be it so or not). In his Earl Lectures of 1963 he writes:

> The other way is that of the mystics in all religions, the basically Asiatic way – namely a resignation which negates the self as such, and thus every self and every life ultimately. Against both positions, I believe it is the unique greatness of Christianity that it shows the positivity of life in the principle [...] which I like to call 'the acceptance of the unacceptable', namely the acceptance of *us*. [...]
> And so I say it is the greatness of Christianity that it shows the positivity of life over against the condemning or self-justifying law *and* over against the profound resignation of life in much of the Eastern world.[14]

So Tillich rejects mysticism (as a type of religion) on the ground that it negates the self for the sake of pure identity with the absolute.[15] But on the other hand, his basic assumption of the mystical *a priori*, the experience of the Holy (agreeing with Rudolf Otto) and the ontological participation of being in being-itself and the ecstatic experience of faith and love as fragmentary transcendent union, are mystical, as Tillich concedes. In *The Courage to Be* he states that even in a person-to-person encounter with God there is the mystical element

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13 *Ibid.*, 242. Tillich also warned his students against the misinterpretation of mysticism as in Protestant theology from Ritschl to Barth. "If you know this, it may be hoped that you will not fall into the trap of removing mysticism from Christianity, which would mean to reduce the latter to an intellectualized faith and a moralized love." Tillich, *History of Christian Thought*, 136.

14 Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, ed. by Durwood Foster (Eugene: Wipf and Stock 2007), 55.

15 According to Werner Schüßler, this notion of mysticism is a misunderstanding and does not hold true even for Plotinus. Cf. Werner Schüßler, *Jenseits von Religion und Nicht-Religion: Der Religionsbegriff im Werk Paul Tillichs*, Athäneum Monographien Theologie 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum 1989), 39 – 40. See also Donald F. Deisbach, "On Tillich's Ambiguous Attitude Toward Mysticism," in Hummel and Lax, *Mystical Heritage*, 402 – 414.

of participation in the power of being-itself.[16] So instead of a mysticism of identity, Tillich's position could be called mysticism by participation that opens up the space for a self that can be affirmed by self-transcendence. That is the element of truth in biblical personalism. This is to be understood against the background of his dynamic non-dualistic ontology, which drives toward eschatological essentification. Participation is only possible 'in spite of' – and fragmentarily within – the categories of time and space.

Again, in the fourth part of his *Systematic Theology*, "Life and the Spirit," Tillich describes the essence of mysticism in the context of self-transcendence (Tillich also uses the term ecstasy): "Its very nature is to overcome the subject-object-split *after* it has fully developed in the personal realm – not to annihilate it, but to find something *above* the split in which it is conquered and preserved [emphasis mine]."[17]

3 The dark night of faith and *pura fe* (Juan de la Cruz)

Juan (1542–1591) is one of the foremost mystical teachers of the Western Church whose influence is widely recognised. His writings are basically canticles or poems, and their partial exposition, indicating the metaphoric or symbolic character of religious speech.[18] Recently, his works have been made fruitful for interreligious dialogue. His metaphor of the "Dark Night" and the underlying experience described as contemplation and pure faith makes him relevant for our present discussion.

It is Juan's basic assumption that the believer enters a spiritual path where he is led into a "Dark Night". The objective is the experience of the loving union with God. This union is ontological, Juan calls it *esencial*, *natural* or *sustancial* and it is possible because man participates in the being of God.

The beginner is still trying to make progress in his spiritual life using his power of the will, of the soul and of the mind. It is the time of meditation, i.e. of discursive thinking, prayer, reading the scriptures and so on. It is ob-

16 MW V, 215.

17 ST III, 92; Tillich, *Systematische Theologie* III, 113.

18 The works of Juan de la Cruz are edited by J.V. Rodríguez und F.R. Salvador *Obras Completas de San Juan de la Cruz*. The citation here follows the German translation in *Sämtliche/ Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 1–5. *Vollständige Neuübertragung*, ed., trans., and intro. Ulrich Dobhan, Elisabeth Hense and Elisabeth Peeters (Freiburg, Basel, Wien, 1995–2000). In the citation the common abbreviations are used: N= noche oscura; S = Subida al Monte Carmelo; e.g. 2N 8,1 = The Dark Night, 2. Book, Chapter 8, Paragraph 1.

ject-related thinking. But to progress one has to go through the purification of all concrete contents of belief, and its respective practice. In this phase all spiritual things are but a burden one should refrain from. In this night one is stripped of all faculties in relation to God. God himself takes away all external and internal support of faith.

Juan describes three nights or rather the different aspects as three phases of the one night:

a) *The night of senses* /sentidos /parte sensitiva (= "nightfall");
b) *The night of the spirit* (= *pura fe*, absolute darkness / "midnight");
c) *The "third" night* (God = "dawn").

The first night concerns the horizontal dimension: everything finite is experienced as finite through the presentiment of the infinite. The objective of this phase is to purify intentionality (*apetito, driving forces, Strebekräfte*) and to direct it from the finite towards the infinite. All natural forms and images must be emptied (2S 13,1). This corresponds with Johannes Tauler's term "*entbilden*" ("deimaging"). The feelings of "dryness" and "emptiness" are predominant.

In the second phase of the night the darkness is the deepest. This phase is concerned with the vertical dimension: now, God himself drifts away and seems lost, prayer is not possible anymore. Deep loneliness, anxiety and fear, pain, doubt and emptiness are the accompanying affects (2N8,7).

The third aspect of night is the contemplation as apophatic self-communication of God. The reason for the darkness of night is that man is blinded by the light of God. Here Juan goes along with Dionysios Aropagita and his expression of the "beam of darkness." The only way to receive this contemplation is pure faith / *pura fe*. Juan calls this night also "the night which is faith," surrendering oneself to darkness in pure faith (2N 4,1). The only practice or rather non-practice is to stay in active passiveness as mindfulness and loving attention to God (*atención y advertencia amorosa*). This self-communication of God and loving union with God by participation is only fragmentary in this life. It is only the dawn of a new day (2N 20,5).

What we find here is what Ralf Stolina calls a basic transformation of negative theology as a theology of faith.[19] According to Stolina, in this concept the transcendence of God is stressed even more than in Dionysios. Even in his self-communication God remains transcendent and for man unfathomable and in-

19 Ralf Stolina, *Niemand hat Gott je gesehen: Traktat über negative Theologie* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter 2000), 27.

comprehensible.[20] To borrow a phrase from Tillich in his sermon "Waiting": "We have God through *not* having him."[21]

Both Tillich and Juan use metaphoric or symbolic speech to express the relation to the absolute, Tillich in ontological terms and religious symbols, Juan basically in poetic language. Faith is emptied of all concrete contents and images.[22] The symbol of the Cross is equally important for Tillich and Juan in this context.

The experience of the dark night in Juan corresponds with the situation that Tillich describes in his analysis of the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness. So one could say that Tillich sees the dark night of faith not only individually but for society as a whole:

> The final answer to the question as to who makes God absent is God himself!
> It is the work of the Spirit that removes God from our sight, not only for some men, but sometimes for many in a particular period. We live in an era in which the God we know is the absent God.[23]

Both of them represent a mysticism of participation. Juan describes the aim of contemplation as *participación en dios* (2N20, 5) on the basis that man is in essence already in relation to God. In contrast to Tillich's definition of mystics, Juan does not go as far as to postulate absolute identity. Instead he uses the term participation to indicate a personal unity through faith in love. The individuality of the self is not denied but transcended. Juan uses the parable of a pane of glass. The self functions like a pane through which a sunbeam radiates. Juan explains that the glass is sunlight or sunbeam by participation. And the more so the less dirty it is. This parable contradicts somehow the vitalistic element in Tillich's philosophy of life where self-actualization plays an important role. Self-affirmation and acceptance doesn't matter in Juan's writings as it does for Tillich in his dialogue with humanist psychologists like Maslow. Tillich sees vitality as a sign of being-itself that resists despair, whereas Juan's *apetito* / striving forces – intend non-ultimate, relative objects of desire and need to be purged in the first place. That relates to Tillich's Protestant Principle which is somewhat in tension

20 *Ibid.*, 29.

21 Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1950 [1948]), 151 (emphasis in the original).

22 Cf. also Johannes Tauler, *Predigten*, Band 1, vollständige Ausgabe übertragen und herausgegeben von Georg Hofmann, Einführung von Alois M. Haas (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag 2011[5]), 41–42. The soul must be purged from any image of God, from any concrete representation.

23 Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (London: SCM Press 2002 [1963]), 58.

with his vitalistic approach. Still, faith is self-transcendence toward the absolute, without losing oneself.

Tillich does not reflect on ways to prepare oneself for the reception of absolute faith. The precondition seems to be given in the "boundary situation" where it comes to a turn from the negative to the positive. Although in his sermon "Waiting" he states that our existence in relation to God is one of waiting. And in his sermon "Our ultimate concern" he proposes we listen like Mary did in Luke 10: "This is the meaning of every sermon. It shall awaken infinite concern."[24] Juan advises loving attention and mindfulness towards God.

4 Perspectives for interreligious dialogue with the Shin-Buddhist concept of *shinjin* 信心 ('faith')[25]

In Shinran (1173 – 1263) we find the same structure as in Juan and Tillich. Shinran experienced utter desperation, finding himself unable to reach liberation by his own efforts. At the deepest point of resignation he experienced the saving grace of Amida as being saved and ultimately accepted (*sesshu fusha* 摂取不捨 'being grasped and not abandoned') by the workings of the original vow (*hongan* 本願) of Amida. Faith (*shinjin* 信心) is nothing that one can produce by himself but it is received (like Juan's contemplation or Tillich's absolute faith). It appears spontaneously when one has had to give up all fruitless efforts of self-power or *jiriki* 自力.

Ueda and Hirota describe the experience of Shinjin 信心 as follows:

> At the foundation of the realization of shinjin lie two interrelated elements: the dissolution of self-power, which is attachment to one's own will and capacity to determine and do what is good, or what accords with truth and reality; and the emergence of Other Power in one's existence, which is expressed as entrance into the ocean of Amida's Vow, or being grasped by Amida. These two elements are in fact two faces of a single religious awakening.[26]

Those who experience *shinjin*, "enter into a complex relationship with Amida."[27] So there is a personal element preserved on the plane of relative truth. The conceptualization of this experience in the context of Buddhist tradition follows the basic hermeneutic of *upāya* or skilful means – although with some alterations.

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24 Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1955), 153.

25 For a detailed elaboration of this topic see Jäger, *Glaube und Religiöse Rede*, 289 – 323.

26 Yoshifumi Ueda and Denis Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought* (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center 1989), 158.

27 *Ibid.* p. 150.

But basically it preserves the dialectic of apophatic ultimate reality and cataphatic relative truth.[28]

Conclusion

The historical and religious context as well as the religious language and categories are different. But there are analogies in structure and similar experiences, which converge at the point of unconditional acceptance experienced in the midst of desperation, through participation in the absolute. It has the paradoxical structure of 'in spite of' where, at the darkest point, negation turns into affirmation. The way to receive this affirmation is absolute faith (Tillich), pure faith/contemplation (Juan) or *shinjin* / trusting heart (Shinran). In each conceptualization the elements of a quasi-personal relation between the individual and the absolute are affirmed and transcended at the same time waiting for the ultimate fulfilment.

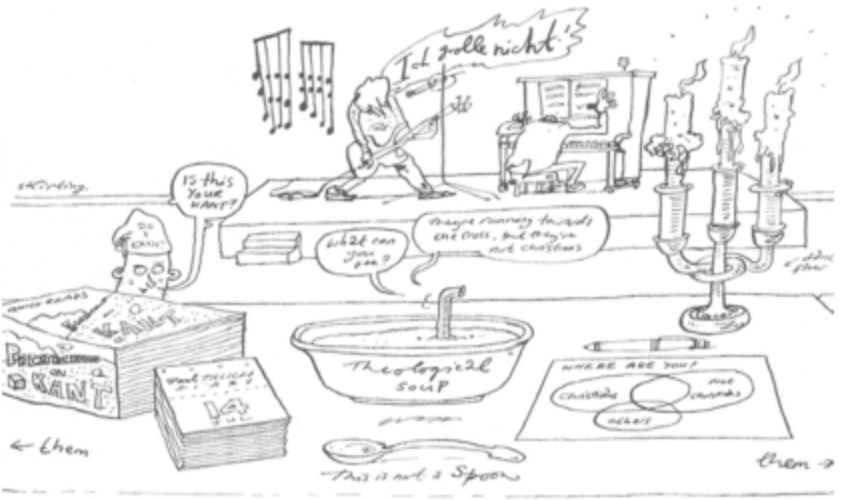
In a phenomenology of religious experience we have the content of the experience (*Erlebnis*) only by way of its interpretation in language of a concrete tradition as interpreted experience (*Erfahrung = gedeutetes Erlebnis*). We cannot go beyond that interpretation. The question how any given tradition prefigures the religious experience is rather difficult. By the nature of the subject there is no empirical method to discern. So the only way left is a hermeneutic of interreligious dialogue to come as close as possible to the respective self-interpretation.

Another question that also cannot be answered is the validity of religious experiences as transcendent or just as a psychological phenomenon as already proposed by Abraham Maslow in his studies on 'Peak-Experiences.'[29] Of course, a religious experience is also a psychological (or neuro-biological) phenomenon and can be scrutinized the psychology of religion or made visible by neuroscientific imaging. But Tillich rejected Maslow's naturalistic position as "...reductionist profanation of the self-transcending of man."[30] That of course is something that remains to be believed.

28 Cf. Jäger, *Glaube und Religiöse Rede*, 324–341.

29 Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, And Peak-Experiences* (Arkana: Penguin 1994 [1964]).

30 ST III, 118; Tillich, *Systematische Theologie* III, 141.



Christoph Schwoebel

Epilogue: A Dinner Speech

Tillich in Transition

Master,
Dear conference participants, dear friends,
When I was asked to deliver the dinner speech at the end of our conference I was slightly bemused. Why did they ask a German to speak after dinner? Is a dinner speech not a better occasion for British humour or French *ésprit?* Why risk being served an indigestible portion of German profundity, which all too often appears on British soil as just another example of Teutonic nonsense? We Germans are well-known for quite a number of things, e. g. for the varieties of sausages and strength of our beer. Occasionally we are quite good at football. Sometimes even whole philosophical schools get connected with Germany; like German Idealism, although that did not have such a good name at this conference. The genre of a dinner speech is not easily combined with the German national character, of which I am, of course, a typical example. The dinner speeches I listened to during my time in England were a mixture of light intellectual entertainment and risqué jokes. Now, I am sure that Tillich would offer the opportunity to present you with a few jokes, but I am not good at jokes; I forget jokes all the time.

Therefore, when I was invited to give this talk I asked Sam, one of the conference organisers, what the talk should be about. He made a number of suggestions, all of which were perfect. The first one was "Are we crazy to host a conference on Tillich?" Well, yes. That seems to be the case. I do not see that Tillich is one of the major theological or philosophical concerns in this country, or in Germany, or in the States at the moment. Although there has been a slow build-up of scholarly works on Tillich over the last years, the high time of theological debates on Tillich is, it seems, long over. Werner Jeanrond and I met at the Oxford Karl Barth conference 1986, the huge centenary conference attended by Stanley Hauerwas and other world celebrities in theology. In the same year there was also a little Tillich conference in Nottingham organised by John Heywood Thomas. If I remember correctly, just 11 people came. My old friend John Clayton was among them, which was for me the reason to be there. The disparity showed the difference between the level of interest in Barth, who was being discovered in this country, and in Tillich, where the interest was not quite so lively. Why should that be the case? If one looks at today's theological scene one would have to say that Tillich is a very good example of a number of things that are theologically fashionable at the moment.

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Take Radical Orthodoxy for example. Tillich would not defend the opinion that theology has to be the master discourse over all other discourses, but the way that Radical Orthodoxy sees every kind of cultural problem as a theological problem is also something that you will find in Tillich. There is more respect for the autonomy of other discourses in Tillich, but nevertheless there is the wide-ranging capacity to relate to the questions in other disciplines and other spheres of culture.

Barth still has an enormous following, especially in the United States. He shares with Tillich two characteristics. The first is that he engages the whole of the Christian tradition. And secondly, Barth, like Tillich, is one of the most revolutionary revisionary thinkers in theology. Tillich was profoundly wrong when he invented the label 'neo-orthodoxy' for Barth, because if one looks closely, say, at Barth's Christology, one will see that it is an enormous work of revision. It is probably the most radical revision of Christology in the 20th Century, certainly nothing along the lines of established orthodoxy. So he shares this characteristic with Tillich as well.

We might also consider Analytic Theology. Tillich could never let go of philosophy, though not particularly philosophy in the analytic tradition. He never seemed to understand what that was really about, and unfortunately the representatives of that tradition that he met in the United States did not encourage him to engage more deeply with that tradition either. However, I could imagine Tillich having fun with the representatives of analytic theology today. And so one could go on.

What do these others have that Tillich does not? There is no real answer to that. And because there is no real answer to that, one cannot know how the situation would change were there more interest in Tillich in this country. Yet I think that there are a number of signs that point in that direction, not least this wonderful conference we have just had.

What I think would be crucial for a revival of interest in Tillich would be a reconsideration of how we perceive Tillich's theology and Tillich as a theologian. Tillich himself wrote a lot about the character of his theology. His characterization of his theological position as a theology "on the boundary" has become, some say, the correct way to describe the format of Tillich's theology and philosophical enterprise.[1] I wonder whether that is right, because it seems that often being on the boundary suggests that one can play with borders and boundaries

1 See the new edition: Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical sketch* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock 2012).

but nevertheless remain on the boundary.[2] That sounds suspiciously like "sitting on the fence" and not really engaging with that which is on either side of the boundary. But Tillich *did* engage the territory on either side of the boundary, and therefore the description of being on the boundary is perhaps not the correct one.

Is there a better description of Tillich's style of doing theology? I want to suggest that we should understand Tillich's theology as *a theology that is in transition*, that is, on the move from place to place and from time to time. That, at least, Hannah Tillich got right![3] This kind of transitional dynamic characterizes all of Tillich's thinking.

Making transitions always means moving from one area to another area. It means that you'll have to make a decision about your luggage, about what you will take with you and what you will leave behind. Luggage can get lost in transit. One might also have to translate from one place to another. The difficulty of translation reminds us that it is not only baggage that can get lost in transit. One can get lost in translation, and, having no language, one's *self* can get lost in translation. I am sure that Tillich often experienced that. He seemed to deal with it by not quite adapting to the new place to which he moved, and instead remaining in transition. I think that much of his charm in the United States consisted in the fact that he never really adapted to the United States. His language was, I think, a sure indication that this was also what he intended. It was the kind of impression that he wanted to give.

1 From Place to Place

Now let us think about two or three aspects of a theology in transition. The first one would be that transition means transition from place to place. If one looks at Tillich's theology I think that one can find that he attaches specific significance to real places and to metaphorical spheres, so that his whole theology can be understood as moving from theology into another sphere of culture. The supplementary volumes for the *Gesammelte Werke* that have been published by Erd-

2 Contemporary sociology distinguishes between boundaries, understood as edges which separate one territory from another, and borders, seen as a zone of interaction between territories. In this sense boundaries are hard and borders are permeable. See Richard Sennett, "Reflections on the Public Realm," in *A Companion to the City*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003): 380–387.

3 See the two volumes of Hannah Tillich's autobiography: *From Time to Time* (New York: Stein & Day, 1974); *From Place to Place* (New York: Stein & Day, 1976).

mann Sturm over the last twenty years now are astonishing in that respect, because they provide us with the unpublished manuscripts of the Frankfurt lectures before he went to the States, and the first lectures in the United States, the real edition of the Dresden lectures on dogmatics, and much more.[4] What they show is that Tillich was able to relate easily the main theological categories to other cultural spheres and their problems.

Recently, I was involved in organizing a conference on the theology of the city. Where can we find theological resources for dealing with the topic of the city theologically? I was for some years in another capacity connected to the Urban Age project at the London School of Economics, and I am well aware that the city, the staggering process of urbanization, is an enormous topic.[5] Where do we find theological resources to deal with it apart from Harvey Cox's *The Secular City*, and, very recently, Philip Sheldrake's *The Spiritual City?*[6] Of course, there was a short sketch by Tillich: "Religion and the City," *(Religion und Großstadt)*.[7] On the first page he offers a thesis that is still interesting with regard to the mega-cities of this world. It is that they show a process of dedifferentiation, of the taking away of differences and distinctions, of the taking away of boundaries and borders, and therefore we do not know how to engage with them any longer. I was absolutely astonished! There was this short sketch by Tillich, an intuitive look in transition from theology to another sphere, where he perceived *exactly* what our problem is today, ninety years later.

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4 See EGW XVIII: *Frankfurter Vorlesungen (1930–1933)* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2013); EGW.XVII: *Frühe Vorlesungen im Exil (1934–1935)* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2012); and EGW XIV: *Dogmatik-Vorlesung (Dresden 1925–1927)*, ed. by Werner H. Schüßler and Erdmann Sturm (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter 2013).

5 See Ricky Burdett and Deyan Sudjic, eds., *The Endless City* (London: Phaidon Press, 2007) and Ricky Burdett and Deyan Sudjic, eds., *Living in the Endless City* (London: Phaidon Press, 2011).

6 See Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (1965), now republished with a new introduction by the author (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); Philip Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City. Religion, Spirituality and the Urban* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014).

7 Paul Tillich, "Religion und Großstadt", in EGW XI: *Religion, Kultur, Gesellschaft. Unveröffentlichte Texte aus der deutschen Zeit (1908–1933), Zweiter Teil*, ed. by Erdmann Sturm (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 189–195. Tillich's main thesis is: "Das Prinzip des Großstädtischen: 'Großstadt ist diejenige räumlich begründete Gestalt, deren Prinzip die Gestalt-Auflösung ist.'" (*loc.cit.*, 189) The text has its "Sitz im Leben" probably during the Dresden time when Tillich offered in the summer semester 1928 a course on "Religion and the City" ("Religion und Großstadt") at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Leipzig. The aspects highlighted in this short sketch are not identical with the lecture "Die technische Stadt als Symbol", GW IX, 307–311.

And so one can find it in many areas, this easy transition from theology to other cultural spheres. What kind of theology must one have to be able to do that? What kind of theology gives one the capacity to leave the ecclesiastical ghetto? I think it is the kind of theology that really takes seriously the notion that religion, that God, the God that Christians believe in, relates to all spheres of life, and that religion has therefore a function in all spheres. Thus we have only to tease out that function rather than simply believing the modern specialization of religion with its kind of reduction of religion to a particular sphere. Does this not mean that religion is indeed present in all other spheres in some way? Tillich thought so, and he had the tools to discover that presence, to make it evident, thereby giving us the capacity to discuss the way in which it has to be dealt with theoretically and practically.

What I have found interesting is that his transitions from theology to other spheres of culture have enormous *diagnostic* potential. Very often theology comes in on the game far too late. Accepting the self-interpretations of other cultural spheres, it then offers some kind of therapy by way of the gospel which does not really fit the kind of sociological theories that were just borrowed. Tillich is very good at using theology as a tool of diagnosis. He is able to masterfully seek out what is really wrong within a given cultural sphere. Therefore one can say with Tillich that if theology is not part of the game right from the start, it will not come in later. Because of this, theologians are, I think, not really well advised to borrow the way they should see the problem of culture from other spheres. If they use their own diagnostics they can engage in conversation with the diagnostics of other disciplines and thereby see what these other disciplines have to offer the conversation. Of course, it is not wrong to agree with somebody in conversation, but perhaps it is the task of theology to notice what is *not said* and in that space offer its own distinctive diagnosis.

For Tillich the transitions from place to place meant not only transitions between metaphorical places and spaces, but between very concrete places, and there is a long list that one could now offer. Halle (1905–1909), for example, played a certain role during our conference and his engagement with the city of Halle could be mentioned.[8] Berlin (1919–1924): it was really here that Tillich

8 On Paul Tillich in Halle see Christoph Schwöbel, "Thomas Mann, Paul Tillich und Halle," in: *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft: Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920)*, ed. Christian Danz (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2008): 19–36. The comparison with Thomas Mann's novel *Doktor Faustus* is particularly interesting here because Tillich advised Mann on how to depict Adrian Leverkühn's time as a theology student at Halle by describing his own experiences in and with that city, his encounter with Martin Kähler. See Paul Tillich's letter to Thomas Mann, 23. May 1943, in: Paul Tillich, GW XIII, 22–27.

found that the city's interests were in many ways also his. His involvement reflected the characteristics of that city during that particular time in German history, a time of change in almost every area of life. Tillich is always a participant interpreter of the situation and therefore he would let certain places 'get' to him and participate in the life of that place. Well, there may be exceptions. He never liked it much in Marburg (1924 – 1925). I could never understand that because I spent twelve formative years at Marburg University. But Tillich could not get away quickly enough because for him it was not a city, but a small provincial town. Dresden (1925 – 1929), I am sure, was much more interesting, and even more so was my hometown Frankfurt am Main (1929 – 1933) at that particular time.

Tillich's theology seems to adapt to the places in terms of the conceptuality that he uses. Very often, I think, this is because of the conversation partners that he finds in certain places. So, for example, his style of theologizing changes from Dresden to Frankfurt by having what later became the Frankfurt School as part of his conversation partners.

A theology in transition would be a theology that is able to move from one place to another place, but many theologies only work in one place. When I am in Oxford or Cambridge I wonder: are there particular kinds of philosophy that work only here, or is there a particular kind of philosophy that works only at Tübingen but nowhere else on this planet or the rest of the universe? I am worried about that question, because it could be that we are developing idiosyncrasies in our different places that do not travel well.

Tillich's conceptualities travelled exceptionally well, even when he made the transition to the United States. There, I think, his particular policy was not to adapt too easily, to remain the outsider. There are enormous advantages to remaining the ignorant outsider in any given system as long as you possibly can. I learned this for myself during my time in England. I had no difficulties with college administration or with the board of examiners. Everything had to be explained to me since I seemed to be a little slow in understanding things. There is really no better way to correct mistakes that have been made than to let people explain them to you and discover for themselves that they have made a mistake! Now, I would not say anything like that of the academic success of my friend Werner Jeanrond here, even though he worked in places where you could successfully play the ignoramus for a certain amount of time. I have the feeling that he and his wife Betty finally found a place where both coming from the outside and being here come together in a wonderful harmony. But for Tillich that was not the case during those first years in the United States. He retained his German accent, it seems to me, not because he could not adapt to the American English, but because he found it very intriguing to be

the representative of this old world across the Atlantic, of representing, for example, German Idealism. He could now present this tradition to an American public whose cultural memory was at best two hundred years old.

However, the transition also meant that he could not rely on the things that he could take for granted in his earlier contexts in Europe. Being in transition means that the things that you take for granted change from one place to another. Whereas in Germany, if you read the Frankfurt lectures, the whole debate about Heidegger could be very much taken for granted, and Tillich could develop an existential historical conception of philosophy almost in the Heideggerian terminology, and then add his own bits that change the rules of the game at, so to say, the last minute. But such things could not be taken for granted in the United States.[9]

Because of these transitions from place to place, Tillich became a wonderful interpreter of those things which theology or any other discipline normally takes for granted. That I think is the real task of philosophy, and Tillich was extremely good at it. He was a master of questioning that which is normally taken for granted, that which we believe just 'works'. Philosophy starts where there is irritation about taking the status quo for granted.

Now Tillich does not deal with that difficulty in the way analytic philosophers do, that is, by responding to every possible utterance with "I don't know what you mean." Philosophy is the only discipline where "I don't understand" is seen as a sign of higher intelligence. In all other disciplines it just means that you are slightly dim and need another explanation. But in philosophy you can develop such responses and play wonderful games. I have been at discussions of analytic philosophers where they play ping pong with that kind of thing endlessly without ever scoring any hits on each other! Understanding, in this case, always remains transcendent. But Tillich took the trouble of trying to get to the roots of what it is that we take for granted and most importantly why we take it for granted.

9 This is very evident in Tillich's paper "Existential Philosophy" from the *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1944 (also published under the title "Existenzphilosophie" in GW IV, 145–173). Tillich sent the article to Thomas Mann who reacted in a letter dated 13th April 1944 with a burst of criticisms of Heidegger and his use of the German language: "Heidegger – ich habe diesen Nazi par existence doch niemals leiden können. Jetzt hätte mir die Probe von seinem philosophischen Schreckensjargon, die Sie anführen, beinahe das Heft aus der Hand geschlagen ... Schopenhauer hätte diesem High-brow-Sudler und kriminellen Sprachschänder die Meinung gesagt." Quoted from the letter found by Erdmann Sturm, published in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20th June 2002, No. 140, 45.

2 From Time to Time

Transitions move not only from place to place but also from time to time. And so for Tillich we have this life-span that stretches back to the time before World War I.[10] The time directly after World War I was one of the most exciting times in Berlin. One could see Tillich responding to the situation in a most dramatic form, politically, in terms of his cultural theory, and in terms of his theology. Suddenly everything is experienced with a new intensity, and all his concepts are infused with this kind of extra passion. Here it seems as though the world is felt to be on the brink of an impending break-through. It is as if many at this time were waiting for it to happen and the revolution was thought to be a sure sign that it would. It is very interesting that Tillich associated with the Independent Socialists (USPD) at that time. They basically cultivated a rhetoric of intensity which he took up in his writings.

Now intensity is not something that you can maintain for a long time without a loss of the original quality being offering. For intensity to remain authentic one must invent certain strategies so that that which one was so intensely troubled about can become a permanent concern.

There is for example, Tillich's transition from expressionism to the *neue Sachlichkeit*, and the whole belief-ful-realism, as it was then translated into English (*gläubiger Realismus*).[11] In such a transition in time it is acknowledged that we

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10 In his still very interesting portrait, published as the introduction to the *Tillich-Auswahl* ed. Manfred Baumotte, Carl Heinz Ratschow has distinguished four formative periods in Tillich's intellectual development: I Youth and Formation through Schelling (1886–1916); II Turning-point and Socialist Decision; III Emigration and new *Dasein*; IV The Vacuum and the Kairos of Human Depth (1947–1965). See Carl Heinz Ratschow, "Paul Tillich. Ein biographisches Bild seiner Gedanken," in *Tillich-Auswahl*, ed. Manfred Baumotte, vol. I (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1980), 11–104. Every one of these phases could be broken up in a number of different "times". An impression of the seemingly minute but often quite momentous changes can be found in Stefan Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie. Studien zur Systembildung Paul Tillichs* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

11 "It is as if frost had fallen on all things ... whether they are *Jugendbewegung* or *Lebensphilosophie*, Expressionism or Religious Socialism!," Tillich states in 1928 and he asks, "Was it not all romanticism, inebriation, utopia?" This situation, however, is not the inevitable hangover after the revolutionary enthusiasm directly after World War I but a new *kairos*, "the break-through of the eternal into time" and the experience of the "essentially real". See Paul Tillich, "Kairos. Ideen zur Geisteslage der Gegenwart" (1928), in MW IV: *Religionsphilosophische Schriften*, ed. by John Clayton (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987), 171–181. See Christoph Schwöbel, "Von Gott unter den Bedingungen des 20. Jahrhunderts reden – Paul Tillich und die Theologie der Kultur," in *"Nimm und lies!". Theologische Quereinstiege für Neugierige*, ed. Ralf K. Wüstenberg (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008): 230–244, 238–241.

are no longer living in ordinary times. Concerns now are different ones and we have to think both of the *logos* and of the *kairos* in very different ways, ways which take them away from this once revolutionary occasion and turn them into structural descriptions of reality which are there all of the time. Such reality cannot be grasped in just any way, but only in specific ways. Then come all the other changes: the opening up to existentialism, existential philosophy, the engagement with the conversations at Frankfurt, and then the transitions to the United States.

Tillich took risks in his theology, and one of the big risks during the time in Frankfurt was this play with the ideology of decision, in his book *The Socialist Decision*, written in 1932 and immediately banned after its publication early in 1933. It was one of the books ceremonially thrown into the flames at the book burnings the National Socialists organised on 10th of May 1933. The concept of "decision" plays an important role in Carl Schmitt's political theology.[12] And there seem to be resonances between Schmitt's scathing critique of "political romanticism" and Tillich's own criticism of the revolutionary enthusiasm of 1919 as romanticism. Political "decisionism" can do a lot of damage. For Carl Schmitt that damage certainly occurred when he identified the moment of decision with the "national revolution" of January 1933. He then began to write for a lifetime in order to justify this mistake and put it in context. Yet he was totally unapologetic. That is perhaps one of the interesting features about his on-going influence in the intellectual life in Germany. It also made him very attractive to some of the intellectuals in France. Now it seems that Tillich was aware that he was taking risks. He tried to limit the damage that could possibly be done with the rhetoric of decision, but I think only when he saw the personal consequences of the use of that category that it suddenly disappears again from his writings. On the 13th of April 1933 Tillich was sacked from his professorship in Frankfurt, and it soon became clear that he had to leave Germany.

In the transition in time to the United States we have the beginnings of the very difficult career and the difficulties of settling into an academic system in which many of his virtues suddenly seemed to be vices. The capacity to draw upon the whole history of philosophy in order to make a specific point did not quite work quite as well with his American students as it had with his European students. However, he discovered that if he reformulated those ideas in a

12 See Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1986). Original publication: 1919, 2nd edition 1925; and Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George D. Schwab (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1985 / Chicago: University of Chicago Press; University of Chicago edition, 2004 with an Introduction by Tracy B. Strong. Original publication: 1922, 2nd edition 1934.

language that seemed to fit everybody, a language of existential concerns, he could, indeed, sell them a lot of Schelling, or Hegel. It only had to be reformulated in such a way that everybody would acknowledge: "Well, this is how I feel and he's just telling me what I need." And that, I think, was one of the great gifts of Paul Tillich.

These transitions from time to time, taking leave and arriving at a certain point only to see new avenues of departure continued until Tillich's very last lecture in Chicago a few days before his death. It is amazing to see that even in his later years he was able to take in new challenges, like his visit to Japan, and work with them in a way which we do not find in any other theologian of that generation. Though there is much that has to be criticized of Tillich's perception of Zen Buddhism, nevertheless one has to say that there is no other theologian of that generation who engaged another concrete religion with such intensity and real understanding, than Tillich.[13] One has to be *surprised* by what Karl Barth knew about Jōdo Shinshū and Jōdo-shū schools of Buddhism (as in the famous paragraph 17 of *Church Dogmatics*). That was quite a new genre for Barth. Nobody really expects that of him. Most of the Barth interpreters do not see the significance of that, which I suppose is understandable, since, frankly, Buddhism of the Pure Land is just not their thing.

But with Tillich it is a very different matter. What I found interesting that after the debate about the "spiritual vacuum" and the "lost dimension" Tillich again was able to make a major move. I think it was already there in part with his engagement with Zen Buddhism. And again we see it in a more programmatic form in his last lecture at the University of Chicago "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologians" where he was trying to combine the essential character and the universal character of the Universal Spirit with the concreteness of particular religions.[14]

For a very long time there was a formal concept of religion that was somehow divorced from the concrete history of religions. That is typical for Tillich's generation and for their reading of their classics. However, already in Hegel you have a complete history of religions. In Schleiermacher you have a complete history of religions. Hegel had numerous books on the religions, almost everything that was available at that time, which then form the background of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. He was knowledgeable about the religions, *particular* religions. And there is, of course, Tillich's life-long inspiration, Schel-

13 See Tomoaki Fukay ed., *Paul Tillich – Journey to Japan 1960*. Tillich Research 4 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2013).

14 MW VI: *Theological Writings*, ed. Gerd Hummel (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1992), 431–446.

ling. Of course, in Schelling you find *everything*, everything that one could possibly have at that time.[15] Tillich again develops this sensitivity that religions are *particularities* where our definitions of what religion is do not really fit. We must not talk about these particularities in ways that isolate them and make them inexplicable to other religious particularities. That is the task of the philosopher of religion, establishing this kind of mutual cross referencing of the religions. But the particularities have to be taken seriously, because the way in which Christianity relates to these particularities of other religions is itself very particular. Christianity focuses on the cross of Christ where the particular is, in the end, not ultimately significant unless it is an expression of the Ultimate Spirit. I think the religion of the Concrete Spirit, which we find in Tillich's last lecture and also in the last volume of the *Systematic Theology*, is something that still has to be discovered by Tillich research.

How should one read Tillich's transitions from time to time? You will have seen that I have an opinion on that. And having a chance to be the last speaker at this conference, although in a different genre, let me explain why. On the whole, I do not think that the on-going debate about genesis and truth claims is a very helpful one. There are those who tend to think that understanding the genesis of a particular claim can indeed be a way to understanding its claim to validity or its truth claim. However, this rigid distinction between genesis and *Geltung*, as we say in German, about origins and claims to validity, may be a mistake. So how should we read the genealogies that are there? How should we read the genesis of Tillich's thought?

Now, since I have chosen to speak on Tillich's theology as a theology in transition, you know already what my answer is. I do not think that we should read Tillich back all the time to his philosophical roots so that we are always asking the question: "where did he get that concept from?" The answer is normally relatively easy, because one finds that in Tillich there are only a few elements that cannot ultimately be traced back to Schelling. Schelling remains resonant throughout the whole system. But does that mean that the system does not change? I think that it only means that he is thinking systematically with the same building blocks in every new situation in response to the challenges of the new places and of the new times. He employs these materials but he uses them in ways that might not always be congenial to where he got them from.

15 The best introduction in English so far is: F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselberger, with a foreword by Jason M. Wirth (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007).

For example, the triads in thinking, the three potencies from Schelling, can be arranged by Tillich in ways that would be quite alien to Schelling.

From this my question would be, should we then read Tillich genealogically with the question "Where did that come from?", or should we read him with the question "Where does what he got from the past lead to?" Should we not have a *teleological* interpretation of Tillich? How does he use his materials in order to respond to the new situations, in order to make a new transition to a new time? Therefore I think that much of the very impressive Tillich research that has been done, especially in Germany, in the last fifteen years, tracing the roots of Tillich's thought back to German Idealism and its revival around the time of World War I, to influences that were part of his philosophical training, is only half the answer. The other half of the answer is "What does he do with that?" How does he rearrange the material from the tradition? What are the elements of continuity that appear? And what are the elements of discontinuity? I think Tillich's theology in transition offers an interesting example of continuity in discontinuity, and of discontinuity in continuity, so that some patterns of continuity are not to be seen in the roots of his thought but rather in the aims he pursues and the interim destinations he arrives at. They are a result of development; they are not already there in the beginning. Were I to put this advice in a rather weak form, I would say: "Please correlate the genealogical question with the teleological question." Were I to put it in a stronger form I would say: "It is the teleological approach that matters." For Tillich, I suggest, the measure for taking up materials from his own process of intellectual formation, is always concerned with how he can move forward with them, how to accommodate the new time he experiences. The logic for interpreting Tillich's thought is not to go back to the first steps in his intellectual development but always to investigate the potential for taking the next step, for moving from time to time.

Now, why is that important? Because it is a feature of *all* our theologies. This is the direction in which we have got to make the transition. Just imagine if our own theologies were accounted for in terms of the theologies of our teachers, of our theological influences in the past. I for one would be quite depressed if my own theology would only be seen in that perspective. The question is, I think, how do we use that that we have inherited, the *legacy*, as our conference title says, in order to meet the challenges of the present and prepare for the future?

3 Pilgrims on the Way

There is also a stronger reason and that is my third point. Tillich's theology is a theology in transition because he was so aware, as possibly no other theologian

was of that generation, that theology's task and theology's achievements are transitory because the different ways in which we perceive the *telos* here and now are only part of the pilgrimage. It is a stage on the way towards the final *telos*. So it seems to me that Tillich is the theologian who is acutely aware that our theology is a theology of pilgrims on the way, where the final *telos* is always out of our reach.

The third volume of the *Systematic Theology* has a very positive assessment of this transitory character of theology, and therefore Tillich did not have troubles leaving certain parts of his philosophical and theological language behind as long as he was aware that he was still going forward, and that his going forward had something to do with pointing to that final *telos* which is the Kingdom of God.

If you have that kind of awareness of doing theology, then you can also easily have a transition in the forms in which we are to do theology. Tillich is a master of doing theology in all kinds of formats, big formats and small formats. It is remarkable that he, as a systematic theologian, finally achieved fame through a collection of sermons, and only later for his major systematic works. It was his sermons that led attention back to his systematic works. This ability to work in many formats allowed him to develop a whole systematic theology in a few theses in 1913 or in the context of one essay. This meant that Tillich could write an essay where nothing is missing because the whole system is somehow there. Only then he could tried to develop that into a whole three volume systematic theology where—if one looks quite closely—a lot of things are missing! Therefore it seems to me that the whole *Systematic Theology* should always be read as a whole. The point, the *telos* of the systematic development is in the third volume; all the rest is preparation for it. A lot of criticism that is normally directed at Tillich is directed at the first volume and does not really take the second volume seriously, let alone the third volume which many critics of Tillich do not seem to have read. I think the systematic structure of this great work is essentially teleological; the third volume is the point to which everything leads.

If one looks at the whole systematic structure, which is dynamically structured in this way, one suddenly discovers that the small formats within the large format are *perfect*. There can be little sections on anything, participation for example, which are just wonderful on *four pages!*[16] Most of us would need two hundred pages in order to get the same kind of idea across to the reader. So we have, on the one hand, a small canvas but the whole of the system is

16 Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematische Theologie* vol. I. 4th edition. (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1973), 207–210.

there; and on the other, we have Tillich painting on a very large canvas in such a way that if one takes a closer look appears as a kind of fragment. And yet it is a fragment that that we are *supposed* to expect when we are on the way to the *telos!* It is this transition that relativizes everything before the *telos* (and the *telos* of this speech will soon be coming).

Can one be a Tillichian? That is, can one be Tillichian as one can be a Barthian or a Bultmannian, as there have been many in the history of German theology, or perhaps a Niebuhr follower? Is that truly possible? Or does the character of Tillich's theology in transition invite one to be something different? I think engaging with Tillich means that one should also take leave of Tillich at a certain stage. That one should do theology, so to say, outside the Tillich framework in order to discover what it means to take on theological responsibility. But if one does that, I think that one will find that one will return to Tillich at certain stages and be surprised at what kind of questions and which answers Tillich has for the kind of theological work that we're engaged in at the moment. Taking leave and returning, that is also the characteristic of a theology in transition.

For me this conference was an occasion to return to Tillich and I am very grateful for that. So if there is supposed to be a toast at the end of the dinner speech, then let us now raise our glasses to Tillich's theology in transition and that we may return creatively and constructively from this encounter with Tillich.

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