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Department of Theology

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Squaring Paul Tillich's ecclesiological circle

by

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ARTS AND HUMANITIES: THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE of Doctor of Philosophy

SQUARING PAUL TILLICH'S ECCLESIOLOGICAL CIRCLE
BY

BARBARA KNIGHT

The thesis presents the hypothesis that the systematic theology of Paul Tillich (1886-1965) offers significant new benefits towards church unity.

The methodology used in pursuit of this aim, is a critical analysis of Tillich's early and late thought. Tillich's work was influenced by the German philosophical and theological schools and came to expression in American academia in his publication *Systematic Theology*. The results of this analysis reveal Tillich's consistent commitment to the concept of *Gestalt*. This finding has been broadened to include the concept that the strength of ecclesial unity is dependent upon the understanding that every ecclesial denomination is an effective element in the constituency of the whole Church. This argument is supported by a deconstruction of Tillich's system that is keyed into the hermeneutical theories of Gadamer and Derrida. The system is then reconstructed in terms of a new *Gestalt* that turns on the hypothesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the Tillichian system, rather than the complementary relationship that Tillich claims. This conclusion is based upon the system being perceived as being founded upon the Western classical philosophical and theological traditions. A critique of Tillich's incorporation of modern existential hermeneutics into this system is made principally in relation to the existentialist thought of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. A hermeneutic of Tillich's existential critique serves to highlight the questions that result from existential disruption rather than to label him as an existentialist *per se*. The system is thus moved forward into the post-modern context under new hermeneutics. An analysis of Tillich's ecclesiology reveals that this is both eschatological and Trinitarian in nature. The relationship between Tillich's system and ecclesiology is brought into dialogue by means of their being expressed in terms of an ecclesiological circle. These hermeneutics are compared and contrasted with the ecclesiologies of Zizioulas and Haight and the published ecumenical documents of The World Council of Churches in order to reveal their commonalties. When the system has thus been applied to the current ecumenical dialogue, then it becomes apparent that the *raison d'être* of Tillich's system is the Church and the *raison d'être* of the Church is the system. The squaring of Paul Tillich's ecclesiological circle is thus made complete.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, BARBARA KNIGHT ...., [please print name]

declare that the thesis entitled [enter title]

SQUARING PAUL TILLICH'S ECCLESIOLOGICAL CIRCLE ....

....

and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

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Signed: ...Barbara Knight..

Date:...13th March 2009...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved brother Goff

Godfrey Hurton (1944-2006)

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to highlight the philosophical and theological system of the German Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich (1886-1965). The thesis will offer the hypothesis that Tillich's system, as it relates to his ecclesiology, has the potential to advance post-modern ecumenical dialogue towards Church unity. At the same time, the intention of the thesis is towards raising the profile of Tillich's system and ecclesiology in the post-modern British philosophical and theological academic consciousness.

The process of researching the thesis has necessarily involved critical analysis of both the early and later philosophical and theological thought of Tillich. It is important therefore that a clear distinction be made between the context of his early and later work. This includes his work from 1919 up until 1933 when he was appointed Professor of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt and his later work up to 1965 when he was Nuveen Professor of theology and sociology at the University of Chicago.

Tillich's systematic theology was therefore formed and developed within the cultural contexts of both Germany and America. The influence of Marxism is most apparent in his early thought and any critical analysis of his work up to 1933 should be mindful of this influence. For example, Tillich analysed the dialectics of Marxism and the doctrines of Christianity in his work, *The Socialist Decision* in 1933. Here, Tillich questions Marx's rejection of religion and religion's hostility to Marxism, arguing that such conflict stems from Marxism's claim for science as a substitute for religion and the Church's antithesis to science.[1] Tillich calls for a theoretical foundation for dialogue between Socialism and Christianity that looks forward towards a new age in which an awareness of God in every human predicament and culture is acknowledged.[2] Tillich's departure from Germany to America in 1933 brought him into a cultural context in which he was able to develop this call. The central hypothesis of this thesis is that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in the Tillichian system. The critical analysis that supports this hypothesis is based mainly upon Tillich's mature major work *Systematic Theology* that was written under the influence of the capitalist and liberal Christian American culture. The argument therefore seeks to place Tillich's call for an awareness of God in the existential situation of this post-modern context.

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[1] Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 1933, 1977 edition, p.81
[2] Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 1933, 1977 edition, p.xiii

The argument also seeks to offer the Tillichian system as conducive to the advancement of post-modern ecumenical ecclesiological dialogue. This raises the question of how the understanding of the term post-modern, as it relates to Christian theology, is defined in this thesis. A chronological perspective would place post-modernism as a period of thought that took root at the end of the modern period as a result of the European Renaissance and the Enlightenment. However, Waugh is right when she argues that, 'totalities such as 'periods' simply do not exist outside the inventive minds of philosophers and historians'.[3] Rather, I would argue that post-modernism is a loose coalition of diverse thought that embraces several disciplines seeking to re-define hitherto acknowledged forms of knowledge. It is representative of a form of cultural relativism with respect to truth, reality and reason, values, linguistic meaning and the self that is informed in contemporary Western culture by Information Technology, consumerism and global economics. The potential consequence for human existence is that consciousness is no longer anchored to a universal ground of truth or reason that was hitherto perceived in modernity.[4] An international group of philosophical and theological scholars argued around this point in 1997 with particular reference to the consequences of the relationship between philosophy and religion for the new millennium.[5] It was argued that contemporary Christian theology finds its focus in the God of the Bible and is best expressed in terms of conceptual and symbolic language.[6] It is this post-modern context that informs the mindset of this thesis. Indeed, it is a mindset that Tillich adopted as early as 1933[7] and that he subsequently resolved by his claim of an inter-dependent relationship between philosophy and theology within his method of correlation in his mature work *Systematic Theology*.[8] This is the method whereby the questions that stem from human existence are answered by the Christian message. Tillich's adoption of conceptual and symbolic language is cross-referenced chiefly against the linguistic theories of Gadamer and Derrida in chapter two.[9] Caputo's claim that Derrida's theory of deconstruction is a preparation for the future messianic event is discussed in chapter ten.[10]

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[3] Waugh, *Postmodernism*, 1992, p.9

[4] It is a human predicament that may be manifested in terms of anxiety and meaninglessness. See for example Lawson's theory in *Reflexivity: The post-modern predicament*, 1985, p.9. Discussed in chap. 8, 'The human predicament and the method of correlation' p.125f.

[5] Conference on 'Religion and Post-modernism', Villanova University, 1997, in Caputo and Scanlon, eds., *God, The Gift and Postmodernism*. Introduction, Caputo and Scanlon

[6] Caputo, Scanlon, eds., *God, The Gift and Postmodernism*, p.11

[7] Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 1933, 1977 edition, p.xiii

[8] Tillich, vol.1, pp. vii, 8, 30-34, 59-66

[9] Gadamer, chap.2, 'The method of correlation', pp.19-22. Derrida, chap.2, 'System and deconstruction', pp.32-33

[10] Chap. 10, 'Tillich's system and ecclesiology – a new ecumenical possibility', p.179, Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*, 1997, pp.xix, xx. Caputo *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are*, 2000. P.263

The central argument that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system allows me to offer it towards dialogue with present day Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiologies. It also allows me to offer the Tillichian system towards dialogue in the ecumenical context of the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

In order to render the hypothesis of the thesis as clear as possible, the conventions adopted and the potential difficulties that arise from their usage need to be addressed and clarified. For example, the dates of the publications of the *Systematic Theology*, that is, volume one, 1951, volume two, 1957 and volume three, 1963, have not been included in the footnotes. However, the chronology of other works cited, that is, both by Tillich and also by other authors, could prove problematic for the reader. I have therefore, for the sake of clarity, supplied within the footnotes, the dates of publication of all referenced work outside the *Systematic Theology*. I have established the context of Tillich's early and later works by including the earliest dates of publication in the footnotes, followed by the date of publication of the source used. For example, *The Protestant Principle and the Proletarian Situation*, a translation of the brochure, *Protestantisches Prinzip und Proletarische Situation*, 1931, in *The Protestant Era*, 1951.

Another potential area of difficulty stems from Tillich's ambiguous terminology for the Church. Indeed, he refers to both 'church' and also to 'Church' both in the lower and upper case, to embrace both the particular and the universal ecclesial contexts. In order to overcome this ambiguity, I have used throughout the upper case 'C' to indicate the universal sense of the word which thus includes all ecclesial denominations and which also abridges his ecclesial terminology, the 'concrete confessional'. Where I have made reference to the particular, I have preceded the lower case form 'church' with the specific ecclesial denomination.

Again, Tillich's references to the divine are expressed in random terms that are potentially ambiguous. For example, God, the Infinite, the Unconditioned, Being-itself, the Spiritual Presence, Jesus as the Christ and the New Being. In order to limit these ambiguities, I have referred to the divine as God throughout the text. I have used Tillich's other terminology only in direct correlation with humanity, for example, in the ontological context where being is in positive correlation with Being-itself.

Yet another potential for ambiguity is my use of the word 'deconstruction' as I have applied it to Tillich's system. I have used this word in the sense of my taking the system apart, that is, of my dismantling the system. However, I have also referred to Derrida's

philosophical theory of 'deconstruction' in support of my hermeneutics of Tillich's system. Specifically, I have borrowed Derrida's strategy of critical engagement with phenomenology and structural linguistics, primarily in chapters two and ten. In this context, reference to Derrida's thought has been integrated into the text and acknowledged in the footnotes.

With these conventions in mind, the thesis turns upon Tillich's claim that systematic theology should serve the needs of the Church. In support of this claim, he argues that any theological system should meet two criteria. Firstly, it should contain the statement of the truth of the Christian message, and secondly, it should contain the interpretation of this truth for every generation.[11] With these criteria in mind, the thesis seeks to reach a critical understanding of Tillich's 'method of correlation' as it comes to expression in his understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology. Tillich seeks to synthesis this relationship but does not fully succeed in this task. Rather, he reaches the conclusion that there is a complementary relationship, in that philosophy and theology are two distinct yet related forms of thought. The thesis turns therefore upon the argument that there is indeed a relationship of synthesis between the disciplines. The significance of this original argument is that it has resonance with post-modern ecumenical ecclesiological thought. In support of this argument, and in parallel with Tillich's consistent adherence to the concept of *Gestalt*, a deconstruction of Tillich's system is made. A reconstruction of the system, wherein all the original philosophical and theological elements are retained, supports the argument of synthesis between the disciplines. This finding is then applied to Tillich's system and ecclesiology in terms of an ecclesiological circle. The argument that this circle has application in post-modern ecumenical dialogue serves to square the circle.

In order to support my critical analysis of Tillich's system, I have made reference, in particular, to his contemporaries, the Protestant theologian Barth and also the Roman Catholic theologian Rahner. In support of my deconstruction of the system, I have made particular reference to Derrida's theory of deconstruction. In my critical analysis of the extent to which modern existentialism influences Tillich's thought, I have confined references mainly to the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. I have endeavoured throughout to highlight the convergence between Tillich's argument that the system and the Church are inextricably linked, by reference to systematic theologians and ecclesiologists from across the denominational divide. In terms of the system, particular

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[11] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.3-4

reference has been made to the Protestant scholar Pannenberg, the Roman Catholic scholar Rahner and the Orthodox scholar Zizioulas.

In terms of ecumenical dialogue, I have again, in particular, referred to the ecumenical ecclesiologies of the Roman Catholic theologian Haight, and again, Zizioulas and also the published ecumenical documents of the Faith and Order Commission which is integral to the World Council of Churches.

The thesis proceeds with a comprehensive deconstruction of Tillich's system. This serves to expose and identify the fundamental philosophical and theological principles that pertain to the system. It becomes evident from the outset that Tillich's epistemology turns upon a wholeness of thought that is consistent with the theory of *Gestalt*. In Tillich's thought, this leads to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the inter-relationship between philosophy and theology within the system. Under my own hermeneutics, it also leads to a deeper understanding of his ecumenical orientation towards the unity of the Church. The thesis thus begins with the argument that Tillich has a clear apologetic agenda, in that whereas he argues that systematic theology should express the self-interpretation of the Church, it should also gain a place for theology within the totality of human knowledge.[12]

An analysis of Tillich's methodology, particularly as it relates to philosophy and theology within his method of correlation, is the central focus of the second chapter. This is the method whereby Tillich argues that the questions that emerge from human existence are answered by the Christian message. His use of conceptual and symbolic language within the method is tested against the hermeneutical theories of Ricoeur, Macquarrie and Gadamer. It emerges that the system is not only apologetic, but also kerygmatic in nature. The methodological analysis reveals the ultimate ontological concepts of being, God, and the unity that pertains between being and God. The methodology also reveals that these ultimate concepts are characterised by finitude. A critique of Derrida's theory of deconstruction serves to endorse the idea that the process of deconstruction allows deeper insight into the system.

Chapter three deals with the ultimate ontological concepts of being, being/Being-itself, and their unity. It emerges that the principle of finitude informs Tillich's philosophical orientation because when finitude is explicated in terms of the ontological being, then it directs humanity towards the ultimate question of God. Again, when God is expressed in terms of Being-itself, that is, the ground and power of being, then a common ontological framework is established with which to argue that there is unity between humanity and God,

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[12] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, his autobiographical sketch, 1936, in *The Boundaries of Our Being*, 1973, p.323

and thus between philosophy and theology. Furthermore, this argument of unity is consistent with Tillich's commitment to the concept of *Gestalt*.

In order to build upon the analysis of the ontological structure and towards reconstructing Tillich's system, an analysis of his philosophical system is made in chapter four. Here, I argue that the Western classical philosophical tradition if normative in Tillich's thought. This is the tradition that derives from humanity's freedom to decide, from knowledge, from the historical relativity of truth and from human cognition. This leads to a hermeneutic wherein Tillich's philosophical perception of truth is both objective and universal. The hermeneutics are keyed into his earliest publication in *The Interpretation of History* of 1936 and in his major work *Systematic Theology*, volume one, 1951 and volume three, 1963.

In chapter five, Tillich's classical philosophy is brought into dialogue with his theology. Again, this dialogue is expressed in terms of both his early and later works. The analysis extends from his earliest thought on the principles of meaning on to the resolution of this thought in terms that theology is theology of culture. It emerges that Tillich's concern is that the theological system should move between the temporal situation of the Church and the eternal truth of the Christian kerygma in the cultural context. In short, this means for Tillich that the philosophical and theological system should move in tune with the prevailing culture. This rationale allows me to offer a perception of Tillich's system as a continuing process and thus to place his system within the post-modern cultural context.

Having now made a systematic deconstruction of Tillich's system by means of a critical analysis of both his classical philosophy and his theology, I move now, in chapter six, towards the reconstruction of the system. Towards this end, all the elements that have been identified in the foregoing chapters are now reconstructed in such a way as to offer the hypothesis that there is indeed a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the system. This hypothesis is in contradistinction to Tillich's argument that there is a complementary relationship between the two disciplines. This is a new perception of the Tillichian system that is dependent upon Tillich's identification of areas of both convergence and divergence between the two disciplines. This argument turns upon the essentialist and existentialist cognitive attitudes of the philosopher and the theologian.

I next turn towards developing my hypothesis of synthesis between Tillich's classical philosophy and his theology that has the potential to advance ecumenical dialogue. However, my analysis of his system shows that he also attempts to integrate eclectic elements of the modern existentialist critique into his system. Indeed, this has led to his

being labelled an existential philosopher by some scholars.[13] However, in chapter seven, I challenge this position by arguing that, within the method of correlation, the modern existentialist critique serves to allow Tillich to offer a more profound interpretation of the questions that arise from human existence. This perspective does nothing to impair my argument of a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology, and thus, coherence towards ecumenical dialogue. Tillich's argument turns upon the way in which human beings are free to establish their identity, to exercise their courage and integrity and to take full responsibility for themselves. I support this argument by testing his existential orientation against a breadth of modern existentialist philosophies, for example, those of Schelling, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre.

In chapter eight, I bring my hypothesis of a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system into dialogue with his ecclesiology. I begin with an analysis of Tillich's perception of the relationship between the modern existentialist critique and Christian theology. Here, Tillich challenges the existential hermeneutic that finitude is self-sufficient. He strengthens this argument by means of an interpretation of Heidegger's subjective concept of anxiety. This 'anxiety' is the characteristic that allows human beings to transcend the subjective and objective structure of reality. Tillich defines the depth dimension of finitude in terms of theonomy. He argues that human beings have the potential to become subject to the soteriological power of God as expressed in Jesus as the Christ. Deeper insight into this potential is gained from Tillich's interpretation of the human predicament in positive correlation with the Christian message. Reference to the social theory of reflexivity enable me to highlight Tillich's understanding of the human predicament in terms of meaninglessness. Since for Tillich, Jesus as the Christ is the answer to the human predicament, it is now possible to express this answer in the ecclesiological terms of the Incarnation and the third person of the Trinity.

Tillich's argument that Jesus as the Christ is the answer to the human predicament now leads, in chapter nine, to an analysis of Tillich's ecclesiology. The analysis turns upon Tillich's argument that the philosophical and theological system is understood in terms of the Church, whilst, at the same time, the Church is understood in terms of the system. This allows me to argue that the relationship between Tillich's system and his ecclesiology can be most clearly represented as an ecclesiological circle. The analysis of Tillich's ecclesiology shows that both the system and the Church are dependent upon the dynamics

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[13] For example, by McLean, G.F., *Paul Tillich's Existential Philosophy of Protestantism* in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, O'Meara, Weisser, eds., 1965

of the Holy Spirit, as derived from the inter-denominational sources of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience. I conclude that Tillich's ecclesiology is both eschatological and also Trinitarian in nature. I go on to show that this mindset is common to that of the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Catholic magisterium and also to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. My hypothesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in the Tillichian system is demonstrated by means of the construct of the Möbius strip. This artifice serves to show the way in which Tillich's philosophical concept of being may be brought into dialogue with his theological concept of God as Being-itself, under the dynamics of the Spirit. It also serves to demonstrate the relationship that pertains between God as the Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit. The implications of the dynamics of the Spirit for Tillich's ecclesiology leads to the question of the relationship of Jesus as the Christ, symbolised as the New Being, within the parameters of the ecclesiological circle.

In the final chapter, I will explain the reasons by which Tillich's system has application towards the advancement of ecumenical dialogue. This entails a comparison being made between Tillich's system and his ecclesiology and documents of the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Catholic magisterium and the Faith and Order Commission, in order to highlight the way in which these ecclesiologies converge. The system is then further compared with the current ecumenical ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic ecclesiologist Haight, who works outside the jurisdiction of the Vatican. A broader ecumenical perspective is then offered by means of a comparison between Tillich's system and ecclesiology and the Orthodox theologian Zizioulas's perspective of *koinonia* and 'otherness'. I then project the Tillichian system into the context of ecumenical dialogue by means of Caputo's interpretation of Derrida's axiom of the 'impossible'. By following this process, the system is now set within the parameters of the present day ecumenical framework. This enables me to posit the argument that Tillich's system has the potential to be carried forward into the future ecumenical search for Church unity. This potential is expressed in terms of its position within an inter-denominational scale-free network. In thus appropriating Tillich's system and ecclesiology to the present and future ecumenical context, I have thus squared his ecclesiological circle.

CHAPTER 1

THE SYSTEM

... the systematic construction has led me to conceive the object of
theology in its wholeness, as a *Gestalt* in which many parts and
elements are united by determining principles and dynamic interrelations.

Paul Tillich[1]

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will
believe in me through their word, that they may all be one.

John 17:20-21

The aim of this chapter will be to demonstrate the structure of Tillich's system in order that
the fundamental philosophical and theological principles may be exposed and identified. It
will become evident that Tillich's epistemology stems from a wholeness of thought that is
dependent upon the theory of *Gestalt*. Indeed, it will emerge that the Tillichian system
consists of inter-dependent elements that form a collective whole. This is a hermeneutical
mindset that will be adopted throughout the thesis and which will ultimately be applied to an
interpretation of his ecumenical and ecclesiological orientation. This approach offers
coherence in the context of post-modern ecumenical dialogue, because for Tillich, a holistic
approach leads to a deeper meaning of the disciplines of philosophy and theology within the
system. Furthermore, Tillich has a clear apologetic agenda in that whereas he argues that
systematic theology must be formed and developed as an expression of the theological self-
interpretation of the Church,[2] his concern also, from his earliest work, is to win a place for
theology within the totality of human knowledge.[3]

A wholeness of thought

A most remarkable characteristic of Tillich's thought is its rigorous systematic formulation
that is based upon the principle of the unity of knowledge. Such wholeness of thought in
Tillich's system has stemmed from his early attempt to arrange all the sciences within an
all-embracing structure according to the ultimate presuppositions of the total cognitive task

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[1] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.3
[2] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.10
[3] Tillich. *On the Boundary*, 1936, his autobiographical sketch in *The Boundaries of our Being*, 1973, p.323

and in relation to the various methodologies and aims of the sciences. For the early Tillich, a system of the sciences, or unification of the scientific disciplines, is achieved when each science is understood with reference to each other and with reference to the totality of the knowledge in which they stand. Thus, the system of the sciences must include the working out of the ultimate principles of thought and reality that inform every cognitive aim and where the sciences serve one truth. The sciences cannot be fully intelligible therefore unless they are understood with reference to the whole. It would follow then that the whole of human knowledge must be subjected to organising principles and that no particular area of knowledge can make truth claims without reference to the system that these principles make possible.[4] A unifying philosophy of meaning that addresses both the nature of thought, and also the nature of reality, is thus indispensable for the Tillichian cognitive agenda. This will therefore inform the hermeneutical mindset of this thesis.

The question now arises. How does Tillich's early system of the sciences come to fruition and find expression in his much later definitive three volume work *Systematic Theology*? In answer to this question, Tillich divides the sciences methodically according to their objects and methods. He published this work in German as early as 1923.[5] At the same time, he makes clear that the sciences are expressions of the human spirit and must therefore also be understood within a context of a total analysis of the structure of reality. This analysis is both philosophical and theological because it seeks to place the sciences within a system where the ultimate presuppositions of thought and being are exposed. The sciences are thus directed toward the total structure of truth and an ultimate objective. This means that although theology has its own methods and data, it cannot be just one science among others and thus it does not find a place in the system of the sciences merely as one other science with its own limited train of knowledge. Nevertheless, Tillich, in his later thought, asserts that theology is related to the other sciences because science comes to expression as the discipline of philosophy and it is this discipline that plays the major role in his mature theological system.[6]

On this point of the inter-relatedness of philosophy and theology in Tillich's thought, it is significant with respect to ecumenical ecclesiology that such inter-relationship does not receive endorsement from all Protestant theologians. For example, the post-liberal Protestant theologian John Milbank adopts an exclusive position for theology that involves

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[4] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English in 1981
[5] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, English publication, 1981, pp.43-217
[6] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1-3.

both a systematic theology and also a critique of secular modernity.[7] Milbank engages theology within a context that serves to illustrate and reinforce aspects of the post-modern analysis of culture. He states that, 'it is theology itself that will have to provide its own account of the final causes at work in human history, on the basis of its own particular, and historically specific faith'.[8] Most significantly, Milbank is in agreement with Tillich when he agues that systematic theology is first and foremost an ecclesiology. However, whereas Tillich's apologetic theology must offer answers to existential questions that are implied in the church's kerygma,[9] for Milbank, theology must offer an account of the specific form of Christian history.[10]

   For Tillich, the system is the most adequate form of methodological rationality available to the theologian. This means that the rational character of theology demands that its propositions must be stated under the logical canon of a consistency that requires that each proposition be developed in terms of its own implications but also in relation to all other propositions. In other words, the system is the organic whole that results in pursuing the principle of consistency to its logical conclusion. From this perspective, Tillich does not understand the system as an alien structure imposed upon the Christian message. Furthermore, he continually distinguishes his understanding of the system from the deductive systems of Lullus and Spinoza[11] and the closed system of Hegel. The latter claimed that his system had achieved the finality of God's truth and was thus finished.[12] Rather, in Tillich's thought, a system can only be closed in the sense that it is a creation of human thought and as such takes on the finality of an individual creation.[13] Indeed, for Tillich, the concept of meaning is the concept of system. Thus, no fragment of meaning can stand independently of the whole in which it receives its meaning and every fragment contains an implicit system of meaning to which it is committed if it is to have any meaning at all. For example, the Christian confession 'Jesus Christ is Lord' is a fragment of meaning which can only be fully understood in a total system of meaning. Tillich is clear that it is the

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[7] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 1990, p.1

[8] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 1990, p.380

[9] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.4

[10] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 1990, p.380

[11] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.58

[12] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, a collection of Tillich's lectures, 1968, edited posthumously by Braaten from Tillich's lectures, p.417

[13] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, publication in English, 1981, p.170

task of theology to create such a system in every new generation and in the face of the obvious failure of every system to stand for all time.[14]

Firstly then, the system means for Tillich a consistency of thought where each proposition within the system must be compatible with all the others. Whilst no proposition can be deduced from any other as if it were a formal necessity between them, consistency requires that no propositions are in contradiction within the system. Secondly, the system means that no proposition must stand apart from the total context of meaning otherwise there is the danger that in its isolated form the proposition may itself become the basis of an inadequate truth claim. For example, Tillich argues that Kierkegaard is lacking in his vision of truth when he isolates the concept of the 'God-Man' from its total context of meaning.[15] In other words, each proposition is subject to the determining principles of the context of the system and receives its full meaning only in relation to all the other propositions of the system. Tillich thus understands the object of theology in holistic terms, that is *Gestalt*.[16]

Indeed, Tillich makes numerous references to the theory of *Gestalt* in support of the structure of his system in his work *Systematic Theology*.[17] This is not surprising in that the fundamental formula of *Gestalt* theory turns on the assumption that there are many wholes, the behaviour of which is not determined by that of their individual elements. Rather, the part processes are themselves determined by the intrinsic nature of the whole and the aim of the *Gestalt* theory is to determine the nature of such wholes. *Gestalt* theory stems from the assumption that science, in the process of collecting scientific data, may through this very activity exclude precisely such phenomena that it seeks to expose. Indeed, *Gestalt* theory argues that Western science breaks up complexes into their component elements in search of the laws that underpin these elements and assumes that problems are solved in the process of re-assembly. In other words, all wholes are reduced to pieces that are interrelated. On the other hand, *Gestalt* theory is resolved to penetrate the problem by examining the fundamental assumptions of science within a holistic context.[18] This assumption would seem entirely compatible with Tillich's scientific perception of the object of theology. For

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[14] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, p.57. Extended version of James W. Richard lectures given by Tillich at the University of Virginia, 1951
[15] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, edited posthumously by Braaten from Tillich's lectures p.147
[16] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, p.3
[17] *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.169, 186, 258, vol.2, pp.103-106, vol.3, pp.3, 20, 33, and 258-259.
[18] *Gestalt* theory emerged from the concrete investigation into psychology, logic and epistemology that was much influenced by Max Wertheimer who was a contemporary of Tillich. See, Wertheimer, M., *Gestalt Theory*, *Über Gestalttheorie*, Erlangen, 1925, Ellis, W D., trans., *Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938. Reprinted by the Gestalt Journal Press, New York, 1997. www.gestalttheory.net/archive/wert1.html accessed 15.06.08

example, Tillich draws on the *Gestalt* theory to point up his perception of the relationship between the historical Jesus and the image of Jesus as the Christ as portrayed by the Gospel authors. In this context, Tillich argues that before reaching any degree of probability about the historical Jesus, it is necessary to offer a critique that separates the elements of the historical facts of the event and the experience of those who received Jesus as the Christ. He argues that 'scientific honesty, loving devotion and theological interest must operate together'.[19] Any attempt to reduce the image of Jesus to the essentials to elaborate a *Gestalt* whilst leaving out the particulars is problematic for Tillich because both elements must be incorporated in order to achieve a plausible *Gestalt*. Tillich develops his argument as follows:

> The dependence of the *Gestalt* on the valuation of the particulars is evident in an example taken from the complex of what Jesus thought about himself. In order to elaborate this point, one must know, besides many things, whether he applied the title "Son of Man" to himself and, if so, in what sense. Every answer given to this question is a more or less probable hypothesis, but the character of the "essential" picture of the historical Jesus depends decisively on this hypothesis. Such an example clearly shows the impossibility of replacing the attempt to portray a "Life of Jesus" by trying to paint the "*Gestalt* of Jesus".[20]

Clearly, a wholeness of thought is absolutely fundamental to Tillich's system. However, such wholeness of thought should not be interpreted as meaning all-inclusive thought where every single aspect of cognition is included. Rather, Tillich situates the systematic form in the modern pluralistic context as follows.

> System stands between *summa* and essay. The *summa* deals explicitly with *all actual* and potential problems. The essay deals explicitly with *one actual* problem. The system deals with a group of *actual* problems which demand a solution in a special situation. In the Middle Ages the *summa* was predominant, though by no means exclusively so. At the beginning of the modern period the essay became predominant, although the systematic trend never ceased to exist. Today a need for systematic form has arisen in view of the chaos of our spiritual life and the impossibility of creating a *summa*.[21]

In effect, using *summa* as a stepping stone towards understanding essential reality, human being is brought into closer dialogue with the holistic theological understanding of being itself. Rahner also acknowledges the need to adopt a wholeness of thought if Catholic theology is to impact in the modern and pluralistic context. Although Rahner's theology

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[19] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.102
[20] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.103
[21] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.59

may be situated broadly within systematic theology, unlike Tillich's absolute commitment to a rigorous systematic approach, Rahner argues that the short formula or essay is the most effective means of making the Christian faith intelligible in the pluralistic society where homogenous Christianity no longer exists.[22] For such short essays to be effective in a rapidly changing world they must be 'capable of being directly appropriated and existentially assimilated, self-explanatory and not requiring a long prior elucidation, in order to commend themselves to men'.[23] Rahner appropriates this task to teachers of religion, dogmatics, philosophy and the history of ideas.[24] On the other hand, the strength of Tillich's system in the post-modern pluralistic context is that it allows a potential pathway between *summa* and essay. Furthermore, I would argue that Tillich's commitment to the wholeness of thought is coloured by his understanding of theology in terms of logical rationality that is inclusive of dialectical thinking. For example, he argues that:

> ...there is no real conflict between dialectics and formal logic. Dialectics follow the movement of thought or the movement of reality through yes and no, but it describes it in logically corrective terms. The same concept always is used in the same sense; and, if the meaning of the concept changes, the dialectician describes in a logically correct way the intrinsic necessity, which drives the old into the new. ... Nor is the formal logic contradicted when, in the dogma of the trinity, the divine life is described as a trinity within a unity. The doctrine of the Trinity does not affirm the logical nonsense that three is one and one is three; it describes in dialectical terms the inner movement of the divine life as an eternal separation from itself and return to itself.[25]

Another remarkable characteristic that is evident in Tillich's thought is a continuity of conceptuality that can be traced from his earliest published work to his most mature and major work *Systematic Theology*. For example, Tillich, in his early research between 1910 and 1912, analysed the thought of Schelling and maintained throughout his academic career the principles of human identity with God and human separation from God as two of the ultimate principles of his understanding of philosophy and theology.[26] Again, Tillich raised the issue of the historical Jesus as early as 1911[27] and returned to this issue in volume two of

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[22] Rahner. *Theological Investigations*, vol.9, *The Need For A 'Short Formula' Of Christian Faith*, 1972, pp.117-121

[23] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.9, 1972, p.118

[24] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.9, 1972, p.121

[25] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.56

[26] Tillich's dissertations, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy, its Presuppositions and Principles*, 1910 and *Mysticism and Guilt-consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 1912

his work *Systematic Theology*.[28] Yet again, as early as 1904, he formulated a position on the issue of 'doubt',[29] an issue that he returned to often throughout his academic life. However, this is not to suggest that Tillich's thought is a mere monolith that is devoid of internal alterations and development. Indeed, my analysis of his system has shown such considerable development in his thought[30] that this movement has led me to perceive his system essentially in terms of a philosophical and theological process.

Although Tillich's system shares general characteristics with the system of the sciences it is his perceived relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology within the system that is of significance for this thesis. This raises the following fundamental questions. Firstly, what is Tillich's epistemology in terms of his system and secondly, where can his epistemology be situated in terms of post-modern philosophy?

Tillich's epistemology

Tillich is clear that every theologian must be prepared to answer questions regarding the epistemological basis of their assertions, their criteria and their evidence.[31] Furthermore, he is also clear that every epistemological assertion concerning philosophy must be ontological. He justifies this position by arguing that philosophy cannot be reduced to a mere epistemology as was the aim of the nineteenth century Neo-Kantian school and the twentieth century logical positivism school because both these schools have failed to avoid the ontological question. Indeed, Tillich points out that the later supporters of Neo-Kantian philosophy did in fact recognise that every epistemology contains an element of implicit ontology.[32] Tillich concurs with and highlights this conclusion by citing the ontology of Nicolai Hartmann who offers the hypothesis that knowing is active participation in being.[33]

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[27] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 1936 his autobiographical sketch in *The Boundaries of Our Being*, 1973, p.320 ff.
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.98-114,124,148,159
[29] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1972, edited by Braaten from Tillich's lectures, pp.449f.
[30] *The Protestant Era*, 1948, pp. xiv-xv, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.16ff. *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.72-75, 85, 114-116, 121,132-134, vol.3, pp.174-175, 224, 227-230, 238-240
[31] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.67
[32] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.71
[33] Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol.1, p.19. See also Stegmüller, *Main Currents in Contemporary German, British and American Philosophy*, pp.220-221 and Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, pp.309-310. www.formalontology.it/hartmann.htm accessed 25.02.05

Put more precisely, being is an 'ontic relation', where every analysis of the act of knowing must refer to the interpretation of being. On the surface, Hartmann's ontology seems to follow Aristotle when he argues that the science of being, (*qua* being), is its most general characteristic with which to determine its actual content. Hartmann's ontology comprises not only being, (*qua* being), as the most general concept of what 'is', but also existence and essence. He adds to these characteristics the types of being designated by the adjectives 'real' and 'ideal' and adds a list of the modes of being such as possibility and actuality, necessity and contingency, impossibility and unreality. Furthermore, Hartmann adds to a list of general categories applying to all the strata of the real world the particular categories of nature and cultural entities. He thus adds the spheres of being which have been opened up by the sciences and the new cultural studies as well as by the theory of values. However, although abandoning traditional metaphysics that concerned itself with the ultimate questions of God and immortality, Hartmann draws on the insolubility of the problems of metaphysics as the background to his new ontology. His ontology thus constitutes a segment of metaphysics that is no longer a field for speculative treatment by *a priori* methods. For Hartmann, metaphysical problems are those which form the horizon of scientific knowledge, and which are inescapable because of their connection with what is known scientifically and yet which cannot be solved by scientific methods alone. Some of these problems Hartmann considers to be impenetrable and irrational in principle, even though they contain an ingredient that can be explored by the rational methods of ontological hermeneutics. This least metaphysical part of metaphysics is for Hartmann the proper field of the new ontology.

Tillich also compares this ontological definition of philosophy with theories that reduce philosophy to scientific logic and argues that if philosophy is based on an analysis of the limits of knowledge then it must be based as with every epistemology on ontological assumptions.[34] As with Hartmann, such an epistemology must tie Tillich to the classical tradition of ontological thought. At the same time, it is because of this ontological commitment that Tillich can define a model of truth and reality in relation to which the theological enterprise is understood. As we shall see, this conclusion holds significant implications for Tillich's understanding of the inter-dependent relationship between philosophy and theology.
The question now arises. In what way does Tillich's ontology equate with his understanding of structure and the wholeness of thought? The answer to this question lies within the consistency of his method where he incorporates philosophy into his system by arguing that

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[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.19

philosophy is the science that asks the question of reality as the whole structure of being. What then of Tillich's theological methodology and his understanding of theology in relation to philosophy within the structure of his system?

Tillich's point of departure is the 'theological circle'[35] whose subject matter is delineated by that circle. Tillich develops his system by bringing into relationship classical Western ontological concepts that are otherwise unrelated to one another. For example, in the history of Western philosophy there is no intrinsic relationship between the ontological concept of 'being' and the concept in Christian thought that Jesus is the Christ. Nevertheless, Tillich unifies these two concepts into a conceptual relationship to one another and reality is given a fundamental interpretation in terms of them.

However, before leaving the question of Tillich's ontological commitment to philosophy in his search for theological truth, it will be useful to ask the question as to how such commitment would fit within the post-modern pluralistic theological context. In his article 'Pluralism in Theological Truth', John Thiel points out that 'as a modern phenomenon pluralism is best understood as the recognition of the relativity of truth-claims'.[36] He argues that pluralism in theology has only been an accepted characteristic of theological scholarship since the second half of the twentieth century and since the advent of such diverse theologies as for example, feminist, narrative and hermeneutical theologies. Furthermore, Thiel rightly points out that the theologian also has to take into account the diversity of theological understanding inherent in the modern church. He cites the Catholic science of divine revelation and the Protestant biblical exegesis to demonstrate his point. This said, then it would follow that Tillich's adoption of a diversity of ontology and also existentialism would situate his theology at the point of the emergence of modern theological and ecclesiological pluralism. Indeed, the implications of Tillich's system towards church unity are all the more significant when perceived in this context. As Thiel points out, the emergence of such pluralism has brought into question the universal, absolute and soteriological theological truth of the Christian tradition and its relevance in the modern context. Tillich's system on the other hand, has a positive application for the pluralistic context because of its unique and diverse appeal, namely, by placing theology within the wider context of other disciplines such as psychology and sociology. However, the aim and objective of this thesis is to make a critique of the relationship between philosophy and

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[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.8-11

[36] John E. Thiel 'Pluralism in Theological Truth', *Why Theology?*, *Concilium*, *1994/96*, edited by Claude Geffré and Werner Jeanrond, London: SCM, 1994

theology in Tillich's thought in the context of current ecumenical ecclesiology. Thiel therefore, offers interesting insight towards this end. He argues that traditional or 'foundationalist' universal epistemology has been challenged by the modern 'non-foundationalist' hermeneutical theories of philosophers such as Heidegger. This observation is significant in that Heidegger's existentialism influences Tillich's integration of a non-foundational existential-ontological hermeneutic into the foundational classical philosophical tradition. In effect Tillich has created the potential for resonance with both the Protestant and Catholic philosophical and theological positions. Indeed, this conclusion is consistent with Tillich's own thought when he writes:

> A way must be found which lies between the Roman Catholic practice of making ecclesiastical decisions not only a source but also the actual norm of systematic theology and the radical Protestant practice of depriving church history not only of its normative character but also of its function as a source.[37]

Tillich's creative existential hermeneutic within the system is key to this enterprise.

Driver offers a helpful definition of Tillich's intention towards existentialism and his choice of language and concepts with respect to his hermeneutics within his system. Essentially, Driver argues that the theologian's task involves risk. He writes:

> … It may be that he will choose to work with concepts … that turn out to be incompatible with the mentality of his own and later ages. This is the risk Tillich has knowingly accepted …The act of constructing a system is, for this reason, deeply existential.[38]

In order that Tillich's system may be progressed into the post-modern context it is now necessary to analyse his methodology as it relates to his adoption of language and concepts within the system.

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[37] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.51
[38] Driver, "St Paul and Tillich", *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol.21, No.1, (Nov. 1965), pp.31-32

CHAPTER 2

THE METHOD

The principle of methodological rationality implies that, like all scientific approaches
to reality, systematic theology follows a method. A method is a tool, literally a way
around, which must be adequate to its subject matter. Whether or not a method is
adequate cannot be decided a priori; it is continually being decided in the cognitive
process itself. Method and system determine one another.

<div align="right">Paul Tillich[1]</div>

What the critics of deconstruction ... have never quite been able to see or make out
about deconstruction is the *viens, oui, oui*, the sighing and dreaming, the 'prayers and
tears' of deconstruction for the coming of something that surpasses expectation. ...
The impossible is not the simple logical contradiction of the possible, but the terminus
of hope beyond hope, of a hope against hope, of a faith in what we cannot imagine or in
any way foresee, a *tout autre*, beyond any present horizon of expectation. ... Derrida
regards this undeconstructible something to come, this nameless *tout autre* as subject
to an endless translatability.

<div align="right">John Caputo[2]</div>

The aim of this chapter will be to analyse Tillich's methodology as it relates to his

philosophical and theological system. In so doing, Tillich's adoption of symbolic language

and concepts within the method of correlation will be identified and cross referenced against

the use of symbols and concepts in the theories of Ricoeur, Macquarrie and Gadamer. The

question of whether the method of correlation commits Tillich purely to an apologetic

system that can be tested against the sciences will emerge. I will argue that the system is

both apologetic and kerygmatic in nature so that in effect, the system also functions to

inform Tillich's ecclesiology. Three major divisions within the system that relate to the

method of correlation will be identified and will serve to reveal the three ultimate concepts

of being, God, and the unity between being and God upon which the method turns. Further

analysis reveals that these concepts are characterised by the principle of finitude. These

results allow deeper access into Tillich's system because it is now possible to lay bare the

fundamental elements of the system that amounts to a form of deconstruction of the system.

The potential impact of Derrida's theory of deconstruction on this conclusion will be

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[1] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.59-60
[2] Caputo, (on Derrida), *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Knowing Who We Are*, 2000, p.263

explored in order to show that in the process of deconstruction new insights into the system arise that have potential application for post-modern ecumenical ecclesiological dialogue.

The method of correlation

Tillich defines his method as the 'method of correlation'.[3] When developing the conceptual meaning of his method, Tillich is clear that method is dependent upon a prior knowledge of the system upon which it builds. However, both method and system are high-level abstractions that are derived from the immediate cognitive relationship to the object of theological reflection. He writes:

> In at least one respect the description of a method is a description of a decisive aspect of the cognition, reveals something about the object, as well as about the subject, in the relation.[4]

From this statement, it would seem evident that Tillich's epistemology is founded upon the philosophical tradition that is associated with Socrates and which suggests that method and system explicate that which we, in some sense, already know and understand.[5] However, for Tillich, knowledge about the object of theology is not given to human beings in our natural, existential state. Thus, knowledge about God cannot be evoked through the Socratic method of our giving birth to latent ideas through a logical sequence of questions and answers.[6] Rather, knowledge of God is given to us through our experience of revelation, where revelatory knowledge comes to us as the answer to the questions of God that arise as a consequence of our existence. In effect, the method of correlation turns upon the assumption that human beings have the capacity to ask the questions of God because of a presupposition of an original unity with God.[7]

The method of correlation is the method by which Tillich brings the questions of existence and the answers inherent in the Christian faith together in mutual interdependence.[8] On one side of the correlation, the questions that arise out of the structure of human existence, of

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[3] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.56-66
[4] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.60
[5] For a recent chronological explication of this function of philosophy from Socrates to Nelson and beyond, see, "The Foundations of Value", Part I, II, Epistemological Issues: Justification (*quid juris*) and Non-Intuitive Immediate Knowledge, *After Kant, Fries & Nelson*, Kelley L.Ross, 2004. www.friesian.com/founda-1.html accessed 30 06.05.See also, and from a different perspective, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, especially p.188f.
[6] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, edited posthumously from his lectures at Union Theological Seminary and the Divinity School, University of Chicago by Bratten, pp.467-469
[7] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.61
[8] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.68

which we have some prior knowledge, are made explicit. Tillich follows Heidegger here who argues that 'any interpretation which is to contribute to understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted'.[9] Ricoeur would also seem to endorse Tillich's hermeneutics on prior knowledge of existence when he argues that 'hermeneutics proceed from a prior understanding of the very thing that it tries to understand by interpreting it'.[10] On the other side of the correlation, the answers given to us on the basis of revelation are systematically and formally symbolised and conceptualised. It is this correlation that determines the structure of the system.

However, within the formal correlation of question and answer Tillich observes other patterns of correlation and this gives the term 'correlation' at least three distinct meanings. It is this diversity within the method of correlation that I would identify as being potentially problematic to his understanding of the ultimate concepts within his system when he writes:

> There is a correlation in the sense of correspondence between religious symbols and that which is symbolized by them. There is a correlation in the logical sense between concepts denoting the human and those denoting the divine. There is a correlation in the factual sense between man's ultimate concern and that about which he is ultimately concerned. The first meaning of correlation refers to the central problem of religious knowledge ... The second meaning of correlation determines the statements about God and the world; for example the correlation of the infinite and the finite ... The third meaning of correlation qualifies the divine-human relationship within religious experience.[11]

Leaving aside the vagueness of the way in which Tillich uses the words 'correspondence', 'logical' and 'factual' within this context, the question arises as to the logical order of what appears to be three distinct tasks the method of correlation is attempting to achieve within the system. For example, can a correspondence between religious symbols and that which they symbolise be determined without first establishing the logical relationship of the concepts defining humanity and God? If a correspondence cannot be determined without the logical clarification of these two types of concepts, then the meaning of correlation is dependent upon its logical meaning. On the other hand, if such a determination can be made without reference to the logical clarification of concepts, would not the relationship between symbols and concepts become problematic as regards to the ideal of the mutual interdependence and determination of the elements within the system? Indeed, would not the whole criterion of consistency within the system be compromised?

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[9] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, p.194.
[10] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 1969, p.351
[11] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.60-61

Macquarrie is clear on this point because he argues that the criteria of existential-ontological language embraces far more than the word God as a synonym for Being. Rather, for Macquarrie, existential-ontological language embraces the whole spectrum of human and divine interaction, which includes the response of allegiance that God demands from us.[12] The hermeneutical theory of Gadamer is also helpful towards clarifying Tillich's use of concepts. For example, Gadamer is adamant that hermeneutics and history, however problematic, cannot be avoided.[13] He argues that truth is not to be reduced to a mere matter of concepts but rather, should relate to experience in much broader terms. Furthermore, for Gadamer, the reality of something written or presented in the past is not recaptured by mere subjective recollection. He gives as examples the Lutheran emphasis on preaching and the Catholic understanding of the Mass where both these realities are disclosed afresh. Hermeneutics do not represent a mechanical reproduction of the past in the present but a creative event in its own right.[14] Indeed, for Gadamer, pre-judgements are more far-reaching and fundamental for hermeneutics than conscious cognitive acts.

The question now arises as to the degree to which Tillich's use of concepts is influenced by history and by his own pre-judgements. It has been pointed out at the beginning of this chapter that Tillich argues against the concept that knowledge about God can be obtained through the Socratic method of logic but is rather received through revelation. I will seek to argue that Tillich's hermeneutical approach is indeed influenced by his own pre-judgement of the Western metaphysical tradition. In his attempt to create a unique ontological-existential and theological system, Tillich's own pre-judgement of the Western metaphysical tradition is that which underpins his method of correlation. Gadamer would seem to agree with Tillich when he argues that a question must place given subject matter within a particular perspective or horizon. Within the process of the interchange of question and answer there is the potential for fresh insights to arise. These insights are not products of an individual's conscious reflection but emerge from the whole process of interrogation. Gadamer writes;

> ...the art of the formation of concepts as the working out of the common meaning ... The process of question and answer ... performs that communication of meaning which ...is the task of hermeneutics'.[15]

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[12] Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, 1977, p.186
[13] Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection", in *Continuum*, VIII, (1970), 85, cf. pp.77-95
[14] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., 1979, p.112
[15] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., 1979, p.331

According to Gadamer then, the structure of a text can be understood only when the question to which it is the answer is understood. This conclusion is entirely compatible with the thought of Tillich. However, this conclusion would not find resonance with the post-structural or deconstructionist school of philosophical thought. For example, Derrida argues that dependence upon the Western philosophical tradition inevitably leads to cognitive paradox and logical aporias besides inhibiting creativity and invention.[16]

An even more fundamental problem presents itself relating to the concepts of 'human' and 'divine', 'God' and 'world', 'infinite' and 'finite' and 'divine-human relationship' as Tillich presents them as the points of departure for the correlative task in all its meanings. This is because, as such, they exercise logical priority over the method of correlation in the sense that they are the assumed correlates of the process of correlation. It is in their assumed and non-derivative status that Tillich apportions them the characteristics of ultimate concepts. However, Tillich does not explain their relationship to each other. This now raises the question, are some concepts inspired and others derivative? Furthermore, Tillich's explication of his method of correlation as it appears in his work *Systematic Theology*, is a brief one. Are there then further ultimate concepts in his thought that he has not discussed here?

With these questions in mind, the method that defines correlation between question and answer will be the means that allows one to enter into a deeper analysis of the structure of Tillich's system. The aim will be to analyse his methodology by making a division between those parts that explicate the full range of questions that emerge from the structure of existence and those parts that formulate the theological answers to these questions on the basis of revelation.

One must therefore now address the basic question as to whether Tillich's system and method of correlation is orientated purely towards offering an apologetic for theology against the sciences. In response to this question, I would again point out that for Tillich, the *raison d'être* of the system is that it is a function of the Church. To this end, the Tillichian system adopts the truth claims of the Christian message and as it is situated in the Church. Kerygma and situation are thus held in a dynamic balance where both poles are determinative for Tillich's understanding of theology.[17] Indeed, Tillich cites the neo-orthodox theology of Barth as an outstanding example of kerygmatic theology. He points

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[16] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 1976, p.145
[17] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.3-8.

out that Barth emphasises the Christian truth claims over and against the human situation and its demands. However, Tillich points out that whereas such kerygmatic theology safeguards it from the relativities of the situation, there is the danger of it becoming the situation itself. Tillich argues that Barth's genius lies in his ability also to correct himself repeatedly in the light of the situation. Nevertheless, for Tillich, kerygmatic theology needs apologetic theology for its completion. He argues that the theologian must be a participant in all the variety of cultural forms that inform his hermeneutical view of existence. Only this participation can, in Tillich's words, 'overcome the present oscillation of kerygmatic theology between the freedom implied in the genuine kerygma and its orthodox fixation'.[18] From this perspective the method of correlation may be understood to fulfil Tillich's commitment of theology as a function of the Church. The Tillichian system is therefore both apologetic and kerygmatic in nature.

Returning now to the analysis of the relationship between question and answer within the method of correlation, it is clear that the structure of human existence is central to the philosophy and the theology of the system. For example Tillich argues that:

> Whenever man has looked at his world, he has found himself in it as part of it. But he also has realized that he is a stranger in the world of objects, unable to penetrate it beyond a certain level of scientific analysis. And then he has become aware of the fact that he himself is the door to the deeper levels of reality, that in his own existence he has the only possible approach to existence itself. [This] … means that the immediate experience of one's own existing reveals something of the nature of existence generally.[19]

Again, Tillich is equally clear that:

> Man occupies a pre-eminent position in ontology, not as an outstanding object among objects, but as that being who asks the ontological question and in whose self-awareness the ontological answer can be found. The old tradition … that the principles which constitute the universe must be sought in man is indirectly and involuntarily confirmed, even by the behaviouristic self-restriction. "Philosophers of Life" and "existentialists" have reminded us in our time of this truth on which ontology depends.[20]

For Tillich then, humanity in its total structure is that upon which the system turns because humanity is the basis from which ontological questions emerge. In similar manner, the answers that derive from the Christian kerygma are revealed to human beings by means of Scripture and the ecclesial Tradition. Indeed, Ernst points out that Rahner endorses this

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[18] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.5-6
[19] Tillich, *Systematic* Theology, vol.1, p.62
[20] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.168

conclusion in his reference to the papal encyclical *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius II which states that God has given the Church the sources of Revelation in Scripture and the Tradition. However, unlike Tillich, Rahner's argument turns on an interpretation of the revelation of God within the framework of the magisterial teaching authority of the Catholic Church.[21] In contrast to this Catholic perspective, Tillich again makes reference to the theological method of Barth. As we have seen, Tillich's methodological point of departure within the system is in terms of the questions that arise from human existence that are subsequently answered by means of divine revelation. To this extent Tillich's method starts with human beings 'from below'. On the other hand, Tillich argues that Barth, ' ... starts from above, from the trinity, from the revelation which is given and then proceeds to man'.[22] However, when Tillich's system is more deeply exposed in chapter eight, it will become evident that his system, as it relates to his ecclesiology is also thoroughly Trinitarian in nature. This conclusion will strengthen the argument that Tillich's system has application for ecumenical dialogue. Although question and answer are independent for Tillich in that they stem from different sources, nevertheless, they sustain a correlative interdependence. Specifically, correlation is possible under the criterion of ontology where Tillich ascribes to humanity and God the commonality of the structure of being. The questions of human existence derive from humanity that is bound by the structure of being and not by God because God is not bound by this structure [23] In Tillich's words:

> They [God's answers] are "spoken" *to* human existence from beyond it. Otherwise they would not be answers, for the question is human existence itself'.[24]

For Tillich, the method of correlation replaces three inadequate methods relating to the contents of the Christian message and human spiritual existence. The first method is that which he identifies as supernaturalism where revealed truth is received from outside the sphere of human existence. Secondly, Tillich rejects any form of naturalism where human beings derive the Christian message from humanity's natural state. Thirdly, he rejects any form of dualistic method that attempts to build a supra-natural structure upon a natural substructure.[25] In contrast, the method of correlation resolves natural theology into the

[21] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.1, 1965, *Introduction*, Cornelius Ernst, p.v

[22] Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, 1967, p.242

[23] See, Loomer's 'Tillich's Theology of Correlation', *Journal of Religion*, Vol.XXXVI, no.3, July, 1956, pp.150-156

[24] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.64

[25] Tillich, *Systematic Theology* , vol.1, pp.64-65, 117

analysis of existence and supernatural theology into the answers given to the questions that are implied in human existence.[26]

However, in order that the answers of the Christian truth claims can become relevant to human existence, theological analysis must expose the structure of human existence in such a way that the questions that emerge from human existence can become identified under the ontological criteria.

From his analysis of human existence, Tillich concludes that a distinction must be made within the structure of human existence itself, that is, between what we are essentially and what we are in our estranged existence. In order to make this distinction, concepts must be developed that are drawn from our awareness both of our essential structure and also from our estrangement from that structure. Tillich's thought has a remarkable resonance here with the psychoanalytical hermeneutics of Kristeva. She identifies the effects of human estrangement from its essential structure in terms of the experience of an inconsolable loss, the result of which is melancholy and depression. For Kristeva, restoration is possible when the self-identification of the individual is re-established through the power of a love that comes from 'outside' the immediate experience of the individual.[27] This example of Tillich's resonance with psychoanalytical methodology serves to demonstrate the way in which his system can be interpreted as touching upon the sciences.

These concepts must also contain the questions that logically emerge from these two dimensions of the structure of being. Firstly, they must be grounded in humanity's essential character and the questions that arise from that essential character. Secondly, they must be grounded in the structure of human existential estrangement and the questions such estrangement invokes. Thirdly, these concepts must presuppose the presence of both essential and existential characteristics in human concrete actuality and the questions that emerge from this actuality. Finally, these concepts must be correlated with the conceptuality that is formulated in answer to these three sets of questions. The main body of Tillich's systematic theology therefore, consists of concepts drawn from these three dimensions of the structure of human existence, the questions that emerge from this existence with respect of them, and the corresponding theological concepts that constitute the structure of the Christian message.[28]

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[26] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.66
[27] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 1989, p.53
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.67

The conceptual system that Tillich constructs is in terms of the distinction that he makes between the structure of being and the theological concepts. The use of the word concept is used here to include both Tillich's understanding of the structure of existence and also his understanding of God. For Tillich, the analysis of existence is clearly a philosophical task and the ideas that stem from this analysis are most properly interpreted as concepts. On the other hand, the theological ideas that he correlates with the analysis of existence, he defines as symbols.[29] In this context, the word concept is used as inclusive of both ontological concepts and theological symbols.

Concepts and symbols

Tillich' system consists of five distinct parts, the first of which relates to the epistemological foundations upon which the system depends. This part, which is entitled, 'Reason and Revelation', deals with the structure of reason and the way in which revelation answers the questions that are raised from this structure. The fifth and final part, which is entitled 'History and the Kingdom of God', deals with Tillich's hermeneutics of human life and the way in which life is actualised in the context of history. However, the primary concepts that inform the method of correlation are to be found in parts two, three and four of the system. The second part of the system relates to the correlation between human beings and God. Here, the controlling concept is fundamental to our essential character and functions to explicate the questions inherent in our essential character. Tillich defines this concept ontologically as 'being' and the correlating theological concept as 'God'. The third part of the system derives from the concept that represents the situation of human existential estrangement. This concept highlights the questions that are raised with respect to the human situation. Tillich defines this concept as 'existence' and the correlating theological concept as 'Christ'. The fourth part of the system derives from the concept that identifies the concrete actuality of human beings and includes the essential and existential elements of that actuality. Tillich defines this concept as 'life' and the correlating theological concept as 'Spirit'.[30]

However, these primary concepts that drive the method of correlation cannot be understood in isolation from the concept that derives from the relationship between essence and existence. For example, Tillich writes:

A complete discussion of the relation of essence to existence is identical with the entire

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[29] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, pp.63-64
[30] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, pp.66-67

theological system. The distinction between essence and existence, which religiously speaking is the distinction between the created and the actual world, is the backbone of the whole body of theological thought. It must be elaborated in every part of the theological system.[31]

There are echoes here of Aquinas's thought who argues that 'essence and existence are not different in God. God's essence, therefore, is his existence'.[32] Notwithstanding this observation, a further question now must be addressed, namely, what are my reasons for identifying the concepts of being, existence and life as the primary concepts that drive the Tillichian method of correlation? In answer to this question, Tillich himself acknowledges that the concepts of reason and history are logically sub-ordinate to these concepts. For example, he argues:

> The problem of reason and revelation is secondary to that of being and God, although it was discussed first. Like everything else, reason has being, participates in being, and is logically subordinate to being. Therefore, in the analysis of reason and the questions implied in its existential conflicts we have been forced to anticipate concepts derived from an analysis of being.[33]

The same pattern of the relationship of logical dependence can be discerned in Tillich's understanding of history, which I would argue, could be interpreted as a contentious and negative understanding in our post-modern age. For example, although history is for him the most embracing dimension of life, nevertheless, history also presupposes for him the prior development of the concept of life. It would seem logical then to deduce that the concept of history cannot be developed outside the full development of those critical concepts through which the idea of life is defined, most significantly, the concepts of the functions of life and the Spirit.[34] I would argue therefore that Tillich's concept of reason is subordinate to his concept of being and his concept of history is subordinate to his concept of life.

In order that the deconstruction of the system be progressed the question now arises as to how the concepts of being, existence and life relate to each other within the method of correlation. I would point towards Tillich's adherence to *Gestalt* theory and suggest that

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[31] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.204
[32] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Nature and Grace*, 4:63, www.ccel.org/aquinas/nature_grace.vi.iii.iv accessed 05.06.06
[33] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.163
[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.297f.

each of these concepts presuppose and are inter-dependent with the others for their complete development in order to provide a conceptual whole within the system.

Again, Tillich can argue that some concepts of being are more inclusive than other concepts. For example, he defines the concept of life as;

> ... the actuality of being. This concept of life unites the two main qualifications of being which underlie this whole system; these two main qualifications of being are the essential and the existential.[35]

Is Tillich claiming here that the concept of life is more inclusive than the concept of existence? We have seen that he distinguishes between essence and existence as qualifications of being. In the same way, is not life as the actuality of being also the presupposition of the concept of being? Indeed, how is it possible for the concept of being to unite these two qualifications in the same way as that of the concept of life when Tillich introduces it in the first place to define the essential dimension of existence? I would suggest that as well as his adherence to the theory of *Gestalt* with respect to these concepts that there is also an irreducible circularity in his thought as these concepts come to expression within the method. At the same time, each of these three concepts must address the distinction between essence and existence on their own terms. Accepting the circularity of these concepts, no particular one of these concepts can be more fundamental to the Tillichian system than any one of the others.

Two alternative analytical pathways towards a deeper deconstruction of Tillich's system now emerge. The first pathway would be via an acceptance that the concepts and the distinction between essence and existence that they presuppose, together with their correlative theological concepts, constitute the primary concepts of Tillich's system. However, this alternative would serve only to identify the primary concepts with respect to the system itself and not to the principles with which Tillich characterises these concepts. The second, and in my opinion, a more favourable pathway by which to proceed, will be via an analysis of the primary concepts as they are explicated by their underlying principles.

Three principles emerge that are in accordance with Tillich's earliest philosophical and theological thought as they were worked out in his two dissertations of 1910 and 1912 on the work of Schelling,[36] that is, the principles of human identity with God, separation from God and ultimate unity with God.

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[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, pp.11-12
[36] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Philosophy, its Presuppositions and Principles*, 1910 and *Mysticism and Guilt-consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 1912

The first principle is the principle of finitude and its structure, within which Tillich appropriates the distinction between essence and existence and which serves to explicate the concepts of being, existence and life.

The second principle turns upon the assumption of the awareness of God within the structure of finitude. A critical point emerges here that relates to the different use of language that Tillich appropriates to God in his early work as opposed to his later work. For example, he uses the terms the Unconditional or the Absolute for God in his early work[37] but abandons this terminology by the time of his mature work *Systematic Theology*, a fact that he supports against his critics.[38] I would argue that such criticism towards Tillich's diverse use of language is well justified because his altered use of language can lead to misinterpretation of his argument within an already complex system.

The third principle turns on the assumption that there is an ultimate unity between finitude and God despite the presence of existential estrangement within the structure of finitude. The circularity in Tillich's thought is again evident in his working out of these three principles that inform the ultimate concepts of being, existence and life.

A point has now been reached where Tillich's system has been deconstructed down to its basic concepts and principles. However, before turning to the task of reconstructing the system, I return now to Derrida's theory of deconstruction. This is in order to support my argument that the process of deconstruction of Tillich's system has created the possibility of it being offered for application in post-modern ecumenical dialogue. Tillich acknowledges the impossibility of entering into dialogue with contemporary philosophical and theological hermeneutical theorists although he acknowledges that 'underground' dialogue exists between them on every page of his academic work.[39] However, I have found no evidence to suggest dialogue between Tillich and the theory of Derrida.

System and deconstruction

Derrida argues against modern structuralism that is derived from Western metaphysics and that so influences Tillich's system. For Derrida, any written texts that result from such structuralism are centred to the extent that the meaning of the structure is limited.[40] In order to seek expansion of the conceptual limits of the texts imposed by metaphysics Derrida de-

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[37] See for example, Tillich, *My Search for Absolutes*, published posthumously in 1967
[38] Tillich, 'Reply to Interpretation and Criticism' in Randall's *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 1952, p.340
[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.ix.
[40] Derrida, *Of Grammatology: Writing Before the Letter*, 1976, p.278

centres the texts by exploring meaning in the margins of the text. He argues that such deconstruction opens up the possibility of unrestricted semantic play and limitless interpretation of the text. He writes:

> Deconstruction, ... happens; and this is what happens: it deconstructs itself, and it can become neither the power nor the possibility of an "I can". I insist here on the "it happens" because ... it is this affirmation of the event, of the arrival of the future at the beating heart of a reflection on the impossible.[41]

When Derrida's argument regarding the sign, the signifier and the signified is translated in terms of Tillich's method of correlation that turns on the concepts of being, existence and life, then remarkable methodological parallels emerge. For example, the sign (being) and signifier (existence) are different in nature and opposite to the signified (life).[42] However, Derrida's elimination of metaphysical hermeneutics is in stark contrast to the hermeneutics that drive Tillich's system because for Derrida: 'The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely'.[43] Derrida justifies this argument by attacking Aristotle's logic of identity where the laws of cognition presuppose logical coherence and where there is an essential origin to which these laws refer. In the process he rejects the argument that meaning is grounded in metaphysical presence, which for Tillich's epistemology relates to the revelatory experience of God. Again, Derrida rejects the metaphysical argument that time is orientated to its end where cognition is prior to speech and speech to writing. I refer here to the non-orientation of time to its end in the context of metaphysical linear time and its relationship to history.[44] Indeed, for Derrida these laws of cognition are so riddled with paradox and contradiction that they prohibit creativity and invention. On the other hand, he argues that his theory of deconstruction reveals that meaning is an affair of language's systems of difference without positive terms of reference. The concept of difference is central to Derrida's theory and is influenced by Hegel's theory of opposites where meaning emerges from the tracing back and forth on the continuum line

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[41] Derrida, *Deconstruction: The Im-possible*, in Lotringer and Cohen eds, *French Theory in America*, 2001, p.157
[42] Derrida, *Of Grammatology, Writing Before the Letter*, 1976, p.280
[43] Derrida, *Of Grammatology, Writing Before the Letter*, 1976, p.281
[44] Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 2003, p.219

between two opposites.[45] Without positive terms of reference means without apportioning privilege to either one or other term in the continuum of opposites.[46] Indeed, for Derrida: 'There is nothing outside the text: all is textual play with no connection with original truth'.[47] For Derrida therefore, difference is not only irreducible to any ontological or theological appropriation but is the very opening up of the space in which the disciplines of philosophy and theology have the potential to produce their system and history. Clearly, these ideas would not transfer to Tillich's method of correlation from which the structure of the system proceeds and where existential questions that arise from a prior awareness of God and a separation from God are correlated with answers received from divine revelation. Nevertheless, his principle argument that the process of deconstruction offers the possibility of unrestricted semantic play and limitless hermeneutics is entirely transferable to a deconstruction of Tillich's system.

This mindset as it applies to Tillich's philosophical and theological system will be the mindset with which I will seek to deconstruct the system down to its fundamental concepts and down to the principles that inform these concepts. These are the ontological concepts of being, Being-itself and the unity between being and Being-itself. The process of deconstruction will thus open up the space for a creative and inventive interpretation of the relationship between philosophy and theology in the Tillichian system that will ultimately resolve itself as one of synthesis. It is these hermeneutics that will be offered towards application of his ecclesiology in post-modern ecumenical dialogue.

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[45] See for example, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 1961
[46] Derrida, 'Difference' in Taylor, ed., *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, 1986, pp.396- 420
[47] Derrida, Quoted in Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 1995, p.282

CHAPTER 3

THE ONTOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

> Philosophy asks the question of reality as a whole; it asks the question
> of the structure of being. And it answers in terms of categories,
> structural laws, and universal concepts. It must answer in ontological
> terms. Ontology is not a speculative-fantastic attempt to establish a
> world behind the world; it is an analysis of those structures of being
> which we encounter in every meeting with reality. ... Theology, when
> dealing with our ultimate concern, presupposes in every sentence the
> structure of being, its categories, laws, and concepts. Theology, therefore,
> cannot escape the question of being any more easily than can philosophy.
>
> Paul Tillich[1]

In this chapter, and using Tillich's mature work *Systematic Theology*, I will make a deconstruction of Tillich's system that is dependent upon an analysis of what I have identified as the foundational principles in Tillich's thought, those of finitude, God, and their unity. I will go on to show the way in which Tillich expresses these principles in ontological terms. The principle of finitude provides the basis for the understanding of Tillich's ultimate philosophical orientation because finitude worked out in relation to being directs humanity towards the question of God. When God is expressed in terms of the ground and the power of human being then a basis is established from which to argue that a unity pertains between human beings and Being-itself, that is God, and thus between philosophy and theology. I have argued that Tillich has a consistent commitment to the concept of *Gestalt* and here, the ultimate unity between human beings and God and the interdependence between philosophy and theology is a further expression of this. My intention in thus deconstructing Tillich's system is to re-construct it so as to include the argument that there is a synthesis rather than interdependence between philosophy and theology as Tillich explicates this relationship. This interpretation will offer a fresh perspective of Tillich's commitment to *Gestalt* that will ultimately be offered for application in post-modern ecumenical dialogue.

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[1] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.20-21

Finitude

The point of departure for the deconstruction of the system is the principle of finitude because it is this principle upon which the ultimate ontological concept of being turns. For example, Tillich argues that:

> Whoever has penetrated into the nature of his own finitude can find the traces of finitude in everything that exists. And he can ask the question implied in his finitude as the question implied in finitude universally. In doing so, he does not formulate a doctrine of man; he expresses a doctrine of existence as experienced in him as man.[2]

Furthermore for Tillich, finitude is the ontological structure of being and when philosophy asks the questions of the structure of being, it answers in terms of categories, structural laws and universal concepts. The function of these categories is related to reality and together with the concepts, they also function symbolically to describe God as Being-itself.[3] The ideal state of human being is when the ontological categories are held in balance and sustain a harmonious whole. However, Tillich argues that finitude precludes such harmony in human beings because humanity is under the constant threat of non-being. He further argues that this threat is overcome and human existential self-affirmation is restored when a basis for unity between humanity and being-itself is established. This is the basis upon which the questions of the structure of being are gained from philosophy and where these questions are answered by theology in ontological terms. Tillich writes:

> The structure of being and the categories and concepts describing this structure are an implicit or explicit concern of every philosopher and of every theologian. Neither of them can avoid the ontological question. ... Of course, the philosopher, as a philosopher, neither criticizes not augments the knowledge provided by the sciences. This knowledge forms the basis of his description of the categories, structural laws and concepts which constitute the structure of being.[4]

What then is the relationship of the structure of being to the principle of finitude? In answer to this question, it would seem clear that the structure of being is finite, on the grounds that the categories and concepts that describe literally, the structure of being are expressions of finitude. In other words, because the categories and concepts of ontology function within the parameters of finitude they themselves must be finite. Furthermore, the ontological structure that is also the finite structure is the structure of the self and the world.

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[2] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.62-63
[3] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.20-24
[4] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.21-22

It is the presupposition of the ontological question and the subject-object structure of reality.
Indeed, for Tillich, it is:

> ... the basic articulation of being. The self having a world to which it belongs ... this
> highly dialectical structure ... logically and experientially precedes all other structures.[5]

The introduction of the ontological structure of being orientates Tillich's thought towards a
phenomenological ontology rather than towards developing any cosmological possibilities
within the structure. So, for Tillich, the structure of being and its fundamental
determination, that is the dipolar ontological structure, is defined generically by its finitude.
What then is the relationship between the ontological concepts and finitude?

The basic ontological structure reflects the pre-eminent position of humanity within the
structure of being because human beings alone are conscious of their participation in the
structure of being. Here, Tillich has borrowed from Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* that
Heidegger defines as 'the place where the structure of being is manifest'.[6] However, a
polarity exists within the structure because the self is constituted by the world and the world
without the self cannot be realised. Here, Tillich understands the term 'self' as being fully
developed and completely centred so that he includes in its meaning both the subconscious
and the unconscious whereby the polar elements are kept in balance. However, this balance
is threatened by a non-being that is a possibility deeply rooted within the self's finitude.[7]
The basic polar ontological structure is therefore that of the self and the world that is in a
dialectical polar relationship in which when one pole is lost then the other is lost also and
thus nothing may be realised.[8] Although for Tillich ontology must begin with this polar
structure, ontology alone cannot answer the question of that which precedes this original
structure. God's self revelation or Being-itself alone however, can do this.[9] What then is the
means by which the integrity of both these poles is maintained? In response to this question,
Tillich offers the theory of reason.[10]

Tillich is clear that the structure of being is a rational structure that enables the realisation
of being.[11] It is effective throughout the whole range of human experience as well as

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[5] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.164
[6] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, p.69 ff., Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.168
[7] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.198-201, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.4 ff.
[8] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.171
[9] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.174
[10] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.171
[11] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.75

cognition in that it is also 'aesthetic, theoretical and practical, detached and passionate, subjective and objective'.[12] In Tillich's thought, the subject-object structure of reason reduces everything that falls within its parameters to an object, whether this is God, humanity or a stone. Such objectification of its subject matter is inevitable for reason since, Tillich argues, 'in the logical sense everything about which a prediction is made is, by this very fact, an object'.[13] How then does humanity as the bearer of subjective reason consistently conceive of itself and God in objective terms? To enable a better understanding of this data, Tillich adopts objective, abstract, and universal concepts. This he applies to both philosophy and theology because both must abstract from the concrete situation in order to develop his concepts further. However, Tillich adds a caveat to this conclusion by pointing out that theology is more aware than philosophy of the dangers of objective thinking. He writes:

> Theology always must remember that in speaking of God ... it must include in its speaking of God the acknowledgement that it cannot make God an object'.[14]

Tillich goes on to express the ontological structure in terms of the self and the world polarity. He does so by means of the analogy that he identifies in the elements of individualisation and participation, dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny.[15]

Tillich grounds the ontological concept of individualisation and participation in the classical Platonist intuition that the idea of difference is 'spread over all things'[16] and where to be a self is, in his words, to be 'unique, unexchangeable and inviolable'.[17] The self's individualisation is in polar relation to its participation. This is because the centred self is an active participant in the world through the rational structure of the mind and reality. The degree of participation is negatively correlated to the degree of individualisation. Although human beings are constrained by their environment, nevertheless we participate in the world through the universal structures of language, reason and concepts.[18]

The ontological concepts of dynamics and form reveal Tillich's closest link with Aristotle. He argues that forms are principles of individualisation. He writes; 'The form which makes

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[12] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.72
[13] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.172
[14] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.172
[15] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.172-173
[16] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.185
[17] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.174
[18] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.175
[18] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.178

a thing what it is, is its content, its *essentia*, its definitive power of being'.[19] Form, as the principle of individualisation forms dynamics which in turn empowers human beings to transcend themselves and thus to transcend the form of human life. It is human vitality in correlation with human intention that drives us beyond ourselves towards new forms and towards new structures of meaning.[20]

The ontological concept of the correlation between freedom and destiny is especially significant because this polar structure contains the description of the basic ontological structure wherein the ontological elements reach fulfilment. It is through the actualisation of freedom in conjunction with destiny within the ontological structure that Tillich directs his argument towards the state of actual being in terms of existence. Freedom in correlation with destiny makes existence possible through the transcendence from the necessity of being.[21] The concept of freedom is also important theologically because revelation is unintelligible without it. Indeed, with respect to the concept of freedom, Tillich argues that it must not be understood as a function of the will but rather of humanity as a totality. He writes:

> ... that is, of that being who is not a thing but a complete self and a rational person ... [who exercises] deliberation, decision and responsibility.[22]

In other words, every dimension of our self participates in our freedom. Again, Tillich writes:

> Destiny is not a strange power which determines what shall happen to me. It is myself as given, formed by nature, history and myself. My destiny is the basis of my freedom; my freedom participates in shaping my destiny.[23]

Destiny is the basis of selfhood for Tillich because it is the total field from which the concrete decisions of the self arise. Destiny does not merely determine the self but it defines the ultimate context in which the self must actualise its freedom.

These three pairs of ontological elements delineate the basic self-world structure and thus constitute the basic structure of being. Individualisation, dynamics and freedom express the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself. On the other side of the

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[19] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.178
[20] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.180-181
[21] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.182
[22] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.183-184
[23] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.185

correlation, participation, form and destiny allow for an understanding that being belongs and that being has universal characteristics.[24]

The ideal state of human being is that self-relatedness and self-togetherness are held in balance and the ontological elements constitute a harmonious whole. However, the basic ontological structure implies finitude and finitude makes such harmony and balance impossible because finitude, that is the whole of reality, is threatened by non-being. Tillich identifies the concept of non-being in existential terms. It is the content of an encounter before it becomes a concept and is first experienced in the shock of the threat of possible negation.[25] Human beings can conceive nothingness because humanity is driven by the threat to the self and the world and by the intentional capacity to transcend every given reality. Being implies non-being ontologically[26] and finitude is being that is limited by non-being.[27] Such limitation can only be conceived in relation to infinity which is unlimited in terms of the dynamic and free self-transcendence of finite being.[28] In Tillich's words, 'infinitude is finitude transcending itself without any *a priori* limit'.[29] Infinity is thus the infinite negation of the finitude's non-being and humanity's foundation in being-itself a concept that is beyond the finite and infinite polarity.

The question now arises as to how Tillich actually illuminates the manifestation of finitude within the ontological elements and the categories. The answer to this question it seems lies in the relationship of finitude in terms of the distinction between essence and existence.

I have shown that for Tillich the categories are both forms of cognition and of being through which humanity grasps and shapes reality. The categories are forms of finitude that express the unification of the positive and negative ontological elements of being and non-being in the self and the world. Tillich identifies the categories of time, space, causality and substance to express the problems inherent in the concept of finitude.[30] On the negative side, Tillich argues that the categories express the subjective form as anxiety in which finitude is threatened by non-being. The anxiety that is manifested through ontological tension is of a

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[24] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.192-204
[25] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.204-208
[26] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.187
[27] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.189
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.190
[29] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.191-192
[30] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.193

different nature to simple and direct anxiety that is seen in relation to the categories. Rather, it is;

> ... the anxiety of not being what we essentially are. It is anxiety about disintegrating and falling into nonbeing through existential disruption. It is anxiety about the breaking of the ontological tensions and the consequent destruction of the ontological structure.[31]

Being and non-being are combined in finitude to the extent that finitude has an inherent and essential threat within itself in the form of the possible loss of its ontological structure and therefore the loss of self. The categories express this and raise the question of the possibility of courage through which we take this threat upon ourselves. In short, the criteria of the categories point up the courage with which humanity addresses its finitude in terms of the definitive question of God.

At the same time, the ontological elements identify finitude as subject to the threat of non-being that arises from the fundamental essentiality of finitude. Again, the ontological elements raise the question of the possibility of courage with which human beings overcome the existential despair that arises from the disruption of the essential structure of finitude. In short, the ontological elements highlight the distinction between essence and existence. In Thomistic terms, since God is both essence and existence,[32] God is the source of unity between essence and existence.

What then is the significance for Tillich of the distinction between essence and existence within the context of finitude? The answer to this question lies in the way in which he brings reason to bear upon this distinction within finitude. The principle of finitude precedes the distinction that constitutes the whole body of theological cognition. This is why finitude is an ultimate principle in Tillich's thought.

Tillich claims a distinction between essence and existence, in that there is an essential cleavage in the polar elements that constitute being.[33] This distinction is the criterion by which both philosophy and theology ask the question of how being can include within itself the whole of its actuality and potentiality. Existence is responsible for the cleavage between essence and existence through the exercise of finite freedom that in correlation with destiny is characterised by the split between essence and existence. Thus, when existence is

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[31] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.199
[32] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, *Nature and Grace*, 4:63 www.ccel.org/aquinas/nature_grace.vi.iii.iv. accessed. 10.09.06
[33] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.202

actualised, it becomes separated from the power and ground of being that is the essence of God, (Being-itself).[34] Furthermore, Tillich's concept of essence and existence is an abstraction from the concrete actuality of being, namely, life.[35]

How then, if both essence and existence are included in the meaning of being is being within finitude established as a concept of God when Tillich argues that God or Being-itself 'is beyond the contrast of essential and existential being'?[36] Does this not mean that these terms do not apply to God at all, especially with respect to God's existence? Surely here, God is not only beyond the distinction between essence and existence but is beyond essence and existence themselves.

Tillich can also formulate essence and existence and their unity by arguing that God transcends the distinction between essence and existence and that there is thus no conflict between the two.[37] For Tillich then, the distinction between essence and existence within finitude is an articulation of being realised under the conditions of finitude. Essence is differentiated from existence because there is a cleavage between them within finitude. On the other hand, when essence and existence are expressed in terms of God then there is no such cleavage and thus no such distinction.

In short, in Tillich's thought, finitude points to the fundamental distinction between God and humanity. Therefore, to what extent is Tillich's conception of finitude determinative for his ontology?

In answer to this question I have argued that in Tillich's thought the task of ontology is to articulate the structure of being. For Tillich, finitude presupposes being but its concepts are less universal than being but more universal than any ontological concept.[38] Tillich defines ontology as the science that investigates the structure of being rather than identifying it as metaphysics[39] and as such, ontology is limited to the parameters imposed by the structure of finitude. Again, the presupposition of being that ontology implies, is the realisation of being under the conditions of finitude, that is, being as it is derived from Being-itself. Ontology is thus the science of finite being that is the conceptual delineation of the nature and structure of finitude. The consequence of this conclusion for Tillich is that the ontological description

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[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.28
[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.28, vol.3, p.12
[36] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.236
[37] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.22-23
[38] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.164
[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.20

of the structure of being,[40] provides him with the concepts with which to symbolise God.[41] Although Tillich is clear that theology must be articulated in terms of God's self revelation, at the same time ontology provides the conceptual language within which God may be identified and articulated. Tillich's argument is open to challenge on this point, because how is it possible for theology to utilise a conceptual language within the context of finitude in order to articulate that which lies beyond finitude and whose being is subject to none of the conditions of finitude? This observation serves to again highlight that in the process of deconstructing the Tillichian system, significant ambiguities have appeared.

God as Being-itself

Further analysis towards a deconstruction of Tillich's system discloses that his concern is to establish a terminology for God that relates to the context of human experience as it comes to expression in culture. Indeed, his search for a philosophical conceptuality for God can be traced back as early as 1923 in his discussion with Barth and Gogarten. Here, he argues that the language for God used in Scripture and the ecclesial tradition does not adequately express the full unconditioned characteristic of God.[42] Tillich develops this argument by establishing an ontological unity between God and human beings. This becomes possible when God is expressed in terms of the ground and power of being. During the process of deconstruction, I have shown that for Tillich, God is encountered within the total range of finite reason. However, he also argues that it is possible for human beings to encounter God religiously as 'ultimate concern'. For example, he writes:

> Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern that qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life.[43]

Furthermore, because ultimate concern needs finite concerns through which to express the unconditioned, this leads to existential tension. In Tillich's words:

> On the one hand, it is impossible to be concerned about something which cannot be encountered concretely, be it in the realm of reality or in the realm of the imagination.

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[40] An exception is the basic polarity of the self and the world. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.244
[41] Here Tillich does not mean that a doctrine of God can be derived from an ontological system. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.243
[42] This argument forms part of Tillich's counter response to Barth's initial response to Tillich's articulation of God as unconditioned. See Robinson, ed., *Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 1968, vol.1, pp.131-162
[43] Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, 1963, p.4. The Bampton Lectures, University of Columbia, 1961

...The more concrete a thing is, the more the possible concern about it. The completely concrete being, the individual person, is the object of the most radical concern - the concern of love. On the other hand, ultimate concern must transcend every preliminary finite and concrete concern. It must transcend the whole realm of finitude in order to be the answer to the question implied in finitude. But in transcending the finite the religious concern loses the concreteness of a being-to-being relationship. It tends to become not only absolute but also abstract, provoking reactions from the concrete element. This is the inescapable inner tension in the idea of God.[44]

Since the idea of God is constructed from finite concrete elements then it serves to point human beings towards that which transcends finitude and which is of ultimate concern. At the same time, Tillich's idea of God is dialectical because he writes:

But the word "God" involves a double meaning: it connotes the unconditioned transcendent, the ultimate, and also an object somehow endowed with qualities and actions. The first is not figurative or symbolic, but is rather in the strictest sense what it is said to be. The second, however, is really symbolic, figurative. It is the second that is the object envisaged by the religious consciousness. ... But the religious consciousness is also aware of the fact that when the word "God" is heard, this idea is figurative, that it does not signify an object, that is, it must be transcendent. The word "God" produces a contradiction in the consciousness, it involves something figurative that is present in the consciousness and something not figurative that we really have in mind and that is represented by this idea. In the word "God" is contained at the same time that which actually functions as a representation and also the idea that it is only a representation. It has the peculiarity of transcending its own conceptual content. ... God as an object is a representation of the reality ultimately referred to in the religious act, but in the word "God" this objectivity is negated and at the same time its represented character is asserted.[45]

In this quotation, the idea of God as dialectical represents a religious concept or a symbol under the dialectic of unconditioned reality that it both represents and yet also fails to represent. Here, Tillich has made a significant departure from traditional concepts of God as derived from Scripture and the ecclesial tradition. Nevertheless he draws on traditional religious symbols and religious language in reference to the idea of God. Thus, Tillich articulates God as a symbol for ultimate reality, the unconditioned Being-itself that is of ultimate concern to humanity.

However, what happens when an attempt is made to identify the concrete element in the idea of God within the parameters of the Christian personal being of Jesus Christ with

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[44] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.211

[45] This extract from Tillich's essay *Das Religiouse Symbol*, which first appeared in *Blätter für deutsche Philosophie*, vol.1, No.4, 1928, was translated into English by James Luther Adams and Ernest Fraenkel in *The Journal of Liberal Religion*, 2, 1940. The extract is taken from the Appendix to *Religious Experience and Truth*, Hook, S., ed., 1961, p.315

whom Christians are within a definitive relationship? It would seem that for Tillich the religious consciousness imposes a significant limitation on the idea of God. In other words, the idea of God as a construct of finite elements cannot express the ultimate element in the idea of God because it is bound within the parameters of the concrete element of religious consciousness. Indeed, even when the religious consciousness understands God in symbolic terms it is still bound within the parameters of that symbol in order to be able to express itself. Nevertheless, Tillich's 'ultimate concern' must be expressed symbolically. For example, he argues that:

> Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning. ... In no other way can faith express itself adequately. The language of faith is the language of symbols. ... But faith, understood as the state of being ultimately concerned, has no language other than symbols. ...The fundamental symbol of our ultimate concern is God.[46]

The Catholic scholar McLean, who was a contemporary of Tillich, takes issue with respect to Tillich's conception of symbol and the analogy to which he equates it.[47] Mclean points out that for Aquinas, reality itself is analogous and so Aquinas is able to develop a rational and objective doctrine of God on the basis of the analogous character of reality. Tillich however, responds to this criticism by insisting that reality is neither symbolic nor analogous and that symbols arise out of the changing existential relationship between humanity and God.[48] This response by Tillich endorses further my perception of his system as a continuing process, because the correlation between the human questions relating to, and the response received from God self revelation, are subject to the ever changing culture from which the questions derive. However, for Tillich, although the religious symbol for God points to the ultimate element in the idea of God it cannot express the ultimate element within itself. This critical point is overcome when God is expressed in ontological terms as Being-itself. Tillich writes:

> We cannot simply say that God is a symbol. We must say two things about him: we must say that there is a non-symbolic element in our image of God – namely, that he is ultimate reality, being-itself, ground of being, power of being; and the other, that he is the highest being in which everything that we have done exists in the most perfect way. If we say this we have in our mind the image of a highest being, a being with the characteristics of highest perfection. That means we have a symbol for that which is not symbolic in the

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[46] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.45
[47] O.Meara. Weisser, eds, *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, McLean, G.F., *Symbol and Analogy Tillich and Thomas*, 1965, pp.145-183
[48] O.Meara, Weisser, eds., Tillich, *An Afterword: Appreciation and Reply, Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, 1965, p.305

idea of God – namely "Being-itself".[49]

What therefore is the relationship between the symbolic and the conceptual elements in Tillich's thought? It seems that whilst the terms God and Being-itself are ontologically identical, a distinction must be made between them on the conceptual and linguistic level because Tillich writes;

> ... the non-symbolic element in all religious knowledge is the experience of the unconditioned as the boundary, ground, and abyss of everything conditioned. This experience is the boundary-experience of human reason and therefore expressible in negative-rational terms. But the unconditioned is not God. God is the affirmative concept pointing beyond the boundary of negative-rational terms and therefore itself a positive-symbolic term.[50]

Apart from the problem that here Tillich denies that the unconditioned is God, he draws a clear distinction between symbol and concept. However, Tillich can also argue that ultimate concern is the point at which non-symbolic statements are to be made about God. For example:

> If we say that God is the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time. These terms precisely designate the boundary line at which both symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide. Up to this point every statement is non-symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). Beyond this point every statement is symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). The point itself is both non-symbolic and symbolic.[51]

Accepting that the symbolic and the non-symbolic involve the distinction between symbol and concept in Tillich's thought then, as this quotation implies, apart from the context of ultimate concern, non-symbolic articulation of God involves the rational determination of the symbol of God by the concept Being-itself. I would ague therefore that rather than claiming a basic distinction between symbol and concept, Tillich is implying interdependence between them in that the symbol has conceptual possibilities and the concept has symbolic possibilities. This is not to say that Tillich reduces God to a concept but rather, in identifying God with Being-itself, he is offering an explanation for the ultimate element in the idea of God that, because of its concrete nature, the symbol alone cannot do. Thus God as unconditioned is revealed on the basis of the explication of Being-itself and when Being-itself is perceived from the perspective of the unconditioned, then the

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[49] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.61. Based on *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919
[50] *The Journal of Liberal Religion*, 2, 1940, p.203
[51] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.10

ultimate element in the idea of God becomes apparent. The Anglican scholar Macquarrie, would seem to concur with Tillich's adoption of concept and symbol in order to articulate the idea of God.[52]

Tillich makes three claims with respect to the meaning of the idea of God as Being-itself. Firstly, he argues that Being-itself is not *a* being. He supports this claim by arguing that because being is subject to the categories of finitude then being is thus conditioned. In his words:

> The being of God is being-itself. The being of God cannot be understood as the existence of a being alongside others or above others. If God is *a* being, he is subject to the categories of finitude, especially to space and substance. Even if he called the "highest being" in the sense of the "most perfect" and the "most powerful" being, this situation is not changed. When applied to God, superlatives become diminutives. They place him on the level of other beings while elevating him above all of them. ... Whenever infinite or unconditional power and meaning are attributed to the highest being, it has ceased to be *a* being and has become being-itself.[53]

In other words, the defining characteristic of being is that it is conditioned by its being and since God is unconditioned then God cannot be a being.

Secondly, Tillich claims that God does not exist. He structures his argument within the context of the classical argument for the existence of God when he writes:

> Both the concept of existence and the method of arguing to a conclusion are inadequate for the idea of God. However it is defined, the "existence of God" contradicts the idea of a creative ground of essence and existence. The ground of being cannot be found within the totality of beings, nor can the ground of essence and existence participate in the tensions and disruptions characteristic of the transition from essence to existence. The scholastics were right when they asserted that in God there is no difference between essence and existence. But they perverted their insight in spite of this assertion they spoke of the existence of God and tried to argue in favor of it. ... God does not exist. He is being-itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him.[54]

Here, in his concern to preserve God's divinity Tillich's argument turns on the assumption that God as Being-itself is not a being and does not exist because God is unconditioned.[55]

Thirdly, Tillich claims that the categories of finitude cannot be applied literally to Being-itself because Being-itself is not conditioned by the structures of finitude that are described literally in terms of ontological concepts. For example, God as Being-itself is beyond

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[52] Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, 1977, p.184, *The Scope of Demythologising*, 1960, p.152
[53] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.235
[54] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.204-205
[55] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.244-245

essence and existence[56] and beyond the characteristics of potentiality and actuality within finitude. Rather, the ontological categories provide the terminology with which to describe the relationship between human beings and God and the ontological elements that symbolise God.

How then does Tillich articulate within his system, the unity between humanity and God as viewed in terms of the unity between finitude and Being-itself?

The unity between finitude and being/Being-itself

In answer to this question, Tillich addresses this claim by attributing three modes of unity between human beings and God, namely those of ontological, cognitive and theological unity.

Firstly, he claims ontological unity between finitude and Being-itself by means of the elements of participation, power and love. Tillich argues that in the process of Being-itself transcending finitude, their unity is maintained because finitude participates in Being-itself and Being-itself participates in finitude. It is through the process of participation in the power of Being-itself that finitude establishes a positive identity with the ground and power of Being-itself.[57] Furthermore, Tillich argues that it is the participation of finite being with Being-itself that provides the basis for the adoption of the classical *analogia entis* for the concrete element in the idea of God.[58] The *analogia entis* controls the adoption of symbolic material for God in terms of finite reality that presupposes the analogy between finitude and the Infinite.[59] In response to Urban's critique of this conclusion, Tillich argues that:

> Positive-symbolic terms presuppose ... that the immediate reality which is used in the symbol has something to do with the transcendent reality which is symbolized in it. Therefore, I can accept the classical doctrine of "analogia entis".[60]

Tillich develops his argument by claiming that it is humanity's love for God from whom it is separated, but with which it was originally united, that drives finitude towards reunion with Being-itself. He writes:

> In man's experience of love the nature of life becomes manifest. Love is the drive towards the unity of the separated. Reunion presupposes separation of that which belongs together. It would, however, be wrong to give to separation the same ontological ultimacy as to

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[56] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.236
[57] Tillich. *The Courage to Be*, 1952, p.89, Paul Tillich. 'Rejoiner', *The Journal of Religion*. vol.42. No.4, 1962, p.188
[58] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.239
[59] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.131
[60] Paul Tillich. 'The Religious Symbol', *The Journal of Liberal Religion*, vol.2, 1940, p.203

reunion. For separation presupposes an original unity. Unity embraces itself and separation, just as being comprises itself and nonbeing. It is impossible to unite that which is essentially separated. Without an ultimate belongingness, no reunion of one thing with another can be correlated. But the estranged is striving for reunion ... Therefore love cannot be descried as the union of the strange, but as the reunion of the estranged.[61]

Secondly, Tillich claims a cognitive unity between finitude and Being-itself by citing Kant's critique of knowledge where the question of empirical knowledge cannot be answered by simply pointing to the realm of objects. Rather, he argues that 'every analysis of experience and every systematic interpretation of reality must begin at the point where subject and object meet'.[62] Furthermore, every act of knowledge where a distinction is made between subject and object is an act that is grounded in a structure that presupposes their original unity. Tillich describes this presupposition in terms of the mystical *a priori*, it is an intuitive awareness which, in Tillich's words, is;

> an awareness of something that transcends the cleavage between subject and object. And if in the course of a "scientific" procedure this a priori is discovered, its discovery is possible only because it was present from the very beginning.[63]

Referring to the Augustinian ontological principle of identity, Tillich claims that God is the presupposition of the question of God.[64] Further, he draws on the Franciscan tradition to argue that God constitutes the identity of both subject and object. He writes;

> ... these ultimate principles and knowledge of them are independent of the changes and relativities of the individual mind; they are unchangeable, eternal light, appearing in the logical and mathematical axioms as well as in the first categories of thought. These principles are not created function *of* our mind, but the presence of truth itself and therefore of God, *in* our mind.[65]

Thirdly, Tillich claims a theological and soteriological unity between finitude and Being-itself on the grounds that true knowledge of the *logos* is revealed in the unique and universal manifestation of Jesus as the Christ.[66] This is a perspective from which the *logos* unites the

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[61] Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice,* 1954, p.25, *Systematic Theology,* vol.3, p.138
[62] Tillich, *On the Boundary,* his autobiographical sketch in *The Boundaries of Our Being,* 1973, p.340
[63] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.1, p.9
[64] Tillich tackled the Augustinian principle of identity in his early work, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods,* 1924, pp.60-62
[65] Tillich, *Theology of Culture,* 1959, p.13. Based on *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,* 1919. Systematic *Theology,* vol.1, p.79
[66] Tillich, *The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian,* his last public lecture. 1965, published in Taylor, *Paul Tillich, Theologian of the Boundaries,* pp.313-314. Also, Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.2, pp.139-144 and *The Protestant Era,* 1948, pp.46-47

absolute concrete being in the personal life of Jesus with the absolute and universal God as Being-itself, which Tillich symbolises as the New Being. In his words:

> If theology ignores the fact to which the name of Jesus of Nazareth points, it ignores the basic Christian assertion that Essential God-Manhood has appeared within existence and subjected itself to the conditions of existence without being conquered by them. If there were no personal life in which existential estrangement had been overcome, the New Being would have remained a quest and an expectation and would not be a reality in time and space. Only if the existence is conquered in *one* point – a personal life, representing existence as a whole - is it conquered in principle, which means "in beginning and power".[67]

In summary, for Tillich, without the immediate presupposition of Being-itself as it is manifested in human cognition there could not be the question of God or the reception of God's answer. Again, without the participation of everything finite in Being-itself, nothing finite could represent or symbolise humanity's ultimate concern. Thus, the method of correlation presupposes the unity between finitude and Being-itself. Yet again, finitude and Being-itself is the foundation upon which the separation and reunion between essence and existence within finitude is overcome. This is through Jesus as the Christ, the New Being, whose crucifixion is symbolic of human existential estrangement but also symbolic of unity with Being-itself through God's soteriological love.[68] Expressed in ontological terms, because finitude is inherent within the creative life of God, non-being is eternally conquered and finitude is eternally reunited within the infinity of the divine life. Existential disruption is thus healed through revelation and salvation in Christ.[69] For Tillich, the unity between being and Being-itself is also dependent upon the participation of finite being in the power of Being-itself. In his thought, should this unity be severed, then nothing finite could exist or recover from non-being.[70] He writes;

> In an analogous way the term "New Being", when applied to Jesus as the Christ, points to the power in him which conquers existential estrangement, or, negatively expressed, to the power of resisting the forces of estrangement. To experience the New Being in Jesus as the Christ means to experience the power in him which has conquered existential estrangement in himself and in everyone who participates in him.[71]

The New Being therefore has overcome existential estrangement and has re-established the original unity between humanity and God. Within the parameters of Tillich's method of

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[67] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.98
[68] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.141-142, *Love, Power, and Justice*, 1954, p.28
[69] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.150-153
[70] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.237, vol.2, p.8
[71] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.125

correlation, this original unity is the source of the power that enables human beings to ask the question of that original unity to which it belongs but from which it is also separated. Viewed from the opposite side of Tillich's correlative construct, the original unity is the source from which God's answers to existential questions are revealed, that is, by means of Christian symbols.

A fundamental deconstruction of Tillich's system has thus disclosed the ultimate ontological concepts of being, Being-itself and their unity as the foundational elements upon which the system is built. These elements are key to understanding the relationship between philosophy and theology in Tillich's thought because they are representative of the basic philosophical and theological assumptions that inform the inter-dependent relationship of the two disciplines.

However, having now deconstructed the Tillichian system, I now intend to reconstruct it by using arguments based upon my hypothesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the system. I will thus present a fresh perspective of Tillich's commitment to *Gestalt* that will serve to strengthen my argument that his system has application in post-modern ecumenical dialogue. Such reconstruction necessitates firstly a detailed analysis of Tillich's philosophical orientation and secondly his theological orientation. It is towards the first analysis that I now turn.

CHAPTER 4

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

Man is by nature a philosopher, because he inescapably asks the question
of being. He does it in myth and epic, in drama and poetry, in the structure
and the vocabulary of any language. It is the special task of philosophy to
make this question conscious and to elaborate the answers methodologically.
The prephilosophical ways of putting and answering the question of being
prepare the philosophical way. When philosophy comes into its own, it is not
without a long prehistory. Without Homer's poetry, the Dionysian festivals,
and the Solonic laws, and above all, without the genius of the Greek language,
no Western philosophy as we have it now would have developed. ... The
fundamentalist minister who said to me, "Why do we need philosophy when
we possess all truth through revelation?" did not realize that, in using the
words "truth" and "revelation," he was determined by a long history of
philosophical thought which gave these words the meaning in which he used
them. We cannot avoid philosophy, because the ways we take to avoid it
are carved out and paved by philosophy.

<div style="text-align:right">Paul Tillich[1]</div>

In this chapter, I will seek to build upon the ontological structure of Tillich's system by arguing

that the Western classical philosophical tradition, as it relates to knowledge and truth, is

normative in his thought. I will begin with an overview of the influences that drive Tillich's

philosophical orientation. An analysis and critique of Tillich's epistemology will follow. I will

present this from the perspective of its relationship to historical truth as it derives from the

dynamic and temporal nature of reality and idea. This is the truth that is rooted in human

freedom to decide, in knowledge, in the historical relativity of truth, and in human cognition

through which is discerned the manifestation of the eternal *logos* and *kairos*. The analytical

results suggest Tillich's adoption of philosophical truth is in terms of objective and universal

truth. The consequences of this conclusion for the relationship between *logos* and *kairos* and

thus, for the inter-dependent relationship between philosophy and theology in the system will

emerge. This conclusion will be crucial to my subsequent argument that there is synthesis rather

than inter-dependence between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system. I have shown from

my analysis of Tillich's structure and method that the concept of *Gestalt* is that of a continuing

process rather than an immutable system. I will seek to maintain these concepts in my argument

throughout this chapter. My system here is dependent upon Tillich's philosophical thought as it

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[1] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, pp.9-10

is expressed in his works *The Interpretation of History*, published in 1936, and *The Protestant Era*, published in 1951, and as it resolves in his definitive work *Systematic Theology*. The significance of citing Tillich's early work is because of its clear dependence upon the Western classical philosophical tradition. However, these early works refer to God as the Unconditioned and for the sake of clarity and continuity the Unconditioned will be transposed herein simply as God.

An overview

Tillich's philosophical thought was formed and developed within the diverse cultural contexts of Germany and America. An analysis and subsequent interpretation of Tillich's philosophy should therefore reflect the influences of these contexts on his thought. For example, it is the nineteenth century German classical philosophical tradition that informed his early thought. However, his major work *Systematic Theology* was developed and came to expression in America after many years of teaching there as a professor of theology. It is important therefore that the different contexts and audiences to which Tillich directed his work be made clear. For example, Tillich's European audience would have differed significantly in language and theological perspective from that of his American audience. Tillich would therefore have had to pitch his scholarship accordingly. With these thoughts in mind, it seems clear that that the rationale of Tillich's philosophy is based upon the historical and existential classical tradition. The progressive development of his philosophical thought, was initiated in his early work,[2] and culminated in his major work *Systematic Theology*. It is also important to point out that any attempt to define Tillich's philosophical orientation must be made within the context of his theological concerns. For example, with respect to his theological system he states that:

> These studies seemed more to foreshadow a philosopher than a theologian. ... Nevertheless, I was and am a theologian, because the existential question of our ultimate concern and the existential answer of the Christian message are and always have been predominant in my spiritual life.[3]

It is not surprising therefore that Tillich can also claim that he stands on the boundary between the disciplines of philosophy and theology.[4]

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[2] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, *The Protestant Era*, 1948, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955
[3] Tillich, *Autobiographical Reflections*, see Randall, J.H., *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 1952, p.10
[4] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 1936, his autobiographical sketch in *The Boundaries of Our Being*, 1973, pp.317-325

In the process of my deconstruction of Tillich's system in the previous chapter, I have argued that the ontological principles of finitude, Being-itself, and their unity, are basic to the structure of the system. It is upon this ontological structure that the Tillichian philosophical enterprise turns, because he argues that human beings are driven towards a form of being that prevails against non-being in both the self and the world.[5]

At the same time, Tillich adopts a definition of philosophy that is eclectic and also broad in character. It embraces elements of the most influential historical philosophies, for example, that of Plato,[6] but essentially adopts a sceptical attitude towards the radical question that is rooted in the possibility of human existence. This is the possibility that human beings have the ability to transcend themselves outside the parameters of the polar opposites of the self and the world, in order to question the intelligibility of the truth concerning the self and the world. It is the possibility that humanity can also interrogate the self and the world from a position of pure theory. The fundamental definition of philosophy for Tillich is thus the theoretical and methodological development of the question and the answer of human being. It is this definition that establishes the continuity between Tillich's philosophy and pre-philosophy. To this extent then, philosophy is a continuing process within Tillich's theological system.

Historical and existential philosophy

Tillich argues that philosophy is historical in the sense that philosophy stands within the classical parameters of fate[7] and its correlate freedom.[8] Specifically, philosophy must be understood in terms of a history that is a movement away from, and partial return to, classical Greek thought. Tillich argues that with the dissipation of the classical vision of Greek philosophy in late antiquity, philosophy succumbed to its own despair and thus to scepticism. With the rise of Christianity, and the impact of revelation, the fate of philosophy was to become subordinate to theology.[9] Greek philosophy could not sustain its claim to universal truth in terms of its fate because it did not acknowledge historical change. What seemed universal was highly particular, what seemed absolute was relative and what seemed unchangeable was altered by change. By the time of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, philosophy had become completely autonomous in that it was determined purely through the laws of reason. In Tillich's own modern period,

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[5] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, pp.11-14
[6] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, pp.14-18, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.18
[7] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.4, *Philosophy and Fate*, Inaugural address University of Frankfurt, 1929
[8] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.5-7, *Philosophy and Fate*, 1929, see footnote 7
[9] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.5-10, *Philosophy and Fate*, 1929, see footnote 7

philosophy had re-adopted the idea of fate expressed within the parameters of reason in order to include humanity's political and education activities.[10] Unlike Greek philosophy, modern philosophy discovered the historical character of thought, and thus its pretensions to be beyond history and fate were refuted by its own history. In short, for Tillich, philosophy itself came to affirm its own conditioned nature.

Tillich argues that the history of post Renaissance philosophy has not only been grounded and shaped in the timeless *logos* where the eternal form of being is the goal of knowledge, but also in thought developed by philosophers such as Böhme, Schelling, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. This is a philosophy that seeks to grasp time conceptually in the *kairos* where *kairos* is a qualitatively fulfilled time of meaning that has significance to the temporal moment. This is a philosophical method, in that it seeks forms that are beyond time and change and therefore beyond fate. It is a method that presupposes that the perceiving subject must be without content if it is to receive the eternal forms. This means that the philosopher as a perceiving subject, has the potential to occupy the absolute philosophical position.[11] It is a position from which the philosopher may become the vehicle of pure theory that seeks to grasp the *logos* theoretically without reference to fate in terms of the qualitatively fulfilled time of the period of history in which it stands. It must therefore seek a theoretical structure that is valid for all periods of history as well as for its own specific *kairoi*. For Tillich, this is a Catholic perception that is in need of challenge. Consequently, he argues that within the historical character of knowledge:

> ... the subject has no possibility of an absolute position. It cannot go out of the sphere of decision. Every part of its nature is affected by ... contradictions. Fate and freedom reach into the act of knowledge and make it an historical deed: the *Kairos* determines the *Logos*. There is a classical-humanistic conception of knowledge. It is rational and static. And there is a medieval-Catholic conception of knowledge. It is super-rational and static. But there is no Protestant conception of knowledge. It has to be irrational and dynamic.[12]

This means for Tillich that true knowledge can only be acquired within the ambiguities of historical existence and in the face of the demand that the *kairos* places upon the knowing subject. Tillich resolves this conception of knowledge by referencing knowledge in humanity's transcendental decision to participate in God throughout history. He writes:

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[10] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.10-11, *Philosophy and Fate*, inaugural address University of Frankfurt, 1929
[11] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.130, *Kairos and Logos, the absolute subject and history*. Extracted from *Kairos and Logos, eine Untersuchung zur Metaphysik des Erkennens aus: Kairos, Zur Giesteslage und Giestewendung*, 1926
[12] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.135, *Kairos and Logos, the absolute subject and history*, see footnote 11

The presupposition of all our thoughts was that truth is realized in a decision regarding the Unconditioned: stated in religious terms, that all knowledge of the truth in a certain stratum is knowledge of God. There is hardly a philosophy for which this statement could not be valid.[13]

This claim clearly presupposes the unity between being and Being-itself because, as I have shown in the previous chapter, for Tillich, to know anything finite is to know it fundamentally in its participation in Being-itself or God.

Furthermore, Tillich argues that human consciousness of history is consciousness of *kairos*, that is, those temporal moments in which the meaning of a historical period in time is fulfilled, a turning point in the historical process is reached and new periods of time are initiated. Tillich's argument here is dependent upon the relationship between time and eternity because he understands the *kairos* as the specific historical moment in which the eternal is manifested and accepted. For example, he writes:

Where there is an acceptance of the eternal manifesting itself in a special moment of history, in a kairos, there is openness to the unconditional. Such openness can be expressed in religious as well as in secular symbols as the expectation of the transcendent Kingdom of God, or the thousand years of the reign of Christ, or the third epoch of world history, or the final stage of justice and peace. However different the historical consciousness involved in the use of the one or the other of these symbols may be, the consciousness of the kairos, of the outstanding moment in history, can express itself in each of them.[14]

Tillich develops the concept of *kairos* within the historical process in terms of its relation to the concepts of autonomy, heteronomy and theonomy,[15] and in particular in relation to the concept of the 'depth of reason'.[16]

Tillich resolves the concept of autonomy by arguing that as a rational being, the individual must obey the law of subjective-objective reason that is the law that is 'implied in the *logos* structure of mind and reality'.[17] The law to which autonomy strives is the essential law of the conditioned that is without reference to God, (the Unconditioned) or to the relationship between the conditioned and God (the Unconditioned).[18] Furthermore, Tillich argues that autonomy strives

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[13] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.141, *Kairos and Logos, knowledge and decision*, see footnote 11
[14] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.49, *Religion and History, Kairos* . Source, *Die Tat*, vol.14, 1922, Heft 5. See *The Protestant Era*, p.298
[15] Tillich first develops these concepts in his early work, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, then in his later work *The Protestant Era*, 1948, and finally coming to fruition in his major work *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, 1951 and vol.3,1963
[16] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.83
[17] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.84
[18] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.52, *Religion and History, Kairos*, 1922, see footnote 14

continuously against heteronomy in the essential nature of reason and that heteronomy reacts against autonomy at the depth of reason.[19] It is at the depth of reason that human beings become subject to a law that is superior in both authority and in validity to the law of essential reason.[20] At the same time, heteronomy is in danger of destroying the integrity of truth by undermining human creative freedom. For Tillich, this results in the undermining of humanity itself and he argues that this is symbolised in the 'terror' that is manifest in absolute churches or absolute states.[21] When this happens then there is a potential for the unity between being and Being-itself to be disrupted. Tillich has however neatly avoided this possibility by arguing that unity is possible because unity, and also autonomy and heteronomy, are rooted in time and space. The manifestation of unity between being and Being-itself, albeit a fragmentary manifestation, in any given period of history, is achieved as a result of theonomy. In Tillich's words:

> Theonomy asserts that the superior law is, at the same time, the innermost law of man himself, rooted in the divine ground which is man's own ground; the law of life transcends man, although it is, at the same time, his own. ... A theonomous culture expresses in its creations an ultimate concern and a transcending meaning not as something strange but as its own spiritual ground. "Religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion".[22]

Theonomy is thus reason united with its own depth within space and time and so within culture and history. Indeed, it is consciousness or the presupposition of the presence of God that permeates and directs all culture and history.[23] A theonomous moment not only communicates the manifestations of God but also affirms the creative possibilities of autonomy.[24] Autonomy may be the dynamic principle of history but for Tillich, theonomy is the very substance and meaning of history.[25] This is because theonomy is fulfilled time; it is the time of the *kairos*. In Tillich's words:

> Kairos in its *unique* and universal sense is, for Christian faith, the appearing of Jesus as the Christ. Kairos in its *general* and special sense for the philosopher of history is every turning-point in history in which the eternal judges and transforms the temporal. Kairos in its *special* sense, as decisive for our present situation, is the coming of a new theonomy on the soil of a secularised and emptied autonomous culture. In these concepts and their

[19] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.84-85
[20] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.57, *Religion and History*, *Kairos*, 1922, see footnote 14
[21] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.52, *Religion and History*, *Kairos*, 1922, see footnote 14. *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.249-252
[22] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.63, *Religion and Culture*, *Religion and secular culture*. Source *Journal of Religion*, vol.26, No.2, 1946, see The Protestant Era, p.298
[23] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.49, *Religion and History*, *Kairos*, 1922, see footnote 14
[24] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.251-252
[25] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.51, *Religion and History*, *Kairos*, 1922, see footnote 14

dialectical relations the answer is given to the basic question of the philosophy of history:
How can the absolute categories which characterize a genuine kairos be united with the
relativity of the universal process of history? The answer is: History comes from and
moves towards periods of theonomy, i.e., periods in which the conditioned is open to the
unconditioned without claiming to be unconditioned itself. Theonomy unites the absolute
and the relative element in the interpretation of history, the demand that everything
relative become the vehicle of the absolute and the insight that nothing relative can ever
become absolute itself.[26]

The absolute element in the *kairos* of an historical period of time is the eternal and unconditional

element that transcends every historical epoch and is thus valid for every epoch. The relative

elements within the *kairos* are the categories and symbols in which a given period of time grasps

God (the Unconditioned) in the theonomous moment. For Tillich therefore, the possibility of

philosophy recognising truth is dependent upon decision and fate and this is intrinsically linked

to the *kairos*.[27]

How then does Tillich's perception of the history of philosophy place itself within the classical

model of truth in terms of the timeless knowledge of the eternal *logos*? For Tillich, this comes to

expression as a dynamic conception of truth that he again relates to the idea of God.[28]

Tillich draws on the philosophies of Hegel and Marx[29] as examples of reality and truth that

stand in dynamic relationship. This is a dynamic perception that Hegel achieves when he applies

a philosophy of idealism to history. So too with Marx, who argues that idealism emerges from

ideas that are produced from within the historical situation itself. However, Tillich does not

accept either of these expressions of dynamic reality in their entirety. Rather, he adopts aspects

of these insights. He accepts that the historical process is dynamic and that the character of

reality is constituted by historical reality.[30]

The dynamic character of reality for Tillich is not subject to empiricism or rationalism. Rather,

as I have highlighted in the previous chapter, it is dependent upon the elements of fate and

freedom that are inherent in human decision. It is these elements that drives humanity towards its

fulfilment in God, (the Unconditioned) and that is made manifest in the *kairos* of every age. This

conclusion leads Tillich to ask the following question:

> … how far knowledge that is the true interpretation of reality is possible, when reality
> itself is dynamic; while truth is usually considered the static element in every change.
> How is it possible to grasp the nature of that which is changing, if the nature itself is not

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[26] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.53, *Religion and History, Kairos*, see footnote 14
[27] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.150, *Kairos and Logos, method and attitude in knowledge*, see footnote 11
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.219-224
[29] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.265-266
[30] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, pp.152-156, *Kairos and Logos, reality and fate*, see footnote 11

withdrawn from the change? If reality has fateful character in the depth of its essence, how then is the perception of essence possible? This question brings us to the problem of the idea.[31]

Plato's theory of the idea informs philosophical method by identifying idea with the timeless, immutable and unchanging elements in reality. In this classical tradition, the idea is static in the sense that the changing, contingent and temporal order achieves a sense of reality only insofar as it participates in the idea.[32] Tillich endorses his theory that the idea is dynamic by borrowing from the theory of Böhme who argues that the idea is a unity between rest and unrest and that it is a movable and questioning dynamic.[33] Tillich resolves his perception of the dynamic character of the idea into dynamic principles of essences that have the power to become embodied in existence.[34] He expresses this in terms of the infinity of the idea that is constantly poured out in existence in various concrete manifestations but which can only be known in the contingent. Tillich writes:

> Essence and fate are not strange to each other: ... Fate belongs to essential being. The idea is inwardly infinite; it does not contrast with existence as eternal completion, in which existence imperfectly participates, but drives on toward existence, toward the pouring out of its inner infinity in the historic fate. Recognizing reality is recognizing reality as it stands in the historical fate, not beyond it. Therefore the knowledge of ideas is never complete and cannot even approach this state, as phenomenology thought. The knowledge of ideas participates in the inner infinity of ideas. An intuitive view of ideas is not a view of the resting idea in an – perhaps outstanding but always accidental – example, it is a view of the idea in its historic fate. The participation of the things in the idea corresponds just as seriously to the participation of the idea in the things. The Logos becomes flesh; it enters into time and reveals its inner infinity.[35]

I would argue therefore that Tillich claims a historical epistemology for truth. It is a claim that is dependent upon a perception of truth that is rooted in the dynamic and temporal nature of reality and idea. It is rooted in human freedom to decide, in knowledge, in the historical relativity of truth, and in human cognition through which is discerned the manifestation of the eternal *logos* in the *kairos*. Keeping in mind that the purpose of my reconstructing Tillich's system is towards arguing that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the system, an analysis his perception of the relationship between the concepts of the *logos* and the *kairos* is necessary.

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[31] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, pp.158-159, *Kairos and Logos, idea and fate*, see footnote 11
[32] Plato, *The Republic*, 1962, p.235
[33] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.161, *Kairos and Logos, idea and fate*, see footnote 11
[34] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.15-16, *Philosophy and Fate, truth above fate*. First publication, see p.298
[35] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.164, *Kairos and Logos, dialectics and fate*, see footnote 11

Logos **and** *kairos*

Tillich borrows Plato's concept of the *logos* in terms of the changeless and rational structure of the mind and reality. It is the eternal truth that is present in both finite and infinite being.[36] The *logos* may be perceived as dynamic in the sense that it manifests itself within the historical process of the *kairos* of any given age. Furthermore, the basic relationship is determined by revelation where the *kairos* reveals the *logos* and where true knowledge is that of the eternal knowledge of the *logos* as it is revealed in the qualitative time of the *kairos*. In Tillich's words:

> As it does not lessen the proportions of Socrates to emphasize his struggle against the spirit of his age, the spirit of sophistic disintegration, so Nietzsche's stature is not diminished by a strong emphasis on the spirit he was fighting against in his day. The more deeply a man is rooted in the Kairos (the creative moment of time) the better is he able to reach the Logos (universal truth).[37]

To be rooted in the *kairos* is to be rooted in a moment in time, in an event. At the same time, it is also to be rooted in the time of the eternal *logos*. To speak of the *kairos* is therefore also to speak of God (the Unconditioned).[38] Tillich's claim that to be rooted in the *kairos* is to be rooted in events throughout history. This is an important claim because it again highlights my perception of his system as a continuing process.

The universal truth of the *logos* is made known to humanity by virtue of its being deeply involved with the *kairos* as it is made manifest in history through the concepts of fate and the idea of God. Philosophy cannot abandon the attempt to delineate the structure of the *logos* as it was perceived in its Greek origin on the basis of universal concepts and categories. At the same time, the universal truth as it is manifested in the *logos* must acknowledge within its parameters the conditioned characteristics of fate and history. In Tillich's words:

> Fate is not strange to truth, it does not concern only the outer court of philosophy, leaving untouched the sacred precincts themselves. Fate obtrudes even into the sacred enclosure of philosophy, into the truth itself, ... But this eternal truth, this logos above fate, is not at man's disposal; ... But truth is not itself an idea with whose help a philosophy free from fate can be created. ... If philosophy maintains its relation to the eternal logos, if philosophy is not afraid of the demonic thrust of fate, then it can quite readily accept the place of fate within thinking. It can acknowledge that it has from the beginning been subject to fate, that it has always wished to escape it, though it has never succeeded in doing so. The union of kairos and logos is the philosophical task set for us in philosophy and in all fields that are accessible to the philosophical attitude. The logos is to be taken up into the kairos, universal values into the fullness of time, truth into the fate of

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[36] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.72-79, 156, 254-256

[37] Tillich, 'Nietzsche and the Bourgeois Spirit'. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.6, 1945, p.309

[38] Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 1936, p.173, *Kairos and Logos, kairos and the absolute position*, see footnote 11

existence. The separation of idea and existence has to be brought to an end. ... And it is essential to philosophy to stand in existence, to create out of time and fate. ... Since existence itself stands in fate it is proper that philosophy should also stand in fate. ... The truth that stands in fate is accessible to him who stands within fate, who is himself an element of fate, for thought is part of existence.[39]

Furthermore, Tillich claims that there is a dialectical relationship between *logos* and *kairos* in that, universal philosophical validity is authenticated in the *logos*, whilst the *kairos* establishes the existential relevance of the *logos*.[40] How then is the existential relevance of the *logos* established in the *kairos*?

Tillich seeks to answer this question by arguing that the philosopher is driven towards the question of Being-itself by something other than reason that is manifest in the depth of being. He equates this 'something else' with Plato's idea, the Stoic's wisdom, Augustine's truth itself, Spinoza's substance, Hegel's absolute, Hume's liberation from prejudice, and Nietzsche's participation in the life process.[41] The concept of ultimate concern is also relevant to the philosophical enterprise for Tillich, in that the philosopher must argue his or her case from the perspective of their conditioned psychological, sociological and historical existence. Indeed, Tillich is clear that without the element of ultimate concern philosophers would be 'lacking in passion, seriousness and creativity' towards their philosophical enquiry.[42] How then do these points equate with the theoretical task of philosophy?

I have argued that for Tillich the driving force of philosophy is the radical question that is asked from the perspective of pure theory. Negatively expressed, it is the radical deconstruction of every assumption from which cognition proceeds and by which it cuts through all aspects of philosophical enquiry from constructive idealism to empirical realism.[43] It is the epistemology of the question itself. The critical task of philosophy is not to seek a system of reality that includes both the sciences and structures of pre-scientific experience. Such an approach serves only to highlight the historically conditioned character of finitude and humanity's failure to grasp the whole of reality. Tillich is adamant that no system is ever once for all and normative for cognition because cognition constantly drives beyond its every formulation. What critical philosophy seeks rather are the general principles that have emerged from and that are transcendent to the history of philosophy. These are the principles that are fundamental to

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[39] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.14-16, *Religion and History, philosophy and fate,* see footnote 14
[40] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.16-17, *Religion and History, philosophy and fate,* see footnote 14
[41] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality,* 1955, p.19
[42] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.24-25
[43] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.1, pp.18-19

question, discussion and change, that have been handed down across the centuries to be re-interpreted by every generation.[44] In the process of seeking the general principles, philosophy cannot delineate the structure of reality if it is limited to epistemology and ethics as in Neo-Kantianism, nor if it is limited to logical calculus as in logical positivism.[45] The philosophical cognitive approach to philosophy must be sought in the general principles of ontology through which being is expressed in universal categories.[46]

Under this criterion, philosophy seeks the most abstract, objective and widespread answers to the general questions about the nature of reality and human existence.[47] Philosophy is thus not limited to the analysis of a specific area of enquiry but rather seeks reality as a whole, as a *Gestalt*. In its search for reality through the universal categories of being, in Tillich's words, the philosopher;

> ... tries to exclude the personal, social, and historical conditions which might distort an objective vision of reality. His passion is the passion for a truth which is open to general approach, subject to general criticism, changeable in accordance with every new insight, open and communicable. ... He assumes ... that there is an identity, or at least an analogy, between objective and subjective reason, between the *logos* of reality as a whole and the *logos* working in him. Therefore, this *logos* is common; every reasonable being participates in it, uses it in asking questions and criticizing the answers received. There is no particular place to discover the structure of being; there is no particular place to stand to discover the categories of experience. The place to look is all places; the place to stand is no place at all; it is pure reason.[48]

Thus for Tillich, the more the philosopher adopts a detached and objective mindset the closer he or she approaches ultimate reality.

Why then, does philosophy need to use concepts and theology symbols if they are both in search of the same ultimate reality? Tillich answers this question by arguing that the relationship between the ultimate and philosophy, and the ultimate and theology, is different. Whereas for philosophy the relationship is 'in principle a detached description of the basic structure in which the ultimate manifests itself', for theology, it is in principle, 'an involved expression of concern about the meaning of the ultimate for the faithful'.[49]

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[44] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.19-20
[45] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.231
[46] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.90
[47] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, p.8
[48] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.22-23
[49] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.91

A question arises here with respect to Tillich's claim that the philosopher must adopt a position of total objectivity when he or she engages with their subject. How is it possible then for the philosopher to achieve this position in full? I would argue that Tillich's claim is at best a qualified claim in that the philosopher cannot ever be fully detached from the particularity of his or her person or from his or her social and historical context. As with the theologian, the philosopher is both objective and subjective, a point that will ultimately support my argument in chapter six, that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system.

Tillich has developed a critique of the Western philosophical tradition that challenges the failure of Greek philosophy to acknowledge its foundations in fate. It is a critique that in its search for the universal structure of being incorporates the historically conditioned and existentially relative dimensions of philosophy within the structure of reason. These dimensions are in a sense subordinate to the universal and general concepts within the structure of reason in that they serve to make intelligible the structure of reality.[50] Essentially, Tillich resolves his perception of philosophical truth as an objective and universal truth that is developed and expressed through universal concepts. It is this interpretation of the Western philosophical tradition that drives his philosophical system and that he brings into dialogue with his theological system, to which I now turn.

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[50] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, pp.6-8

CHAPTER 5

THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM

> Theology, as a function of the Christian church, must serve the needs
> of the church. A theological system is supposed to satisfy two needs:
> the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation
> of this truth for every generation. Theology moves back and forth
> between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal
> situation in which the eternal truth must be received.
>
> Paul Tillich[1]

I will now seek to bring Tillich's classical philosophy, as I have interpreted it in the previous chapter, into dialogue with his theology. A line will be traced from his early thought on the principles of meaning that resolve into his definition of theology as 'theology of culture', to his mature theological thought as expressed in his *Systematic Theology*. Tillich's use of diverse theological language is again evident throughout his early work. For example, he defines the Church in concrete confessional terms.[2] I will, for the sake of clarity, abridge this terminology by using the word Church throughout. The question of what has been lost or gained in the process of translation of Tillich's work, from German to American English, remains open to debate. An analysis of Tillich's argument that the theological system must serve to move between the temporal situation of the Church and the eternal truth of the Christian message serves to strengthen a perception of Tillich's system as a continuing process. It is within this process that it again becomes apparent that Tillich's perception of meaning and truth is informed by the concept of *Gestalt*. For Tillich, his method of correlation is dependent upon a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology. An analysis of this argument will set the framework for the following chapter in which I will seek to place Tillich's system within the context of post-modern ecumenical debate. To this end, my argument will turn on the hypothesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the system.

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[1] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p.3
[2] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?*, 1973, pp.175f.

Theology of culture

I have shown in chapter one that from his earliest thought, Tillich's concern is to win a place for theology within the total range of human knowledge. He seeks to achieve this position for theology by construing it in terms of a cultural science by way of claiming that theology is prior to cognition and knowledge in every cultural context.[3] This is the means by which he brings philosophy and theology into dialogue.[4] Tillich formulates this claim in three early essays between 1919 and 1925, which were subsequently combined and published as *What is Religion?* in 1973.[5] As one of the cultural sciences, the objective of theology is to achieve a synthesis of knowledge in which the ideal and real elements are rendered actual and united in both the cultural and spiritual life. For Tillich, the concept of spirit is an expression of humanity's capacity to live within structures of meaning that are separate from biological and psychological structures of reality. Indeed, the spiritual reality is of itself a *Gestalt* of meaning in that human beings have an awareness of the relatedness of meaning in terms of every separate meaning, of every particular meaning, and in terms of an awareness of the demand to fulfil ultimate meaning in God. The spiritual act thus actualises particular meanings that are dependent upon the *Gestalt* of meaning in the world, but which are not actually grounded in that *Gestalt* of meaning. Here, Tillich defines particular meaning as form and content of meaning, whereas he defines unconditioned meaning as the unconditioned nature of the ultimate reality of God. The principles of meaning derive therefore from the concrete forms and content of meaning that are measured against their ultimate meaning in God.[6] The principles of meaning are rendered actual within history and culture in the creative acts of the spirit. It is therefore the task of cultural and historical science to develop these principles of meaning.[7] The function of philosophy within the cultural sciences is to determine the universal principles of philosophical meaning. For example, the philosophy of art seeks to define the essence of art. Therefore, just as the meaning of philosophy and history come under the umbrella of cultural science, so also should theology.[8] As one of the cultural sciences, Tillich argues that theology moves

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[3] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English, 1981
[4] Tillich, *On the Boundary* an autobiographical sketch in *The Boundaries of our Being*, 1973, pp.317-325
[5] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, *The Conquest of the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion*, 1922 and *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925
[6] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925 in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.56-58
[7] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English 1981, pp.149-152
[8] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925 in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.32-34. Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.158-159

between two poles, that of the concrete sphere of meaning and that of the unconditioned import of meaning as they are revealed in the forms of meaning. Theology is thus the normative science of religion that stands in dialectical relationship to the philosophy and history of religion. I will offer a critique of this relationship before proceeding to explain the way in which it resolves into a relationship of theology of culture.

Tillich acknowledges that the breakdown of the synthesis that pertained between theonomy and autonomy in the Middle Ages brought about a situation where theonomy became heteronomous. This resulted in theology becoming one particular autonomous science amongst the sciences. In consequence, theology became involved in the cultural conflict between autonomy and heteronomy to the extent that theology itself became both autonomous and heteronomous.[9] Christianity is one example of an autonomous science of religion, but Tillich adheres to a liberal theology that challenges any idea that theology can be reduced to an autonomous and heteronomous rational metaphysics. Rather, he argues that if theology is understood in terms of a theonomous system, then its religious autonomous substance is preserved. Consequently, theology will be detached from the functional meanings of other scientific disciplines.

I have argued in the previous chapter that, for Tillich, philosophy must be construed within history. So too should theology for him, because he binds theology to classical Christian symbols as they come to expression in the history of the Church.[10] Theology involves a dialectical relationship between theonomy and autonomy where autonomy is most apparent in theonomous metaphysics. Theonomous metaphysics is a form of meaning in which the spirit can be rendered actual and which is normative for church dogmatics. In Tillich's words:

> In its intention, however, normative dogmatics is directed toward the universal. It cooperates in the formation of symbols; it is thus a function of the spiritual life, a function that is necessary as long as there are theonomously filled communities. ... But when metaphysical symbolism is creatively adapted to both the fundamental theonomous attitude and the autonomous conceptual material, dogmatics accomplishes its synthetic task; it becomes theonomous metaphysics.[11]

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[9] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods* 1923, published in English 1981, pp.62-65

[10] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English 1981, pp.203-214, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925 in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.97

[11] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English, 1981, pp.210-211

A critical point emerges here in that Tillich would seem to accept dogma provided that it is expressed in terms of theonomous metaphysics and provided that heteronomy is avoided and autonomy is maintained in the classical symbols of the Church.

Tillich was much influenced by the Continental debate of 1920-1930 that tackled the question of the nature of religion and revelation and the question of the relationship between religion and culture. For example, he writes:

> Concepts such as "revelation" and "redemption" stand in clear opposition to the concept of "religion". They express an action happening only once, transcendent in origin and transforming in its effect on reality, while "religion" subordinates a whole series of spiritual acts and cultural creations under a general concept. "Revelation" speaks of a divine, "religion" of a human action. "Revelation" speaks of an absolute, singular, exclusive, and self-sufficient happening; "religion" refers to merely relative occurrences, always recurring and never exclusive. "Revelation" speaks of the entrance of a new reality into life and the spirit; "religion" speaks of a culture, "revelation" of that which lies beyond culture. For this reason religion feels an assault is made upon its inmost essence when it is called religion. For that reason it closes its mind to philosophy of religion and opens itself at most to theology, insofar as the latter is nothing other than a "science" of revelation.[12]

Tillich goes on to argue that theology and the philosophy of religion are two elements of a single normative cultural science of religion and that they are both inextricably linked to the cultural history of religion.[13] Furthermore, the relationship between religion and culture is dependent upon the spiritual realisation that all meaning is fulfilled in the unconditioned meaning of the Holy Spirit. In Tillich's words:

> Only in the "Holy Spirit" does the nature of spirit find its realization. It comes to realization, however, not in forms that stand alongside the cultural ones (through which the unconditionedness of religion would be dissolved) but rather precisely in the cultural forms; culture is a form of expression of religion, and religion is the substance.[14]

Tillich argues that, in its search for God, religion is manifest in the deepest and most ultimate dimensions of the human spirit as ultimate concern. Ultimate concern is a creative function of the human spirit and it is manifest in that realm of knowledge that passionately longs for ultimate reality and ultimate meaning. It is manifest in religion as the substance, ground and depth of the spiritual life. By the time of his work *Theology of Culture*, published in 1959, Tillich expresses religion as follows:

> Religion as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of culture, and culture is

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[12] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925, in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.27-28
[13] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925, in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.30-34
[14] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925, in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.73

the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself. In abbreviation: religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion. Such a consideration definitely prevents the establishment of a dualism of religion and culture. Every religious act, not only in organized religion, but also in the most intimate movement of the soul, is culturally formed.[15]

A question now arises. If, as Tillich argues, the most authentic relationship between religion and culture is theonomy, then how does this relationship sit within those institutional and historical religions in culture that have the potential to cause separation between religion and culture? This is, for Tillich, the separation that results when religion and culture become the dynamic force of the spiritual life. In an autonomous situation that is inclusive of the cultural critique of religious symbols in which God's import is expressed, then religion renders these forms and symbols absolute. Therefore, religion is placed outside the sphere of autonomous criticism. It is when religion claims that God's meaning is confined to particular forms within specific religious spheres that separation occurs between religion and culture. In turn, this results in tension between autonomous culture and heteronomous religion.[16] What is it then that leads the human spirit to create specific personal and institutional religions? Tillich's response follows:

> The answer is, because of the tragic estrangement of man's spiritual life from its own ground and depth. ... It [religion] makes itself the ultimate and despises the secular realm. It makes its myths and doctrines, its rites and laws into ultimates and persecutes those who do not subject themselves to it. It forgets that its own existence is a result of man's tragic estrangement from his true being. It forgets its own emergency character. ... For the religious and the secular realm are in the same predicament. Neither of them should be in separation from the other, and both should realize that their very existence as separated is an emergency, that both of them are rooted in religion in the larger sense of the word, in the experience of ultimate concern. To the degree in which this is realized the conflicts between the religious and the secular are overcome, and religion has discovered its true place in man's spiritual life, namely, in its depth, out of which it gives substance, ultimate meaning, judgement, and creative courage to all functions of the human spirit.[17]

In his early work, Tillich also defines the normative concept of the philosophy of religion as a 'religion of paradox'. He argues that religion in not simply a creation of the human spirit but is also the revelatory perfection of the religious consciousness in which its natural structure is both affirmed and negated. The dialectical movement from the sacramental to

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[15] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1959, p.42, based on *The Idea of a Philosophy of Culture*, 1919
[16] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1959, pp.73-75, based on *The Idea of a Philosophy of Culture*, 1919
[17] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1959, pp.8-9, based on *The Idea of a Philosophy of Culture*, 1919

the religion of paradox is that point at which theology and philosophy of religion meet.[18] In Tillich's words:

It is not the task of philosophy of religion to decide what concrete symbol the religion of paradox can adopt, or better, what concrete symbol is fundamental for the normative concept of religion. This is the task of theology, which is necessarily confessional because it involves acknowledgement of a concrete symbol. But it does not therefore need to be less universally valid than philosophy of religion. If it has grasped the paradoxical, symbolic character of the content of faith, it must also place itself and its apprehension of the Unconditioned under the No of the Unconditional. It will stand all the deeper in the religion of paradox, the more it succeeds in intuiting in its own symbol the No of the Unconditioned against every symbol.[19]

To this extent for Tillich then, philosophy of religion is a branch of philosophy. Indeed, philosophy is indispensable for theology because it provides the theory of meaning within which theology is adequately expressed. It is this theory of meaning that is integral to culture. In order to serve the needs of the Church, theology maintains its own elements and categories within its religious practice. However, since both theology and philosophy are concerned with universal meaning then theology is also able to function as philosophy.[20] Indeed, when theology is perceived as theology of culture then, Tillich argues as follows:

We have assigned to theology the task of finding a systematic form of expression for a concrete religious standpoint, on the basis of the universal concepts of philosophy of religion and by means of the classification of philosophy of history. The task of theology of culture corresponds to this. It produces a general religious analysis of all cultural creations; it provides a historical-philosophical and typological classification of the great cultural creations according to the religious substance realized in them; and it produces from its own concrete religious standpoint the ideal outline of a culture penetrated by religion.[21]

The question of Tillich's perception of the relationship between theology of culture and the theology of the Church arises. In response, it is evident that in his thought, theology of culture is simply not viable without the specifically religious culture of doctrines, worship and liturgy that are integral elements to the life of the Church. It is the penetration of cultural forms by substance or import that create both the specifically religious situation and also the broader religious substance of culture. Each religion has developed from it own independent forms that have evolved from separate histories.[22]

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[18] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925, in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.93-96
[19] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925, in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.97
[20] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?* 1973, pp.164-165
[21] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.165
[22] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.176

Tillich goes on to argue that the church theologian can adopt three distinct attitudes towards culture. Firstly, there is the absolute Catholic attitude where all aspects of culture are grouped together in terms of the world and the Kingdom of God as they are realised and interpreted by the Church. Then there is the old Protestant relative attitude where the Church, culture and ethics are open to inconsistent interpretation. Both these attitudes are untenable for Tillich and give way to an attitude that goes towards his formulation of a new Protestant principle. In Tillich's words:

> On the one hand, the distinction between religious potentiality and actuality, i.e., between religious principle and religious culture, will be strictly drawn and the character of "absoluteness" assigned only to the religious principle and not to any factor of the religious culture, not even that of its historical foundation. On the other hand, the religious principle will not be defined in purely abstract terms, nor will its concrete fulfilment be entrusted to every fleeting fashion of cultural development. Every effort, however, will be made to ensure the continuity of its concrete religious standpoint. Only if this attitude is adopted can there be any positive relation between theology of culture and the theology of the church.[23]

Here, the incorporation of both the past and future characteristics of church theology emerges in Tillich's thought. This again strengthens the idea that when theology is perceived as ecclesial theology, it is thus a continuing process. A critical point has now been reached because it would seem that from his earliest thought, Tillich's systematic theology and ecclesiology are inter-dependent. Furthermore, the continuing systematic theological and ecclesial process is applicable to theology of culture because this theology relates to the living and ever changing cultural context. Again, theology of culture and theology of the Church are potentially complementary for Tillich when they both adopt the religious principle that culture is the locus of religion.[24] In terms of the nature of theology, it is evident that the concept of theology as a theononous system is made intelligible only when the philosophy of meaning and the cultural task of theology are grounded in the philosophical conception of religion. Any critique of theology of culture that is based solely on the church's Scripture, tradition and kerygma is only viable for Tillich when the philosophical perspective that pertains to the philosophy of religion is included.

The seminal point that has emerged from my analysis of Tillich's early thought is that philosophy, in its cognitive search for universal concepts and categories of meaning, is integral with theology. Nevertheless, the distinction he makes between philosophy and

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[23] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.177

[24] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.178

theology stems from his theological perspective where philosophy is abstract, objective and universal, whereas theology is concrete, existential and universal. Philosophy can develop a normative concept of religion, but for Tillich, it is theology that establishes the content of that norm when it is grasped by a living relationship in the concrete norm of Jesus as the Christ. Indeed, I would argue that for him, the concept of religion drives philosophy away from a purely profane, secular and critical positivistic understanding of itself. Philosophy is therefore religious, in the sense that its history reveals its quest for ultimate reality and unconditioned meaning. On the other hand, Tillich's concept of religion drives theology away from a purely ecclesial understanding of itself. This results in a broader understanding that derives from a merging of philosophy and theology within the cultural context. There is the possibility that conflict may occur between the two disciplines if philosophy is interpreted as autonomous and theology as heteronomous. However, as I have already shown, for Tillich, such conflict is overcome when both are interpreted as theonomous.

The theological circle

In order to build upon the above analysis of Tillich's early thought, I must now refer to the way in which he seeks to answer the questions that stem from humanity's self-understanding in culture, as expressed in his mature work *Systematic Theology*. Essentially, the correlative and apologetic critique that emerges seeks to overcome the potential conflicts between theology of culture and church theology resulting from his claim that these theologies are separate yet related disciplines.

The concept of the theological circle is developed from Tillich's early thought where he neatly separates the theology of the Church (concrete-confessional) from philosophy and the philosophy of religion.[25]

Tillich's later work is aimed towards a complete theological system, one that embraces both the message of the Christian faith and also the cultural milieu of the theologian. He is clear from the above quotation that the theological system should be a function of the Church in that it should not only proclaim the truth claims of the Christian faith, but also, that it should interpret this truth for every new generation. His systematic theology and ecclesiology are thus inextricably linked. He argues that theology must move back and forth

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[25] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English, 1981, pp.203-214. *The Philosophy of Religion* 1925 in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.94

between two poles, that of the Christian truth and that of the temporal situation in which this truth is received.[26] Tillich defines the word 'situation' in the following way:

> The "situation" theology must consider is the creative interpretation of existence, an interpretation which is carried out in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions. The "situation" certainly is not independent of these factors. However, theology deals with the cultural expression they have found in practice as well as in theory and not with these conditioning factors as such. ... The "situation" to which theology must respond is the totality of man's creative self-interpretation in a special period. Fundamental orthodoxy rejects this task, and, in doing so, they miss the meaning of theology.[27]

However, Tillich identifies risks as well as benefits when a theological system moves between the two poles of the Christian message and the situation. For example, he argues that sometimes in the past, the kerygma has been diminished by the relative nature of the cultural situation when, in his words, theology:

> ... lost its own ground when it entered the situation. Apologetic theology in all these forms – and that means practically all nonfundamentalist theology since the beginning of the eighteenth century – is, from the point of view of recent kerygmatic theologians, a surrender of the kerygma, of the immovable truth. If this is an accurate reading of theological history, then only real theology is kerygmatic theology. The "situation" cannot be entered; no answer to the questions implied in it can be given, at least not in terms which are felt to be an answer. The message must be thrown at those in the situation – thrown like a stone. ... Kerygmatic theology must give up its exclusive transcendence and take seriously the attempt of apologetic theology to answer the questions put before it by the contemporary situation.[28]

Tillich avoids a pure kerygmatic theology, as for example that of Barth,[29] in which Tillich perceives the danger of the Christian message becoming diluted. Rather, his method of correlation draws upon the concepts and language within the cultural process in order to facilitate dialogue between the kerygma and culture. This way, Tillich overcomes what he perceives as the cultural isolation of a purely kerygmatic theology by uniting both kerygmatic and apologetic theology within the theological system.[30]

The nature of the theology that drives the theological system of Tillich's mature thought moves away from his early claim that dismisses theology as an inductive empirical or a

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[26] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.3
[27] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.4
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.6-7
[29] Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, 1963, pp.15-25, 37-47. *Church Dogmatics*, vol.1, part 1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 1975
[30] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.7-8

deductive metaphysical branch of the sciences and moves towards a theology of individual experience, ecclesial tradition and personal commitment. Indeed, and in contrast to Lindbeck,[31] he acknowledges the mystical *a priori* character of theology that is determinative for the empirical basis for theology. In Tillich's words:

> Whether it is "being-itself" (Scholastics) or the "universal substance" (Spinoza), whether it is "beyond subjectivity and objectivity" (James) or the "identity of spirit and nature" (Schelling), whether it is "universe" (Schleiermacher) or "cosmic whole" (Hocking), whether it is "value creating process" (Whitehead) or "progressive integration" (Weiman), whether it is "absolute spirit" (Hegel) or "cosmic person" (Brightman) – each of these concepts is based on an immediate experience of something ultimate in value and being of which one can become intuitively aware.[32]

The mystical *a priori* determines the philosophy of religion within the parameters of the 'theological circle' and within which the unity between finitude and God is presupposed. Remarkable parallels between Tillich's thought and Rahner's concept of the 'supernatural existential' emerge here in that Rahner argues that revelation presupposes a spirituality of God.[33] For Tillich, a philosopher of religion endeavours to adopt general abstract concepts concerning religion, whereas the theologian consciously adopts the specific and concrete universality of the Christian message. In order to fulfil the theological self-interpretative function of the Church, the theologian enters the theological circle as a member of the Church.[34] This is a criterion in which the objective cognitive approach of scientific theology and the philosophy of religion are precluded from entering the theological circle. On the other hand, the Christian theologian cannot adopt a position of pure objective reason towards theology because of the mystical *a priori* element that is intrinsic to theology. This involves the theologian making an existential decision to adopt the situation of faith. At the same time however, Tillich points out that because the theologian is also in a position of doubt, he or she is sometimes inside and sometimes outside the theological circle. Nevertheless, providing that the theologian acknowledges that the content of ultimate concern is contained within the parameters of the theological circle, then the theologian has access to it. Again, the whole theological system operates most effectively within the theological circle when each part of the system works in inter-dependence with every other part, namely, within the *Gestalt*.

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[31] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 1984, p.34
[32] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.9
[33] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, p.906
[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.10

Ultimate concern

Tillich's criterion of ultimate concern with respect to the theological circle serves to highlight the religious character of theology and also serves to establish a place for theology in relation to religion and culture. Ultimate concern expresses total, unconditional and infinite concern. This means that the existential character of religious experience is added to the circle, and the object of ultimate concern (God) is thereby revealed. The following quotation from Tillich's *Systematic Theology* is a definitive expression of ultimate concern. He writes that ultimate concern is:

> ... the correlate of an unconditioned concern but not a "highest thing" called "the absolute" or "the unconditioned," about which we would argue in detached objectivity. It is the object of total surrender, demanding also the surrender of our subjectivity while we look at it. It is a matter of infinite passion and interest (Kierkegaard), making us its object whenever we try to make it our object. For this reason we have avoided terms like "*the* ultimate," "*the* unconditioned," "*the* universal," "*the* infinite," and have spoken of ultimate, unconditioned, total, infinite concern.[35]

We have seen in the previous chapter, the way in which the ontological concept of being refers to the total structure of finite reality, a reality that it threatened by non-being. This threat is of ultimate concern to human beings. Tillich deals with this threat by uniting both the subjective and objective dimensions of faith in terms of ultimate concern. For example, he argue that:

> The term "ultimate concern" unites the subjective and the objective side of the act of faith – the *fides qua creditur* (the faith through which one believes) and the *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed). The first is the classical term for the centred act of the personality, the ultimate concern. The second is the classical terms for that toward which this act is directed, the ultimate itself, expressed in symbols of the divine. This distinction is very important, but not ultimately so, for the one side cannot be without the other. There is no faith without a content toward which it is directed. There is always something meant in the act of faith. And there is no way of having the content of faith except in the act of faith.[36]

Thus, whilst theology is rooted in human existence and humanity's encounter with reality, the divine object of theology is not generated out of this structure. Rather, for Tillich, it is faith that determines the reality of God.[37] This is a perspective from which he can argue that

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[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.12
[36] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.10
[37] Tillich, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1925 in *What is Religion*, 1973, p.79

ultimate concern determines the ontological character of theology and thus the criterion by which human beings can overcome the threat of non-being in objective terms.

For Tillich, the *raison d'être* of theology is the self-interpretation of the Church within the theological circle. How then does he justify this claim against those theologies that are outside the theological circle? His answer to this question again re-enforces his commitment to both apologetic and kerygmatic theology. He writes:

> Apologetic theology must show that the trends which are immanent in all religions and cultures move towards the Christian answer. This refers both to doctrines and to the theological interpretation of theology.[38]

In this process, the truth claims of the Church are interpreted in continuity with other theologies by means of the relationship between reason, expressed as *logos*, and God. This places Tillich's theological orientation in the classical Greek tradition where metaphysics unite rational analysis with theological hermeneutics. Christian theology is thus the prime theology for Tillich in that the divine *Logos* became flesh as revealed in Jesus as the Christ. In his words:

> Christian theology has received something which is absolutely concrete and absolutely universal at the same time. No myth, no mystical vision, no metaphysical principle, no sacred law, has the concreteness of a personal life. In comparison with a personal life everything else is relatively abstract. And none of these relatively abstract foundations of theology has the universality of the Logos, which itself is the principle of universality.[39]

Tillich supports this claim further by arguing that the *Logos* has the power of transcendence over both the abstract and the particular. In this process, the absolutely concrete Jesus as the Christ is united with the absolutely particular God. The *Logos* concept thus evolves from the formal principles of theology as ultimate concern. Firstly, it establishes the concrete existential subjective character of theology. Secondly, it determines the absolute and universal objective character of Jesus as the Christ.[40]

So then, for Tillich, ultimate concern is for Christian theology the subjective existential interpretation of the religious encounter with reality. Kerygmatic theology expresses the message of the Christian church and apologetic theology justifies this theology in the context of culture. The content of ultimate concern that determines human being or non-

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[38] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.15
[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.16
[40] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.17

being is a matter of decision in the universal context of the Church. This is the context in which theology stands in positive correlation with philosophy. Again, ultimate concern establishes the objective ontological character of theology in which it unites with the existential character of theology. Ultimate concern is fulfilled in the *Logos* as revealed in Jesus as the Christ. How then does Tillich express his concept of revelation within his system?

Revelation

For Tillich, revelation is the manifestation of that which is of ultimate concern. The two fundamental sources of revelation for Tillich are Scripture and the ecclesial Tradition. For his contemporary Barth, these were the sole sources.[41] Tillich, however, argues that Scripture is a product of the human interpretation of religion and culture, and must consequently be subject to human error. Nevertheless, Scripture is an important source for theological investigation, because it is, in his words:

> ... the original witness of those who have participated in the revealing events. Their participation was their response to the happenings which became revealing events through their response. The inspiration of the biblical writers is their receptive and creative response to potentially revelatory facts. The inspiration of the writers of the New Testament is their acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, and with him, of the New Being, of which they became witnesses. Since there is no revelation unless there is someone who receives it as revelation, the act of reception is a part of the event itself. The Bible is both original event and original document; it witnesses to that of which they became a part.[42]

Scripture is thus a product of the milieu of thought and of language during its inception. Whilst the sacred may be transparent in the biblical text, nevertheless, for Tillich they are testaments of belief that are framed in their time according to the prevailing world-view and knowledge of that time. In their day, the biblical authors correlated the sacred religious answers with current existential issues. Accordingly, Scripture can be probed for the eternal and universal substance that is present, whilst the expression of that substance changes from generation to generation. However, Kegley argues that Tillich's system is 'wholly and finally determined by the revelation of God recorded in the Bible'.[43] Under Tillich's biblical hermeneutics, revelation is a work-in-progress because although he argues that revelation is final in Jesus as the Christ, it is not complete or immutable. Indeed, he argues that the

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[41] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.36, Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, 1963, pp.15-25
[42] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.35
[43] Kegley, *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 1964, p.230

content of Christian revelation is largely the product of the tradition of the early church, the Catholic Middle Ages and the reaction of the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Thus, for Tillich, revelation is an interpretation by human beings of God's self-manifestation in the context of event. Rahner would seem to support Tillich's argument here when he argues that God reveals his inner reality through the character of event.[44]

It is worth pausing here to examine the way in which Tillich's interpretation of revelation as event resonates with post-modern thought. For example, Caputo interprets event theologically in terms of God's name. He interprets an event as follows:

> An event (événement) is a certain "happening" that is "linked" but not bound causally to antecedent and consequence, not bound by efficient causality to the past or by teleological causality to the future, but is taken for itself, in its own singularity. The event has a certain free-floatingness, an innocence and gift likeness; it is a happening over which we have no mastery, in which things happen to us, overtake us, as when we say that rule of God has come over us.[45]

Furthermore, Caputo endorses Tillich's concept of revelation as event in terms of a process for every generation when he argues that a theology of the event is a work-in-progress.[46] Again, Milbank contributes to the idea of revelation as event in terms of process when he argues that God cannot be realised in a static event but is realised rather in a process of events.[47]

For Tillich, revelation is a special and extraordinary type of knowledge that he links to the mystical *a priori* and which, he argues, is two dimensional in character. The first dimension is objective revelation to which he applies the term 'ecstatic' and whereby the mind is elevated to experience union with the mysterious ground of being. He defines the second dimension of revelation as subjective revelation to which he applies the term 'miracle', which is an unusual event that points towards the ultimate source of reality and meaning.[48] The event of revelation is ecstatic in the sense that the human intellect transcends its ordinary structure and is thereby correlated with miracle in reality. It is an event that points towards human transcendence of the polarity between the self and the world, towards God, who is the ground of being and who is of ultimate concern for human beings. In Tillich's thought, both dimensions of revelation are communicated to human beings by means of

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[44] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, p.171

[45] Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, 2006, p.175

[46] Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, 2006, p.295

[47] Milbank, J., "The Soul of Reciprocity Part One: Reciprocity Refused", *Modern Theology*, 17, No.3, July, 2001. Milbank also made reference to this argument in his paper at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in 2007

[48] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.106-131

myth and symbol.[49] He links the correlation between ecstatic and miraculous revelation to the soteriological dimension of revelation. For example, Tillich argues that:

> Jesus as the Christ, the miracle of the final revelation, and the church, receiving him as the Christ or the final revelation, belong to each other. The Christ is not the Christ without the church and the church is not the church without the Christ. The final revelation, like every revelation is correlative.[50]

In Tillich's thought, the biblical source of revelation is made available to the systematic theologian in the same way that ecclesial history is made available, that is, through a 'historically critical and ultimately concerned history of Christian thought, formally called "history of dogma"'.[51] Furthermore, Tillich perceives Scripture as a source for ontology in that it describes the structure of experience in terms of human life, love and knowledge.[52] He argues that the systematic theologian has the freedom to approach theology with a critical mindset providing that he or she applies the criteria of the impact of both revelation and the response to revelation within ontological terms that relate to event.

Again, it is worth pausing here to compare Tillich's interpretation of revelation with that of the contemporary philosopher Badiou. In his work *Being and Event*, Badiou offers two complementary claims with respect to event. Firstly, he argues that the phenomenology of the event is what appears when the event itself disappears. This is because the event has no reality within the situation as it stands and no temporal reality other that the 'moment' of its (dis) –appearance.[53] Secondly, with respect to ontology, the event has no definitive status in the sense that there is no absolute way to resolve it belonging to the situation and no way that human beings can answer the question of the event actually happening within the situation. For Badiou, as for Tillich, in order for the event to have any consequences it requires a response from within the situation. Under this criterion, the event cannot be the object of factual knowledge, evidence or proof. Rather, it is possible only to have a subjective orientation towards the event. With respect to the non-definitive ontological status of the event, Badiou argues, again as with Tillich, that there is a possibility that a decision will be necessary, if the event is to proceed. Yet again in resonance with Tillich,

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[49] Tillich, "The Present Situation", *Theology Today*, 6, 1949-1950, p.206
[50] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.137
[51] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.38
[52] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.21
[53] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 2005, chap.4

Badiou argues that the event to which human beings respond is an investment that is beyond knowledge, consciousness and hope. It is investment in the radically new.

The dynamic dialogue that pertained between Tillich and some Catholic scholars also centred on the hermeneutics of revelation. For example, Dulles is in agreement with Tillich that Scripture is not the sole source for systematic theology and endorses Tillich's refusal to interpret the Bible literally without reference to myth or symbol. He also agrees that biblical history must be perceived within the context of the faith of the biblical authors.[54] Again, Dulles is in agreement with Tillich in that the ecclesial tradition is a source for systematic theology only providing that the tradition moves in tune with, and relates to, the prevailing situation. In Dulles's words:

> Tillich does well to emphasis that Christian doctrine cannot be a static thing. The radical biblicist, in his willingness to depart from the letter of the Bible, is unfaithful to its spirit. As Tillich points out, the Gospel cannot have its due impact unless it is presented in ways suitable to the needs and capacities of each successive generation. Although Tillich's conception of the kerygma does not quite coincide with the Catholic notion of the "data of revelation," his efforts to distinguish between the kerygma and theology will prove stimulating to many Catholic theologians. His emphasis on the "answering" function of systematic theology is in full accord with Catholic teaching on doctrinal development and adaptation.[55]

In essence then, the ecclesial tradition is a source of revelation providing that it relates to, and moves in tune with culture. Thus, Christian doctrine is never static for Tillich but should adapt and develop if it is to answer the existential questions for every new generation. Scripture and ecclesial tradition are both sources of revelation in that they are records of the various theonomous events that have occurred throughout the history of Christianity in particular cultural situations.

This mindset can be traced back to his early thought of 1922 and which came to expression in his developed Protestant Principle.[56] This is the principle in which one side of the relationship between human beings and God is expressed and made effective in all periods of history.[57] This is a balanced approach in that Tillich builds into the rubric of the Protestant Principle the concept of the 'catholic substance'.[58] Neither the term Protestant or the word

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[54] Dulles, *Paul Tillich and the Bible* in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, 1965, pp.109-132
[55] Dulles, *Paul Tillich and the* Bible in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, 1965, p.130
[56] Tillich, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919 in *What is Religion?* 1973, p.177
[57] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, pp.xxvi, 239, *The Protestant Principle and the Proletarian Situation*. Source, from a tranlation of the brochure, *Protestantisches Prinzip und Proletarische Situation*, Bonn: Friedrich Cohen, 1931. See *The Protestant Era*, p.298
[58] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.245

'catholic' as used by Tillich here refers to a particular Christian tradition. Rather, the terms refer to the Church's attempt throughout its history to observe an apologetic position for theology in the cultural situation whilst also maintaining the eternal core of the Christian kerygma. This means that theology remains vibrant and relevant because it maintains integrity towards its dialogue with culture and also remains faithful to the catholic substance of the Christian kerygma. In this process, it transcends all former religious and cultural forms even though it can be identified in them all, because the living and moving ground and power of God is within them all. Indeed, Tillich's Protestant Principle is an expression against any absolute claim made for a relative reality in both the Protestant and Catholic traditions. It is for Tillich, the theological expression of the true relationship that pertains between human beings and God.

Moreover, Tillich argues that systematic theology must broaden its sources to include not only Scripture and ecclesial tradition, but also the history of religion and culture. In his opinion, the theologian is thereby fully equipped with the conceptual tools with which to formulate both the existential questions and the theological answers. Added to this, the theologian must bring the receptive medium of experience into the historical theological investigation. Here, Tillich's concern is to seek a critique of the empirical theology that he himself was experiencing in America, by challenging the concept of theological experience against neo-orthodoxy. He argues that although experience must be absorbed into the theological method, it is not in itself a source for theology. Rather, it is revelation that is received through experience in the event that constitutes the content of theology. For Tillich, this takes Christian theology beyond the experience of Jesus as the Christ to the new centre of truth and reality in Jesus as the New Being.[59]

Where then does Tillich place his concept of reason within the existential and subjective dimension of the theological structure? On this point, he argues that there is a self-transcending form of reason that he defines as ecstatic reason and through which the contents of the kerygma are received.[60] This form of reason cannot express the kerygma in methodical terms but rather in terms of what Tillich defines as technical or formal reason, neither of which are in themselves the sources of the contents of theology. In Tillich's words:

> Ecstatic reason is reason grasped by an ultimate concern. Reason is overpowered, invaded, shaken by ultimate concern. Reason does not produce an object of ultimate concern by logical procedures, as a mistaken theology tried to do in "its arguments for the existence of

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[59] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.46-50
[60] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.53, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.74f.

God". The contents of faith grasp reason. Nor does the technical and formal reason of the theologian produce its contents...[61]

So then theology is conceived through technical reason and received through ecstatic reason. Tillich recognises that this ambiguous argument can be avoided by theology only when these two forms of reason reach the complete harmony of the theonomy of God's kingdom. To this extent, Tillich acknowledges that theology is subject to the contradictions that are inherent in the existential situation of human beings.[62]

What then is Tillich's definition of the rational character of theology? Clearly, he is aware of the potential for ambiguities to arise and argues that the theologian must thus seek to apply the rules of semantic clarity to theological expression in terms of precise and unambiguous language. For example, he argues that words such as New Being have emerged from a whole context of meanings that include anthropological, psychological and philosophical elements.[63] For Tillich, the principle of semantic rationality in theology demands that all words should be consciously inter-related within the *Gestalt* of a centred and controlling meaning. At the same time, Tillich argues that:

> The semantic situation makes it evident that the language of the theologian cannot be sacred or revealed language. He cannot restrict himself to the biblical terminology or to the language of classical theology. He could not avoid philosophical concepts even if he used only biblical words; and even less could he avoid them if he used only the words of the Reformers. Therefore, he should use philosophical and scientific terms whenever he deems them helpful for his task of explaining the contents of the Christian faith. The two things he must watch in doing so are semantic clarity and existential purity. He must avoid conceptual ambiguity and a possible distortion of the Christian message by the intrusion of anti-Christian ideas in the cloak of a philosophical, scientific, or poetic terminology.[64]

Thus, the structures that are formulated in the principles of reason are as significant for theology as for any other science. However, for Tillich, there is no conflict between the structure of cognition and any dialect that is built into that structure when the cognitive structure is perceived as paradox.[65] He gives as an example:

> The doctrine of the Trinity does not affirm the logical nonsense that three is one and one is three; it describes in dialectical terms the inner movement of the divine life as an eternal separation from and return to itself.[66]

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[61] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.53
[62] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.54
[63] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.55
[64] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.55-56
[65] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.56-57, vol.2, pp.90-92
[66] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.56

Nevertheless for Tillich, theology should maintain a rational and consistent methodology when expressing its argument. Theological method is grounded in the nature of theology and in the structure of systematic theology. The method of correlation presupposes the nature of theology and expresses this nature within the theological structure. In Tillich's words:

> The cognitive relation in theology reveals the existential and transcending character of the ground of objects in time and space. Therefore, no method can be developed without a prior knowledge of the object to which it is applied. For systematic theology this means that its method is derived from a prior knowledge of the system which is to be built by the method.[67]

I have shown in chapter two, how Tillich's method of correlation achieves an apologetic Christian theology by means of existential questions in correlation with theological answers within three distinct meanings. Firstly, there is correlation between symbol and symbolised in the search for religious knowledge. Secondly, there is a logical correlation between concepts that define human beings and God that are determinative for statements concerning God and the world. Thirdly, there is a factual correlation between ultimate concern and God that qualifies the relationship between human beings and God within religious experience.[68] Tillich point out that Barth challenged this third criterion of correlation on the grounds that this correlation is open to the interpretation that God is dependent upon human beings. Tillich's neat response to this challenge is to argue that:

> ... although God in his abysmal nature [Calvin: "In his essence."] is in no way dependent upon man, God in his self-manifestation to man is dependent on the way man receives his manifestation. This is true even if the doctrine of predestination, namely, that this way is foreordained by God and entirely independent of human freedom, is maintained. The divine-human relation, and therefore God as well as man within this relation, changes with the stages of the history of revelation and with the stages of every personal development. There is mutual interdependence between "God for us" and "we for God." God's wrath and God's grace are not contrasts in the "heart" of God (Luther), in the depth of his being; but they are contrasts in the divine-human relationship. The divine-human relationship is a correlation. The "divine-human encounter" (Emil Brunner) means something real for both sides. It is an actual correlation in the third sense of the term.[69]

We have also seen in chapter two, that the Tillichian method of correlation is dependent upon the three foundational principles of finitude, God and their unity, and where unity is

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[67] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.60
[68] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.60-62
[69] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.61

the presupposition of the method. Medium and content are identical at that point in the structure, where unity is presupposed through the mystical *a priori*. This means that philosophical question and theological answer are identical at that same point in the correlation. In Tillich's words:

> The divine-human relationship is a correlation also in its cognitive side. Symbolically speaking, God answers man's questions, and under the impact of God's answers man asks them. Theology formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence. This is a circle which drives man to a point where question and answer are not separated. This point, however, is not a moment in time. It belongs to man's essential being, to the unity of his finitude with the infinity in which he was created ... and from which he is separated. A symptom of both the essential unity and the existential separation of finite man from his infinity is the ability to ask about the infinite to which he belongs: the fact that he must ask about it indicates that he is separated from it.[70]

The method of correlation therefore, answers the questions of human existence by building philosophy into the structure of the system, and in so doing, the method defines the formal relationship between philosophy and theology. Theology is dependent upon philosophy insofar as the objective and universal determination of the structure of human existence is concerned. Philosophy is dependent upon theology for the answers to the questions that this analysis reveals. There is therefore, for Tillich, a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology within the method in that the method dictates the form of both the question and the answer.[71]

Furthermore, the method of correlation replaces three hitherto inadequate methods in relation to the kerygma and the situation. Tillich argues that the dialectical relationship between the content of the Christian faith and the cultural context in which the faith is received has been impaired in these methods. Tillich highlights this point as follows:

> The first method can be called supranaturalistic, in that it takes the Christian message to be a sum of revealed truths which have fallen into the human situation like strange bodies from a strange world. No mediation to the human situation is possible. ... The second method to be rejected can be called "naturalistic or humanistic." It derives the Christian message from man's natural state. It develops its answers out of human existence, unaware that human existence itself *is* the question. ... Questions and answers were put on the same level of human creativity. Everything was said by man, nothing to man. But revelation is "spoken" to man, not by man himself. The third method to be rejected can be called "dualistic," inasmuch as it builds as a supranatural structure on a natural substructure. This method, more than others, is aware of the problem which the method of

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[70] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.61
[71] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.30

correlation tries to meet. It realizes that, in spite of the infinite gap between man's spirit and God 's spirit, there must be a positive relation between them. It tries to express this relation by positing a body of theological truth which man can reach through his own efforts or, in terms of a self-contradictory expression, through "natural revelation".[72]

Tillich's method of correlation overcomes these three methods in that it adopts the concepts of self-transcending realism that absorbs natural theology into the parameters of human existence. Again, it absorbs supra-naturalism into answers given to the question implied in human existence. In Tillich's words:

> The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence. These answers are contained in the revelatory events on which Christianity is based and are taken by systematic theology *from* the sources, *through* the medium, *under* the norm.[73]

Tillich shows a consistency from his early to mature thought in arguing that there is only one genuine paradox with the Christian message, namely the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, who under the conditions of existence, conquered existence. The norm of theology is therefore grounded in this central paradox for Tillich. This is not a static definition however, because Christian historical scholarship has revealed a variety of norms that have emerged from special events and unique demands. For Tillich, the norm grows out of the experience of the spiritual life of the Church. The Church is thus the source, medium and norm of systematic theology.[74] Tillich's ecclesiology thus informs his system and his system informs his ecclesiology. Furthermore, since systematic theology has emerged from the ecclesial Tradition and the development of this tradition, then it should follow that, in similar manner to philosophy, it is a process. This means that both philosophy and theology are continuing processes within the structure and the method of Tillich's system. From the perspective of church history, the norms of systematic theology cannot be absolute norms because these norms change in tune with the time and space of the prevailing culture in which the Church is situated. For example, the historical period of the Reformation was fertile ground in which to establish the need for forgiveness of sins by a merciful God. The norm of Lutheran theology developed a doctrine of justification by faith in response to this need. It is the cultural self-definition within a given period of time that determines the hermeneutics of the norm of systematic theology. Tillich develops his existential hermeneutics of the norm of

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[72] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.64-65
[73] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.64
[74] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.48

systematic theology from the perspective of his own understanding of contemporary Western culture in terms of humanity's disruption, conflict, self-destruction, meaninglessness and despair. This is the point at which he engages with the modern existential movement that was so influenced by the thought of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. For Tillich, such creative philosophy should also determine the theological norm in that the answer to existential disruption, in his thought, lies in the presence of that reality that is manifested in a personal and historical existence that overcomes these conditions of existence. It is here that the overlap between Tillich's classical philosophy and existentialist philosophy become apparent. The theological norm represents a new reality of integration, meaning and fulfilment that is proclaimed in the Christian faith in the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, the New Being. It is the historical Jesus who is also the paradox of Jesus as the Christ, without which the New Being would be representative of an ideal and not of a new reality and therefore the answer to the question of humanity's existential situation. For Tillich then, the criterion for the source, medium and norm of systematic theology in any given period of history, and under the conditions of ultimate concern, is the New Being who is manifest in the Church.[75]

In making a detailed analysis and interpretation of the nature, structure and task of Tillich's classical philosophy, and now also his theology, I have highlighted his argument that there is a relationship of inter-dependence between the two disciplines. This argument is also based on his perception that there are areas of convergence and divergence between the disciplines within the system. I now intend to challenge this conclusion by offering the argument that rather, there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the Tillichian system.

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[75] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.49-50

CHAPTER 6

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY SYNTHESISED

> Thus there can be no conflict between theology and philosophy,
> and there is no synthesis either – for exactly the same reason
> which insures that there will be no conflict. A common base is
> lacking.
>
> Paul Tillich[1]

I will, in this chapter, seek to draw together the threads of my analysis of Tillich's classical philosophy and his theology towards a reconstruction of his system that permits the hypothesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between them. I will argue that Tillich does indeed seek to achieve a synthesis between philosophy and theology but that his search does not reach its logical conclusion. Rather, he concludes that there is a complementary relationship of inter-dependence between the disciplines within the method of correlation, where the questions that arise out of human existence are answered by the Christian message. In the previous chapter, I have shown, that for Tillich, theology must be perceived within the context of history, and that it must move in a continuing process between past intellectual achievements and contemporary cultural developments, within the dialectics of both yes and no. In order to develop my reconstruction, I will explain the way in which Tillich engages his argument of inter-dependence in relation to other philosophers and theologians. This will allow me to highlight the way in which he argues that philosophy and theology converge and diverge within the parameters of his system. For Tillich, both convergence and divergence are dependent upon the essentialist and existentialist cognitive attitudes of the philosopher and the theologian. In order to posit my hypothesis of synthesis, I will accept Tillich's argument of convergence between philosophy and theology but challenge his argument of divergence between them.

Philosophy and theology in context

I have shown that for Tillich a purely positivistic philosophy is not tenable without theology because it is only through theology that philosophy can be developed in its totality and within the *Gestalt* of the total system. In Tillich's words:

> The historically most significant philosophies show not only the greatest power of thought but the most passionate concern about the meaning of the ultimate whose manifestations they describe. One needs only to be reminded of the Indian and Greek philosophers, almost

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[1] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p27

without exception, and the modern philosophers from Leibnitz and Spinoza to Kant and Hegel. If it seems that the positivistic line of philosophers from Locke and Hume to present-day logical positivism is an exception to this rule, one must consider that the task to which these philosophers restricted themselves were special problems of the doctrine of knowledge and, in our time especially, analysis of the linguistic tools of scientific knowledge. This certainly is a justified and very important endeavor, but is not philosophy in the traditional sense.[2]

Here, it is clear that an inter-dependent relationship between classical philosophy and theology is normative in Tillich's thought. Indeed, he challenges any form of pure kerygmatic theology that does not have a philosophical orientation. For example, he again challenges the theology of Barth for attempting to create a dogmatic theology that does not recognise the impact of philosophical concepts upon its own reflection and language.[3] The criterion for Barthian dogmatic theology is the Word of God, the exclusive source of which is the Bible and which is preached in the Church.[4] Indeed, Barth leaves his reader in no doubt that:

> Theology had to renounce all apologetics, or external guarantees of its position within the environment of other sciences, for it will always stand on the firmest ground when it simply *acts* according to the law of its own being.[5]

Tillich expresses this point further in general terms thus:

> It is infuriating to see how biblical theologians, when explaining the concepts of the Old or New Testament writers, use most of the terms created by the toil of philosophers and the ingenuity of the speculative mind and then dismiss, with cheap denunciations, the work from which their language has been immensely enriched. No theologian should be taken seriously as a theologian, even if he is a great Christian and a great scholar, if his work shows that he does not take philosophy seriously.[6]

On the other hand, scholars such as Williams, highlight a clear philosophical orientation, especially that of Kant, in the theology of Barth.[7]

Tillich's conception of the relationship between philosophy and theology is based upon a perception of the disciplines as two distinct forms of inquiry. In effect, both disciplines engage in distinct methods, objects and areas of knowledge that are not identical but in which

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[2] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.92
[3] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.4-5, 21, vol.3, p.258
[4] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.122, Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, 1963, pp.15-25, 37-47, *Church Dogmatics*, vol.1, part 1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 1975. See also, Furya, Y.C., "Apologetic of Kerygmatic Theology?", *Theology Today*, Vol.16, No 4, January, 1960, http://theologytoday accessed 4.4.07
[5] Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, 1963, p.15
[6] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, pp.7-8
[7] Williams, D., "Barth and Brunner on Philosophy" in *The Journal of Religion*, vol.27, No.4, 1947. See also, Le Fevre, ed., *Essays in Process Philosophy*, 1985, pp.119-212

comparable characteristics can be identified at specific points within the structure of the relationship. The comparable characteristics reveal areas of convergence whilst the distinctive characteristics reveal areas of divergence within the relationship.

I have shown that Tillich's classical philosophical orientation is ontological in that ontology is the means by which the questions and the answers of human beings are expressed in terms of objective and universal concepts and categories. Tillich is clear that:

> Philosophy necessarily asks the question of reality as a whole, the question of the structure of being. Theology necessarily asks the same question, for that which concerns us ultimately must belong to reality as a whole; it must belong to being. Otherwise we could not encounter it, and it could not concern us. Of course, it cannot be one being among others; then it would not concern us infinitely. It must be the ground of our being, that which determines our being or not-being, the ultimate and unconditioned power of being. ... Theology, when dealing with our ultimate concern, presupposes in every sentence the structure of being, its categories, laws, and concepts. Theology, therefore, cannot escape the question of being any more easily than can philosophy.[8]

For Tillich, theology presupposes the structure of being, its categories, laws and concepts in terms that have emerged from historical philosophy. Therefore, in order for the theologian to have a critical understanding of philosophy, these terms must be understood at the deepest and broadest level of their meaning.[9] This is the ontological level where both the philosopher and the theologian should address their disciplines within the parameters of the ontological question. Tillich asks the question of the relationship between philosophy and theology in terms of the ontological question posited by the philosopher and also the ontological question posited by the theologian.[10] Since the *raison d'être* of both disciplines is to search for reality as a whole, then for Tillich, there cannot be any fundamental divisions between them. In his words:

> For philosophy asks the question concerning being-itself. This implies that philosophy primarily does not ask about the special character of the beings, the things and events, the ideas and values, the souls and bodies which share being. Philosophy asks what about this being itself. Therefore, all philosophers have developed a "first philosophy," as Aristotle calls it, namely, an interpretation of being. And from this they go on to the description of the different classes of beings and to the system of their interdependence, the world. It is easy to make a simple division between philosophy and theology, if philosophy deals only with the second realm, with sciences, and attempts to unite their last results in a picture of the world. But philosophy, before attempting a description of the world in unity with all kinds of scientific and non-scientific experience, tries to understand being itself and the categories and structures which are common to all kinds of beings. This makes the division between philosophy and theology impossible, for, whatever the relation of God, world, and man may be, it lies in the frame of being; and any interpretation of the meaning and structure of being

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[8] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.20-21
[9] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.21
[10] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.21-22

as being, unavoidably has consequences for the interpretation of God, man, and the world in their interrelations.[11]

Since Tillich's conclusion here is that there is no division between philosophy and theology, then it follows that theology cannot be simply kerygmatic in nature. For him, the only viable theology should thus be both kerygmatic and apologetic. The fact that philosophical and kerygmatic theology have developed relatively independently of each other should not serve to conceal their underlying unity. Tillich describes this unity in terms of a natural duality as follows:

> It is implied in the very word "theology," the syllable "theo" pointing to the *kerygma* in which God is revealed and the syllable "logy" pointing to the endeavour of human reason to receive the message. This implies further that kerygmatic and philosophical theology demand each other and are wrong in the moment they become exclusive. No kerygmatic theology ever existed which did not use philosophical terms and methods. And no philosophical theology ever existed – deserving the name "theology" – which did not try to explain the content of the message. Therefore, the theological ideal is the complete unity of both types, an ideal which is reached only by the greatest theologians and even by them only approximately.[12]

For Tillich therefore, both philosophy and theology ask the question of human being but from different perspectives. For example, he argues that: 'Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us'.[13] It is from this perspective of differentiation that Tillich identifies convergent and divergent trends between the disciplines. Essentially, convergence and divergence turn on the argument that philosophy is predominantly theoretical in nature and that theology is predominantly existential in nature. However, this argument is not fully sustainable for Tillich because he also perceives a considerable overlap between the essential and existential elements in philosophy and theology. For example, he argues that:

> We have searched for the object or question of philosophy, and we have discovered that a theological element, an ultimate concern, gives the impulse to philosophy. We have searched for the object or question of theology, and we have discovered that a philosophical element is implied in theology – the question of the meaning and structure of being and its manifestation in the different realms of being. Philosophy and theology are divergent as well as convergent. They are convergent as far as both are existential and theoretical at the same time. They are divergent as far as philosophy is basically theoretical and theology is basically existential. This is the reason that philosophy is able to neglect its existential basis and to deal with being and beings as if they did not concern us at all. And this is the reason that theology is able to neglect its theoretical form and to become mere *kergyma*. But as

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[11] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.96, *Religion and Culture, philosophy and theology*. Source, *Religion in Life*, vol.10, No.1, 1941. See *The Protestant Era*, p.298
[12] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.94, *Religion and Culture, philosophy and theology*. See footnote 11
[13] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.22

theology always has created a philosophical theology, so philosophers always have tried to reach existential significance, to give a prophetic message, to found a sect, to start a religious-political movement, or to become mystics. But in doing so they were philosophical theologians and were considered as such by followers and foes. Most creative philosophers have been theological in this sense.[14]

Philosophy and theology converge and diverge in that they both adopt the structures, laws and categories of being in their search for the whole of reality albeit from different perspectives. Thus there can be no conflict between the disciplines and in Tillich's words, 'no synthesis either – for exactly the same reason which insures that there will be no conflict. A common basis is lacking'.[15]

Philosophy and theology converge

Tillich's argument that there are points within the system at which philosophy and theology converge turns upon the existential status of both the philosopher and the theologian. In effect, this means that the philosopher, as with the theologian, cannot be completely divorced from the impact of ultimate concern towards his or her subject. Tillich thus perceives an implicit theology inherent in every philosophy. For example, he argues that:

> Every creative philosopher is a hidden theologian (sometimes even a declared theologian). He is a theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision. He is a theologian in the degree to which his intuition of the universal *logos* of the structure of reality as a whole is formed by a particular *logos* which appears to him on his particular place and reveals to him the meaning of the whole. And he is a theologian in the degree to which the particular *logos* is a matter of active commitment within a special community.[16]

In Tillich's thought, only those philosophies that have been informed by the existential dimension have creative power and genuine historical significance, because for him, non-creative philosophy detaches itself from its existential base. In his words: 'It has in its hands the shell, not the substance of philosophy, but the trading of old philosophical merchandise'.[17] However, Tillich does not attribute any specific intention to become a theologian on the part of the philosopher. Rather, he argues that if the philosopher is to achieve a tenable perspective of the whole of reality, by means of the universal *logos*, then he or she should deliberately turn away from his or her existential situation. In Tillich's words: 'The conflict between the

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[14]Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.99, *Religion and Culture, philosophy and theology*. See footnote 11
[15]Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.27
[16]Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.25
[17]Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.25

intention of becoming universal and the destiny of remaining particular characterizes every philosophical existence. It is its burden and its greatness'.[18] On the other hand, the theologian should deliberately turn towards his or her existential situation, under the impact of ultimate concern, if he or she is to clarify the universal validity of the *logos* structure. As Tillich says:

> And he can do this only in an attitude of detachment from his existential situation and in obedience to the universal *logos*. This obligates him to be critical of every special expression of his ultimate concern. He cannot affirm any tradition and any authority except through a "No" and a "Yes". And it is always possible that he may not be able to go all the way from the "No" to the "Yes". He cannot join the chorus of those who live in unbroken assertions. He must take the risk of being driven beyond the boundary line of the theological circle. Therefore, the pious and powerful in the church are suspicious of him, although they live in dependence upon the work of the former theologians who were in the same situation. Theology, since it serves not only the concrete but also the universal *logos*, can become a stumbling block for the church and a demonic temptation for the theologian. The detachment required in honest theological work can destroy the necessary involvement of faith. This tension is the burden and the greatness of every theological work.[19]

The truth claims of both disciplines have, for Tillich, universal significance in that they both engage conceptually with the universal *logos* of being. In effect, he argues that philosophy is basically cosmological, conceptual and theoretical whereas theology is basically soteriological, symbolic and existential. Tillich's argument of convergence between philosophy and theology means that there is no conflict between the disciplines. Conflict presupposes a common basis from which to argue, and since philosophy and theology stem from different bases, then they are precluded from such conflict. Indeed, open conflict between the philosopher and the theologian cannot occur on the philosophical level because, in Tillich's thought:

> The theologian has no right whatsoever to argue for a philosophical opinion in the name of his ultimate concern or on the basis of the theological circle. He is obliged to argue for a philosophical decision in the name of the universal *logos* and from the place which is no place: pure reason. It is a disgrace for the theologian and intolerable for the philosopher if in a philosophical discussion the theologian suddenly claims an authority other than pure reason. Conflicts on the philosophical level are conflicts between two philosophers, one of whom happens to be a theologian, but they are not conflicts between theology and philosophy.[20]

Rather, Tillich argues that the hidden theologian in the philosopher is driven to engage with the theologian and this is especially true where a theological analysis by the philosopher requires the recognition of existentially conditioned elements in his or her ideas. In seeking the

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[18] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.25
[19] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.25-26
[20] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.26

position of pure reason, and in order to conceptualise the universal *logos*, the philosopher is reluctant to acknowledge the impact of his or her existential situation upon their ideas because this would amount to a qualification of their universality. The theologian should resist this tendency in the philosopher because the value of the truth of any philosophy is dependent upon the creative unity that results from existential passion and rational power. Again, Tillich supports this argument as follows:

> The insight into this situation is, at the same time, an insight into the fact that two philosophers, one of whom happens to be a theologian, can fight with each other and that two theologians, one of whom happens to be a philosopher, can fight with each other; but there is no possible conflict between theology and philosophy because there is no common basis for such a conflict.[21]

Since, in Tillich's thinking, there is no common basis for conflict between the disciplines, then there can be no synthesis between them either. Indeed, he goes on to point out that the very idea of synthesis between philosophy and theology has led to an untenable dream of a specifically Christian philosophy. Whereas he does not deny the positive impact of Christian theology on Western philosophy, nevertheless, for him, philosophy should be dictated by the universal *logos* and not by a Christian theology that is directed and interpreted strictly by the Church. In his words:

> There is nothing in heaven and earth, or beyond them, to which the philosopher must subject himself except the universal *logos* of being as it gives itself to him in experience. Therefore, the idea of a "Christian philosophy" in the narrower sense of a philosophy which is intentionally Christian must be rejected. The fact that every modern philosophy has grown on Christian soil and shows traces of the Christian culture in which it lives has nothing to do with the self-contradicting ideal of a "Christian philosophy". Christianity does not need a "Christian philosophy" in the narrower sense of the word. The Christian claim that the *logos* who has become concrete in Jesus as the Christ is at the same time the universal *logos* includes the claim that wherever the *logos* is at work it agrees with the Christian message. No philosophy which is obedient to the universal *logos* can contradict the concrete *logos*, the Logos "who became flesh."[22]

A critical point has now been reached because, if as Tillich argues, both philosophy and theology are grounded in the universal *logos*, why then does he not cite the universal *logos* as the common base between the two disciplines towards achieving their synthesis? I would argue that the answer to this question lies within Tillich's perception of the way in which the universal *logos* actually validates the two disciplines within both the cultural and spiritual context. Essentially, his perception of the revelation of the universal *logos* that determines the

[21] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.27
[22] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.28

essential character of philosophy and theology and which leads to divergence, is a qualitative disclosure. Whereas it is the same universal *logos* of being that is the object of both philosophy and theology, Tillich nevertheless argues that it is comprehended quite differently by the two disciplines. In its search for universal truth, philosophy grasps the rational structure of the *logos* of being by means of universal, permanent, necessary and unchanging principles. This is a position of pure reason that determines the essential character of philosophy in terms of theoretical detachment from the concrete and particular in the context of immediate experience. In its search for universal truth, theology on the other hand, is subject to the grace of the universal *logos* of being and to the power of the universal structure of being. There is remarkable resonance here with the thought of Tillich's contemporary Macquarrie.[23] Under this criterion of grace, theology is subject to the salvation that is manifested in the universal *logos* within the concrete historical events of the Church. This is a soteriological perspective, in which Tillich defines theology as the freedom of Being-itself to reveal itself, and in so doing, to transform the existence of those human beings that participate in the event of revelation. Tillich thus perceives theology as an existential characteristic of cognition that is dependent upon the philosophical criterion of the structure of being. The concrete truth of theology in Jesus as the Christ, is, at the same time, the universal truth of Being-itself. Theology should be in dialogue with ontology and history if the absolute uniqueness of God is to be conceived, and also with mythology if the ultimate, free and transcendent nature of God is to be adequately expressed.[24] This is the criterion under which Tillich claims that there is a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology. Inter-dependence means that the integrity of each discipline is maintained and that neither discipline is totally dependent or totally independent of the other. In the context of this complementary relationship, philosophy diverges from theology because it is predominantly theoretical or essential cognition, whereas theology is predominantly existential cognition. Indeed, the ideal philosophical perspective for Tillich is one of detached objectivity even though philosophy must engage with its subject in an existential context.[25]

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[23] Macquarrie, 'How is Theology Possible?', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol.XVlll, No.2, Winter, 1963

[24] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.222-223

[25] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.96, *Religion and Culture, philosophy and theology*, see footnote 11

How then is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology possible?

In support of this hypothesis, I have shown that Tillich resolves the problems that are inherent in finitude by claiming that being-itself is unconditioned being. In the classical philosophical tradition, this means that, in general, the resolution of this problem lies in relation to the eternal, universal and objective structures of being that are accessed by humanity by virtue of its own particular and concrete nature. The ultimate, eternal, universal and objective truth in which all humanity shares is being-itself. Clearly therefore, it is under the influence of this unconditioned power that the problems that are inherent in finitude are overcome. My analysis of the classical ontological categories has shown the way in which humanity is subject to both being and non-being and that a basic courage is required in order for human beings to affirm and maintain themselves under the threat of non-being. For Tillich, this amounts to 'the cosmological question of God',[26] because the source of humanity's courage to be, lies in the power of Being-itself. In his words:

> Only because being-itself has the character of self-affirmation in spite of non-being is courage possible. Courage participates in the self-affirmation of being-itself, it participates in the power of being which prevails against non-being. ... Man is not necessarily aware of this source. In situations of cynicism and indifference he is not aware of it. But it works in him as long as he maintains the courage to take this anxiety upon himself. In the act of courage to be the power of being is effective in us, whether we recognise it or not. Every act of courage is a manifestation of the ground of being, however questionable the content of the act may be. The content may hide or distort true being, the courage in it reveals true being.[27]

I have shown in chapter four, the way in which Tillich expresses his classical critique of fate, the idea, history, decision and the *kairos* in existential terms, and the way in which he incorporates these elements into his theology. God as being-itself, is the ground and power of all finite beings, God is transcendent to finitude beyond universal essence and existence, God is the universal structure of meaning and God is the universal source of truth. In order for theology itself to be valid and to resonate with culture, it must articulate these criteria in propositions that are also valid for universal philosophy. Theological truth cannot contradict the rational structure of cognition and the reality that is disclosed in this cognition. Since rationality is the source of the *logos* structure of the self and the world, then theological truth should conform to the criterion of universality as a constitutive element in the conception of rationality itself. Indeed, I would argue that Tillich synthesises theology in terms of the classical philosophical conception of the universality of truth in every part of his theological system. His theory of God is synthesised with the concept of being. His theory of Christ is

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[26] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.208
[27] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, pp.171-172

synthesised with the universal power of being that is present in a concrete life and that restores humanity under the conditions of existence, albeit fragmentarily to its essential nature. His theory of the Spirit is synthesised with the universal process of the divine life that overcomes the ambiguities of finite life. It is in his eschatological theory of the Kingdom of God that Tillich completes the relationship of synthesis between humanity and God because here, he relates this theory to the universal process of the divine life that overcomes the ambiguities of finite life in historical existence. This amounts to the ultimate 'essentialization' of humanity at the end of history into eternal life where finite life participates permanently in the unambiguous inner life of God.[28] On a temporal level, this is a 'work-in-progress', but Tillich makes a correlation between ontology and St Paul's teaching, and concludes that this is the ultimate fulfilment of the cosmic process where through Christ, God is, in Pauline terms, 'in' and 'for' everything finite.[29] Tillich assigns to this theory the symbol 'eschatological pan-en-theism'.[30] In Tillich's words:

> God, so to speak, drives towards the actualization and essentialization of everything that has being. For the eternal dimension of what happens in the universe is the Divine Life itself.[31]

In this context therefore, Tillich has effectively created a dialogue between human beings and God in ontological terms and thus, in my view, between classical philosophy and theology.

Again, I would argue further that Tillich has created the conditions for synthesis between philosophy and theology with respect to the universal *logos*. He achieves these conditions by claiming that Christian theology is not an abstract principle of meaning but is rather the most universal and concrete of meanings, This is because it is grounded in the final revelation of the universal and concrete *logos* in Jesus as the Christ. Tillich cites the classical universal theological truth claims of Justin Martyr in order to make this point when he writes that:

> Justin taught that this Christian philosophy is universal; it is the all-embracing truth about the meaning of existence. From this it follows that wherever truth appears, it belongs to the Christians. ... This is not sheer arrogance. He does not mean that Christians now possess all the truth, or that they alone discovered it. He means, in terms of the Logos doctrine, that there cannot be truth anywhere which is not in principle included in Christian truth. ... Justin said what I think is absolutely necessary to say. If anywhere in the world there were an existential truth which could not be received by Christianity as an element of its own thinking, Jesus would not be the Christ. He would be merely one teacher alongside other teachers, all of whom are limited and partly in error. But that is not what the early Christians

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[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.406-422
[29] 2 Cor.5:14-20
[30] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.421
[31] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.422

said. They said – and we should say – that if we call Jesus the Christ, or the Logos as the Apologists called him, this means that by definition there cannot be any truth which cannot be taken into Christianity. Otherwise the application of the term "Logos" to Jesus as the Christ would not have been possible. This does not mean that this *Logos* knew all the truth. But it does mean that the fundamental truth which has appeared in him is essentially universal, and therefore can take in every other truth.[32]

At the same time, although the concrete nature of the historical Jesus makes an existential relationship to the universality of the Christian truth claims necessary, nevertheless, this does not preclude theology from being founded also upon universal and objective truth. In Tillich's words:

> The final revelation, the revelation in Jesus as the Christ, is universally valid, because it includes the criterion of every revelation and is the *finis* or *telos* (intrinsic aim) of all of them. The final revelation is the criterion of every religion and of every culture, not only of the culture and religion in and through which it has appeared. It is valid for the social existence of every human group and for the personal existence of every human individual. It is valid for mankind as such, and, in an indescribable way, it has meaning for the universe also. Nothing less than this should be asserted by Christian theology.[33]

I would ague therefore that when the criterion of ontology and the universal *logos* are perceived as the bases from which philosophy and theology emerge within the Tillichian system, then there is a relationship of synthesis between the two disciplines rather than a complementary relationship as Tillich claims. This is because the truth claims of both philosophy and theology have universal significance in that they are both cognitive specifications of the universal *logos*.

However, he also argues that there are three points of divergence between philosophy and theology that preclude his call for a relationship of synthesis between the disciplines. I will now highlight these points of divergence and then challenge them in order to strengthen my hypothesis that indeed there is a synthesis.

Philosophy and theology diverge

Tillich's first point of divergence between philosophy and theology lies in the different cognitive attitudes of the philosopher and the theologian. He argues that the philosopher is predominantly an essential thinker and that the theologian is predominantly an existential thinker. Tillich supports this argument by claiming that the ideal attitude of the philosopher is an attitude of detachment and objectivity. In his words:

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[32] Tillich, A *History of Christian Thought,* 1968, pp.27-29
[33] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.1, p.137

Although driven by the philosophical *erōs*, the philosopher tries to maintain a detached objectivity toward being and its structures. He tries to exclude the personal, social, and historical conditions which might distort an objective vision of reality. His passion is the passion for a truth which is open to general approach, subject to general criticism, changeable in accordance with every new insight, open and communicable. In all these respects he feels no different from the scientist, historian, psychologist, etc. He collaborates with them. ... Of course, the philosopher, as a philosopher, neither criticizes nor augments the knowledge provided by the sciences. This knowledge forms the basis of his description of the categories, structural laws, and concepts which constitute the structure of being. In this respect the philosopher is as dependent on the scientist as he is dependent on his own prescientific observation of reality – often more dependent. This relation to the sciences ... strengthens the detached, objective attitude of the philosopher. Even in the intuitive-synthetic side of his procedure he tries to exclude influences which are not purely determined by his object.[34]

In comparison, Tillich argues that the cognitive attitude of the theologian cannot be other than one of total involvement. It is the subjective cognitive attitude of ultimate concern towards theology. It is a matter of life or death, that is, of being or non-being. He writes:

The theologian, quite differently, is not detached from his object but is involved in it. He looks at his object (which transcends the character of being an object) with passion, fear, and love. This is not the *erōs* of the philosopher or his passion for objective truth; it is the love which accepts saving, and therefore personal, truth. The basic attitude of the theologian is commitment to the content he expounds. Detachment would be a denial of the very nature of this content. The attitude of the theologian is "existential." He is involved – with the whole of his existence, with his finitude and his anxiety, with his self-contradictions and his despair, with the healing forces in him and in his social situation. Every theological statement derives its seriousness from these elements of existence. The theologian, in short, is determined by his faith. Every theology presupposes that the theologian is in the theological circle. This contradicts the open, infinite, and changeable character of philosophical truth. ... Theology is necessarily existential, and no theology can escape the theological circle.[35]

In response to this argument of divergence between philosophy and theology, I would argue that the philosopher is equally involved in the questions of existence. The philosopher can never therefore achieve a position of total detachment and objectivity in the search for objective truth. For example, under Tillich's criterion for philosophy, the decision by the philosopher against adopting a subjective attitude to philosophy is, necessarily of itself, a subjective existential decision. Indeed, in the very process of attempting to exclude his or her existential status, the philosopher is as radically and ultimately involved as the theologian who

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[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.22, Tillich questions the concept of "philosophical faith" in this argument and refer to Jasper's, *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1949, see note 8

[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.22-23

relates the Christian truth to the structure of human existence. For Tillich, the criterion of involvement is the correlate between the objective philosophical truth of being and the personal meaning of salvation for human beings. In his thought, the theologian is more involved, in that the theologian's perception of ultimate meaning and identity lies in the truth that emerges from cognition. In contrast, the ultimate meaning of existence for the philosopher lies outside the philosophical truth that he or she actually achieves.[36] Ultimately, the theologian is involved through a love that accepts personal and soteriological truth. It is an involvement that is determined by faith. However, Tillich's entire system turns upon his claim that there is a presupposition of cognition, that is a mystical *a priori*, in all human beings. Since both the philosopher and the theologian exist, then the mystical *a priori* must apply equally to philosophy and theology. Indeed, Tillich himself claims a 'saving and transformation and illuminating revelation' for philosophy.[37] He continues:

> Ontology presupposes a conversion, an opening of the eyes, a revelatory experience. It is not a matter of detached observation, analysis, and hypothesis. Only he who is involved in ultimate reality, only he who has encountered it as a matter of existential concern, can try to speak about it meaningfully. In this sense one must say that there is faith in the philosopher ... faith as the state of being grasped by ultimate reality. ... Certainly, philosophical conversion and philosophical faith are not identical with conversion and faith in biblical religion. The latter are related equally to all functions of man's spiritual life, to his whole personality. There is no preponderance of the cognitive function as it is in philosophical conversion and philosophical faith. But even philosophical conversion and philosophical faith are not restricted to the cognitive function, for this function, if it is existentially moved, cannot be separated from the other functions. Philosophical conversion changes not only the thinking of the philosopher but also his being. But this being remains in the background, while in religious conversion it is in the foreground.[38]

Moreover, the philosopher cannot maintain and indeed defend his or her philosophical position against contradictory philosophical positions unless they are totally involved cognitively with their own existence and the existence of others. I would argue therefore that Tillich's criterion of involvement in his argument for divergence between philosophy and theology fails and that this criterion does not impair the relationship of synthesis between the disciplines.

Tillich identifies a second point of divergence between philosophy and theology in terms of their sources. He argues that in its search for the structure of reality as a whole, philosophy adopts the whole of reality as its object. Indeed, philosophy presupposes a common rational

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[36] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, pp.470-471
[37] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, p.65
[38] Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 1955, pp.65-66

structure in which human beings participate in order to question and to answer the nature of reality. This is the universal structure of reality that constitutes the basis of objective truth. It is a truth that lies outside the parameters of the concrete and the particular nature of the concern of the philosopher. On the other hand, the source of the ultimate concern of the theologian is more limited in that it is manifest in a specific concrete history and where, in Tillich's words:

> The source of his knowledge is not the universal *logos* but the Logos "who became flesh," that is, the *logos* manifesting itself in a particular historical event. And the medium through which he receives the manifestation of the *logos* is not common rationality but the church, its traditions and its present reality. He speaks in the church about the foundation of the church. And he speaks because he is grasped by the power of this foundation and by the community built upon it. The concrete *logos* which he sees is received through believing commitment and not, like the universal *logos* at which the philosopher looks, through rational detachment.[39]

On this point of divergence, I have shown above the way in which Tillich acknowledges that both philosophy and theology have universal significance in that they both engage conceptually with the universal *logos*. Indeed, Tillich claims that the two disciplines converge under this criterion and that there can be no conflict between them. Tillich precludes synthesis between them on the grounds that there is qualitative distinction in the way in which the universal *logos* is revealed to the philosopher and the theologian. However, how can he then go on to argue that the two disciplines stem from divergent sources whilst at the same time citing the same universal *logos* as the source of the search for objective and also subjective truth? His second point of divergence thus also fails, and in so doing, once again does not preclude the potential for synthesis between philosophy and theology within his system.

Tillich's third point of divergence between philosophy and theology lies in their content where the two disciplines address the same question of reality, but from different perspectives. He argues that the philosopher renders the structure of reality intelligible through both reason and experience as follows:

> The philosopher deals with the categories of being in relation to the material which is structured by them. He deals with causality as it appears in physics or psychology; he analyzes biological or historical time; he discusses astronomical as well as microcosmic space. He describes the epistemological subject and the relation of person and community. He presents the characteristics of life and spirit in their dependence on, and independence of, each other. He defines nature and history in their mutual limits and tries to penetrate into ontology and logic of being and non-being.[40]

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[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.23-24
[40] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.24

He acknowledges that these criteria have application also to theology. However, for him, the purpose of adopting the ontological concepts and categories for the systematic theologian, should be to explicate the soteriological characteristic of the New Being that is Jesus as the Christ. In Tillich's words:

> He discusses causality in relation to a *prima causa*, the ground of the whole series of causes and effects; he deals with time in relation to eternity, with space in relation to man's existential homelessness. He speaks of the self-estrangement of the subject, about the spiritual center of personal life, and about community as a possible embodiment of the "New Being." He relates the structures of life to the creative ground of life and the structures of spirit to the divine Spirit. He speaks of the participation of nature in the "history of salvation," about the victory of being over non-being.[41]

Therefore, in Tillich's thought, the philosopher experiences the universal *logos* only partially, whereas the experience of the theologian is a total experience. However, I would challenge this point of divergence by broadening Tillich's argument that philosophy is essential cognition and that theology is existential cognition. Specifically I will place my argument with respect to his claim that existential cognition is circular thinking and that its validity cannot be established other than in the context of faith. This is the context in which God is the ultimate meaning of existence and the very object of cognition. Tillich demonstrates this point in relation to the question of final revelation when he writes:

> In accord with the circular character of systematic theology, the criterion of final revelation is derived from what Christianity considers to be the final revelation, the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. Theologians should not be afraid to admit this circle. It is not a shortcoming; rather it is the necessary expression of the existential character of theology.[42]

Existential cognition proceeds from a foundation of presupposition, the mystical *a priori*, in the sense that any knowledge of God is the presupposition of the question of God. However, my argument that Tillich's criterion of circularity for theology fails, turns on his hypothesis of the theological circle. He is clear that the theologian receives the universal concrete *Logos* within the parameters of the theological circle by virtue of believing commitment whereas the philosopher receives the universal *logos* purely as a result of rational detachment. How then does he justify this criterion of divergence when its establishment cannot be verified or denied by either purely scientific or empirical means? When his argument is broken down further, it

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[41] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.24
[42] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.135

becomes apparent that a comprehensive philosophical perspective of the essential structure of reality emerges from an ultimate certainty that is contained within the structure of cognition. Indeed, this would resonate with the theory of foundationalism and the self-justified certainty that essential cognition is the source and criterion of knowledge.

However, at the same time, he claims that this certainty stems from the presupposition of cognition, that is the mystical *a priori*. He further develops this point by using idealism and naturalism as examples of philosophies that share this common source in their pursuit of theological concepts. He says here:

> The theological concepts of both idealists and naturalists are rooted in a "mystical a priori," an awareness of something that transcends the cleavage between subject and object. And if in the course of a "scientific" procedure this a priori is discovered, its discovery is possible only because it was present from the very beginning. This is the circle which no religious philosopher can escape.[43]

Indeed, Tillich points out that the historical philosophical systems have endured because they have the power to draw out of human beings a response to their meaning that is efficacious beyond their rational or empirical verification.[44] Is Tillich arguing here that philosophical truth is existential truth in that it presupposes the structure of human existence beyond the parameters of pure reason? If this is the case, then he is also arguing that philosophy conforms to his criterion, namely that existential cognition is circular cognition and therefore his criterion that theology alone is circular thinking fails. Again, Tillich argues that theology is the definitive paradigm of circular cognition because it acknowledges the mystical *a priori* as being a central characteristic of the Christian faith. Theology is thus bound to the final and unchanging truth of the Christian message as it is expressed and interpreted in the symbol Jesus as the Christ, whereas philosophy is bound to a particular open, infinite and changeable truth.[45] It must therefore follow that the universal *logos* is the manifestation of being-itself within the rational structure of thought and reality for philosophy and also, for theology, the manifestation of Being-itself within the life and ministry of Jesus as the Christ. Thus, if being/Being-itself is the presupposition of cognition and not its consequence, then in terms of their cognitive sources, philosophy and theology are equally circular.

Furthermore, I would argue that Tillich's claim that the concrete *logos* is the criterion by which the Christian message is universally validated is not compatible with his claim that the

[43] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.9
[44] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.105
[45] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.23

theologian is more existentially bound by the theological circle. This is because under the criterion of the universal *logos*, he does not incorporate into the circumference of the theological circle the exclusion of competing philosophical perspectives from the theologian's truth claims. Since the concrete *logos* is universally valid because it is compatible with all existential truth, then it must follow that all philosophical and theological truth claims must be included within the circumference of the theological circle. Again, Tillich's claim of divergence between philosophy and theology under the criterion that existential cognition is circular thinking also fails.

A critical point emerges here with respect to my hermeneutics of Tillich's argument that both philosophy and theology are informed by the universal *logos* in relation to the structure of reality.[46] This is because these hermeneutics allow me to tie him to the classical definition of *logos* as 'word' as expressed within the context of the text but also allows me to place his argument into the context of post-modern dialogue on the critique of 'logocentricism'. This is the critique whereby concepts are expressed by means of the written word within the confines of the text. This would be to place Tillich's argument into post-modern dialogue with Caputo and his interpretation of Derrida's thought.[47] For example, as we have seen in chapter two, for Derrida, words that are confined to the text lead to limited hermeneutics. Rather, in his view, meaning is to be found in the margins of the text, where the danger of paradox and contradiction is lessened and where creativity and invention is heightened.[48]

Moreover, Tillich argues that existential cognition involves a total participation in existence because only under these existential conditions it is possible for God to be expressed in non-objectifying terms. For example, he writes:

> The principle of personal Existence or "Existential Subjectivity" demands a special type of concept in which to describe this immediate personal experience. These concepts must be "non-objectivating"; they must not transform men into things, but at the same time they must not be merely "subjective".[49]

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[46] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.23-25

[47] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 1997, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, 2006

[48] Chapter 2, pp.32-33, Derrida, *Of Grammatology: Writing Before the Letter*, 1976, pp.278-280

[49] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.94, based on *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919

Existential cognition is therefore subjective thought that is involved with the Christian message within the parameters of the theological circle and insofar as the theologian participates within the meaning of the Christian truth claims with his or her whole being. The Catholic theologian McLean, in dialogue with Tillich, highlights Tillich's argument that ontological participation is participation in God.[50] This is a useful dialogue with which to compare the high degree to which Tillich's classical philosophical and theological argument of participation resonates with that of some of his contemporary Catholic scholars. McLean points out the way in which Tillich acknowledges that ontological participation has been realised and preserved most perfectly in Catholic doctrine and practice as a permanent corrective for Protestantism. McLean is referring here to Tillich's incorporation of the 'catholic substance' into his Protestant Principle,[51] and, in so doing, the way in which Tillich has taken 'a decided step away from classical Protestant thought and toward Catholicism'.[52]

The importance of ontological participation within the structure of Tillich's system turns on the criterion that existential cognition is participating thinking. Tillich resolves his criterion of participating thinking by way of an analysis of the ontological polarity between individualisation and participation as it is expressed in human knowledge. He argues that individualisation is an expression of the separation between subject and object that accounts for the difference between ontological reason and the controlling knowledge that emerges from technical and scientific reason. Tillich highlights the ambiguity in controlling knowledge in that in its demand for objectivity, it is in danger of disregarding the subjectivity of the object by the knowing subject.[53] The strength of the polar ontological element of participation for him accounts for the unity in knowledge because just as there is an essential unity between cognition and being, so also is there an essential unity between subject and object. In terms of receiving knowledge, separation and cognitive detachment is reduced through participation in that which is already known. Indeed, for Tillich, all knowledge is dependent upon a dialectical relationship in which both separation and union are present in varying degrees. This is why he can say that: 'Receiving knowledge takes the object into itself, into union with the subject'.[54] The element of individualisation therefore results in separation and cognitive detachment and

[50] McLean, *Paul Tillich's Existential Philosophy of Protestantism* in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought,* O'Meara, Weisser, eds., 1965, p.80

[51] McLean, *Paul Tillich's Existential Philosophy of Protestantism* in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought,* O'Meara, Weisser, eds, 1965, p.80. Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.3, pp.6, 168-171

[52] McLean, *Paul Tillich's Existential Philosophy of Protestantism* in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought,* O'Meara, Weisser, eds., 1965, p.81

[53] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.1, pp.97-100, *The Protestant Era,* 1951, p.99, *Religion and Culture, philosophy and theology,* see note 11

[54] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.1, p.98

the polar element of participation results in unity and cognitive involvement. Participation used in the context of existentialist thinking is thus an extension of the ontological argument and not an independent criterion. As an ontological element, participation refers to the essential unity between subject and object which obtains for both controlling and receiving knowledge and therefore for both philosophy and theology.

I must conclude therefore that Tillich's argument regarding a divergence between the terms that philosophy is essential cognition and theology is existential cognition has failed. It follows that his claim of divergence between philosophy and theology has also failed.

However, Tillich also clearly acknowledges that essential cognition and existential cognition are interdependent. This is because theology cannot dispense with the essential component of cognition and maintain its identity as constructive systematic theology, any more than philosophy can dispense with the existential component of cognition and remain alive and relevant to human existence. This means that philosophy and theology are at the same time, both essential and existential cognitive disciplines. Again, Tillich's argument of divergence between philosophy and theology fails under the criterion that philosophy is essential cognition and theology is existential cognition because these forms of cognition are clearly interdependent in his thought.[55]

Philosophy and theology synthesised

The foregoing argues in favour of Tillich's points of convergence whilst also arguing against his points of divergence between philosophy and theology. In pursuit of synthesis rather than the inter-dependence that he claims, I return now to Tillich's claim of divergence between philosophy and theology on the grounds that theology is soteriological and that philosophy is not.

Towards this end, I have shown that for Tillich there is a presupposition of thought, that is a mystical *a priori*, that is common to all human beings, and thus to both the philosopher and the theologian. I have also shown that when philosophy and theology are expressed in ontological terms, then Tillich can claim saving, transforming and illuminating revelation for philosophy as well as for theology. In order to make my argument as clear as possible for the post-modern ecumenical context, I will draw on the Catholic theology of Rahner. For example, I have shown in chapter five, that Rahner expresses the mystical *a priori* in terms of the 'supernatural

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[55] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.98

existential'.[56] In his words: 'God's self-communication as offer is also the necessary condition which makes its acceptance possible'.[57] Whereas Tillich speaks in terms of philosophy and theology, Rahner speaks in terms of nature and grace, where the supernatural existential element that is present in every human being acts as a bridge between philosophy and theology. As with Tillich, this is the mystical *a priori* knowledge of God that is fundamental to every human being and where experience is conditioned by human transcendence and mediated by concrete reality. For Rahner, the purpose of God's grace is that all human beings will receive the 'beatific vision', a concept that not only implies an ontological relationship between God and humanity but which also echoes Tillich's theory of humanity's essentialisation of all human beings into the inner life of God. Also, I would argue, and again in line with Tillich's thought, that Jesus as the Christ is the final revelation, this final experience is not merely an ideal reality for Rahner, but it is also rooted in historical experience. In Rahner's words:

> God is revealed as communicating himself in absolute and merciful presence as God, that is, as the absolute mystery. The historical mediation of this transcendental experience is also revealed as valid, as bringing about and authenticating the absolute experience of God. The unique and final culmination of this history of revelation has already occurred and has revealed the absolute and irrevocable unity of God's transcendental self-communication to mankind and of its historical mediation in the one God-man Jesus Christ, who is at once God himself as communicated, the human acceptance of this communication and the final historical manifestation of this offer and acceptance.[58]

How then, is Tillich's argument that theology is soteriological whereas philosophy is not, to be overcome and a perspective of synthesis achieved? Again, I would point towards Rahner's theological thought and specifically to his theory of the 'anonymous Christian'.[59] This argument is based upon the scriptural premise that God's will is to save all humanity, (1Tim.2:4).[60] This includes even those who are not baptised members of the Church, and even those who cannot express salvation in conceptual terms.[61] For Rahner therefore, every human being has a sense of belief in God, providing that they do not deny that God exists, and providing that they acknowledge the ontological relationship between being and being-itself.

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[56] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, p.124

[57] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, p.128

[58] Rahner, *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol.6, *Scandal to Zionism*, 1978, p.349, see also *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, pp.120, 172-173

[59] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.6, *Concerning Vatican Council II*, 1974, pp.390-398

[60] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.6, *Concerning Vatican Council II*, 1974, p.391, *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol.3, 1978, *Habitus to Materialism*

[61] Rahner, *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol.6, *Scandal to Zionism*, 1978, p.349

This is his criterion under which human beings are subject to God's universal salvation. Rahner's argument here, has thus served to endorse Tillich's claim that when the relationship between philosophy and theology is grounded in the ultimate reality of the universally valid truth, that is revealed through God, then the two disciplines stand in genuine theonomy. A relationship of synthesis is thus achieved between them.

What then are the implications of this claim for post-modern ecumenical dialogue?

I have argued that a relationship of synthesis is possible when philosophy is perceived as originating from theology, where God is revealed to human beings by means of the mystical *a priori*. I have shown that this argument is compatible with Rahner's thought on the 'supernatural existential' and the 'anonymous Christian' that had such a significant impact upon the more open theological attitude of Vatican II. Indeed, for Rahner, the kerygma is totally dependent upon this inter-dependent relationship.[62] Again, as with Tillich, Rahner asserts that philosophy must relate to the prevailing existential situation of any given age. The Catholic scholar Phelan was also, in Tillich's own time, seeking to resolve the consequences of a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology.[63] The vital importance of defining such a relationship turns on philosophy positing the questions of existence that are relevant to the prevailing culture and to the answers given by theology. Tillich's method of correlation defines these criteria. However, when the method of correlation is developed further, by introducing the criterion of a relationship of synthesis between classical philosophy and theology, then a new momentum is introduced. When the questions posited by philosophy are synthesised with the answers given by theology, then both disciplines are moving more precisely, not only in tune with each other, but also with the prevailing culture. This fulfils Rahner's concern that the theological answers of the Catholic Church should keep abreast of the prevailing culture. The implications for post-modern ecumenical dialogue are that question and answer are kept in relevant tension within the post-modern context.

However, the impact of the influence of the modern existentialist movement on Tillich's thought should not be ignored because it has the potential as a complete philosophical system, to impair my argument regarding the relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in his system. I will overcome this potential problem by arguing that rather, Tillich adopts eclectic elements of the modern existentialist critique in order to highlight the human predicament of existential disruption and estrangement.

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[62] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.6, 1974, *Concerning Vatican II. Philosophy and Theology*. p.80
[63] Phelan, *Selected Papers, Philosophy and Theology – A Contrast*, 1967, pp.31-38

CHAPTER 7

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MODERN EXISTENTIALISM
FOR THE TILLICHIAN SYSTEM

> Often I have been asked if I am an existentialist theologian, and my
> answer is always short. I say fifty-fifty. This means that for me
> essentialism and existentialism belong together.
>
> <div align="right">Paul Tillich[1]</div>

> O Lord, you have searched me and known me. … For it was you who
> who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's
> womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
> Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not
> hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven
> in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
> in your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when
> none of them as yet existed. … I come to the end – I am still with you.
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> <div align="right">Psalm 139:1, 13-16,18</div>

I have now offered a critique of what I have identified as the classical line of philosophy in Tillich's system. I have gone on to offer an original interpretation of the relationship between this philosophy and his theology as being one of synthesis. It is a hypothesis that extends Tillich's argument of a complementary relationship between the two disciplines and as such, progressively reconstructs his system so as to provide a fresh perspective that has the potential to advance ecumenical dialogue towards church unity. However, the results of my analysis have also disclosed that there are elements of the modern existentialist critique within the system. Tillich incorporates these elements into a predominantly classical philosophy. In this chapter, I will argue that Tillich's eclectic adoption of elements of modern existentialism allows him to offer a more profound interpretation of the questions that arise from human existence. This is because the existential critique points up the way in which human beings are free to establish their identity, to exercise their courage and integrity, and to take full responsibility for themselves.[2] This criterion of finite freedom is central to the way in which

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[1] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, p.541
[2] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.186-190, vol.2, pp.69-70, vol.3, pp.92-93

Tillich argues that existential disruption and estrangement are overcome. An overview of Tillich's existential hermeneutics will serve to illuminate the distinction he makes between the essence of modern existentialism and the philosophical school of existentialism. This will provide significant insight as to the consequences of this distinction with respect to the inter-dependent relationship between essence and existence. This will lead to the question as to how Tillich defines, within his method of correlation, the existential criteria under which the existential questions that pertain to human beings are asked. To this end, it will emerge that Tillich adopts a wide range of existential thought that stems from the early influence of the positive philosophy of Schelling and that extends to the later influence of the existentialist thought of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre.

Tillich's existential hermeneutics

Tillich argues that modern existentialism emerges as a cultural phenomenon in response to a major spiritual crisis in Western society. It is a response that is precipitated as a result of the collapse of the classical philosophical patterns of meaning which have hitherto provided cohesion and purpose in Western society. Tillich perceives twentieth century existentialism as:

> ... the most vivid and threatening meaning of "existential" ... it is the expression of the anxiety of meaninglessness and of the attempt to take this anxiety into the courage to be as oneself".[3]

In his thought, the intense existential disruption and existential estrangement that was experienced during the First World War contributed to this representation of existentialism. Indeed, it was Tillich's own dire experience as a Lutheran chaplain in the German trenches that brought into sharp focus for him the questions that pertain to human existence. This led him to formulate, in a new way, the answers that empower human beings to overcome existential disruption and estrangement.[4]

Macquarrie, in his comprehensive examination and evaluation of existentialism, endorses Tillich's argument that existentialism turns on the existential questions that relate to finitude.[5] Again, as with Tillich, Maquarrie expresses the existential questions in terms of the concrete subject.[6]

For Tillich, existentialism appears as an element within the earliest history of the Western

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[3] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.132
[4] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.73
[5] Macquarrie, *Existentialism*, 1991, p.xiii
[6] Macquarrie, *Existentialism*, 1991, pp. 223f.

classical philosophical tradition and subsequently takes definite shape against the last three centuries of Western culture, finally becoming a concrete philosophical discipline in the twentieth century.[7]

Tillich makes a distinction between what he defines as the essence of modern existentialism and the philosophical school of existentialism. He defines the essence of existentialism as an involved attitude that is an attitude of existential thinking. He writes:

> The existential attitude is one of involvement in contrast to a merely theoretical or detached attitude. "Existential" in this sense can be defined as participating in a situation, especially a cognitive situation, with the whole of one's existence. This includes temporal, spatial, historical, psychological, sociological, biological conditions. And it includes the finite freedom which reacts to these conditions and changes them. An existential knowledge is a knowledge in which these elements, and therefore the whole existence of him who knows, participate.[8]

Here, a direct correlation can be made between his definition of the essence of existentialism as existential thinking, and his definition of theology as existential thinking.

On the other hand, Tillich defines the content of the philosophical school of existentialism on the basis of the assertion that human beings have the ability to transcend the ambiguities of finitude and human existence. In his words:

> Hegel's system is the classical expression of essentialism. When Kierkegaard broke away from Hegel's system of essences he did two things; he proclaimed an existential attitude and he instigated a philosophy of existence. He realized that the knowledge of that which concerns us infinitely is possible only in an attitude of infinite concern, in an existential attitude. At the same time he developed a doctrine of man which describes the estrangement of man from his essential nature in terms of anxiety and despair. Man in the existential situation of finitude and estrangement can reach truth only in an Existential attitude. "Man does not sit on the throne of God", participating in his essential knowledge of everything that is. Man has no place of pure objectivity above finitude and estrangement. His cognitive function is as existentially conditioned as his whole being. This is the connection of the two meanings of "existential".[9]

The word 'existential' and the term 'existential thinking' stem from existence and existence presupposes essence from which it is fallen and yet to which it will ultimately return. Tillich's argument here turns upon the symbol of 'the Fall' of Adam as it emerges from the Christian tradition. In Tillich's words:

> Although usually associated with the biblical story of the "Fall of Adam," its meaning transcends the myth of Adam's Fall and has universal anthropological significance. Biblical literalism did a distinct disservice to Christianity in its identification of the Christian

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[7] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, pp.539-541
[8] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.117
[9] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.119

emphasis on the symbol of the Fall with literalistic interpretation of the Genesis story. Theology need not take literalism seriously, but we must realize how its impact has hampered the apologetic task of the Christian church. Theology must clearly and unambiguously represent "the Fall" as a symbol for the human situation universally, not as the story of an event that happened "once upon a time."[10]

Tillich's hermeneutics on 'the Fall' would again allow his thought to be placed in both the Platonist and Augustinian schools. Moreover, it is a hermeneutic from which it would appear to parallel the foundationalist theories of epistemological justification.[11] This is because Tillich's system appears to be justified by means of a chain of rational beliefs that stem from the Western metaphysical philosophical tradition. Moreover, foundationalist theories are concerned with the rationale that underpins a structure in a given moment in time rather than the development of that system over a period of time. They do not therefore rule out the possibility that a system could be justified by one belief system at one time and yet another belief system at a different time. This is an argument that now becomes compatible with Tillich's selective incorporation of elements of modern existentialism into an otherwise traditional philosophical system. However, most importantly, foundationalist theories operate under the critique of absolutism. Given that Tillich adopts selective elements of existentialism rather than adopting the philosophy as an entire belief system, then this must place his system in the realm of relativism. Is Tillich's system subject to the coherentist theories of epistemological justification then?[12] The answer to this question is that it is not. I base this answer on the grounds that there is nothing within the definition of the coherentist theories that allows for the possibility for two entirely different belief systems, or parts thereof, to be internally coherent. Indeed, if either the traditional or existential systems of belief claim to be the one absolute truth, then according to the coherentist theories, coherentism must provide a way of choosing between these two belief systems. My hermeneutics with respect to Tillich's incorporation of eclectic elements of modern existentialism into his system suggest that there is no such competition between the two philosophical systems. This is because rather than competing with Tillich's traditional philosophical system, his existential hermeneutics serve rather to add coherence to the system by highlighting the existential disruption and estrangement from God that results in the anxiety of meaninglessness.

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[10] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.29
[11] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justep-foundational accessed 11.04.08. Audi, R., *The Structure of Justification*, 1993, *The Foundationalism – Coherentism Controversy*, pp.49-95
[12] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justep-coherence accessed 11.04.08. Audi, R., *The Structure of Justification*, 1993, *The Foundationalism – Coherentism Controversy*, pp.95-117

I return now to Tillich's argument that existence presupposes essence to which it will ultimately return. With respect to this point, Zizioulas also points towards the ancient Greek philosophical tradition and cites the following argument of Aristotle. 'Nothing could have come to be out of what is not, for there must be something present as a substrate'.[13] Indeed, Zizioulas goes on to point out that the first Christian scholars had to reconcile this philosophical position with the doctrine of creation. Here, it was argued that the world did not always exist but rather came into being as a result of God's free choice to create the world. Consequently, in order to rationalise the distinction between essence and existence, Christian theology established a differentiation between the ontological being of God in his immanent divine economy and the human being that resulted from his action in creation.

For Tillich, existential thinking is also the analysis of the involved predicament of human existence rather than the analysis of the essential structure of human existence. In effect, this means that the essential structures of reality are accessible through detached cognition and the existential predicament is comprehended through involved cognition. However, Tillich does not claim that existential thinking is in conflict with the detached attitude of essential thinking because he argues that existential analysis must include some degree of cognitive detachment and essential analysis must include some degree of cognitive involvement. This argument comes to expression, as we have seen, in Tillich's claim of a complementary relationship between philosophy and theology. This argument is also strengthened when Tillich situates the characteristic of the existential attitude firmly within the history of Western philosophical thought. For example, he writes:

> Most characteristic, and at the same time most decisive for the development of existentialism, is Plato. Following the Orphic description of the human predicament he teaches the separation of the human soul from its "home" in the realm of pure essences. Man is estranged from what he essentially is. His existence in a transitory world contradicts his essential participation in the eternal world of ideas. This is expressed in mythological terms, because existence resists conceptualization. Only the realm of essences admits of structural analysis. Wherever Plato uses a myth he describes the transition from one's essential being to one's existential estrangement, and the return from the latter to the former. The Platonic distinction between the essential and the existential realm is fundamental for all later developments. It lies in the background even of present-day Existentialism.[14]

Plato's distinction here between essence and existence and the existential attitude that stems from it, finds expression in classical Christian doctrine, especially in the doctrines of creation, the fall of Adam, sin and salvation. Classical Christian thought affirms with Plato the

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[13] Aristotle, *Physica*, 191A, 23, cited in Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, p.15
[14] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, pp.120-121

fundamental goodness of human beings and their world within the parameters of the essential structure of being. It also affirms the loss of such goodness in the act of freedom as highlighted in the myth of Adam's temptation and his revolt against God.[15] Following Plato's theory of memory, classical Christian ontology holds that the disrupted unity between essence and existence remains intact despite the fall of Adam by virtue of God's sustaining and directing goodness and truth. This doctrine is fundamental to Tillich's entire system in that, as I have shown, the unity between finitude and God is one of the basic principles upon which the Tillichian system depends.[16] Tillich affirms the existential orientation of Aquinas[17] who argues that the undivided unity between essence and existence results in intelligible reality.[18] However, Tillich points to a discernible challenge to this existentialist thought in the rise of nominalism in the late Middle Ages[19] and which later takes firm expression in the thought of Descartes. In Tillich's words:

> The existence of man and his world is put into "brackets" – as Husserl, who derives his "phenomenological" method from Descartes, has formulated it. Man becomes pure consciousness, a naked epistemological subject; the world (including man's psychosomatic being) becomes an object of scientific inquiry and technical management. Man in his existential predicament disappears. It was, therefore, quite adequate when recent Existentialism showed that behind the *sum* (I am) in Decartes' *Cogito ergo sum* lies the problem of the nature of this *sum* which is more than mere *cogitatio* (consciousness) – namely existence in time and space and under the conditions of finitude and estrangement.[20]

What then are the criteria by which Tillich determines the elements of existentialism that he integrates into a predominantly classical philosophical system? Furthermore, how do these existential elements serve to clarify the existential questions within his system?

The existential criteria

This question may be answered by firstly identifying and then eliminating the pure essentialist philosophies that have no application for the Tillichian system. Tillich's interpretation and subsequent rejection of the essentialist philosophy of Hegel is the best example with which to demonstrate this point. Tillich argues that in Hegel's thought, 'God is the bearer of the essential structure of all things', so that all essences are expressions of God's self-revelation in

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[15] Genesis 3
[16] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.252f.
[17] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.205, 236
[18] Aquinas, *De Verit*, 1,2,3, cited in Phelan, *Selected Papers, The Existentialism of St. Thomas*, 1967, pp.67-82, especially p.81
[19] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.123
[20] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.125

time and space.[21] It follows for Tillich that in thus denying a distinction between essence and existence, Hegel is claiming that reason is real, that reality is rational and that human beings are reconciled within reality purely by means of the dynamics of cognition alone.[22] For Tillich, such thought involves the loss of existential attitude and thus the loss of the conception and the valuation of the concrete and particular existence of the individual human being. Hegel's 'negative' philosophy has thus no application for his system.

However, in contrast to Hegel's 'negative' philosophy, Schelling's 'positive' philosophy has a positive impact on Tillich's early thought because Schelling offers the possibility of a relationship of interdependence between essential and existential thinking. Schelling does this on the premise that existential cognition is the presupposition of essentialist thought. Tillich argues that Schelling highlights the unconscious and in so doing he (Schelling) points up the problems that are inherent in existential disruption and estrangement. This thought comes to expression within the parameters of the problematical relationship between the conscious and the unconscious and the way in which these problems are manifested in anxiety, guilt and the demonic.[23]

The philosophy of Kierkegaard also has positive impact on Tillich's thought in that Kierkegaard prepares the pathway for the acceptance of the element of passionate decision towards God.[24] This involves the awareness of anxiety that is an integral element of existential disruption and estrangement. In Tillich's words:

> Man is not only finite, as is every creature; he is also aware of his finitude. And this awareness is "anxiety". ... Through Søren Kierkegaard the word *Angst* has become a central concept of existentialism. It expresses the awareness of being finite, of being a mixture of being and non-being, or of being threatened by non-being. ... Kierkegaard particularly has used the concept of anxiety to describe (not to explain) the transition from essence to existence.[25]

Kierkegaard adopts the analogy of the relationship between Abraham and Isaac to highlight a sense of reality in relation to a finite value that is passionately contingent, temporal and threatening.[26] It is a form of meaning that is defined in relation to the limitation of finitude in

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[21] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, pp.417-418, 427-428
[22] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, pp.82-83, based on *On The Idea of the Theology of Culture*, 1919
[23] Tillich's doctrinal theses, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles*, 1910 and *Mysticism and Guilt-consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 1912. Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought.*, 1968, pp.446-447
[24] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.12, 215. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 1985, pp.48ff.
[25] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.34-35
[26] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 1985, pp.53-83. Genesis 22:1-14

time and space, to the impermanence of finitude, to the threat of ultimate loss, and as a consequence, to existence in pain. Such was the limit of Tillich's adoption of Kierkegaard's criterion of subjectivism because inevitably, Tillich could not accept a perception of subjective reality that did not also include the essentialist, objective perspective.[27]

Tillich's dependence upon the inter-relationship between essence and existence within the existential critique comes into sharp relief when viewed within the context of the thought of Heidegger. This is because Heidegger develops the concept that being is finite. Clearly, this is not a new insight in the history of Western philosophy. However, for Tillich, the existential critique does not operate within the classical ontological parameters. This is where the finite is contrasted with the infinite order of being, the contingent with the necessary, the relative with the absolute, the temporal with the eternal, the mutable with the immutable or ultimate unreality with ultimate reality. The existential critique does not challenge the classical philosophical perception that beyond the contingency, relativity and ultimate impermanence of the finite world there is the ontological order of perfection that is characterised as absolute, permanent and eternal, in relation to which finitude establishes its meaning. Rather, it asserts that in the event that such an order of eternal truth exists, it cannot be the source of authentic human existence in terms of eternal happiness. This is because human beings are essentially temporal and concrete and authentic existence is possible only by means of that truth which also is essentially temporal and concrete.

For Tillich, the nineteenth century thought of Nietzsche, who argues that God is dead, is the most profound articulation of the collapse of the tradition philosophical patterns of meaning.[28] Specifically, Nietzsche argues that God has been murdered by human beings and that thus, the transcendental perspective of the Infinite that was so prevalent in the classical philosophical tradition is no longer a tenable philosophical position. Having thus killed God, human beings can neither believe in a divine source of values nor interpret the divine in terms of the 'Absolute Spirit' in history. However, it is interesting to note that Nietzsche's claim of a philosophical perspective that is centred on finitude does not preclude him from making absolute and eternal claims. For example, in his theory of the 'eternal recurrence of the same', Nietzsche's point is not that there can be no logical possibility of infinity, but rather that the values and functions of human activity and reason cannot be formulated from an infinite and hence 'other' perspective. Transcendence is still a necessary component of philosophy but

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[27] Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1968, pp.470-471
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1.pp.259-351

only in terms that transcendence is accepted, not within the parameters of the finite human perspective towards God, but rather from the finite perspective to the still finite but transcendent view of what Nietzsche defines as the 'overman'.[29]

Heidegger's development of Nietzsche's argument is crucial to Tillich's existential hermeneutics. This is because Heidegger defines finitude as the ontological ground of transcendence in subjective terms that are dependent upon an interpretation that reason is self-consciousness.[30] Heidegger was a colleague of Husserl and would seem to relate to Husserl's pure phenomenology. This is because Husserl defines phenomenology as an analysis of the essence of pure consciousness to describe meanings.[31] His phenomenological criteria includes the idea that truth begins with a revelation of consciousness. Indeed, Tillich acknowledges Husserl's contribution to methodological phenomenology towards his own analysis of the meaning of revelation.[32] Essentially for Husserl, phenomenology is the *a priori* science of essences, where consciousness is intentional towards an object. In effect, this gives meaning to the object of human existence. Again, Heidegger echoes Husserl's thought when he comes to ask the question of human existence in that the epistemological question is expressed in terms of ontological hermeneutics. Essentially, this results in a phenomenology that is dependent upon a correlation between essence and existence and between the knowing subject and the world.[33]

Tillich's dependence upon the philosophy of the early Heidegger stems from Heidegger's ontological perspective of human being as that being who asks the questions of being. It is the question of *Dasein*.[34] It is where each individual human being, that is *Dasein*, exists in a specific historical and cultural context and has the possibility of self-transcendence through the structure of its own existence to ask the question of its own being. This means that human existence has a universal and necessary *a priori* structure that is accessible to conceptual analysis in terms of *Dasein*'s *a priori* transcendence. This concept is echoed in Tillich's argument of the inter-dependence of essential and existential cognition, because in placing *Dasein* at the centre of the philosophical question, he is continuing the classical Western critique of philosophy. Moreover, Heidegger is formulating a concept of the essence of

[29] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1969, see also Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, The Entry into Postmodernism; Nietzsche*, 1990, pp.83-105

[30] Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, The Entry into Postmodernism; Nietzsche*, 1990, pp.101- 104

[31] Husserl, *Ideas: A General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*

[32] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.106-107

[33] Heidegger, *Basic Writings: Letter on Humanism*, 1999, p.235f.

[34] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, pp. 33-34, 52, 236, *Basic Writings: What is Metaphysics?*, 1999, p.94

Dasein that is open to conceptual analysis and that also grounds the essence of human beings within the temporal, historical actuality of human decision and freedom. In other words, *Dasein* is open to possibilities that are dependent upon the hypothesis that essence and existence are identical concepts.[35]

Most importantly for Tillich's existential hermeneutics is Heidegger's critique of the consciousness of *Dasein* and of its being in the world.[36] This is because this critique provides a framework from which the concept of non-being in the world finds expression in the experience of anxiety. In Heidegger's thought, anxiety highlights the ultimate possibility of the death of *Dasein*, where death is the key to authentic existence.[37] It is in the anticipation of death that human beings have an acute awareness of essential finitude and thus, an awareness of the possibility of authentic existence. In the process of taking upon itself the anxiety of death, human beings take full responsibility for their own existence as being fully, holistic, integrated and autonomous individuals. It is at this point that Tillich departs from this atheistic perspective of Heidegger. Nevertheless, in terms of highlighting the subjective characteristics of being, Tillich's adoption of Heidegger's ontological interpretation of human self-affirmation is clear.[38] It is a further step towards Tillich's implementation of the subjective element of human existence into his otherwise essential system.

Tillich furthers his argument by citing the thought of Sartre who, from Tillich's perspective, not only brings Heidegger's early thought to its logical conclusion, but also articulates the essence of modern existentialism. Tillich writes:

> I refer above all to his [Sartre's] proposition that "the essence of man is his existence." This sentence is like a flash of light with illuminates the whole Existentialist scene. One could call it the most despairing and the most courageous sentence in all Existentialist literature. What it says is that there is no essential nature of man, except in the one point that he can make of himself what he wants. Man creates what he is. Nothing is given to him to determine his creativity. The essence of his being – the "should be," "the ought-to-be," – is not something which he finds; he makes it. Man is what he makes of himself. And the courage to be as oneself is the courage to make of oneself what one wants to be... existentialism in philosophy is represented more by Heidegger and Sartre than by anybody else.[39]

In thus affirming that existence precedes essence, the modern existential critique removes the possibility of the beneficial effect of the Christian doctrine of salvation. In this radical form,

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[35] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, pp.67-69
[36] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, pp.85-102, 155-176
[37] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1992, pp.294-310. The influence of Kierkegaard's thought on the subject of anxiety is evident in Heidegger's conclusion here.
[38] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, pp.140-141
[39] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, pp.142-143

this is not a viable philosophy for Tillich. Indeed, he challenges the structure of this argument by pointing towards, what he refers to as a 'happy inconsistency' in this form of existentialism. In his words:

> He [Sartre] calls his existentialism humanism. But if he calls it humanism, that means he has an idea of what man essentially is, and he must consider the possibility that the essential being of man, his freedom, might be lost. And if this is a possibility, then he makes, against his own will, a distinction between man as he essentially is and man as he can be lost: man is to be free and to create himself. ... Heidegger talks also as if there were no norms whatsoever, no essential man, as if man makes himself. On the other hand, he speaks of the difference between authentic existence and unauthentic existence, falling into the average existence of conventional thought and nonsense – into an exercise where he has lost himself. This is very interesting, because it shows that even the most radical existentialist, if he want to say something, necessarily falls back to some essentialist statements because without them he cannot even speak.[40]

This neat argument of Tillich apart, his rejection of such radical existentialism lies in the questions that relate to human reality. He argues that these questions cannot be answered by the modern existential critique as a complete philosophical system because of its basic claim that existence precedes or defines essence. Indeed, for Tillich, modern existentialism is self-contradictory in its rejection of the essential structures of reality as *a priori*, necessary, and universal forms. This is because, without these forms, there can be no cognitive approach to either essential or existential reality. On the theoretical level, existentialism cannot sustain its basic argument without essential thinking to complement and complete its own line of inquiry into the human meaningless predicament of existential disruption and estrangement. Furthermore, in Tillich's thought, the existential argument, as exemplified in the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre, that human beings have the courage to overcome the existential predicament in the radical subjectivity of the self, is problematical. This is because for him, these theories set up a chain of events that result in the subjective self becoming isolated and subsequently detached from existence within the community[41] a reality of existence that is fundamental to the life of the Church. Rather, for Tillich, the subjective self is constituted by the power of God, that is, Being-itself. Any emphasis on autonomy rather than on theonomy leaves the self lost to the world and also lost to those principles and norms in relation to which the self's potential can become actual. This amounts to the radical

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[40] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.21, based on *On The Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919. Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 1977, pp.23-56. Heidegger, *Basic Writings: Letter on Humanism*, 1999, pp.232-233

[41] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, pp.104-105, 146

relativism of the self wherein its existential possibilities are the self's own norm. In Tillich's thought, if the self is cut off from God, then it is also cut off from the essential structure of reality. This includes the universality of language, moral wisdom, universal ethical obligation, and the categories and polarities of being.[42] Effectively, the self is cut off from the entire world as cosmos and is thus nothing more than an empty shell of possibilities.[43] Therefore, the existentialist philosophies of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre are theoretically inadequate for Tillich because they claim a pure form of cognition that does not need essential cognition to complete its analysis. In contradistinction, Tillich's overall evaluation of modern existentialism is positive in that he first of all identifies, and subsequently incorporates, elements of this form of philosophy into his predominant classical philosophy. This is the philosophy that stems from Plato's distinction between essence and existence. It is the philosophy that gave birth to the idea of the element of anxiety in the human predicament. It is also the philosophy that was developed into the classical Christian doctrines of creation, the Fall and salvation.

Tillich, therefore, accepts elements of the modern existential critique on the premise that existential analysis cannot proceed without the essential structure of human beings that serve to highlight the predicament of human existence. He also accepts the early philosophy of Heidegger where Heidegger achieves a concept of human being in *Dasein* that corresponds in large, to the classical perception of human being. This is the perception that anxiety, which Tillich expresses as meaninglessness, is characterised by awareness by human finitude. It is this concept that Tillich adopts as an interpretative structure for the question of finitude in relation to which Christian symbols are made intelligible within his method of correlation. This is an interpretative structure that adopts the existential critique of the actual character of existence as it presents itself in the immediacy of experience. In Tillich's thought, this means that existentialism cannot become theology or indeed an ideology, in the sense that it is only faith that can answer the questions of human existence. Modern existentialism can, for him, highlight the disrupted and estranged structures of human existence. It cannot however, heal and save the disruption and estrangement within these structures.[44] What the existentialist critique has to offer the Tillichian system is the clarification of the element in being that is its proper object, namely, human being or *Dasein*, in the actuality of time and space. It becomes a viable philosophy for Tillich only when this critique is utilised to articulate the questions that arise from existential disruption and estrangement and where these questions are

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[42] Tillich, *Morality and Beyond*, 1969, p.17f.
[43] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, p.144
[44] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.25-26

answered in correlation with the soteriological action of the divine, that is, Being-itself. It must follow that there cannot be conflict between modern existentialism and theology when perceived within these parameters. The potential for conflict arises only when the existential critique includes self-contradictory or ultimate statements. For example, that God does not exist or that essence and existence are identical.

Again, the resonance of Tillich's thought with that of Macquarrie emerges. For example, Maquarrie's concern also is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of existentialism as it relates to Christian theology.[45] Furthermore, Macquarrie, does not designate a school of philosophy to existentialism, as for example, the Thomism school, since he argues that a common body of existential doctrine does not exist. Rather, he argues that existentialism is more a style of philosophising.[46]

I would argue that in adopting eclectic elements of the modern existentialist critique, Tillich indeed offers an existential hermeneutic that allows deeper insight into the questions that pertain to human existence.

What then are the consequences of Tillich's existential critique, as interpreted here, with respect to his integration of modern existentialism into the larger Western philosophical tradition? How does this argument add to a deeper interpretation of Christian symbols as they relate to the answers to the questions of human existence within Tillich's method of correlation? This question will be the central focus of the next chapter.

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[45] Macquarrie. *Existentialism*, 1991, p.xii
[46] Macquarrie. *Existentialism*, 1991, p.252

CHAPTER 8

EXISTENTIALISM AND THE ANSWER TO THE HUMAN
PREDICAMENT

Christianity asserts that Jesus is the Christ. The term "the Christ" points by marked contrast to man's existential situation. For the Christ, the Messiah, is he who is supposed to bring the "new eon," the universal regeneration, the new reality. New reality presupposes an old reality; and this old reality, according to prophetic and apocalyptic descriptions, is the state of the estrangement of man and his world from God. This estranged world is ruled by structures of evil, symbolized as demonic powers. They rule individual souls, nations, and even nature. They produce anxiety in all its forms. It is the task of the Messiah to conquer them and to establish a new reality from which the demonic powers or the structures of destruction are excluded.

Paul Tillich[1]

So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

John 10: 7-10

The aim of this chapter is to show the way in which my hypothesis that there is a

relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system may be

brought into dialogue with his ecclesiology. To this end, the relationship that Tillich

perceives between the modern existentialist critique and Christian theology will be my point

of departure. Tillich's challenge to the existential hermeneutic that finitude is self-sufficient,

leads to his interpretation of Heidegger's concept of anxiety, as that human characteristic

that allows human beings to transcend the subjective and objective structure of reality.

Tillich defines the depth dimension of finitude in theonomous terms that subsequently

allows him to argue that human beings have the potential to become subject to the

soteriological power of God, as expressed in the symbol of Jesus as the Christ. In order to

gain deeper insight into this potential, an analysis of the way in which Tillich interprets the

human predicament within the method of correlation will be made. I will then make

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[1] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.27

reference to the social theory of reflexivity that addresses the human predicament in terms of meaninglessness. This approach facilitates my assertion that Tillich's existential critique does not impair my argument of a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology. Tillich's argument that Jesus as the Christ is the answer to the questions of human existence will allow this answer to be expressed in the ecclesiological terms of the Incarnation and the third person of the Trinity. Tillich's system and ecclesiology will thus be brought into dialogue in the following chapter.

Existentialism and theonomy

Tillich appropriates the truth of human being under the existential critique and then applies this critique within the parameters of the essential nature of human being, as it is interpreted in general within the classical Christian philosophical and theological traditions. In his words:

> Existentialism has analyzed the "old eon," namely, the predicament of man and his world in the state of estrangement. In doing so, existentialism is a natural ally of Christianity. Immanuel Kant once said that mathematics is the good luck of human reason. In the same way, one could say that existentialism is the good luck of Christian theology. It has helped to rediscover the classical Christian interpretation of existence. ... existentialism and contemporary theology should become allies and analyze the character of existence in all its manifestations, the unconscious as well as the conscious. The systematic theologian cannot do this alone; he needs the help of creative representations of existentialism in all its realms of culture.[2]

In this process, Tillich argues that the Christian theologian must bring to bear three fundamental concepts in his or her theological evaluation of modern existentialism. The first concept is that of *esse qua esse bonum est*, that is, being as being, is good. Since God is the source of created goodness, then Tillich again establishes the unity between being and God. Secondly, Christian theology is dependent upon the concept of existential disruption and subsequent estrangement that occurs as a result of the universal fall from the created essential goodness of God. Thirdly, Christian theology should affirm the concept of wholeness for being that is the result of healing and salvation within the estranged condition of actual being. Tillich highlights these concepts as follows.

> These three considerations are present in all theological thinking: essential goodness, existential estrangement, and the possibility of something, a "third," beyond essence and existence, through which the cleavage is overcome and healed. Now, in philosophical terms, this means that man's essential and existential nature points to his teleological nature (derived from *telos*, aim, that for which and toward which his life drives).[3]

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[2] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.27-28
[3] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.119, based on *On The Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919

Under these criteria, existentialism is for Tillich, the philosophy of the predicament of actual disrupted and estranged human existence that has resulted from the fall of Adam. From this perspective, existentialism becomes a philosophical development within the larger classical philosophical and theological whole. Tillich rationalises this position by rejecting the element in existentialism that denies the essential nature of human beings. Under this criterion, there is no essential nature to which human beings can be reconciled because there is no ground or power of being through which the separation between essence and existence may be overcome. However, when Tillich's existential hermeneutics are perceived as a philosophical development within a larger and classical philosophical whole, where existentialism serves to highlight existential disruption and estrangement, then he can be seen to justify the appropriation of this line of philosophy despite its obvious atheistic elements. This argument now leads to the question of the extent to which Tillich's adoption of elements of modern existentialism into a predominantly traditional philosophical system challenges the fundamental hypothesis of this thesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in his system.

I have argued that for Tillich, theology is existential in character on the grounds that theology should be addressed from a position of the ultimate concern of the theologian. Indeed, theology is a process of existential thinking in that it cannot be argued from a position of essential, detached and objective thinking alone. For example, Tillich writes:

> It [theology] is the object of total surrender, demanding also the surrender of our objectivity while we look at it. It is a matter of infinite passion and interest (Kierkegaard), making us its object whenever we try to make it our object. ... This, then, is the first formal criterion of theology. *The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately: Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter or ultimate concern for us.*[4]

Here, Tillich clearly establishes the existential character of theology where the meaning of existential is linked to the theologian's ultimate concern. At the same time, for him, systematic theology is a function of the Church for every new generation and as such, it is the interpretative element in the Christian experience of Jesus as the Christ. Indeed, the Tillichian method of correlation seeks to correlate the explanation of the Christian faith in

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[4] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.12

answer to existential questions within the parameters of finitude and its unity with God.[5]
This is a crucial point. Because this is a process in which it is incumbent also upon theology
to form the existential questions that philosophy must pose. Tillich himself says:

> Theology formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates
> the answers implied in human existence. This is a circle which drives man to a point
> where question and answer are not to be separated. This point, however, is not a moment
> in time. It belongs to man's essential being, to the unity of his finitude with his infinitely
> in which he was created ... and from which he is separated.[6]

The theonomous significance of existential philosophy may also be identified in Tillich's
thought with reference to the early philosophy of Heidegger when he writes:

> His [Heidegger's] interpretation of human existence implies and develops, however
> unintentionally, a doctrine of man that is one of human freedom and finitude. It is so
> closely related to the Christian interpretation of human existence that one is forced to
> describe it as "Theonomous philosophy" in spite of Heidegger's emphatic atheism. To be
> sure, it is not a philosophy which presupposes the theological answer to the question of
> human finitude and then explains it in philosophical terms. That would be a variant of
> idealism and the opposite of a philosophy of existence. Existential philosophy asks in a
> new and radical way the question whose answer is given to faith in theology.[7]

When existential philosophy is thus perceived as theonomous then it can be integrated into a
creative theological correlation despite its internal inconsistencies, its atheism and its
adherence to autonomy.[8] Indeed, the theonomous character of modern existentialism is
evident on two fronts in Tillich's thought.

Firstly, this philosophy challenges the self-sufficient dimension of finitude as proposed by
the modern existential critique in that, for Tillich, it points towards the depth dimension of
existence. In effect, this is a philosophical critique that serves to articulate the disruption of
the subjective and objective structure of reality, as it relates to the self and the world, in
order to disclose the existential threat of non-being. Tillich's argument here turns on the
thought of Kierkegaard and Heidegger where anxiety is the existential correlate to
awareness in finitude. This is a critique in which anxiety renders human beings aware of
being subject to the potential experience that lies outside the parameters of the subjective
and objective structure of reality in the self and the world. Tillich distinguishes between
anxiety and fear where fear is defined as an effective response to the threat that is located in

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[5] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.60
[6] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.61
[7] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 1936, *Autobiographical Reflections*, in *The Boundaries of our Being*, ,1973, pp.324-325
[8] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.25-26

the external parameters of the world. Fear, in contradistinction to anxiety, has a definite object that can be faced, analysed, challenged and endured, and thus participated in, in the process of which the self affirms itself. This argument is dependent upon Tillich's location of fear in contextual terms within the parameters of the subjective and objective structure of reality where human response to fear is effectively locked within the structure. However, Tillich argues that anxiety has no object, 'or rather, in a paradoxical phrase, its object is the negation of every object'.[9] This means that Tillich locates anxiety outside the parameters of the subjective and objective structure of reality and also outside the self and the world. Under this criterion, anxiety is outside the parameters of both participation and self-affirmation. Tillich has thus made a neat challenge against the self-sufficient argument of the existential critique, and to fill the vacuum, has created the possibility for what he defines as 'theonomous existentialism'. For example, he argues that:

> Anxiety is the more fundamental affection because the fear of something special is ultimately rooted in the fact that as finite beings we are exposed to annihilation, to the victory of non-being in us. In this sense, anxiety is the foundation of fear. Their ontological relation is different; for anxiety has an ontological precedence; it reveals the human predicament in its fundamental quality, as finitude.[10]

Anxiety thus discloses to human beings the depth dimension of finitude because it empowers human beings to transcend the confines of the parameters of the subjective and objective structure of reality, and also the self and the world. In the process, existential disruption and estrangement are experienced as meaninglessness. This argument is strengthened when perceived in terms of Heidegger's later thought. Here, Heidegger argues that in the 'fundamental mood of anxiety we have arrived at the occurrence in human existence in which the nothing is revealed and from which it must be interrogated'.[11] Indeed, it is in holding itself out to nothing that Heidegger argues that 'Dasein is in each case already beyond beings as a whole'. That is, *Dasein* is in the state of transcendence.[12] This is an interesting point, because in *Dasein*'s questioning and self-affirmation of itself in transcendent terms, Heidegger has brought the existence of *Dasein* into dialogue with metaphysics and also with Nietzsche's definition that the history of metaphysics is nihilism. This now becomes a position from which Tillich can argue that the existential critique provides the means of articulating the radical questions that are implied in the meaning of

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[9] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.34
[10] Tillich, *Existential Analysis and Religious Symbols* in *Contemporary Problems in Religion*, 1956, p.44
[11] Heidegger, *Basic Writings, What is Metaphysics?*, 1999, p.101
[12] Heidegger, *Basic Writings, What is Metaphysics?*, 1999, p.103

existence, but not the articulation of the answers. There is a sense in which Tillich's existential critique now becomes instrumental in preparing human beings to receive the Christian message. Tillich has thereby created a positive relationship between existentialism and Christian theology and the means by which these two may be brought into dialogue. In his words:

> Existential analyses express conceptually what the religious myth has always said about the human predicament. And in doing so they make all of those symbols understandable in which the answer to the question implied in the human predicament is given; the symbols and myths which center around the idea of God.[13]

The second point with respect to the theonomous character of existentialism, is the question of the method by which Christian symbols are correlated with the questions that arise from Tillich's existential critique. The analysis of Tillich's existentialism above has revealed that anxiety is a necessary experience for human beings. When this experience is transposed into terms that human beings are creatures, then it can be linked to the Christian symbol of Creation. Tillich's writes:

> ... creation expresses symbolically the participation of the finite in its own infinite ground; or more existentially expressed, the symbol of creation shows the source of the courage to affirm one's own being in terms of power and meaning in spite of the ever present threat of non-being. In this courage, the anxiety of creatureliness is not removed but taken into the courage.[14]

Tillich's existential critique now becomes a viable interpretative structure within which the questions that emerge from the human predicament may be correlated with the divine salvation that is symbolised in Jesus as the Christ. Furthermore, the existential critique provides the key for the understanding of the Christian eschatological symbol of Eternal Life that Tillich articulates in term of the process of eschatological pan-en theism. This is the process where eternal e xistence is synthesised into the eternal life of God and a process that Schelling articulates as essentialisation.[15] Indeed, Tillich says that:

> My task, was to show that existential analysis has made it more difficult for the modern mind to dispose of religious symbols by first taking them literally and then properly rejecting them as absurd.[16]

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[13] Tillich, *Existential Analysis and Religious Symbols* in *Contemporary Problems in Religion*, 1956, p.48
[14] Tillich, *Existential Analysis and Religious Symbols*, in *Contemporary Problems in Religion*, 1956, p.49
[15] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.420-421, see reference to Schelling p.400
[16] Tillich, *Existential Analysis and Religious Symbols*, in *Contemporary Problems in Religion*, 1956, p.55

It follows that Tillich's existential critique has the potential to add weight to the apologetic nature of his philosophical and theological system. Once more, this is because it confronts human beings with the problems that are inherent in the existential predicament. This creates the possibility for the reception of the Christian answer to the meaning of existence as it is articulated by the existential critique. For example, existential disruption and estrangement are overcome through participation in the new reality of Christ as the New Being who appears in historical existence and who, in overcoming the conditions of existence, is the source of integration, meaning and fulfilment.[17] To this extent, when the criterion of theonomous existentialism is incorporated into Tillich's method of correlation under the condition that it affords deeper insight into the questions that pertain to human existence, then my argument of synthesis between philosophy and theology is further extended.

The human predicament and the method of correlation

I return now to Tillich's statement that his task is to make his existential critique acceptable to modern thought. In order to remain as faithful as possible to this statement, and towards extending it into the post-modern context, the dialectical character of the method of correlation must firstly be addressed. For example, Tillich argues that:

> ... theology must use the immense and profound material of the existential analysis in all cultural realms, including therapeutic psychology. But theology cannot use it by simply accepting it. Theology must confront it with the answer implied in the Christian message. The confrontation of the existential analysis with the symbols in which Christianity has expressed its ultimate concern is the method which is adequate both to the message of Jesus as the Christ and to the human predicament as rediscovered in contemporary culture. The answer cannot be derived from the question. It could be said *to* him who asks, but it is not taken *from* him. Existentialism cannot give answers. It can determine the form of the answer, but whenever an existentialist artist or philosopher answers, he does so through the power of another tradition which has revelatory sources. To give answers is the function of the Church not only to itself, but also to those outside the Church.[18]

Clearly here, by placing theology within the context of the science of therapeutic psychology Tillich has remained consistent to the concept of *Gestalt* that he attempted to

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[17] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.50
[18] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.49, *On an Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919, see also *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.202-204

formulate as early as 1924 in his work *The System of the Sciences According to Methods and Objects*. Most significantly this allows him to claim a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology within the method of correlation. This observation apart, we have seen above that Tillich's existential critique was developed largely from the thought of Heidegger. This points to the depth dimension in human beings in terms of the threat of non-being and is manifested in anxiety. In adopting the elements of existentialism and in integrating them into the method of correlation as I have highlighted, the rationale for Tillich's claim that there is a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology becomes evident. His critique of existentialism stating that existentialism cannot give answers but rather articulates the question of existence follows directly and consistently from this perceived relationship. At the same time however, Tillich's argument that there is a relationship of inter-dependence between philosophy and theology does not achieve synthesis because of his claim that theology is soteriological whereas philosophy is not. I have challenged this argument by pointing out that Tillich himself acknowledges that philosophy is not excluded from salvation when it is perceived as divine revelation. Tillich can also express this conclusion in the following terms:

> The conquest of the conflicts of existential reason is what can be called "saved reason". Actual reason needs salvation, as do all the other sides of man's nature and of reality. Reason is not excluded from the healing power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Theonomous reason, beyond the conflict of absolutism and relativism, of formalism and emotionalism – this is reason in revelation. Reason in revelation is neither confirmed in its state of conflict nor denied in its essential structure. But its essential structure is re-established under the conditions of existence, fragmentarily, yet really and in power.[19]

Again, Tillich draws a distinction between philosophy and theology by arguing that philosophy is not dependent upon a self-conscious appropriation of the Christian message. He rationalises this distinction by arguing that philosophy can access the essential ontological structure of being even under the conditions of disrupted and estranged existence. On the other hand, Christian theology is dependent upon the unique soteriological revelation of God in Jesus as the Christ. I have challenged this argument by also pointing out that the search for reality in Greek thought is dependent upon a concept of truth that is correlated with objectivity, universality and eternity. The relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in the Tillichian system that I propose, turns on the argument that it is this thought that most nearly approaches and approximates God by virtue of its capacity

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[19] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.155

to transcend that particularity of the existence of both the theologian and the philosopher. The reality of the soteriological action of God thus applies to both the philosopher and the theologian.[20] Clearly, my analysis of Tillich's critique of existentialism, shows that he attempts to create a synthesis between the classical and modern critiques of philosophy in relation to the existentialist revolt against essentialism. In so doing, what emerges is the theological significance of existential philosophy as existential thinking and that contributes to a more profound interpretation of Christian symbols in correlation with the predicament of human existence. Tillich's perception that existential philosophy is theonomous is thus in direct synthesis with his argument that theology is existential thinking. It is on these grounds that I argue that his integration of the existential critique into a largely classical philosophical system does not impair the fundamental argument of this thesis.

How then is my argument of a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system to be brought towards its application in the present day ecumenical dialogue? In an attempt to answer this question, it is firstly necessary to construe the findings of my analysis of Tillich's existential critique from the perspective of the post-modern era.

Tillich's existential critique in the post-modern context

The apologetic weight that Tillich attaches to the correlative implementation of the existential critique within his systematic theology is all too clear. Moreover, it seems clear that his existential hermeneutics with respect to Christian symbols precludes challenge to the symbolic method on the grounds that although he does not expect the symbols to be interpreted literally, he does expect his method to be taken seriously. It seems plausible to argue therefore that Tillich's apologetic *raison d'être* is to offer his system as the answer to questions that arise from human existence in terms of Christian symbols. This is a historical philosophical and theological *raison d'être* that is equally applicable to the existential questions that arise in the post-modern age.

If we return now to Tillich's existential hermeneutics and his argument that anxiety cannot result in self-affirmation, we can gain deeper clarity into transposing this argument into the post-modern Western cultural context from his work *The Courage to Be*. Indeed, when Tillich wrote the work in 1952 he argued that he was writing in an age of spiritual anxiety that extended to both Europe and America. Tillich makes a distinction between three types of anxiety that he correlates with three different eras in the history of Western civilisation.

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[20] Psalm 139, Jeremiah 1:4-5

Firstly, he argues that at the end of ancient civilisation, ontological anxiety dominated philosophical thought in the threat to non-being in the relative terms of fate and in the absolute terms of death. Secondly, he argues that at the end of the Middle Ages moral anxiety was philosophically dominant in the threat to moral self-affirmation and in the relative terms of guilt and the absolute terms of condemnation. Thirdly, Tillich argues that at the end of the modern period, emptiness and meaninglessness dominate philosophical thought. Both these manifestations of anxiety are spiritual and can result in the threat of spiritual non-being. In the search for spiritual self-affirmation, Tillich qualifies emptiness as relative anxiety and meaninglessness as absolute anxiety, both of which are the potential cause of the threat of spiritual non-being. Specifically, Tillich correlates the anxiety of meaninglessness with the loss of ultimate concern, that is, of an ultimate meaning that gives meaning to all meanings. This is a form of anxiety that results from the loss of a spiritual centre in which the question of the meaning of existence is answered in the symbolic terms of the Christian message.[21]

Two critical points now emerge. Firstly, in Tillich's adoption of the term spiritual anxiety in correlation with the period in history that he acknowledges as 'the end of the modern era'[22] it is possible to place his thought on the cusp of the post-modern age. Secondly, it is also possible to make a correlation between his existential hermeneutics with respect to anxiety as manifested in his own Western culture. For example, he writes:

> The breakdown of absolutism, the development of liberalism and democracy, the rise of a technical civilization with its victory over all enemies and its own beginning disintegration - these are the sociological presuppositions for the third main period of anxiety. In this the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness is dominant. We are under the threat of spiritual non- being.[23]

These critical points now allow Tillich's existential critique to be brought into dialogue with the philosophical insights of reflexivity that deal with the question of the human predicament. Indeed, Lawson echoes the thought of Tillich when arguing that the post-modern predicament is the result of a crisis in truth and belief systems albeit that for Lawson the predicament, 'owes to reflexivity its origin, its necessity and its force'.[24] In his review of Lawson's thought on reflexivity, Taylor's critique serves to forward Tillich's existential critique of the human predicament into the post-modern context. Taylor writes:

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[21] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, pp.37-59
[22] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.53
[23] Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 1961, p.58
[24] Lawson, *Reflexivity: The post-modern predicament*, 1985, p.9

During the modern period, the notion of reflexivity becomes the basis for an interpretation of subjectivity that is supposed to secure human knowledge. Descartes' inward turn to the subject eventually leads to the reflexivity of Hegelian spirit in which absolute knowledge becomes concretely embodied in and through the evolution of the spatial and temporal process. The postmodern preoccupation with reflexivity, Lawson contends, differs from the modern by its concentration on language and texts rather than selfhood and subjectivity. The transition from subject to language, which is initiated by Nietzsche and extended by Heidegger, is developed most fully by Derrida. In contrast to their modern predecessors, these "postmodern" writers insist that, when pushed to the limit, the notion of reflexivity makes certainty impossible and uncertainty unavoidable.[25]

Lawson would thus seem to support the responses of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida to the human predicament based on reflexive self-awareness, responses that find empathy with Tillich's existential critique. Derrida's method of deconstruction in terms of language and texts and its application for Tillich's system have been addressed in the second chapter of this thesis. His hypothesis of the 'impossible' will be cited again in the concluding chapter in order to highlight the potential positive contribution Tillich's system has to offer to post-modern ecumenical ecclesiology.

With the thought of ecumenical ecclesiology in mind, the question of the implications of Tillich's existential hermeneutics with respect to Catholic thought now emerges.

The existential critique and post-modern ecumenical ecclesiology

With respect to Tillich's existential critique and post-modern Catholic thought, it is interesting to note that Caputo identifies a correlate between the thought of Aquinas and that of Heidegger when perceived in terms that being is 'granted' to human beings. Caputo argues that past attempts to confront the thought of Aquinas with that of Heidegger have been impaired by the perception that Aquinas' metaphysical definition of being is rooted in reason. Rather, Caputo writes that;

> ... once the depth dimension, the mystical element in St. Thomas' metaphysics, is wrested loose from this metaphysical encasement one finds a Thomas who eludes Heidegger's critique of metaphysics, for whom metaphysics is something to be overcome, a more essential thinker in whom Heidegger would have been compelled to concede that here too ... there is a profound unity of mysticism and thought. The key to St. Thomas lies in the *non possum*. In the *non possum* there lies the most profound possibility of St. Thomas' thought. And, as Heidegger says, possibility is higher than actuality.[26]

[25] Taylor, M.C., author of the review on *Reflexivity: The Post-Modern Predicament, Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* Vol.55, No 2, Summer, 1987, 402-404

[26] Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics,* 2003, p.11

This is a perception that yet again echoes Tillich's argument that human beings have *a priori* awareness of God as Being-itself. More significantly, Caputo is creating a potential pathway here in which the existential critique relates not only to the context of Heidegger's thought and in the Protestant context of Tillich's thought, but also in Catholic thought. This is Catholic thought as it generally stems from, and is generally dominated by the thought of Aquinas.

Again, Rahner's reaction against Thomism has enormous implications for ecumenical ecclesiology with respect to his offer of a definition of the relationship between philosophy and theology as that of being the relationship between nature and grace. Thomism draws a sharp distinction between nature and grace, in that nature is defined as the natural order of the created world, whereas grace is defined as divine intervention in the world. For Rahner, human nature is subject to grace. This argument applies especially when human beings question the meaning and significance of their own existence in the world. For example, Rahner argues that theology should, 'of its own nature, will that man shall freely, independently, and on his own responsibility, achieve an understanding of himself'.[27] Rahner's thought is compatible with that of Tillich in that Rahner argues that such self-understanding stems from God who creates human beings with a capacity of self-transcendence towards the divine.[28] Rahner's significant contribution to Vatican II and his understanding of the Church's relationship to the world, echoes Tillich's argument. This is where Tillich argues that the polar relationship between the self and the world, within the subjective and the objective structure of reality, cannot be derived, rather, it must be accepted.[29] Indeed, both the Catholic and Protestant Christological perspectives are dependent upon the mystical *a priori*. The question that arises is the degree to which these Christologies respond to the questions of existence in either tradition. Specifically, for Tillich, Christology should honour the claim to a valid universality at the ontological level by providing the answer at the deepest level of reality, where the quest for God is ontologically pre-formulated.[30] Tillich expresses this ontological principle in the philosophy of religion as follows: 'Man is immediately aware of something unconditioned which is the prius of separation and

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[27] Rahner, *Theological Investigations: On The Current Relationship Between Philosophy And Theology,* Vol.13:4, 1975, p.77

[28] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith,* 1978, pp.129-133

[29] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol.1, p.174

[30] Tillich, *Biblical Reality and the Search for Ultimate Reality,* 1955, pp.55-61

interaction of subject and object, theoretically as well as practically'.[31] At this profound level of existence the theological answers to existential questions should be revealed by means of Christological symbols. These are symbols that are informed by and expressed in historical theological terms for Tillich because, in his view, human experience is conditioned by historical events that have influenced both conscious and unconscious thought across the generations. To this extent, some symbols will be subject to change as the revelatory situation changes. However, Tillich is clear that:

> Theology as such has neither the duty nor the power to confirm or negate religious symbols. Its task is to interpret them according to historical theological principles and methods.[32]

In view of their shared history, this point should place Tillich's symbolic method of interpretation in convergence with Catholic theological scholarship. However, from Tillich's perspective, Catholic symbolic hermeneutics are static in that they do not move in tune with the prevailing culture. In his view, symbolic interpretation should acknowledge and address the possibility that symbols are subject to change.[33] For example, Tillich relates his Christology to the revelatory event of the historical Jesus and to the consequences of this event for the followers of Jesus.[34] Again, both the Catholic tradition and Tillich ascribe the term Christ to the unconditional and eternal ground of humanity which is revealed in this Christological event within history. However, there is a difference in the way that this Christology is expressed. The difference stems from Tillich's adoption of the symbol 'essential Godmanhood' with which to argue that the historical Jesus as the Christ was not conquered by the meaninglessness of existence because he was not subject to the Fall.[35] Tillich symbolises Christ as the 'Eternal Godmanhood' and 'God-for-us' on the premise that Jesus as the Christ was acknowledged by his followers in a situation of faith.[36] For Tillich, the symbol of Jesus as the Christ must not be interpreted therefore as 'God walking on earth',[37] that is, as 'a divine-human automaton without serious temptation, real struggle, or tragic involvement in the ambiguities of life'.[38] Indeed, his argument turns on the premise that human beings cannot step into the theological circle unless they are able to identify with

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[31] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.22, based on *On The Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919
[32] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.240
[33] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, p.43
[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.97. Chapter 5, *The Theological System: Revelation*, pp.75-79
[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.98
[36] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.98-100, Mark 8:29-30
[37] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.133
[38] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.135

Jesus as the Christ as being fully representative of human reality and the revelation of the ground and power of being. In effect, this means that the historical Jesus is representative of 'a personal life which is subjected to all the consequences of existential estrangement, but wherein existential estrangement is conquered in himself and a permanent unity is kept with God'.[39] In similar manner, the symbol of the New Being serves to articulate the way in which Jesus as the Christ overcomes the dichotomy within the subjective and objective structure of reality, in the process of which being and Being-itself are brought into unity. In Tillich's words: 'New Being is the essential being under the conditions of existence, conquering the gap between essence and existence'.[40] Tillich has neatly completed the theological circle within parameters that are inclusive of his existential critique and also inclusive of elements of the classical Christology of both the Catholic and Protestant theological traditions. Indeed, past Christologies that have rationalised Christ's words, brought pietism to his deeds and orthodoxy to his suffering, are only theologically insightful for Tillich when interpreted within the ontological terms of Christ's being. Moreover, Tillich claims that the New Being is of universal significance because he argues that: 'Jesus as the Christ is the Savior through the universal significance of his being as the New Being'.[41] Furthermore, as I have shown, this significance is dependent upon his argument that revelation is universal revelation.[42]

It could be argued that Tillich's symbolisation of Christ as the New Being falls wide of both Protestant and Catholic hermeneutics. However, this argument is challenged when this symbolisation of Jesus as the Christ is perceived as being representative of the Church's interpretation of the Incarnation and the third person of the Trinity. It is though, this very representation that now allows me to bring Tillich's system into dialogue with his ecclesiology.

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[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.135, see also, *The New Being*, 1963, pp.18-24
[40] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.119
[41] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.138-142, vol.2, pp.121, 168
[42] Chapter 5, *The Theological System: Revelation*, pp.75-79

CHAPTER 9

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL CIRCLE

> Man, in experiencing himself as man, is conscious of being determined
> in his nature by spirit as a dimension of his life. This immediate
> experience makes it possible to speak symbolically of God as Spirit
> and of the divine Spirit. ... Without this experience of spirit as the
> unity of power and meaning in himself, man would not have been able
> to express the revelatory experience of "God present" in the term "Spirit"
> or "Spiritual Presence". This shows again that no doctrine of the divine
> Spirit is possible without an understanding of spirit as a dimension of life.
>
> Paul Tillich[1]

> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for
> he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he
> will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me,
> because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the
> Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine
> and declare it to you.
>
> John 16:13-15

An analysis of the structure of Tillich's ecclesiology will be made in this chapter. To this end, it

is important that my use of the word ecclesiology in relation to Tillich's thought be clarified. The

argument will proceed therefore under the criterion that for Tillich, ecclesiology means that

systematic theology should serve as a function of the Church. Thus, it must surely follow that the

Church is the *raison d'être* of the Tillichian theological system and that the Church and the

system are inextricably linked, a conclusion that is endorsed by Rahner.[2] This is a circular

argument wherein the system is understood in terms of the Church, and the Church is, at the

same time, understood in terms of the system. I will argue therefore that the results of my

analysis of Tillich's ecclesiology are more clearly represented as an ecclesiological circle. It will

emerge from this analysis that for Tillich, the Church is fundamentally dependent upon the

dynamics of the Holy Spirit. He symbolises the Spirit as the Spiritual Presence as interpreted

from the inter-denominational sources of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience. This is

the dynamic under which the life of the community of the Church, which he symbolises as the

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[1] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.111
[2] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.10, *Dialogue in the Church*, 1973, p.119

Spiritual Community, depends. These are hermeneutics that enable me to offer a perception of Tillich's ecclesiology that is eschatological in character. Furthermore, the results of my analysis of Tillich's ecclesiology reveal an implicit Trinitarian character within the structure.[3] My interpretation of Tillich's ecclesiology in eschatological and Trinitarian terms is an ecclesiological mindset that is in general paralleled in the agreed ecumenical papers of the Faith and Order Commission.[4] Integral to the World Council of Churches, the Commission is endorsed by the Vatican Pontifical Council for promoting Christian unity and includes full membership of the Catholic Church. The argument that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system will be brought into dialogue with his ecclesiology by means of the construct of the Möbius strip. This will serve two functions. Firstly, it will serve to demonstrate the way in which Tillich's philosophical concept of being is brought into synthesis with the theological concept of Being-itself under the dynamics of the Spirit in the community of the Church. Secondly, it will serve to demonstrate the Trinitarian relationship that pertains between God as Father, Son and Spirit. Finally, the implications of the dynamics of the Spirit on Tillich's ecclesiology will lead to the question of the relationship between the New Being within the parameters of his ecclesiological circle. In the final chapter, the foregoing arguments will allow me to offer a squaring of Tillich's ecclesiological circle that will bring his ecclesiology into conversation with the post-modern ecumenical dialogue towards church unity.

The structure of Tillich's ecclesiology

It has been pointed out in the previous chapter that Tillich was much influenced by his experiences as a Lutheran chaplain in the German trenches during the First World War.[5] These were experiences that led him to express his analysis of existential estrangement in relation to both the First and Second World Wars in the following terms:

> We have become a generation of the End. ... The End is nothing external. It is not exhausted by the loss of that which we can never regain: our childhood homes, the people with whom we grew up, the country, the things, the language which formed us, the goods, both spiritual and material, which we inherited or earned, the friends who were torn away from us by sudden death. The End is more than all this; it is in us, it has become our very being. We are a generation of the End and we should know that we are.[6]

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[3] Chapter 3, *The Ontological Structure: The unity between finitude and Being-itself,* pp.47-49
[4] For example, *Faith and Order Paper No.111,* 1982. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry;* eschatology, I:7, II:2.6, Trinity, I:5, II:2, www.oikoumene.org
[5] Chapter 7, *The Consequences of Modern Existentialism for the Tillichian System: Tillich's existential hermeneutics,* pp.107-111
[6] Tillich, *The New Being,* 1963, p.172

This is a thoroughly eschatological perspective that is inclusive of the concept of the completion and fulfilment of history rather than of the end of history. This is because these concepts are dependent upon a teleological interpretation of history as the acts of God and in relation to human destiny as a theme of history.[7] For Tillich, the concept of the end of history in which history disappears into secular nihilism is overcome when God is brought into the discussion of both temporal and eternal life as the means of completion and fulfilment. In ontological terms, as the finite is bound by the Infinite, so also is time and space bound by eternity. This means that there is a potential for finitude to participate in the inner and eternal life of God[8] and for eternity to be understood not as an antithesis to time but also as simultaneity of time. It is interesting to note a resonance here with the thought of Barth who articulates eternity as 'authentic duration' which, he argues, is the source, epitome and basis of time and where time is understood as God's gift of the participation and fulfilment of all things into eternity.[9] On the other hand, Zizioulas offers a post-modern ecclesiological hermeneutic of the relationship between time and eternity when he argues that existence in the Church is a 'paradoxical hypostatis, which has its roots in the *future* and its branches in the present'.[10] What is so interesting about Zizioulas' argument is that he does not understand human destiny in historical evolutionary terms. Rather, he interprets the axis of human history as being in the future and thus outside the parameters of time. Under these hermeneutics, Zizioulas argues that human destiny is grounded in the eschatological future. This now becomes a perspective from which human being is redeemed because it is brought in its entirety into the soteriological eternity of the Kingdom of God. In thus giving human being ontological content, Zizioulas can claim the redemptive eschatological future as the ontological present in the life of the Church.[11] Here, there are strong echoes of Tillich's hermeneutic of eschatological pan-en-theism in which he argues that everything temporal is derived from God and returns to God in the eternity of the Kingdom of God.[12]

Furthermore, it is evident that in arguing that fulfilment in eternity is inclusive of time, Tillich is adhering closely to biblical narratives that inform the life of the Church. For example,

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[7] Kant, *Kant on History*, 1989, pp.78-79
[8] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.310-312
[9] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:1, *The Doctrine of God*, 1957, pp.608-625
[10] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, p.59
[11] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, chaps. 3, 6. See also, Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, chap.2
[12] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.420-421

according to the author of the Gospel of John, final eschatological judgement is already a present reality in the moment of existential decision. Those who are baptised in Christ have already passed from death into life in the present[13] and will also receive eternal life in the future.[14] Again, the Pauline corpus interprets and expresses the present and future in terms of Christ's death and resurrection and also baptism into Christ in relation to the future promise of the first fruits of the Spirit.[15]

For Tillich, when every generation is perceived in the eschatological terms of the generation of the 'End', then this is a situation in which the questions that pertain to human existence come into sharp and often painful focus. It is also the situation from which the answers to existential disruption and estrangement are subsequently more sharply revealed in Christ within the life of the Church. Indeed, this argument is all the more intelligible when, as I have argued, the Tillichian relationship between philosophy and theology is perceived as one of synthesis.[16] Moreover, Tillich's eschatological interpretation of the Church converges with the Faith and Order report *The Nature and the Mission of the Church*, which states:

> The Church is an eschatological reality, already anticipating the Kingdom. However, the Church on earth is not yet the full visible realisation of the Kingdom. Being also an historical reality, it is exposed to the ambiguities of all human history and therefore needs constant repentance and renewal in order to respond fully to its vocation.[17]

It is interesting to note the shift in emphasis from the implicit eschatological language of the earlier Faith and Order document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* of 1982[18] to the more explicit eschatological language of this current ecumenical report.

From Tillich's existential eschatological perspective, temporal and spatial fulfilment and reconciliation in God is possible because in the area of ontological enquiry there is an acceptance of a natural unity between God and human being within the eternal life of God.[19] To this end, Tillich's eschatology turns upon the Platonic and subsequent Augustinian traditions

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[13] John 5:24-25
[14] John 6:40
[15] 1Cor.15:3-4, Rom.6:3, 8:23
[16] Chapter 6, *Classical Philosophy and Theology: Philosophy and theology diverge*, pp.95-103
[17] *The Nature and Mission of the Church, Faith and Order Paper 198*, 2005, A.50
[18] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Faith and Order Paper No.111*, 1982, see for example, I:1, II:2,6,8
[19] Chapter 3, *The Ontological Structure: The unity between finitude and Being-itself*, pp.47-49

where existence is also understood as estrangement from God as a result of the Fall.[20] Indeed, existential disruption and estrangement is healed and unity restored between essence and existence through the power of Jesus as the Christ. This circular argument is eschatological in that the power of Jesus as the Christ is at the same time the power of the Spirit within the life of the church community. This is an interesting point because in defining the identity of Jesus as the Christ with that of God as Spirit, it is now possible to claim an ontological relationship of synthesis between Tillich's human being of Jesus and God as Being-itself. In effect, the existence of Jesus as the Christ is brought into unity with the essence of God and into the unity that pertains between finitude and the Infinite. Tillich develops this argument in terms of his ecclesiology by arguing that reconciliation between human beings and God is dependent upon God's Spirit entering finitude at both the individual and corporate dimensions of the Church community. This is the point of time within history that Tillich defines as the *kairos*, which is representative of the fulfilment of time in eternal life, and that he symbolises as the Kingdom of God. Tillich writes:

> Its basic assertion [Kingdom of God] is that the ever present end of history elevates the the positive content of history into eternity at the same time that it excludes the negative from participation in it. Therefore, nothing which has been created in history is lost, but is liberated from the negative element with which it is entangled within existence. ... Eternal Life, then, includes the positive and negative content of history, liberated from its negative distortions and fulfilled in its potentialities.[21]

What emerges thus far in the analysis of Tillich's ecclesiology is the method by which his existential critique of disruption and estrangement is integrated into the Western philosophical and theological traditions so as to disclose the potential of a relationship of unity between human beings and God. Again, the existential critique serves to formulate the question of disrupted and estranged existence and the Christian message serves to formulate the answer. However, in order for unity to be instigated, Tillich borrows from Kierkegaard another perspective into the human existential condition. He argues that human beings must make a 'leap of faith'.[22] This is the faith that is exemplified in the historical event of Jesus as the Christ, the one human being who overcame the separation between essence and existence.[23]

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[20] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.19f.
[21] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.397
[22] *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, 1998, p.207f.
[23] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.94-95

This is the faith that guarantees its own foundation in the appearance of that reality upon which the faith was created and which Tillich symbolises as the New Being. In Tillich's words:

> This reality is the New Being, who conquers existential estrangement and thereby makes faith possible. This alone faith is able to guarantee – and that because its own existence is identical with the presence of the New Being. Faith itself is the immediate (not mediated by conclusions) evidence of the New Being within and under the conditions of existence.[24]

Tillich also expresses this same argument of a new reality, not in the symbolic terms of the New Being but rather in the traditional language of the reality of the Christ as follows:

> But even the greatest in power and wisdom could not more fully reveal the Heart of God and the heart of man than the Crucified has done already. Those things have been revealed once for all. 'It is finished.' In the face of the Crucified all the 'more' and all the 'less,' all progress and all approximation, are meaningless. Therefore, we can say of Him alone: He is the new reality; He is the end; He is the Messiah. To the Crucified alone we can say: 'Thou are the Christ.'[25]

Therefore, central to his understanding of the spatial and temporal situation of the Church is the correlation that Tillich makes between existential estrangement and reconciliation in God, as manifested once for all in the crucified Jesus in this unique historical event. Although Tillich is adamant that Jesus is manifested as the Christ in the answer given to him by his disciple Peter, as exemplified in the Marcan narrative,[26] nevertheless the profound implication of this answer is not received in a vacuum. Rather, the healing salvation of existential disruption and estrangement that is manifest in Jesus as the Christ comes to full expression in the life of the community of the Church.

The method by which salvation is manifested, for Tillich, is by means of the power of love, which is that power that drives estranged human beings towards union with God. In Tillich's words: 'Life is being in actuality and love is the moving power of life. In these two sentences the ontological nature of love is expressed'.[27] The supreme manifestation of God's love is exemplified in Jesus as the Christ whose love, in Tillich's words, 'embraces everything concrete in self and world'.[28] Tillich's concept that love is the moving power of life opens up significant hermeneutical possibilities because clearly this is a concept that embraces the love of God as exemplified in Jesus as the Christ and that is subject to the dynamics of the Spirit. I would argue therefore that there is a sense in which Tillich is implying a relationship of God as

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[24] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.114
[25] Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 1949, p.150
[26] Mark 8:29-30
[27] Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice*, 1960, p.25, see also, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.279-282
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.152

the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit here. Indeed, Tillich points up the qualitative

dimension of the Trinity as being representative of the living God as follows:

> Trinitarian monotheism is not a matter of the number three. It is a qualitative and not a quantitative characterization of God. It is an attempt to speak of the living God, the God in whom the ultimate and the concrete are united. ... Trinitarian monotheism is concrete monotheism, the affirmation of the living God.[29]

Again, I refer to the quotation above, cited from Tillich's work *The Shaking of the Foundations*. Is Tillich implying here that the crucified Jesus is also the God of the second person of the Trinity, when he argues that the crucified one has revealed the heart of God and the hearts of human beings more fully than any other power and wisdom? Tillich would seem to follow Schleiermacher here.[30] However, I would suggest that for Tillich, the three Trinitarian principles are only a pre-Trinitarian formula with which to make Trinitarian cognition meaningful. That is to say, they are a presupposition of, and the preparation for, the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine of God.[31] I would furthermore argue, that an ontological Trinitarian perspective of God is indeed possible when the divine ground and power of being is interpreted in terms of the appearance of Jesus as the Christ in history,[32] who is the bearer of the New Being in the totality of his being.[33] Indeed, Chung-Hyun Baik argues that Tillich's theological system as a whole has been arranged within the parameters of the Trinitarian structure of God, Christ and Spirit.[34] I would agree with Baik's argument here on the grounds that it is perfectly consistent with Tillich's concept of *Gestalt*, which, as has been stressed throughout this thesis, is a consistent feature of his systematic theology. In Trinitarian terms, the Trinitarian structure within the system is dependent upon the concept that all the parts are inter-related so as to form a dynamic unity. This Trinitarian structure is represented by Tillich in his *Systematic Theology*, as *Being and God, Existence and Christ* and *Life and the Spirit*.[35]

Tillich is clear that any dialogue concerning the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine of God must derive from the Christological assertion that Jesus is the Christ. However, Tillich's concern is

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[29] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.228

[30] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.285 Scheiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers*, 1988, p.219, see also John 16:13-15 above

[31] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.285

[32] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.251

[33] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.121

[34] Chung-Hyun Baik, *Paul Tillich's Trinity: Tension Between Its Symbolic And Dialectical Characteristics Under The Trinitarian Structure of System*, Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich, Society, vol.33, 2, Spring, 2007, pp.28-35

[35] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1:67, vol.1, part II, vol.2, part III, vol.3, part IV

not with the Trinitarian doctrine *per se* but is rather with the presupposition of this doctrine as it relates to the idea of God. Tillich's argument here is Pneumatologically driven and is expressed as follows:

> Spirit is the unity of the ontological elements and the *telos* of life. Actualized as life, being-itself is fulfilled as spirit. ... *Telos* stands for an inner, essential, necessary aim, for that in which a being fulfils its own nature. God as living is God fulfilled in himself and therefore Spirit. God *is* spirit.... The statement that God is Spirit means that life as spirit is the inclusive symbol for the divine life. It contains all the ontological elements. God is not nearer to one "part" of being or to a special function of being than he is to another. As Spirit he is as near to the creative darkness of the unconscious as he is to the critical light of cognitive reason. Spirit is the power through which meaning lives, and it is the meaning which gives direction to power. God as Spirit is the ultimate unity of both power and meaning.[36]

Tillich's Pneumatology turns therefore upon the assumption that God is the living God because God is Spirit. Indeed, it is now possible to bring his Pneumatology into dialogue with his ecclesiology because it is the power of the Spirit upon which the life of the church community depends. At the same time, Tillich's pre-Trinitarian formula is dialectical in character because it reflects the dialectics of human life, that is, the movement between separation from and reunion with the divine life. For example, Tillich writes:

> Nothing divine is irrational – if irrational means contradicting reason –for reason is the finite manifestation of the divine Logos. Only the transition from essence to existence, the act of self-estrangement is irrational. ... But the trinitarian symbols are dialectical; they reflect the dialectics of life, namely the movement of separation and reunion.[37]

Tillich's conception of the Trinity is also linked to his theory of revelation because he argues that: 'The doctrine of revelation is based on a Trinitarian interpretation of the divine life and its self-manifestation'.[38] He interprets the different *personae* of the Trinity as different characters of the divine life and develops the implications of this hypothesis for the understanding of God's self-revelation. In his words:

> It is the abysmal character of the divine life which makes revelation mysterious; it is the logical character of the divine life which makes the revelation of the mystery possible: and it is the spiritual character of the divine life which creates the correlation of miracle and ecstasy in which revelation can be received.[39]

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[36] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.249-250, see also vol.3, pp.284-285
[37] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.248
[38] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.157
[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.156, for an explanation of what Tillich means by revelation as ecstasy see chapter 5, *The Theological System: Revelation*, pp.75-79

The three *personae* of the Trinity correspond to the three different characters of divine revelation, that is, the Father identifies as the abysmal character, the Son as the logical character and the Spirit as the spiritual character. Tillich points up the implications of this theory in the following words:

> If the abysmal character of the divine life is neglected, a rationalistic deism transforms revelation into information. If the logical character of the divine life is neglected, an irrationalistic theism transforms revelation into heteronomous subjection. If the spiritual character of the divine life is neglected, a history of revelation is impossible.[40]

An interesting question now emerges with respect to Tillich's articulation of the different characters that make up the pre-Trinitarian formula. Is there not a resonance here with Derrida's idea of 'Différance' as I have already argued?[41] Indeed, in response to this question when posed by Hart, Derrida points out that even if he could be convinced of the viability of the doctrine of the Trinity it is not sufficient to think about God in terms of difference. Besides, if the argument were to be developed it would, in Derrida's view, have to be framed within the philosophical and not the theological context.[42]

How then is it possible to extend my argument that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system, so as to develop further, the dynamic of the Spirit within the Trinitarian relationship as it relates to the Church? The answer to this question turns on Tillich's perception of the freedom of God's Spirit; a perception that again echoes that of Schleiermacher.[43]

In order to make such synthesis as clear as possible, I now draw on the traditional technique of using some simple geometric imagery, and the Möbius strip construct in order to demonstrate the dynamics of the Spirit within the Trinitarian structure, (see Appendix).[44] In effect, this construct will act as a bridge between my hermeneutics that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology within the Tillichian system and my hermeneutics of Tillich's ecclesiological circle.

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[40] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.157
[41] Chapter 2. *The Method: System and deconstruction*, pp.32-33
[42] Sherwood. Y., Hart, K., eds., *Derrida and Religion*. 2004, p.48
[43] Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers*. 1988, p.220
[44] This construct was used in my MA dissertation to demonstrate a synthesis between eschatology and ecclesiology, the dynamic of which is dependent upon the Spirit. Knight, *Eschatology and Ecclesiology - Squaring the Circle*. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of MA (Theology). 2004

The Möbius construct

At this point, I invoke the properties of the geometric design of the Möbius strip. This will provide a convenient means by which to help make clear my conception of the relationship of synthesis between Tillich's philosophy and theology as it relates to his ecclesiology.

The Möbius construct, in the context of Tillich's Trinitarian orientation, is dependent upon his philosophy and theology being represented as two circles. When the philosophical circle and the theological circle are drawn geometrically side by side then they will occupy a two dimensional plane. From the viewer's perspective, when an attempt to fuse the two is made by superimposing one on to the other, in order not to hide specific elements appertaining to each, a third dimension is required. This can be achieved visually by means of the ingenuity of the artistic perspective. Thereby, all the elements that constitute the circles are visible despite the circles being superimposed in close proximity. The synthesis between Tillich's philosophy and theology is thus achieved. From the Trinitarian perspective, the theological circle that is constituted by God, in the ontological terms of Being-itself, is brought into synthesis with the philosophical circle that is constituted by Jesus as the Christ, in the ontological terms of being. The question now arises as to how the third dimension of the Trinity, that is the dynamic of the Spirit, can be brought into the construct in such a way as to demonstrate its relationship to God as Father and Son in the context of the Church. This is achievable when the philosophical and theological circles are perceived in cylindrical form, where the two circles form the top and base of a hollow cylinder. When the side of the cylinder is cut open so as to form a two dimensional rectangle, then the circumferences of the two circles that represent the constituent elements of each circle, will thus become the parallel top and bottom edges of the rectangle respectively.

The construction of the Möbius strip becomes clear when the rectangle that is formed between Tillich's philosophy and theology is perceived in terms of a strip of paper having parallel sides. Taking hold of the ends of the strip and turning one end through an angle of one hundred and eighty degrees and then attaching this end to the other end of the strip completes the construct. The construct thus produced is a Möbius strip. If one progresses along one edge of the strip, which is formed from both circular ends of the original hollow cylinder, which, as I have explained, represents both the philosophical and/or the theological circle, then eventually one will arrive at the point from which one has started. In other words, without ever leaving the edge from which one started the journey one would have travelled through the constituent

elements of both the philosophical and the theological circles. This results in a perfect fusion of the two and synthesis of their constituent elements. Thus, each circle is constitutive of the other.

A further extension of this Möbius analogy now allows me to demonstrate the way in which the synthesised philosophical and theological circles are subject to the freedom of the Spirit. Tillich's commitment to the freedom of the Spirit is exemplified as follows; 'Like the wind the Spirit blows where it wills! It is not subject to rule or limited by method'.[45] My demonstration of these dynamics are dependent upon my reconstruction of Tillich's system where the synthesised circles constitute the system and where the system is inextricably linked to the Spirit upon which the life of the Church depends. The dynamics of the Spirit become clear when viewed from the perspective of the free movement of the Spirit around the circumference of the Möbius strip and so around the system and the Church. Furthermore, the construct serves to demonstrate the dynamic of the Spirit as it relates to God as Father and Son in the context of the Church. This is possible when the philosophical circle is perceived as constitutive of the ontological being as exemplified in Christ the Son and the theological circle is perceived as constitutive of the ontological Being-itself as exemplified in God the Father. The Möbius construct has thus allowed me to demonstrate two things. Firstly, to show in geometric terms the relationship of synthesis between Tillich's philosophical, theological and ecclesiological circles. Secondly, it serves to highlight the eschatological and Trinitarian nature of his ecclesiology as it relates to his philosophical and theological system.

However, two critical points emerge here. Firstly, how is my concept of God's freedom of movement around the circumference of the Möbius construct to be explained? Secondly, in what way does the free characteristic of the Spirit have an ontological significance for Tillich's ecclesiology?

In answer to the first question, Tillich also expresses the freedom of God as follows:

> He [God] is the creative ground of the spatial structure of the world, but he is not bound to the structure, positively or negatively. The spatial symbol points to a qualitative relation: God is immanent in the world as its permanent creative ground and is transcendent to the world through freedom. Both infinite divinity and finite human freedom make the world transcendent to God and God transcendent to the world.[46]

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[45] Tillich, *The Eternal Now*, 1963, p.72
[46] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.263

It is within Tillich's ontological perception of God as the Infinite that a conceptual Trinitarian theory of God emerges in terms of a differentiated unity. Essentially, God the Father remains transcendent whilst God the Son and the Spirit become immanent in the Church. The persons of the Trinity together thus account for the divine infinity. From this perspective, God the Spirit may be conceptualised as being free to operate both inside and outside the spatial and temporal limitations of the Church, a concept that is central to my argument that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's system.

It is of significance that Pannenberg offers an ontological Trinitarian rationale towards my hermeneutic of Tillich's perception of the Trinity and the freedom of God.[47] This is because Pannenberg presents the case for a wholly free, determinative and unsurpassable God.[48] In effect, and in tune with Zizioulas,[49] Pannenberg argues that God relates to time and space within history from the open future. This means, in his thought, that God is free to release all finite events from the open future and is free to integrate them into the present. This allows Pannenberg to argue that all present events are related to God and that God is the source of all events.[50] This is the means by which the infinite God transcends the finitude of the individual and corporate members of the church community. It is within this ontological context of God's infinity that Pannenberg is able to offer a Trinitarian theory to conceptualise God as a differentiated unity. Again, and in resonance with Tillich's thought,[51] Pannenberg argues that God (the Father) remains transcendent whilst the Son and the Spirit become immanent in the Church. The persons of the Trinity together thus again account for the divine infinity. At the same time, for Pannenberg, the essence of Christ and the essence of God are indivisible, so that retroactively, at the point of his resurrection, Jesus is consummated as God. Jesus as the Christ is therefore ultimate in the sense that he is simultaneously the fulfilment of the Jewish apocalyptic expectation and also the very revelation of God.[52] Yet again, Pannenberg's thought converges with that of Tillich[53] because he argues that the resurrection of the Son is also central to an understanding of the dynamics of the Spirit. This is because it is at the point of the

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[47] Tillich. *The Eternal Now*, 1963, p.72

[48] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, 1991, pp.342-347, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 1969, p.63

[49] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, chaps.3,6, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, chap.2

[50] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 1969, p.56

[51] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.263

[52] Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, 1968, p.133

[53] Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, pp.154-165, vol.3, pp.412-414

resurrection of the Son that the Spirit becomes the medium of *koinonia* between God and Jesus as the Christ in the life of the Church.[54] Pannenberg has thus offered a neat rationale for a Trinitarian theology of the ontological being of God. It is a rationale that is founded upon the particulars of the historical Jesus in the life of the Church and which is, at the same time, derivative in that these particulars have been transported from that which is prior. Most significantly for my argument is that Pannenberg has effectively offered within a Trinitarian structure, a free determinative and unsurpassable divine Spirit who is free to operate both inside and outside the temporal and spatial limitations of the Church. At the same time, and in line with Tillich,[55] the Spirit is constitutive to the very being of the Church and the definitive source of eschatological fulfilment and reunion for disrupted and estranged human existence.

I turn now to the second critical point, namely, does God's freedom have ontological significance for the Church in Tillich's thought? The answer it seems is dependent upon the relationship he perceives between Christology and Pneumatology. Certainly, he is clear that: 'The Christ is not the Christ without the church, and the church is not the church without the Christ',[56] but what then is his perception of the dynamics between Christ and the Spirit in this context? Given that Tillich's hermeneutics within his theological system are dependent upon Scripture, it is significant that the New Testament authors seem to perceive no conflict between Christology and Pneumatology. For example, the risen and ascended Christ gives the Spirit to the Church,[57] Christ's existence depends upon the pre-existent Spirit who announced Jesus' coming and who constitutes his very identity both at his biological conception[58] and also at his baptism.[59] Again, Christology and Pneumatology are fundamental to eschatological hope because the Christian confession of truth and membership of the body of Christ's Church is received as the gift of the Spirit.[60] From a post-modern perspective, I would argue that if Christology is applied to ecclesiology in isolation from Pneumatology, then there is the danger that a differentiation could result between the local and the universal Church. Indeed, Zizioulas makes this point when he argues that:

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[54] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, 1991, pp.342-347
[55] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.129-142
[56] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.137
[57] John 7:39
[58] Matt.1:18, Luke1:35
[59] Mark 1:10-11
[60] 1Cor.12

> The Church is the body of Christ, which means that she is instituted through the one Christological event: she is one because Christ is one and she owes her being to this one Christ. If Pneumatology is not ontologically constitutive of Christology this can mean that there is first one Church and *then* many Churches.[61]

What Zizioulas says here is pertinent to my argument that Tillich's system has potential application towards post-modern ecumenical ecclesiology. This is because he is arguing that when Christology and ecclesiology are perceived as being ontologically dependent upon Pneumatology for their actual being, then there can be no question of a differentiation between any category of ecclesiology. In essence, it is the Spirit that brings about and also constitutes the body of Christ and thus the Church. For example, the author of the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians writes:

> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.[62]

This text is strongly reminiscent of Tillich's argument that any discussion relating to the presupposition of the doctrine of the Trinity in relation to the idea of God must derive from the Spirit.

What is so significant in Zizioulas' argument in relation to my hermeneutics of Tillich's thought, is that Zizioulas defines ecclesiology in terms of the interdependent relationship between Christology and Pneumatology where Christology requires the dimension of *koinonia* to fulfil its enquiry. To this end, Zizioulas acknowledges that there has been a relationship between the Spirit and *koinonia* since the time of the early Church. He then goes on to develop a dimension of *koinonia* in Christology that involves what he defines as the 'corporate personality' of Christ and where Christ is not just an individual, that is not 'one' but 'many'.[63] Therefore, for Zizioulas, in the context of communion, Christ cannot be understood in terms of an individual but rather as a person and a relational reality that exists for the whole human community. The corporate personality has a structure whose archetype is the Trinity and in which God the Father is the cause. Correspondingly, he argues that in the Church, Christ is the cause and it is God the Spirit that forms the corporate personality of Christ. The 'one' and the 'many' are thus all the work of the Spirit. The concept that the many exist by the Spirit and yet

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[61] Zizioulas, *Being and Communion*, 1985, p.132
[62] Ephesians 4:4-6, see Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.249-252
[63] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, pp.130-131

are causally dependent upon Christ is aptly expressed by saying that Christ the 'one' who gives the Spirit to the 'many'. Thus a corporate understanding of Christ enables and requires both that the Spirit forms Christ and also that Christ gives the Spirit. In adopting the concept of corporate personality Zizioulas can thus offer a means for a relationship of interdependence between Christology and Pneumatology that is consistent with the thought of the New Testament authors. In Zizioulas's thought, the contribution of each of the divine persons of the Trinity in God's teleological plan for the world, must be reflected in ecclesiology. This was achieved when the God appeared in history as *only one* and that is the Christ event'.[64] The Spirit enters into the discussion because it is the Spirit who actually realises that which is articulated as the soteriological Christ by bridging the gap between the Christ event in history and Christ's personal existence in terms that Christ is the body of the Church. According to the New Testament eschatologically orientated narratives, Christ becomes a historical person only in the Spirit.[65] Indeed, the Spirit instigates Christ's birth and anoints him to make him the Christ so that the whole of soteriological activity is thus dependent upon the dynamics of the Spirit.[66] For Zizioulas therefore, ecclesiology emerges as a result of the entire economy of the Trinity where Christology is constituted by Pneumatology. In his words: 'The Spirit as 'power' or 'giver of life' opens up our existence to become relational, so that he may at the same time be 'communion''.[67]

In the Pauline narratives, the confession of Christ is totally dependent upon the Spirit. This is because the metaphorical body of Christ, that is the Church, is composed of the gift of the Spirit, where gift is understood in terms of the membership of Christ's body.[68] If it is accepted that the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus within history was as a result of God's teleological plan, then, according to Zizioulas, the Spirit works in the opposite direction. He argues that the Spirit frees Jesus as the Christ and frees God's teleology from the physical constraints of history, so bringing the eschaton into history.[69] Pneumatology is therefore thoroughly eschatological and Christ is made an ontological eschatological being. Zizioulas has thereby offered a rationale for the dynamic of the freedom of God as Spirit to operate around

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[64] Zizioulas, *Being and Communion*, 1985, p.130
[65] Matt.1:18-20, Luke 1:35
[66] Luke 4:13
[67] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, p.112, cf. 2 Cor.13:13
[68] 1Cor.12
[69] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, p.130. Rom.8:11

the circumference of the artifice of the Möbius strip. Moreover, the concept of Christ as individual is broadened to Christ as corporate by the dynamic of the Spirit. Zizioulas has thus offered an ontological argument in terms of Pneumatology that is central to post-modern ecclesiology. He writes:

> The Spirit makes the Church *be* ... pneumatology refers to the very being of the Church. ... it is the very essence of the Church. The Church is *constituted* in and through eschatology and communion. Pneumatology is an ontological category in ecclesiology.[70]

Tillich's thought is not as developed as that of Zizioulas' thought with respect to the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology and its implications for ecclesiology. Indeed, although Tillich points up the importance of the unified relationship between Christ and the Spirit he is unclear about the way in which this relationship is revealed. Tillich's concern within the modern theological context seems only to assert that Christology and Pneumatology are not in contradiction.[71] Nevertheless, the resonance between his thought and the thought of Zizioulas is so striking that one is led to offer Tillich's hypothesis towards post-modern ecumenical dialogue.

However, another question now arises. How then does Tillich's perception of the dynamics of the Spirit in terms of the *koinonia* of the Church equate with such post-modern thought?

The Spirit and the church community

It is evident that Tillich draws upon the New Testament definition of the Church as *ekklesia* in order to highlight his concept of the church community. For example, he writes:

> The Church in New Testament Greek is *ekklesia*, the assembly of those who are called out of all nations by the *apostoloi*, the messengers of the Christ, to the congregation of the *eleutheroi*, those who have become free citizens of the "Kingdom of the Heavens." There is a "church," an "assembly of God" (or the Christ), in every town in which the message has been successful and a Christian *koinonia*, or communion, has come into being.[72]

This goes somewhere towards answering this question. Furthermore, New Testament scholarship as exemplified by Dunn points out that the word *ekklesia* as it appears in the Septuagint, approximately one hundred times, may in the process of translation, have picked up

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[70] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, p.133
[71] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.147-148
[72] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.162

connotations by association with the Hebrew principle of *qahal* or assembly.[73] In the Hebrew, the word *qahal* means the covenant assembly of Israel who are 'called out'[74] before Yahweh. In relation to the people of the ancient Greco-Roman world, two Matthean texts attribute the use of the word *ekklesia* to Jesus.[75] Indeed, the word is the single most frequently used word used in the Pauline corpus for those groups of people who met in the name of Christ.[76]

I have argued that Tillich's ecclesiology turns on a perception that is thoroughly eschatological on the grounds that the life of the Church community is dependent upon the dynamics of the Spirit. An interesting point now emerges in the fact that Tillich symbolises the Church community without prefixing 'community' with the definite article. Rather, he uses the symbol 'Spiritual Community'. He supports his hermeneutics here by arguing that (the) Spiritual Community is 'not a group existing beside other groups, but rather a power and a structure inherent and effective in such groups'.[77] Furthermore, (the) Spiritual Community is not to be interpreted as an assembly of the spiritual faithful departed, who, throughout history observed ecclesial hierarchical structures and the sacraments. Rather, for Tillich, (the) Spiritual Community is an absolute structure of reality that is dependent upon the love that flows from God's Spirit as manifested in the faith of the individual believer. This is a reality in which the Church has the potential to become an unambiguous Spiritual Community.[78] The Spiritual Presence is a symbolic presence in the sense that it cannot be isolated and distilled out of the actualised Church because the Church is by nature ambiguous. For example, the Church is holy by virtue of the dynamics of the Spirit but this holiness is often paradoxically hidden beneath the dynamics that emerge from the Church's institutions and doctrines. This point relates closely to Tillich's argument with respect to the Catholic Church. For example, he writes:

> The Roman church ... does not accept critical judgement of itself as an institution, of its doctrinal decisions, ritual traditions, moral principles, and hierarchical structure. It judges on the basis of its institutional perfection, but this basis itself is not judged. Protestantism cannot accept the predicate of holiness for its churches if it is based on any kind of institutional perfection. The

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[73] Acts 7:38. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 1998, p.537

[74] From *ek-kalĕo*, to call out

[75] Matt.16:18, 18:17

[76] Occurs 62 times, see Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 1998, p.537. The word *ekklesia* is also used in more general terms in relation to the word assembly in the New Testament, for example, it is used by the author of Acts in reference to a general assembly of people who riot against Paul at Ephesus in Acts 19:23-41

[77] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.162

[78] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.164

holy church is the distorted church, and this means every church in time and space.[79]

Nevertheless, Tillich's willingness to engage in ecumenical dialogue with Catholic scholars is evident in his response to the publication *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*.[80] Again, Tillich acknowledges the work of the World Council of Churches as a manifestation of the power of the Spirit to bring about unambiguous unity. For example, he writes:

> The ecumenical movement of which it is the organized representative powerfully expresses the awareness of the predicate of unity in many contemporary churches. In practical terms it is able to heal divisions which have become historically obsolete, to replace confessional fanaticism by interconfessional co-operation, to conquer denominational provincialism, and to produce a new vision of the unity of all churches in their foundation.[81]

On the other hand, Tillich's does not project an optimistic view towards future ecumenical dialogue. This is because he argues that the ambiguities that are manifest in ecclesial unity and division have been a characteristic throughout the Church's history and there is therefore, no reason to assume that these ambiguities will change in the future. In Tillich's words:

> The dynamics of life, the tendency to preserve the holy even when it has become obsolete, the ambiguities implied in the sociological existence of the churches, and above all, the prophetic criticism and demand for reformation would bring about new and, in many cases, Spiritually justified divisions. The unity of the churches, similar to their holiness, has a paradoxical character. It is the divided church which is the united church.[82]

What Tillich is arguing here is thoroughly consistent with the basic theme of his entire philosophical and theological system, where separation from essence, that is God, results in existential disruption and estrangement. The ambiguities that exist in the Church's unity and division are a manifestation of this. However, Tillich's definition of the paradoxical character of the united and divided Church should not preclude its application in the ecumenical dialogue. Indeed, my intention is to offer Tillich's system so as to embrace a unity that is inclusive of the richness of the diversity of philosophical and theological scholarship that exists across the denominations. I will also seek to place this scholarship as it is endorsed in the agreed ecumenical statements of the Faith and Order Commission, for example in *The Nature and*

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[79] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.167-168
[80] O'Meara, Weisser, eds., *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought: An Afterword, Appreciation and Reply*, pp.301-311
[81] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.169
[82] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.160-170

Mission of the Church.[83] However, in order to do this, the ambiguities that exist within the Church must be acknowledged and addressed. Again, I would argue that it is these very ambiguities that provide the fuel by which the fire of the dialogue burns. However, Tillich's view of ecumenism is not altogether pessimistic because he goes on to argue that every church is united, in that every church is an actualisation of the Spiritual Community. In his words:

> It [unity] is identical with the dependence of any actual church on the Spiritual Community as its essence in power and structure. This is true of every particular local denominational and confessional church which is related to the event of the Christ at its foundation. The unity of the church is real in each of them in spite of the fact that all of them are separated from each other.[84]

Tillich points out that this critique of unity is in contradistinction to the claim of the Roman Catholic tradition that it represents, in its particularity, the unity of the Church to the exclusion of all other churches. [85] However, this critique of unity means that he commits the Church to participation in all dimensions of life on the one hand, whilst on the other hand, he validates the foundation of the Church in the context of all cultures.[86] Under these criteria, Tillich would seem to offer simultaneous opportunities for holiness and for non-holiness, for unity and for division and also for the isolated particular and universal. To this extent he would seem to support my optimistic interpretation for the future progress of ecumenical dialogue.

Another interesting point now emerges with respect to Tillich's perception of the ambiguous nature of the Church that stems from his definition of the Church as a community of those individuals who affirm Jesus as the Christ as the foundation of the Christian Church.[87] Indeed, this is the affirmation that is basic to membership of the World Council of Churches. In the Roman Catholic tradition any denial of this principle of faith would be perceived as heretical and would therefore subsequently lead to exclusion from the Catholic Church. Tillich, however, neatly defines any such rejection as an ambiguity within the Church that is not heretical, but is rather, 'separation from the community in which the problem of heresy exists'.[88] The conclusion to be drawn from Tillich's argument here is that he does not ascribe to the Church the authority to label

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[83] *Faith and Order Paper, No.198*, II C 60, 1Cor. 12:7, 2Cor.9:13
[84] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.168-169
[85] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.169
[86] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.170-171
[87] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.174
[88] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.176

rejection of the faith as heretical nor to stigmatise any human being who practices this rejection as heretical. Again, Tillich attributes any schism that may arise in the community of the Church to ambiguities that stem from the actual life of the Church. Although he points up such ecclesial ambiguities he does not offer solutions to the problems that arise from these ambiguities. Is it possible then that he does not ascribe to the Church the authority to address these problems? Certainly, this conclusion is compatible with his negative attitude to the Roman Catholic Church and also with his appropriation of ecclesial responsibility to the individual Christian believer. Again, I would argue that these are conclusions that should not deter Tillich's ecclesiology from being well placed in the post-modern ecclesiological context. Yet again, Tillich develops his argument of ecclesial ambiguity in terms of four ecclesiological functions that he keys into the structure of his systematic theology.[89]

Tillich points up the first constitutive function of the Church as that of the giving and the receiving of the Word of God and of the sacraments between individual human beings. For example, according to Tillich, 'he who preaches to himself is a listener, and he who listens is a potential preacher'.[90] It follows that he does not discount a form of ecclesial hierarchical structure whereby the function of some members is to act as mediators whilst others are receivers. Tillich's argument is ontological in that the structure is dependent upon individual participation that derives as a result of the response to the Church's ultimate ground of its being.[91] The constitution of the Church is thus established through specific mediating principles that include individual and distinctive forms of worship across the denominations. Indeed, this is an acknowledgement that is endorsed by the Faith and Order Paper of 1995, *So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship*.[92] However, I would suggest that Tillich's constitutive function of the Church precludes dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church where a clearly defined hierarchical structure of mediating and receiving remains the norm despite the significant movement towards lay participation since Vatican II. Again, as we have seen, in Tillich's thought, any function of mediating and receiving is continually subject to reform in the light of the existential questions that arise in any given cultural context. To this extent, Tillich's

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[89] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.182-216
[90] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.189
[91] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.176-177
[92] *Faith and Order Paper No. 171*

ecclesiology is determined by a dynamic structure that has the potential for development into new structures in the post-modern context.

Tillich's second expanding function of the Church includes mission, education and evangelism, which he argues is demanded by the universality of the Spirit for each new generation. He understands mission in geographical terms, that is, as the actualisation of the Spiritual Community within concrete churches throughout the world.[93] In contrast, he argues that evangelism or revivalism constitutes those activities that involve all individuals whether or not they are active members of the Church.[94] The paradox inherent in this argument lies between adherence to the true sources of the Church's mission and the shifting emphasis dictated by the circumstances of those to whom mission is directed. For Tillich, the Church is constituted by means of a process of mediation through which it expands. Both the constitutive and expanding functions of the Church are thus referenced directly against the dynamic essence of the Church that is the Spiritual Community of faith.

Thirdly Tillich argues, that the constructing functions of the Church are those functions that build up the life of the Church by adopting and transcending the functions of human life under the dynamic of the Spirit.[95] These are the theoretical, aesthetic, cognitive and the practical, communal, personal functions. The ambiguity here lies in the opposition between form-transcendence and form-affirmation, where form is understood as the modes of human activity that become common usage through an experience of their relative worth. For example, two principles of aestheticism control the authenticity of ecclesiastical art. The principle of consecration is an application of the general principle of form-affirmation. On the other hand, the whole of creation is susceptible to consecration and the artist should treat the material he or she uses with reverence because this material is affirmed by nature. Tillich identifies two further factors in the theological cognitive function as mediation and discourse. He argues that the meditative function serves to penetrate the substance of religious symbols, thus transcending their form and the discursive function serves to analyse and describe the form in which the substance can be understood.[96] Theological discourse therefore, is not confined to any particular set of symbols but is open-ended. Nevertheless, as I have shown,[97] Tillich specifically chooses to engage the philosophy of existentialism in dialogue with theology in his system.[98]

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[93] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.193
[94] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.195
[95] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.196
[96] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.202
[97] Chapter 7, *The Consequences of Modern Existentialism for the Tillichian System.* Chapter 8, *Existentialism and the Answer to the Human Predicament*
[98] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.203

An interesting point emerges with respect to Tillich's cognitive and existential ecclesial hermeneutics and the ecumenical orientated hermeneutics of Rahner as articulated by Lindbeck. Essentially, Lindbeck points out that the cognitive dimension of religion is characteristic of the Anglo/American analytical philosophical tradition that seeks meaning in religion. On the other hand, Lindbeck defines the aesthetic existential dimension of religion, as 'experiential-expressive' and which stems from the Liberal Continental theologies that were so influenced by the thought of Schleiermacher. Furthermore, Lindbeck makes the interesting observation that Rahner combines both the cognitive and existential ecclesial dimensions and that in so doing, Rahner has made a significant contribution to ecumenical dialogue.[99] A commonality of interpretation with respect to Heidegger's existential critique is evident in Tillich and Rahner's thought. However, it is entirely possible that Tillich has pre-empted Rahner on this point of ecumenism.

Tillich identifies the fourth relating function of the Church in terms that systematic theology must formulate the dynamics of its interaction with other sociological groups. For example, he agues that the priestly function of the Church is to give Spiritual substance to the society in which it exists and at the same time to receive the influx of the ever changing cultural forms of that society. In other words, the answers that emerge from Christian theology are in correlation with the questions that emerge from the cultural context in which a particular church is placed. The prophetic function of the Church follows in terms of its interaction of mutual criticism with culture. Both priestly and prophetic functions fall within religious parameters but Tillich goes on to appropriate a political function to the Church on the grounds that, 'Christology attributes the royal office to the Christ'.[100] This function should therefore be exercised in the name of Christ and according to his teachings. It is within these terms of reference that the real power of the dynamics of the Spirit lies. It is interesting to note Tillich's acknowledgement that these terms of reference have not always been observed by either the Catholic or the Protestant traditions.[101]

A critical point has now been reached with respect to the structure of Tillich's ecclesiology and in terms of his systematic theology. Essentially, he has constructed a system of such complexity of conception and of language that it is often difficult for the reader to follow. This difficulty must apply especially to post-modern students and also to teachers of Tillich's systematic theology. The above analysis of his ecclesiology has revealed that the structure is

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[99] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 1984, p.16
[100] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.214
[101] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.215

founded upon the orthodox concept of the Church that stems from Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience, but which has been obscured sometimes by Tillich's hermeneutics of concept and of language. More clarity could be brought to his expanding hermeneutics as a function of the Church. For example, mission, education and evangelism could be expressed in terms of being dependent upon the peace and reconciliation that stems from the life and ministry of Christ under the dynamics of the Spirit. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the on-going critical dialogue between Foster and Sturm with respect to Tillich's hermeneutics of the historical Jesus, turns on different interpretations of the wording used by Tillich.[102]

What then is the significance of Tillich's ecclesiological hermeneutics for the individual human being in relation to the New Being and thus for the ontological relationship between God and his Church?

The Church and the New Being

For Tillich, to become a member of the Church is to experience conversion. However, again, it is not easy to make a clear interpretation of what Tillich means by this claim. For instance, is it the Church or the individual that has ontological precedence? It could be argued that the Church has predominance over the individual in that it is a community that already exists in which the individual may subsequently enter and share. On the other hand, the experience of individual conversion suggests a covenantal relationship where the Church comes into existence through the conversion experience of the individual. This observation apart, Tillich is clear that the individual human being experiences Christ in the Spiritual Presence of the New Being within the life of the Church and on three levels.

Firstly, he relates ecclesial experience to regeneration, that is faith, where the New Being is experienced as creation within the community of faith and love.[103] For Tillich, to be thus under the impact of the Spiritual Presence means that the individual believes himself or herself to be acceptable to God even though unacceptable. This relates to Tillich's existential argument that existential estrangement means radical separation from and ultimate reunion with God and self.

Secondly, Tillich argues that the individual's ecclesial experience is subject to paradox which has been manifest in the Church since its inception, albeit in different forms due to differing cultural contexts. However, the individual is also subject to being justified as a result of

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[102] The critical dialogue between Foster and Sturm refers to Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.99. Durwood Foster, *Response to Erdmann Sturm, The Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, Volume XXXIV, Number 2, Spring 2008, pp.3-46

[103] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.221-223

receiving faith as a gift of grace. Indeed, in his concern for clarity between Catholic and Protestant scholarship, Tillich would dispense with the Protestant principle of 'justification by faith' and would replace it with the formula 'justification by grace through faith'.[104] For the individual, this means having 'the courage to surrender one's own goodness to God'.[105] The central question for Tillich would seem to be, how is it possible for the individual to find meaning in a meaningless world? One could respond to this question by arguing that human beings should simply accept any meaninglessness that they perceive to prevail in the world, but this then posits a further question. Is not the surrender of the individual really as a result of faith in God, or is it simply as a result of being in the situation of despair?

Thirdly, for Tillich, ecclesial experience means sanctification for the individual. This experience takes the form of a process of awareness of the paradoxical presence of Christ's Spirit in the world and includes awareness of both the divine and also the demonic.[106] Sanctification for the individual also means increased freedom from the law and increased attitude of devotion towards Christ that results from relatedness and self-transcendence.[107] To be reborn, justified and sanctified, are experiences that have the potential to lead the individual towards perfection.

Finally, and in relation to ecclesial experience, Tillich asks the question as to whether transcendence of the division between the subjective and objective structure of reality is a possibility in the human existential situation. In short, is there an unambiguous element in individuals that relate directly to God? For Tillich:

> The answer is that it is a reality in every encounter with the divine ground of being but within the limits of human finitude and estrangement – fragmentary, anticipatory and threatened by the ambiguities of religion.[108]

Here, Tillich does not seek to answer this question strictly within the parameter of the Church but rather allows space for the universal dynamics between all individuals and God. He adopts the ontological terminology of Heidegger's *Dasein*, that is human being, in order to point up the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the individual and in the context of the Church. In so doing, he thus establishes a common terminology with which to conceptualise the relationship

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[104] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.223-224
[105] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.226
[106] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.231
[107] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.233-236
[108] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.242

between the individual human being and the symbol for Christ as the New Being. He argues that as members of the Church, individual human beings are free to experience the New Being in regenerative terms. They are thus empowered under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, to overcome existential estrangement that is characteristic of the radical separation from God and from self. It is here that Tillich brings his existentialism into dialogue with his understanding of the event of God's self-revelation.[109] He is clear that the sources of revelation are not natural theology or metaphysics,[110] but are rather through God's self-manifestation in the individual's objective cognition and subjective experience. It is on this point that my argument of a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in Tillich's thought comes to expression in terms of his ecclesiology. This is because it is now possible to express God's self-revelation in objective and subjective terms[111] that allow Jesus as the Christ, the New Being to be articulated ontologically as the ground and power of human being in the life of the Church. It is the context in which the individual is the key to the unity that pertains between God and humanity. It is within the context of an ecclesiological circle whereby existential disruption and estrangement are overcome and whereby the individual has the potential to return to his or her point of departure in God. My hypothesis here is therefore based upon Tillich's concept of the fragmentary revelatory and soteriological experiences that occur during the historical process.[112] Indeed, it is this point upon which Tillich's argument concerning the complementary relationship between philosophy and theology turns. Nevertheless, it is the theological perspective, and according to my argument also the philosophical perspective, that prevails for Tillich when he comes to express the consequence of this relationship. This is because he correlates the fragmentary temporal and spatial manifestation of the unity between God and human beings with theonomy. As we have seen,[113] this is the temporal and spatial moment of the *kairos* where and when the knowledge of God as the *Logos* is revealed. For Tillich, this means the unique and universal revelation of Jesus as the Christ, the New Being.[114] Most crucially, the foregoing analysis allows me to offer an interpretation of Tillich's system that is inextricably linked to his ecclesiology.

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[109] Chapter 5, *The Theological System: Revelation*. pp.75-79
[110] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.111-161
[111] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.14
[112] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.153-160
[113] Chapter 4, *The Philosophical System: Logos and kairos*, pp.59-62
[114] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.150-151, vol.2, pp.134-144, *The Shaking of the Foundation*. 1949. p.148, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.46-47, *Love, Power and Justice*, 1960, p.28

The *raison d'être* of the synthesised philosophical and theological system is the Church; the *raison d'être* of the Church is the system. The ecclesiological circle is thus complete.

I turn now to a hypothesis that seeks to square this circle in terms of ecumenical dialogue.

CHAPTER 10

THE SYSTEM AND THE CHURCH SQUARED

> Only the divine Spirit and historical providence can overcome the splits amongst those representing the Spiritual Community which transcends every particular church and every particular religious group. A dialogue done in "listening love," can be a tool of providence and a channel of the divine Spirit.
>
> Paul Tillich[1]

> The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
>
> John 17:22-23

In this final chapter, I will explain the grounds upon which is based my hypothesis, that Tillich's system has application in present day ecumenical dialogue. Towards this end, Tillich's system, as it comes to expression in his ecclesiology, will be compared and contrasted with Vatican ecumenical texts and also with Faith and Order papers. The contradistinctions between Tillich's ecclesiology and these documents shall then become apparent. Points of convergence will then be compared with arguments posited by Roman Catholic scholars such as Haight, whose ecumenical ecclesiology operates outside the jurisdiction of the Vatican. The argument will be further broadened to include Zizioulas's Orthodox ecumenical understanding of the relationship between *koinonia* and 'otherness'. This will offer a point of departure that will enable me to argue that Caputo's interpretation of Derrida's axiom of the impossible presents a viable vehicle with which to project Tillich's ecclesiology into future ecumenical dialogue. Finally, I will integrate Tillich's own perception of ecclesiology, within an environment that enables a potential for ecumenical dialogue. I will express this environment in terms of a scale-free interdenominational network. In appropriating Tillich's system and ecclesiology to the present and future ecumenical dialogue, I will thus have squared his ecclesiological circle.

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[1] The conclusion of Tillich's response to the articles by Catholic scholars, *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, 1965, p.311. See also, Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 47, 1995

Tillich's system and ecclesiology in the post-modern ecumenical context

Tillich's openness to dialogue with scholars of traditions other than the Lutheran tradition is exemplified in the chapter's opening quotation, where he responds to critical appraisal of his system by Roman Catholic scholars. Most significantly, here, Tillich argues that the dynamic of the Spirit is an essential element towards fruitful inter-denominational dialogue, an argument that has been crucial to the hermeneutics of this thesis. In order for this conclusion to find credence in post-modern ecclesiological scholarship, the argument will be broadened to include his perception that the ambiguities within the life of the Church are nevertheless subject to the dynamics of the unambiguous Spirit.

Firstly however, Tillich's incorporation of elements of modern existentialism into his fundamentally traditional ontological system must be addressed because such incorporation is problematic when compared with Vatican ecumenical texts. This is because these documents are subject to the theological hermeneutics that operate within the confines of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium. Indeed, for Tillich, this is the tragedy of the Catholic Church,[2] because, paramount for him, is individual conversion and individual response to revelation, and not the Church *per se*. For example, he writes:

> The Church very early forgot the word of our Gospel that He *is* the truth; and claimed that her doctrines about Him are the truth. ... [This] is the greatness of Protestantism: that it points beyond the teachings of Jesus and beyond the doctrines of the Church to the being of Him whose being is the truth.[3]

Again, Tillich's symbolisation of Christ as the New Being falls wide of Catholic theological hermeneutics. However, this argument fails when this symbolisation is perceived as being representative of the Incarnation and the third person of the Trinity. Yet again, convergence is indeed possible when Tillich's symbolisation of the New Being is perceived in direct correlation with the mystical *a priori* awareness of God. Such awareness has the potential to lead towards the answer of the question of existential disruption and estrangement that is manifest in the human predicament, as is argued also by Rahner.[4]

How then does Tillich's symbolisation of Christ as the New Being sit within the parameters of present day ecumenical thought? The revised Faith and Order Paper, *The*

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[2] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, pp.189-204, *Protestantism, the Protestant message and the man of today*. Based on *Religiöse Verwirklichung*, a volume of collected essays, Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1929
[3] Tillich, *The New Being*, 1963, pp.70-71
[4] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, pp.129-133

Nature and Mission of the Church states that the Christian message should be made relevant and dynamic for all cultural contexts within the integrity of the tradition.[5] This statement is entirely compatible with Tillich's perception of the nature and the mission of the Church.[6] Tillich's method of symbolisation of Christ as the New Being does not contravene the intention towards church unity as set out in this statement. On the other hand, during the time that Tillich was formulating his system, the encyclical *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius XII, published before Vatican II in 1950, deemed as heretical any modern interpretation of existentialism that was not preserved, guarded and interpreted by the Catholic Church.[7] This encyclical, in its general condemnation of existentialism, would therefore seem to be completely out of touch with Tillich's existential hermeneutics when it states that:

> ... it [existentialism] concerns itself only with existence of individual things and neglects all consideration of their immutable essences.[8]

Indeed, towards the end of Tillich's career, in 1965, Pope Paul VI, in his search to answer the existential questions with respect to inter-religious dialogue,[9] and with respect to religious freedom,[10] confines his search strictly within the parameters of the Roman Catholic perspective. This exclusive principle remains consistent in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* of Pope John Paul II in 1998, and is reiterated by the then Cardinal Ratzinger in his Declaration *Dominus Iesus* in 2000.[11] Nevertheless, the resonance between Tillich's existential hermeneutics and those of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is all too apparent. For example, the text of *Fides et Ratio* reads:

> ... God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth – a word, to know himself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to know the fullness about themselves (cf. *Ex.*33:18; *Ps.* 27:8-9, 63:2-3; *Jn* 3:2). ... The truth of Christian revelation, found in Jesus of Nazareth, enables all men and women to embrace the "mystery" of their own life. As absolute truth, it summons human beings to be open to the transcendent, whilst respecting both their autonomy as creatures and their freedom. At this point the relationship between freedom and truth is complete, and we understand the full meaning of the Lord's words. "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (*Jn.*8:32).[12]

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[5] *The Nature and Mission of the Church, Faith and Order Paper 181*, III A 70

[6] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.3

[7] *Humani Generis*, 6, 15, 18, 32

[8] *Humani Generis*, 6

[9] *Nostra aetate*, 2

[10] *Dignitatis humanae*, 1

[11] *Dominus Iesus*, 2

[12] *Fides et Ratio*, pre-Introduction, 15, see also *Dominus Iesus*, 23

However, notwithstanding this convergence between Catholic scholarship and that of Tillich, my findings suggest that Tillich should not be labelled as an existentialist *per se*. Rather, his eclectic incorporation of elements of modern existentialism into his fundamental classical system serves to highlight existential estrangement from and subsequent reunion with God, within the parameters of his ecclesiological circle. Furthermore, under these hermeneutics, Tillich's existential critique falls outside the parameters of heresy as defined by the papal encyclical *Humani Generis*.

The scholarship that emerged as a result of the initiative of The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, (Vatican II), was to have significant impact on the ecumenical movement. This was brought about largely by such Catholic scholars as De Lubac, Congar, Rahner, Küng and Ratzinger, who called for a return to Scripture and the ecclesial tradition as fundamental sources for theological investigation.[13] This resulted in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church's document *Lumen Gentium*, acknowledging that the Church is a complex network of relationships that stem from the Pauline metaphorical relation of Christ as the head of his body, the Church.[14] This is a Trinitarian relationship in which *koinonia* between individuals and the Church is founded in the community of faith and love under the dynamics of the Spirit. This entirely parallels Tillich's ecclesiological thought.[15]
Indeed, Tillich's sustained adherence to the Bible and the ecclesial tradition as fundamental sources for his systematic theology has been highlighted throughout this thesis, especially in relation to his hermeneutics on revelation as event.[16] Again, we have seen that Tillich's perception of ecclesial unity is characterised by ambiguity and paradox. For example, he writes:

> It [Protestantism] considers the division of the churches as unavoidable in light of the ambiguities of religion but not as something which contradicts their unity with respect to the churches' foundation – their essential unity, which is paradoxically present in their ambiguous mixture of unity and disunity.[17]

Yet again, this conclusion accords with Rahner's thought.[18] It is also in accordance with my intention to offer Tillich's system towards church unity, as opposed to unification. This I do on the grounds that the Church has, throughout its history, continued to grow within the

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[13] For a detailed history and the problems of the ecumenical movement see Lindbeck's *Ecumenical Theology* in Ford's *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, vol.2, 1989, chapter 13
[14] 1Cor. 12:12-26
[15] *Lumen Gentium*, chap.1, Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.162-247
[16] Chapter 5, *The Theological System: Revelation*, pp.75-79
[17] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.169
[18] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.10:6, *Dialogue in the Church*, 1973, p.110

tension of both its unity and disunity. Moreover, Tillich's perception of ambiguity within the Church is echoed in post-modern ecumenical statements that were published after his death. For example, the Faith and Order Paper, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, of 1982, affirms that a common eucharistic faith does not imply liturgical or practical uniformity and that rather, diversity in worship is a healthy and enriching characteristic of ecclesial *koinonia*.[19] This point is affirmed in the later *Ditchingham Letter and Report: So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship* of 1994.[20] Again, the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, ARCIC II, statement *Church as Communion* of 1991 acknowledges that ecumenical dialogue should accept the diversity of the canonical structures that exist across the denominations as enrichment towards a common communion.[21] Indeed, Tillich's Orthodox contemporary Afanassieff, argues that ecclesial diversity is 'merely canonical'.[22]

For Tillich, the ambiguity of unity and disunity within the Church should be challenged by the power of the Spirit in the Church community. He recognises the contribution that The World Council of Churches has made towards this endeavour when he writes:

> The ecumenical movement of which it [The World Council of Churches] is the organized representative powerfully expresses the awareness of the predicate of unity in many contemporary churches. In practical terms it is able to heal divisions which have become historically obsolete, to replace confessional fanaticism by interconfessional co-operation, to conquer denominational provincialism, and to produce a new vision of unity of all churches in their foundation. But neither the ecumenical nor any other future movement can conquer the ambiguity of unity and division in the churches' historical existence.[23]

When this conclusion is set against the ARCIC II agreed statement *Church as Communion* of 1991, then its convergence with Tillich's eschatological and Trinitarian ecclesiology is evident. For example, the statement reads:

> For a Christian the life of *communion* means sharing in the divine life, being united with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, and consequently to be in fellowship with all those who share in the same gift of eternal life. This is a spiritual communion in which the reality of the life of the world is already present.[24]

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[19] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, III 28. The agreed statement that the Church is *koinonia* is a key concept in postmodern ecumenical dialogue. See Tavard, *The Church, Community of Salvation*, 1992, Tillard, *Church of Churches*, 1992, Avis, *Christians in Communion*, 1990
[20] The letter and report of an international ecumenical gathering of theologians, liturgists and musicians
[21] ARCIC II, *Church as Communion*, IV, 43
[22] Afanassief, *Le Eucharistic principal lien entre les Catholiques et les Orthodoxes*, in *Irenikon*, 38, 1965, pp.337-339, in Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, p.140
[23] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.169
[24] ARCIC II *Church as Communion*, IV, 43. Faith and Order Papers, *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*, statement following the Canberra Assembly, 1991.*On the Way to Fuller Koinonia, Faith and Order Paper No. 166*, 1994, also *So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship, Faith and Order Paper No. 171*, 1995, also Vatican documents *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 20, *Ut unum sint*, 114

The key agreed ecumenical statement that the Church is *koinonia* also implies a relationship of fellowship with the Church. It thus allows it to be set once more within the exploration of the Trinitarian relationship with respect to church unity. For example, the Faith and Order Canberra statement, *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*, of 1991 links the word *koinonia* to the *telos* of God as Trinity for all creation.[25] Such exploration is dependent upon Scriptural sources. For example, the hermeneutics can be linked to the text of the first letter of John as follows:

> ... we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.[26]

This allows one to perceive God in terms of *koinonia*. Indeed, it seems that God's purpose is to be in *koinonia* with humanity, because the relationship of fellowship between God and his creation in history has been a fundamental theme from the beginning in Scripture.[27] Also, central to this theme throughout the Old Testament is a circular pattern of communion, estrangement and renewal of the relationship between God and human existence. Again, this theme is strongly echoed in Tillich's concept of eschatological pan-en-theism.[28] To effect his purpose of *koinonia* God enters into a covenantal relationship with humanity.[29] Although estrangement follows in the form of exile, God's constant purpose of *koinonia* with human beings brings reconciliation in the form of a radical transformation within a new covenant.[30] This is the new covenant that God establishes through entry into history as the Christ.[31] After Christ's death and resurrection, God gives the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost as the source of *koinonia* in the life of the Church.[32] I would argue therefore that the scriptural sources imply a realisation of *koinonia* between God and humanity that turns within the framework of the Trinitarian *perichoresis* that pertains between God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

Indeed, the doctrine of the Trinity is an important element in the concept of *koinonia* between God and humanity and in relation to the Church. Increasingly, agreed ecumenical ecclesiological thought has pointed towards the relationship that exists between the visible

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[25] *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*, para.1, see also ARCIC II *Church as Communion*, 3
[26] 1 John 1:3
[27] Gen.2.3
[28] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.421-422
[29] Exodus 19:5-6
[30] Jer.31:31f.
[31] Gal.4:4-5
[32] Acts 5

koinonia of human beings and the Trinitarian *koinonia* of God. For example, this is evident in the ARCIC II agreed statement *Church as Communion* of 1983 and again in the Faith and Order Canberra statement *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*, of 1991. Here, in this latter statement, *koinonia* is articulated in terms of the unity of the Church in the wider context of the purpose of God the Trinity for the whole of creation. The Church is described as a foretaste of God's plan:

> ... to gather the whole of creation under the Lordship of Christ Jesus in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all are brought into communion with God.[33]

The theology of Barth with respect to the retrieval of the Trinitarian basis for theology cannot go without comment. Essentially, for Barth, God's self-revelation is actualised in three distinct modes of existence.[34] Barth's argument on the question of God's unity within diversity has been criticised by Moltmann. In Moltmann's view, Barth's argument fails to do justice to God's dynamic nature as revealed in the history of salvation.[35] For Moltmann, the whole idea of communion in relation to the Trinity is conceptualised in a social and historical context. He begins his argument for the Trinity in terms of the divine persons and then proceeds to discuss their unity. In so doing, he reverses the traditional Western pattern of Trinitarian thought and offers a concept that the one God is constituted as three individual divine persons. Moltmann argues that this concept protects the specific Christian image of God because is stops it degenerating into simple monotheism. This means for Moltmann that the unity of God consists not in a static substance or essence but in the 'unifying-at-oneness' of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the experience of God as Trinity in the experience of salvation history has its transcendental and primal ground in the inner Trinitarian life of God. Moltmann writes:

> The history of God's trinitarian relationships of fellowship, corresponds to the eternal perichoresis of the trinity. For this trinitarian history is nothing other than the eternal perichoresis of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their dispensation of salvation, which is to say in their opening of themselves for the reception and unification of the whole of creation.[36]

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[33] *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*, para.1
[34] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol.1, part 1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 1975
[35] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 1981, pp.154-161
[36] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 1981, p.157

However, on similar lines, although Barth seems to reject any social analogies of the Trinity as argued by Moltmann, he nevertheless seems to envisage communion in terms of a fellowship within the life of God. However, in contrast to Moltmann, who understands this in terms of personal relationships within the Godhead, Barth approaches this as an aspect of the single divine person-hood of God by treating the Spirit as the *koinonia* of the Father and the Son. For Barth, the Spirit's mode of existence is the mutual 'participation of the Father and the Son ... the *common factor* between the mode of existence of God the Father, and that of God the Son'.[37] However, Barth does not make clear the way in which the Spirit's mode of existence in relation to the Father and the Son is actually transposed into the concept of fellowship. He does however seem to address this when he claims that God's fellowship with humanity is possible on the grounds that God is eternally self-present as the fellowship between the Father and the Son.[38] God's fellowship with humanity is only possible for Barth because in his view, the Spirit is the self-revelation of God as fellowship and is thus the source of the human knowledge of the Trinity.

Gunton points out that it is in the incipient Trinitarianism of the Johannine Gospel that the link between the *koinonia* of the Godhead and that of the Church is at its most definitive.[39] For example, the author of John attributes the fellowship of communion to the relationship between the Father and the Son.

> I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and loved them even as you have loved me.[40]

However, for some theologians this text has the potential to lend itself to an ontological definition of the Church that fails to do justice to the dynamic character of *koinonia*. For example, Hanson argues that any such perception of the Church is inappropriate on the grounds that it is 'utilitarian and mechanistic'.[41] However, I would argue that with respect to *koinonia*, this Johannine text suggests no such differentiation between the ontological questions of being and function when compared with Tillich's ontological hermeneutics. The fundamental concern of the author of John's Gospel here is towards church unity that he

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[37] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol.3, part 1, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 1958, p.537
[38] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol.3, part 1, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 1958, p.549, vol.2, first half volume, *The Doctrine of God*, 1957, pp.63f., 307f., 313
[39] Gunton, *The One the Three and the Many*, 1993, p.215
[40] John 17:20-23
[41] Hanson, A. and R., *The Identity of the Church: a guide to recognizing the contemporary church*, 1987, p.ix

expresses within the limits of both the structure and the form of the Church. The Church as *koinonia* therefore reflects Tillich's perception of the *koinonia* between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Indeed, the text goes on to place *koinonia* in an eschatological context that is again consistent with Tillich's eschatological ecclesiology. It reads:

> Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.[42]

This is a perspective from which the concept of *koinonia* is already God's gift of salvation to the Church and the anticipation of the glory that will be his final gift. Although the church community already shares in the soteriological gifts of Christ's body, nevertheless, the Church is called by God to seek the even closer *koinonia* that pertains between the Father and the Son. The Church is thus the manifestation of the eschatologically decisive action of God and its *koinonia* is both a present reality and also a future hope. It is both the gift and the calling of the Church. In an apparent paradox therefore, which is perfectly in tune with Tillich's argument that the church community is ambiguous, the Church is called to a more perfect realisation of what it already is. This is because it now directs itself to the promised unambiguous eschatological reconciliation of all things in God, rather than solely within the paradoxical limitations of its own reality. This point is reiterated a number of times in both Catholic ecumenical documents and also in agreed ecumenical documents. For example, in the encyclical *Ut unum sint*, of John Paul II of 1995, and also in the Faith and Order Paper, *The Nature and Mission of the Church* of 2005.[43]

Tillich's method of correlation, where the questions that arise from human existence are answered by means of Christian theological symbols, present yet another point of convergence between his system and current ecumenical documents. His concern that theology be argued upon the same grounds as the sciences is evident from as early as 1923 and is basic to the argument of the first two chapters of this thesis.[44] Effectively, this means that Tillich correlates ecclesiology with culture, a correlation that is echoed in the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* of 1964, which reads:

> The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church [universal mission] so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ.[45]

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[42] John 17:24

[43] *Ut unum sint*, 1:9, *The Nature and Mission of the Church, Faith and Order Paper, 198*, 1, A, 25-34

[44] Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, 1923, published in English in 1981. Chapter 1, *The System*, chapter 2, *The Method*

[45] *Lumen Gentium*, 1:1, see also 14, *Dignitatis* Humanae, 1,2, *Unitatis Redintegratio* 1, *Ut unum sint*, 7

Furthermore, the correlation between ecumenical ecclesiology and culture remains a strong theme in recent Catholic declarations. For example, the encyclical *Ut unum sint*, of John Paul II in 1995, reiterates the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* that 'exhorts all the Catholic faithful to recognise the signs of the times and to participate actively in the work of ecumenism'.[46] Again, this theme is fundamental to the present Faith and Order Paper, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, which states that, 'The Gospel ... has to be proclaimed in language, symbols and images that engage with and are relevant to particular times and particular contexts'.[47] My analysis of this document has also allowed a further significant link to be made between its statement for ecclesial mission and Tillich's commitment that systematic theology should function towards the kerygma of the Church for every new generation.[48] For example, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, in terms that are placed in the context of Scripture and the ecclesial tradition, states that, 'The Church is called upon to proclaim the same faith in each generation, in each and every place'.[49]

Finally, I would point towards the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* of 1964 as a point of reference with which to sum up Tillich's ontological, eschatological and Trinitarian ecclesiology in the ecumenical context. What is so striking about this document is that it contains all the Tillichian ecclesiological elements and was published during the latter part of Tillich's career.[50] The question remains as to whether the ecclesiology contained therein had any resonance for Tillich's system. The answer to this question perhaps lies in Tillich's engagement in inter-faith dialogue during this period, which will be expanded upon in the conclusion of this thesis. To this extent, this Catholic ecclesiology may well have resonated with Tillich's thought but possibly did not have application to his *modus operandum* at that time. Interestingly, Tillich's contemporary Rahner, offers a hermeneutic towards ecumenical dialogue that provides a mindset within which Tillich's system may enhance such dialogue. Rahner writes:

> ... an open dialogue still has certain meaning even in those cases in which it does not imply that kind of unity which consists in mutually holding the same opinion, but rather in accepting the other person in his uniqueness and otherness, the difference of 'view-point' being only a very secondary expression of this.[51]

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[46] *Ut unum sint*, 1:8, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1

[47] *The Nature and Mission of the Church, Faith and Order Paper, 198*, II, C, 61

[48] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p.3

[49] *The Nature and Mission of the Church, Faith and Order Paper, 198*, III, A, 69

[50] *Lumen Gentium*, 1: 2,3,4. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 20, reiterated by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 1995, 114

[51] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.10:6, *Dialogue in the Church*, 1973, p.104

How then does Tillich's system sit within such a mindset in the context of post-modern ecumenical dialogue?

Post-modern ecclesiology in context

The post-modern Catholic ecumenical mindset of Boeve would seem to echo that of Rahner when he calls for a perspective of 'irreducible multiplicity' which has the potential to lead towards an acceptance of ecclesial 'otherness'.[52] Indeed, these are mindsets that have developed in response to the perceived neo-exclusive 'ghetto mentality' of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium. However, whereas Rahner's call for a change of mindset is made with nuance,[53] Mannion currently sums up this mindset as:

> ... the attempt to impose a kind of official ecclesiology across the entire church universal, and the inward-looking, seemingly world-renouncing mindset that has set back ecumenism and dialogue with other faiths. ... We could go on to chart further developments such as the "creeping infallibilism" and absolutist tendencies of the magisterium in post-modern times, the intolerance of dissent from official pronouncements and the "demand" of obedience, and the issues pertaining to the nature, understanding, and exercise of teaching authority today and the role of the Catholic theologian.[54]

Catholic theologians such as Mannion and Haight, who have challenged a mindset such as this, are now calling for a movement towards an inter-denominational magisterium in order for ecumenical dialogue to be advanced. For example, Haight argues that:

> The church is the place for theology. But the church at the end of the twentieth century as a result of the ecumenical movement is recognized to be the whole or total church, despite its disunity and divisions. This means, negatively, that the church in the sense of a particular communion cannot by itself be a final or exclusive limit or constraint or criterion or norm for Christian theology today. Rather, positively, the many magisteria of various churches are witnesses to Christian truth and sources for data for Christian theology.[55]

Indeed, Haight was subsequently forbidden by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to teach Catholic theology, on the grounds that his book, *Jesus: Symbol of God* published in 1999, contained serious doctrinal errors. However, these perceived doctrinal errors apart, the resonance between Haight's thought and that of Tillich is evident in this

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[52] Boeve, *Interpreting Tradition*, 2004, p.90

[53] Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, 1975, p.93

[54] Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Times*, 2007, pp.43,105. See *Lumen Gentium*, 8, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3, *Ut unum sint*, 10

[55] Haight, *The Church as Locus of Theology*, in *Why Theology?* Concillium, 1994/1996, 22, in Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Times*, 2007, p.164

work. This is because Haight's methodology attempts to establish a critical correlation between theology and twenty first century culture that seeks to generate new understanding across the traditions.[56] In effect, here, Haight is responding to the vision of Vatican II that seeks constant reform and renewal in ecclesiological scholarship. He is calling for Catholic ecumenical ecclesiology to transcend the Catholic magisterium in order that the entire Church, in all of its diversity, may be the theologian's primary context. Indeed, this call is echoed in the Faith and Order document, *A Treasure of Earthen Vessels*.[57] Essentially, the ecclesiology of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that Haight defines as ecclesiology 'from above' is highly incompatible with Protestant ecclesiologies, and thus with that of Tillich, that operate 'from below'.[58] Although both ecclesiologies are dependent upon the Pauline metaphorical hermeneutic that the Church is the body of Christ,[59] nevertheless, the hermeneutics diverge. Bultmann helps to throw light on such divergence when he argues that Paul was able to unify the concept of the body of Christ with the concept of the Israel of God, because he understood the metaphor precisely as the eschatological assembly of God. Bultmann goes on to argue that the body of Christ metaphor was subsequently replaced by an ontological interpretation that resulted in the Church being transformed from a soteriological fellowship into a soteriological institution.[60] In effect, Bultmann highlights the way in which the Church moved away from a divinely instituted *koinonia* towards a human institutional perception of *koinonia*. This now becomes a perspective that avoids the Pauline metaphorical hermeneutics of the Church as the body of Christ becoming interpreted literally. Such interpretation would thus become so closely identified with Christ that the Church itself would become divine. Indeed, such ecclesial divinisation is evident in Catholic thought before Vatican II. For example, Mersch was adamant that 'The Church is Christ'.[61] Again, before Vatican II in 1943, the papal encyclical

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[56] A lengthy notification of the conclusions of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with respect to Haight, was published in the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, 7-8 edition, 2002. The notification was signed by Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and was approved for publication by Pope John Paul II.

[57] *A Treasure of Earthen Vessels: An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics*, 61. The text is the product of study consultations in Dublin, 1994, Lyons, 1996 and Bossy, 1997, carried out at the request of the *Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order*, Santiago, 1993

[58] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.1, *Historical Ecclesiology*, 2004, chap.1

[59] For example, Col.1:15-20, Eph.4:1-24

[60] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.2, 1955, pp.113-114

[61] Mersch, *The Whole Christ*, Dobson Books, 1949, p.578 in Hanson, *The Identity of the Church: a guide to recognizing the contemporary church*, 1987, p.13

Mystici Corporis of Pius XII identifies the Catholic Church with the mystical body of Christ without nuance. The encyclical reads:

> If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ – which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church – we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime or divine than the expression 'the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ' ...[62]

De Lubac's definition of the Church as sacrament, yet again before Vatican II in 1950, is less open to the challenge of triumphalism in that he cites Christ himself as the primary sacrament.[63] This ecclesial hermeneutic is retained in the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* albeit in less definitive language. For example, it adopts the term *subsistit in*, rather than *est*,[64] but reiterates the perception that the Church is 'indefectibly holy'.[65] On the other hand, Tillich would seem to endorse Barth's 'from below' ecclesiology when Barth argues that such ecclesial divinisation is *sacro egoismo* because the Church, 'even in its invisible essence is not Christ, nor a second Christ, nor a kind of extension of the one Christ'.[66]

However, a question now arises. What are the reasons behind Haight's call for an inter-denomination magisterium towards progress in ecumenical dialogue? The answer to this question would seem to stem from a perceived shift away from the ecclesial paradigm of Vatican II in some recent Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith documents. For example, an analysis of the thought of Ratzinger, in his address on the implementation of Vatican II to the international convention in 2000, reveals an underlying preoccupation with ecclesial divisions rather than with the subject of the New Testament ecclesial witness under discussion.[67] Again, in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith document *Dominus Iesus*, Ratzinger attacks the relativistic and pluralistic mentality of those theologians who operate outside the jurisdiction of the Catholic magisterium.[68] Yet again, the document claims a superior soteriological position for the Catholic Church and for those churches in perfect communion with it. According to Mannion, this includes the 'Orthodox and Eastern Rite and Old Catholics by dint of their holding to a valid episcopacy and celebration of the eucharistic mystery'.[69] This claim is again based upon the supposition that ' ... there exists a

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[62] *Mystici Corporis*, 1:13
[63] De Lubac, *Catholicism, Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, 1950, p.29
[64] *Lumen Gentium*, 1:8
[65] *Lumen Gentium*, 5:39
[66] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol.4, part 3, 2, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, 1969
[67] Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today, Witness of the New Testament regarding the origin and essence of the Church*, chap.1:2, pp.21-40. Mannion also points this out in *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Times*, 2007, p.79
[68] *Dominus Iesus*, Introduction, 4
[69] Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Times*, 2007, p.79

single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, ...'.[70] Any ecclesial community that does not meet this neo-exclusive criterion would not therefore be a 'proper' church and would indeed fall into the category of a 'defective church'.[71] Such exclusive language would not extend to the search for ecclesial *koinonia*, however imperfect, that was expressed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut unum sint*.[72] Inevitably, the response by the Lutheran World Federation to the document *Dominus Iesus* expressed the disappointment that so many years of fruitful dialogue between the Catholic and Lutheran traditions has been impaired by this mindset. Again, The World Council of Churches echoed this response in 2006. Indeed, a subsequent addition to this response in 2007 relates perfectly to the mindset of Tillich when it reads:

> Each church is the Church catholic and not simply a part of it. Each church is the Church catholic, but not the whole of it. Each church fulfils its catholicity when it is in communion with the other churches.[73]

Such state of flux in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium does not therefore seem conducive to offering Tillich's system in this present dialogical context. For example, his relativistic ecclesiological position as defined in his Protestant Principle would be an antithesis to dialogue with the absolute and exclusive position taken by Ratzinger in *Dominus Iesus*. This position of Ratzinger does not seem to have changed since he became Pope Benedict XVI. For example, in 2007, he ratified, confirmed and ordered publication of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Responses*. Here, it was reiterated that the Church of Christ subsists only in the Catholic Church and in those with whom she is in perfect communion. Those ecclesial communities that are outside the Catholic Church cannot be called churches in the proper sense of the word because, and again, they 'suffer from defects'.[74]

In the meantime, Catholic theologians such as Haight are engaged in fruitful ecumenical research and dialogue towards church unity that mirrors that of The World Council of Churches. Haight's intention is towards a 'partial' ecclesial communion that allows for the

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[70] *Dominus Iesus*, chap. IV:17, see also, *Lumen Gentium* 8, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 4, *Ut unum sint*, 86
[71] *Dominus Iesus*, chap. IV:17
[72] *Ut unum sint*, 11
[73] Affirmation agreed by the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in February, 2006, press released 10th July, 2007
[74] *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Responses To Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects Of The Doctrine Of The Church*, June 29th, 2007, questions, 2 and 3

richness of ecclesial diversity within an overall unity that is based upon the common substance of one faith, one Lord, one baptism and one life in the Spirit.[75] He argues that the post-modern pluralistic mindset is a valuable resource with which to engage in ecclesial pluralism because it brings diverse hermeneutics to ecumenical discussion within the traditional framework of historical scholarship. Haight writes:

> Each analysis [post-modern] allows for newness and difference but saves a constancy, continuity, sameness, and thus unity within differences. Ultimately that sameness cannot be captured in propositions that line up in a one-to-one correspondence between the apostolic period and the present. It remains a project of interpretation and admits of considerable pluralism.[76]

The resonance between Haight's framework for ecumenical dialogue and the substance of Tillich's Protestant Principle emerges here. Haight is furthermore in tune with Tillich's ecclesiology when he calls for a 'dialogical mission' in his pursuit of progress towards church unity that involves a method of ecclesiology 'from below'. Essentially, Haight defines ecclesiology 'from below' as 'concrete, existential and historical', and in relation to the theological progress of any particular ecclesiology from its origin to the present day.[77] Most significantly, Haight argues that ecclesiology 'from below' is experienced by means of theological symbols that point human beings towards the presence and activity of God within the church community. This argument strongly echoes Tillich's symbolisation of the Church as the Spiritual Community whose life is dependent upon the dynamics of the Spiritual Presence. Furthermore, Tillich's method of correlation turns upon the answers to existential questions that are offered, in terms of theological symbols. Indeed, Haight's ecclesial methodology seems to parallel the Tillichian method of correlation.[78] For example, Haight correlates the questions that arise from post-modern culture with the answers that are inherent in current ecclesiology.[79] He does however, express the correlation in terms of Rahner's 'nature and grace'.[80] In effect, this means that for Haight, the reality of human life

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[75] Eph. 4:1-6, Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.3, *Ecclesial Existence*, 2008, pp.282-283

[76] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.3, *Ecclesial Existence*, 2008, p.287. Haight refers here to Schillebeeck's *Church: The Human Story of God*, pp.40-45 and Thiel's *Senses of Tradition: Continuity and Development in Catholic Faith*, pp.56-99

[77] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.1, *Historical Ecclesiology*, 2004, pp. 4, 69-71, vol.3, *Ecclesial Existence*, 2008, especially chapter 8

[78] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, pp.55-64

[79] Haight, *Comparative Theology* in Mannion, Mudge, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, 2007, pp.15-18

[80] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol.10:6, *Dialogue in the Church*, p.110

is one reality and that if theology is to be an effective answer for the questions of human

existence, it must cross the denominational divide. In Haight's words:

> ... human beings must address the elements of our common existence which are senseless,
> murderous and scandalous. God's revelation to human beings in this world is for human
> existence in this world. To be credible and relevant, theology must address the actual lives
> of human beings in this world by formulating its meaning in social-historical terms as well
> as interpersonal and transcendent terms.[81]

For Haight, and also Tillich, the ecclesiological mindset 'from above' as exemplified by the

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium is so exclusive as to

be beyond challenge and criticism. Indeed, Haight argues that any hierarchical structure that

claims to descend from God has the potential towards an 'hierarchical imagination' that can

be misinterpreted as 'corresponding to the will of God'.[82] Accordingly, ecclesiologies 'from

above' are not always in tune with the culture of post-modern times. It is on these grounds

that Haight calls rather for an ecclesiology 'from below' that is conscious of the historical

context in order to meet the challenges presented by contemporary globalisation and

pluralism. It follows for him that this should include ecclesial pluralism. To this end, he

supplements his call for historical ecclesiology with a call for comparative ecclesiology that:

> ... consists in analyzing and portraying in an organized or systematic way two or more
> different ecclesiologies so that they may be compared.[83]

Such ecclesiology is characterised by the utilisation of social and historical science in its

analysis, by its representation of authoritative sources of particular ecclesiologies and by the

organisation of different ecclesiologies under comparison according to a common paradigm.

Within these parameters, Haight's comparative ecclesiology acknowledges that:

> ... it is no longer possible to think that a single church could carry the full flow of
> Christian life in a single organizational form. [Thus] comparative ecclesiology does not
> undermine the basic thrust of historical ecclesiology but sharpens its tensions and makes
> it considerably more interesting.[84]

For Haight, constructive comparative ecclesiology, when undertaken from within a

particular confessional or ecclesial identity, results in 'transdenominational ecclesiology',

because under this criterion, theology becomes dynamic in that it transcends the narrow,

sectarian, absolutist characteristics of any one particular church. In effect, this means that

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[81] Haight, *Church as Locus of Theology* in *The Ecumenical Review*, 53:1, January 2002, pp.14-24
[82] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.1, *Historical Ecclesiology*, 2004, pp.19-25
[83] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.2, *Comparative Ecclesiology*, 2005, p.4
[84] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.2, *Comparative Ecclesiology*, 2005, pp.7,9

Haight perceives progress towards church unity in terms that are outside the doctrinal constraints of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium. Indeed, Haight endorses the ecclesiology of the Faith and Order Papers *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and *The Nature and Mission of the Church*.[85] Again, this ecclesiology resonates with Tillich's Protestant Principle which again becomes a viable ecclesiological position from whence to place Tillich's ecclesiology within the post-modern context.

Two critical points now emerge that serve to strengthen this argument. Firstly, I refer to Haight's call for a comparative ecclesiology that is systematically organised within the parameters of historical and social science and which thus allows a critique of different ecclesiologies to be made according to a common paradigm. There are strong echoes here of Tillich's earliest aim to bring theology into dialogue with the sciences under the umbrella of a *Gestalt*. For Haight, this means bringing his ecclesiology into dialogue with other ecclesiologies under the shared criteria of one faith, one Lord, one baptism and one life in the Spirit. Secondly, the question arises as to the extent to which Haight's numerous references to the thoughts of Protestant theologians such as Tillich, in his book *Jesus: Symbol of God*, was instrumental in his being banned from teaching Catholic theology by the magisterium.[86] Haight's reference to Tillich's thought is of particular significance to my argument that Tillich's work has application in present day ecumenical dialogue. Nevertheless, it is also of significance that by the time of his major voluminous work *Christian Community in History*, Haight makes only one reference to Tillich and then only in parallel with a reference to Augustine.[87] The question now arises as to whether this is a reaction against his being forbidden to teach Catholic theology by the magisterium. Possibly, his situation would not be enhanced by his acknowledgement of the significant contribution that Tillich's ecclesiology has made to post-modern dialogue.

Yet another present day Catholic scholar, Modras, endorses the view that Tillich's Protestant Principle is key to understanding his ecclesiological orientation. As early as 1976, Modras argues that Tillich has balanced his Protestant perspective with the 'catholic substance' so allowing the Protestant and Catholic perspectives to exist in a creative

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[85] Haight analyses the method of constructive comparative ecclesiology with relation to 'transdenominational' ecclesiology and with respect to these reports in *Christian Community in History*, vol.2, *Comparative Ecclesiology*, 2005, chapter 7. See also his paper *The Promise of Constructive Comparative Ecclesiology: Partial Communion*, delivered as the First International Conference of the Ecclesiological Investigations Network, St. Deiniol's Library, UK, 2007

[86] Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, 1999, p.318. Again, in his work *Dynamics of Theology*, 2001, Haight cites Tillich twenty seven times

[87] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.2, *Comparative Ecclesiology*, 2005, p.475. Here, Haight refers to the power and wholeness of self-transcendence that derives from the mystical *a priori*

polarity.[88] Furthermore, Modras is appreciative of Tillich's sharp criticism of the potential towards exclusivism and triumphalism of Catholic documents that were published before Vatican II. In his survey of Catholic ecclesiology, Modras identifies scholars such as Küng, Kasper, Baum and Dulles as manifesting the spirit of Tillich's Protestant Principle in their work. However, Modras points out that this spirit has not yet impacted on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith or the Catholic magisterium. In his critique of the work of Modras, albeit in 1978, Carey not only highlights the significant influence of Tillich's ecclesiology on American theological scholarship, but also points to the importance of Tillich's work for contemporary Catholic scholarship.[89] Modras continues to teach these principles today and so his ecclesiology is significant to my call for Tillich's ecclesiology to be applied to post-modern ecumenical dialogue.[90]

The ecclesiology of Zizioulas also resonates with that of Tillich when he argues that the relationship between *koinonia* and 'otherness' is essential to the life and unity of the Church. Zizioulas defends the freedom to be the 'other' from the post-modern existential position and argues that *koinonia* is the foundation of true 'otherness' and identity. Essentially, his argument turns upon the Orthodox theological perspective that the Church is holy and sinless. This argument is not open to the challenge of triumphalism as illustrated above with respect to the Catholic scholarship of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the magisterium. This is because for Zizioulas, such ecclesiology rather necessarily leads to deep compassion and *metanoia* whose dynamics are dependent upon the *koinonia* that exists in God as Trinity.[91] Zizioulas demonstrates a constant awareness of the deepest existential questions that pertain to today's society. Furthermore, he points out that existential concern was a characteristic of the writings of the Greek Fathers who attempted to address these concerns in the early ecumenical councils. How apt then, that Tillich's system is admirably suited to the task of addressing the questions of existence and that his system, as it pertains to his ecclesiology, is equally suited to answer these questions in the present day ecumenical discussion. For Zizioulas, rather than 'otherness' threatening *koinonia* it serves to generate *koinonia*. Again, Zizioulas argues in language that is reminiscent of the Tillichian eschatological dynamics of the Spirit in the Church when he writes:

The Holy Spirit is associated ... with *koinonia* (2 Cor.13:13) and the entrance of the last

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[88] Modras, *Paul Tillich's Theology of the Church: A Catholic Appraisal*, 1976

[89] Carey, J., review of Modras, R., *Paul Tillich's Theology of the Church: A Catholic Appraisal*, Journal of the American Academy of Religion, vol.46, No.1, March 1978, p.87

[90] Modras teaches at St. John's Seminary, Plymouth, Michigan. As a former student of Küng in Tübingen, he brings to his critique of Tillich's ecclesiology Küng's deep commitment to ecumenical ecclesiology.

[91] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, pp.4-6

days into history. (Acts2:17-18), that is *eschatology*. When the Holy Spirit blows, he does not create good individual Christians, ... but an event of communion, which transforms everything the Spirit touches into a *relational* being. In that case the other becomes an ontological part of one's own identity. The Spirit de-individualizes and personalizes beings wherever he operates.[92]

The implications for ecclesial unity for Zizioulas lies in the acceptance of the 'other', not in terms of the other's past or present but rather in terms of the other's common future that is subject to the divine *telos*. Indeed, he argues that without 'otherness' there would be no existential freedom. In his words:

> ... if there is no absolute, ontological otherness between God and the world, there is no ontological freedom allowing each of these two 'beings' to be *themselves* and thus to be at all.[93]

Indeed, again here, Zizioulas would seem to underpin the elements upon which the Tillichian method of correlation and ecclesiological *Gestalt* turn.

Having now brought Tillich's theological system and ecclesiology into dialogue with scholars such as Haight and Zizioulas, I return now to the philosophical thought of Derrida and his axiom of the 'impossible'. This will enable me to argue that my interpretation of Tillich's system and ecclesiology are representative of a new ecclesiological perspective that has application for ecumenical dialogue.

Tillich's system and ecclesiology – a new ecumenical possibility

I have argued that Tillich's philosophical and theological thought was operative on the cusp of the post-modern age. I would also argue that today, in 2008, we are also on the cusp of yet another age. This necessarily calls for, and in agreement with Haight, a new hermeneutic that has the potential to challenge existent hierarchical structures that relate to the Church and to culture.[94] My intention now is to build upon this claim in order to offer my Tillichian hermeneutics as a fresh ecclesiological perspective.

As I have shown in chapter two, Derrida argues that any deconstruction of the Western philosophical tradition leads to cognitive paradox and logical aporias that inhibit creativity and invention.[95] In response, I have argued that Tillich's system creates and invents the space to absorb the ambiguities and paradoxes that he perceives as characteristic of the life

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[92] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, p.6
[93] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, p.19
[94] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, vol.3, *Ecclesial Existence*, 2008, chap.8
[95] Chapter 2, *The Method: System and deconstruction*, pp.32-33.Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 1976, p.145

of the Church. I have also placed Tillich's thought here in relation to Kristeva's semiotics and offered a hermeneutic of his system as progressively open to new forms of identity.[96] With respect to Tillich's system and Derrida's axiom of the impossible, I refer again to the question put to Derrida by Hart as to how he perceives this axiom with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. In response, and I would argue in line with Tillich, Derrida argues that 'it is not enough to think of the difference of God', rather, the question needs to be framed philosophically.[97] Caputo goes on to interpret Derrida's axiom of the impossible in relation to contemporary continental philosophy and within a religious framework.[98] For Caputo, the key to Derrida's thought is to understand him as a man of prayer whose aim is to project his philosophy of deconstruction into the future.[99] Furthermore, central to Caputo's argument, and in remarkable resonance with Tillich's concept of the mystical *a priori*, is Derrida's phenomenological interpretation of deconstruction that relates to the unconditional. In effect, Derrida also echoes Tillich's thought by raising the question of the human supposition of the 'other'.[100] Here, Derrida argues that human beings have inherited the promise of an unconditional love from beyond the realms of human spatial and temporal reality that lies in the future reality of the impossible. Indeed, Caputo argues that Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction is a passion and a prayer for the impossible that involves an element of transcendence.[101] In this process, human beings surrender and give themselves back to the impossible. Caputo points out that Derrida is not referring here to Plato's search for the understanding of the reality of goodness.[102] I would argue however, that there are strong echoes here of Kierkegaard's argument that in order to secure goodness, it must first be sacrificed.[103] According to Caputo's hermeneutics, Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction is preparation for the future messianic event that inspires love for that which cannot be deconstructed and that is open to a presence beyond itself.[104]

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[96] Chapter 2, *The Method: System and deconstruction*, pp.32-33
[97] Sherwood and Hart, eds., *Derrida and Religion*, 2004, p.48
[98] For example, Caputo, *Confessions of a Postmodern Catholic: From St. Thomas to Derrida* in Hancock and Sweetman, eds., *Faith and the Life of the Intellect*, 2003, p.2
[99] Derrida, *Circonfession*, part of his autobiography that is Jewish orientated and heavily dependent upon Augustine's *Confessions*
[100] Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, 2003, pp.137-172
[101] Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*, 1997, pp.xix,xx
[102] Plato, *The Republic*, 1962, pp.235, 509. See Chapter 4, *Tillich's Classical Philosophy: Historical and existential philosophy*, pp.53-58
[103] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 1985, pp.33-82. See chapter 7, *The Consequences of Modern Existentialism for the Tillichian System: The existential criteria*, pp.111-117
[104] Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are*, 2000, p.263

It is the possibility of the impossible.[105] Indeed, the impossible is the site of the convergence between deconstruction and ecclesiology, in that it is an affirmation of the faith that belongs to all ecclesiologies and for the purpose of my argument, in particular the ecclesiology of Tillich. Again, Derrida's philosophy expresses a passion for the impossible that strongly echoes Tillich's argument that theology is a matter of ultimate concern. It is on these grounds that I would argue that Derrida's philosophy of the impossible is a potential vehicle with which to forward my interpretation of Tillich's system and ecclesiology into future ecclesiological dialogue. Caputo sums up the consequences of his hermeneutics of Derrida's axiom of the impossible as follows:

> We venture out and take the risk, perilous as it may be. First, immobilization, then movement. The movement is mobilized by the immobilization. We take the Kierkegaardian leap into the rush of existence, come what may. First we are frozen with fear and immobility; then we leap. When we go where we cannot go, then we are really moving and something is really happening, over and above the routinized flow of the tick-tock time that runs on automatic pilot. The immobilization belongs more to the cognitive domain: we *know* that this can't be done; we have been instructed by the understanding about the limits of what is possible. But then we go. Thus the movement is carried out by a shift to the sphere of praxis … to a certain non-cognitive leap which overcomes the hesitations of the understanding that is what Augustine calls *doing* the truth, *facere veritatem*.[106]

This is a perspective from which Derrida's axiom of the impossible projects the possibility of my interpretation of Tillich's system and ecclesiology as a fresh perspective towards ecumenical dialogue. To this end, I would also quote the words of Kierkegaard as follows:

> If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but for the passionate sense of the potential, for the eye, which ever young and ardent, sees the possible. Pleasure disappoints, possibility never. And what wine is so foaming, what so fragrant, what so intoxicating, as possibility![107]

The possibility of situating my interpretation of Tillich's system and ecclesiology within the context of his call for 'listening love',[108] may be met by means of an inter-denominational scale-free network. Indeed, Lewis expresses this same idea in terms of friendship when he

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[105] Caputo, *For Love of Things Themselves: Derrida's Hyper-Realism*, www.jcrt.org/archives/01.3/caputo 37-40
pp.10-11, accessed 15.06.08. See also, Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, p.156
[106] Caputo, *The Experience of God and the Axiology of the Impossible*, in Wrathall, ed., *Religion after Metaphysics*, 2003. P.126
[107] Kierkegaard, *Either-Or*, 1959, p.40
[108] Tillich, His response to Catholic scholars in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, O'Meara, Weisser, eds.,1965, p.311. *Ut unum sint*, 47

argues that the more friends that join a network of friendship, the more the network is strengthened.[109]

This is in tune with Haight's call for a new hermeneutical approach that is strengthened when it is inclusive of inter-denominational ecclesiologies within the network of the ecumenical councils. The scale-free network,[110] when perceived as a structural hermeneutic for inter-denominational ecclesiologies turns on the concept of a horizontal plane that does not include exclusive vertical hierarchical structures. Frieson explicates the potential for an ecclesial scale-free network as follows:

> The modern world is increasingly marked by a rapid fluidity which is eroding the structures that were once assumed to be solid. Our "solid" definitions of the church and God's kingdom are struggling to find resonance in this liquid society. The kingdom of God is a Scale-free Network; it is a vast shaping web, linking all of creation under the relational reign of God. Each node of creation is related to every other node through a dynamic network of constantly morphing links. Within this scale-free network the church is a cluster of people centred in Jesus Christ. Until recently network theory could not explain clustering phenomena; it is the reality of "clustering" that makes scale-free network theory so important. Scale-free network theory accounts for the grouping of nodes around hubs (or popular nodes). It serves as a hermeneutic of the relational structure of all of life, and opens new vistas for understanding and experiencing the living relationship between God's World, God's Kingdom and God's churches. Within God's "scale-free kingdom" churches are best understood as Christ clusters. Christ clusters are groups of nodes responsible for discrete Holy Spirit led/cluster determined cellular functions.[111]

This now becomes a mindset with which to argue that my interpretation of Tillich's system is a viable node within the Christ clusters. The argument will turn on my interpretation of Tillich's method of correlation where philosophy and theology are synthesised. Moreover, what is so significant about the scale-free network is that it mirrors Tillich's commitment to *Gestalt*, where every element of the system (network) is inter-related so as to form a whole. My argument above, that Western culture is on the cusp of a new age, is based upon a vision of culture that is subject to constant change, and where previously upheld absolutes are now open to challenge. For example, new advances in science and technology mean that these networks are constantly changing whilst new networks appear. New hermeneutics in philosophy, theology and ecclesiology also involve constant change and so a paradigm shift to a more fluid perception of these disciplines, as they relate to culture, is needed. According

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[109] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 1960, pp.69-109, see also John 15:12-13
[110] Frieson, *Scale-free Networks as a Structural Hermeneutic for Relational Ecclesiology*, www.georgefox.edu accessed 18.06.08
[111] Frieson, *Scale-Free Networks as a Structural Hermeneutic for Relational Ecclesiology*, www.georgfox.edu p.4, accessed 18.06.08

to Frieson, the scale-free network is representative of the Kingdom of God. For my argument, nodes within the scale-free network are representative of ecclesiologies that range from the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches to those 'liquid' churches that are currently emerging.[112] Also inclusive are all those philosophies that fulfil Tillich's criterion that all human beings are subject to God's universal revelation.[113] Indeed, there could be a cluster representative of the atheistic perspective of Richard Dawkins.[114] It follows that the philosophical and theological orientation of each individual church denomination and those of no denomination, are represented on the respective nodes. The scale-free network has thus crossed the institutional boundaries. If we now apply Tillich's symbolisation of the Kingdom of God as 'Eternal Life', the scale-free network becomes representative of the fulfilment of time, the *kairos*, when all humanity will be in *koinonia* with God in the future.[115] The scale-free network is also representative of Paul's metaphor that the Church is the 'body of Christ'[116] and the eschatological assembly of all of God's people. Furthermore, the network is sympathetic to Zizioulas's eschatological argument that ecclesial *koinonia* lies in the future redemption of the Kingdom of God[117] and where the 'otherness' of the churches serve to generate *koinonia* with God.[118] Again, we have seen that Pannenberg argues that God relates to the Church by releasing all finite events from the free and open future of the Kingdom into the present.[119] Most importantly, Tillich's node permits entry to ecumenical dialogue alongside all other ecclesiological Christ clusters across the scale-free network. The fluid nature of the network means that new ecclesial nodes may enter the network whilst others may leave at any given time. For example, since the network has no hierarchical structures of authority, the ecclesiologies of Tillich, Haight and Zizioulas may engage in ecumenical dialogue on equal terms. At the same time, the network is also open to any future ecclesiological discussion between these ecclesiologies. Most significantly, the network is inclusive of the ecclesiology of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium. In support of his hypothesis that the scale-free network is a structural hermeneutic for relational ecclesiology, Frieson argues that leadership within the network functions as hubs that serve to facilitate the communication of cultural issues

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[112] For example, Ward offers a hermeneutic of a 'liquid' church in *Liquid Church: A Bold Vision of How to Be God's People in Worship and Mission – a Flexible, Fluid Way of Being Church*, 2002

[113] See for example, Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.170

[114] Dawkins, *The God Delusion*

[115] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.397

[116] Col.1:15-20

[117] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, p.59

[118] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, pp.4-6

[119] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, 1991, pp.342-347, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 1969, p.63

between the nodes. Facilitation is a democratic process in that it is the nodes that decide the time and duration of the connection between the node and the hub.[120] In terms of my hypothesis of Tillich's system and ecclesial hub, then this hub would be facilitated by the cultural hub that is ever changing in tune with the prevailing culture. In other words, the answers that stem from Tillich's hub or Christ cluster are facilitated by the questions that emerge from human existence in any given cultural situation. It is a mirror image of Tillich's method of correlation. Furthermore, Frieson argues that when the connection between the node and the hub is no longer viable then the node will seek connection elsewhere on the network. This means that the hub opens up every link that may be useful to a node in a process that is parallel to *kenosis*.[121] I suggest that here, Frieson is referring to the process of *kenosis* whereby, in the process of the self-emptying of one's own will, one becomes receptive to the perfect will of God.[122] Again, the failure of the ecclesiology of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Catholic magisterium to address in full the questions that emerge from a fluid cultural context come into sharp focus. In effect, ecclesiological hubs that fail to link to these intransigent Catholic ecclesiologies, will seek new links in order to create new hubs with which to activate their ecclesiological nodes within the network, for example, the ecclesiologies of Haight and Mannion. The hermeneutic inherent in the scale-free network is dependent upon a shift away from the hierarchical institutional orientated ecclesiology of the Catholic Church. This necessarily includes a perception of itself, and those churches in perfect communion with it, as the one and only catholic and apostolic church in which Christ subsists. Rather, the scale-free Kingdom of God network allows all ecclesiologies to engage dynamically with the fluid nature of the prevailing culture.

In terms of the Tillich's system and ecclesiological node, I refer once more to his hermeneutics of the ontological categories where individualism is in positive correlation with participation.[123] I have argued that his entire system is ontologically driven towards *koinonia* between God and his Church. Indeed, for Tillich, ecclesiology is inextricably linked to his concept of eschatological pan-en-theism that is dependent upon God's Spirit in the life of the Church.[124] Tillich's entire system turns upon an ecclesiological network of

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[120] Frieson, *Scale-Free Networks as a Structural Hermeneutic for Relational Ecclesiology*, p.18
[121] Frieson, *Scale-Free Networks as a Structural Hermeneutic for Relational Ecclesiology*, p.18
[122] Phil.2:6-7
[123] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, pp.174-178. Chapter 3, *The Ontological Structure: Finitude*, pp.37-38
[124] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, pp.420-423

eschatological and Trinitarian relationship that is well placed towards offering a new hermeneutic that has the potential to forward ecumenical dialogue towards church unity.

What then are the implications of these conclusions for my argument that humanity is on the cusp of a new age? In response, I would refer to the following Pauline text:

> But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'[125]

In effect, I am calling for a fluid ecumenical ecclesiological mindset that is inclusive of the potential significant philosophical, theological and ecclesiological contribution that Tillich has to offer the future of ecumenical ecclesiology. In the process of researching this hypothesis, I have endeavoured, in all humility, to bring integrity to my new hermeneutics of Tillich's system and ecclesiology. These are hermeneutics that have the potential to forward the Tillichian system and ecclesiology into the post-modern context and indeed onto the cusp of the future new age.

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[125] Rom.10:14-15, Isa.52:7

CONCLUSION

In my concern for the unity of the Church, I have presented the argument that the systematic theology of Paul Tillich has the potential to advance ecumenical dialogue. Tillich's sustained commitment to the concept of *Gestalt* became evident from the inception of my research. I have developed this finding to include the concept that the strength of ecclesial unity is dependent upon every denomination being an integral part of the whole Church. I have supported this argument, firstly, by a deconstruction of Tillich's system and then by a reconstruction of the system that contains all the original elements of the system, but which has resonance with current ecclesiological scholarship. The reconstruction offers the hypothesis that there is a relationship of synthesis between philosophy and theology in the Tillichian system. I have gone on to apply this hypothesis to Tillich's eschatological and Trinitarian ecclesiology and have concluded that both the system and its relationship to the Church should be perceived in terms of an ecclesiological circle. Finally, I have sought to square this circle by arguing that it has application towards current and future ecumenical ecclesiology.

Furthermore, I would argue that this conclusion has the potential to be extended even further to include its application to the inter-faith dialogue. I support this argument by making reference to Tillich's sustained commitment to revelation as universal revelation.[1] To this end, Tillich argues that the history of religions shows that revelatory experiences are received under the finite human condition, and are thus common to all religions. In order to address any distortions that may have crept into revealed religion, Tillich advocates the employment of mythical, prophetic and secular critical analysis. Based upon these principles, he is thus open to the inter-action between the history of religions and Christian theology.[2] Indeed, Tillich expresses this openness with respect to the Eliade seminars as follows:

> ... perhaps we need a longer, more intensive period of interpenetration of systematic theological study and religious historical studies. ... This is my hope for the future of theology.[3]

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[1] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 1964, p.170, based on *On The Idea of a Theology of Culture*, 1919
[2] Tillich, *The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian* in Wach, *The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding*, 1967, pp.241-255
[3] Tillich, *The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian*, in Wach, *The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding*, 1967, p.252. Mircea Eliade was Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago

For Tillich, the inner *telos* of the history of religion is that it should seek to become the religion of the 'Concrete Spirit'.[4] He bases this hypothesis upon the concept of theonomy, whereby the meaning of existence is revealed in the eschatological fulfilment of God.[5] Tillich is also referring here to his early argument that revelation is dependent upon theonomous events that are recorded throughout the history of Christianity in particular cultural situations.[6]

Again, the potential for Tillich's system to advance the inter-faith dialogue may be found in his 'Protestant Principle'. This is because this principle offers a balanced approach to theological investigation in that it addresses the existential questions that stem from culture, whilst at the same time, it incorporates the 'catholic substance'.[7] For Tillich, this is the Church's attempt throughout its history to observe an apologetic stance in prevailing cultural thought and practice, as well as to maintain the eternal core of the Christian faith. Essentially, the Tillichian Protestant Principle transcends all former religious and cultural forms, even though it can be identified in all of them. This is because it is representative of the living, moving and restless ground and power of God as the 'Concrete Spirit' within them all. In short, it is in opposition to any absolute claim made for a relative reality and the theological expression of the true religious relationship that pertains between God and all humanity.[8] Tillich seeks to engage in the inter-faith dialogue in his Bampton lectures, which he delivered at Columbia University in 1961. These were subsequently published as *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions* in 1963, in which he again applies the above principles from his early thought.

Tillich claims that revelatory experience serves to prepare adherents of other religions for the coming of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ.[9] He attempts to correct this potential difficulty for other religions by arguing that the particularity of the person of Jesus was crucified for the sake of universal humanity. This is a neat attempt by Tillich not only to liberate Jesus from bondage to the Jewish religion to which he belonged, but also to free him from the particularities of other religions. This is an image that can now be interpreted as particular and religious and yet free from

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[4] Tillich, *The Future of Religions*, 1966, pp.87-88
[5] Tillich, *The Future of Religions*, 1966, p.90
[6] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.xxvi
[7] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.3, p.245
[8] Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 1951, p.239, *The Protestant Principle and the Proletarian Situation*. A translation of the brochure, *Protestantisches Prinzip und Proletarische Situation*, Bonn: Friedrich Cohen, 1931. See *The Protestant Era*, p.298
[9] Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*, 1963, pp.2-3, 62

particularity and religion. Indeed, for Tillich, this is the criterion under which Christianity must judge itself whilst in dialogue with other religions.[10] Tillich borrows from the thought of Otto[11] to argue that all religions are sacramental in that they experience the holy as, 'present here and now, in this thing, this person, this event'.[12] For Tillich, no one religion can express adequately the expansiveness of the Holy because each religion is subject to the influences of the Holy as expressed in terms of its own history and its own culture. What is crucial for Tillich is that expressions of the Holy, other than that of Christianity, can give deeper insight into the ultimate meaning of human existence. This point is fundamental to his method of correlation, where the questions of human existence are answered in terms of theological symbols. Tillich has thus created the potential to include expressions of other religions into his systematic theology. For him, the Lordship of Jesus over history, as experienced in the present, is central to the Christian faith. Nevertheless, also for him, faith cannot judge the future destiny of historical humanity and the way in which this may end. In Tillich's words:

> Jesus is Christ for us, namely for those who participate in the historical continuum which he determines in its meaning. This existential limitation does not qualitatively limit his significance, but it leaves open other ways of divine self-manifestations before and after our continuum.[13]

What then is Tillich's perception of other divine self-manifestations outside the Christian historical continuum? Tillich's answer to this question comes back to revelatory response to various authentic contextual analysis of existence. Clearly, such response would be outside the hermeneutical parameters of the manifestation of Jesus as the Christ. However, when perceived in terms of the New Being, then has not Tillich created an equal ontological framework for inter-faith discussion? He is clear that fundamental to every human being is a longing for a new reality that is in contrast to the ambiguous reality of human existence. The soteriological message of the New Being is an ontological mediation of reality that is the criterion for all humanity, in whatever religion or culture. Indeed, Tillich is clear that the New Being is at work even in cultures where

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[10] Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*, 1963, pp.27-39
[11] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, 1924
[12] Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*, 1963, p.58
[13] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.101

the name of Jesus is unknown,[14] which brings to mind Rahner's idea of 'anonymous Christians'.[15] Would it not follow under this criterion then, that Christians could be acknowledged as 'anonymous Hindus' or 'anonymous Buddhists'? Indeed, could not the name of the historical Jesus of the Bible and the ecclesial tradition be complemented with the name Buddha or Mohammed as other manifestations of the New Being? However, Tillich's argument that all revelatory events are fragmentary and preparatory for the final revelation in Jesus as the Christ would seem to preclude this hypothesis. Nevertheless, I argue that this difficulty should be overcome if the cultural base of Tillich's method of correlation were to be widened so as to include the various fragmentary revelations that pertain to any given culture.

Indeed, this argument would leave Tillich's entire system, as it relates to universal revelation, wide open for dynamic inter-faith dialogue. It would also be the logical conclusion to the hypothesis of this thesis that Tillich's philosophical and theological system, as it is relates to ecclesiological scholarship, has much to offer ecumenical dialogue towards the unity of the Church.

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[14] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2, p.164

[15] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 1978, pp.311-321, *Theological Investigations*, vol.6, *Concerning Vatican Council II*, 1974, pp.390-398. Chapter 6, *Classical Philosophy and Theology Synthesised: Philosophy and theology synthesised*, p.104

APPENDIX

Möbius strip represents the dynamics of the Spirit in the Church
www.bartleby.com/61/imagepages/A4mobius.html Accessed 25.02.08

Philosophy
Being
Christ/Son
New Being

Theology
Being-itself
God/Father
New Being

Synthesis
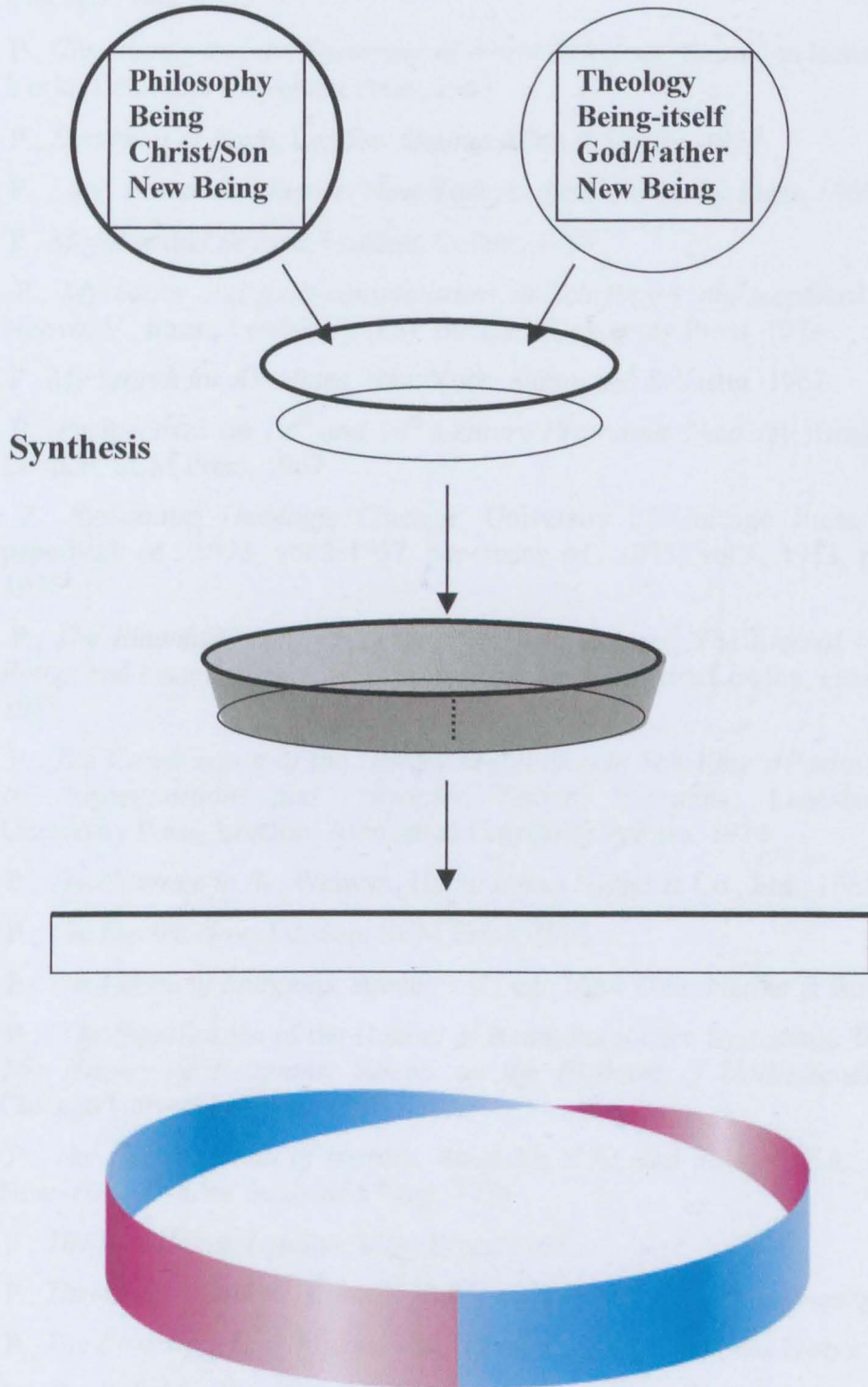
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