

SYMBOL AND KAIROS  
Paul Tillich in Encounter with World Religions

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the elements in the theology of Tillich which would have enabled him to enter into the intensive encounter with data from the history of Religion, which encounter he thought offered the only acceptable hope for the future of theology and of Religions as such. Tillich conceives religion as man's concern for ultimate meaning fulfillment. It forms the true substance of all culture, because all cultural activities are essentially responses to the immanence of the Ultimate Ground of reality which breaks through the concrete forms as a revelatory demand on man to transcend the concrete meaning structures. Revelation and man's self-transcending responses to it are universally present, but the latter are ambiguous as they are embodied in concrete, limited forms, which tend to absolutize themselves. As symbols, however, these forms have the power to mediate man's relation to the Ground of being and as such be life-giving. Symbolic mediation, in Tillich's opinion, must be related to the historical setting of a concrete community. It is effective to the extent that it enables man to live in the paradox of accepting concrete forms and moments (*Kairoi*) as the representatives of what concerns him ultimately. Our approach to religious symbols, then, must be that of a double hermeneutics. We must be radically critical lest any contingent form claims ultimacy and at the same time we must be entirely committed to accepting the

tradition as the source of meaning fulfillments. We have related Tillich to the two major hermeneutical approaches of our time and we found that his own position not only accomodates any scientific study of Religions but also illustrates how a different tradition can become an integral part of a community's hermeneutical horizon. Tillich proposed the ideal of a unifying theonomy, as the alternative to heteronomy and absolutism on the one hand, and autonomous secularism and relativism on the other. He rehabilitates myths and symbols as indispensable parts of all religion. By this system, we think, Tillich created sound theological conditions for the required dialogue, even though he did not develop an adequate heuristic tool for the analysis of non-Western Religions and failed to emphasize the need of intensive practical contacts.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| INTRODUCTION . . . . .                           | 1    |
| PART I   |      |
| I.1 Religion against Religion . . . . .          | 8    |
| I.2 Identity and Distance . . . . .              | 16   |
| I.3 Religion and Culture . . . . .               | 25   |
| I.4 Reason and Revelation . . . . .              | 32   |
| I.5 Correlation and Self-Transcendence . . . . . | 43   |
| I.6 Dialectics and Symbolism . . . . .           | 56   |
| I.7 Encounter and Typology . . . . .             | 64   |
| PART II  |      |
| II.1 Religious Symbols . . . . .                 | 75   |
| II.2 <i>Analogia Imaginis</i> . . . . .          | 86   |
| II.3 Community and History . . . . .             | 96   |
| II.4 Prophetism and <i>Kairos</i> . . . . .      | 107  |
| II.5 Hermeneutics and Encounter . . . . .        | 117  |
| II.6 The Dialogue . . . . .                      | 130  |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .                           | 150  |

## INTRODUCTION

Shortly before he died in the Fall of 1965, Paul Tillich, then 79, delivered an address entitled "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian", in which he regretted the fact that his theology had been conceived exclusively as an answer to the secular criticism of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> His philosophical and theological convictions had matured in a very involved confrontation with the German cultural crisis of the early 20th. century, and no substantial change took place after he emigrated to the U.S.A., in 1933. He had attempted to show that religion as perceived in the Christian - Protestant tradition, formed the depth dimension which responded to the existential questions implied in man's cultural activities. This form of apologetic theology was most appreciative of culture and refused to retreat into the idea of a revelation which is posited as a monolithic, divine word. He professes that human culture universally embodies divine revelation, which itself, however, transcends these forms. The concepts of dialectics, correlation, boundary and paradox had received specific meanings in this theology, but regrettably

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Brauer (ed.), *The Future of Religions* (abr.: *Fut. Rel.*), 1966, p. 91.

they had never been applied to a serious encounter with non-Western, religious traditions.<sup>1</sup>

We may wonder why Tillich had previously failed to pay much attention to that encounter, despite his admiration for a man like R. Otto. He obviously detested the neo-Protestant opinion that all Religions had become obsolete since Christianity had appeared. On the other hand he rejected Troeltsch's theory of self-sufficient cultures with unrelated religious traditions.<sup>2</sup> That he still failed to advocate an intensive contact between World Religions, can be explained only by one major factor in his system, namely the conviction that theology should be apologetic in the sense of responding to the existential situation. The factual contact between cultures and the impact of quasi-Religions on the established Religions

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<sup>1</sup>The attempts which he made in the Bampton Lectures of 1961 do not offer any new views, but only repeat the concepts about quasi-Religions, universalism, dynamic typology, dialogue and Christianity's need of self-criticism. These Lectures appeared in *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions* (abr.: *Chr. Enc.*), 1963. Tillich indicated the need for encounter with non-Christian Religions briefly in his main work *Systematic Theology* (abr. *ST.*) Vol. I - III, 1951-1963. Cf. *ST.* III p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich shares Otto's high regard for mysticism but he fears a detached aestheticism that might result from that attitude. Troeltsch' view that truth is in the depth of every Religion is also criticized for too little active interest and involvement. True religion, he thinks, is beyond, not in, any existent form. Cf. *Gesammelten Werke* (abr.: *Ges.W.*) Vol. XII, 1971, pp. 185f. and 169. This twelveth volume is the last in a series started in 1960.

at the present time, demand a theological reflection for the first time in history. This can be done without the prevailing risk of becoming a purely academic exercise, a "Literätenillusion", because some form of "Blutzusammenhang" has now been created.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the actual dialogue, Tillich resents any form of relativism which rejects every criterion, but the guideline which he himself proposes as absolute says only that everything is relative and nothing absolute. We must try to discover why he insists on this absolute criterion. He also proposes a distinct method of approach, called the dynamic typology, and finally he gives directives for the dialogue, which can be summed up in the demands to accept the equality of the partner, a common ground and a commitment to sincerely represent one's own tradition. The dynamic typology tries to determine in each Religion the fundamental elements that, by their eternal dynamic tension, create the actual cultural expressions of the sacred.<sup>2</sup> His holistic approach and the idea that such basic elements are universals, make Tillich come close to the latest developments, especially of the structuralist theories in studies of myth and ritual. Consequently, it

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<sup>1</sup>Understanding other cultures with which there is no such relationship Tillich considers a scholar's illusion Cf. *Ges.W.* V. p. 21

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.* I, pp. 219f.

is left to conjecture to find why he should prove to be dissatisfied with his own method.<sup>1</sup> The most plausible reason for this seems to be that Tillich sensed how strongly his concepts of ultimacy and paradox depended on the Western frame of thought. He must have felt that they can hardly function as heuristic devices in determining the typological elements of other Religions.

Additional reasons for his dissatisfaction can be advanced such as the danger that his method might favour an intellectualism that merely concentrates on essentials and restricts the encounter to symposia and isolated experiments. Essentialism with its stress on abstract eternalities militates against his basic conviction that truth is existential in nature. Most of all, the heuristic tool itself, the Protestant principle, is scarcely convincing as being universally applicable. Does the awareness that ultimacy breaks through rational forms exhaust the fundamentals of everything religious, from rituals to mystical ecstasy? Is there perhaps a danger of reducing all religion once again to feelings and irrationalism?<sup>2</sup> Could it be that Tillich's

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<sup>1</sup>'My approach is dynamic-typological.' '...Teilhard de Chardin ... stresses the development of a universal, divine-centered consciousness which is basically Christian. I am dissatisfied with such an attempt. I am also dissatisfied with my own'. (*Fut. Rel.* p. 86).

<sup>2</sup>Nörenberg thinks that there is this danger of Tillich relapsing in the post-Schleiermacher theology of feeling. Cf. K.D. Nörenberg, *Analogia Imaginis*, 1966, p. 225. Could this be the reason why K. Barth reproached Tillich for irrationalism? Cf. T. Torrance, *Karl Barth*, 1962, p. 181.

holistic approach is valid but that his heuristic tools are formulated in terms that are too strongly culture-bound? Did Tillich find the 'key for understanding the extremely chaotic... history of Religions'?<sup>1</sup>

Rather than a key for understanding other Religions, Tillich seems to have formulated a key to the eschatological perspectives of Western traditions, including Christianity and the secularist movements that sprang from it, in which non-Western Religions receive a place to the extent that they conform to this criterion. This might seem entirely uninteresting for any student in religious studies, unless the true conditions for a dialogue have been created rather than excluded by this criterion. When Tillich discusses the Religion of the Concrete Spirit as the aim of all history of Religions he seems to consider the encounter, the unifying dialogue as the kernel of all religion. Man's separation from the ultimate ground of being is overcome by *symbols* that are life-giving, not because they give abstract knowledge about the divine, but because they create communication within the concrete reality, the *kairos*. The love (*eros* which becomes *agapē* within the *kairos*) is the crucial factor in this system because it realizes the essentialization of man, the conquest of his alienating attachment to particularity and a transcendence of subject - object structures.

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<sup>1</sup>*Fut. Rel.* p.88.

In this thesis, therefore, we shall not concentrate on the actual method which Tillich proposed for the study of other Religions. We shall try to trace the elements in Tillich's view of religion which enable him not only to acknowledge the value of other Religions, but to consider the dialogue desirable or even indispensable. His actual studies of non-Christian Religions are very sparse and little helpful in this respect, as we have intimated above, and we shall focus our attention on two central issues in his system which have a direct bearing on the evaluation of non-Christian Religions, namely the question of the universality of revelation and the role of concrete reality, as *symbol* and *kairos*, in relation to this revelation. These two issues divide the thesis into two major parts. In keeping with most commentaries no attempt has been made to find developments in Tillich's views. The word 'religion' is used in capitalized form unless it indicates the human - divine relationship as such, in the form Tillich thinks it should take.<sup>1</sup> In the first part we shall deal with this ideal of religion as man's ultimate

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<sup>1</sup>This form, according to Tillich, is the 'point where Religion loses its importance' as a separate entity, (Cf. *Chr. Enc.* p.97) and where the reinforcement of the religious elements in all Religions results in an ever greater awareness of what concerns man ultimately and which by definition lies beyond all existent religious forms.

concern and response to the universal revelation. In the second part we shall examine how the theologian Paul Tillich approaches concrete symbols, and which hermeneutic method he in fact favours. The question to ask is whether his theological framework allows the renewal of his own system which he envisaged in the free approach of the history of Religions.



PART I

## I.1 RELIGION AGAINST RELIGION

The theological valuation of the World Religions has been widely discussed in both Protestant and Catholic circles ever since Cusanus and Lessing. In the last three decades Catholic theologians, tuning in more and more on global problems, have shown an increasingly positive appraisal of other Religions, which they view as basically valid responses of mankind-in-evolution to God's Word. Even terms like Christianity in preparation (Daniélou) or anonymous Christianity (Rahner) are gradually being discarded as inadequate.<sup>1</sup>

During this period the Protestant scene was struggling to free itself from nineteenth century liberalism and historicism. Most influential in this struggle has been the neo-orthodox theology led by Karl Barth. He was sharply critical of Religion as such. He considered human Religion as man's futile attempt at self-salvation and therefore as opposed or even contray to God's act of self-revelation and of reconciliation in Jesus

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich shows little interest in Catholic theology. In our context he mentions Pierre Teilhard de Chardin whose christocentrism he interprets neither favourably nor very correctly. Cf.: *Fut. Rel.* p. 86. Among the more influential works by Catholic theologians published on this topic during Tillich's American years we mention: J. Daniélou: *Le Mystère de l'Avent*, Paris 1948, J. Daniélou: *Le Mystère du Salut des Nations*, Paris 1948, J. Daniélou: *Essai sur le Mystère de l'Histoire*, Paris 1955, K. Rahner: *Schriften zur Theologie* I-VIII, Einsiedeln 1954ff, K. Rahner: *Mission and Grace* (Eng. Tr.), New York 1964, J. Ratzinger *Die Neue Heiden und Die Kirche*, Hochland, 1958, id. *Der Christliche Glaube und Die Weltreligionen* in H. Vorgrimler: *Gott in Welt* Vol. 2, 1964, E. Cornelis: *Valeurs Chrétiennes des Religions non Chrétiennes*, Paris 1965.

Christ. Religion has no positive role at all prior to or even alongside faith in God's Word. In this respect Feuerbach is correct in calling Religions illusions. Barth holds that revelation in Christ can never be considered 'a particular instance of the universal which is called religion'<sup>1</sup>. On the contrary this revelation should be accepted as the prius of all relations between man and God. Religion then is only true to the degree that it is an expression in space and time of the community's faith in this revelation.

Paul Tillich proves to differ considerably from this view when he calls religion man's ultimate concern, which forms the foundation of his faith in revelation. Does this mean that Tillich is less critical of established Religions and of liberal views thereof? On the contrary, His criticism seems even more rigid and consistent than that of Barth! In fact he acknowledges that he had come to the same critical position as Barth, independently and on the basis of his philosophy.<sup>2</sup> As early as

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<sup>1</sup>K. Barth: *Church Dogmatics* I,2, 1963, p. 281. This par. 17 gives a comprehensive exposition of Barth's views on religions as unbelief and of what he calls true religion. "No religion is true... it can become true ... only from without". *Ibid.* p. 325. Other important works by Barth in this context are K. Barth: *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1919, Eng. Tr. 1933, id.: *The Humanity of God*, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. P. Tillich: *What is Religion?* 1969. This book contains three early works by Tillich, namely: *Religionsphilosophie* 1925, *Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie* 1922; *Religionsphilosophie der Kultur*, 1919 (in part). They are translated, edited and introduced by James Luther Adams.

1912 he wrote: "Der Religionsbegriff muss von dem Gottesbegriff abgeleitet werden, nicht umgekehrt".<sup>1</sup> In 1922 he showed in an address to the Kant-Gesellschaft that the liberal concept of Religion takes the place of God and is worthless because it is mere Religion (blosse Religion). But in that same year Tillich contrasted his views to Barth's concept of the critical paradox and he called his approach the positive paradox. The opposition between the two men grew and the final breach occurred in 1934, the year after Tillich's departure from Germany. It was occasioned by Barth's brochure "*Nein*" directed against Brunner's natural theology and by the Barmen Declaration in which Tillich saw clearly the social isolationism to which Barth was leading the German Church.<sup>2</sup>

This breach however, did not mean that Tillich stopped preaching that Christ is the crisis of all Religion. As we can see from the sermon on "*The Yoke of Religion*", which was delivered

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<sup>1</sup>"The concept of religion should be derived from the concept of God not the inverse" Quoted in B. Benktson: *Christus und die Religion*, 1967, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>The Barmen Declaration was drafted by K. Barth personally, soon after Hitler had become Chancellor and Tillich had been removed from his chair of sociology at Frankfurt University because of his active interest in a Christian, socialist movement. (Tillich's publications in this connection are to be found in the second volume of *Gesammelten Werke*, 1962). Barth's action was aimed against the Deutsche Christen, who cooperated with Hitler's party and it became the foundation paper of the Confessing Church. It declared the world profane and devoid of direct Christian interest. Cf. B. Martin: *Paul Tillich's Doctrine of Man*, 1963, p. 25.

in the fourties, Jesus is said to replace the burden of Religions with the easy yoke of New Being and to be the end of all Religions rather than the bringer of a new one.<sup>1</sup> And at the end of his life Tillich writes that "a particular Religion will last to the degree in which it negates itself as a Religion".<sup>2</sup> Unlike Barth, however, Tillich accepts a religious principle in man which is valuable and imperishable.<sup>3</sup> True religion as the state of ultimate concern is, in fact, the foundation of faith, but consequently involves attitudes beyond faith which Barth would reject as self-righteous aberrations. According to Tillich ultimate concern permeates all culture, and faith consists in relating this concern to a concrete symbol as the representation of what concerns us ultimately. As Tillich sees it, it is the task of religion to fight within the cultural totality of concrete Religions against human religiosities. His view of religion therefore is dialectic and paradoxical in ways that Barth's is not. We understand that Bonhoeffer is somewhat suspicious of Tillich's attempt "to interpret the evolution of the world itself ... in a religious sense"<sup>4</sup>. Tillich in fact makes sure to reject a Religion of

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<sup>1</sup>P. Tillich: *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 1948, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup>*Chr. Enc.*, p. 97

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 96. Cf. also *Fut. Rel.*, pp. 88 and 94.

<sup>4</sup>D. Bonhoeffer: *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Cf. Letter 8/6/1944, Fontana papers, 1965, pp. 108 f.

non-religion or a theology of the secular.<sup>1</sup> In his eyes these concepts are contradictions and it seems to us that Barth's contrast between revelation and religion, between God's word and man's word, is prone to lead to such contradictions.

The paradox in which Tillich tries to combine the positive and negative appraisal of Religions forms the heart of his system and it can be understood only in terms of correlation as we shall try to show below. It is interesting to see in this context that Tillich agrees with Bonhoeffer's view that Christianity should become secular, or in his own words "an expression of the ultimate meaning in the actions of our daily life".<sup>2</sup> The relation between religion and the secular should be given some attention right from the beginning. It is the ever returning theme of Tillich's thinking and he himself stresses the role it plays in the encounter between the Religions.<sup>3</sup> Whereas he considers the profane the absolute opposite of religion, and whereas pure secularism should also be seen as a truncated

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<sup>1</sup>"... rejected the paradox of religion of non-religion, or a theology without theos also called a theology of the secular". *Fut. Rel.* p.80.

<sup>2</sup>"We find contemporary theologians (like Bonhoeffer..) maintaining that Christianity must become secular.. And that is what it should be", *Chr. Enc.*, p. 94. It is interesting to note that the word "secular" had been absent from Tillich's works almost until the final period of his life. But the interpretation he gives of it corresponds to a theme which occupied him during all his life, namely the relation between culture and religion. For this theme cf. P. Tillich: *On the Boundary*, 1966, pp. 68-74.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Chr. Enc.*, p. 95.

orientation that frustrates grace in a self-sufficient finitude<sup>1</sup>, he holds that the secular nonetheless has a religious function of its own.<sup>2</sup> When life is dominated by "the ecstatic forms of the Holy and the repression of the intrinsic demands of goodness, of justice, of truth and of beauty", Tillich insists, secularization is liberation.<sup>3</sup> The secular in this sense contains the rational protest which also urged the prophets and mystics. Rationalism is in fact the daughter of mysticism and consequently only those forms of the irrational should be excluded by a secularization process which try to preserve the inner power of things against the "ratio".<sup>4</sup> On the other hand the secular shares in the ambiguities of Religions as it is always in danger of becoming autonomous and demonic itself. When the forces of law, science and aesthetics cease to point to the ultimate meaning of life, secularity acquires the state of quasi-Religion with its own oppressiveness and ambiguity.<sup>5</sup>

Thus Tillich refuses to consider religion the sphere of the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. James L. Adams: *Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion*. 1965, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Fut. Rel.*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 90. Also: "The Secular is the Rational. The Rational must Judge the Irrationality of the Holy". Ibid. p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. quotations in Adams op. cit. pp. 219f. n. 58, as well as P. Tillich: *Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology* (Abr. Persp.) 1967, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. *Fut. Rel.*, p.90.

irrational as does Rudolph Otto.<sup>1</sup> When he designs his apologetic theology with similar intentions as Schleiermacher, he attempts first of all to safeguard the rights of the rational.<sup>2</sup> Yet his main interest is not rationalism but existentialism for he primarily aims at defeating the former. In particular, he strongly resents Hegel's rationalist monism, because it declares philosophers the highest self-realization of the divine and glosses over the seriousness of man's existential predicament. Although he himself retains many idealist elements in his own self-transcending realism, as we shall see below, he makes every effort not to reason away historical existence into a static, essentialist system as has been done by the main stream of Western philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Against Hegel he argues that the ground of being does not shine through existence unequivocally,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. quotation in Adams op. cit. p. 220 and also *What is Religion?* p. 61. This does not exclude that Tillich acknowledges great indebtedness to Otto at many instances e.g., *ST.I*, pp.215f.

<sup>2</sup>His esteem for Schleiermacher is often combined with criticism of the attempt to make religion a separate province of man's spiritual life. Cf. *What is Religion?* pp. 126,131,160. But Tillich knew about Schleiermacher's real intentions cf. *ST.I*, p. 42 and *Persp.* p. 96 and passim.

<sup>3</sup>Adams op. cit. pp. 202-13 gives clear outlines of Tillich's perception of European philosophy. For his idealist sympathies. Cf. *On the Boundary* pp. 81-91. Many critics think that idealist elements choke Tillich's understanding of existence to some extent Cf. especially K. Hamilton: *The System and the Gospel*. 1963. K. Osborne: *New Being*, 1969. For Tillich's views on the relation between essentialism and existentialism cf. *Persp.*, pp. 243 ff.



but that this transparency is in fact the *telos*, the intended fulfillment of history and that as such it will always require an infinite "jump".<sup>1</sup>

In Tillich's conception of religion it is this intended transparency of everything for the ground of being, which allows him to agree with Bonhoeffer's demand that Christianity must become secular. It also calls for a swinging between "Yes" and "No", a paradoxical balancing on the boundary line, which indeed Tillich thinks crucial for anyone who desires true knowledge of reality.<sup>2</sup> These concepts however can not be understood unless we study them within Tillich's perception of the history of philosophy and more particularly in the light of his doctoral study on Schelling. As a matter of fact, we find most of his later insights already in this work and he himself acknowledges repeatedly that Schelling inspired his understanding of existence. It is also interesting to note that he traces back

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<sup>1</sup>"There is no proportion or gradation between the finite and the Infinite. There is an absolute break, an infinite "jump". " (ST. I, p. 237) Yet: "... the infinite transcendence of the infinite over the finite,... does not contradict but rather confirms the coincidence of opposites. The infinite is present in everything finite" (ST.I, p. 263). The coincidence of opposites and the infinite "jump" (concepts derived from Nicolaus Cusanus and Søren Kierkegaard) form together what Tillich has called "the positive paradox of religion".

<sup>2</sup>"The boundary is the best place to acquire knowledge" (*On the Boundary*, p.13) Tillich's stress on the boundary we see also in: P. Tillich: *The Protestant Era* (abr. *Prot. Era*) 1962, p. 195.

to Schelling some of the other philosophies that have influenced him, such as Nietzsche's Lebensphilosophie and Kierkegaard's existentialism. And finally we should mention that he himself considers this study of Schelling helpful for the encounter with Asian Religions.<sup>1</sup>

## I.2 IDENTITY AND DISTANCE

In his doctoral study on Schelling Tillich was faced with the problem which was to occupy him for the rest of his life: can we accept a philosophy of religion which presupposes the identity between the religious and the philosophical ultimate and, at the same time, profess the wholly otherliness of God's transcendence. This is the problem of man's essential union with the divine and the all-permeating and infinite distance, which requires that the divine address itself to mankind.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Persp.*, pp. 75 and 141f.; *Ges.W.I* p. 9; *Ges.W.IV*, p. 133. Tillich knows about Kierkegaard's criticism of Schelling but he thinks that the two have more in common than Hamilton permits. Cf. *Persp.*, pp. 150f. and 162f.

<sup>2</sup>"Das religiöse und philosophische Absolute, *deus* und *esse*, können nicht unverbunden nebeneinander stehen. Wie können sie miteinander verbunden werden, ontologisch und erkenntnistheoretisch?" (*Ges.W. V*, p. 123). "Philosophy of Religion Loses God the Moment it forsakes this grounds: *impossibile est sine deo discernere deum*. God is known only through God." (*What is Religion?* p. 154).

In modern philosophy the extreme positions of this polarity were represented by Hegel and Kant. The latter's critical philosophy had shown that man's mental categories completely structure his knowledge of an object. Hegel accepted this view but denied the conclusion that this unity between the subject and the object forces us to posit an absolute distance between the contingent and the divine source. Spinoza's monism had professed the identity of the universe and the one, divine Substance, and now Hegel like other Romantics, attempted a synthesis of Kant and Spinoza. His theory of divine, cunning ideas, driving dialectically toward actualization in historical mankind, was bound to break down, because it failed to recognize that God, universe and human intellect cannot possibly be made interchangeable terms, or, in other words, because it ignored the second side of the polarity, the distance. The vacillation between these two poles characterizes all the history of Western philosophy according to Tillich.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>These themes return passim in *Persp.*, but we should mention more particularly Tillich's article: "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion" (abr. *Two Types*) *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 1 (1946) pp. 3-13 and two chapters in *Protestant Era*, namely *Philosophy and Fate*, and *Realism and Faith*. Osborne devotes an excursus to Tillich's view of the two philosophical streams. Cf. op. cit. pp. 207-15. J.P. Gabus also spends a chapter on this issue. Cf. *Introduction à la Théologie de la Culture de Paul Tillich*, 1969, pp. 65-86. Comparing these two authors we seem to find a double polarity in Tillich's classifications, namely that between the ontological and the cosmological approach, and that between the essentialist and the existentialist philosophy. Although the latter, the post-Renaissance polarity runs mainly parallel to the former, there are differences which Tillich does not examine thoroughly.

One stream of thought stresses the distance between God and man in an overwhelming manner. Kierkegaard's protest against Hegel is the most forceful expression of this awareness that man should never ignore this distance and disguise the guilt involved by calling a lack of being simply a non-being or a not-yet-being.<sup>1</sup> The anxiety about non-being relates Kierkegaard to Kant's view of the ethical imperative, of finitude and radical evil. This view, in its turn, should be valued as an adequate expression of the Protestant rejection of all human attempts at self-salvation.<sup>2</sup> The emphasis on man's distance from the divine, therefore, goes back to the Reformers, to their nominalist sources, to Duns Scotus, and in the final analysis to the Thomist-Aristotelian protest against the neo-Platonic, Augustinian line of thought.<sup>3</sup> The latter's main contention that '*Deus est esse*' had led to an exaggerated view of the fundamental, divine immanence in both reality and human

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Ges. W.* I, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>'We can not break through to God... He must come to us. In this way Kant represents to great extent the attitude of Protestantism' (*Persp.* p. 66). Tillich develops this similarity between Kant, Protestantism and early Existentialism also with reference to the theory of radical evil. Finally he shows that the Romantics all 'faced the problem: How to unite mysticism and the Protestant principle' and that Schleiermacher was the first one to attempt that synthesis, the synthesis between Spinoza and Kant. (*Ibid.* pp. 74f).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Two Types* pp.6f. An Interesting study on the revolution toward anthropocentrism which Aquinas initiated can be found in L. Dewart *The Foundations of Belief*, 1969. The word 'dissolution' which Tillich uses to characterize Aquinas' attack on the Augustinian system suggests a disapproval which is not altogether Tillich's real view, for he praises Aquinas at many occasions especially for introducing the analytical detachment. Cf. e.g. *ST.I*, p. 41.

reason. The awareness of God, however, as the immanent power of being, which preceeds the separation between object and subject, and as the source of all truth (*ipsum verum*) is considered by Tillich as the indispensable basis of all philosophy of religion. This emphasis on the union with the divine was defended by Franciscans like Bonaventura and re-appeared in modified form, after the nominalist episode, in the rationalism of Descartes, Leibniz and especially in Spinoza's concept of the divine Substance.

Kant attempted to combine the immanence of eternal ideas in man's mind with the British empiricism and Hume's skepticism. In so doing, however, he formulated most clearly the static, essentialist approach of reality which had become ever more dominant and which enabled Hegel to use Kant's critiques for his own phenomenology of the Spirit, in which the radical, existential estrangement from the divine is completely ignored. Kant himself was still aware of this distance, when he restricted the union between God and man to the categorical imperative, but the Romantics who replied to him had soon obliterated the last element of the subdominant stream of Western thought, namely the awareness of the existentially critical struggle between the divine and the demonic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This did not prevent him from having a high regard for men like Schleiermacher. Cf. *ST*. I, p. 42.

Among the rejoinders of Kant, Tillich had chosen to study Schelling because of his ultimately successful attempt at integrating an idealist philosophy of nature and an existentialist awareness of the demonic conflict between the conscious and unconscious. In so doing Schelling included the subdominant of thought with its emphasis on the concrete historical dimension of man, as against the Cartesian, rational formalism, and, more important yet, he avoided deriving the concept of God from a rational analysis of religion.<sup>1</sup>

Mysticism, as the union with the divine, and consciousness of guilt, as expression of the infinite estrangement, are the poles with which Tillich's study on Schelling deals. Schelling's first period had been a direct preparation of Hegel's essentialist monism. It ignored man's guilt and distance from the divine.<sup>2</sup> In attacking Kant's first two Critiques, Schelling combined Fichte's dialectics with the organic teleology found in Kant's Critique of Judgment. This led him to a mysticism

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Persp.* p. 88. We should note that Tillich in speaking of dominant and subdominant streams of thought does not intend to classify any philosopher exclusively in either line. Whereas the most outspoken representatives of the two streams are Kant and Boehme, we see that Plato and Augustine are said to have integrated very successfully the existentialist awareness. Cf. *Persp.* p. 244.

<sup>2</sup>'Alles was existiert ist als existierendes mit Gott identisch, ein Widerspruch zwischen Gott und Mensch beruht auf Imagination... Schuldbewusstsein ist Sünde' (*Ges.W.I.*, p.74). Tillich's doctoral study was published in 1912 under the title: '*Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*' (*Ges.W. I.* pp. 13-108).

in which nature figured as the free self-development of the Unconditional Ground of being. Nature was not an irrelevant matter, he claimed, in which man was to establish his ethical and religious glory, but rather the embodiment of grace, the divine self-manifestation and self-gift. Man's justification, then, consisted in his mystical unification with the creative force underneath nature's history.<sup>1</sup> Schelling's first period ended in an aesthetic mysticism in which he professed creative art to be the divine revelation, just as Hegel did with regard to philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

Schelling entered his second period with a new study of the idea of freedom, after he had perceived the distortion of the moral consciousness in both his own system and that of Hegel. He still retained some central views of his idealism, such as the idea that nature's history embodies the grace which unites man to the *Unvordenkliche*.<sup>3</sup> In history freedom and destiny seem to be each other's opposites and essentially they form in fact a polarity (*Widerspruch*). In God's aseity,

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<sup>1</sup>'Indem ich aber mit der Natur identisch bin, bin ich eins mit Gott dem Lebendigen der Natur' (*Ges.W.* I, p. 44). Tillich is quick to point out that Schelling's position is not identical with Spinoza's pantheism because it does not equate God and nature but calls God nature's creative power. Cf. *Ges.W.* I, p.9.

<sup>2</sup>'die Kunst ist die wahre Religion' (Quoted by Tillich *Ges.W.* I, p. 57).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.*I, pp. 76ff. The word "Unvordenkliche" means that beyond which thought is inconceivable.

however, this polarity is overcome by an eternally new act of the Will. Ideally, therefore, the poles of freedom and destiny include each other because being receives its form only through the spiritual and free self-determination.<sup>1</sup>

At the opposite pole to God is the created universe of which He is the underlying (*subjectum*) power of being. He wills its eternal coming into existence and in so doing He freely renounces immediate union. This fact is irrational not because it contradicts, but because it preceeds rationality.<sup>2</sup>

The freedom to create this pole as his self-manifestation proves God's transcendence. To the extent that the created universe has being, its opposition to the divine is essentially overcome, and not to be identified with the sinful separation. This created pole, however, as can be seen most clearly in its highest actualization which is man, possesses the same structure of being, that is the polarity between freedom and destiny. This polarity results in sinful self-limitation if man asserts his selfhood over against the orientation toward the eternal and transcendent divine act. Man, of necessity, has a '*Universalwille*', but he can sacrifice it to something particular and

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<sup>1</sup>'Es ist ein Ur-und Grundwollen das sich selbst zu etwas macht, und der Grund und der Basis aller Wesenheit ist' (Quoted by Tillich: *Ges. W.I*, p. 77).

<sup>2</sup>We see this idea of irrationality return in connection with Tillich's discussion of the purpose of creation. Cf. *ST.I*, p. 263.



in so doing become a truncated subjectivity. When he submits, however, to the concern about the depth of creation we speak of religion, which Schelling also calls God's love of Himself in a completed self-realization.<sup>1</sup> Even though the opposition which resulted from God's free act of creation can assume the traits of a sinful, autonomous opposition in man and although it factually always does so, we must still hold that the opposition is basically overcome in an enduring union between creation and the Ground of its being. This union appears as a wrathful judgment if an anthropocentric, self-sufficiency prevails in man, but it is grace if God's immanence is accepted, if man recognizes his guilt and lets this union overcome the separation.<sup>2</sup>

This is Tillich's reading of Schelling, which has become most influential in his own understanding of religion as the true dimension of history. The imperishable union with the divine and the distorting, factual estrangement form the paradoxically united dimensions of our situation. Man must accept that he is essentially the divine nature in an eternal incarn-

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<sup>1</sup>'Religion ist die Liebe mit der Gott sich selbst liebt' (*Ges. W. I*, p. 83).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ges. W. I*, p. 87. Why selfhood has not got the spiritual power to overcome the opposition, as has the divine Spirit, is one of those questions to which Schelling would answer that is how things are, and that 'Nur Seinen Wegen nach zu gehen ist aufgabe der Theologie' (*Ges. W. I*, p. 86).

ation, not as an identity, but as a conquered opposition.<sup>1</sup> This acceptance, which conquers man's estrangement, cannot be a mystical escape from existential, concrete conditions, for it necessarily takes place in cultural forms. The spatial and temporal reality, the cultural forms, however contingent and particular they be, are the only mediation of our unification with the Ground of our being, when the sinful '*Particularwille*' is submitted to the '*Universalwille*'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>'Der Mensch an sich ... ist Gott setzend, ... die Vermittlung Gottes mit sich selbst' "Überwundener Widerspruch... Identität ... behauptet sich im ewigen Prozess der Menschwerdung Gottes. Dies ist der Religionsbegriff... Das, was Religion zur Religion macht, ist die substantielle Identität mit Gott" (Ges. W.I, pp. 101f).

<sup>2</sup>'Sünde ist die Selbstheit die sich als Selbstheit Aufrichten will' (Ges. W. I, p. 89). The words '*Particularwille*' and '*Universalwille*' are close enough to English to be immediately comprehensible. Tillich learned from Schelling that religion should negate all attempts at self-salvation without denying the intrinsic value of the concrete reality. The Thomist revolution had rightly emphasized the concrete, rational world of the human, culture creating spirit, but when later the estrangement from the ultimate Ground of meaning was forgotten, as in Hegel's essentialism which identifies culture and religion, the valuable subdominant stream had lost its protesting power. Only the system that keeps the pradox between these poles can hope to have universal relevance. Gabus thinks that Aquinas was better equipped to do so than the Franciscan tradition of Bonaventure, which Tillich has chosen to follow. Cf. Gabus, *op. cit.* p. 85. On both sides this discussion smacks slightly of unwise confessionalism.

### I.3 RELIGION AND CULTURE

Religion as the ultimate concern is the prius of all events, because it is the event in which creation, through man, returns to its origin. Man surrenders to his essence as divine self-manifestation without losing his selfhood. This religious surrender is an infinite leap, but it should not be called irrational except in the same sense as God's creativity, which establishes the opposition God - Creature, is irrational, or rather pre-rational. Religion, even if we call it God's own self-love, is a fully human and rational reality, which, however, cannot be sounded to its full depth. It does not exist separately from rational functions. It does not contradict them, but rather permeates them. By functions Tillich means the spiritual processes by which man realizes meaning in historical acts of grasping and shaping reality. And it is his most crucial view that the religious relation to the ground of all meaning underlies every human function, so that religion is the prius of culture and that no finite form of meaning, no concrete cultural act can be understood without the permeating passion of the infinite.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It could be observed that there is a shift in Tillich's definition of religion from 'the state of being ultimately concerned' to 'the state of being grasped by the ultimate concern', which is his favourite formula in later years.

To comprehend this insight fully, however, we must relate it to the human tendency to set the search for cultural absolutes in the place of God and thereby to cease being self-critical.<sup>1</sup> Because the ultimate concern distorts man's self-transcending function when it clings relentlessly to a contingent cultural reality, this function's essential unity with that of cultural self-realization and moral self-integration will be broken in the state of man's existence.<sup>2</sup> Religion, then, appears as a separate and ambiguous function in mankind. Man's inclination to halt the eternal process of the divine by sinful self-assertions turns what is essentially only a logical distinction into an existential distortion. The core of this process is that man tries to negate finitude by attaching absolute value to autonomous cultural acts. Because Tillich does not deny the intrinsic value of these acts we can feel already that the Lutheran paradox of '*simul justus et peccator*' has an important role to play in this system. This paradox makes Tillich also accept that the history of revelation is entirely interwoven with man's self-righteous attempts at overcoming his finitude.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Each of these... forms in which religion is overcome within religion is characterized by the same dialectic as religion itself. They can set themselves in the place of God' (*What is Religion?* p.147).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ST.III*, p. 96. This view qualifies Tillich's former contention that religion can not be considered as a separate function of the human spirit.

<sup>3</sup> 'That history...of revelation,...begins the moment man becomes aware of the ultimate question of his estranged predicament and of his destiny to overcome this predicament'. (*ST.III*, p. 366). 'Demonization of the holy occurs in all Religions day by day' (*ST. III*, p. 102). Cf. also *Ges. W. I*, p. 383.

Tillich appears close to Barth's criticism of liberal, anthropocentric theories when it comes to the relation between culture and religion. He points out that the Liberals wrongly identified religion with spiritual functions such as willing, feeling or thinking and actually defined God by taking finite realities as point of departure, such as the self, the universe, culture or the history of Religions.<sup>1</sup> To identify religion with these human functions means to turn it into the most pertinent expression of distortion because it obliterates the unconditional Ground of all meaning.<sup>2</sup> Each function necessarily operates within the subject - object polarity. But God transcends this polarity, so that any Religion which ignores God as the prius of all functions is necessarily destructive, tragic and demonic.<sup>3</sup> Whereas Barth's criticism presents a strongly moralistic and abstract *No* to culture, Tillich tries to show that the quest of God and the theological study thereof permeate all functions and institutions of man. He claims that God's transcendence does not make religion

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *What is Religion?* p.124.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 160. This forms one of the central ideas of Barth's criticism of Religion.

<sup>3</sup>Churches are the places where faith is allowed to become Religion i.e., 'ambiguous, disintegrating, destructive and demonic' but also where these ambiguities are recognized. Cf. *ST. III*, p. 73.

irrelevant for culture and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> The tradition of Halle University had given Tillich an awareness that religion can never be divorced from, nor identified with special functions of the human spirit. He therefore thinks that Barth's approach in stead of offering an alternative to Liberalism, presents a disruption of meaning, a negative view of creation and a supranaturalism which does not care to relate revelation to the questions implied in man's predicaments.<sup>2</sup>

Tillich's own alternative can be summed up in his frequently used formula: religion is the substance of culture and culture is the form of religion.<sup>3</sup> We find this view worked out more particularly in some of his early writings.<sup>4</sup> In 1922, he set out to show that theology does not deal with a separate being but with the ultimate concern that inspires all fields

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<sup>1</sup>In Tillich's view 'the rationalistic moralism and the abstract universalism of Kantian ethics have served to give an abstract, "untimely" character to Barthianism' Adams op. cit. p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Persp.* XXXI. The university of Halle combined a pietist and idealist tradition. Its most influential teacher had been Martin Kahler, to whom Tillich is indebted for some most fundamental insights. His difference with Barth in these matters is clear from *ST.* III, 285 and also from Adam's discussion. Cf. op. cit. p. 120. But this should not make us forget that he had a deep respect for Barth. Cf. e.g., *Prot. Era*, pp 84, 38, 60, 207.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *ST.* III, p. 248 and *On the Boundary* pp.69f.

<sup>4</sup>In particular: *Religionsphilosophie der Kultur*. Berlin 1919. *Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religions-philosophie*. Berlin 1922. *Das System der Wissenschaften nach Gegenständen und Methoden*. Gottingen 1923 and *Religionsphilosophie* Berlin 1925.

with which other sciences are dealing.<sup>1</sup> He rejects the Liberals who considered religion the irrational field of the human spirit which can not come into conflict with the rational. He argues that this view is a form of escapism, which only 'spatializes' God as a being besides other beings and Religion as a function besides others.<sup>2</sup> Against such attempts we should stress that religion is the ultimate import embodied in cultural forms of meaning as the very concern about meaning, rather than as a separate activity dealing with an object such as a "Highest Being", the "Ultimate" or the "Universal".<sup>3</sup> In order to formulate both the difference and the relation between culture and religion, Tillich had to develop a new method which he called metalogics or critical phenomenology.<sup>4</sup> This method underlies his whole system of correlations and it is determined by his basic insight into the paradoxical nature of the reality.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Adams p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *What is Religion?* p.13. Benkston compares Tillich's warning against escapism into the rational (Cf. *ST.I*, p. 15) to similar protests voiced by Bonhoeffer. Cf. op. cit. p. 103.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 12. On the other hand Tillich points out that 'in the cognitive realm everything... be it God or a stone... is an object' and that 'Theology makes an object of that which precedes the subject - object structure' (*ST.I*, p. 172).

<sup>4</sup>The term metalogics is used exclusively in the earlier works, and it refers to the method that goes beyond (meta) the study of mere logical forms. We find a clear description of his 'Critical phenomenology' also in *ST.I*, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup>Tillich declares that 'das System nicht nur ziel sondern auch Ausgangspunkt alles Erkennens ist' (*Ges.W.I*, p. 111). For a discussion of this view in relation with the place of theology in the system of sciences, see Schmitz op. cit. pp. 38ff.

As many critics attack Tillich's system as such we must give some attention to this method. Although it deals in first instance with the philosophy of religion, this method is of direct importance for theology because Tillich considers these two directly interdependent.<sup>1</sup>

Tillich thinks that in determining the essence of religion, we can not rely either on psychology or history. Even theology or metaphysics are inadequate disciplines in this respect.<sup>2</sup> Religion's critical power, which points to the transcendent depth of all cultural meaning, is lost by the relativism of all disciplines that define religion in terms of cultural structures. The dialectic relation between religion and culture was lost also when Schleiermacher, Troeltsch and even Otto adopted the theory of a religious a priori.<sup>3</sup> The only hope left seems to be a combination of Kant's criticism and Husserl's phenomenology, which emphasize respectively the actual form in which man structures reality and the essential that breaks through the

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<sup>1</sup>All cultural realities, religion included, can be approached from three angles. Philosophy articulates their particular sphere of meaning, cultural history studies the empirical forms in which this meaning is embodied and systematics presents the concrete normative system on the basis of the two forgoing studies. With respect to religion we see three interdependent fields namely: the philosophy of religion, the history of Religions and systematic theology.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *What is Religion?* pp. 10, 32, 80, 97.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Adams op. cit. p. 150 and *What is Religion?* pp. 61 and 126.



actual forms. Neither of these methods by itself reaches a real understanding, and even an idealist combination as proposed by Hegel falls short of the mark.<sup>1</sup> Kant takes cultural forms and their interconnections at their face value without asking about the dynamics that bring them about and unite them.<sup>2</sup> The Kantian approach, which led to a concentration on empirical, psychological data, called for the phenomenology of Husserl as a reaction. He claims that any study of empirical forms of meaning is preceded by an intuition into the eternal truth of essences (*Wesensschau*).<sup>3</sup> But Husserl, and Hegel to a large extent as well, failed to explain the distance between essence and concrete actualization.

Tillich stresses that cultural logical forms as concrete, historical structures embody in finite ways an import of meaning which itself is infinite and inexhaustibly dynamic. The plurality of forms in their rational concreteness and unity betray a dynamics of being which is not explained by their form. In terms of religion and culture one should relate these two poles of reality saying that religion focuses on the dynamic import of meaning and culture on its form and that 'culture as

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<sup>1</sup>'The critical-dialectical method ... hopes ... to avoid... an exclusive idealism as well as a doctrine of pre-established harmony, ... it is best to speak of the spiritual process of fulfilling being with meaning'. (*What is Religion?* p.42). Cf. also *ibid.* p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 43f.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Ibid.* pp. 45f.

culture is therefore substantially, but not intentionally, religious'.<sup>1</sup> Form and import of meaning are obviously inseparably united and anything but contradictory to each other. Every form actualizes the import but no matter how valuable it is, it may close itself to the ever demanding depth beyond itself. It is at this point that ambiguity enters and that the essential unity between the self-creating function of culture and the self-transcending function of religion breaks down into two separate functions.

#### I.4 REASON AND REVELATION

Gilkey points out that Tillich is a true Liberal as he considers religion the creative, 'spiritual force within culture rather than the antithesis of culture' yet differs on several points on revelation.<sup>2</sup> This makes us wonder how Tillich relates revelation to the sphere of rationality. How can we speak of the correlation between existential questions and theological answers without turning religion into an irrational function, a false safety?<sup>3</sup> In the discussion of

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> L. Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God - Language*. 1969, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Tillich says that the protest against any absolute claim for a relative reality is the remedy against the temptation in the many offers of religious or non-religious safety. Cf. *Prot. Era.* pp. 163 and 195. But with Tillich this should not result in a sort of Religion of misery and doubt.

reason and revelation we meet a great variety of influences on Tillich's thought. His affinity with men like Heidegger and Plotinus is immediately evident when we look at his concept of reason. Reason is that which gives form to being so that 'nichts wird erkannt, was nicht denkgeformt ist.'<sup>1</sup>

Reason itself, however, is not the same as the spirit which creates culture in a constant self-determination, in the dynamic tension of freedom and destiny, of being and reason, of substance and form.<sup>2</sup> Only man's spiritual existence, only *Dasein*, knows the concern for being. *Dasein*, as Heidegger has shown, is the key to what transcends the rational forms, namely the power of being.<sup>3</sup> Tillich values highly not only Heidegger, however, but also the neo-Platonic *logos*-ontology, especially in the form presented by Plotinus who 'finds the ultimate power of being beyond the *nous* (the power of reason) in the abyss of the formless One'.<sup>4</sup> W. Rowe emphasizes this congruence between Tillich and Plotinus which is most interesting for us, if we consider that Tillich called the synthesis of the mystical

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<sup>1</sup>Nothing can be known which is not formed by thought *Ges.W.I*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>'Geist ist selbst-bestimmung des Denkens im Sein... sein dynamische Spannung beruht auf dem unendlichen Widerspruch von Denken und Sein' (*Ges.W. I*, p. 210).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *ST.*, I, pp. 62-189, and also *Prot. Era* p. 85.

<sup>4</sup>*Prot. Era* p. 69.

and the rational an oriental element in Plotinus. Incidentally, this point is also noted by Gilkey.<sup>1</sup>

While Tillich considers himself as standing on the boundary between idealism and marxism, he insists on calling himself an idealist if that means accepting 'the identity of thought and being as the principle of truth'.<sup>2</sup> But, at the same time, he refutes the static formalism which could result from this principle. By stressing the polarity of being and reason he reintroduces a dynamism of which neo-Platonism had been aware already when it considered the goal of reason to be identical with the goal of life's movement.

The great impression Kant made on Tillich,<sup>3</sup> had taught him not to look at reason or '*logos*' itself as the creative pulse of history. In Kant's view reason consists of the human categories

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<sup>1</sup> 'Plotinus... in this ... is oriental and not Greek'. (Ibid.) Cf. Gilkey op. cit. p. 289. In particular, it is interesting that Tillich's Being-itself and Plotinus' One agree in excluding any literal, non-symbolic predication. The major difference between these two, according to Rowe, stems from the fact that Tillich's Being-itself does not exclude all negativity but rather overcomes it. Cf. W. Rowe, *Religious Symbols and God* Chicago 1968, pp. 69-71.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Boundary* p. 82. This quotation is taken from the chapter entitled: Between Idealism and Marxism.

<sup>3</sup> 'Finitude is essential for reason... The structure of this finitude is described in the most profound and comprehensive way in Kant's "critiques".' (ST.I, pp. 81f.) Although Tillich acknowledges he is heavily indebted to Kant's critical philosophy at many occasions (Cf. Osborne op. cit. pp. 51-57), he also considers this line of thought the mightiest expression of the Cartesian methodological formalism, which he resents because it sacrifices history to eternal ideas and laws. Cf. Adams op. cit. p. 202.

that structure our perception of reality. Hegel's dialectic idealism does not deny this, but claims that this rational, formative principle not only agrees with historical reality, but even determines its very development. Schelling, Marx and Nietzsche in their turn, pointed out that these two positions were both static and ideological formalism, which ignored the fact that the real, historical dynamics must break through established rational forms as the power of being.<sup>1</sup> It appears to Tillich that the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition struck an acceptable balance in this matter, because it combined a prophetic appraisal of the historical with the view that truth and being coincide in God as *ipsa veritas* and *ipsum esse*. God, in this perception, is the ultimate power that makes all beings participate in Himself and precedes the cleavage between subject and object.<sup>2</sup>

What made Tillich adopt this seemingly outdated approach: the *logos*-ontology? It was a reaction against those, especially the Neo-Kantians, who forgot that 'every epistemology has

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich, following Schelling, contends that *logos* is an empty abstraction unless it becomes a matter of concrete concern and decision. This abstraction can take the form either of rational, distinct ideas or of empirical probabilities. Truth, however, is existential. The idea must enter history, not in the Hegelian way, but within the ambiguity of the tension between fate and freedom. Cf. Adams op. cit. pp. 206-213.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Two Types*. pp.4ff. The term *ipsum esse*, although not Augustinian in the proper sense, has been linked to this tradition by Tillich and rightly so.

ontological assumptions'.<sup>1</sup> If we accept Kant's premise that epistemology 'must begin with the point where subject and object meet', we must admit according to Tillich, that any object has 'essential structures with which the cognitive subject is essentially united'.<sup>2</sup> This means that there is an objective as well as a subjective '*logos*'. All being is formed by the '*logos*' which is the universal principle of the divine self-manifestation. Because he accepts rational structures in the objects, Tillich considers himself a realist, but not in the traditional sense of the word.<sup>3</sup> What he calls self-transcending realism points to man's participation in the transcendent unity between subject and object, as well as in the essential union between reason and being. As a free and spiritual self-determination man can therefore be called a microcosm.<sup>4</sup>

In his entirely individual *Dasein* man grasps and shapes being rationally with a concern about the unconditioned and universal being. At first sight we suspect a deep affinity with Hegel, in

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Osborne op. cit. pp. 51f.

<sup>2</sup>*On the Boundary*, p. 82 and *ST.* I, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>He disagrees with Realism which 'questions every transcendence of the real' (*Prot. Era*, p. 67).

<sup>4</sup>'Man is the microcosmos because in him all levels of reality are present' (*ST.*, I, p. 260). Later Tillich will change the term *level* to *dimension*. Cf. *ST.* III, p. 15. This concept is illuminating because it shows how Tillich thinks that religion need not contradict culture any more than the biological contradicts the physical.

these lines. But Tillich does not hold that the eternal, essential union appears in existence as such, through some inherent force. On the contrary, the world process which man's reason grasps and shapes is not identical with the eternal *logos* that pulsates through all our thinking.<sup>1</sup> The polarity between the free dynamics of being and the determinative, logical structures, which is essentially overcome in the divine, eternal *logos*, is experienced as a destructive predicament in human existence. Reason itself suffers most from the existential predicament. Not only does man's reason fail to grasp and to shape structures of inter-related beings in full integrity, but it is even impossible to say that man's reason is the divine *logos* when viewed under the aspect of eternal evolution. Historical existence, according to Tillich, can not experience openness to the dynamic presence of the Unconditioned, but as an irrational breakthrough, which however, does not destroy the rational forms against which its 'No' is directed.<sup>2</sup> When the concern about the unconditional meaning grasps man's reason, the logical structures in which

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 95

<sup>2</sup>Tillich takes great pains to point out that 'God does not need to destroy his created world ... in order to manifest himself in it' (*ST. III*, p. 114).

he deals with reality are subjected to the existential quest for revelation.<sup>1</sup> This is because the essential union between being and reason (in the sense of their conquered polarity) is disrupted in the fragmented human reason, so that it becomes impossible to say that existential rationality is the power of things (which can be said of the divine *Logos*).

To understand the existential predicament of reason, from which revelation heals us, we must briefly look into Tillich's analysis of reason. Further it will prove to be important in respect of the dialogue between Religions. As Tillich says, reason is not just the cognitive function alone. We distinguish between receiving and shaping rationality and in both cases there is one side that deals with the form and one that deals with the contents, so that we discover four rational functions: the cognitive, the aesthetic, the organizational and the organic.<sup>2</sup> The subject - object structure in all of these has to be transcended if the depth of reason is to manifest itself fully, but relativism and absolutism either exaggerate or ignore that fact. Just like other antinomies, these prevent the full manifestation of the *logos* which occurs only when the unconditioned import of

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<sup>1</sup>So if Tillich agrees with Heidegger that man is the existential question himself, he qualifies it. Another difference between these thinkers we find when Tillich thinks that Heidegger has basically lost the sting of historicity by taking the idealist element out of Dasein. Cf. Osborne op. cit. p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST*. I. p. 85. These functions correspond to the areas of science, art, law and morals, each with its intrinsic demands of the truth, beauty, justice and goodness.



meaning shines through the concrete forms as God's free self-determination.

Although the very being of things does show that the rational form stands in a relation of conquered opposition to the ground of being, we can only say that existentially this is being contradicted to an infinite degree. Human reason is a distorted *logos* in the state of fragmentation and conflict between the four functions.<sup>1</sup> In the final analysis these conflicts can be reduced to the opposing realities of an autonomous reason which limits itself to finite forms and the theonomous reason which accepts as a law (*nomos*) that everything finite should be open to the unconditioned (*Theos*). When theonomy is considered a surrender to some reason beyond reason and when we speak of law being imposed upon reason rather than reason being united with its own depth, then a conflict between revelation and reason, between culture and religion appears inevitable.<sup>2</sup> But things are not so.

Tillich leaves no doubt that in his view revelation does not give extraneous information or laws to our rational functions, or 'add anything directly to the totality of our ordinary

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<sup>1</sup>For a short exposition of Tillich's system of the so-called *Geisteswissenschaften* Cf. J. Schmitz, *Die apologetische Theologie Paul Tillichs*. 1966, pp. 26-41.

<sup>2</sup>'Autonomie für sich treibt zur leeren, inhaltlosen Form' (*Ges. W. I*, p. 272) and actual reason as such resents the quest of or revelation as well as the unification with the depth of reason. Cf. *ST.*, I, pp. 83-94.

knowledge'.<sup>1</sup> Revelation is an event, a healing event, and as such it can be made an object of our cognitive reason. Just what is this healing event? Its first aspect, as Tillich points out, consists in the ontological shock in which the existential predicament is exposed. The rivalries between the functions and their internal struggles, as well as the appalling lack of depth and integrity of meaning which they have occasioned all through human history, appear experienced as a quest for a word of power, able to overcome this predicament.<sup>2</sup> The impact of the ontological shock is the beginning of all genuine philosophical questioning, but the answer, the integration of the functions, can only be received as a gratuitous gift. Yes, even the shocking threat of non-being itself, which leads to the ontological question, is inconceivable without the gratuitous, miraculous influence of the mystery of being, and consequently it would be wrong to suggest a process in the line of Socrates' maieutics. Revelation does not bring out what is there already but it brings 'the self-manifestation of the divine... which is a transforming power'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*ST.I.* p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>And in this sense 'reason does not resist revelation. It asks for it' (*ST.I*, p. 94) Cf. *ST.II*, p. 140 and *ST. I*, pp. 147-153. Cf. also Schmitz op. cit. pp. 168f. We feel like asking, with Martin op. cit. p. 80, if there could not be ways to overcome these conflicts other than by the gratuitous revelation described by Tillich.

<sup>3</sup>*Persp.* p.180.

This strong emphasis on the gratuitous revelation does not mean, however, that Tillich accepts two levels of God's self-manifestation, or accepts any destruction of the rationality. With respect to the latter we should be quite clear. Tillich describes revelation as the miraculous appearance of the mystery of being which man receives in the state of ecstasy. This sounds like an irrational enthusiasm about something anti-natural. Tillich, however, states that ecstasy and miracle in his usage are characterized exactly by the respect for rationality.<sup>1</sup> Miracles are the events in which man is confronted with the abysmal mystery of his being through the encounter with a concrete reality. Man recognizes this reality as representative of the unconditioned Ground of meaning, but only because of his state of form-transcending openness, called ecstasy. Although rational structures are respected here, neither miracle nor ecstasy can be called 'objective';<sup>2</sup> they must need transcend established structures, even though revelation will always

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<sup>1</sup>This respect for rational structures distinguishes ecstasy from demonic possession. Cf. *ST.I*, p. 116f. It seems a legitimate question to ask if therefore rationality can be used as a criterion to distinguish ecstasy and miracle. Tillich evades this question, but to accept this view would contradict his views.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, pp. 125f. A miracle must be astonishing and be received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience. It must consequently express the relation of the mystery of being to us in a specific way, so that we can not hold that its contents do not matter, even though it is true that everything can become a medium of revelation. Cf. *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (abr. *Bibl. Rel.*), 1955, p. 22.

require concrete structures. To the extent that revelation is the transparency of the Ground of all meaning and being in concrete forms, the opposition between the various functions of reason is overcome under a growing primacy of love. (*agapē*).

The final and decisive revelation is consequently that event in which 'the medium of revelation overcomes its finite conditions by sacrificing them and itself with them' through 'the power of negating itself without losing itself'.<sup>1</sup> This final revelation, Tillich tells us, has in actual fact happened in Jesus as the Christ, the Crucified who conquered the demonic powers of self-limitation and thereby liberated his followers 'from the authority of everything finite in him', so that they might have courage and power to be.<sup>2</sup> The absolute of the Christ event which Tillich proposes does not deny rationality or impose a new one. It respects meaning as meaning and brings it to completion. Reason as reason is universally both the fruit of revelation and the condition for final revelation to occur, not

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<sup>1</sup>ST.I, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>ST.I, p. 134. It is the reality of the Cross (which itself is a symbol) that constitutes the universally valid, decisive revelation. It seems to me that Martin's criticisms (op. cit. pp. 69-80), miss the point which Tillich wants to make in several instances. Tillich would in fact hold that the contents of the biblical Christ were valid as final revelation even if the historicity of Jesus could be disproved. Cf. *On the Boundary* p.50. And to object that the final revelation as complete transparency should not require symbols is either misunderstanding the nature of symbols or changing the focus of attention from the Christ event to the forms in which we receive it cognitively. All man can receive the final revelation but it would be wrong to say that christians have received it, received, that is, in the full, existentially valid sense of the word.

on a second level, but as the transparency which is universally relevant and expected.

### I.5 CORRELATION AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

The purpose of Tillich's much debated method of correlation is to show the interrelatedness of the questions arising from human existence and the answers provided by the Christian message. We are ill-advised to take these words at face value as if we are dealing with a simplistic question - answer schema, for Tillich makes it quite clear that the method itself must be understood in terms of 'a prior knowledge of the object to which it is applied'.<sup>1</sup> The crucial insight here is the interdependence of God and man in the revelatory event, which is never a unilateral act but rather a constellation. It is an encounter in which man's reason is grasped by the Unconditioned in an experience of the mystery of being mediated by a word or a sacrament.<sup>2</sup> Reality as a whole in all its aspects is filled

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<sup>1</sup>*ST. I*, p. 60. 'The method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence' and it is 'derived from a prior knowledge of the system which is to be built by the method' (*ibid.*) Cf. also *ST. II*, pp. 13-16.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST. I*, pp. 106ff. Osborne gives a clear summary of the revelatory constellation *op. cit.* pp. 89ff. Note that in Tillich's view the divine - human encounter 'means something real for both sides' (*ST. I*, p. 61).

with the history of the holy. This does not deny that revelation is gratuitous.

Tillich's emphasis on the leap and on the self-sacrifice in the final revelation makes it impossible to accuse him of Hegelian naturalism, for he holds that neither the question nor the answer has its origin in an inner-human word and that reason must necessarily be thrown out of balance.<sup>1</sup> Granted this, however, we must observe that Tillich is very sympathetic to Feuerbach's contention that religion is an entirely human, rational answer to man's predicaments and infinite desires. He even agrees with Marx saying that Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel did not go far enough because it only inverted things and did not remove the real danger of the system, which consists in its inert conservatism. Feuerbach's demand for social commitment became only effective when Marx related it to historical struggles and discrepancies. Tillich agrees that any Religion is dehumanizing to the extent that it accepts ideological superstructures as revealed truth and in so doing refuses to give fully human answers to historical predicaments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 113 and Martin op. cit. pp. 61f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Dynamics of Faith* p.75. A number of authors have pointed to Tillich's affinity with Feuerbach. E.g. J. Taubes in S. Hook (ed.) *Religious Experience and Truth* 1961, pp. 70-75. Cf. also Osborne op. cit. p. 89. For Tillich's own appraisal of Feuerbach and Marx we can refer to many places such as *Prot. Era* p.193; *Ges.W.* II, pp. 153; 156; 164 and 321. More extensively he deals with this subject in *Perspectives* pp. 139ff. and *On the Boundary* pp.81-91.

How can he hold, then, that the revolutionary renewal requested can come only from the divine answers to existential questions? What is this correlation? How can revelation break through a closed realism and yet be anything but a alien body of information and laws? Tillich says that the unconditional Ground of being is present as the eternal 'Yes' and 'No', inspiring man's cultural activity and prohibiting any ideological absolutism. God's Spirit fills man with a passion for ultimacy, but in every detail, the Spirit depends on man's activity for the actualization of meaning. Tillich thus combines the gratuitousness of revelation with a synergism that gives full weight to man's cooperation with God's creative immanence.<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of asserting the fully human nature of the answer presupposes a certain view of man, for we see that Tillich at the same time emphasizes that even the human quest of God is

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<sup>1</sup> Tillich's main objective is to find a *tertium quid* for the polarity naturalism - supranaturalism. Cf. Osborne op. cit. p. 102. In simple form he states that God 'gives man the power of transforming himself and the world.' (ST.I, p. 256). Revelation does not only remedy the shortcomings of human reason, it is the very presupposition of this reason. Although this clearly excludes Pelagian forms of synergism, Schmitz thinks that Tillich abbreviates God's revelation by defining it as an answer to man's existential questions, for this allows man to limit God, as it were, by the extent of his questioning. Cf. op. cit. pp. 272f. But did Tillich not say that man is an infinite passion, an enduring quest for being?, and also that the first impact of revelation is the ontological shock? Schmitz knows that Tillich sees the very desire of salvation as the fruit of revelation, but he still contends that the latter is conceived in terms of the 'aufgewiesene' conflicts. May we ask Schmitz if Tillich ever excluded that other conflicts are 'aufzuweisen'?

a fruit of revelation.<sup>1</sup> It must presuppose that the human spirit has an essential relationship with the divine Spirit in which 'there is no correlation but rather mutual immanence', and that it is yet existentially in infinite estrangement from this union.<sup>2</sup> This estrangement is radical and total in the sense that no historical reality escapes from it. The anxieties resulting from the limitations and distortions involved constitute the existential question which man's *Dasein* is. Tillich does not say that man's existential predicament is a steppingstone for revelation, or a premise which revelation can hook on to, as Bonhoeffer seemed to think.<sup>3</sup> Meaninglessness and finitude can be known only through concern about infinite meanings, which can not be the fruit of our finitude as such.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This agrees with the Neo-Orthodox position but has very different connotation, which is the universality of revelation and not the acceptance of a natural theology as Bonhoeffer thinks. In: *Act and Being*, 1962, p. 87 n.1.

<sup>2</sup>Quotation from *ST*. III, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup>'Bonhoeffers Zurückweisung von Tillich's Versuch, die Grenze zum Fundament der religiösen Frage und damit zum Anknüpfungspunkt der Offenbarung zu machen (zeigt) eine frappierende Ähnlichkeit mit Barths Protest gegen Brunner'. Benktson op. cit. p. 166.

<sup>4</sup>Tillich refers often to Cusanus' *docta ignorantia* and *coincidentia oppositorum* in this connection Cf. especially *ST*. I, pp. 81ff.



Tillich, therefore, agrees with the neo-orthodox school that the real question can be understood only through revelation. Schillebeeckx sees clearly that Tillich reformulated the question theologically so as to avoid a categorical blunder by giving answers in a language different from that of the questions, but does that necessarily forfeit the purpose of the method of correlation, as Schillebeeckx claims it does?<sup>1</sup> It does only if we fail to see that the answers have received a reformulation as well. Translating the answers back we find ourselves directly confronted with the proposition that there is the revelation of the creative ground of being wherever there is meaning being formed. A very important insight for us indeed!

The idea of correlation has a very wide application in Tillich's system, which is seasoned with polarities and boundary lines. But the 'universality which Tillich claims for revelation is not just that of binary or dialectical thinking. His self-transcendent realism can not do without this schema but it refuses to restrict itself to a static formalism. Self-transcendence is an idea which does not contradict the autonomy of man in his attempts to give answers to his questions. This

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<sup>1</sup> 'Tillich ... has reformulated the philosophical question theologically. But this, of course, undermines the purpose of the method of correlation' (Translation E.) (E. Schillebeeckx: Christelijk antwoord op een menselijke vraag? in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 10, (1970), p. 7.

autonomy is watertight and does not need any stop-gaps. But, in all its dimensions, it lives by an infinite interest and a concern for ultimacy which explains that human answers, however finite and ambiguous, are not in themselves incompatible rivals of the divine but rather its manifestations.<sup>1</sup> Hegel again? On the contrary, there is an infinite jump, but this does not introduce an alien body of conditions to replace human existence.

The concept of existence in Tillich's writing has caused much controversy. Existence is not pure negativity. Even as the principle of opposition to essence it can not be considered thus. Tillich is pointing to a fact rather than a logical principle when he says that 'the state of existence is the state of estrangement'.<sup>2</sup> But in point of fact existence is always estrangement and resistance, and it is a question only under the impact of revelation. It would be wrong to conclude from this that self-transcendence as the state of man under the influence of revelation, should destroy existence. When we study the concept of self-transcendent realism we realize

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<sup>1</sup>'God does not destroy his created world ... in order to manifest Himself in it' (*ST*.III, p. 114).

<sup>2</sup>*ST*. II, p. 25. Osborne feels that existence as abstract principle receives only negative connotations in Tillich's descriptions. Cf. *op. cit.* pp. 119-123.

that Bonhoeffer is wrong in supposing that Tillich wants to clear a space for religion against the world.<sup>1</sup> But we also realize that for Tillich there is no such thing as natural revelation or natural theology. Natural theology is in fact the misnomer for the interpretation of the shock or 'stigma of nonbeing', which is experienced in existence. To reject this as something altogether valueless, as Barth does, is a self-deception.<sup>2</sup> But we should realize that it is 'the negative side of the revelation of mystery' and that 'the universal quest of New Being is a consequence of universal revelation', of nothing else.<sup>3</sup>

When dealing with Tillich's realism we should note first of all that this is not just an epistemological system. Other

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bonhoeffer: *Letters and Papers from Prison* p.108. Tillich answers: "Believe me, you who are estranged from religion... it is not our purpose to make you religious ... when we interpret the call of Jesus for our time" (*Shaking of the Foundations* p.102).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.* II, p.14. The awareness of being's mystery comes from revelation through natural mediums, but never from a natural revelation, for that is a contradiction in terms. Natural theology interprets the shock brought about by that awareness. It prepares the question for being. This question itself is not asked by natural theology, it is the question of reason about its own ground and abyss. By this Tillich probably means that it is not a formal, academic question, but an existential concern. Cf. *ST.* I, pp. 119f).

<sup>3</sup>Quotation from: *ST.* II, p. 89. About Tillich's view of natural theology see *ST.* I, p. 119f., and *ST.* III, p. 112.

types of realism went wrong exactly because they failed to relate the cognitive to the rest of human experience.<sup>1</sup> Involvement in entire existence is the condition of true knowledge. This fact is not honoured by either mystical or technological realism, but only by historical realism, which combines a passionate interpretation and transformation of the self and of the historical situation with scientific objectivity.<sup>2</sup> The existentialist and Marxist conception of truth as truthfulness is noticeable here, but Tillich goes further and points out that this realism is preliminary and unrealistic, unless it accepts that the real ground of meaning is beyond man's historical autonomy. He who takes history seriously must acknowledge the infinite gap between the contingent forms of meaning and their ultimate depth.<sup>3</sup> This brings us to Tillich's conception of the act of faith. Self-transcendent or belief-ful realism does not negate historical existence, but rather accepts it as representative of what concerns man ultimately and is beyond the totality of meaning structures in reality. Man is grasped gratuitously by that concern and through the correlation of the 'Yes' and the 'No'

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era* p.73.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ibid.* p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Ibid.* p. 76.

within concrete reality.<sup>1</sup> When faith is formally defined as the accepted awareness of the Unconditioned, this does not mean that it is essentially a disdain of cultural creations of meaning, and even less a conceited trust in some sort of vague feeling.<sup>2</sup>

The state of fulfillment in which revelation is accepted in the belief-ful openness for the Unconditioned is called New Being or essentialization.<sup>3</sup> This state of self-transcendence in its final fulfillment is the conquest which lifts concrete structures of meaning above their self-limiting tendencies, so that the essential self shines through the contingencies of the existential actualizations.<sup>4</sup> In Tillich's opinion this is not a second level of existence or an identification with the divine, in which present existence would be annihilated,

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<sup>1</sup>'The unconditional reality... is... the *No* and *Yes* of everything' (*What is Religion?* p. 162), Cf. also *ibid.* p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich is a reductionist in the sense that he reduces all theology to one level. Cf. Osborne *op. cit.* pp. 91-93.

<sup>3</sup>The term 'essentialization' stems from Schelling but was avoided by Tillich until the final section of his *Systematic Theology* probably because of its Platonic connotations, which call for a negation of existence. Cf. *ST.III*, p. 400.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *ST.III*, p. 235. Hamilton fails to see that Tillich dissociates himself from the popular interpretation of Schleiermacher's concept of faith as feeling. Compare Hamilton *op. cit.* pp. 226 and 162 n.1 with *ST.I*, pp. 15 and 41f. It is hard to see how Hamilton could arrive at his conclusions.

but rather the conquest of existential estrangement with its distortions and despair. Faith, then, is the act in which man as a free and centered person transcends himself and surrenders to the demand that he fulfill the ultimate meaning reality within a finite meaning.<sup>1</sup> This is also what Tillich calls the paradox of Christ's God-manhood which coincides with essential manhood and which does not remove contingent concreteness. Even the resurrection should not be interpreted as the nullification of man's non-identity with the divine, for that would contradict the act of creation.<sup>2</sup> Faith is a response which takes the risk not just of giving up all false certainty, but of having the courage to accept a finite meaning as the representative of the Unconditioned, the 'God above God', about which one is ultimately concerned.<sup>3</sup> Faith and doubt are therefore inseparable.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Dynamics of Faith* p. 114 and *What is Religion?* p.19.

<sup>2</sup>The christological paradox is explained in *ST.II*, pp.149f. and pp. 90-93. Tillich interprets the resurrection as a symbol interrelated with the symbol of the Cross. Jesus' historical crucifixion is the picture in which the leap that brings New Being is recognized by mankind. The resurrection is the event in which New Being became decisively embodied in the Cross of this concrete person Jesus, as the Christ and center of history. His death was unable to separate the New Being, which had appeared in him and which conquered the death of existential estrangement, from the picture of his personal life. Cf. *ST.II*, pp.154-162. It can not be our task to discuss this restitution theory or other christological concepts of Tillich. Many commentaries focus their criticism on this aspect of Tillich's theology.

<sup>3</sup>This concept of the risk taking response is therefore different from the existentialist *Entscheidung* taught by Bultmann. Tillich declares the theistic God to be a symbol of the object of our ultimate concern which is beyond this symbol. Cf. Hook op. cit. p. 315 and *ST*. p. 12. The expression 'God above God' was used mainly in his book: *The Courage to Be*, 1952.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *Dynamics of Faith*, pp. 16ff., and 99ff. Cf. Also A. Unhjem *Dynamics of Doubt*, 1966.

leap of faith should never be less, but rather more intensive, when man has actualized more of his potentialities into higher forms of meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now return to the question of the dialectics between questions and answers in relation to synergism and to the gratuitous, yet universal revelation. Tillich resents the theology which sets out to prove that man's endeavours are worthless, only leading to the absurdities of estrangement and that Christian revelation has the exclusive, ready-made answers to this predicament. All human efforts are attempts at meaningful fulfillment, however misconceived they may be. They all aspire toward the ultimate in being and meaning in a movement of self-transcendence, which supposes what is formally defined as faith, namely the state of being grasped by ultimacy. 'In this formal sense of faith as ultimate concern, every human being has faith'.<sup>2</sup> Every meaningful fulfillment, therefore, must be seen as the fruit of the gratuitously given state of being grasped by ultimate concern. The reception and embodiment of this concern, moreover, are entirely dependent on contingent, cultural categories. When the question of meaning arises and man submits to the demand of ultimacy, answers, in whatever religion or culture, are being

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *What is Religion?* p.144. Tillich's leap of faith seems more paradoxical than Kierkegaard's, for the latter urges a totally irrational surrender.

<sup>2</sup>ST.III. p. 130. 'Nobody can escape the essential relation of the conditional spirit to something unconditional, in the direction of which it is self-transcendent in unity with all life'. (Ibid.)

given both within human structures and in the dimension of revelation. The concept of synergism must be extended into the very heart of revelation, for the sensitivity for the ultimate is conditioned by cultural patterns. This insight agrees with the conception of theology as the paradox of the '*logos of theos*'. Paradoxical means neither irrational nor dialectically rational, but rather: 'against man's self-understanding and expectations'.<sup>1</sup> Neither the reflection on the question - answer dialectics itself, nor, on the other hand, the accumulation of paradoxes, leads to the understanding of *theos*. Cultural expressions of meaning form coherent systems and should be studied as such, but this study should perceive itself as being the *logos* of the new and ultimate reality which forms the immanent horizon of all meaning fulfillment, the *genesis* of its *archē* and the *eschaton* of its *telos*. The reception of the ultimate concern can be, and is, always, distorted to some degree, so much so that religious forms often destroy rather than heal man. No form, then, should be considered meaningful, except to the extent to which it is sustained by the immanence of the ultimate.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ST.II, 92. Cf. ST.I, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>This conception of man's immediate awareness of ultimacy we find also in the transcendental Thomism of Rahner and Coreth, where it is expressed in the Heideggerian term *Vorgriff*, which allegedly corresponds to Aquinas' *excessus*, i.e. an a priori metaphysical horizon. In his book *Spirit in the World*, New York 1968 (Original German title: *Geist in Welt*) K. Rahner resembles Tillich in that he also intends to combine the Kantian epistemology with Heidegger's



In the final analysis man lives only by this ultimate concern, which in the temporal process of a growing essentialization is effective as the *eternal* memory. Tillich uses the phrase 'from essence, through existence, to essentialization' to indicate that the latter is not a single event in which existence is nullified and man returns to his essential state.<sup>1</sup> He thinks that Christianity rejects the Nirvana doctrine, which fails to value positively the meaning fulfillments in history. The latter are enrichments of the essences and participate in eternal life, but only so if the negative is exposed as negative and if the ambiguities of life are conquered. The memory of the transcendent and the awareness of finitude are reinforced rather than attenuated when more potentialities are being actualized. In any moment in which estrangement is conquered the essentialization is said to happen, which honours the value of man's attempts at answering his own questions. The *telos* of the 'resurrection of the body', which involves all dimensions of human

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Footnote 2 continued

ontology. It seems, however, that the Thomistic influence has prevented Rahner from recognizing the fact that meaning should not be conceived merely as a cognitive reality but primarily as practical and that the transcendent appears both as criticism and fulfillment of all meaning structures. Tillich is more sensitive to this fact.

<sup>1</sup>ST.III, p. 130.

being,<sup>1</sup> is the symbol in which the all-embracing correlation of this process to the dimension of ultimacy is expressed. Man's life itself is an existential question for ultimacy, for revelatory and theological answers, but not as stop-gaps for deficiencies within our human dialectical structures. God is the name and symbol of what we are ultimately concerned about, and which is immanent in every meaning we establish.<sup>2</sup>

#### I.6 DIALECTICS AND SYMBOLISM

After we have covered some of the most important aspects of Tillich's views on religion, we must now try to locate his concept of symbolism in this system of correlation and paradox. He himself said that the center of his 'methodological doctrine of knowledge is the concept of symbol'.<sup>3</sup> The question that must eventually be asked is how Tillich relates particular to universal

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<sup>1</sup> 'If we use "essentialization" we can say that man's psychological, spiritual and social being is implied in his bodily being- and this in unity with the essences of everything else that has being' (ST.III, p. 413). This view commands a total universalism and openness to accept this as the *telos* of man.

<sup>2</sup> It seems that Tillich's method of correlation does meet Schillebeeckx' requirements of non-functionalistic language about God in which meaning or value 'is recognized, called by name and loved without having secondary thoughts about functional utility play a role' (Schillebeeckx art. cit. p. 19. Transl.E.).

<sup>3</sup> In: C. Kegley: *The Theology of Paul Tillich*. New York 1961, p. 333.

revelation. To solve that problem we have first to prove that symbolism is to be defined in terms of the correlation we have described, the correlation that is between union and distance in the God-man relation. Despite the danger of repetition we may try to summarize Tillich's position and for that purpose refer to his highly controversial theory about the transcendent fall, which we find in the chapter entitled: 'The Transition from Essence to Existence and the Symbol of the Fall'.<sup>1</sup>

When Tillich speaks about man falling away from his essential unity with the ground of being, this should not be understood in terms of one being departing from another being, as the prodigal son departs from his father, for God is not an existent being.<sup>2</sup> It is good to remember that Tillich never accepted the pre-existence in an essential state. Notwithstanding terms like

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<sup>1</sup>*ST. II*, pp. 29-44 Cf. also *ST. I*, pp. 255f. The affinity of this concept with Neo-Platonic theories is clear. Among the Greek Fathers it was held particularly by Origen, who like Tillich stressed the universality and the ontological character of the fall. Cf. *Persp.* XXI. We shall not enter the discussions in detail, but it seems that Hamilton's opinion, that Tillich holds creation and fall to be ontologically the same, gravely distorts the meaning of Tillich's answer to Niebuhr which runs: actualized creation and estranged existence are identical. This formula only implies that human existence always involves a self-limiting particularism. Tillich's coincidence is a temporal category not an ontological. Compare *ST. II*, p. 44 and Hamilton op.cit. p. 151 as well as Osborne op. cit. p. 110 and Martin op. cit. p. 134f.

<sup>2</sup>For Tillich only one thing exists, namely, man in his world. The existence of God is a contradictory term. Cf. *ST. I*, p. 65 and 236f.

'dreaming innocence' and 'eternal memory' he rejects such Platonic theories. The state of the essential unity with the ground of being, in Tillich's conception, is a pure potentiality which has existed at no time nor in any place, so that the transition we speak of should not be conceived as temporal or spatial. We are dealing with the ontological passing from potentiality to the actualization of finite freedom, which by structural necessity is tragic and sinful. To understand Tillich we should be careful not to identify this structural necessity with Hegelian doctrines. As Osborne has pointed out correctly, Tillich's view of the all-embracing estrangement and guilt is designed specifically to offset the idealist concept of a unified world-structure.<sup>1</sup> Another observation of Osborne could be helpful, namely when he stresses that Tillich deliberately chooses poetic terms to present his myth of the transcendent fall. Thus potentiality is called 'innocence', which besides guiltlessness, means absence of responsible involvement.<sup>2</sup>

The core of the transition consists in man's anxious desire to actualize his finite freedom in a creaturely self-realization

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich refuses to ontologize away the fall lest 'sin may become a rational necessity, as in purely essentialist systems' (ST.II, pp. 43f.) Cf. also ST.II, p. 29 and Osborne op. cit. p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. ST.II, p. 33 and Osborne op. cit. p. 110. Many problems would disappear if we realized that Tillich wants to give an analysis of *Dasein* (existence) rather than a doctrine of man's origin.

which separates him existentially from the divine. This view is obviously not Hegelian. But we should not identify it with Indian Religions or with the philosophies of Plato, Kant or Origen either, even though all of them profess the transcendent fall in one form or the other.<sup>1</sup> Tillich does hold that existence as the way from essence to essentialization is always tragically estranged and morally sinful, but as we have seen before he rejects the idea that essentialization, as the state of fulfilment, requires the negation of existence and a return to essence or pure potentiality.<sup>2</sup> It is our destiny to exist, i.e., to actualize our essential potentialities in limited forms. Sinfulness stems from the desire to limit the self to forms which, being finite, are not identical with and therefore separated from the divine Ground. Does that compell us to identify guilt and finitude? No more than that it denies the fact that meaning is being actualized in existence and that this happens through the dynamics of the essential unity with the divine, even when man intentionally 'stops with the actualities ... in their conditioned form'.<sup>3</sup> Thus Tillich accepts immanence of the divine

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST. II*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>'...self-realization, estrangement and reconciliation... is the way from essence through existence to essentialization' (*ST. III*, p. 422). Martin, op. cit. p. 136 shows little knowledge of recent trends in theology as also of Tillich's real intentions in this matter when he quotes approvingly Loomer's opinion that Tillich advocates a return to potentiality similar to alleged Hindu ideals.

<sup>3</sup>*What is Religion?* p. 177.

in existence. Objecting that existence is given no credit in this set up precisely illustrates the point which Tillich wants to make: existence should not claim credit. The divine immanence however is a 'No' only in so far as it conquers the distorting self-limitations in which finite man, the micro-cosm with his accumulated load of evolution's sinfulness, is inclined to indulge by losing sight of the dynamic appeal of the Unconditioned. Tillich's dialectics tell us that every aspect of existence is valuable as actualized meaning, but that every aspect is also totally affected by the transcendent fall. That is why we can consider Luther's adage '*simul justus, simul peccator*' the key to Tillich's thoughts even though he himself refers to this very seldom.<sup>1</sup>

From this we conclude that essentialization is to be considered as reconciled existence in which the self-limiting tendencies of man are conquered. But because Tillich does not consider those tendencies accidentals in the way Pelagius viewed them,<sup>2</sup> we should not think of fulfilment in terms of complete actualization of potentialities if that means a static perfection. We are rather to think of eternally dynamic dialectics and be aware that the leap of self-sacrifice, the surrender of all

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. e.g. *ST.II*, p. 178 and *ST.III*, p. 13. This Lutheran idea can be seen turning up constantly, however, as Tillich's famous 'Protestant principle'.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.II*, p. 41.

meaning-fulfilment, will never make itself superfluous.<sup>1</sup> There is the eternal ontological fact of the correlation between the dynamic substance and the structural form. Religion deals with the first, culture with the second, so that they are never to be identified, but even less to be separated.<sup>2</sup> Within this context the concept of symbol should be understood.

The complexity of Tillich's doctrine of symbolism appears as soon as we attempt to define symbols in terms of mediation of revelation. Brunner calls Tillich's conception of symbolism ambiguous because it does not clearly relate revelation to one unique event with its particular mediation.<sup>3</sup> At first view this seems to be born out by Tillich's statement that 'the New Being is not dependent on the special symbols in which it is expressed'.<sup>4</sup> The subject of symbolism therefore raises a number of questions which will be dealt with in the second part

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<sup>1</sup>As we have seen this forms the core of the final revelation, of the New Being in Christ. Even resurrection does not mean the removal of that jump, but a definite overcoming of particularism. As such New Being affects all structures of life, even sexual differentiation. Cf. *ST. II*, p. 156ff. and *ST. III*, pp. 412 and 294. Tillich agrees with the philosophy of becoming that the state of blessedness is not an immovable perfection, but 'the eternal conquest of the negative' (*ST. III*, pp. 403ff).

<sup>2</sup>There is an 'essential belongingness of religion and culture to each other' so that 'the secular is driven toward union with the holy' (*ST. III*, p. 248) 'in the common directedness toward the unity of meaning'. (*What is Religion?* p. 60).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. E. Brunner: *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1937, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>*ST. II.*, p. 165. How much Tillich differs from Brunner appears when he declares it necessary to defend the christological dogma even if the non-existence of the historical Jesus were proved probable. Cf. *On the Boundary*, p. 50.

of our study, such as: what makes symbols stand out as a medium of revelation and what is their function within Religions and within the encounter between different Religions? At this point we should try to define symbols provisionally in relation to the theme of this first part of our study. In Tillich's perception a symbol is the concrete object of a theoretical and practical act in which faith apprehends the Unconditional.<sup>1</sup> It is important to distinguish *symbols* so conceived from other entities like:

*concepts*, which are abstractions used in classificatory thinking;

*signs*, which point to the signified, without representing it;

*historical*, types which embody ideals but have no mediating power;

*metaphors*, which are hermeneutic devices used to compare beings;

*images*, which for their representing and mediating power rely on their perceptible form rather than on pure substitution.

The conception of symbols is most closely related to that of myths. In fact myths can be understood as the exegesis of symbols as they connect the latter with other symbols usually in a kind

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<sup>1</sup>What is Religion? p. 79.



of historical setting<sup>1</sup>. Tillich's ideas about the positive paradox are clearly recognizable when we find that symbols are able to represent the meaning and power of being although their participation in the transcendent is always ambiguous.<sup>2</sup> To say this, however, he has to adopt a specific type of analogical thinking which we shall examine later. He warns us never to use the phrase 'only a symbol' because 'that is to confuse symbol with sign'.<sup>3</sup> The importance he attaches to symbols is apparent when he calls it irreligious to attempt speaking about the Unconditional in anything but symbols and myths.<sup>4</sup> Symbols are the proper language of religion and for that reason he rejects Bultmann's project of demythologization saying that every act of faith needs symbols and myths. His view of correlation and his ontological interest explain why he resented the ethical bias of existentialist theology because they excluded cosmological, sacramental mediation.<sup>5</sup>

Symbols mediate the revelatory event. They are fully rational but not the fruit of reason. They are to be understood within the correlation as the finite reality in which the God-man encounter is historically actualized. Within the revelatory constellation,

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<sup>1</sup>Gadamer's influence is noticeable in these lines that summarize: Nörenberg, op. cit. pp. 14-25.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Hook: op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>ST.II, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ibid p. 49 as well as *What is Religion?* p. 79, and *Persp.* pp. 228 and XXXIf.

therefore, symbols can be said to be representative of the transcendent referent.<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that revelatory constellations can not be identified with recognized religious settings. Unlike the latter, the former is always required if a symbol is to represent the depth of reason and to be a genuine rational creation. The paradox of 'Yes' and 'No', then, is reflected in the two main characteristics of religious symbols: their representative, yet only figurative power. Both these and aspects like the function, the origin, the life-span and the ambiguity of symbols will demand much of our attention in the second part of our study.<sup>2</sup>

#### I.7 ENCOUNTER AND TYPOLOGY

It should be clear from the foregoing that Tillich's first concern has been not only to defend Christian symbols against cultural despisers.<sup>3</sup> We should never lose sight of the radicalism

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<sup>1</sup>'The realms in which representative symbols appear are language and history, the arts and religion' (Hook op. cit. p. 3). Tillich distinguishes these symbols from mathematical symbols which he calls discursive (cf. Ibid.)

<sup>2</sup>These characteristics of symbols we find summarized by Tillich in Hook op. cit. pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup>The converse is equally close to the truth. Tillich tells the Christians to understand that the confrontation between secularism and established Religions is the most important historical reality. Cf. *ST*. III, p. 6. His involvement in socialism leaves no doubt about his seriousness in this respect. For a comparison with Schleiermacher's position see W. Paul: What can religion say to its cultured despisers *Reformed Review* 23 (1970), pp. 208-216.

in his method of correlation. Even though it seems sound Barthianism to call Church traditions the 'receptacles of revelation' and religion 'the name for the reception of revelation',<sup>1</sup> we can not fail to see the difference when we compare Barth's concept of revelation with the universalistic view of Tillich. Tillich applies the concept to every fulfillment of reason whether it is intentionally religious or not. Obviously, he does not pretend that creations of meaning can be known as receptions of revelation without previous knowledge of revelation. He insists that every meaning is created by man as a result of his search for the ultimate reality and consequently as the fruit of revelation.

The word *encounter* has been related by Tillich to this universalistic concept of the revelatory constellation. Man encounters finite beings, the past, the living substance in which we participate etc. Just as when the Church encounters the biblical message, there is a challenge at the heart of any situation of encounter.<sup>2</sup> A universal feature related to this is the personalism in every experience of the holy, which Tillich attributes to the fact that we are touched in the center of our personality.<sup>3</sup> But

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<sup>1</sup>*Bibl. Rel.* pp. 4 and 3.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.* I, pp. 48, 51, 61 and *Bibl. Rel.* pp. 13f and 22-34.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Bibl. Rel.* p. 24.

even if we can speak of the projection of personal aspects onto the symbols of the Unconditioned, we should yet be aware that biblical theism, according to Tillich, inverts the position. The encounter with the biblical God is more than calling the holy a person, for it is the very origin of our understanding of what a person is.<sup>1</sup>

This inversion which makes God the chief *analogon* of personal categories reminds us of the Barthian approach to analogical speech about God. Unlike Barth, however, Tillich claims that we should transcend personal theism before we can accept the biblical personalist symbols. The theological type of them, which declares God a person in the philosophical sense of the word, has flourished only since Kant and must be abandoned if God's true transcendence is to be salvaged. But biblical theism is also one-sided, in that its I-Thou encounter tends to ignore God's participation in everything that is. The insight that God is immanent as the Ground of being not only in *everybody*, but in *everything* as well, should qualify the symbol 'personal God', even though this symbol remains 'fundamental because ... man cannot be ultimately concerned about anything that is less than

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<sup>1</sup> 'It is not that we first know what person is and then apply the concept of God to this. But, in the encounter with God, we first experience what person should mean.' (Ibid p. 27.) Tillich takes the antiontological character of biblical personalism very seriously here.

personal.'<sup>1</sup> Tillich's criticism of theistic categories opens opportunities for the dialogue between the Religion which he never thoroughly explored.

The radicalism of Tillich, however, does not consist in a relativistic attitude to concrete symbols, but rather in his respect for these rational structures as valuable representations of ultimacy. We see this clearly when we study the dynamic typology, which is the method he proposes for the encounter between Religions. We should be aware that he is not primarily concerned with a method for classifying Religions, but with the theological principles of the dialogue. He tells us first of all not to consider any tradition as a static combination of symbols which at a certain moment may become obsolete. Such a view is Hegelian and based on an unacceptable view of progress.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ST.I, p. 244. Cf. Schmitz op. cit. pp. 217f. Tillich call God both Being-itself and Personal-itself. Cf. *Bibl. Rel.* p.83. Nörenberg op. cit. pp. 186f. contends that Tillich should have paid more attention to Heidegger's warning that there is no easy passage from the Dasein's analysis to the personality of the Christian God. O'Meara, however, points out that Tillich never pretended there was. Cf. T. O'Meara, *Tillich and Heidegger; a structural relationship. Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968) pp. 258f. Tillich emphasizes that the *esse ipsum* is a transpersonal category in Christianity which facilitates understanding of Buddhist nothingness. Cf. *Chr. Enc.*, p. 67. He claims such elements make it possible to empathize with Asian mysticism. But in 1929, he had warned that 'Es ist nicht möglich eine geistliche Wirklichkeit zu verstehen mit der nicht ein Blutzusammenhang geschaffen ist'. (*Ges. W.V.* p. 21). The Asian studies of those days he calls a 'Literatenillusion die den Ernst der asiatische Religion... nicht gerecht wird', but he fails to indicate that they could be the means of creating that 'blutmassigen Zusammenhang' (Ibid.)

<sup>2</sup>Tillich limits the validity of the concept of progress especially in the field of Religions. Cf. ST.I, p. 219 and *Fut. Rel.* p.64-79. Gilkey (op. cit. pp. 80 and 343) considers the loss of belief in progress the characteristic mark of modern Western man,

All religious traditions, according to Tillich consist of enduring elements which are forever part of the experience of the holy and which create and sustain a community. It is the community that lives and believes transcending the personalities with a power of its own.<sup>1</sup> Tillich hesitates to describe these creative elements in concrete traditions, but he thinks that a typology can be useful for guiding our dialogue<sup>2</sup>. There is an ideal structure behind the direct appearance of every Religion. This should be brought out and be confronted with an other tradition and with the challenging criterion of final revelation.<sup>3</sup>

It can not go unobserved that Tillich himself has arrived only at a rudimentary application of his approach. He has been pre-occupied mainly with the relation between Protestant Christianity and quasi-religious tendencies such as Fascism, Communism, Humanism and Nationalism. His limited remarks about other Religions are mainly superficial or highly polemic as in the case of

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Footnote 2 continued

to which Tillich may have replied more constructively than neo-orthodoxy. Cf. also the conclusion in J.P. Gabus: op. cit. pp.236f.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era*, p. 125 as well as *Bibl. Rel.* pp. 10 and 47f. Cf. also *ST.III*, pp. 172-182.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Chr. Enc.*, p. 54 and *ST.I*, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, pp. 220f.

Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> This arrangement of Religions according to three typifying elements, namely the sacramental, the mystical and the prophetic, already appears in his study on Schelling. It is clearly determined by his views of dialectics, of the positive paradox and of the Protestant principle.<sup>2</sup>

We are not primarily interested, however, in the actual classification of the types, given by Tillich. We should rather concentrate on the theological analysis of the encounter as such, realizing that this word itself often refers to the revelatory situation as an event. We should consider therefore, why Tillich calls his approach *dynamic* typology. He envisages the dynamics of a challenging encounter which evokes the activation of the eternally valid elements in each Religion. These elements such as the sacramental and the mystical are contrasting poles. They are interdependent, forming the actual, creative forces that determine Religions in a typifying manner and at the same time driving the type beyond itself.<sup>3</sup> In this sense we can speak of a universal preparation of final revel-

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<sup>1</sup>Behind most of his statements about Catholicism we sense his opinion that it is 'the most potent form of demonry' (Quoted by Adams op. cit. p. 51). However, especially in his last publications, Tillich calls the Catholic substance indispensable if the Protestant principle is to make sense. Cf. *ST.* III, pp. 6; 122; 245.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.* I, pp. 102-108 and *Fut.Rel.* p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Chr. Enc.* pp.56ff.

ation.<sup>1</sup> Revelation breaks through universally by the internal growth which is to be activated by the encounter with other traditions. Tillich does not say that revelation is a general structural fact that occurs naturally everywhere and always.<sup>2</sup> But he accepts a concept of final revelation which presupposes the universal possibility of revelation and he outlines the preparatory, dynamic process, pointing to the three functions of conservation, criticism and anticipatory transcendence of what has been received.<sup>3</sup>

In the evaluation of Religions Tillich seems to be very near to opinions voiced by theologians such as Rahner and Danielou. Osborne is eager to point out this affinity referring especially to related questions such as immanence of the divine, so-called *Anknüpfungspunkte* and the reduction of theology to one level, one order of grace.<sup>4</sup> As we saw before,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. ST.I, p. 221. In the third volume of Systematic Theology we find ample use of both the word *preparatory* or *preliminary* and the word *latent*. Cf. ST.III, pp. 153-156 and 246. It is surprising that Osborne fails to point out this similarity with Rahner's concept of anonymity (Note that Rahner has of late dropped his term *anonymous Christianity* in favour of the *anonymous redeemed*). On the concept of the latent Church cf. Gabus op. cit. pp. 60-62.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. ST.I, pp. 138f.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. ST. I., pp. 139-144.

<sup>4</sup>Besides K. Rahner, Osborne refers especially to H. de Lubac and E. Schillebeeckx as well as to Orthodox theology. Cf. op. cit. pp. 201f. Cf. also Benktson op. cit. p. 202.



Tillich does not accept a natural theology in the sense that Bonhoeffer thinks he does. But there seems another point of difference between Bonhoeffer and Tillich, which places the latter closer to Catholic thinking and which forms the core of Hamilton's criticism.

Benktson is mistaken in thinking that Bonhoeffer's letter of 8/6/1944 simply misunderstands Tillich's intentions of uniting culture and religion when it accuses him of trying to clear 'a space for religion in the world'. Unlike Tillich, Bonhoeffer is apparently unable to think of religion other than in terms of individualism. So he starts his programme of religionless Christianity in the letter of 30/4/1944,, writing; 'religion as individualistic concern for personal salvation has ... left us all'. The conceptions of Bonhoeffer and Hamilton are determined by the ideals of religious personalism, which has been revived by Kierkegaard's existentialism. Tillich is strongly opposed to the serious distortion which considers religion as the individual's search for justification and as a useful factor in man's self-development. This is the Protestant version of the humanist ideal of personality, which, as Tillich thinks, could only result in a drive toward a new tribal existence in the form of Fascism.<sup>1</sup> With good reason,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era* p. 131. Parts two and three of this article on personality id. p. 125-135 are extremely instructive. See also *Courage to Be*, p. 113. Tillich does not want to return to a Catholic concept of a sanctioned structure of an encompassing hierarchy, but he also resents the isolationist position of the Confessing Church which could only favour fascism. Cf. *Ges.W.* II, pp. 217 and 255.

therefore, he drops the word *personal* when he applies Kierkegaard's formulation of the infinite passion to his own concept of religion.<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that he drops the element of personal involvement and decision. He points out, however, that it is the community that gives meaning to the individual and that mediates grace by believing in the promise it has received. Thereby he tries to counterbalance the Protestant stress on the heroic, ethical *Entscheidung*.<sup>2</sup>

When this view is combined with the universalistic conception of revelation it opens up an entirely new approach to Religions, for it makes us acknowledge that the various traditions themselves are valuable embodiments of revelation despite their ambiguity. Tillich agrees whole-heartedly with the *logos* doctrine of the Greek Fathers and it is this identification of the universal with the incarnated *Logos* that enables him to fight the absolutism of any Religion without yielding to the temptation of relativism.<sup>3</sup> The paradoxical correlation of 'Yes'

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Hamilton op. cit. p. 43. Kierkegaard describes Christianity as 'an infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness'. Hamilton does not see why Tillich attempts to change the one-sided, ethical bias involved in this type of existentialism.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich should not be accused of ignoring the ethical for he refers time and again to the demands of ultimacy to which man should surrender, but he also emphasizes the cosmical and social aspects of man who as an individual is an end only as part of a whole (Cf. *Prot. Era*, p. 125).

<sup>3</sup>He has always rejected the relativism of Troeltsch and he has restated his position shortly before his death in a reply to MacQuarrie. Cf. *Union Seminary Quaterly Review*, 20 (1965) pp. 177-178 .

and 'No' of divine immanence of transcendence forms the basis of his theology of culture which sees religion even where the religious import is not cognitively acknowledged.

The effect of his dialectical thinking bewilders many critics who try to establish whether the gratuity of revelation in the biblical sense is respected in this universalist view of revelation. We can agree with Gabus that Tillich does move in congruence with biblical universalism but that he applies his conception of ultimate concern and correlation too easily to iron away tensions which the Bible takes much more seriously, in order to arrive at the dialogue.<sup>1</sup> This seems due mainly to his uncritical acceptance of Heidegger's concentration on the ontological rather than the ontic.<sup>2</sup>

A question which should be asked in fact is whether the ultimate concern can become a criterion to diagnose and remedy the demonic pathologies of man's shaping and grasping cultural activities. We wonder if Tillich has not lost contact with the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Gabus op. cit. p. 62ff. Tillich himself does not offer much exegetical material. A crucial sermon in connection with universalism is the one on Gal. 6:15 called 'The New Being' (*The New Being*, New York 1955, pp. 15-24). Barth has also come to recognise the universality of revelation especially in "*The Humanity of God*", but there seems to be still a difference which can be understood in terms of the difference between Mk. 9:40 (Tillich) and Mt. 12:30 (Barth), in my opinion.

<sup>2</sup>This is Gilkey's criticism of Tillich, op. cit., p. 307n.

concrete, the ontic, when he finds himself justified in saying both of faith and of sin that they are necessarily universal.<sup>1</sup> We shall have to return to this in the second part of our study. At this moment we can only conclude that Tillich has shown a brilliant consistency, working out his conception of the positive paradox.<sup>2</sup> Churchmen will find fault with his excessive emphasis on continuity, whereas others are dissatisfied with his great emphasis on gratuity, the divine 'No', and the Protestant principle. His view of correlation calls for both. It is a challenge which can be faced only in the actual dialogue for which he has given a solid basis. But however much we need outside influence to solve the age-old problem of synergism which continues to plague Western theology, only the commitment to the *humanum* provides us with a truly meaningful motive to embark on the dialogue.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Dynamics of faith*, p. 126 and *ST. II*, p. 44. But we note that he makes a distinction between structural or essential necessity and tragic, factual or existential necessity, which brings out once again the tension of the positive paradox.

<sup>2</sup>Osborne argues that Tillich succeeded in maintaining the tension between the conditioned being and the Unconditioned, within the definitions he himself gave of this paradox, but that these definitions hinge on questionable, ontological conceptions of essence and existence. Cf. Osborne, op. cit. p. 205.

<sup>3</sup>Tillich rejects vigorously the studies of Asian Religions for the sake of curiosity or greater self-fulfilment. Cf. *Ges. W.* IV, p. 21. He also insists that commitment to the own tradition is a prerequisite for a fruitful dialogue. Cf. *Chr. Enc.*, p. 62. But the *humanum* has clearly his prime interest and this joins him with the objectives of Bonhoeffer and it seems to make his method of correlation more valuable than Schillebeeckx is willing to admit. Benktson, op. cit. p. 203 suggests that Western theology does in fact need the importation of ideas from elsewhere as theology of the secularizing process arrives at an impasse.

## PART II

## II.1 RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

As indicated in the introduction, this second part must try to relate the universality of revelation to the effectiveness of symbolic mediation within concrete Religions. After having examined the nature of revelation as it applies to all Religions, we may have the feeling that Tillich never transcended what might be called a negative type of hermeneutics. It is worth noting that Tillich's dissatisfaction with his dynamic typology resembles the discontent which Freud expressed at the end of his life concerning the system of reductive hermeneutics which he had developed.<sup>1</sup> Ricoeur sets out to show that Freud's system in fact presupposes an actualizing hermeneutics.<sup>2</sup> It would appear that Tillich's method even surpasses Ricoeur's but at the same time fails to accentuate certain aspects, the examination of which could well have resolved the dissatisfaction mentioned. With respect to Ricoeur we notice that he ends his book on Freud by stating that symbolism can be understood only

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<sup>1</sup>'I am far from satisfied with these remarks on... the installation of the superego ... as a successful instance of identification with the parental agency' (Quoted by P. Ricoeur in: *Freud and Philosophy*, 1970, p. 481).

<sup>2</sup>This word is used by E. Schillebeeckx O.P. in two articles on theological hermeneutics and criticism published in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 11 (1971) pp. 30-51 and 113-140. Ricoeur uses the terms remythicizing, progressive and restorative as opposed to demystifying, regressive and reductive hermeneutics. The former approach as reappropriation by reflection, has been worked out most eloquently by H. Gadamer.

if the dialectic between the *No* and the *Yes*, that is between Kierkegaard's and Spinoza's approach, is honoured.<sup>1</sup> To integrate these two approaches, as we know, has been Tillich's objective from the very beginning of his career, particularly with reference to symbolism, the subject to which we now return, which is a focal point in all contemporary religious studies and which has undoubtedly played a central role in Tillich's association with Mircea Eliade.<sup>2</sup>

The various theories of symbolism can be classified into two groups which Tillich calls the negative and the positive

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ricoeur, op. cit. p. 549. Ricoeur does not seem to know Tillich, even though he has exactly the same interests, namely to amalgamate phenomenology and neo-orthodox existentialism in view of the Freudian and Marxian criticisms.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich was in close contact with M. Eliade during the final years of his life. Cf. *Fut. Rel.* pp. 91 and 31ff. Of the vast literature on symbolism we mention the following periodicals and books: *Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme*, Havre-le-Mons, Belgium; *Symbolon*, Jahrbuch for Symbolforschung, Basel; *Antaios* (yearly), Stuttgart; E. Cassirer: *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, New Haven, 1957; G. Durand: *Les Structures Anthropologiques de l'Imaginaire*, Paris, 1963; id.: *l'Imagination Symbolique*, Paris, 1964; M. Eliade: *Images and Symbols*, New York, 1952; H. Gadamer: *Wahrheit und Methode*, Tübingen 1960; C. Lévi-Strauss: *La Pensée Sauvage*, Paris, 1962; P. Ricoeur: *The Symbolism of Evil*, New York, 1967; A survey of previous theories of symbolism is given in: H. Loeff: *Der Symbolbegriff in neueren Religionsphilosophie und Theologie*, Cologne 1955; The most explicit study of symbolism in Tillich's thought is: K. Nörenberg: *Analogia Imaginis*, Gutersloh, 1966.

approach.<sup>1</sup> Negative theories like those of Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, and we may add Lévi-Strauss, all reduce symbols to mere signs, claiming that they are no more than repressing subterfuges by which man covers up his inadequate mastership of reality. As such symbols are considered detrimental to man.<sup>2</sup> Tillich himself certainly rejects this view, but paradoxically so, for his eschatology pleads for a Religion of the Concrete Spirit in which the 'contrast between reality and symbol' is suspended and 'the non-symbolic reality itself becomes a symbol'. This view clearly differs from that of Lévi-Strauss who envisages the eventual nullification of any transcendence as the symbolized referent.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the negative theories, Tillich distinguishes symbols from metaphors, signs, images and types, not because he considers these dimensions irrelevant, but because a symbol as such refers to a specific dimension. With Anricht he could say that a symbol is reality in its effectivity.<sup>4</sup> Symbols are not a world apart, but they point to the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Hook, op. cit. pp. 303ff.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ibid. p. 304 and Ricoeur, op. cit., pp. 16ff.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. H. Fortmann: *Als ziende de Onzienlijke*, 1965, Vol. 3a Geloof en Ervaring, p. 186. For the quotations from Tillich cf. Hook op. cit. p. 320 and: *Fut. Rel.* p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>'Das Symbol ist die Sache in ihre Wirkung' (Quoted in: Fortmann op. cit. p. 172).



transcendent meaning of the one world of our experience. They cease to be symbols once they lose this signifying power.<sup>1</sup> In Tillich's own words, a symbol 'radiates the power of being (*Seinsmächtigkeit*) and meaning (*Sinn*) of that for which it stands'.<sup>2</sup> We recognize here Heidegger's view that the world, as the correlative pole of man's *Dasein*, mediates man's caring about an understanding of being. However, we should note that from the beginning Tillich's idea of symbolism was conceived as related to the social setting, the community, which determines the symbolic content and its mediating power. Moreover, he does not see symbols as cognitive devices by which being is understood, but primarily as revelatory events in which being is radiated.<sup>3</sup>

With respect to symbolism we face three basic questions. What is the referent of religious symbolism? What is the hermeneutic context of the word meaning? Which factors give symbolic powers to a reality? If we start with the third question we must first ask whether Tillich believes there is an inner affinity between a concrete being and that 'was ohne es ganzlich verborgen bliebe'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Ges. W.* III, p. 126. Tebus seems right in pointing out that Tillich too easily rejects symbols which he considers to have lost their signifying value. Cf. *op. cit.* p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Hook, *op. cit.* p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>K. Jaspers especially emphasizes that a symbol is an 'Ereignis'. Cf. Fortmann *op. cit.* p. 167. For the congruence of Tillich and Heidegger cf. O'Meara *art. cit.* *Harvard Theological Review*, 61, (1968) pp. 249-261.

<sup>4</sup>Phrase quoted from Jaspers in: *Ibid*, p. 166. Fortmann, *op. cit.* p. 166.

Although we shall deal with this question specifically in the next chapter, we should note at this juncture the extent to which Tillich stresses the dependence of symbols in their rise and decline on the totality of social surroundings.<sup>1</sup> In order to receive revelatory significance the symbolic material must have a specific relative position within a meaning structure. This position cannot be assigned by an individual at random but depends on the acceptance by a group.<sup>2</sup> Symbols have the power to open up hidden dimensions and they have an integrating effect on human life. They are ambiguous, however, and can be demonically devastating, which is all the more serious as they distort that which intentionally deals with the meaning and substance of all human culture. On the other hand we must say that revelatory symbols must both upset and restore the transmitted order of meaning.<sup>3</sup>

The question of meaning contents of symbolic material confronts us with the problem of the hermeneutic 'theological circle',

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Fut. of Rel.* p. 93 and Hook op. cit. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>The concept of 'relative position' is used in the anthropological structuralism of P. Maranda, E. Leach, J. Pouver a.o. in refutation of functionalism which concentrates on individual symbolic meanings rather than on the semantic structures with their transformational rules. Tillich had no knowledge of structuralism, but the concept of Gestalt in his system indicates that he was predisposed to its holistic approach.

<sup>3</sup>This twofold hermeneutics will occupy us later, but one quotation seems most valuable at this point: 'Religious symbols... have their roots in the totality of human experience including local surroundings ... and... can be understood partly as in revolt against them' (*Fut. of Rel.* p. 93.)

within which Tillich acknowledges himself to be operating. This circle determines his conception of religion. We have seen that Tillich proposes to base the universal validity of the latter on the central role played by the conception of the *logos* in which the absolute universal coincides with the absolutely concrete. To explain the universality of the Christian message apologetic theology must show that the 'theological circle' is all inclusive thanks to its twofold formal criterion of all theology.<sup>1</sup> Man's ultimate concern about being and not-being is the context in which one should understand Tillich's universal paradox of meaning. The concept of meaning itself, he thinks beyond definition.<sup>2</sup> However, we could resort in this matter to the early Heidegger, who conceives meaning as the fulfillment of man's being-in-the-world which is a concerned openness to a given condition. It is the understandability of reality in terms of an answer to the question of being.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST*. I, pp. 11-18. Tillich is aware of the difficulty in completing this apologetic task, but he insists that we can not escape the question. Critics agree that he has given a most energetic and thought-provoking answer to it. Cf. C. Armbruster: *The Vision of Paul Tillich*, 1967, p. 40 and also Schmitz op. cit. pp. 110f.

<sup>2</sup>'One can not trace back the concept of meaning to a higher concept', it is 'the ultimate unity of the theoretical and the practical sphere of spirit'. (*What is Religion?* pp. 56f).

<sup>3</sup>'Sinn ist das durch Vorhabe, Vorsicht und Vorgriff strukturierte Woraufhin des Entwurfs aus dem her etwas als verständlich wird' (M. Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*, p. 151, Eng. tr., 1962, p. 193). Heidegger points out that understanding of meaning is necessarily circular and this will bring him more and more into the field of language and hermeneutics. But from the beginning he stresses that the hermeneutic circle is not a vicious circle (Cf. *ibid.* pp. 152f. Eng. tr. p. 194). Ricoeur agrees with this. (Cf. op. cit. p. 432).

If a symbol radiates the meaning of that for which it stands, it does so only because it activates the ultimate concern for being. Although Heidegger, like Freud, considered the quest of being insatiable because death and meaninglessness is inherent in all finite things, he does stress the universality of this quest.

This brings us to the question concerning the referent of all religious symbols. If anything can become a symbol so that nothing can be considered symbolic by its very nature, and if the symbolic dimension of a reality depends on tradition, we must ask if anything non-symbolic can be said about the referent of religious symbols, which Christian theology calls God. When Tillich refuses to make the symbolic tradition subject to deliberate human decisions or some sort of a Platonic memory,<sup>1</sup> he wants to point out that the human synergetic involvement is guided by the directing creativity of the divine referent himself, who transcends finite meaning structures. On the other hand he agrees that a non-symbolic statement about God is not only possible but in fact necessary. Such a statement must first of all see to it that the referent of ultimate concern is not made into a being which is available as an object.<sup>2</sup> The only acceptable statement therefore seems to be that God is Being-itself

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.* I, pp. 94f. and 125f and also Gabus, op. cit. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.* I, p. 238; *ST.*I, pp. 9f; Kegley op. cit. p. 341.

beyond the subject-object structures.

When this statement created a controversy, Tillich made the issue more enigmatic not only by offering other formulations, but also by declaring that 'the statement itself is metaphorical and designates the boundary line at which symbolic and non-symbolic coincide'.<sup>1</sup> Much of the controversy seems to spring from a misunderstanding of Tillich's basic insight expressed in his warning never to use the phrase 'only symbolic', which warning he attaches to his view that the only non-symbolic statement about God is really that everything said about him is symbolic.<sup>2</sup> Speech about God always deals with the relationship between God and man and the language used in a religious relationship can only be symbolic.<sup>3</sup> To try and define God outside this special dimension of reality by ignoring this relationship should be considered an absurdity. Tillich wants to avoid by all means the Liberal danger of spatializing God as an object

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<sup>1</sup>ST.II, p. 10. Cf. Kegley op. cit. 334 and Hook op. cit. pp.7f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. ST.II, p. 9 and Kegley op. cit. p. 334. It is amazing to see that Schmitz uses the phrase 'nur symbolisch' on the very same page where he refers to Kegley op. cit. p. 334, although Tillich in that location as in numerous other occasions warns against the usage of that phrase. Cf. Schmitz op. cit. p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Here the word *only* does not give an evaluation of the word *symbolic* but expresses that symbolic language alone expresses 'eine Wahrheit die in keiner andere Sprache ausgedrückt und mitgeteilt werden kann'. (Ges.W.,V, p. 231). Tillich points out that 'reflectively religion can also express itself in theological, philosophical and artistic terms. But its direct self-expression is the symbol'. (Hook op. cit. p. 3).

alongside others about which something objective can be said.

A second consideration is that symbolism is the language of religion and not the language of theology. Single symbols should be understood within the entirety of symbolism as language of religion. This entirety, however, can be analyzed in theontological,<sup>1</sup> metalinguistic terms in which symbols are understood as a category of the language of correlation. They represent God as the answer or horizon (Ricoeur and Schillebeeckx) of the existential question, which man is. Theontological speech is the boundary line at which symbolic and non-symbolic coincide. We speak non-symbolically only in terms of man's ontological shock and the rational explicitation of the quest that issues from it. This quest, although evoked by the actual encounter with the holy, remains man's question and as such non-symbolic.

The actual encounter with the holy, however, ceases to be an encounter if it ignores the symbolic dimension of its language. The term 'Being-itself', therefore, is used non-symbolically to the extent that it expresses the painfully absent dimension which characterizes the predicament of man's finitude, but it is used symbolically to define the experienced answer to this predicament. Consequently, another variant of the non-

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich accepts this term coined by R. Scharlemann in: *The Journal of Religion* XLVI, (1966) no. 1 Part II, p. 184.

symbolic statement could be that God is the answer to the question which man is.<sup>1</sup> God is the Being-itself about which we are ultimately concerned. This statement is the most comprehensive possible, and consequently nothing else can be predicated literally as it would say less rather than more. The structures of being apply to God because they concern us. In Tillich's view the truth of symbols consists in their mediation of the New Being, that is, the power to be. Being is the object of that single faculty of desiring about which Kant has spoken.<sup>2</sup> This object can not receive a logical, essentialistic definition. It is neither a being nor the totality of all beings in the unity of all meaning fulfillments. This totality itself must be made

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<sup>1</sup>It is Norenberg's main purpose to show that symbolism should be understood in the context of correlation. Cf. Armbruster op. cit., p. 162, note 90.

<sup>2</sup>Ricoeur relates this expression of Kant to Freud's *libido*. Cf. op. cit. p. 512. The ambiguous interpretation of man's predicament appears when 'Freud adds a pathology of duty to what Kant called the pathology of desire'. (Ibid. 448). Is man alienated by subjection to law or to desire, to culture or to nature? Is it not rather man's impossibility of overcoming this contradiction which is exposed by the revelation of unambiguous life? Levi-Strauss relates a similar idea to the purpose of myth-making when he says that myth is 'to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (an impossible achievement if, as it happens, the contradiction is real) ... its (the myth's) growth is a continuous process whereas its structure remains the same' (C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Structural Study of Myth* in: T. Sebeok (ed.) *Myth, a Symposium*, London, Midland Books, 1968 p. 105). We seem to be line with Ricoeur and Tillich when we contend that the problem of evil and finitude is the kernel of myth-making. The structures of the myth remain the same because man has to recuperate the power of being in the depth of those cultural and religious forms, which have objectified reality and alienated man from a union with being, beyond the subject - object structure.

into the symbol of God's free self-manifestation.<sup>1</sup>

Before we examine the factors that determine the symbolic material, we must ask whether Tillich's object of ultimate concern differs in any respect from the claim that God is only the projection of our desire. Tillich's answer is much in line with the neo-orthodox inversion of analogy. God is the origin rather than the aim of our concern. This inversion is related to the non-symbolic statement. Referring to the various formulations of the latter, Ford, in reply to Rowe, pointed out that there is one constant, basic idea, namely, the absolute imperative not to attempt any objective predication about God.<sup>2</sup>

Tillich goes further, however, and stresses that the dimension of ultimate concern is not only beyond satisfactory predication but also beyond being ignored as irrelevant. The universal experience of finitude presupposes the knowledge of the infinite which is the prius of the finite, exposing the latter inevitably as a question. Finite being presupposes Being-itself which Schelling called the "*Unvordenkliche*" and Anselm "*id quod maius cogitari nequit*". This does not force us to accept the ontolog-

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<sup>1</sup>The perfect symbol of the Unconditioned can be only 'die vollendete Sinneinheit, die höchste Form der Kultur ... Sie konnte es sein, ist es aber nicht mit Notwendigkeit. Unmittelbar ... ist diese Sinneinheit nur die Einheit des Bedingten und als solchen Welt' (Schmitz op. cit. p. 66).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. L. Ford: Tillich's one non-symbolic statement in: *Journal of American Academy of Religion* (1970) pp. 176-182.



ical proof of God as a human possibility but it does hold that the quest of God, be it ever so human, originates beyond man. Barth is right to adopt Anselm's axiom 'credo ut intelligam', but Tillich claims that the credo should not concern a defined and limited set of predications.<sup>1</sup>

## II.2 ANALOGIA IMAGINIS

Although everything that exists can become a symbol of the divine Ground of Being because it participates in being, not everything is actually a symbol, for ontological participation is not the only ingredient of symbolism. One of the most striking ideas of Tillich is that symbols are means of speaking about God rather than means of knowing Him.<sup>2</sup> These observations force us to examine his view of the symbolic material and more particularly his conception of analogy. He often uses analogy and

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<sup>1</sup>The valid aspect of the traditional proofs of God is that they show the possibility and inevitability of the question of God. Cf. *ST.I*, 204-210. The roots of what has been called the neo-orthodox inversion of analogy can clearly be found even in Ritschl and in Aquinas himself. On a comparison between Tillich and Aquinas cf. G. McLean; *Symbol and Analogy; Tillich and Thomas*. This is an article published in T.O'Meara and C. Weiser; *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, 1964. This book returns time and again to the comparison between Tillich and Aquinas.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 131; *ST.II*, p. 115; Armbruster op. cit. pp. 142f; McLean art. cit. p. 169.

symbolism as synonyms even though he combines a penchant for the negative side of analogy with a positive view of the representative power of symbols.<sup>1</sup> The questions to face now are what it means that the birth of symbols does not depend on an arbitrary, intentional creation, but on man's experience of the religious encounter with reality; secondly, what is this decisive experience of the holy which allows concrete beings to open up the dimension of ultimacy in reality?

Any ontological statement, as we have seen, has a twofold nature, for any observation about the structure of being implies both 'the logical analysis and the conscious concern about the matter analyzed'.<sup>2</sup> The latter aspect is the subject of theology in which the persistent participation in being is shown as the origin of man's self-transcending quest for being due to his shocking confrontation with the absurdity of his finitude. The answer to the challenging finitude, however, is the creative presence of transcendent being within symbols. The creatively healing word enters through a concept, or law, or image, to allow 'the Unconditioned import of meaning (Sinngehalt) breaking through the form of meaning (Sinnform) as a

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. O'Meara op. cit. p. 24 and Kegley op. cit. p. 334. In the last reference we see that Tillich rejects the *via eminentiae* which Hartshorne proposes and replaces it with the *via symbolica*. R. Aldwinckle also resents Tillich's negative penchant in: *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 10, (1964) pp. 110-117.

<sup>2</sup>Kegley op. cit. p. 335.

revelation', dependent on 'the reaction of a group through which it becomes a symbol'.<sup>1</sup>

We are presented here with a very unusual form of analogy which Gabus seems to miss entirely when he states that Tillich's doctrine of symbolism reduces everything to an univocal conception of being without taking history and tradition into account.<sup>2</sup> The fact that being appears as the object of man's single faculty of desire does not justify Gabus' judgment, because Tillich rejects that any being is received other than in total dependence on the historically conditioned, mystical experience.<sup>3</sup> Gabus' criticism does not stand up even in view of Tillich's statement that analogy exists only between the *meaning* of God's ultimacy which is immediately and non-symbolically experienced, and the *meaning* of something finite, for the latter is entirely conditioned by a group's meaning structures.

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<sup>1</sup>*What is Religion?* p. 105 and Hook op. cit. p. 4. Cf. also Norenberg op. cit. p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Gabus op. cit. p. 131. Tillich definitely related the experience of existentially valid answers to the historically given reality. Cf. *ST*, I, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>The mystical experience, or experience by participation, underlies and exceeds the ontological and technological experience. It happens in faith within the circle of religious understanding. In itself it is ambiguous and, should be rejected as a source of theology. Under the direction of the critical norm of New Being however, it must be accepted as the practical knowledge by which man receives the unification with the divine Spirit within the concrete, existential setting. Cf. *ST*, I, pp. 40-45.

Tillich's way of escaping pansymbolism is another issue in which a right understanding of his view of analogy is important. Eschatologically speaking the unity of all reality represents pansymbolically the dimension beyond its literal meaning. But Benktson is wrong if he thinks that Tillich avoids actual pansymbolism by a form of actualism which resembles Barth's positivism.<sup>1</sup> It is not through God's choice that one form rather than another becomes the symbol of revelation. It is rather that most realities are prevented from functioning as a symbol by the ambiguities of existence, despite their intrinsic and natural power (*Selbstmächtigkeit und Naturmächtigkeit*).

Once again we are faced with the problem of immanence and transcendence, which formed the central subject in the medieval theories of analogy. They tried to determine the sense in which a finite concept could be applied to God. Whereas the analogy of proportionality was proposed by Thomas Aquinas, the Franciscan school headed by Bonaventure kept to the more Augustinian inspired analogy of attribution. Tillich opts for the latter while underscoring very heavily the analytic, protestant detachment proper to Aquinas' approach.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge of God can be

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Benktson op. cit. pp. 136-138. Benktson is right in contending that the creative, gratuitous initiative of God (actualism) is the center of Tillich's understanding of revelation and that all analogy must be understood within a certain form of dialogue between God and man, but with regard to symbols Tillich holds that they are much more bound to the contingency of traditions than Barth seems to admit. Cf. Nörenberg op. cit. p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 41, and *Two Types.*, p. 6.

imparted only by God's revelation and natural theology is impossible. Tillich finds this neo-orthodox axiom presented in Aquinas' rejection of Augustinian mystical claims that man has an immediate awareness of being itself.<sup>1</sup> Yet if Bonaventure did not preserve the divine transcendence, neither in Tillich's opinion did Aquinas himself. In fact, to call created reality the derived analogon does not suffice to justify the *via eminentiae*, as a valid method of applying predicates to the divine.<sup>2</sup>

As Norenberg suggest, it is important to examine the idea of participation in this context. Thomas Aquinas proposes the *participatio causalis*, in order to lend emphasis to the concept of creation. In creation, reality has received a certain relation or proportion to being and to the structures of being, such as life and knowledge. The Creator also has a certain relation to this being through causality and so it is the proportion of proportions that constitutes the analogy. Against this view Bonaventure draws on the old principle that knowledge presupposes a certain formal identity between subject

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 41 and Nörenberg op. cit. p. 160. Bonaventure stresses the dynamic, anagogical effect of man's reading of the book of creation in addition to the scriptures: 'Aliter enim nobis innotescere non potuit invisibilis Dei Sapientia nisi se his quae novimus visibilium rerum formis ad similitudinem conformaret et per eas nobis sua invisibilia quae non novimus significando exprimeret' (Tract. de plantatio paradisi n. 1 quoted in: J. Bougerol: *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 1964.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Kegley op. cit. p. 334.

and object which exceeds the causal relationship and he opts for the *participatio objectiva*. Aquinas rejected this approach mainly to avoid the hermeneutical problems of the allegorical exegesis, which makes him a forerunner of the Reformation and of the critical hermeneutics of Spinoza.<sup>1</sup>

If analogy oscillates between univocity and equivocity we must say that both Tillich and Aquinas keep closer to the latter so as to stress the divine transcendence. Tillich is uncompromising in this respect, yet he neither excludes the real mediating power of myths and symbols the way Bultmann does, nor reduces symbolic efficacy to an amorphous univocity of being (*via negationis*).<sup>2</sup> Although he considers some aspects of pantheism necessary elements of Christian thought, he speaks of Being-itself only as the depth dimension of reality, which is immanent only as a theophanic, creative crisis. The analogical proportion of man's and God's dimension of being is marked by the fact that God is the answer to man's ultimate concern about

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. G. Weigel: *Myth Symbol and Analogy* in: W. Leibrecht (ed.): *Religion and Culture*, 1959, pp. 129f.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich stresses the necessity of breaking the myth, that is of challenging every literalist interpretation of it. This does not lead to the denial of reality's power to speak meaningfully about God. Cf. O'Meara op. cit. p. 23. Nörenberg's accusation concerning the univocality of Tillich's conception of being is uncomprehensible to me and seems also self-contradictory if we compare op. cit. pp. 120; 171f. and 222. If Tillich emphasizes that we can not say that God exists, does this not show that God's relation to being is totality different from man's? Does this not reflect directly Aquinas' concept of the analogy of proportionality by which transcendence is stressed?

being, which answer is known only in the mystical experience of ecstasy. God's *modus essendi* is infinitely different from man's, so much so that analogy can never be 'a method of discovering truth about God' in an objectifying process of reasoning.<sup>1</sup> Barth and Aquinas argue that, given the faith in God's revelatory and creative self-manifestation, we can discover knowledge about God by starting either from his words or from his creation. Tillich, on the other hand, continues to stress the Lutheran paradox that God's immanence can never permit us to make any literal predication in an absolute sense, because our faculty of knowledge is existentially conditioned to apply the subject-object structure to God. This does not make predication entirely impossible, however.

Despite his negative-protesting understanding of analogy Tillich professes that finite reality can give contents to the cognitive function of revelation. His hesitation in this respect, as well as his emphasis on the concept of being, makes commentators raise the question of why we cannot define concepts like love similarly as objects of our unconditional concern.<sup>2</sup> Tillich's *analogia imaginis* gives an answer to this but only after warning us again never to pretend to push behind the

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<sup>1</sup>ST.I, p. 131. With regards to Tillich's alleged view on God as the essence of all things, cf. ST.I, pp. 234f. and O'Meara op. cit. p. 308.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Aldwinckle art. cit. p. 116 and Gabus op. cit. p. 121. Tillich points out that his ontological statement is the first and certainly not the last assertion about God. Cf. Kegley op. cit. p. 339.

analogy. This solution presupposes Aquinas' *analogia entis* in the sense that any object of our concern must have a relationship to the quest for being.<sup>1</sup> Predication about God without reference to concern about being is impossible.

With this intensified Thomistic premise, Tillich feels at liberty to adopt freely the Franciscan tradition, which considers the world as the anagogical, divine self-manifestation. He never drops the neo-orthodox critical intention. He stresses that no reality can be a medium of knowledge about the divine by itself unambiguously and that it is not man's decision that determines this matter. He seems very close to Barth's positivist and christocentric *analogia fidei*, especially when he holds that any reality that functions as God's self-manifestation must be understood within the co-relation of the divine answer to man's quest for New Being. But it is important to note that the christological New Being is not an empty abstraction nor is it determined by any absolute form. The objective contents of the symbolic material are the concrete expressions of the regenerating divine grace. It is true that the acceptance by the subject in a situation of encounter and ecstasy is indispensable and that this acceptance is socially conditioned, but this can be called a relativistic subjectivism

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<sup>1</sup>The term *analogia imaginis* seems to occur only once in Tillich's oeuvre, namely in *ST.II*, p. 115. The key-concept of Aquinas' *analogia entis* is the famous principle: 'Omne agens agit sibi simile quia agit secundum quod actu est' (Thomas Aquinas: *Sent. III*, d 33 q1 a2. Quoted in Norenberg op. cit. p. 174).



only if the existentialist conception of truth is abandoned in favour of positivist essentialism. *Analogia imaginis* does accept the intrinsic power of symbolic realities to speak truthfully about God. The picture of Jesus does reveal the divine in all its dimensions, but these dimensions are to be subjected to the criterion of being, New Being.<sup>1</sup>

The regenerating experience of the holy within the meaning structures of a historical community is the aspect of God's anagogical immanence, about which the Franciscan tradition has spoken. Tillich accepts this but, at the same time, he is too much aware of demonic distortions of religious symbols to forget the warning contained in Aquinas *analogia entis*. A symbol is a valid predication of God to the extent that it unifies man with the God who overcomes his existential estrangement. New Being is the ever-critical horizon which affirms concrete realities that lead man to self-transcendence.<sup>2</sup> Tillich

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<sup>1</sup>With regards to the symbol of Jesus as the Christ *analogia imaginis* says that the personal life of Jesus 'when encountered by the disciples ... created the picture ... which mediates the transforming power of New Being' (ST.II, p. 115). Although 'New Being is not dependent on the special symbols in which it is expressed' we must still hold to the universal significance of Jesus as the Christ (ST.II, p. 165). This is a contradiction only if the christological paradox is ignored.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich rightly claims that he has anchored analogy beyond relativism and subjectivism. But when he continues and rejects the demand for 'objective information' about God (Cf. O'Meara op. cit. pp. 304f.) he fails to explain how one reality e.g. wisdom is more appropriate as a predication of God than an other e.g. deceit. It is Tillich's view that, although such concepts change with time and place, there is one invariable dimension in our relation to both God and e.g. wisdom, namely our concern about being. But, if this is the basis of our analogous predic-

does not opt for a timeless ontology, rather through *analogia imaginis* he refers being back to history, even though his exegesis often seems too careless to support the claim of historical interest.<sup>1</sup> Aquinas had pointed out that there is no applying of finite concepts to God simply by expanding their contents, but only by relating them to the crucial fact of contingency and creation. Because Tillich's existentialism is indebted to Heidegger's destruction of traditional ontology, it draws the conclusion that *analogia entis* is valid only as an ever critical basis.

The quest for being and the answer to this quest form the dimension within which the effectiveness of contingent symbolic realities must be judged. With Barth we must confirm that symbolic representations of the divine are true only within the

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Footnote 2 continued

ations, we must ask if this being is the fullest or the emptiest of all concepts. Nörenberg argues that Tillich settles for the latter. Cf. op. cit. p. 226. Schmitz also finds fault with Tillich's idea that the perfect actualization of the structures of being in God means that they are negated as distinct categories. Cf. op. cit. p. 102 n. 97. But when Tillich argues that symbols should be understood within the 'configuration in which the mystery of the ground appears to us' (quoted Ibid. p. 98 n. 75), he seems to have only one objective, namely to destroy the idea that the eternal *logos* can be grasped by an individual as a Cartesian type of distinct idea apart from the socio-historical *kairos*. Truth of being is existential and consequently we must say that symbols do not radiate the power of being as means of knowing God, but as means of communicative dialogue in speaking about Him.

<sup>1</sup>Gabus' criticism that Tillich's view of history refers us back to symbolism and this in its turn to the concept of being is valid only if being is conceived as a static category, rather than in the dynamic sense of the Lebensphilosophie. Cf. Gabus op. cit. p. 131.

religious group. In fact, there is no revelation of New Being without social, historical conditions. Unlike Barth, however, Tillich holds to an analogy which is christological rather than christocentric. Any reality which resembles the Christ event in leading man to recognize the quest for God or rather the concern of ultimacy, carries the analogy of divine being. This is a form of revelatory actualism but not like Barth's *analogia fidei*. There is no ensuring, supernatural ratification, nor is there any rationalist certainty. *Analogia Imaginis* does not give a verifiable similitude between finite and infinite being, but rather it enables the revelatory power of being to be a historic experience.<sup>1</sup> The hermeneutical richness of Bonaventure's (and Anselm's) anagogical approach should be combined with Aquinas' critical insights. Barth seems to fall short of this mark.

### II.3 COMMUNITY AND HISTORY

We ended Part One by observing that Tillich vigorously represented the individualism of bourgeoisie religiosity. Protestantism, he claims, has favoured a profanized mass culture within a liberal economy, political imperialism and positivistic technocracy and neo-orthodoxy is powerless to offset this for its prophetic

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Nörenberg, op. cit. pp. 102f.

protest remains an abstract *No.*<sup>1</sup> It was in connection with the interpretation of this historical situation and with his appeal for a religious socialism, that Tillich first formulated his idea of symbols. In 1922 he published 'Masse und Geist', in which he pleaded for respect for the holiness of the masses and he declared that Christian symbols cannot hope to be redemptive if they fail to deal with the masses' sufferings.<sup>2</sup> In his search for effective religious symbols that respect social reality, he considered joining the Catholic Church, but was deterred by the latter's claim that its contingent community should be identified with the eschatological Spiritual Community.<sup>3</sup>

The paradoxical conception of religious symbolism which Tillich developed in these years stresses simultaneously the autonomy of cultural forms and their transparency for the unconditioned substance.<sup>4</sup> The truth of such symbols consists

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Ges. W.* VI, pp. 29-41. This analysis of the mass culture could have been influenced by Tillich's contact with Heidegger to a substantial degree, although there is no explicit indication of this in the text.

<sup>2</sup>'Die Masse ... ist Offenbarung der Schöpflichen Unendlichkeit des Unbedingt Wirklichen' (ibid. p. 72). Tillich characterizes the present type of masses, by referring to an 'immanente Mystik' that is, by an awareness of worldwide suffering. Cf. id. p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Armbruster op. cit. p. 230.

<sup>4</sup>'Die Erfassung dieser Doppelheit von Gewissheit und Überzeugung gegenüber der religiöse Symbol ist die Voraussetzung für ein auf die Menschheit gerichtetes religiöses Einheitsbewusstsein das fern ist von kritischer Entleerung des Konfessionellen und seiner individuell schöpferische Symbole'. (*Ges. W.* II, p. 97). 'Je mehr Negativität gegen sich selbst vom Unbedingten her... desto leichter für religiöse Socialismus in die Symbole einer solchen Kirche einzugehen ... (Ibid).

in their power as historical events within an internally vital community. True symbols must be creative and dynamic within a social setting lest religion become ideology.<sup>1</sup> Tillich had become aware of the social effect of religious and quasi-religious symbols when he observed the Nazi myths of origin. He realized that socialism itself could employ symbols for a demonic, ideological self-limitation in a reactionary self-assertion.<sup>2</sup> Truly effective symbols that recreate power and justice in a community can be hoped for only if their sacramentally conceived holiness is dialectically oriented to the ultimacy which transcends all structures. Unlike medieval society, our own tends to show little respect for the charismatic person who, knowing that he lives by the substance of the community of which he remains a part, transcends the given totality in a prophetic way so as to combine his prophetism with a constructive, priestly leadership.<sup>3</sup>

Priestly sacramentalism is the basis of all symbols, but it tends to endow logical dogmas and aesthetic as well as legal

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<sup>1</sup>'Wahrheit (ist) die eigentliche Macht; aber nicht als abstracte Norm ... sondern ... nur als konkrete Wahrheit ... der innerlich mächtigen Gruppe in ihr'. (*Ges. W. II*, p.201). Cf. *Ibid.* pp. 104-118.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.II*, pp. 235f and 324f.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.II*, p. 288 and 37 as well as *Ges.W.VI*, p.37. We cannot help wondering why Tillich does not think it worthwhile to examine the implications of these roles in the christological explanation of the figure of Jesus. Cf. *ST.II*, 168. Tillich often mentions the Middle Ages as an example of theonomous culture. Cf. Adams op. cit. p. 83.

formulas with a metaphysical inviolability, which prevents an autonomous development of these forms. Unless the community is guided by a committed, prophetic criticism, it is prone to conceal or even destroy certain areas of reality.<sup>1</sup> As Otto and Scheler have pointed out, ideas and forms, which are powerless by themselves, receive power because man perceives the dimension of transcendence and value through them. Tillich, however, qualifies his acceptance of this view and stresses that ideas can also demonically distort transcendence. Any living community must therefore perform the double operation of creating and criticizing symbols and Religious Socialism must first of all 'um Symbole einer theonome Gemeinschaft ringen'.<sup>2</sup>

Gabus thinks that this socialism is abstract because it lacks the depth of Buber's personalism, and that it classifies other philosophies inaccurately. This comment seems unjustified particularly when it calls Tillich's attempt to defend the person against technocratic powers a sort of afterthought.<sup>3</sup> To be a person, Tillich contends, is by definition to be a social being so that it is an inevitable conclusion that the community gives fullness and depth to an individual.<sup>4</sup> Symbols that mediate revel-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.II*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.II*, p. 104. Cf. also *Ibid.* pp. 92f.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Gabus op. cit. p. 205.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era* p.125. 'But the individual is not a limb of a body; he is ... a social being, but the society does not create the individual'. (*Love, Power and Justice*, p. 92f.) Tillich resents speaking about so-called social organisms because of its reactionary tendency which rejects any prophetic innovation.

ation and salvation to a person are not only derived from the cultural environment but are effective only to the extent that they support and recreate the community.

This view draws attention to dimensions and categories which Buber's I - Thou personalism is likely to underestimate. The revealing capacity of symbols is directly related to their community creating power. The religious, dynamic import of culture may never be conceived as an isolating, individualistic relationship to the divine, for 'God calls individuals ... as participants in his kingdom, in the unity of all beings under God.'<sup>1</sup>

The holy as the ultimate referent of religious symbols is therefore to be called Being-itself and Personal-itself in-  
equally fundamental sense. Religious symbols by their very same essence radiate both the power of being and of being personal i.e. social. Symbolic language must be understood in relation to the history-bearing group, to which it gives actual identity.<sup>2</sup>

History, symbolism and religious reception of revelation are intimately related realities. With this insight of Schelling Tillich stays closer to Hegelian ideas than did men like Marx, Nietzsche and Heidegger, who had influenced him to a significant

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<sup>1</sup>*Bibl. Rel.* p.47. Cf. *ST.III*, p. 40. Tillich continues to praise the Reformers for defending the unique value of each individual person.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.III*, p. 346.

degree. His conception of finitude and estrangement forbade him, it is true, to uphold Hegel's idealistic dialectics as they accept a totally inner-worldly synthesis.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, he thinks that history is inexplicable unless we accept the enduring union of the finite with the unconditioned, which union Schleiermacher has shown to be the presupposition of all rational functions of man.<sup>2</sup> In many publications Tillich opts for the early Hegelian polarity between space and time. Nazi romanticism which attempts to revive the space-oriented myth of origin, '*Blut und Boden*', tries to reintroduce the uncritical dominance of sacramental forms of the holy. This spatial orientation had been broken through by the protest of Jewish prophetism, starting with Abraham's act of migration. Nazism, therefore, contradicts itself by including both utopian expectations and rational criticism into its creed.<sup>3</sup>

Tillich does not deny that space and time are inseparable despite their polar opposition, but he holds that there are two distinct types of Religions corresponding to this polarity. There is the priestly or cyclical type and the prophetic or linear type. The latter he identifies with the monotheistic, theocratic

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era* pp. 12f. Tillich accepts the fact that there is an extremely valuable insight in Hegel's dialectical approach. Cf. *ST.III*, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Adams op. cit. pp. 205ff. and *ST*, I, pp. 41f.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.II*, pp. 34-47; *Ges.W.VI*, pp. 140-148; *ST.III*, pp. 313-320.



Religions.<sup>1</sup> Space determined Religions, which deny that anything really new can arise, are found mainly in polytheism, the tragic or mystic views of life, and movements like modern Nationalism.<sup>2</sup> The God of Jewish prophetism on the other hand, gives up nation, dynasty and sanctuary to establish the *telos* of the Spirit which transcends any limitation of nation or Church. This Religion challenges any uncritical attachment to forms, and points out the demonic within every experience of the holy. This prophetic element is never absent in any Religion, however rigid the spatialization might be even in mythological reports the concept of time is active as a historical consciousness which transforms facts into symbolically significant events.<sup>3</sup>

All historiography, including the modern type, depends on implicit symbols of interpretation so that the process of selection and transformation of events into paradigms of an original onto-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.* VI, p. 141 and *What is Religion?* pp. 88f. The space-time polarity has been introduced into Western thought most explicitly by Kant, but the connotation which Tillich gives to it comes mainly from Hegel and Schelling. It has also been influential in the thinking of Troeltsch, Bergson, a.o.

<sup>2</sup>It is Eliade's opinion that the eternal return is the kernel of all mythology and that the 'sacred time' is essentially the fundamental time, that is the past. Cf. M. Eliade: *Cosmos and History*, 1959, pp. 20f. For the relation between space, polytheism and nationalism Cf. *Ges.W.* VI, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>'In the depth of every living Religion there is a point at which ... that to which it points breaks through its particularity' (*Chr. Enc.* p. 97).

logy need not be called anhistorical, as Eliade thinks.<sup>1</sup> There or two types of symbolic transformations however, namely, the non-historical and the historical interpretation of history.<sup>2</sup> We must be aware that time can be made a dimension of space as is done by modern progressivism. Such an approach is, like mystical pantheism and even Bergson's vitalism and Heidegger's existentialism, 'gerade die Negation jeder Realbeziehung zur Geschichte.'<sup>3</sup> Unlike the linear, goal-oriented view of history, they all envisage some sort of an individualistic deliverance from existence.

Starting with Zoroaster's dualism down through Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic thought to Christian eschatology, there is a historical orientation which is endangered constantly by conservative, utopian or super-naturalist eschatologies. Its paradox

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.III*, p. 301 and Eliade op. cit. p. 46. Although Tillich points out that he who interprets history actually contributes to its creation, he never states explicitly that historical consciousness precedes both the interpretation of facts and the actual form in which facts take place. Paradigms of original ontology not only determine our historiography but also our very historic existence. With regard to biblical exegesis this means that not only the early Church interpreted Jesus mythologically, that is according to the existing patterns of thought, but also that Jesus himself acted mythologically within those very patterns.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era* pp. 16-31 and *ST.III*, pp. 350ff.

<sup>3</sup>*Ges.W.VI*, p. 178. Cf. *Prot. Era* pp.20f. and Osborne op. cit. p. 43. It is hard to see why Gabus objects to the inclusion of Bergson in this line and not to that of Nietzsche. He seems correct in thinking that Tillich's criticism of Heidegger directly affects Bultmann. Cf. Gabus op. cit. pp. 95f.

is not opposed to sacramental forms as such, but points to the depth of meaning in the center of these forms. The awareness of this dimension gives a sense of calling, not primarily to the individual, but to groups and nations who aim at concrete values in concrete periods.<sup>1</sup> This value mediates power to be, as the effective center of history, often explicitly represented in symbols. The universally valid center of history is the calling New Being. It is symbolized in Jesus as the Christ in whom the eschatological *telos* is realized. It is the center of unification of man's fragmentated rational functions. The universal validity of this calling is a matter of faith, not only because the unification has not yet penetrated all the world, but because of its very nature. By *analogia imaginis* Jesus Christ expresses the divine as the power of being both transcendent and immanent in history.<sup>2</sup>

This is the center of history because it integrates the prophetic and the sacramental orientation. As the perfect, para-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.III* pp. 308ff. and 330 as well as *Fut. Rel.* pp. 58f.

<sup>2</sup>'The appearance of Jesus as the Christ is the historical event in which history becomes aware of itself and its meaning' ... 'the *actual* assertion is and remains a matter of daring faith' (*ST.III*, pp. 368f.) Does this not also place an exceedingly heavy emphasis on the consciousness of Jesus? It remains unclear how Tillich solves the problem of the present understanding of the Christ event in its relation to the self-understanding of Jesus. This is surprising if we realize that the conception of the Christological center of history appeared explicitly as early as 1929. Cf. Armbruster op. cit. p. 256.

doxical symbol it radiates God's kingdom as the unification of functions under the sign of *agape*. To say that God conquers the existential negativities by participating in the historical estrangement is not necessarily patripassionism in Tillich's opinion.<sup>1</sup> The term 'Kingdom of God' is equivalent to 'theonomy', the word used in religious socialism. The Kingdom cannot be restricted to the Christian Churches, who, however, should be considered its representatives. They are to expose the dynamics of history as questions for the divine answer. They are to present the balanced integration of sacramental forms of the holy and the prophetic, critical transcendence, banning both absolutist demonizations and relativistic scepticism.<sup>2</sup>

We may ask whether Tillich's teleological thinking does not overemphasize the superiority of progress and innovation over established forms and what this would mean in relation to non-Christian Religions. He holds, in fact, that man's potentialities cannot be actualized unless a person or a centered group adopts some sort of progressive thinking.<sup>3</sup> History is always aiming for the better even though we cannot exclude the possibility

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<sup>1</sup>Although he rejects the doctrine, Tillich sees a valid point in patripassionism. Cf. *ST*. III, pp. 404 f. and *ST*. II, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Every utopian movement must become self-critical. This need not cripple its courage. It is only the spiritual power of faith that can save a movement from ideocracy. Cf. *Ges.W.* II, pp. 208f. and *Ges.W.* VI, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *ST*. III, pp. 333 and *Fut.Rel* pp. 44f.

that man relapses more than he advances. This can be true not only in ethics, as was the case with the German rebarbarization, but even in technological matters. Fields such as moral integrity, art or religion in particular know of no valid concept of progress. Forgetfulness of this fact leads utopian movements time and again into cynicism, because they look for 'the fulfillment around the corner'.<sup>1</sup>

Religion and utopia, however, always go together. Man universally faces the challenge of his potentialities. He is anxious neither to destroy the given forms nor to forego the opportunities. Most Religions, therefore, translate opportunities in terms of an ideal which is projected into the mythological past. Even though space-oriented thinking absorbs man in these mythological as well as in the mystical Religions, the utopian element will always be present even if in inverted form.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, we observe that this element does tend to adopt a symbolic center. Most important of all, we find that the heart of time consciousness is not progress, but the prophetic negation of the negative. Although Tillich seems overly eager to stress God's participation in history as its critical dimension, he is not exclusively time oriented. God is the depth dimension of the temporal process of

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<sup>1</sup>'Das Resultat der optimistische Erwartung war ein tiefe Enttäuschung, die schliesslich zu Gleichgültigkeit und dem Zynismus oder auch Fanatismus bei den Masse führte' (*Ges.W.VI*, p. 139). Cf. *Fut. Rel.* p.177.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Ges.W. VI*, p. 175.

actualization of potentialities. A static mystical symbol like Ground of being can be used because God is beyond space and time.<sup>1</sup> Negation of finitude appears once again as the pivotal point.

#### II.4 PROPHECY AND *KAIROS*

To summarize Tillich's views on symbols we could choose the protestant principle as a guideline. This principle is not the abstract *No* which Tillich detested in neo-orthodoxy. It is not merely a protest against claims made for a relative reality, it is the continuous paradox of both the critical preparation and the creative affirmation of God's Kingdom, which becomes manifest in the Cross as the center of history.<sup>2</sup> The prophetic, critical preparation is logically prior but not temporarily separated from the positive forms of God's immanence. Tillich pays definite attention to the positive embodiment of revelation within

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.* VI, pp. 174 and 209f. as well as *ST.III*, pp. 320ff.

<sup>2</sup>'The Protestant principle demands a method of interpreting history in which the critical transcendence of the divine... is strongly expressed and in which, at the same time, the creative omnipresence of the divine in the course of history is concretely indicated'. (*Prot. Era* p. XV f.) "The idea of "the *kairos*" unites criticism and creation" (*id.*)..." in the power of the New Being that is manifest in Jesus as the Christ. Here the Protestant protest comes to an end." (*id.* p. xviii). Cf. *ST.III*, p. 371 and Armbruster op. cit. p. 259.

the Spiritual Community. We have learned about his cosmological and dialectical interests which stem from Schelling and Hegel. Hegel had proposed the theory of cunning ideas that use the vital forces of persons and of groups to actualize themselves. Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and also Scheler had pointed out that those forces molded ideas as impotent products of economical or libidinal drives. The clear and distinct ideas of Cartesian philosophy are exposed by the absolute dominance of irrational fate over philosophical truth.

Tillich admits this historically contingent growth of thought, for 'fate obtrudes even into the sacred enclosures of philosophy, into truth itself.'<sup>1</sup> On the other hand he holds Hegel's view that ideas are dynamic forces whose essence aims at appearance in existent reality. The dependence of ideas on less than rationally conscious forces, however, seems to be his predominant conviction. He even rejects Scheler's thought that the intuition of moral values eventually guides our thinking process. There is only one certainty for which fate steps, only one absolute truth we have, namely, that fate 'is meaning-fulfilling and not meaning-destroying'.<sup>2</sup> In this position Tillich is able to accept the most radical psychological or sociological criticism of the religious symbols and yet hold that *logos* prevails over fate. The

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<sup>1</sup>*Prot. Era*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

eternal *logos* pulsates through all our thinking but is not at man's disposal. Rather it critically challenges every realization.

Prophetism lives by the belief in an unconditioned truth and by the courage to stand within the circle of fate. Unable to leave that cricle it contributes to the unconsciously produced growth of the theological norm by acts that are unquestionably conscious but not in control of that development.<sup>1</sup> Prophetism objects to the Cartesian or Kantian *logos*, which alienates the subject from the object, for if time is pure duration within a mathematical space, reality has ceased to be the historical matter of free decision. Only if the distinct ideas of the *logos* are related to the historical condition do we know what it is to fulfill meaning as a free person standing under the divine judgment of ultimacy.<sup>2</sup> The prophetic spirit proclaims the new and eternally important which manifests itself in temporal forms but which the Cartesian *Logos* is unable to perceive.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>'The growth of these norms is a historical process which, in spite of many conscious decisions, is on the whole unconscious,' (ST.I p. 48).

<sup>2</sup>This criticism by Tillich is best explained in Adams, op. cit. pp. 202-205. The alienating effect of Cartesian methodology is the main theme of Gadamer's book: *Wahrheit und Methode*.

<sup>3</sup>'It is the power of the prophetic spirit in all periods of history to pronounce the coming of such a *kairos*.. in which something new, eternally important manifests itself in temporal forms.' (Prot. Era p. 155).



The prophet announces the *kairos*, that is, the historical significance of a certain time in view of the realization of God's Kingdom. Strictly speaking, we should hold that the appearance of New Being in Jesus as the Christ is the only such *kairos*, but Tillich insists that this unique *kairos*, while remaining the center and the criterion of history occurs in preparatory or derived forms in lesser centers of history.<sup>1</sup> Accepting the revelatory element in every creation of meaning, Tillich easily combines the universal claim of the central *kairos* with the positive evaluation of particular symbolic events.

If the christological paradox of New Being is the focus of we-consciousness within the Christian group,<sup>2</sup> Tillich is right in claiming this openness as the true prophetic message, but only in its constant dialectic relation to the center. The prophetism that perpetuates this relationship is the kernel of the community and of the history of New Being. Prophetism is dialectics that creates community and history in a sense of which Hegel and Marx were unaware, because they failed to see that man's alienation cannot be overcome by a synthesis within time. Prophetism does not primarily profess the belief in a utopian synthesis, but

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<sup>1</sup> 'The fact that ... the appearance of the center of history is again and again re-experienced through relative *kairoi*... is decisive for our consideration' (ST. III, p. 370). Cf. Kegley op. cit. p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kegley, op. cit. p. 296.

rather it mediates the art of dialectics.<sup>1</sup> This art can be defined as the praxis of living on the boundary. It is not enough to discover relationships between realities, we must yet conceive them in constant reference to the beyond. Every reality must be defined by its limits and at the same time by its ecstasy beyond that finitude. *Kairos* and *logos* determine each other, the limits of actualized essences are challenged by a transcendental stratum of knowledge. The dialectics of this prophetic spirit is by no means the privilege of the Christian tradition, for any true concern about justice, goodness, truth and beauty reflects this crossing of frontiers, while they are brought to fruition.<sup>2</sup>

At this juncture we should not be surprised that the doctrine of God's directing creativity is crucial in Tillich's thought. The Protestant Principle expresses primarily the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. It tells us that any human act in the intellectual and practical field receives its value only from the dynamic, transcendent dimension breaking through

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<sup>1</sup>'An absolute stage at the end of the dialectical process is a contradiction of the dialectical principle'. (*Prot. Era* p. 42). Cf. *The Interpretation of History*, p. 165 and Kegley op. cit. p. 300.

<sup>2</sup>'But frontier is not only something to be crossed: it is also something which must be brought to fruition.' (*Fut. Rel.* p.57).

this particular form.<sup>1</sup> It can be asked if the prophetic principle does not oblige us to foster an *a priori* doubt against any established form of the holy.<sup>2</sup> If we aim at the conquest of Religion by the Spiritual Presence we seem to exclude not only absolutisms but also any interest in the formative power of the spirit or the so-called Catholic Substance. Tillich has seen this objection from the beginning and he has proposed the idea of 'Gestalt of grace'. He does not advocate another Hegelian phenomenology of the Spirit. Absolute knowledge in *theoria* or *praxis* is inconceivable if we take finitude seriously.

When Ricoeur professes the same opinion and declares that finitude is the motor of all symbolic language, he fails to emphasize historicity and the dynamic element, which according to Tillich is the true dimension. Ricoeur tries to combine Eliade's phenomenology and Bultmann's hermeneutics, but both these approaches underestimate the value of the present actual-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Kegley op. cit. pp. 231; 244 and 252f. The constant negative penchant of Tillich has time and again made critics wonder if a positive theory of symbolism is possible. Cf. Nörtenberg op. cit. p. 225 and Gabus op. cit. p. 120. In defence of Tillich it can be said that symbols have the onus of proving their value for the forum of reason, not vice versa.

<sup>2</sup>'The principle of justification by grace through faith ... is the first and basic expression of the Protestant principle itself.' (ST.III, p.223). 'It is the principle which permeates every single assertion of the theological system ... no realm of life can be understood or formed without a relation to the Protestant principle'. (Prot. Era, p. VIII).

ity.<sup>1</sup> They also adhere to an epistemology of timeless *logos*-thinking which gives rise to an academic world of ascetic scientists trying to perceive eternal objective essences.<sup>2</sup>

A mystical or technocratic realism may result from this, whereas Tillich pleads for a historical realism in which knowledge is viewed as the act of relating *logos* and *kairos*. The metaphysical arrogance of traditional epistemology must bow to the divine ultimacy and acknowledge that man has insight despite his separation from the source of meaning.<sup>3</sup> This surrender however, this awareness of transcendence is not formless, however; it is impossible without a concrete embodiment in which its protest can resound and be heard. The depth dimension of the *logos* can not be perceived either in *theoria* or in *praxis* without the mediation of the Gestalt of grace.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>'We must once more come to grips with Freud, we must confront his hermeneutics with the hermeneutics of Van der Leeuw, Eliade, Barth and Bultmann, in order to construct what we can say positively and negatively about the psychoanalysis of religion'. (Ricoeur, op. cit. p. 531). Cf. also id. pp. 526.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich considers Max Weber a typical example of such a scientist. Cf. *Prot. Era* p.74.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *The Interpretation of History*, p. 141 and Adams op. cit. p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>'Negation, if it lives, is involved in affirmation... This is also true of Protestantism. Its protest is dependent on its Gestalt, its form-negating on its form-creating power' (*Prot. Era*, p. 206). This basic insight of Tillich is most revealing even though his actual elaboration of this point is left very vague mainly because Gestalt refers 'to the total structure of a living reality', and only to a derived degree to specific expressions of the total structure. (Cf. Ibid. Note 1).

Theological reformulations and liturgical renewals as well as organizational measures should restore the forms which Protestantism has removed, according to Jung's accusation, in an iconoclastic destruction of religious symbols, which was understandable but unjustified.<sup>1</sup> Grace can never become tangible, yet it is wrong to replace a demonic sacramentalism with intellectual, emotional or ethical individualism, or worse, with empty secularism. We should create new mythological and cultural symbols of the ultimate meaning of reality, but at the same time submit them to a relentless secular scrutiny.

'In every Protestant form the religious element must be related to, and questioned by, a secular element.'<sup>2</sup> In fact we must acknowledge that the secularization process itself is a *kairos*, in which the truly prophetic spirit breaks down ecclesiastical arrogance so as to make a true encounter with reality possible. Only a daring confrontation with the present situation can hope to realize the Spiritual Community.

Besides the most distinctive mark of Tillich's ecclesiology, namely the universality of the Spiritual Community, we must note his interest in combining the sacramental and prophetic elements. It is clear that Tillich refuses to triumph over factual ecclesi-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ibid. p. XIX.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 214.

astical achievements in reconciling and socializing mankind.<sup>1</sup> What is important however, is not only to note the ambiguities in actual Churches but to develop the theology of the Spiritual Community in which 'the encountered reality is in totality symbolic of the Spiritual Presence'.<sup>2</sup> The growth of unambiguous life in manifest form is an obligation which neo-orthodox doctrinism seems to forget. Grace is received in the hearing of the word, but the word can not be heard unless it becomes 'immanent, creating a divine structure of reality'.<sup>3</sup> Tillich does not hold that the sacramental element has been absent from Protestantism, but that it was unwisely ignored and played down as something to be ashamed of. We must be ready to acknowledge that secular thought which is driven to seek the ultimate meaning needs a concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence.<sup>4</sup> When we ask about the concrete forms which the Gestalt of grace should take in the Spiritual Community, we seem to find few directives. But there is one overriding insight, namely, the uncompromizing involvement in the secular struggle for meaning. Instead of preventing secular culture from protesting against established forms,

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<sup>1</sup>M. Schepers takes this seriously amiss in his article entitled: Paul Tillich on the Church. O'Meara, op. cit. p. 251.

<sup>2</sup>ST.III, p. 158

<sup>3</sup>Prot. Era, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup>In Tillich's view this marks 'The Permanent Significance of the Catholic Church for Protestantism' (Armbruster op. cit. p. 231).

the Churches should lead this protest and help create ever new forms. This commitment covers socio-political as well as scientific and artistic endeavours.

In view of our understanding of Tillich's interests it comes as no surprise that Przywara should consider the concept of *kairos* the central insight of the system.<sup>1</sup> The *kairos* is the moment in which a concrete form within the rational, cultural tradition becomes the recipient of a revelation and, by its imparted power to carry man beyond the limited structures, this form mediates the courage to believe and to grasp or shape reality in perspective of the unconditioned meaning. In the *kairos* the *logos* meets the deepest dimension of reality, namely, finitude's relationship to the infinite. Although the eternal import of reality is the constant horizon of any moment in time, and although every moment can therefore become a *kairos*, we must repeat what has been said with respect to symbols, namely, that the participation in the eternal ultimate dimension alone does not give to a moment or to a reality its capacity to radiate the power of the infinite. These two concepts of *kairos* and *symbol*, therefore, belong together and require an identical hermeneutic technique, for we should avoid any attempt to define them *in abstracto* without relating them to the socio-historical setting.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Leibrecht, op. cit. p. 113

## II.5 HERMENEUTICS AND ENCOUNTER

The open experience of new material from inside or outside the Christian circle is considered indispensable by Tillich, but at the same time it is rejected as a source of theology. The experiential situation receives the theological sources as an existential truth only through a hermeneutic process.<sup>1</sup> These sources also include data from the history of Religions. Studying Tillich's directives for the encounter between World Religions, we seem to be presented with a clear form of the so-called actualizing hermeneutics, which beginning with men like Schleiermacher and Dilthey, now prevails in the philosophical school of Heidegger and Gadamer, and in the theological approach of both Bultmann and Barth. Against the alienating methods of Cartesian type science, in which a detached, academic comparison of religious data is advanced, Tillich points out that a true hermeneutical encounter should be centered on an existential understanding. This agrees with Gadamer's plea for a

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<sup>1</sup>'If experience is called the medium through which the objective sources are received, this excludes the reliance of the theologian on a possible post-Christian experience. But it also denies ... that experience is a theological source... experience receives and does not produce. Its productive power is restricted to the transformation of what is given to it. But this transformation is not intended'. (*ST.I*, p. 46). This view agrees with the evidence provided by the hermeneutic sciences. '...Philosophy does not begin anything, since the fullness of language precedes it'. (Ricoeur op. cit. p. 38). Tillich's rejection of subjectivism and of experience as a source of revelation is not new in Protestant theology, but it must be seen in the light of his dealings with the distorting quasi-religious developments in National Socialism.



universal hermeneutic reflection on the principle of the 'Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein', which method acknowledges that the person himself is engaged in contributing to the growth of the tradition on which he reflects, so that it can be said that hermeneutic 'Verstehen ist selber Geschehen'.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Tillich seems equally close to the second contemporary line of thought, the so-called emancipative, critical hermeneutics. They point out that the tradition does not consist solely of rational, meaningful factors and that distortions are more than accidental, temporal alienations. Tradition itself, then, stands under accusation. Rooted in Spinoza and the Enlightenment, but silenced during Romanticism, this approach returned in Marx, Freud, Nietzsche and more recently in the Frankfurter Schule of social philosophers.<sup>2</sup> Habermas' call for an emancipative praxis, seems to suit Tillich better than Bultmann's preoccupation with the semantic gap between the traditional language and modern thought.<sup>3</sup> Tillich's prime con

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<sup>1</sup>H. Gadamer, The scope and function of hermeneutic reflection *Continuum* 8 (1970) pp. 85f. As early as 1930 Tillich wrote: 'Betrachtung der Geschichte ist immer ein Mitschaffen des Sinnes der Geschichte.' (*Ges.W.* V, p. 193). Tillich's views on the technocratic realism as opposed to self-transcendent realism agree with the struggle against the objectifying methods of positivistic sciences, which we find in Heidegger and those influenced by him (in particular Gadamer and Marcuse).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Schillebeeckx art. cit. pp. 31f.

<sup>3</sup>'Tillich ne nous parle pas de compréhension et de conceptualité, mais de *participation*...il est ... convaincu que le Message chrétien ne touche pas seulement ... le niveau de la compréhension, mais également toute la dimension inconsciente et collective, de la vie humaine. Et ici son approche se distingue profondément de l'approche bultmannienne'. (Gabus op. cit. pp. 209f.)

cern is not the attempt to find alleged essentials by a process of demythologization, but rather the creative participation which re-energizes and emancipates. This requires however, a twofold hermeneutics namely a combination of actualizing and critical approaches, of both the theological tradition and the contemporary situation.<sup>1</sup> As mentioned before Ricoeur has shown convincingly that the critical approach of Freud presupposes a 'hermeneutic circle'. Schillebeeckx says the same about Habermas, whose method resembles Freud's because he attempts a type of sociological psychoanalysis of the irrational in history, to which Tillich also seems inclined.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Theology is the methodological interpretation of the contents of Christian faith' (ST.I, p. 15). Besides this process of capturing the original meaning of desintegrated symbols, he emphasizes that secular criticism should be taken fully seriously and that is why Gabus speaks of a double participation. Cf. op. cit. p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> 'New motifs began to attract attention: the ambiguous character of existence ... the conflict of the unconscious and the conscious' (Prot. Era pp. 10f.) It seems unjustified to relate Tillich's agreement with Habermas to their common dealings with the University of Frankfurt. We should rather point to the influence of both the early Marxian philosophy and Fichte's system of sciences, which they both adopt with minor modifications. Tillich speaks of sciences of *Denken*, *Sein* and *Geist*. Habermas refers to hermeneutic sciences dealing with the praxis of communication, analytic-empirical sciences dealing with technical utility and social sciences which concern the emancipatory praxis. Although Tillich's classification differs considerably, we should be aware that in his view too, the third group is characterized by the spirit, which is the creative tension between thought and being. Cf. *Ges.W.I*, pp. 217f. and Schmitz exposition op. cit. pp. 23-34 For Habermas' views cf. Schillebeeckx art. cit. p. 35 and J. Habermas: *Technik und Wissenschaft als "Ideologie"*, 1968 pp. 148-159.

The twofold hermeneutical line has been Tillich's concern from the moment he first conceived of the metalogical method and formulated it as the critical phenomenology with its two formal criteria of all theology.<sup>1</sup> Where phenomenology observes the forms of the holy as matters of ultimate concern, it needs the explicitation of that ultimate dimension as a critical check on demonic developments of these forms. This critical dimension is Dasein's ontological question which functions as a Gestalt-forming force. By integrating this center of the Greek tradition once again with Jewish theism, we do what the early Apologists did, namely, create a new theological language in the encounter between two radically different methods.<sup>2</sup> Meaning is the aim of all hermeneutic reflection, but it cannot be understood by phenomenology of the forms alone. Meaning is the realm of the spirit, that is, of the critical polarity between thought and being in which the boundary of the immediately given is transcended, not only in the dialectics with other beings, but primarily in the surrender to the demand of ultimacy.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, pp. 11-15 and 106-108. The critical phenomenology tries to avoid the method of abstraction by intuitive description under the guidance of a central criterion of all revelation. These two criteria also helped us to define the ultimate referent of all religious symbolism. Cf. Hook op. cit. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Tillich's apologetic writing demonstrates how he shared the conviction of the Apologists that Christians by no means have a monopoly on the truth, and that the truth wherever it may be found belongs to us Christians' (Braaten in his preface to *Persp.* p. xx). Cf. Adams op. cit. pp. 1-16.

No reality, therefore, is meaningful unless it is critical of itself. The christological paradox and the insight that the Gestalt of grace has always the demonic in its back, express this truth.<sup>1</sup> The critical hermeneutics of Freud, Marx and their recent revivers lack this self-critical power apparently because they ignore their own hermeneutical conditions.<sup>2</sup> Tillich accuses both orthodox and liberal Protestantism of inconsistent criticism. They avoid a real encounter and prevent theology from becoming truly apologetic, that is, the formulation of the divine answer to human history.<sup>3</sup> Tillich's twofold approach can also be seen in his definition of God as the abyss and the ground of meaning. This is not a gnostic amalgamation, but an uncompromizing recognition of existential finitude. Hermeneutics must include the radical criticism which results from the dispossessing experience of meaninglessness before it can even hope

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<sup>1</sup>The demonic depth of the divine nature itself tells us that 'Religion is the creation and the distortion of revelation' and that even in claiming 'that in the Cross of Christ the final victory in this struggle has been reached ... the form of the claim itself shows demonic traits' (*ST.III*, p. 104). The analysis of the demonic returns often in Tillich's writings, and he considers it decisive for his interpretation of history and Religions. Cf. *Prot. Era* p xvi; *ST.I*, pp. 222-227; Adams op. cit. pp. 56f.

<sup>2</sup>Habermas tries to avoid this situation by what he calls the 'controlled alienation', realizing that all cognitive and practical dealing with reality is objectifying, alienating. It seems worth noting that the critical hermeneutics have often been advanced by Jewish thinkers like Spinoza, Marx, Freud, Marcuse, Adorno a.o.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Ges.W.VII*, pp. 256f. and Schmitz op. cit. p. 115. The theme of Christ as fulfillment (Cf. Mt. 5,17) seems to be central also to the thinking of the early Apologists.

to reappropriate concrete forms of meaning.

Meaning, then is neither the Hegelian synthesis of dialectic ideas nor the outcome of a skeptical relativism (*epochē*). Meaning lies in the power to enter a concrete situation without the need to avenge excluded opportunities. Meaning appears in the final revelation of the *agapē* which integrates the relentless criticism of absolutes and a complete commitment to the concrete as representative of ultimacy.<sup>1</sup> The concept of meaning in this theology, therefore, accomodates the two forms of hermeneutics in their most pronounced forms. As mentioned before the study of Religions, according to Tillich, should courageously apply the skills of psychoanalysis, of social critique, of anthropology and the like. The confrontation between the World Religions and the secular criticism of quasi-Religions should be considered a challenge which we should not avoid by subtleties of purely actualizing hermeneutics.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The love of Jesus, which is the manifestation of the divine love' confronts the absolutes of the four realms of rational creativity and it 'conquers them without producing cognitive skepticism or aesthetic chaos or lawlessness or estrangement'. (ST.I, p. 152). Cf. *Love, Power and Justice* passim. Love and faith are one in the dynamics of an existential life-giving power. Cf. Armbruster op. cit. p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>In view of 'the unceasing reference to the quasi-religions and their secular background ... the dialogue loses the character of a discussion of dogmatic subtleties and becomes a common inquiry in the light of the world situation'. (*Chr. Enc.* p. 63).

On the other hand we can not ignore that our criticism lives by the actualized tradition. We must therefore consider briefly Tillich's hermeneutical insights concerning the encounter between the Christian tradition and the ontological search of ultimate reality. These two traditions have interacted for twenty centuries and they have survived in relative independence. Moreover, Tillich partly agrees with Barth that a synthesis between Christianity and Humanism should be rejected.<sup>1</sup> Despite their insurmountable differences, however, these traditions have one fundamental point of contact. This is the state of ultimate concern, to be formulated either as ultimate quest for being or as the need of salvation. This is not an attempt to define God in terms of differences from other forms of the divine, as if Tillich intended to leave further interpretation and assimilation to the listener.<sup>2</sup> In the encounter between the Biblical Religion and

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<sup>1</sup>This agreement should be greatly qualified, but Tillich does not outrightly negate the objections of the Barthians raised against his conception of an ultimate unity between Biblical Religion and ontology. Cf. *Bibl. Rel.* p.1.

<sup>2</sup>er versucht die Lehre nicht in ihrem eigenen Verständnis durch eine Abgrenzung gegen andere Gottesvorstellungen genau zu bestimmen, sondern er versucht eine Deutung der zentralen biblischen Aussagen über Gott' (Schmitz op. cit. p. 218). This means that Tillich is not in favour of the usual form of comparative religious studies. The similarities or dissimilarities between Religions do not consist in empirical forms. Each tradition must be considered first of all as a meaning Gestalt in itself with its own internal structure. His hermeneutical principle of explaining a tradition by its own self-understanding could open his approach for a promising cooperation with structuralist techniques of anthropological research.

the ontological search, we realize that the method of correlation consists in making the ultimate question of the other tradition part of one's own horizon. This question itself is always asked with changing connotations so that the true encounter between the believing Community and the Christian message varies in each generation.<sup>1</sup> Apologetic theology is exactly the interpretation of Christian faith as a response to the questions of different situations, rather than a defense of the contents of faith. Now we have to ask: what are the sources of this response, how are the sources accessible and by which norm should we interpret them?

Tillich accepts a multiplicity of sources, namely all cultural forms in which revelation has been received in history. Not only the Bible and its exegesis, or the Church's history, but also the history of Religions and all cultures contain forms to which our experience can be indebted for understanding.<sup>2</sup> As Gadamer and Ricoeur have also pointed out, there is a basic alienation from these sources, which man must appropriate in an

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>'A broader source of systematic theology than all those mentioned so far is the material presented by the history of religion and culture' (*ST.I*, p. 38). Tillich lists this source after the more obvious ones like Scriptures and Church history, and he points out that a theologian uses this source in two ways. He is in unavoidable contact because his spiritual life and even his language is conditioned by his cultural environment, but he also deals more directly with these data either as a help, as a challenge or as an object of his theological reflection. (Cf. *Ibid.*)

ever-new hermeneutic experience. Tillich would agree with Ricoeur that this experiential reappropriation can never lead to absolute knowledge, but in addition he would emphasize with Habermas the importance of the hermeneutical, emancipative praxis. With respect to the norm of this interpretative process, Tillich observes that there is a growth which is unconscious and cannot be produced intentionally.<sup>1</sup> He distinguishes four elements in the norm, namely that it should be positively concrete, constructive, derived from the sources and created by the collective experience of the religious group. The variation in the norm obviously is a matter of emphasis and the present focus of attention is on estrangement and despair which makes the aspect of New Being within the symbol of the Cross the material norm of systematic theology today.<sup>2</sup>

In this light we must understand Tillich's hermeneutical encounter (apologetics) between Biblical Religion and contemporary ontology. Hamilton and others claim that Tillich has never come near to relating the factual life of Jesus to the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, pp. 49f.



ontological concept of New Being.<sup>1</sup> Tillich however, does not claim that ontology exhausts Biblical theism, but only that the concrete symbol of Jesus as the Christ in fact relates to the existential quest for being in all its forms of rational, social and historical dimensions. Biblical personalism does not contradict ontology, despite its differences in emphasis.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand we should realize that we are speaking symbolically if we call God a person. Biblical symbols are richer than can be expressed in ontological structures, but as a minimum it

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<sup>1</sup>This is the main contention of Hamilton. Cf. especially op. cit. pp. 158-173. Armbruster lists the main complaints tabled in this respect. Cf. op. cit. p. 195. Osborne points out that the main contribution of Tillich consists in having shown in which hermeneutical approach the questions should be asked, namely in the most courageous confrontation with contemporary thought. Cf. op. cit. pp. 205. Although Schmitz knows that in Tillich's system the ontological question itself is formulated in view of the Christian message, he constantly points out that the ontological categories abbreviate the theological answers. He even objects to an ontological understanding of love as a unification of being. His comments become incomprehensible unless he either accepts a complete dichotomy between a religious and an ontological concern or restricts his disagreement to the fact that Tillich did not explain all possible implications. However, to say that the concept of participation in being holds prevalence over creation and redemption is simply misunderstanding Tillich's apologetic intentions. (op. cit. pp. 218-22 and 250f.)

<sup>2</sup>'Ontology can receive the christological question ... Every philosophy shows the traits of its birthplace ... To say that Jesus as the Christ is the concrete place where the *Logos* becomes visible is an assertion of faith ... But is not an assertion which contradicts ... the search for ultimate reality.' (*Bibl. Rel.* pp. 75f.) Tillich is not aiming at a *summa* of answers to all possible questions, but at a central orientation 'in view of the chaos of our spiritual life'. (*ST.I*, p. 59).

should be required that they fully answer the critical quest for being.<sup>1</sup> These hermeneutical presuppositions are crucial and they seem to be ignored too easily. Another instance of this is the allegation that Tillich's ontology prevails to the extent of reducing the historical Christ event to marginal proportions.<sup>2</sup> Can this event be ignored as the center of the hermeneutic circle after it has generated the quest of New Being? Can the reappropriating experience be comprehensible within this circle but without the central *kairos* of Jesus as the Christ?<sup>3</sup>

With respect to the hermeneutic problem it is finally most instructive to examine Tillich's view of myth in relation to

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<sup>1</sup>Especially the relation between ontology and personalism is raised constantly e.g. in: Nörenberg op. cit. 215f. Where Tillich objects to the objectifying tendencies in theism Nörenberg insists that we should call God a Person. Tillich with his concept of the transcendent Personal-Itself (*Bibl. Rel.* p. 83) seems much closer to Aquinas' approach for he says 'God who makes us ... personal ... is completely personal in our encounter with him. It is not that we first know what person is and then apply the concept of God to this. But in the encounter with God we first experience what person should mean.' (*Ibid.* p. 27). Aquinas says: 'creatura intantum eum repraesentat ... inquantum perfectionem aliquam habet: non tamen ita quod repraesentet eum, sicut aliquid eiusdem speciei vel generis, sed sicut principium excellens'. (*S.Th.I*, q. 13, a 2 resp.)

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Nörenberg op. cit. pp. 218f. The critics often forget that Tillich chose ontology as the frame of reference in order to break through the tradition which made religion an isolated function, mainly in the ethical sense of following Jesus' examples or rules of behaviour.

<sup>3</sup>It cannot be denied that Tillich's considerations about history deal more explicitly with the belief in something new than with the relationship to the origin, but he definitely holds that his approach is christological and incomprehensible without the figure of Jesus as the Christ.

religion and science. Like Ricoeur, he excludes existence without myth because by definition this is the category in which we speak about the estrangement from, and the quest of the Unconditioned. Even a total integration of all meaning structures could not fail to speak in myths and symbols.<sup>1</sup> Finitude forbids us to usurpate the sacred and postulate absolute knowledge. The nature of myth as the reappropriation of the mythological tradition consequently requires that the myth should be prophetically broken in name of the Unconditioned meaning. Because evil, or the estrangement from the Unconditioned due to objectification, forms the center of myth, as Ricoeur holds, we must conclude that myth both requires to be and resents being broken.

The actual sacred forms are in fact alienated realities, which should be both exposed and reappropriated in creative acts of cult, myth-telling and piety.<sup>2</sup> The school of Heidegger tends to blame Cartesian sciences for man's alienation, but in fact it is rather the objectification process that forms the kernel of our predicament. Moreover, we should realize that science and metaphysics themselves are not a-mythical, but rather 'exhibit a mythological consciousness', by using symbols 'that

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ricoeur op. cit. p. 526 and *Ges. W. V*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup>'Kein Mythos ist religiös der nicht in Kultus und Frömmigkeit lebendig ist ... Die im Mythos enthalten Vergegenständlichung des Göttlichen ... wird von der prophetische Frömmigkeit bekämpft, von der mystischen überboten, von der philosophischen als unwürdig und widersinnig dargetan ... Die Mythos ist überwunden aber die mythische Substanz ist geblieben.' (*Ges. W.V*, p. 189).

pulsate with the depth of reality'.<sup>1</sup> Breaking the myth is our first hermeneutical and religious task and atheism has the religious function of reminding us of this task.<sup>2</sup>

This is possible, however, solely because myth is never total alienation. Myths and their religious symbols are structured forms of man's union with the transcendent meaning (Gestalt of grace). The divine is both a shattering abyss and a creative ground exactly because it confronts the subject - object process of alienation, which is most painfully experienced in the demonic objectification of the sacred within the rational functions. Somewhat presumptuously Tillich holds that his ontological analysis expresses accurately the mythological understanding of the human situation.<sup>3</sup> Considering what has been said regarding the coincidence of symbolic and non-symbolic statements as well as the relation between myth and metaphysics, we may contend that it is the first task of any hermeneutics of encounter (or method of correlation) to make reappropriation of one's own tradition possible by ever more extending and clarifying the horizon of our understanding.<sup>4</sup> The hermeneutic encounter is a religious praxis which 'takes its object into the transcendent

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<sup>1</sup>Adams p. 246 Cf. *Ges. W.V.* pp. 190-192.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Adams p. 246f.

<sup>3</sup>'Sie lehrt jene Symbole und Mythen verstehn' (*Ges.W.V.*,p.231).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Ricoeur op. cit. p. 526.

unity of unambiguous life' and participates in the *agapē* that 'characterizes the divine life itself symbolically and essentially.'<sup>1</sup> As hermeneutic reflection in which the myth is both broken and recaptured, the encounter appears as *kairos* and as *symbol* at the same time.

## II.6 THE DIALOGUE

With regard to the dialogue in a pluralist society we have the word of Rahner that 'er muss umfasst bleiben von der schweigende Ehrfurcht darüber dass das, worüber geredet wird, über alles was gesagt wird unaussprechlich erhaben ist'.<sup>2</sup> Tillich's view of symbolism can leave no doubt that he is ready to agree with this. His critics, however, attack him for stressing transcendence while at the same time reducing the divine revelation to a purely ontological analysis. Concentrating on the underlying hermeneutic principles, we notice that Tillich surpasses other methods like Ricoeur's by pointing out that symbols should be understood within the community's confrontation with the historical situation, the *kairos*, so that they are seen primarily as actively mediating the fullness of

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<sup>1</sup>ST. III, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>K. Rahner, *Der Dialog in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft* in: J.B. Metz: *Weltverständnis im Glauben*, 1965, pp. 297f.

unambiguous life.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, he knows that there is no unambiguous relationship between symbols and ultimate meaning fulfillment, so that he should agree with Freud's and Marx' findings, formulated in Ricoeur's words: 'to seek meaning is no longer to spell out the consciousness of meaning, but to decipher its expression'.<sup>2</sup> This raises doubts about the validity of Tillich's criterion of ultimate concern and about his critical phenomenology if not in application to his own tradition, certainly in that to others. Is it not a deceptive tool?

Tillich's first reply would be that we judge other structures by this tool only if we want to evaluate their forms for our own religious needs or if we want to offer them our quest of ultimacy, that is, only within a dialogue that presumes a universal revelation.

Universal revelation, in Tillich's view, is a matter not only of the individual's relation to the divine, but, demonic distortions apart, of cultural traditions as such. As early as 1931 he recognized humanist groups as latent forms of what he would later call the Spiritual Community. As such the concrete relations between people that live by the new power to be are

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<sup>1</sup>Ricoeur would probably not deny this, but he actually pays little attention to the fact that symbols arise from mankind's practical dealings with life, it seems.

<sup>2</sup>Ricoeur op. cit. p. 33.

forms reflecting the Spiritual Presence.<sup>1</sup> These forms are not always explicitly religious symbols but they are visible and effective mediators; consequently this view differs distinctly from the doctrine of the invisible Church. Often we find a visible integration of the three functions of life, howbeit fragmentary, which must be attributed to the impact of revelation from which results faith and love. Latency means that the manifest religious self-expression is missing because the ultimate criterion of Christ's Cross has not yet been received. The reception of that criterion makes Churches manifest representatives of that same Spiritual Community. Both in the state of preparation, however, and in the state of reception of this final revelation, this Community must be considered created by the divine Spirit and marked by faith and love.<sup>2</sup> The latent Community is 'not simply an infant awaiting baptism; it is already a mature adult member ... and under the drive of the Spirit it voices criticism of the manifest Church.'<sup>3</sup> From Tillich's christian point of view this sets the stage and assigns

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<sup>1</sup> 'The problem of the Church and society prompted me to distinguish ... between the "manifest" and the "latent" Church ... The existence of a Christian Humanism outside the Christian Church seems to make such a distinction necessary'. (*Interpretation of History* p. 48 quoted in Armbruster op. cit. p. 216).

<sup>2</sup> 'Latent or manifest the Spiritual Community is created by the divine Spirit as manifest in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ ... the community of faith and love'. (*ST.III*, p. 155).

<sup>3</sup> Armbruster op. cit. p. 234. The absence of the ultimate criterion however, leaves the latent Community without a 'principle of resistance against profanization and demonization' (*Ibid.* p. 215.)

the roles for the dialogue. Tillich does not claim that non-Christians should accept this view and neither does he remove the Church's responsibilities. Witnessing to mankind's dynamic powers and being a guardian against its distortions remains a task even if we recognize that other structures are a Gestalt of grace, a creation of the Spirit, in which man does show concern about the '*Lebenssinn*', i.e. about the ultimate meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Universalism, therefore, is not based on the experimental discovery of Christian forms, but on the time-honoured view, that no search for real meaning is possible without the logically preceding encounter and acceptance of the ultimate meaning. At the same time this results in a universal, material faith, howbeit distorted or underdeveloped. 'Every Religion is the receptive answer to revelatory experiences.'<sup>2</sup> Moreover, accepting the validity of these symbols we must say that 'without the symbols created by universal revelation the final revelation would not be understandable'.<sup>3</sup> Tillich would not agree with Tavad

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich has never drawn the conclusion that the phrase 'Gestalt of grace' should be applied to these groups and structures, even though he acknowledged the authenticity of their revelatory origin. A first explicit study on them we find in 1929: *Nichtkirchliche Religionen* Cf. *Ges.W.V*, pp. 13-31.

<sup>2</sup>*ST.III*, p. 99. Tillich illustrates this tradition of universalism in *Chr. Enc.* pp. 27-51.

<sup>3</sup>*ST.I*, p. 139. However: 'the universal revelation as such could not have prepared the final revelation. Since the latter is concrete, only one concrete development could have been its immediate preparation' (*Ibid.* p. 142).



that the Church should be selective and that the separation between believers and non-believers must precede the *kerugma*. Even more strongly would he reject any missionary activity that imposes religious forms with claims of ultimacy.<sup>1</sup> The Church's double task is the commitment to both the final revelation and humanity in all its dimensions.<sup>2</sup> His interest in dialogue and in the religious question of mankind is of a strongly practical and ethical nature, in which he is comparable to Barth and Brunner.<sup>3</sup>

Among the partners of the dialogue, the secularist, quasi-religious movements such as Nationalism and Communism take a peculiar position, because they seem to have a similarly

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Prot. Era* p. 57 and *ST.III*, p. 193. Tillich blames post-reformation developments for a loss of universalism and for an unjustified subjection of foreign cultures Cf. *ST.III*, p. 171. It could be advanced that a bent towards individualism in both Catholic and Protestant approaches made missionary activity less prone to embark on an intensive dialogue than the early Jesuit endeavours proved to be. Tavad, like Bonhoeffer, objects that Tillich declares people members of the holy community even though they are unaware of being so. Cf. Armbruster op. cit. p. 299. It is undeniable that Tillich's approach has possible dangers of ending the dialogue before the other has been heard, but as a theological presupposition it can hardly be considered objectionable.

<sup>2</sup>'The purpose of missions ... is not to save individuals ... nor corss-fertilization of Religions and cultures ... rather the actualization of the Spiritual Community within concrete churches all over the world.' (*ST.III*, p. 193).

<sup>3</sup>'What he is seeking is ... a fundamental definition of the ethical task of religion'. (H. Niebuhr, Preface to P. Tillich: *The Religious Situation*, 1964, p. 22).

devastating effect on all Religions. Tillich's evaluation of these movements is very ambivalent. Protestantism is both blamed for favouring their development and praised for fulfilling a religious obligation thereby.<sup>1</sup> These movements resulted from prophetic, rational criticism and now 'these outgrowths of the Christian civilization' constitute the common horizon or forum before which the World Religions are meeting.<sup>2</sup> The ambivalence is even greater when Tillich deals with technology as the first and most powerful disrupting influence on non-Western cultures. He considers its detrimental effects short-lived and he is less pessimistic than others who have been influenced by Heidegger's thought in this respect.<sup>3</sup> After he has described the worldwide dialogue as an encounter

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<sup>1</sup> 'The inner dilemma of Protestantism lies in this that it must protest against every religious or cultural realization which seeks to be intrinsically valid, but that it needs such realizations if it is to be able to make its protest in any meaningful way' (Ibid. p. 192).

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from *ST.III*, p. 379. We must ask 'the question of the future of all Religions in the face of the victory of secularism all over the world'. (*Chr. Enc.* p. 27. Cf. also *ibid.* p. 63 and 77). Tillich moves too easily in classifying movements with the help of his three categories of sacramental, prophetic and mystical orientation.

<sup>3</sup> 'In the depth of technical creativity as well as in the structure of the secular mind there are religious elements which have ... offered an alternative to the old traditions as well as to mere indifference'. (*Ibid.* p. 14). His criticism of capitalist mentalities however, is very severe, particularly in his book '*The Religious Situation*'. 'Soweit ihr Gegenstand die autonome Wirtschaft und ihre Gipfelung im Kapitalismus ist, wird Sachlichkeit zum Dämonendienst'. (*Ges. W.V.*, p. 30).

between the established Religions and the quasi-Religions he develops the theological principles by which Christians are to judge others and themselves in such a dialogue. Against the relativistic syncretism of Troeltsch and Toynbee, and against the Barthian rejection of a universal *logos*, he holds that it is possible to adhere to the time-honoured universalist approach without giving up every criterion. Christianity should judge itself as the Gestalt, the embodiment of the meaning visible in that personal life which 'crucified the particular in himself for the sake of the universal'.<sup>1</sup> From this follows an absolute respect for any form in which Religion universally negates itself as a separate function. The evaluation of self and others, therefore, should be in view of a dialogue rather than of a conversion, and it should be inspired by a cosmos-embracing love.

There can be little doubt that this approach of the dialogue contains substantial theological foundations for an open encounter, but at the same time it encourages useless typological classifications and an overemphasis on the need of a constant reformation of religious forms. Before we attempt to evaluate Tillich's method, however, let us consider the theological aim

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<sup>1</sup>*Chr. Enc.* p. 81. It does not seem improper to note that Christ did not crucify Himself, but was crucified. With regard to dialogue this means self-negation should not be iconoclastic, but accepted for the sake of a well-defined greater good. Paradox, cannot be a value in itself.

and motivation of the dialogue between the Religions. Already in the 1920's Tillich had indicated the need for all mankind to become conscious of its basic religious unity.<sup>1</sup> When he speaks of the latent and manifest Spiritual Community, he clearly intends to present the Christian ecclesiology with its notions of unity and universality. As we have seen, he conceives of symbols and their importance precisely in terms of their community-creating power. They radiate the power of being owing to the fact that an internally vital and centered group is conscious of its historical vocation. Tillich undoubtedly aims at the unification of mankind in religious respect and he professes that the Church, as the representative of the Kingdom should embark on this liberating and unifying task, with a view to establishing an increasingly manifest Spiritual Community. This should not be interpreted, however, in terms of proselytizing, missionary activities, as should be clear from the hermeneutical self-criticism of Christianity which Tillich proposes and by which he urges Christianity to become ever more self-critical and less imposing.

Tillich's objectives seem much in line with J.B. Metz' political theology and J. Moltmann's eschatological orientation, which argue that apologetic theology, if it wants to spell out the

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<sup>1</sup>'ein auf die Menschheit gerichtetes religiöses Einheitsbewusstsein' (*Ges.W.II*, p. 97).

divine answer to man's existential quest in all dimensions, ought to take the historical, political situation seriously and consider it as a *kairos* in which our practical response is demanded.<sup>1</sup> The third volume of *Systematic Theology* gives a careful analysis of the relation between religion and the social and historical dimensions of man. Many authors consider this volume the core of Tillich's theology. It conceives the Religions as communities which offer man the symbols by which he can grasp the historical moment as a *kairos* i.e. as the immanence of the ultimate ground of meaning which urges him to actualize new community-creating forms of meaning.

In the introduction to this third volume Tillich points out that the present day contact between Religions, and their common experience of being attacked by the quasi-Religions, creates a challenge for theology to see this as a *kairos* and to turn the factual contact into a unifying dialogue.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that we should nurture utopian, progressivistic ideas, for 'there is no united mankind in history'.<sup>3</sup> We should not try,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Politische Theologie' does not mean the theology of politics. It is the conquest of an individualistic, anthropocentric theology which compromised the Christian message by establishing its universalistic claims on other-worldliness. In the political theology 'wird die Welt primär als ... Geschichtswelt ... Theologie primär als eschatologisch, gesellschaftskritische Theologie sichtbar'. (J.B. Metz: *Zum Verhältnis von Kirche und Welt*, 1967, p. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ST.III, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> ST.III, p. 311.

as Teilhard de Chardin is tempted to do, to design a unified Religion within the limits of history, even though we should try to formulate the inner aim of the history of Religions and believe that this can be approached in fragmentary manifestations.<sup>1</sup> The real task is missionary, therefore, but only in a very limited sense of the word. Tillich strongly emphasizes the world-unifying impact that secularist movements have, which movements he calls quasi-Religions, because they carry a consciousness of ultimate concern embodied in concrete forms and symbols.<sup>2</sup> In view of this fact Religions should concentrate on their transmitted forms, not in order to perform a rescue operation for defunct cultural objects, but because they realize that this unifying experience, like any other experience, is co-determined by a religious frame of reference which should not be allowed to operate in the obscurity of the unconscious. There is no such thing as a pure experience and we must realize that the symbols of our religious traditions are involved in the present encounter between the cultures, whether we want it or not. It is of the utmost importance that this dimension of underlying conceptions and symbols is analyzed in a dialogue, in which the greatest capacity and willingness to present one's

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<sup>1</sup>'Theonomy appears in what I called "the Religion of the Concrete Spirit" in fragments ... its end is expectation which goes beyond time to eternity' (*Fut. Rel.* pp.90f.) Neither Barth nor Tillich realizes how close they are in this matter, as Gabus points out. Cf. op. cit. pp. 230-234.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Chr. Enc.* p.94.

own tradition is combined with the acceptance of a common ground and of the validity of the other tradition.

The question should be asked whether the obligation to activate the unified Spiritual Community is compatible with such an open encounter. Should we choose mission or dialogue, both or neither? It is no surprise that Tillich does not think these alternatives mutually exclusive. As in so many other cases, he chooses to stand on the boundary between a dialogue which refuses to absolutize any contingent reality, and an uncompromizing commitment to the decisive criterion of New Being, which he as a Christian relates to the symbol of Jesus as the Christ. How does this commitment to a final criterion operate within a meaningful dialogue? What does Tillich reject in the approaches of Troeltsch, Toynbee and MacQuarrie? What does it add to the discussion when he says that we should keep to one absolute statement, namely, that nothing should be absolutized?

We wonder why Tillich criticizes Troeltsch's opinion that the truth exists in the depth of every Religion and that a dialogue should be restricted to an unintentional process of cross-fertilization, for Tillich himself says that the actual dialogue should reach out to the depth of every Religion.<sup>1</sup> This depth of every Religion, however, in Tillich's view, is the

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<sup>1</sup>Compare *Ges. W.* XII, p. 169 and *Fut. Rel.* p. 97.

point where the new, the ultimate, breaks through the concrete forms. This dimension cannot be entirely new, for man can receive only within the forms that are already predisposed to so receiving. Consequently, if there is to be a fruitful contact of any sort, it presupposes basic elements in all traditions that can be fertilized in a dialogue. There must be a common ground between the partners. Ignoring this dimension is tantamount to pleading for two unrelated monologues.

This common ground, says Tillich, can only be the awareness that ultimacy must break through particularity. Renouncing absolutism is not enough. One should be committed to the ultimate meaning fulfillment, one should not leave this to some random, unconscious process. With regard to the history-determining *logos* and to the growth of theological norms, he had argued that they are beyond man's conscious controls, but he refused to conclude from this that man should cease to be concerned with these realities. The socialist background had taught him that critical action of highly motivated prophets is indispensable to prevent irrational and ideological distortions. To let things develop at random is itself a decision. Consequently the commitment to a final criterion which Tillich demands is a stand against indifference, rather than the material belief in one creed or another. To draw on other traditions for private intellectual, aesthetic or spiritual benefit, rather than to embark on a dialogue which creates a 'Blutzusammenhang', that seems to be the attitude to which Tillich takes exception.



Mission and dialogue for the sake of mankind presuppose rather than exclude each other in Tillich's perception, because the symbols of the unambiguous life mediate salvation or New Being only to the extent that they create a dialogue, a communication.

Although we must concede that, theologically speaking, Tillich's combination of mission and dialogue is well founded and supported by the concepts of universal revelation, correlation, symbol and *kairos*, there is still substantial reason to be dissatisfied with the directives which he gives for the actual dialogue. He speaks of a 'seemingly incomprehensible jungle which the history of Religions represents'.<sup>1</sup> He calls the dynamic typology the most fruitful means to understand this jungle, but we cannot fail to see that this method is conceived from one central conviction, namely, that there should be a development from a space-oriented, self-sufficient sacramentalism to a time-oriented, self-transcendent, Protestant attitude.

Our main objection to this does not concern the predominance of the idea of finitude and the paradox involved in it, but rather the presupposition that the ontological categories in which this crucial idea is conceived should be applicable to the analysis of other traditions. Determining the typological elements in other traditions with such culture-bound and even polemic conceptions appears to be a futile exercise. It is certainly

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<sup>1</sup>Chr. Enc. p. 54.

true that he refuses to draw up a typology starting from arbitrarily interpreted phenomena and it should also be remarked that he expects the main results of the dialogue to spring from the fact that it 'is accompanied by a silent dialogue *within* the representatives of each of the participating Religions'.<sup>1</sup> We cannot fail to see, however, that the critical phenomenology, which was conceived within the crucible of Germany's cultural and religious crisis, is applied to the worldwide dialogue not only rashly, but with the loss of some of its most valuable elements.

We feel that the hermeneutics of critical praxis, which was very much alive in Tillich's early contacts with socialist and other critical, secularist movements, ceases to be operative in his later works, although he never failed to stress its importance. His later works, including Systematic Theology, appear to depend almost exclusively on the actualizing hermeneutics and on the anthropocentric tendency of European theology.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>'Under the method of the dynamic typology every dialogue between Religions is accompanied by a silent dialogue *within* the representatives of each of the participating Religions'. (*Chr. Enc.* p.57).

<sup>2</sup>The anthropocentric approach has become prevalent not only in the hermeneutic theology of Bultmann's school, but also, on the Catholic side, in the so-called transcendental Thomism of K. Rahner, B. Lonergan and to some degree E. Schillebeeckx. Rahner speaks of theology as transcendental anthropology and advances an explication of the meaning of revelation 'auf der Grundlage eines zutiefst "anthropozentrischen" Verständnis-horizontes' (C. Geffre, *Von Apologetik zur "politische Theologie"* in: H. Peukert, *Diskussion zur "politische Theologie"*. 1969, p. 109).

It is surprising that he should insist on applying this approach to other traditions, even though he is aware that the consciousness of estrangement, conflict and self-destruction is typical for the present situation in Western culture and that the norm of New Being has been conceived in answer to that situation.<sup>1</sup> What has become of his conviction concerning the role of the unconscious, when he thinks that he can decipher typological elements from outside with no other tool than phenomenological intuition? Can the dialogue be fruitful if concentrated solely alleged essentials or should it rather be a total, cultural experience?<sup>2</sup> And, most of all, we should ask why he has retreated almost entirely in the cognitive, intellectualist domain, whereas he started out his encounter with European

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Footnote 2 continued

Tillich's strong inclination to idealism and the phenomenological ontology of Heidegger have earned him the criticism of Gabus (op. cit. pp. 224f.) and Gilkey (op. cit. p. 307n.) to the effect that he pays too little attention to the ontic reality.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ST.I*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>In a very instructive article on 'Hindu - Christian Dialogue: Its Religious and Cultural Implications' (*Studies in Religion Sciences Religieuses* 1 (1971) pp. 83-97). K. Klostermaier points out very convincingly that any dialogue should be aware that the real issues far transcend what we usually consider as the field of religion. The dialogue cannot fail to be a total experience in which all cultural dimensions should be considered interrelated. Concentration on essentials may be dividing rather than uniting mankind, whereas personal relations of friendship may be more constructive, and can shed light often on the most fundamental issues, which then call for a deeper dialogue.

movements with an emphasis on the practical search for new, life-giving symbols.

We should point to two reasons that could be given in favour of Tillich's method. To the extent that this method is valuable in explaining the religious tradition underneath secularism and technology, it can be helpful in the creation and explication of the growing cultural bond between the cultures. Tillich rightly argues that these movements embody a prophetic element of Christianity and that they are based on science and metaphysics in which the mythological tradition pulsates, as can be seen in the symbolic self-expressions these quasi-Religions have adopted. To ignore this would be unwise and Tillich's method, therefore, is valuable as a contribution to the encounter, to the extent that it illuminates the relation between Christianity and the movements which now attack non-Christian Religions.

However, this method could be helpful not only as an interpretative tool, but also as a new element within the critical horizon of the other Religions' internal dialogue. If we agree with Ricoeur and Tillich that the problem of evil and finitude, or the problem of the alienating objectification, forms the kernel of myths and religious symbolism, we must accept that there is in every tradition what J.B. Metz has called a '*dan-*

*gerous memory*,<sup>1</sup> i.e. a constant awareness which endangers or rather challenges the present state of man. The structure and operation of this '*dangerous memory*' cannot be determined from outside with concepts derived from another tradition - and here Tillich's method is bound to fail - but as the center of a living Religion it can and must integrate all the questions that appear at its horizon. The categories in which this happens are determined entirely by the existing structures of that tradition, which should be analyzed by other than phenomenological methods. Tillich's ideas seem to hold elements that make the use of such other methods appropriate.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we must say that Tillich's theology has presented an exceptionally strong case for both the possibility and the need for Christianity to enter into a truly open dialogue. In particular his positive evaluation of the cultural and rational forms in correlation with the universal revelation has cleared away many obstacles on the side of Christianity. Although many critics advance objections concerning the interpretation of certain dogmas, it seems that on the whole Tillich

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<sup>1</sup>'Jene gefährliche Erinnerung, die unsere Gegenwart bedrängt und in Frage stellt weil wir uns in ihr an unausgestandene Zukunft erinnern'. (J. B. Metz, "Politische Theologie" in der Diskussion. in: H. Peukert op. cit. p. 287).

<sup>2</sup>His conception of Gestalt combined with the insight of the universality of polarity between typological elements should make him particularly prepared for the structuralist methods of analysis.

can be said to present a solid and acceptable presentation of the Western religious tradition.

When it comes to the concepts of symbol and *kairos*, in relation to the social and historical dimensions of man, we even feel that his thought is almost directed to making such a dialogue come about. But we cannot help being disappointed when he actually offers his directives for such a dialogue. These directives are entirely concerned with an intellectual discussion about essentials and they cannot fail to lapse into academic curiosity and relativistic indifference, in which the universalism of revelation is reduced to a private feeling of ultimate concern fed by an eclectic amalgam of symbols.<sup>1</sup> One cannot hold that Tillich himself explicitly favours this, but he fails to place the dialogue in the framework of the actual creation of the 'Blutzusammenhang' and the total involvement in the search for new life-giving symbols. He remains in the position

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<sup>1</sup>What we have said about Tillich's aversion from individualism in religious matters, does not prevent him from emphasizing the enduring value of Christianity's interest in the concrete person. 'The Kingdom of God is a ... personalistic symbol ... Nirvana is an ontological symbol'. (*Chr. Enc.* p.64). H.R. Schlette points out that speaking about the 'political theology' and the socio-critical involvement does not contradict the fact that religion will always be a 'Privatsache'. We have seen that Tillich's main objection against the present mass-culture concentrates on the fact that it robs man of his identity. 'Diese Freisetzung und Vermittlung der Privatheit ist sehr wohl eine Errungenschaft des Christentums, die ... gegenüber asiatischer Religiosität,, afrikanische Tribalismus und auch modernen Kollektivismen ... eine Befreiung bedeutet' (R.R. Schlette, *Religion ist Privatsache* H. Peukert op. cit. p. 76).

of a spectator, although he had reproached Troeltsch for seeking the meaning of Religions in their depth rather than in the beyond. Having emphasized so strongly the *agapē* dimension of the Spiritual Community,<sup>1</sup> he now fails to apply this to the present dialogue. We need new symbols not for another systematic theology, but for mankind, symbols that are born, rather than created, in the actual struggle for meaning, symbols that are revealing, unifying and rational, symbols overcoming estrangement by true communication.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich spends many pages on this concept of *agapē* and he compares it to the Platonic conception of *eros*, which 'drives the soul through all levels of reality to ultimate reality, to truth itself'. This *eros* is the cognitive desire, which forms part of the *agapē*. (*Bibl. Rel.* p. 72). *Agapē* concerns the concrete person and it is the accepting and reuniting affirmation of the other self by participation in his personal center in terms of the eternal meaning of his being. Cf. *ST.* III, p. 45 and 178. This *agapē* makes relativism impossible because it 'cuts into the detached safety of a merely aesthetic *eros* ... makes the cultural *eros* responsible and the mystical *eros* personal'. (*Love, Power and Justice*, p. 118). *Agapē* however 'is first of all the love God has toward the creature and through the creature to himself ... and then the *agapē* of creature toward creature'. (*ST.* III, p. 138). It is God who accepts creature, holds fast to it despite the demonic estrangement and re-establishes its holiness and dignity. Of man the same cannot be said in his relation to God, but still his faithful adherence to the ultimacy that grasps him, is the participation which gives being beyond the subject - object structure, in all rational functions. Cf. *ST.* I, p. 152. *Agapē* must be judgment before it can be unification, it must be critical but not abstract. '*Agapē* loves in everybody and through everybody love itself'. (*Love, Power and Justice*, p. 119).

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps we should invert Rahner's saying: 'Darum aber ist jeder wahre Dialog nur das unendliche Bemühen, dass im Glanze der ausgesagten, gemeinsam besessenen Wahrheit auch *erscheine*,... die Liebe, die allein glaubhaft ist' (Art. cit. p. 297). The practical encounter in the present world should be the most effective symbol at this time, a time which Tillich rightly considers a *kairos*.

Tillich rehabilitated myths and symbols as universals of all authentic religion; he stressed that the latter cannot be identified with one absolutized form; he denied that the religious principle can ever come to an end; he resented pure relativism which explains away the real import of different religious traditions; he rejected any attempt to view religion as an insignificant by-product of cultural activities; and most of all, he illustrated concretely how a theologian should stand on the boundary between different traditions. "Theology on the boundary", then, is a most adequate summation of Tillich's system.<sup>1</sup> When it comes to standing on the boundary between World Religions, however, Tillich should be aware that the dialogue requires a more involved approach. Whereas the philosophy of one tradition shares the bulk of its insights with the Religion of that same tradition, so that standing on the boundary between them is relatively easy, the same cannot be said of the encounter between different religious traditions. Theology on the boundary, in that case, not only needs heuristic tools other than those that Tillich proposes, but first of all a practical orientation. However, we feel that Tillich's work, centered on the concepts of *symbol* and *kairos*, creates a very promising framework and a valuable impetus for such a dialogue.

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<sup>1</sup>Under this title W. Nicholls discusses Tillich's theology in: W. Nicholls, *Systematic and Philosophical Theology*, 1969.



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