THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE
IN THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILLICH
WITH INCIDENTAL REFERENCE TO THE POSITIONS OF
REINHOLD NIEBUHR AND KARL BARTH

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Divinity
of the University of Edinburgh
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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1955
An exposition of any phase of Paul Tillich's thought demands an appreciation of his highly individualistic and powerful terminology. For some, this has presented an almost insurmountable obstacle. Others, having wrestled with its meaning, have discovered an insight and profundity that is at once astounding and fascinating. Such has been my experience. I have been aided in my understanding by a deep respect for what Professor Tillich is trying to do, that is, reinterpret Christian thought in terms that have meaning for this age. Welcoming his departure from traditional theological language, I have frequently in the course of this thesis allowed Tillich to speak for himself. Only by facing up squarely to his "unconventional language" can one enter fully into the "courageous venture of his original mind, struggling with important questions." Tillich's terms may be abstract, but his thought is not. It deals rigorously and realistically with the very stuff of life.

American spelling has been used throughout this thesis.

I must acknowledge my special indebtedness to those whose patience and sympathetic interest have made possible the completion of this task; to many of my colleagues, particularly to the Reverend Jack E. McClendon, whose stimulating conversations have allowed me to work out some of the difficulties encountered along the way; to my advisors, the Reverend Professors William S. Tindal and John H. S. Burleigh, for their creative guidance and encouragement; to Professor James Luther Adams of the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago, who has given me access to his extensive collection of Tillich manuscripts and translations; to President Fred Holloway and Professor Carl Michelson of Drew University, who have made available Tillich's lecture (now in the process of publication) on the "Existential Aspects of Modern Art"; and above all, to Professor Tillich himself, who has taken time out from the preparation and delivery of his second series of Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen to converse with me and who has loaned his personal copies of books and manuscripts; to all of these I express my deep appreciation.

Also, for the great helpfulness of the staffs of the New College and Old College Libraries of the University of Edinburgh, the British Museum, and the libraries of the Meadville Theological School and Union Theological Seminary, I record my sincere thanks.

W. B. C.

New York, New York
August 1955
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Contemporary Protestantism is frequently and forcefully criticized for its neglect of the problem of culture. For example, Christopher Dawson, a Roman Catholic, accuses Protestant theology of enforcing such a strict separation between religion and culture that no room is left "for any positive conception of Christian culture." He points to the rigor with which the "otherness" of the divine is pronounced by "orthodox" and "neo-orthodox" theologians as indicative of a fear "lest the transcendent divine values of Christianity be endangered by any identification or association of them with the relative human values of culture."

There is much truth in such charges. The situation which they describe is in no small part a reaction against the liberal theology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet, the divorce of culture and religion in current "neo-orthodoxy" is one extreme, just as the simple identification of the two in recent liberalism is the other. Hence, the question arises: Is there no mid-point? Is there no "via media" which combines creatively and dynamically the "no" of stringent orthodoxy with the "yes" of naive liberalism? Paul Tillich's formulation of the religion-culture dialectic intends to be a middle way.

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1Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe*, p. 10.
The purpose of this thesis is to present in a coherent whole Tillich's dialectical concept and theology of culture. Thus it is expository in character, for the most part. The ideas of Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth are introduced as contrasting shades of darkness and light to give sharper definition to the subject. A critical estimate of Tillich's thought is reserved for the final section.

The exposition itself is in two parts, corresponding to Tillich's systematic development of the problem. In the first part consideration is given to the theological and philosophical substructure underlying Tillich's interpretation of contemporary culture. Basic definitions, key concepts, functional principles and relationships are investigated. Then notice is taken of the application of these conceptual tools in the framework of his theology of culture.

The second part (beginning at Chapter VI) is concerned with Tillich's analysis of recent and contemporary cultural movements. It aims to set forth the spiritual substance which he finds implicit in economic, social, political, artistic, literary, psychological, philosophical and theological movements. At this point in the study one realizes that Tillich's theology of culture is much more than an academic exercise. It is a serious and profound attempt to discover the spiritual forces at work in the present crisis of civilization. More than that, it is an interpretation of the drama between the divine and the
demonic which is being enacted on the stage of historical time with human beings as the principal characters.

The element of crisis, central in current theology, appears as a Leitmotiv in Tillich's thought as presented in the following chapters. Karl Barth also talks and writes in terms of crisis. But the crisis that Barth envisages is timeless in its relevance; it inheres in the human situation as such. In a general way, Tillich shares this view, for he too knows that man as man stands always in a state of crisis when he is confronted by the boundaries of human possibilities and the demands of vital religion.

But the crisis which is at the center of Tillich's concern has a particular and concrete as well as a universal and abstract character. It is a crisis that is not only timelessly inherent in the human situation in general, but also timely in its special relevance, a crisis peculiar to the present situation. It is this concern with our immediate historical existence that gives Tillich's theology of culture its unique vitality and commanding importance.

Although his concepts and analysis raise serious questions and manifest glaring contradictions, one must respect his intention to stimulate a new awareness of the divine in every area of life—an awareness which will enable us to respond creatively and redemptively to this time of crisis.
CHAPTER I

TILLICH ON CULTURE: HIS STANDPOINT AND DIALECTIC

1. Tillich's Religious Standpoint

Whenever one considers the problem of culture, one faces not only contingencies and relativities which make it difficult to establish a reliable frame of meaning, but also the fact that every critic is inevitably involved in the material he is trying to survey. Complete detachment and absolute objectivity--norms for certain types of scientific investigation--are impossible for a valid interpretation of culture. They distort the truth that culture belongs to man and man belongs to culture, that he creates it and it fulfills him.

Moreover, the empirical method, based on rational presuppositions and dependent upon calculable facts, is incapable of penetrating the complexities of freedom and creativity inherent in cultural phenomena. The depth of meaning expressed in the creative act is beyond rationally intelligible systems.

Thus, a reliable interpretation of culture must be prefaced, as Tillich acknowledges, with the statement of the interpreter's viewpoint and the establishment of a suitable method of approach. The first of these matters is the concern of this chapter; the methodology appropriate to the "cultural sciences" is presented in Chapter IV.
The priority given to the presentation and elaboration of Tillich's standpoint is confirmed by the recognition that the interpreter's standpoint determines, not only the selection of material, but also the position from which it is judged. Any concept of culture which denies its standpoint is useless, as Tillich notes, until its "normal concept" (Normbegriff, the statement of a "norm" or "standpoint"), preliminary to and presupposed in every other statement, has been clarified. Every culture requires the acknowledgment of its standpoint before it can have any meaning.  

The standpoint which is explicit in and supports Paul Tillich's concept of culture is contained in one word: religion. To determine the meaning, appropriateness and adequacy of Tillich's "religious standpoint," one must explore his definition of "religion" and "culture" and inquire into the relationship between them. The quintessence of this crucial matter is contained in the following formula:

Religion is the direction _relatedness_ of the spirit toward unconditional meaning; culture is the direction of the spirit toward conditioned forms. Both meet in a directing toward the completed unity of the forms of meaning which for culture is the conclusion, but for religion is simply a symbol which is simultaneously confirmed and denied by the unconditional.
Religion, as Tillich sees it, has a double meaning. In the largest and most basic sense, it is "direction toward the unconditional." As such, it transcends every formal expression of man's cultural life. It cannot be limited to the symbols and rites of any particular religious tradition.

Nor can religion in this sense be identified with any special psychic or spiritual function. The history of religion witnesses compellingly to this fact. When religion has been identified with the moral function, it has become subservient to morality. As long as it has supported the prevailing standards, it has been accepted; but in the moment it asserts its own claims, it has either been silenced or has been cast away as subversive of morality. Often religion has been mated with the cognitive function and thus conceived as a special way to knowledge. However, when pure knowledge, strengthened by the success of scientific work, has triumphed, religion has become subordinate and has been declared irrelevant to knowledge. Again, religion has been joined with the esthetic function. But when it has refused to acknowledge that art is religion, it has been expelled from the artistic realm. Finally, it has been identified with a function that accompanies every activity and function of man's spiritual life, that is, feeling. However, when this has happened, religion has lost its
seriousness. Without a definite object of emotion, without ultimate content, it has died.\textsuperscript{3}

The prolonged and unsuccessful efforts to identify religion with any special psychic or spiritual function point to the fact that in its deepest sense, religion is beyond any and every human function and that its inherent claim to unconditionality is sacrificed when it is made one function alongside other functions. Hence, so far as Tillich is concerned, none of the theories proposed—by Hegel, who assigned religion to the theoretical side of the mind, or by Kant, who assigned it to the practical side, or by Schleiermacher, who assigned it to the emotional side—has been able to maintain itself.\textsuperscript{4}

Only as "ultimate concern" can one grasp, according to Tillich, the fullest meaning of religion. This definition is designed to give proper emphasis to both the "unconditional" and "existential" aspects of religion.

Unconditional implies independence of any conditions of character, desire or circumstance. It also conveys the idea of "totality"—"no part of ourselves or of our world

\textsuperscript{3} Paul Tillich, "Religion," \textit{Man's Right to Knowledge} (2nd Series), pp. 80-81.

\textsuperscript{4} Cf. Paul Tillich, "Ernst Troeltsch," \textit{Kant-Studien} xxix, 352-353.
is excluded from it."\textsuperscript{5} Unconditional refers to an experience of radical affirmation on the basis of radical negation—the negation of existing things, the negation of personal life. It does not denote a new reality, beside or above other realities. That would only mean another thing subject to negation. On the contrary, the unconditional, which is the ultimate in ultimate concern, "breaks-through" all reality. It is at the same time the absolute "no" and the absolute "yes" to everything. It is not something which is in being, nor is it the substance or totality of what is in being. The unconditional is that which is transcendent ("beyond being" - Überseinde) in being. "It is something and nothing in purest form." But, explains Tillich, even the predicate "is" disguises the fact that one is dealing not with an existent reality, but with a "symbolic reality" (Sinwirklichkeit)---the ultimate and profound reality which shatters all things and builds them up anew.\textsuperscript{6}

The "existential" aspect implies that the ultimate given in religious experience "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

\textsuperscript{5}Paul Tillich, \textit{Systematic Theology}, I, p.12.
\textsuperscript{6}"\textit{Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur}, pp.35-36.
interest (Kierkegaard), making us its object whenever we try to make it our object."7

If religion is what concerns man ultimately, then it is impossible for him to be genuinely irreligious. For one cannot reject religion "with ultimate seriousness, if ultimate seriousness, or the state of being ultimately concerned, is itself religion."8 Nor is it possible to imagine any historical moment in the past, present or future in which man is without religion. For

Man is that being which by his very nature is ultimately concerned and therefore essentially religious. He may not accept this situation; he may fight against it. He may try to escape the shaking experience of being grasped by an ultimate concern. He may express the ultimate in mythical, theological, philosophical, poetic, political or any other terms. He may avoid 'religious symbols' in the narrower, traditional sense of the word. But he cannot avoid religion in the larger, more profound and more universal sense. Religion lasts as long as man lasts. It cannot disappear in human history because a history without religion is not human history, which is a history in which ultimate concerns are at stake.9

It follows, that religion in this basic sense is everywhere present. It is implied in every realm of human existence. "It is the ultimate concern in all preliminary concerns, the center of all theoretical and practical

7 Systematic Theology, p.12.
8 "Religion", p.82.
9 Paul Tillich, "Vertical and Horizontal Thinking," The American Scholar (Winter 1945-46), xv, 102-103.
activities, the inexhaustible meaning in everything that has meaning." Religion is manifest in the moral sphere as the unconditional seriousness of the moral demand, in the realm of knowledge as the passionate longing for ultimate truth, and in the esthetic sphere as the infinite desire to express absolute meaning.  

After this first and central meaning has been established, a second and narrow definition must follow. Religion in the restrictive sense refers to the concrete, historical forms in which man's ultimate concern finds expression. It denotes the symbols and rites of particular traditions and institutions. It includes belief in a divine being (or beings) and the cults organized around this belief, the devotional practices of individuals and groups, the intellectual, emotional and ethical content of religious systems. Religion in this sense is one special sphere of man's cultural life, that is, the sphere where reference to his ultimate concern, where direction toward the unconditional is definite and explicit.

The significance of this secondary meaning establishing the cultural aspect of religion lies in the fact that

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11 "Religion," pp. 81-82.
"direction toward the unconditional" cannot be achieved except through cultural forms. Therefore culture has a claim upon religion which cannot be relinquished. It is in the position of deciding the form in which ultimate concern must express itself. It provides the symbols by which the unconditional ground and abyss of meaning is designated. Religion in thus dependent upon and determined by the cultural forms in which it is realized. Tillich summarizes the situation in this sentence: "Culture is the form of the expression of religion and religion is the substance of culture."

Consequently religion and culture may not properly be placed in sharp juxtaposition, for form and substance belong together. It is meaningless to posit the one without the other. From the point of view of its form, every religious act is a cultural act. And in so far as every cultural act has meaning, it is substantially religious.

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12Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History, p.50. Cf. Christopher Dawson: "....however universal and spiritual a religion may be, it can never escape the necessity of becoming incarnated in culture and clothing itself in social institutions and traditions...." (Christopher Dawson, Religion and Culture, p.54).

13"Religionsphilosophie," p. 800.
There is only this difference:

In religion the substance which is the unconditional source and abyss of meaning is designated, and the cultural forms serve as symbols for it; whereas, in culture the form, which is the conditioned meaning is designated, and the substance, which is the unconditional meaning becomes perceptible only indirectly throughout the autonomous form.\textsuperscript{14}

In other words, culture aims at unity of forms and recognizes only implicitly the demand for substance of meaning. Whereas religion does not have in mind the totality of forms, but rather aims to make explicit the unconditional substance of meaning.

The unity and difference between religion and culture is illustrated in the situation of a person who is impressed by the ceiling paintings in the Sistine Chapel and who asks whether his experience is religious or cultural. On the basis of the foregoing propositions, the only adequate answer would be, as Tillich suggests, that the experience is "cultural as to form, and religious as to substance." It is cultural because no special "ritual-activity" is involved; it is religious because it raises a question as to the ultimate meaning of human existence. This answer is in accord with the essence of each and brings into focus their interaction.\textsuperscript{15} It highlights the definitions given in the original

\textsuperscript{14}The Interpretation of History, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 49.
formula: religion is direction toward the unconditional (or man's ultimate concern) and culture is direction toward conditional forms of meaning (or the whole of man's preliminary concerns—personal, social, historical).  

2. The Dialectic

Implied in the above formulations is a hidden, ambiguous, dialectical movement which is made explicit in the following proposition:

The unconditional character of man's connection with the holy, implies that there is no Essential but only Existential difference between religion and culture. Culture as the totality of man's spiritual creativity is Essentially the expression of man's ultimate concern. But Existentially it has the tendency to isolate itself from the connection with the holy and to become secular.  

16 T. S. Eliot holds to the same proposition. He writes: "We may ask whether any culture could come into being, or maintain itself, without a religious basis. We may go further and ask whether what we call culture, and what we call the religion of a people are not different aspects of the same thing: the culture being, essentially, the incarnation (so to speak) of the religion of a people" (Notes Towards the Definition of Culture, p. 27).

Cf. Dawson: "The relation between religion and culture is always a two-sided one. The way of life influences the approach to religion, and the religious attitude influences the way of life" (op. cit., p. 57). Cf. Berdyaev: "Culture is the development of the religious cult, of its differentiation and the unfolding of its content. Philosophy, science, architecture, painting, sculpture, music, poetry and morality are all integrally comprised in the ecclesiastical cult in an undifferentiated and undeveloped form... Every culture (even the material one) is spiritual and the product of the creative work of the spirit as applied to the natural element" The Meaning of History, pp. 212-213.

The word "existential" in the above statement refers to man's experience of something other than the essential harmonious relation between religion and culture. Man knows two separate areas—one called "religion" and the other called "culture." He finds a competitive tension between them: religion stands against culture and culture stands against religion. He encounters "a temple beside a town hall, a Lord's Supper beside a daily supper, prayer beside work, meditation beside research, 'caritas' beside 'eros.'"\(^{18}\)

The split between religion and culture is the basis of the ambiguity of the cultural life. It accounts for the fact that no cultural function is essential or existential only. Elements of both are always present and interpenetrating. Four sets of categories are used by Tillich to describe this ambiguity:\(^{19}\)

1) Culture as the expression of man's spiritual life bears the marks of creative and destructive tensions at the same time. All cultural activities and systems are moved by the pull between form and freedom, conservation and revolution, collectivity and individuality. On the one hand, creativity is manifest in the possibility of balancing and

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\(^{19}\) The following paragraphs are based upon formulations in the mimeographed "Propositions" for Part IV of *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, and on the basis of lecture notes.
transcending these tensions in the direction of meaningful substance. On the other hand, destructiveness appears in the predominance of one side of the tension above the other, leading either to an overwhelming reaction of the one side to the other or to its complete suppression. Either case means death for the cultural system.

2) Culture as a reflection of the separation and reunion of human existence has a tendency to be total and fragmentary at the same time. Its total character is seen in the relatedness of every sphere to the ultimate life principle which binds them all together. Its fragmentary character appears in the separation of particular functions from one another, as, for example, when the economic and social realms are set against the artistic and religious realms and also in the partial disruption of the essential unity of theory and practice within every cultural activity. "Theory, separated from practice, is unconcerned intuition or utopian criticism of the realities of cultural life. Practice, separated from theory, is mechanical traditionalism or arbitrary activism."20 The polarity between the total and fragmentary character of all culture emphasizes the impossibility of a "perfect culture". It denies all perfectionism so long as perfectionism implies that in existence the

ambiguities of culture can ever be fully overcome. At the same time, this polarity affirms that the highest form of the unity of the total and the fragmentary character of culture is sacrifice, that is, the sacrifice of form for the sake of meaning. The supreme example of this sacrifice, declares Tillich, is to be found in religious symbols.

3) Culture as the actualization of man's spiritual being contains greatness and tragedy at the same time. It has greatness in so far as it expresses its inexhaustible ground of meaning; it has tragedy in so far as it attempts to dissociate itself from its ultimate meaning. Greatness is measured in terms of power of being, in terms of the participation of a cultural act or object in ultimate creativity. Every cultural form has some greatness and this is what makes it subject to tragedy. For tragedy strikes that which is great because it is great. It consists in the confusion between conditioned form and unconditional substance, or in finite meaning trying to make itself infinite. The gravest tragedy is the idol—some fragmentary element which claims greatness for itself. However, greatness and tragedy are always interdependent in such a way that no cultural act is tragic alone or great alone. The highest form of the unity of greatness and tragedy is expressed in tragic art, in which morals, culture, and religion are united.
The final set of polar concepts concerns the ambiguity of the holy and the profane in every cultural activity. Every cultural act has holiness in so far as its divine background is clear; and every cultural act is demonically distorted in so far as it makes one finite reality infinite and universal. It is not necessary at this point to comment further on these two concepts; for besides witnessing to the ambiguity of cultural life, they express the basic dialectic underlying the split between religion and culture, and, therefore, are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Now, all of these ambiguities are present in every cultural function, including religion, in so far as it expresses itself in cultural forms. "Religion has holiness, greatness, uniting and creative power as the receptive of the infinite. Religion has demonic, tragic, disruptive and destructive implications as the expression of it in forms of Existential finitude. The religious life is the highest glory and deepest shame of man." Nevertheless, it is in religion that the quest for that which transcends the ambiguities of culture, for a "trans-cultural culture," is to be found.

The inner ambiguity of culture and religion comes to full focus in the message which denies both, and yet is subject to both, namely, the message of the Cross. For "the
Word of the Cross, too, became religion in the moment it was uttered, and it became culture in the moment it was perceived. But its greatness and the proof of its absoluteness is that it denies again and again the religion and culture that proclaim it. In the power of this unique manifestation, present in every manifestation of the divine, religion and culture co-exist. They are dependent on that which denies their separation.

The Word of the Cross, pointing to the "pre-mythological" unity of unconditional substance and conditioned forms, testifies to the impossibility of secular culture. For secular culture, like atheism, presupposes unconditional meaning and expresses ultimate concern.

Likewise, the Cross leaves no room for any special religious sphere of culture, or even for holy objects or "sanctified" methods of religious perception. It opens the way for any reality to become a bearer of the mystery of the divine. Nothing is excluded from being religious just because nothing is designated as religious on the basis of special qualities.

22 The Interpretation of History, p. 234.
24 Systematic Theology, p. 118. Cf. Jaspers doctrine of "ciphers": there is nothing which cannot be a "cipher," i.e., which may not in a favorable moment give intuition of Transcendence or being-in-itself.
While the Word of the Cross confirms the essential unity of religion and culture, it denies every human claim to recapture this unity. It may indeed be anticipated or even indicated at certain periods of history, called theonomous. But a complete overcoming of their separation belongs to the Kingdom of God and is not the result of human endeavor.

Therefore, under the condition of existence, three possible relations between culture and religion are to be reckoned with. First, there is the possibility that the two may be mutually indifferent. This relation is known as "autonomy." It is reached when cultural forms are created without reference to their religious content. Autonomy always involves two elements: obedience to laws of form and resistance to unconditional meaning. It is obedience in so far as it subjects forms to the unconditional demand for meaning; it is resistance in so far as it denies unconditional meaning. Autonomous culture is thus simultaneously "hybris" and "gift of God."[25]

The second relation is achieved by elevating some preliminary, cultural concern to the place of ultimate concern—religion. Here unconditional meaning and authority are claimed for a particular form (more often than not, a religious form) as over against all other forms. This relation

[25]"Religionsphilosophie, pp. 800, 801."
is called "heteronomy" and opposes the "cultural hybris" of autonomy with "religious hybris."  

The third relation occurs when conditioned forms become vehicles for the unconditioned, that is, when cultural creations are fulfilled in the content of ultimate meaning. This relationship between culture and religion is called "theonomy" and marks the balancing of autonomy and heteronomy which remain as tensions within theonomy. Theonomy represents the partial achievement of a priori, essential unity and thus anticipates the Kingdom of God.  

Under all the conditions of existence where culture and religion have to do with one another, a basic dialectic (an unconditional "yes" and "no") is presupposed. When it is repressed, as in autonomy and heteronomy, a break-up follows. And by contrast, its expression in theonomy is the power which preserves the balance. This dialectic is at the heart of Paul Tillich's concept of culture. It is the expression of the union and separation which characterize the religion-culture relationship. And, at the same time, it witnesses to the primary truth that separation is related to union. Tillich summarizes this matter in the following metaphor:

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\[26\text{Loc. cit.}\]

If we imagine the import (or ultimate meaning) to be the sun, and form to be the orbit of a planet, then for every form of culture there is proximity to and distance from the sun or the import. If, on the one hand, it is the power of the sun which is revealed in nearness to the sun, it is, on the other hand, the peculiar power in the movement of planets which is expressed in the distance from the sun; and yet, it is the sun itself which supports both nearness and distance.

The above metaphor accents the view that all cultural phenomena are on the periphery of reality and yet are related to its center, its inviolable core.

3. The Holy and the Profane.

The dialectic between religion and culture has its roots in the dialectic between the holy and the profane. Every philosophy of religion and every theology of culture rests, in Tillich's view, on this final dialectic. Hence, a brief review of his treatment of this dialectic is in order.

28 Paul Tillich, "Religiöser Stil und religiöser Stoff in der bildenden Kunst," Das Neue Deutschland (1921), ix, 155. T. S. Eliot suggests that the unity of "religion and culture remains on the unconscious level, upon which we have superimposed a conscious structure wherein religion and culture are contrasted and can be opposed." But the contrast "imposes a strain: we escape from this strain by attempting to revert to an identity of religion and culture which prevailed at a more primitive stage....Hence....I am obliged to maintain two contradictory positions: that religion and culture are aspects of one unity, and that they are two different and contrasted things." (Eliot, op. cit., pp. 68-69).
Holiness is a quality of the unconditional. An act or object is holy in so far as it is related to the unconditional, in so far as it is a bearer of unconditional meaning. And it is profane to the extent that it fails to give expression to the unconditional.

All reality is in tension between the holy and the profane. Reality which has affirmed fully its ground of meaning, which has achieved holiness, is the realized Kingdom of God. But, Tillich insists, the Kingdom of God is symbol and not reality, since unconditional meaning cannot be placed beside conditioned meaning or even beside the totality of meanings, as God cannot stand "beside" the world. What stands beside one object is another object and therefore cannot be God. The unconditional has the quality of being inexhaustibly holy. If its holiness could be exhausted in any single object, or in any totality, then it would be finite and not unconditional.

Just as every negative can live only by the power of the positive that it negates, so every thing that is profane is dependent upon the holy. And as unconditional holiness is totally beyond finite possibility, so the completely profane, which is the Satanic, or destruction without creation, is not really possible. All reality, then, must move within the polarity of the holy and the profane.
In other words, all reality contains the affirmation and the denial of "the finite by the unconditional." It is affirmed "in the sense that the finite is supported in its depths by a substance greater than any single phenomenon." It is denied in the sense that it is not appearance as such which gives it this quality, for the appearance of all reality is rejected by the holy as such.  

The nature of this denial or the negative aspect of the profane, is clarified in Tillich's discussion of the relationship between the profane and the demonic. He shows how the profane is itself an attempt to overcome the demonic by subjecting it to rational form. But in the process, the divine depth is lost; its creative aspects are denied. "In so far as the profane is the realization of a pure rational form, it means the overcoming of the demonic; and in so far as it must recognize the resistance to the realization of rational form, it falls back into the demonic." Or to state the matter from the point of the divine, it can be said that: "In so far as the demand that pure form be realized is contained in the divine, profanization is affirmation of the divine. In so far as absolute transcendence over every form is contained in the divine, the profane means negation of the divine."  

29 "Religionsphilosophie," p. 806.  
30 The Interpretation of History, p. 111.
Thus the dialectical character of both the holy and the profane leads to the conclusion that there is no ground for holiness in things themselves. There is no preferred sphere, there are no persons, scriptures, communities, institutions, or actions that are in themselves holy. Nor are there any which are in themselves profane. Nevertheless, there are things and people, forms and processes, which possess overwhelming symbolic power and whose meanings are realized in becoming holy. The mark of symbolic power is the ecstatic character and the potentiality for expressing unconditional meaning which a thing receives through subjective intention.

For considering the inner ecstatic quality of a person or thing, Tillich offers the following classification: Autonomy looks at everything from the point of view of the ideal unity of the holy and the profane. It seeks to transcend the immediately given through an ideal demand; it turns ecstasy into enthusiasm for the ideal. The weakness of autonomy is that it does not see that ideal being is determined by the unconditional. "It forgets in the presence of the thing as it is its ground, and in the presence of the thing as it should be the abyss." On the other hand, heteronomy takes the viewpoint of the supranatural, asserting that the holy has so identified itself with the holy object that it has raised the object into a higher sphere and
has thus set it over against everything else profane. In heteronomy the insight is lost that the holiness of a being is achieved through the negation of its immediate existence. It does not remember that the holy object is on the same level as all other objects.\(^3\)

Whereas both autonomy and heteronomy contradict the dialectical character of the holy, theonomy preserves it. Theonomy rejects idealism because it does not put ideal forms under the "no" of the unconditional, thus depriving of their holiness real forms in a false manner as well as making ideal forms holy in a false manner. It rejects supernaturalism because it sanctifies a definite form in and of itself, and thereby excludes all others. In contrast to both, theonomy penetrates into the dialectical character of the holy and of ecstasy—the character of inner transcendence. It recognizes that while the unconditional breaks through all forms, it has no form itself. In this way theonomy preserves both the positive and negative elements of the holy. The first makes the holy that which blesses, that which drives toward unconditional fulfillment. The second transforms the holy into the untouchable, the "taboo." From the first results the strivings of religion; from the second, the denial which is necessary if one would become a "vessel to receive grace."\(^3\)

\(^3\)"Religionsphilosophie," pp. 806-807
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 808.

a. Adequacy of Tillich’s standpoint.

The essential relation between religion as "direction toward the unconditional" and the meaningful substance expressed in cultural creativity affirms the necessity, validity and universality of Tillich’s religious standpoint. Only a standpoint sensitive to the ultimate concern implied in all preliminary concerns can provide a suitable interpretation of cultural life.

Tillich’s religious standpoint and the principle it embodies is, on the one hand, an intuition into the ultimate character of reality, and on the other hand, an expression of a basic attitude. Both may be defined simply as a meaningful approach to reality. This intuition and attitude is not a special function, but rather an understanding such as is inherent in all cultural activity. Every branch of culture, even the most exact, the most subject to methodical technique, contains fundamental presuppositions rooted neither in formal evidence nor in material possibility, but in a decision for the meaningfulness of reality as a whole. "The meaningfulness of reality as a whole" connotes the principle that informs but does not exhaust itself in cultural creativity. It constantly breaks through cultural forms and yet is beyond every particular form and beyond the totality of forms and therefore can never be a form beside other forms. It is the
religious principle or standpoint. But the identification of this principle with a particular ecclesiastical tradition is a denial of the religious standpoint and a rationalization of spirit which hinders creative activity.

b. Tillich's use of the dialectical method.

In his fundamental use of the dialectical method, Tillich has much more in common with the older Schelling than with Hegel. The latter's dialectic of "spirit" does not allow for a real distinction between essence and existence. Movement of affirmation and negation through the stages of thesis and anti-thesis toward inevitable, unambiguous synthesis is for Hegel a law of progress. To the contrary, Schelling and Tillich propose an existential dialectic which is never more than a method of describing the movement of life in its inner tensions and contradictions and in its trend toward more embracing unities. Consequently, both offer substantially the same criticism of the Hegelian method.33 They describe alike the radical separation between essence and existence and speak in similar terms of the dynamic immanence of the divine overcoming the separation.

33Tillich's criticism of Hegel is set forth at length in the address, "Hegel," delivered on the centenary of his death and published in the Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie Religionsgeschichte, 1932. In his view, Hegel's dialectic was dynamic in the beginning, but in the end it lost its openness and flexibility.
On this point both men have been influenced by Jakob Böhme's analysis of divine creativity in terms of "primal ground" (Unggrund), "abyssal nought," and "formless omni-possibility" (gestalt lose Allmöglichkeit).34 And Tillich's picture of the mystical experience or ecstasy which perceives "the holy bond of unity underlying all things," is strikingly similar to Schelling's.

On the whole, significant parallels are to be expected in view of Tillich's early grounding in and love for Schelling's mystical philosophy of nature. His is an influence that Tillich has always been glad to acknowledge.

34 Nicolas Berdyaev provides a significant parallel to Tillich on this and many other points (Cf. The meaning of History, pp. 54-58). For an instructive comparison, see Daubney, op. cit., pp. 7-9.
CHAPTER II

BARTH, NIEBUHR, AND TILlich ON CULTURE: 
CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS

It must be remembered in comparing Paul Tillich's interpretation with Karl Barth's and Reinhold Niebuhr's that Tillich deals with culture directly and systematically, while Barth and Niebuhr treat it only in an indirect and disorganized fashion. Yet all three share a common standpoint, religion, thus making possible an instructive comparison.

1. Karl Barth

Tillich's dialectical approach comes into sharp focus beside Barth's extreme dualism. The latter's whole interpretation is summed up in the first commandment: "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods beside me." By way of explanation Barth adds: "If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called 'the infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: 'God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.'"1 However, when Barth comes to demonstrate this principle, he applies the positive exclusively to God, rejecting

1Karl Barth, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. by Edwin C. Hoskyns, p. 10. For other passages emphasizing God's transcendence, see pp. 35-37, 331

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man and his cultural creations as wholly negative.° He deems every aspect of the human situation to be "totally depraved." Whatever image of the divine may have been contained in original creation has been destroyed by sin. Culture and history are spheres in which man in his brokenness stands by himself alone. Natural man, man in his finitude, is doomed to wander in darkness, condemned to death by his question about good, and certain only that from the viewpoint of the good, he is powerless. ³ "Man is a riddle and nothing else, and his universe, be it ever so vividly seen and felt, is a question. God stands in contrast

° Jacob Taubes has commented on how Barth, beginning with the second edition of the Roemerbrief (1923), shifts his emphasis to such a degree that "dialectical theology becomes a 'theology of crisis.'" The spirit of critique is radicalized to a spirit of crisis. The antithesis takes on the aspect of perennial contradiction. The negative characteristics are exegetically unfolded in all lengths and at all depths. The smell of death reaches to the highest and most sublime realms of human activity.... If the dialect of the first edition of the Roemerbrief can be interpreted in the light of a religious Hegelianism, the second edition reveals the influence of Kierkegaard's negative dialectic on every page." Taubes also marks a further shift in emphasis in Barth's thought, beginning with the Kirchliche Dogmatik in 1932: "Not God's divine judgment is the theme but the divine incarnation in the human flesh" ("Theodicy and Theology: A Philosophical Analysis of Karl Barth's Dialectical Theology," in The Journal of Religion (October 1954), pp. 236, 237, 239). Cf. Paul Tillich, "Denker der Zeit: Karl Barth," in Vossische Zeitung (January 20, 1926), p. 1.

to man as the impossible in contrast to the possible, as death in contrast to life, as eternity in contrast to time."4

The thought of nature pointing to a lost good, or of culture containing a hidden meaning, or of man finding within himself a question implying a divine answer, is forcefully resisted by Barth. "The solution of the riddle, the answer to the question, the satisfaction of our need is the absolutely new event....There is no way which leads to this event; there is no faculty in man for apprehending it."5

Barth's unreservedly negative attitude implies Marcionism, that is, the identification of finiteness with sin, creation with the fall. He further substantiates this view by his yearning for the passing of the present order and for the establishment of a new spiritual realm. In fact, he admits that his theology may be rightly taken as "neo-Marcionism."6

For Barth, the only relief from the "impenetrable muteness" of the human situation is the isolation of a holy

4Ibid., p. 197.
5Loc. cit., Cf. Karl Barth, Kirchliche Dogmatik, I, 190. On this score, Williams has noted Barth's indebtedness to Kant: "Barth's early theological development was within the framework of the Kantian philosophy with its sharp restrictions on metaphysical knowledge. Barth can take the attitude he does toward all human 'world views' because he implicitly relies on Kant's Critical Philosophy with its limitation of scientific knowledge to the world of appearance. God lies wholly beyond our experience" (Daniel Day Williams, What Present-day Theologians are Thinking, p. 48).
6Ibid., p. 99
sphere. But even here, there is no escape. For the holy itself signifies the unconditional "no" which God pronounces upon civilization. The holy can assume only a negative, never a polar relationship to the profane. Consequently, culture can furnish neither standards for Christian teaching nor norms for Christian conduct. Likewise, no historical event can lay claim to being even a partial revelation of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is never present in history, just as the divine is never manifest in any cultural form. The only voice that Barth can hear is the bitter wail of man in his brokenness and loneliness, crying aloud,

Where is God in all the human? Where is the meaning in all the meaninglessness, the original purpose in the degeneration, the wheat in the midst of all the weeds? Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return. Is this not the right verdict concerning humanity, and is it not humanity's own creed?

The discrepancies between Barth's announced intention and his actual system (between his blueprint and the theological structure that he finally erects) are astutely noted by Tillich in answering the question, "What is wrong with the

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7 Barth seems to remove God so completely that he borders on Deism, described by Thomas Carlyle as "an absentee God, sitting idle....at the outside of His Universe and seeing it go" (Sartor Resartus, p. 112). Kurt Leese accuses Barth of "consigning the world to the devil in the name of God" ("Das System der Wissenschaften," Christliche Welt, XL, 1926, 318).

8 Barth, op. cit., p. 278.
'Dialectic' Theology?" In short, replies Tillich, it is not dialectic."

A dialectic theology is one in which 'yes' and 'no' belong inseparably together. In the so-called 'dialectic' theology, they are irreconcilably separated, and that is why this theology is not dialectic. Rather it is paradoxical, and therein lies its strength; and it is supernatural, which constitutes its weakness.9

Commenting further on its "non-dialectical" character, Tillich explains how Barth's obsession with the divine sovereignty has resulted in the denial of mysticism and the rejection of philosophy of religion. Since these two disciplines presuppose some knowledge of God prior to the act of faith (mysticism through nature, philosophy through reason), they are radically opposed by Barth. He caustically condemns as tending toward the deification of man all theology which admits of human activity.

9Paul Tillich, "What's Wrong with the 'Dialectic' Theology?", Journal of Religion (April 1935), XV, 127. Tillich makes this same criticism in another connection: "Barth is correct in stressing the statement that God is in heaven and that we are on earth, that God is the creator and that we are creatures; but he is at fault in simply putting these two statements beside one another, without inquiring into the dialectical relation between them. The thought of Barth is not dialectical in the proper sense, and he shares this defect with the liberal theology which he attacks" ("Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Incarnation," Church Quarterly Review, January-March 1949, CXLVII, 114).
Barth's defiant supernaturalism, rather than protecting the sovereignty of God, appears to Tillich as a distortion of it. It was on this count that he and Bultmann and finally even Brunner broke with Barthianism. To say that the divine cannot be associated with human procedures, and then to assert that in a definite temporal event God becomes manifest, seemed an absurdity. If culture and history are purely God-abandoned, then how can a historical and culturally conditioned revelation be perceived as such?

Certainly God is in heaven and man is on earth. But man can make this statement only in case heaven and earth have touched one another time and again, not only once, but in a process of history in which statements and then doubts have been expressed about gods who are thought to be on earth and men who are thought to be in heaven.¹⁰

Tillich agrees that neither history nor culture as such is to be confused with revelation. Both are human possibilities, while revelation is a divine possibility. Yet revelation would not be a divine possibility unless it could be received by means of cultural forms as human phenomena. Otherwise, it would be a foreign substance, a non-human entity conveying no message and bearing no meaning within the human sphere. "It could communicate only with a ghostly and empty form of man, the content of whose being would have to be

¹⁰Ibid., p. 138.
self-engendered."11

Because Barth refused to recognize the divine immanence in historical events or in cultural creations or even in man’s preliminary erring knowledge about God, which makes revelation possible, Tillich turned away to the dialectical position illustrated by his concept of culture.

2. Reinhold Niebuhr

Over against the rigidly negative position of Karl Barth stands the unrefined dialecticism of Reinhold Niebuhr. Unlike Barth, Niebuhr finds an ultimate coherence, or essential unity, within the whole of reality. Religion and culture, the sacred and the secular, the holy and the profane do meet in a final congruity. However, this congruity is not the product of rational theories, most of which

11 Loc. cit. Cf. "I agree with Barth that there is no experience of God without revelation of God, that there is no natural knowledge of God. But I disagree with Barth if he says that there is no historical experience of God. It must be emphasized that such an assertion makes historical revelation utterly impossible. Consequently, I assert that in every historical experience of God there is implied an element of revelation; or that history must receive revelation in every moment in order to be able to receive it in one moment. For every moment in history is dependent on every other one, the present on the past and the future on the present; and conversely, the meaning of the past on the meaning of the present, and the meaning of the present on the meaning of the future. This interdependence in history entails that the one moment which we call revelation can be revelation for us only because there is preceding revelation in every moment" (Paul Tillich, "Natural and Revealed Religion," Christendom, Autumn 1935, I, 167).
sacrifice some aspect of reality—its uniqueness or its freedom—in order to arrive at a proper synthesis.

Only in the suprarational affirmations of the Christian faith are the antinomies and contradictions of existence finally resolved. It is this element of suprarationality, argues Niebuhr, which makes Christianity different from pantheistic religions that look for essential harmony either within the structures of existence or in some universal subsistence above and beyond the world. Niebuhr, like Tillich, discovers the basic unity of culture and history in the manifestation of a suffering divine love.

This love bears within itself the contradictions and cross-purposes made possible by human freedom....The Holy Spirit, who is the final bond of unity...represents not only the rational harmony of all things in their nature but the ultimate harmony, which includes both the power of the creator and the love of the Redeemer....In short, the situation is that the ultrarational principles of Christian truth, embodying paradox and contradiction and straining at the limits of rationality are...the keys which made the drama of human life and history comprehensible and without which it is either given too simple meaning or falls into meaninglessness.12

This view leads Niebuhr to oppose, on the one hand, the tradition represented by Tertullian, Duns Scotus, Luther, Kierkegaard, and Barth—which denies any fundamental coherence between religion and culture, revelation and reason; and on

12 Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, pp. 164-165.
the other hand, the tradition which identifies religion and culture, revelation and reason—represented by Origin, Aquinas, the Christian Platonists and Humanists, and modern liberal theology. These are the two sides of the debate running throughout history: the one unconcerned with the disciplines of culture, makes "the suprarational affirmations of faith too simply irrational," while the other, absolutizing cultural pursuits, equates too simply meaning and rationality. The first overlooks the vital patterns of coherence in existence; the second obscures the profound contradictions and incongruities of human life.\(^ {13} \)

Niebuhr caricatures the latter, the liberal tradition, as

a confection in which the whole cake comes from the modern temporal world view. The icing is Christian; and the debate between the secular or the Christian version is usually on the question whether the icing is too sweet or whether the cake would be more wholesome with or without the icing.\(^ {14} \)

Kierkegaard and Barth, the high priests of the wholly negative tradition, are guilty, charges Niebuhr, of rendering the Christian message devoid of meaning by setting it in contradiction to all forms of cultural creativity. Kierkegaard, in reacting to Hegel, exploits the contradictions and is thus driven to a "hazardous" subjectivity which tries to embrace

\(^ {13} \text{Loc. cit.} \)

\(^ {14} \text{Tbid., p. 190.} \)
all the ambiguities of life within the existing self. Barth, denying all human integrity, takes the other alternative—complete objectivity. He sees "the Word of God as the only light which shines in darkness, and its acceptance or non-acceptance as a pure mystery of grace."15

Since the perilous subjectivism of Kierkegaard and the irrational objectivism of Barth are grounded in the same disavowal of commerce between religion and culture, Niebuhr rejects both. The consequences of Barth’s position seem to him more dangerous, however, for it produces a literalistic and allegorical faith "fashioned for the catacombs" and little suited to the "task of transforming the natural stuff of politics by the grace and wisdom of the Gospel."16 Its application of the doctrine of total depravity

15Cf. "Barth carries this Augustinian emphasis (on justification) to a point where he is forced to deny what both Saint Paul and Augustine affirm, namely, that man is formed in the image of God and thus innately capable of knowing something about God....In Saint Paul’s first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans he ascribes to the Gentiles a natural capacity to know the Creator through the creation. Barth....treats the Pauline doctrine with gingerly ambiguity, being prevented by his conception of Biblical authority from an unequivocal rejection. He is forced to reject the conception of a 'natural theology' in every instance by his conviction that every effort to understand God on the part of man leads to a deification of man, particularly to the sin of making human reason the unconditioned principle of life and clue to the meaning of existence" (Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Contribution of Paul Tillich," Religion in Life, Autumn 1937, p. 574).

16Ibid., p. 196
to every realm of life makes impossible any dialogue between the holy and the profane.

In the foregoing criticisms, offered as a part of his own position, Niebuhr is quite definite. However, it is largely by implication that the positive aspect of his interpretation is then expressed. He follows the dialectical method to the point of distinguishing from the two previous positions a third which he calls "biblical realism." But when it comes to elaborating this position, Niebuhr leaves much to be desired. When his clues about "biblical realism" are taken together, they seem to anticipate the idea of a theonomous culture supported by "beliefful realism" which Tillich has carefully developed. The parallel will be increasingly evident as both views unfold.

"Biblical realism," Niebuhr explains, rests on the belief that the "coherences and causalities of life and history" must be taken with absolute seriousness. It assumes a positive attitude toward all the disciplines of culture—particularly philosophy and science, recognizing that the limits which they reveal suggest a profounder mystery and meaning beyond them.

There is no mystery of life, or complexity of causal relations, which do not...upon careful scrutiny point to a mystery beyond themselves. There is, therefore, no way of understanding the ultimate problem of human existence if we are not diligent in the pursuit of proximate answers and solutions. Nor is there any way
of validating the ultimate solution without constantly relating it to all proximate possibilities.17 Cf. Tillich's "method of correlation." 3

By taking seriously the evidence from physical science, "biblical realism" adopts a more closed attitude toward the realm of causation. This, in turn, leads to a radical reinterpretation of such Biblical myths as the fall of man, the New Testament miracle stories, the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Christ. But at the same time, "biblical realism" remains open to particular events that have special depth and penetrate in a decisive way into the meaning of the whole (cf. Tillich's idea of kairos).18 It stands on the belief that the divine is encountered in creativities which introduce elements into the historic situation which could not have been anticipated;...in judgment whenever human ideals, values, and historical achievements are discovered to be in contradiction to the divine rather than in simple harmony with the ultimate coherence of things...and in, events in which the divine judgments lead to a reconstruction of life. These are revelations of redeeming grace in which the old self, including the collective self of false cultures, is destroyed, but the destruction leads to a newness of life. Cf. Tillich's idea of a theonomous "break-through" on the demonic ground of a heteronomous culture. 19

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17 Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, II, 211.
18 Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 197.
19 Ibid., p. 200.
3. Contrast and Comparisons

In further comparing and summarizing Tillich's position with that of Barth and Niebuhr, it seems helpful to utilize the general categories suggested by Professor Richard Niebuhr in his monumental treatment of the "Christ-and-Culture problem." Since neither of our three theologians is referred to in Professor Niebuhr's essay, the writer must assume full responsibility for the following classification.

Karl Barth can be recognized readily as belonging to the "dualists" who hold Christ and culture in strict paradox. Over against those who try to effect some type of synthesis, this group, early represented by St. Paul and Marcion, envisions an unending conflict between Christ and culture, or, as they prefer, between God and man. Their logical starting point is the event called Jesus the Christ, by whose cross God in grace "reaches out across the no-man's land of the historic war" and brings reconciliation. The extent of human depravity makes it impossible for man to take so much as the first step toward reconciliation. All of his creations are plagued by the "virus of sin," which is the will to be God. The "whole edifice of culture is cracked and madly askew." Consequently the will to receive grace must itself be God's doing.

Yet Barth, like all true "dualists" and unlike the "radical rejectionists," knows that he is joined to culture
and cannot escape from it.

If we had our first wish, would we not turn away from life and society, in utter scepticism and discouragement? But whither? From life and society one cannot turn away. They surround us on all sides...they confront us with decisions. We must hold our ground.20

Under these circumstances, Barth, along with Luther (the chief exponent of cultural dualism), is forced to recognize a negative value in cultural forms and institutions. That is, the restraint of the powers of evil and the prevention of complete anarchy. His evaluation of the state is an example:

The Christian community is aware of the need for the civil community, and it alone takes the need absolutely seriously. For...it knows of man's presumption and the plainly destructive consequences of man's presumption. It knows how dangerous man is and how endangered by himself. It knows him...as a being who...if he were not checked in time...would bring human time to an end...It sees as the visible means of this protection of human life from chaos the existence of the civil community....21

From this follows a responsibility on the part of the Christian both toward society as a whole and toward civil authority in particular.

It is not ours to be onlookers; it is ours to take our appointed place in the world's march. We are forced to it by the consciousness of solid responsibility laid upon our souls for the degenerate world; we are forced to it

20 The Word of God and the Word of Man, pp. 272-273.
21 Karl Barth, Against the Stream, p. 20.
by the thought of the Creator who is and remains the Creator even of our fallen world. However true it may be that everything we do within the limits of mere particular things and events is only play in relation to what really should be done, it is none the less significant play if it is rightly engaged in. Poor players will certainly not make good workers; camp followers, correspondents, and spectators on the battle-field of the everyday can hardly be made into shock troops to storm the kingdom of heaven.

The dualism of Barth, especially prominent in his early writings, besides being reminiscent of Luther, shows also a striking similarity to the paradoxes and ambivalences of Kierkegaard, although the latter did not concern himself directly with the Christ-and-Culture problem.

Barth and the "dualists" do make a positive contribution to Christianity and to culture, however. To Christianity they impart a new awareness of the sovereignty of God, together with a fresh determination to live confidently apart from the legalism of custom and tradition. To culture they give a new sense of proportion, a loss of interest in culture-for culture's-sake, and a stronger emphasis upon service to humanity.

At first glance, Tillich seems unquestionably to belong to the "synthesizers" in the "Christ-Above-Culture"

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22 *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p. 306.
class. He could not honestly say, "Either Christ or culture" (as did Tertullian and Tolstoy) because in both an ultimate concern is implied. Nor could he adopt the unambiguous "Christ of culture" position (as did Abelard and Ritschl). So, of the remaining possibilities within the "Christ-Above-Culture" class, Tillich would appear to be most at home with Clement of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas. As one of his recent critics has said, he "shows a concern to relate theology to all knowledge and all culture which reminds one more of St. Thomas than of any contemporary Protestant thinker."\(^2^\)

Certainly, Tillich would insist with St. Thomas on a frank recognition of the existential gulf between Christ and culture. He would further agree that if protest against prevailing ecclesiastical forms and institutions is to be effective, it must be incorporated into the church without losing its radical character. Like St. Thomas, Tillich represents a Christianity that accepts responsibility for the social institutions in which man's life is spent. And like St. Thomas, he urges the individual on to maximum self-affirmation.\(^2^5\)

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\(^2^4\) Walter M. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," in The Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 27

\(^2^5\) Richard Niebuhr, op. cit., pp. 128-129.
Tillich shares with St. Thomas the belief that some type of synthesis between religion and culture must be attempted. For this endeavor both insist upon combining philosophy and theology without confusing them. And they recognize that whatever synthesis is achieved will be "full of tensions and dynamic movements and subject to strains." Finally, both ground their syntheses in the essential unity of all things as manifest in the Christ.

However, Tillich seems to be more aware of the tendency to "absolutize" which is the demonic element in every synthesis. Being ever alert to this danger, he scrupulously tries to avoid elevating the finite to the place of the infinite or lowering the infinite to the status of finitude. Thus, he demands repeatedly that his synthesis be kept open, subject to radical criticism, always provisional and symbolic, always confronted by the threat and support of the inexhaustible depth.

It is this fundamental assertion which inclines Tillich more toward Augustine and the tradition of those who receive Christ as the "transformer of culture," than toward St. Thomas and the "synthesizers." And to this same tradition Reinhold Niebuhr seems committed.

Tillich's awareness of the tension between every synthesis, even the highest, and the absolute referred to in it, is reminiscent of the early Fichte, though the latter finds the tension only in the field of practical conduct whereas Tillich finds it also in that of theoretical knowledge.
Tillich, Niebuhr and the "conversionist" group are alert to the perils which have caused many to reject both the "dualist" and the "synthesist" positions. Christopher Dawson is among the many, and his criticisms have prepared the way for the renewal and acceptance in our day of the "conversionist" answer. Dawson writes:

Any religious movement which adopts a purely critical and negative attitude to culture is therefore a force of destruction and disintegration which mobilizes against it the healthiest and most constructive elements in society—elements which can by no means be dismissed as worthless from the religious point of view. On the other hand, the identification of religion with the particular cultural synthesis which has been achieved at a definite point in time and space by the action of historical forces is fatal to the universal character of religious truth. It is indeed a kind of idolatry—the substitution of an image made by man for the eternal transcendent reality.27

Against the pitfalls of "dualist" and "synthesist" positions, Tillich and Niebuhr have set up three safeguards which serve at the same time as foundation stones for their own dialectical concepts of culture. The first concerns creation: in contrast to Barthian neglect, Tillich strongly emphasizes God's goodness, not only "in the beginning," but also in his continuing creativity. Man's life in time reflects the creative power of the Divine Word. Thus he can respond affirmatively to and participate meaningfully in the

27 Dawson, op. cit., p. 206.
goodness of the ordered world, even though his own action has distorted this order and goodness.

The second proposition deals with man's perversion of created goodness. It makes a sharp distinction between creation and the fall, between finitude and sin. Whereas Barth implies the identity of the two, Niebuhr and Tillich (especially Niebuhr)\textsuperscript{28} insists upon freedom and responsibility as the decisive factors in man's defection. The result of misdirected freedom is a warped, twisted, perverted good, but not, as Barth maintains, the complete annihilation of the good.

Man's good nature has become corrupted; it is not bad, as something that ought not to exist ... He loves with the love that is given him in his creation, but he loves beings wrongly, in the wrong order; he desires good... but aims at goods that are not good for him; he produces fruit, but it is misshapen and bitter; he organizes society with the aid of his practical reason, but works against the grain of things in self-willed forcing of his reason into irrational paths, and thus disorganizes things in his very acts of organization. Hence his culture

\textsuperscript{28} Niebuhr considers the major weakness of Tillichian theology to be its want of clarity on this point. He raises the question as to whether Tillich's ontological speculations have not falsified the Biblical picture of man. That is, in emphasizing the ontological structure of existence, he has made sin a structural necessity. It is in the actualization of his freedom that, according to Tillich, man separates himself from the ground of his being. "The sinfulness of man is thus an ontological fate". Reinhold Niebuhr, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation in Tillich's Theology," in The Theology of Paul Tillich, pp. 216-227.
is all corrupted order rather than order for corruption...It is perverted good, not evil; or it is evil as perversion, not as badness of being. The problem of culture is therefore the problem of its conversion, not of its replacement by a new creation; though the conversion is so radical that it amounts to a kind of rebirth.29

The third proposition asserts that history is fundamentally meaningful and that its meaning appears in the dramatic interaction between Creator and creature. Unlike Barthian dualism that lives "between the times," the "conversionism" of Tillich and Niebuhr affirms the eternal significance of the present moment. It looks to "the now" as the time of "break-through," and to "the here" as the place where the unconditional power of being appears. Its eschatology is "realized eschatology."

Tillich and Niebuhr share these statements of theory with Augustine, the prime example of the "conversionist" tradition. In their insistence on the Christ as he who redirects culture in all of its expressions; in their affirmation of the essential goodness of creation; and in their contention that, in spite of depravity, good is still latent in every being, the three men are agreed. They hold in common, too, the recognition of "theonomous" possibilities in every aspect of life—science, the arts, philosophy, religion, and politics.

29Richard Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 194.
However, Niebuhr and Tillich surpass Augustine when it comes to making a practical application of their belief. Augustine did indeed envision the "new culture," the Civitate Dei; however, he failed to relate it to his own time. Instead, he withdrew into his eschatological imaginings and in the face of responsible reforms, defended the patterns of fourth-century culture.

The existential element in Tillich and Niebuhr is too compelling to allow them to escape the vicissitudes of the present. Besides, the crisis they confront is too immediate to be avoided. They insist that only adequate approach to a time that calls for transformation as "the alternative to futility" is an affirmative attitude which sees every moment as an eschatological present and works to make it so.

In contrast to Augustine, the genius of these two men seems to lie exactly in the practical and immediate consequences which each proclaims. Minor differences can be accounted for by different backgrounds and temperaments. Niebuhr's pronouncements show more of the ecstatic flare of the prophet, while Tillich's propositions, at times equally prophetic, are more highly formulated along philosophical lines.30 Tillich's views on culture actually develop into

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30 Cf. "Tillich is not primarily the prophet—the man whose sincerity and stamp of inspiration bring immediate conviction—but rather the philosopher, whose appeal lies in his mastery of reason and rational argument" (John Herman Randall, Jr., "The Ontology of Paul Tillich," in The Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 161).
a full-grown theology of culture, as the next chapter shows. Niebuhr, on the other hand, never tries to construct a system, although he shares most of the insights expressed in Tillich's. To formulate a theology of culture is beyond the range of Niebuhr's special interest. Yet on certain concrete political and social issues, his views are far more pronounced.31

Apart from differences in personality, Tillich and Niebuhr's ideas on culture seem to run along the same line— a line that coincides with what Richard Niebuhr has called the "conversionist" tradition. Recognizing the limits of human achievement, they point to the transforming power of the holy which is latent in every cultural sphere. This is their incentive to responsible action; this is what drives them to live and plan in intense expectancy. For Tillich and Niebuhr, the dialectical "conversionist" attitude is symbolized in the boundary situation: the boundary between the Kingdom of God as actuality and possibility.

31Cf. "If Niebuhr excels him—Tillich, in polemical vigor and practical strategy, he excels Niebuhr in constructive power and theoretical comprehension" (Horton, op. cit., p. 27).
CHAPTER III

TILLICH'S LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTS

1. Attitude Toward Language

Before proceeding to the exposition of Tillich's "Theology of Culture," we must consider certain relevant matters regarding his language and concepts. Such a consideration seems indispensable, first, because of the highly individualistic and notoriously abstruse character of his terminology. And secondly, because in the handling of semantic problems Tillich gives convincing evidence of his belief in the meaningful depth of cultural phenomena.

Also, this is the area in which the basic contrasts between Tillich and Barth find practical expression. Barth, on the one hand, maintains a strict adherence to established, traditional language. He begs the indulgence of non-theologically minded readers who might find the language of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans immediately unintelligible. To critics who urge "simplicity as a mark of divinity," Barth replies:

I could not make the book more easily intelligible than the subject itself allows....If I be not mistaken—and here I must contradict Arthur Bonus—we theologians serve the layman best when we refuse to have him especially in mind, and when we simply live of our own, as every honest labourer must do.1

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1 Epistle to the Romans, p. 5.
Tillich, on the other hand, insists that the words of the theologian should be new words that speak meaningfully and convincingly to all his readers. This leads to a double criteria for theological language: the message of the eternal truth and contemporaneity. Barth preserves the first at the sacrifice of the second. He fails to realize that traditional language can obscure and distort the eternal message. He is blind, declares Tillich, to the fact that by his refusal to adapt his language to the contemporary situation, he is making liturgy and preaching ineffective and creating a gulf not only between the church and the world, but also between the theologian and the layman.  

Since language is the basic and all-pervasive expression of every situation, apathy towards language amounts to apathy toward the present. Herein lies the seriousness of Barth's neglect: it is indicative of his failure to penetrate his own historical context. This means that he cannot answer the questions which it raises, at least not in terms that can be recognized as answers. Even though Barth and his followers have been courageous in recovering and preserving the Christian message, their unwillingness to give it contemporaneity dooms it to fall, as Tillich says, "like a strange body from a strange world."  

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2Systematic Theology, p. 5.
3Ibid., p. 7.
In a passage where the reference to Barthians is obvious, Tillich writes:

Instead of meeting the challenge to speak to the contemporary condition of their hearers, many representatives of the church prefer a sort of intoxicated renunciation of success or effectiveness, a renunciation that is in the end self-destructive. But even the message of the Bible can give no justification for repealing contemporaneity.... In so far as our understanding of the words of the Bible requires us to separate ourselves from the here and now, from our contemporaneity, they are not the Word of God.4

When language loses its contemporaneity, it disintegrates, becomes banal, ineffective. The original meanings of words disappear. Disintegration is apparent in religious words that express too much and too little at the same time: "too much in so far as they elevate 'one' object (called 'God') above all the others; too little in so far as they do not attribute to God the unconditioned power which makes him God (and not a highest being only)." When religious words no longer express the paradox of man's existence, when they cease to witness to their unconditional meaning, they become "monuments showing that a great spirit was once there but is there no longer." Theological language is then an escape from reality, rather than a penetration of it.5

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5 The Protestant Era, p. 107.
How does Tillich propose to deal with this problem? Does he advocate, as some suppose, the complete overthrow of all church formulas, confessions, and historic doctrines? Not at all!

It is certain that the original religious terminology, as it is used in the Bible and in the liturgies of the Ancient Church, cannot be supplanted. These are religious original or archetypal words (Urworte) of mankind. But these original or archetypal words have been robbed of their original power by our objective thinking, and the scientific conception of the world, and thus, have become subject to dissolution.

6 Cf. K. Barth: "I adduce what P. Tillich sets forth as to the task of Church proclamation today. Above all, he feels bound to advise it to renounce any direct exposition of religious contents as they are given in the Bible and in tradition" (Doctrine of the Word of God, p. 209). "We must credit even his meaning by his language the proclamation of the Word of God. But if that is so, are not all his proposals pure child's play, compared with which one perhaps comes very much closer to reality by sticking for the future as in the past to the direct proclamation of the contents of the Bible and tradition?" (Ibid., p. 210).

7 The Interpretation of History, p. 47. Cf.: "I never shall forget the conference somewhere in Hesse in the early 20's where I was to deliver the main address on the principles of religious socialism. In order to make myself understood to those unfamiliar with or opposed to religious terminology, I had tried with great care to avoid any of the traditional religious words like God, sin, salvation, Christ, etc. After I had finished, Martin Buber got up and challenged my paper, not with regard to its content but its language. He stated with great seriousness that certain words are not replaceable, that there are 'Ur-Worte' (primary words) which no other, especially no philosophical terms can ever supersede. Later liturgical attempts (which I made for special purposes) confirmed for me the truth of Buber's assertion. And his whole interpretation of the 'word' as more than the bearer of a logically defined meaning has become an integral element of my theological and philosophical thought, and a weapon against the attempts of modern semantics to reduce the word to a quasi-mathematical sign" (Paul Tillich, "Martin Buber and Christian Thought," Commentary, June 1948, p. 515).
Recognizing that all attempts to supplant Biblical and liturgical language by modern terminology have failed, Tillich suggests giving new relevance to the basic words and structures of Christianity by standing between their secular and distorted terminologies and recapturing their original religious meaning from the border. Such a task calls for the principle of "semantic rationality." This principle may be understood as "the demand that all connotations of a word be consciously related to each other and centered around a controlling meaning." For example:

When theology employs a term like 'Spirit,' connotations are present which point to philosophical and psychological concepts of spirit, to the magic world view in which breath and spirit are identical, to the mystic-ascetic experience of Spirit in opposition to matter or flesh, to the religious experience of the divine power grasping the human mind. The principle of semantic rationality does not demand that these connotations should be excluded but that the main emphasis should be elaborated by relating it to the connotations. Thus, 'Spirit'...must be related to 'spirit' (with a lower-case 's'); the primitive magic sense must be excluded, the mystical connotations must be discussed in relation to the personalistic connotations, etc.

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6Loc. cit.

9Systematic Theology, pp. 54-55. Cf.: "There are few words more strange to most of us than 'sin' and 'grace'... But there is a way of rediscovering their meaning, the same way that leads us down into the depth of our human existence. In that depth these words were conceived; and 'there' they gained power for all ages; 'there' they must be found again by each generation, and by each of us for himself" (The Shaking of the Foundations, pp. 153-154).
Obviously, the attempt by means of "semantic rationality to grasp and effectively communicate reality in a new and deeper fashion is not original with Tillich. He himself cites similar attempts by Nietzsche, Stefan George, and Rainer Maria Rilke.\(^\text{10}\) However, Tillich is distinctive in his effort to see and name reality in the spirit of radical Protestantism. As one of his critics puts it:

What he sees with his own eyes and names with his own words—the concrete, dynamic, tensional, and tragic qualities, the intimate and ultimate qualities of experience—he associates with a Protestant interpretation of the nature and meaning of life.\(^\text{11}\)

That his interpretations of reality are decisively preconditioned by the Protestant ethos will be obvious as we examine a few of his basic concepts.

2. Exposition of Concepts

a. Depth

Tillich's early experiences by the seaside provided his imagination with the powerful concept of "depth." He takes a term denoting spatial experiences, and draws upon the richness of its poetical, philosophical, religious, and Biblical usages, to identify an attitude characteristic of ultimate concern. The word "depth," when its theonomous

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\(^{10}\)The Protestant Era, pp. 107-108.

\(^{11}\)James Luther Adams, Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion, p. 15.
possibilities are realized, is a compelling symbol for a spiritual quality. It points to man's bondage to things finite as well as to his spiritual dimensions.

Deep or depth, in its spiritual sense, has two meanings: It is either the opposite of shallow, or it is the opposite of high. Tillich prefers the first meaning because it suggests looking down through reality to its ground or abyss, rather than looking up and away from it as is suggested by "height."

All things have a surface and a depth: the world, individual life, and the corporate existence of society. The surface is, in each case, that which is seen at first glance. However, to act on the basis of appearances is disappointing. The true essence of things can be found only by going below the surface, by digging into the depth. What this depth signifies Tillich reveals in the following extensive quotation:

When we look through the strata of the relation which joins every thing with every other, that is, through its interrelationship with the world, then a depth in the thing may be disclosed to us, which we can designate as the pure existentiality of things, their being supported by the basis of existence, their sharing in the abundance of existence. This foundation and this suggestion by things of another thing, which is still no other thing, but a depth in the things, is not rational, i.e., demonstrable from the interrelationship of things with the world; and the 'other,' to which the things point, is nothing discoverable by a rational process, but a quality of things which reveals—

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12 Paul Tillich, "Depth," *Christendom* (Summer 1944), ix, 320.
conceals—a view into its depths. We say of this depth, that it is the basis of being of things, whereby 'being' is taken absolutely, transcendentally as the expression of the secret into which thinking cannot penetrate, because, as something existing, it itself is based thereon. In order to say this, however, we must also say something else: that the depth of things, their basis of existence, is at the same time their abyss; or in other words, that the depth of things is inexhaustible. If it were not inexhaustible, and if it could be exhausted in the form of things, then there would be a direct, rational designable way from the depth of things to their form; then the world could be comprehended as the necessary and unequivocal unfolding of the basis of existence; then the supporting basis would pour out entirely into the cosmos of forms; then the depth would cease to be depth, ceasing to be transcendental, absolute.13

In traditional religious terms the infinite and inexhaustible depth is God. "This is what the word God means." He who knows that God signifies depth has profound insight. And he who knows about the depth, knows about God.14

b. The Unconditional

Closely allied with the idea of "depth," is the concept of the "unconditional." This is the central concept in Tillich's theology. The term "unconditional" has a long history in Western philosophy. It is especially conspicuous in the writings of Plato, Kant, Schelling, and Schleiermacher. However, Das Unbedingte of Tillich cannot be identified with the "eternal forms" of Plato, with the "Absolute" of Hegel, or yet with the "Wholly Other" of Rudolph Otto and Karl Barth. Actually, Tillich's usage is more in

13 The Interpretation of History, pp. 82-83.
14 "Depth," p. 320.
line with Schelling's Das Unwördenkliche—"immemorial being"—
that which is prior to, presupposed by, and beyond all
thought. Das Unbedingte, connotes "the majestic and the
awful, the ultimate and the intimate, the sovereign, the
commanding, that which cannot be tampered with, that which
makes demands that cannot be ignored with impunity."\(^{15}\)

Tillich hopes with the term "unconditional" to get
completely beyond the notion of one being (even though the
highest) alongside other beings, or yet an object among
other objects (not even the greatest). Therefore, his whole
concept is destroyed when Das Unbedingte is translated or in-
terpreted, as it sometimes is, by the word "unconditioned,"
admitting the possibility of "one" whose existence can be
argued for or against. To argue about it is to rob it of
its unconditional character: The unconditional transcends
all distinctions between "essence" and "existence," "subject"
and "object." Thus, Tillich rejects Professor Hartshorne's
suggestion that the term "unreserved" be substituted for
"unconditional."\(^{16}\) Rather than preserving "the unconditional

\(^{15}\)Adams, "Tillich's Concept," p. 300.

\(^{16}\)Charles Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God,"
in The Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 167. Cf. "It is the
religious function of atheism ever to remind us that the
religious act has to do with the unconditionally transcendent
and that the representations of the unconditional are not
objects concerning whose existence or non-existence a dis-
cussion would be possible" (Religiöse Verwerkelichung, p. 102).
character of the unconditional," the term "unreserved" tends to throw it back into the sphere of the "relative and absolute," "temporal and eternal."

Together with the absolute transcendence of the "unconditional," Tillich holds to its absolute immanence in being as such. It is expressed in every symbol of the divine. It points to "that element in every religious experience which makes it religious and is expressed most forcefully in the command: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.'" It is recognized in all man's serious concerns as well as in his ultimate concern. It is present in every single meaning and in the totality of all meaning as the meaningfulness of the whole, the unity of all possible meanings. The unconditional is the ground and abyss of everything finite. As the ground, it is the creative bearer (not to be indentified with cause) of every finite being; as

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17. The Protestant Era, p. 32, fn. It is at this point that Professor Hartshorne suggests "unreservedness" instead of "unconditional." The latter seems to him to present an impossibility, since man, by his very nature, is incapable of unconditional activity. Even his "love of God is literally contingent, and he is powerless to make it otherwise....Total, integral, unreserved response seems to be what religion calls for, rather than the philosophical 'unconditioned,' 'ultimate,' 'absolute,' or 'infinite'" (Hartshorne, op. cit., pp. 167-168).
the abyss, it is the inexhaustible depth in which everything finite disappears. It is at once the affirmation and the negation of all being.

All that has been said indicates that the unconditional is actually a quality or qualification, the depth dimension, the aspect which gives being to existence. It is that in goodness and truth, beauty and love which elicits ultimate concern. It is the quality of all being and value, all power and vitality which affirms itself in meaningful creativity. It is presupposed even when one asks if there is any ultimate or unconditional meaning. Even God is unconditional; however (and this is basic), the unconditional is not God: "God is the affirmative concept pointing beyond the boundary of the negative-rational terms and therefore is itself a positive symbolic term."\(^1\) Thus Professor Hartshorne is right in assuming that God (or being-itself) transcends even the negativity of this concept.\(^2\)

c. New Being

The discussion of "unconditional"—Tillich's central concept—has prepared the way for a consideration of "New Being"—his most radical concept. This term represents both a return to New Testament theology, where in the writings of


\(^2\) Hartshorne, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
St. Paul the concept of "New Being" is developed, and a departure from traditional terminology which has tended to distort its basic meaning. With "New Being" Tillich is driving for a reinterpretation which is at the same time a "break-through" of the original reality.

What is "New Being?" It is the reality of the transformation of existence, the new state of reconciliation, reunion, and resurrection. It is man reconciled to God, to himself, and to his fellow men. "New Being" is the reunion of all the separated aspects of existence—religion and culture, the sacred and the secular, the holy and the profane, man and nature. It is the power of separation permanently conquered by the power of reunion. It is resurrection, the new being born out of the death of the old, the power to create new life out of death.

Tillich further defines the concept in an essay where he interprets the Incarnation as the appearance of "New Being" or "the manifestation of essential God-man-hood under the conditions of existence." "Essential God-man-hood" points to the original unity of all being in the ground of being.

\(^{20}\text{Cf. II Corinthians 5:17.}\)
\(^{21}\text{Cf. Paul Tillich, "The New Being" in Religion and Life (Autumn 1950), XIX, 511-517. Here these three aspects of "New Being" are fully developed.}\)
\(^{22}\text{Loc. cit.}\)
concerning which man has only fragmentary knowledge. Nevertheless,

We know that the disrupted and antagonistic elements of existence belong essentially to a unity, a unity between the self and the world including even the strange and remote sections of our world, such as the inorganic realm. It is a unity, moreover, of our separated and lonely individuality with the universality and community to which we belong: a unity, above all, of our finiteness with our infinity, of our transitoriness with our eternity, of our contingency with our creativity, of our melancholy with our courage, of our situation at the periphery like all beings with our situation at the center above all beings. We know that this unity is what we are essentially. We know that even in the existential destruction of this unity, its remaining power maintains existence. We know this because it appears to us as law and command, as judgment and threat, and as promise and expectation. But it never appears as being, as New Being overcoming the contrast between essential and existential being, overcoming law and threat and mere expectation, except in the Incarnation: more precisely, the Incarnation is its manifestation as New Being over against essence and existence. 23

One point is emphasized: the manifestation of "New Being" (in Jesus as the Christ) is not the appearance of "Being-itself" (God). This is in full accord with Biblical thought which nowhere implies that God as such becomes man. The paradox of the Incarnation is that in New Being original God-man-hood, or the spiritual God-man, appears in the form of existence which is in radical contradiction to his spiritual form, and yet, even under these conditions, does not lose his

essential character. Far from being dialectical, that is, demanded as the immanent side of a tension with the divine transcendence, the manifestation of "New Being" is the one genuine paradox, that which is "against the opinion of finite reason," contrary to and transcending all human expectations and possibilities. 24

d. The Demonic

In the development of the concept of the "demonic," Tillich is once again indebted to artistic categories and creations. His interpretation begins with the wisdom found in primitive art which expresses both proportion and that which mocks all proportion. These creations point to a depth that has escaped consciousness, although it has never ceased to determine human existence. This is the "demonic," "the unity of form-creating and form-destroying strength." 25 Ancient sculptures and masks demonstrate to an astonishing degree the power of form to embrace within itself something definitely contrary to form. And what art reveals, the history of religion repeatedly confirms.

Both disciplines know about a "tension" or "dialectic" in the demonic. The negative or destructive element, is called the "Satanic"—symbolizing destruction without creation.

24Cf. Systematic Theology, pp. 56-57
25The Interpretation of History, p. 81.
Since the Satanic can have no existence apart from that which it destroys, there must be an a priori divine element, a point of contact rooted in creative forces. Where the Satanic is missing, there is creative force, not demonry. And conversely, where there is destruction without creative form, there is weakness, deficiency, but not demonry. Only in the depths, where the two elements are united, is the demonic effective. "In the demonic...the divine, the unity of ground and abyss, of form and consumption of form is still contained....the isolation and formless eruption of the abyss results in, demonic distortions. Demonry is the form-destroying eruption of the creative basis of things."\(^\text{26}\)

The demonic exercises power only in personalities. Demonic forces are visible on subpersonal levels, but it is only on the personal level that the movement is completed which involves the breaking out beyond form of those vital forces that enter reality only through form. Consequently, personality is the main object of demonic distortion. The "possessed state," called also "split consciousness," is the actualization of the demonic in an individual. The same vital forces (the "impulse for power" and the "impulse for Eros") that threaten personal life, break out in superindividual, social demonries. But social demonry, like personal,

\(^\text{26}\text{Ibid., pp. 84-85. The terms Grund and Abgrund are adaptations from Boehme. The theory of the demonic itself is an adaptation of Schelling's theory of "potencies."}\)
political, and historical demonries, becomes really effective only in spiritual or sacred forms which hold the power of destruction in such a way that it is essentially connected with its creative supporting impulse.

e. Word of God

"Word of God" is another of the traditional theological expressions which in Tillich's thought undergoes radical reinterpretation. He aims to rescue it from the confusion of half-literal and half-symbolic understanding by clarifying its different usages, by uncovering the root meaning, the depth to which "Word of God" originally pointed.

First of all, "Word of God" is the principle of divine self-manifestation. It is the logos element in the ground of being: the source of every form and the abyss which finally swallows all forms.

Again, "Word of God" is the agent of creation, the form-giving power that freely actualizes itself in the freedom of the created. It is also the manifestation of the unconditional in the general course of history and at special historical points (kairos). Foremost, the "Word" is the revelation of the divine in the unique kairos, in the appearance of New Being. This is the crucial, decisive "Word," the logos incarnate. Every "Word of God" in all history and to every individual is implied in the Word. It is the complete
expression of man's relationship to the eternal.

In other usages, "Word of God" refers to the original record of the unique revelation, the Bible—an identification which, more than any other, has contributed to misinterpretation of the term. The printed words of the Bible may become "word of God" for somebody; but when they are identified mechanically with the "word of God," they lose their spiritual power and become a text.

Finally, "Word of God" refers to the proclamation of the Church's message. To the degree that preaching pronounces the objective message given to the church, it is "Word of God" in the same sense as any other revelation.

All of these different usages point for Tillich to one common, overall meaning: "Word of God" is any reality by means of which the unconditional breaks into the human situation. Whether it comes in creation, in history, in the unique revelation, in the Bible, in words or actions of the church, in the silent symbols of art, or simply in the spoken word that comes to someone in a special circumstance, "Word of God" is always "the mystery of the divine ground and abyss expressing itself."27

One must note the special emphasis Tillich puts on the "correlative character" of the "Word of God;" that is, no word is "Word of God" unless it is received as such by

somebody. It never appears in a vacuum (objectively) but only in correlation with the person for whom it is "Word of God." And this happens, as the Reformers insist, only through the witness of the Divine Spirit.

Hence it follows that every word can become a vehicle for the Divine Spirit and thus become the Word of God for somebody. It may be a conversation, a reading, a poem, a piece of news which in a special situation is used by the Spirit. But always, the criterion of every word which claims to be "Word of God" is the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. 28

At no single point is the issue between Tillich and Barth more sharply drawn than on their interpretations of this expression "Word of God." In contrast to the several meanings previously discussed, Barth restricts the term to the "unsymbolic, specific revelations of the Christ." Christ as the Word of God is spoken to man, not by means of his spirit and its cultural creations, but against his spirit. Its understanding is mediated through the "Holy Spirit," apart from which it cannot be received. The form in which the "Word" is spoken is the Word of Scripture. Churchly preaching, sacraments, and charitable deeds are nothing more than the anticipation of the "Word," never its realization.

28 "Propositions," Part IV, p. 22.
The intimation that "Word of God" should be taken as a symbolic expression, is violently opposed by Barth: "We have no reason for not taking the concept 'Word of God' in its primary and literal sense. 'God's Word' means, God speaks." To take it otherwise is "simply to end in dissolving it."  

f. The Boundary

Perhaps the most picturesque of Tillich's concepts and the one most descriptive of his personal and intellectual development, is the concept of the "boundary." With this term, the trademark of existential philosophy from Kierkegaard to Jaspers, Tillich summarizes his own life history. He presents his autobiography in terms of the alternatives or boundaries on which he has stood—"being completely at home in neither," and yet taking "no definite stand against either. Among them, he discusses the boundaries between social classes, between city and country, theory and practice, theology and philosophy, church and society, home and alien land.  

29Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, p. 150.
30Ibid., p. 70.
31Cf. Kierkegaard's parable of the King's coachman in Judge for Yourself, reported by W. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, pp. 460 ff.
32The Interpretation of History, p. 3. Miss Harkness suggests that the concept of the "boundary" reflects the "predilection for paradox which is the keynote of Tillich's thought" (Georgia Harkness, "The Abyss and the Given," Christendom, Autumn 1938, III, 508).
More than that, the concept of the boundary provides a pictoral image of Tillich's dialectic between religion and culture. It expresses their unity and separation, their form-creating and form-shattering intercourse. It pictures the possibilities as well as the limitations of each. It designates the "yes" and "no" of the theologian toward culture and cultural synthesis. It is applicable also to the root dialectic of the holy and the profane which underlies every philosophy and theology of culture.

However, the concept of the boundary achieves its fullest significance as a restatement of the reality apprehended by Luther and the Reformation. In this context it symbolizes the furthest outpost of human existence where absolute negation and affirmation, ultimate threat and support converge. On the one hand, it is the place where the self loses itself; on the other hand, it is the place where the self finds its true being. The boundary is thus the expression of man's capacity for self-transcendence.

It is possible because man as man stands above his vital existence, because he has in a sense broken away from his vital existence. To be man involves...the freedom from himself, the freedom to say 'yes' or 'no'....This freedom...carries with it the fact that he is radically threatened.33

33 The Protestant Era, pp. 196-197.
This threat is experienced in the awareness of the limits of self-transcendence, in the situation of despair. Despair is the sharp edge of the boundary where ground and abyss, being and non-being meet and beyond which man cannot go. It is the paradoxical experience of "naked anxiety" and "absolute faith" at the same time.

The decisive manifestation of the boundary situation is the Cross. Here ultimate despair is overcome by the courage which takes despair into itself—even despair about God—and overcomes it in the unconditional power of being.

5. Symbol

One further concept calls for analysis, namely the concept of symbol. In the development of this concept, the practical implications of the "religion-culture" dialectic are manifestly determinative.

Tillich's concept of symbol is grounded in a fundamental distinction between "symbol" and "sign." A "sign" is an object that merely points to another object without bearing any necessary relationship to it. Whereas, a "symbol" participates in the reality for which it stands. In the case of the religious symbol, this correlation is expressed in terms of the object's inherent power to represent a reality which is unconditionally beyond the conceptual sphere. But every symbol, intentionally religious or not, possesses a
"necessary" character: it cannot be exchanged; it can only be created. A sign, on the other hand, can be regulated according to the dictates of expediency.\(^3^4\)

Moreover, symbols are figurative—not ends in themselves, but means to higher ends. This is observable in the case of a national flag, since allegiance is directed not to the flag itself but to the state for which it stands. Symbols possess also the quality of perceptibility. They need not be sensuous, but can be imaginatively conceived, as, for example, "father" or "living" used as symbols for God. Another characteristic of symbol is its acceptability as such. This connotes social rootage and support.

The act by which a symbol is created is a social act, even though it first springs forth in an individual. The individual can devise signs for his own private needs; he cannot make symbols. If something becomes a symbol for him, it is always in relation to the community which in turn can recognize itself in it.\(^3^5\)

The religious symbol is distinguished from symbol in general by its reference to the unconditional. It explicitly points to the ultimate reality intuited in the religious act—a reality expressible only in non-objective, non-literal symbols. For the unconditional is beyond all representation, above all particularity.

The intention to speak unsymbolically of religion is irreligious, impious; for it robs the unconditional of its unconditionality and leads in

\(^{3^4}\textit{Religiöse Verwirklichung}, p. 89
^{3^5}\textit{loc. cit.}\)}
addition to the quite proper abandonment of the unconditional when transformed into an object, as a creature of fantasy. 36

Religious symbols are possible because of an analogy between particular beings and being-itself: every finite being participates in being-itself (God). Therefore, a segment of being may be used as a figurative representation of God. Here Tillich adopts the classical method of analogia entis, though not as a basis for the rational constructions developed by the Thomists. 37

The truth of a religious symbol is determined by its ability to express the "yes" and "no" of man's relationship to the unconditional: a relationship whose existential nature is reflected in the dialectic of religion and culture, holy and profane, sacred and secular, and whose essential

36 "Religionsphilosophie," p. 798. The statement that God is "being-itself" is the only completely nonsymbolic statement that can be made about God, according to Tillich. "After this has been said, nothing else can be said about God as God which is not symbolic" (Systematic Theology, p. 239). It is this nonsymbolic statement that implies the necessity of religious symbolism (Paul Tillich, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," in The Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 334).

unity is expressed in New Being. In the "double-edge quality" of a true symbol, both can be seen. Separation overcome by unity appears when, in becoming a symbol, the theonomous depth of a special cultural creation is brought to light. For example,

If God is called 'king,' something is said not only about God but also about the holy character of kinghood. If God's work is 'making whole' or 'healing,' this not only says something about God but also emphasizes the theonomous character of all healing. If God's self-manifestation is called 'the word,' this not only symbolizes God's relation to man but also emphasizes the holiness of all words as an expression of the spirit.38

Thus, "true" religious symbols participate in and stand unambiguously for the transcendent. They provide no objective knowledge, only a genuine awareness. Their only claim is that they represent the Unanschaubaren-Transzendenten39 which is independent of them so far as being is concerned.40

On the basis of the above considerations Tillich distinguishes two levels of religious symbols: first, a "supporting level" (fundierende Schicht), and "level supported by it" (eine fundierte Schicht).41 The first and basic level

38 Systematic Theology, p. 241.
39 Religiöse Verwirklichung, p. 90.
40 In adopting this particular theory, Tillich points to the inadequacy of the negative theory. Although the latter recognizes that the psychological (Mietzsche, Freud) and social (Marx) situation strongly influence the selection of symbols, it goes to the extreme in attempting to show that symbols express no other reality than the subjective state of
consists of "objective religious symbols," representations of the Supreme Being ultimately referred to in the religious act. Also included on this level are symbolic characterizations of the nature and action of God, together with natural and historical objects which are drawn into the service of the holy.\textsuperscript{42} Again it must be understood that the unconditional supersedes every possible symbol. "Whenever this aspect is lost sight of, there results an objectification of the Unconditional (which is in essence opposed to objectification), a result which is destructive of the religious as well as of the cultural life."\textsuperscript{43}

The second level or class of symbols, is made up of the pointing symbols that refer to religious objects of the first level. These include actions, objects, gestures that originally held some magical-sacramental force, but now only

\textsuperscript{42}In this connection, Tillich maintains that it is correct to speak of Christ as a symbol in so far as the unconditionally transcendent is envisaged in him. Modern research on the life of Jesus has rediscovered this by stressing the problematic character of the empirical element.\textsuperscript{43}
secondarily characterize the religious attitude. All of the "pointing symbols" are only indirectly symbolic. Their power of holiness is a distantly derived power. An elaboration of this class would be tantamount to a discussion of the phenomenology of religion in general.
CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF CULTURE: ITS METHOD AND TYPOLOGY

1. Preliminary Considerations

The definitions and relationships elaborated in Chapters I and III constitute the frame of meaning upon which Tillich develops his theology of culture. His first formulations are contained in "Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur," presented before the Kant-Gesellschaft in Berlin on April 16, 1919.

In this lecture, Tillich defines a theology of culture as the analysis of the religious substance inherent in all cultural forms "in order to discover the ultimate concern in the ground of a philosophy, a political system, an artistic style, a set of ethical or social principles."¹ This description includes the statement of its task, which is to ascertain and clarify the preponderant substance expressed in cultural forms. The problem of form and content belongs, as Tillich insists, to the area under analysis. Theology's primary concern is the concrete religious experience behind the forms.

¹"Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur," p. 38. Cf. Systematic Theology, p. 39. Cf. also Schelling: "The purpose of the most sublime science can only be to demonstrate the reality—reality in the strictest sense—the proximity (Gegenwart), the living presence (Dasein) of a God in the totality of things and in the particular (F.W.J. Von Schelling, Samtliche Werke, I, 2:376."
Basic to the understanding of this matter is the sharp distinction which Tillich draws between "substance" and "content" and "form". Content denotes the subject matter to be raised by the form to the intellectual-cultural sphere. Substance refers to the meaningfulness that gives to every particular form its reality and power. "Substance is grasped and brought to expression in a content by means of form. Content is accidental, substance is essential, form is the mediative element."^2

Form and content are not to be thought of as opposites. Rather they both stand at one pole, the opposite of which is substance or meaning. Content is the least significant. Form can lose its necessary relation to content since content recedes before an abundance of meaning. In this way form achieves a quality of detachment from content which brings it into immediate relation to substance. It then becomes form in a paradoxical sense, for it expresses substance and at the same time allows itself to be shattered by it.3 This implies that the creation and shattering of form is itself a form. Such a paradoxical form Tillich calls a "form (or gestalt) of grace." It is form in the sense that it manifests a dynamic, form-creating tendency. It is a form of grace in the sense that in it the depths of being

[^3]: Loc. cit.
and meaning break through protesting against the identification of any form and the totality of forms with unconditional substance. It is this form-creating, form-shattering operation which concerns a theology of culture.

Before describing the method of a theology of culture, we must come to a more definite understanding as to the nature of culture. For this purpose, consideration is given to Tillich's identification of culture and spirit.

Spirit denotes the dynamic power of creativity in man. It is not identical with reason or creative intellect. Rather, it is between the two. Spirit unites elements of the universal, the rational, the existent, the creative and the individual.

It is not possible to grasp the essence of spirit without grasping metaphysically the two basic elements of knowledge, thought and being. The essence of spirit, its internal tension, its dynamic character, flow from the infinite contradiction between thought and being. In the logistic analysis of mind the being-element is usually neglected while the psychological analysis neglects the thought-element. Both neglect the tension of these elements. However, spirit is not thought form, just as it is not a form of being. In spite of its dependence upon both, spirit is a separate and particular form. Spirit is the form of thought in the existential dimension.¹

Every spiritual act is, in other words, an individual act of meaning fusing thought and being. Through the activ-

¹Paul Tillich, Das System der Wissenschaften, p. 90
ity of the spirit thought frees itself from its dependence upon forms of being. It stands over against all forms and posits the unconditional character of its claims. Thus the complete separation of something existing from its bondage to finite form—that is, complete freedom—is the presupposition of spirit. Spirit is real only in the realm in which meaning, subject exclusively to the laws of meaning, is grasped in individual forms which, as such, are subject to their own structural laws. Hence spirit receives concreteness and fullness, an individuality and infinity that can be expressed only by the "ecstatic" concept form of grace.  

The identification of culture and spirit is further elaborated in Tillich's exposition of the nature of the spiritual or cultural sciences and their relation to the sciences of thought and being.

The elements of knowledge and their relationship provide the principles which determine Tillich's classification of the sciences. Corresponding to the principle of absolute thought (where being determines thought) are the sciences of thought or the ideal sciences; corresponding to the principle of absolute being (where being is the opposite of thought) are the sciences of being or the real sciences; and corresponding to the principle of spirit (where

5Loc. cit.
thinking is itself being) are the cultural or normative sciences.

The first classification consists of logic and mathematics. The second has three subdivisions:

1) The law sciences: mathematical physics, mechanics, dynamics, chemistry, and mineralogy.
2) The Gestalt sciences
   a) The organic sciences: biology, psychology, and sociology.
   b) The technical sciences: transforming technology and developmental technology.
3) The sequence sciences: political history, biography, cultural history, anthropology, ethnology, and philology.6

The third classification includes sciences which deal with norms and meanings: art, ethics and metaphysics, law and society, philosophy and theology. This third group is itself subdivided in terms of the theory of meaning as follows:

1) The theory of the principles of meaning: philosophy, including philosophy of religion.

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It is interesting to note that Tillich separates history from the cultural sciences where it is usually associated. Because some newly discovered document, for example, can destroy historical calculations, history cannot claim to be a normative (or cultural) science. Nevertheless, in Tillich’s system, history is made the foundation of Geistesgeschichte and thus a presupposition of the cultural sciences.
2) The theory of the material of meaning: the history of thought from the point of view of principles of meaning.

3) The normative system of meaning.

Tillich warns against every attempt to absorb the cultural sciences in either the thought sciences or the being sciences. The movement to merge cultural sciences with thought sciences overlooks the fact that the characteristic of the cultural life is precisely the meaningful link which ties it to being, that in every act of real cultural life not merely a logical form is realized but an irrational datum which at first is estranged from everything logical breaks forth uniting itself with the logical and thus becoming Spirit, yet it never becomes merely a thought form. Logism of all kinds neglects the irrationally creative character possessed by the cultural life by virtue of the fact that its content is 'being.' The creative element mentioned above is indeed the peculiar element by which the cultural process is distinguished from mere being as well as from a mere thought form.

While the cultural sciences cannot be dissolved into the sciences of thought and being, thought and being are included and fulfilled in the cultural sciences. In spiritual creations the "whole soul" with its capacity for thinking, feeling, and willing expresses itself as a unity. In the individualization of the cultural life, the principle of life,

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7Ibid., pp. 6-8.
8Ibid., pp. 8-9.
of creation, of Gestalt, of form and the eruption of form, come to purest realization. Moreover, "Because in every creation being and thought are one, every creation is at the same time individual and universal. Creation is the individual creation of the universal."9

In Tillich's view, the whole of reality comes to focus in the creative activity of the spirit, individual and social, which is rooted in the finite and relative but beyond them is open to the infinite and to the reality of unconditional meaning. All existence strives for this kind of fulfillment.

But beyond the fulfillment of thought and being is this decisive fact that every spiritual or cultural act is related to ultimate meaning, is confronted by the claim of the unconditional. In response to this claim, the spirit effects the fulfillment of meaning.

This does not mean that a reality, meaningless in itself, would become meaningful through the acts of the spirit-bearing Gestalten. The meaning-giving acts are rather acts of fulfillment of meaning. The meaning which dwells within all forms of the existing comes to itself in the spiritual act. Meaning realizes itself in the spiritual. All existence is subject to the law of unconditioned form, but only in spirit is the unconditional grasped as unconditional, as validity.10

9 Ibid., p. 92.
10 Ibid., p. 102.
2. The Method

Having made a closer study of the nature of culture and its relation to spirit and having noted their identity in the cultural or spiritual sciences, the discussion may proceed to an examination of the method or attitude required for interpreting cultural phenomena. In developing a method, the distinction between form and substance again serves as a Leitmotiv. Again, too, the distinction between form and content is far less significant than the distinction between form and substance.

Cultural acts are, as has been observed, a complex of thought, being and meaning (or form, content, and substance). Consequently, an adequate method must incorporate a dynamic principle of knowledge, required by the infinity of thought and being, as well as a metaphysical principle, required by the presence of meaning. The method which harmonously unites these two principles Tillich calls "metalogical":

Logical to suit the thought-forms, metalogical to suit the actual meaning or substance.... Mere logism will not grasp the actual meaning or substance, and alogism will not achieve the thought form. The first leads to formalism, the second to arbitrariness. The first must do violence to all sciences by forcing upon them a formal logical pattern, the second is incapable of accomplishing a well-rounded and intrinsically necessary structure.11

11 Ibid., p. 9.
The metalogical method maintains the logical element of criticism but goes beyond pure formalism in two ways: It apprehends the substance inherent in the forms, and it possesses an individual creative power to set up norms. In short, it grasps both form and substance. Yet it does not remain attached to particular forms, but critically and intuitively reaches for the principles of being and meaning which are contained by both form and content.

The essence of the metalogical method consists in the fact that it intuits the irrational being-element of the various functions—epistemological, aesthetic, ethical, and so on—into the logical form. Thereby thought and being receive a metaphysical import. Thought becomes identical with "form in general" and being becomes identical with "substance in general." "Thought" becomes the expression of the rational, creative, form-engendering element; 'being' becomes the expression of the irrational, living, infinitely elusive element, the expression of the depth and creative power of all reality.\(^{12}\)

Tillich finds a striking similarity between the metalogical method and Hegel's dialectic in its inception. Both are dynamic. However, at a certain point in the logical and temporal development of the Hegelian dialectic, the dynamic

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 10.
element was lost. The logical element swallowed the meta-
logical. Whereas the synthetic idea is basic for Hegel, the
dynamic form-creating, form-bursting meaning is basic for
Tillich.13

Also, a constructive comparison may be made between
the metalogical method as formulated by Troeltsch and Tillich.
Troeltsch applied the metalogical concept to what Tillich
calls the "goal of knowledge," thereby making it a sub-division
of methodology rather than a method itself, as does Tillich.
By so doing Troeltsch perceived the divine exclusively "as
the basis and meaning of cultural life, but never as a break¬
ing through the cultural." He missed the ultimate significance
and the real quality of meaning beyond the forms of meaning.
While Troeltsch's method has the dynamic quality of reality,
it lacks, in Tillich's view, the dimension of depth.14

Drawing together the elements of earlier philosophy
represented in Tillich's metalogical method, one will recog¬
nize the critical-rational-transcendental line from Kant to
Hegel, and the existential-creative line from Jacob Böehme
and Schelling through Nietzsche, with their concepts of ground

13 Loc. cit.
14 Ibid., p. 113; "Ernst Troeltsch," pp. 352-353.
and abyss, of freedom, and creative spirit. Behind both of these lines is Neo-Platonic thought with its "ecstatic," "negative theology."\(^\text{15}\)

The idealistic principle of the identity of thought and being in Tillich's method, his "ecstatic" theory of meaning, his idea of spiritual forms (or gestalt of grace) imply a dialectic of the universal and the particular, the absolute and the relative, the creative and the fateful. In the individualizations of cultural life, the principles of life, of creation, of form and the eruption of form come to purest realization. By metalogic the rational, shaping, structural form-bearing elements and the irrational, living, infinite elements, the depth and the creative power of all reality, are grasped in dynamic and mutual relationship.\(^\text{16}\) In short, the metalogical method is a dialectical method suited to the dialectic of religion and culture, the holy and the profane.

Now having outlined the method of a theology of culture, its task takes shape accordingly: 1) a historical-philosophical and typological classification of the different cultures according to the religious substance realized in them; 2) a general analysis of all cultural creations; and

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\(^{15}\)Kurt Lesse, "Das System der Wissenschaften," Christliche Welt (1926) XL, 374.

\(^{16}\)Das System der Wissenschaften, pp. 90-92; p. 30.
3) an outline from its own particular standpoint of the ideal plan for a culture centered on religion. The remainder of this thesis is a demonstration of the manner in which Tillich performs this three-fold task.

3. Types of Culture

The structure for a religious typology of culture arises out of the formulation of the existential relationship between religion and culture (see Chapter I). There Tillich develops the actual terminology which he applies to the task of classification. His doctrine of types aims at universality and intends to be flexible enough to allow for intermediate stages.

The Autonomous type. Autonomous culture is characterized by the affirmation and actualization of cultural forms without any reference to their religious substance. Autonomy makes the logical structures of the human mind and of reality the final governing principle. It replaces the mystical with the rational, the mythical with the technical. It throws religion back upon the individual as wholly a matter of personal decision. It builds communities on the basis of purpose and morality on the ground of human perfection.

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17"Uber die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur," p. 38.
Autonomy asserts that man as the bearer of universal reason is the source and measure of culture and religion—that he is his own law.... We called an autonomous culture the attempt to create the forms of personal and social life without any reference to something ultimate and unconditional, following only the demands of theoretical and practical rationality. 18

The great historical example of a fully developed autonomous culture is the "Golden Age of Greece." During this age, reason—the all-determining, all-devouring principle—reigned supreme.

The next stage of conscious autonomy is reached in the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment.

Its view of the world is secular, regarding the world as completely subjected to human reason; all holy, supernatural and divine elements are expelled from life and from the world. The transcendent sphere is given room only beyond the boundaries of our world, being forbidden to break into it. For in 'this world' mankind would build its wide and comfortable house, furnished with all the products of the rational control of nature. Neither God nor demons are permitted to trouble this edifice of human reason. Revelation and miracles are regarded as inconvenient encroachments by transcendent powers upon the slow but sure progress of human enlightenment and morality. No divine support is desired, no demonic attacks are feared. Things have become calculable and controllable; science having removed their irrational character—their holiness—which prevented mankind from touching them without feelings of veneration. The 'tabu,' that is, the sacred, untouchable character of things, whether animals or plants, elements or rocks, has disappeared. When thus controlled by human reason and used for human goals, things

18 The Protestant Era, pp. 56-57.
are subject to a process of profanation, from which nothing is exempt—neither the things of nature not the events of history, neither the relations of men in family and society nor the powers of state, nor yet the movements that occur in the depths of the human soul. 19

Renaissance and Enlightenment, as pictured above, present autonomous culture in all of its might and grandeur. The same power and influence is carried over in the development of the capitalist state and society. In so far as capitalism is based upon the self-sufficiency of the human and finite world, it exists as a continuation of the autonomous age that began with the Renaissance.

But, as history—past and present—shows, autonomy left to its own power loses its vitality.

Autonomy is able to live as long as it can draw from the religious tradition of the past, from remnants of a lost theonomy. But more and more it loses this spiritual foundation. It becomes emptier, more formalistic, or more factual and is driven toward...the loss of meaning and purpose. 20

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20 The Protestant Era, p. 146. Cf.: "Humanism remains alive and powerful just so long as the religious background remains effective behind it, so that hidden religious enthusiasm informs its thoughts and actions. Only by this means has modern humanism found itself able to overcome the old religious attitude encouraged by the church. Since force must be met by force, it follows that only religious force can subdue religious force. Only the concealed religious forces of humanism have overthrown the open religious forces of the church. Therefore the moment the religious background of humanistic movement began to disappear, in that moment the religious room in the human soul became, so to speak, empty" ("The Religious Situation in Germany Today," p. 169). Cf. Berdyaev, op. cit., pp. 140-143.
Since there cannot be a vacuum, even in the spiritual realm, autonomy finally yields to demonically destructive forces. "An autonomous culture without religious foundation necessarily falls into anti-divine heteronomy."\(^{21}\) The ensuing culture, standing over against autonomy, Tillich calls "heteronomy."

**Heteronomous Culture.** Autonomous culture is characterized by the over-powering of substance by form; heteronomous culture is characterized by the domination of all forms by one particular form. It is founded upon the presupposed inability of man to act according to reason. On this ground, heteronomy establishes laws (that really amount to alien forms) which claim to represent culture and its depth. It imposes commands from the "outside" as to how all cultural forms shall be determined. It introduces foreign criteria by which culture must be judged. These laws and standards exercise authority in the name of the infinite.\(^{22}\) But because they disregard the autonomy of form (or the logos structure of reality), they cannot possibly be united with culture. If uncontested, they destroy culture: they "destroy the honesty of truth and the dignity of moral personality."


\(^{22}\) Reinhold Niebuhr offers a brilliant analysis of the heteronomous process: "If the effort is made to establish any one of these subordinate realms of meaning as the clue to the meaning of the whole, the cultural pursuit becomes involved in idolatry. A premature source and end for the meaning of life is found; which is to say that a god is found who is not truly God, a principle of final judgment is discovered which is not really final; or a process of salvation and the fulfillment of life is claimed which is not finally redemptive" (The Nature and Destiny of Man, II, 209).
They undermine creative freedom and the humanity of man. Their symbol is the 'terror' exercised by absolute churches or absolute states."  

According to Tillich, heteronomy, symbolized by Leviathan, has appeared in Western culture under three different "faces." The first of these was the "ecclesiastical face" which showed itself in the authoritarian church of the late Middle Ages. At that time the Church dominated culture by imposing all sorts of demands and decrees that stifled personal spontaneity and cultural creativity.  

Culture was thereby rendered absolutely dependent upon religion in its ecclesiastical form.

That this same face threatens to reappear in Barthian supranaturalism is, in Tillich's view, one of the major threats to the Church today. In reply to Barth, who argued that the identification of heteronomy with the demonic was "a continuous struggle against the 'Grand Inquisitor'," (in

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23 The Protestant Era, p. 46.

24 Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr's discussion on the destructive effects of the medieval authoritarian church: "If a human authority sets the limits and defines the conditions under which the pursuit of truth shall take place, it is quite inevitable that significant truth should be suppressed and valuable cultural ambitions should be prematurely arrested under the guise of keeping them within the confines of the final truth about life and history as apprehended by faith" (Niebuhr, op. cit., II, 208).
the sense of Dostoevsky's story)," Tillich says:

The 'Grand Inquisitor' is about to enter the Confessional Church, and strictly speaking, with a strong but tight-fitting armor of Barthian supranaturalism. This very narrow attitude of the Barthians saved the German Protestant Church; but it created at the same time, a new heteronomy, an anti-autonomous and anti-humanistic feeling which I must regard as an abnegation of the Protestant Principle.25

Secondly, Leviathan appeared in his "technical face" in recent periods when the machine became a devouring monster. That which man had created as a means to creaturely comfort broke its bounds, became an end in itself, and subjected him to its own violent rule.

Finally, Leviathan appeared in his "political face" in the various forms of the totalitarian state—Fascist, Nazi, and Communist. Each of these political authorities claimed for itself final jurisdiction. Each tried to dictate the course of history; each pretended to be the realization of cultural meaning. In these three "faces" heteronomy has threatened Western civilization.26

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25The Interpretation of History, p. 26. Cf. "A man like Tertullian...emphasizes again the paradox: 'The Son of God has died; it is certain because it is inadequate. And the buried has resurrected; it is certain because it is impossible.' This...intellectual form...has become a logical instead of a real paradox. It negates reason in a rational form....Neo-supranaturalism largely uses this method which claims to be Biblical but is not. And because it is not Biblical it cannot escape a heteronomous subjection to Bible or Church" (Paul Tillich, "Faith in Jewish-Christian Tradition," Christendom (Autumn 1942), VII, 523).

The foregoing considerations are incomplete without asking how these two classifications are related to one another. A study of the history of culture seems to indicate that heteronomy is generally a reaction against autonomy that has lost its substance and has become empty and powerless. On the other hand, autonomy is a liberation from an arrogant heteronomy that threatens to undermine the rational structure of existence. Thus, the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy and the struggle toward theonomy provide the key to an understanding of human development. This dialectical movement within reason itself reflects the conflict within the manifoldness of cultural history:

The history of Greek philosophy, for example, can be written as a curve which starts with the still theonomous pre-philosophical period (mythology and cosmology), the slow elaboration of the autonomous structures of reason (pre-Socratic), the classical synthesis of structure and depth (Plato), the rationalization of this synthesis in the different schools (after Aristotle), the despair of reason in trying autonomously to create a world to live in (skepticism), the mystical transcending of reason (Neo-Platonism), the questioning of authorities in past and present (philosophical schools and religious sects), the creation of a new theonomy under Christian influence (Clement and Origen), and the intrusion of heteronomous elements (Athanasius and Augustine). During the high Middle Ages a theonomy (Bonaventura) was realized under the preponderence of heteronomous elements (Thomas). Toward the end of the medieval period heteronomy became all-powerful (Inquisition), partly as a reaction against autonomous tendencies in culture and religion (nominalism), and destroyed the medieval theonomy. In the period
of the Renaissance and Reformation the conflict grew to new intensity. The Renaissance, which showed a theonomous character in its Neo-Platonic beginnings (Cusanus, Filipo), became increasingly autonomous in its later development (Erasmus, Galileo). Conversely, the Reformation, which in its early years united a religious with a cultural emphasis on autonomy (Luther's reliance on his conscience, and Luther and Zwingli's connection with the humanists), very soon developed a heteronomy which surpassed even that of the later Middle Ages in some respects (Protestant orthodoxy). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in spite of some heteronomous remnants and reactions, autonomy won an almost complete victory. Orthodoxy and fundamentalism were pushed into the corners of cultural life, sterile and ineffective. Classical and Romantic attempts to re-establish theonomy with autonomous means (Hegel, Schelling) did not succeed, producing radical autonomous reactions (post-Hegelians), on the one hand, and strong heteronomous reactions (revivalism), on the other hand. Under the guidance of technical reason autonomy conquered all reactions but completely lost the dimension of depth. It became shallow, empty, without ultimate meaning, and produced conscious or unconscious despair. In this situation powerful heteronomies of a quasi-political character entered the vacuum created by an autonomy which lacked the dimension of depth.27

The above quotation introduces the third type, theonomous culture, and at the same time raises questions as to the relationship between the first two types and the third.

The relationship between theonomy and autonomy is made explicit in the previous statements regarding the dialectic between religion and culture, the holy and the profane, substance and form. It should be sufficient just to recall that as, for example, the holy is latent in the profane, so

27 Systematic Theology, pp. 65-66.
hidden in the depths of every autonomous culture is an ultimate concern, a theonomy. For in every autonomy there is

the obedient acceptance of the unconditional character of the form, the "logos," the universal reason in world and mind. There is: the acceptance of the norms of truth and justice, of order and beauty, of personality and community. There is: obedience to the principles that control the realms of individual and social culture. These principles have unconditional validity. Obedience to them is obedience to the "logos" element in the unconditional.28

This is what makes autonomous culture the birthplace of theonomous culture. In the struggling and questioning of autonomy with the meaning of its forms, the dimension of the holy comes to light.

CHAPTER V
THEONOMY -- A CULTURAL IDEAL

1. Theonomous Culture

In the description of the third classification, the task of a religious typology and the task of outlining an ideal plan for a culture centered on religion coincide. Theonomous culture, overcoming the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy, is for Tillich the meaning and goal of culture and history. It is the answer to the question implied in the ambiguities and frustrations of the cultural process.

When theonomy appears, autonomy and heteronomy are at once affirmed and denied. By emphasizing the commanding element in the unconditional demand, theonomy retains and transforms an element of heteronomy.¹ And by driving to the fulfillment of the innermost logos structure of the world and man, theonomy deepens and transforms an element of autonomy. It confronts both with an ultimate threat and support which overcomes separation. It signifies also the reunion of culture and religion, the holy and the profane, form and substance.

¹Professor Theodor Siegfried raises the question as to whether there is any authority which is not heteronomously distorted. "Is there such a thing as a theonomous authority?" Tillich's answer points to the cultus which gives ultimate meaning to daily life. (Siegfried, op. cit., p. 82)
The theonomous ideal is approximated when culture realizes itself in the power of its own inexhaustible depth. For man, this means the affirmation of the universal law of reason which is his innermost law, as it is rooted in the divine ground, which is his own ground. For cultural forms, it means transparency, that is, the manifestation of an unconditionally transcendent meaning. In a theonomy, nothing that is reckoned to be good and true and beautiful--whether in philosophy or in science or in art--is sacrificed. Reality is experienced as whole and centered.²

But a theonomous culture is not necessarily one in which the majority of people are actively religious. Rather, it is one that

is turned toward, and open to, the unconditional... the consciousness of the presence of the unconditional permeates and guides all cultural functions and forms....This situation finds expression, first of all, in the dominating power of the religious sphere, but not in such a way as to make religion a special form of life ruling over the other forms. Rather, religion is the life-blood, the inner power, the ultimate meaning of all life. The 'sacred' or the 'holy' inflames, imbues, inspires, all reality and all aspects of existence.³

²Systematic Theology, pp. 148-149.
³The Protestant Era, p. 43.
Authentic examples of theonomous culture are to be found in certain primitive societies, in the early and high Middle Ages, and at the beginning of the Renaissance.

It must be admitted, however, that these theonomous periods are, at best, only limited approximations of a complete theonomy: the Kingdom of God. As historical actualities, they are fragmentary and never prolonged. Even the greatest has become heteronomous in its efforts to preserve its theonomous achievements. The good that is attained, it legalized; the artistic forms that it created, it set up as absolute standards. Consequently, it became static and immobile and provoked autonomous reaction. Experiences of

\[4\text{Dawson's description of primitive Egyptian cultures gives a typical picture of early theonomy: "The material and the spiritual factors interpenetrate one another so completely that they form an inseparable unity, so that religion and life have become one. Every moment of life, every social occasion, every gesture and form of expression is consecrated by religious tradition and invested with religious significance. From the peasant in the field and the craftsman in his workshop to the priest in his temple and Pharaoh on his throne, the whole society obeys the same laws, moves with the same rhythm, breathes the same spirit. The gods are the life of the land, and human life follows the pattern of the divine ritual" (Dawson, op. cit., p. 197).}

\[5\text{Concerning the theonomous character of the early Renaissance, John Baillie writes: "I believe also that the public life...approached closer to the true type of what I have called an open Christian civilization than that which has elsewhere been enjoyed. Its explicit renunciation of the ecclesiocratic or Hildebrandine ideal, its frank concession of a real autonomy to the various secular interests, its acceptance and indeed eager championship of the principle of religious freedom and more generally, its complete conversion from the conception of a compulsive to that of an}
a partially theonomous culture testify to the truth that unlimi
ted theonomy is beyond the reach of human achievement.

With this background, an intensive analysis of theonomy—Tillich's cultural ideal—will be undertaken by drawing
together its manifold details under the three following
propositions.

2. Theonomy and Kairos

Theonomous culture is the demand and expectation
of a kairos, of a new awakening of the word of revelation.
This means that culture does not create theonomy. Always it
receives it as something from beyond itself, as a new revela-
tion breaking into time.

The term kairos, fully developed through New Testament
usage, can be understood only in comparison with chronos,
the other Greek word for time. Chronos signifies the quanti-
tative point at which an event occurred; it is the designa-
tion of a certain day, in a certain month, in a certain year.
Hence, chronos can be called "formal time," or "pure dura-
tion."\(^6\)

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\(^6\) The Protestant Era, p. 33.
Kairos, on the other hand, refers to "the right time," the moment rich in content and significance. The New Testament declares that Jesus came on kairos, in the fullness of time, after historical conditions were fully prepared. As "qualitative" or "prepared" time, kairos is the moment in which time is invaded by eternity. Not that every period of time is not related to the eternal; certainly, it is. But not every period is aware of this relation. It is the peculiar constellation of events making an awareness of the eternal possible, giving recognition to the "break-through," that distinguishes kairos from every other time.

Although kairos is the consciousness of the invasion of time by eternity, it is not perfection or completion in time. Tillich, in applying the concept to religious socialism, makes this clear:

The term is meant to express the fact that the struggle for a new social order cannot lead to a fulfillment such as is meant by the Kingdom of God, but that at a special time special tasks are demanded, and one special aspect of the Kingdom of God appears as a demand and expectation. The Kingdom of God will always remain transcendent.

The concept of kairos is intentionally, then, in a sense, the antithesis of both Utopia and the Golden Age,

7Loc. cit.
8The Interpretation of History, p. 57.
culturally speaking. Against conservatism which confines all meaning to the past and against Utopianism which makes the meaning of the present dependent upon the future, kairos mightily affirms the significance of the present cultural stage as having its own meaning—in relation, of course, to the past and future. Also, kairos unites the demands of absolute and relativist cultures. The absolute demands one culture over against all the others, while relativity finds in all culture the same significance or want of significance. To these demands, kairos introduces a culture which should be absolute, and yet not absolute, but under the judgment of the absolute. Both demands are fulfilled when culture surrenders itself to become a vehicle for the unconditional, that is, theonomous.

Tillich's concept of kairos has three distinct yet clearly correlated references. Its unique reference is to the appearance of New Being (essential God-man-hood) in history—the event in which the historical and cultural processes become conscious of themselves and their meaning. This is the moment of fulfillment and transformation. Here the contrast between the holy and the profane is overcome. The unity of cultural creations with their ultimate ground is

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9The Religious Situation, pp. xvii-xviii.
10Cf. The Protestant Era, p. 142.
dramatically announced. Thus the appearance of New Being is the dividing point of history and culture. Before, is the period of preparation; afterwards, the period of reception. Each period, however, contains elements of the other.

In a general sense, kairos refers to "every turning point in history in which the eternal judges and transforms the temporal." Such general kairoi are derived manifestations of the unique kairos. They are secondary centers of history, reflecting the universal center in the appearance of New Being. The awareness of a general kairos made possible a "break-through" in the days of Martin Luther and was the formative power behind German religious socialism.

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11 With regard to the place of the historical Jesus in Tillich's thought, Reinhold Niebuhr makes the following critical observations: "For him the center of faith and history is Christ and not Jesus. He insists that it is not possible to go behind the faith of the Early Church that Jesus was Christ and the faith that this Christ was as He is described in the Gospels. He is not interested in any rediscussion of the 'historical Jesus' since the basis of the Christian religion is the faith that the Christ is the revelation of the eternal meaning in time. That, to speak analogically, seems to me like accepting the biographer's estimate of a person's peculiar significance too uncritically. There was, after all, an historical Jesus who had a Gospel which fitted remarkably well into a life which ended on the Cross. Humanly speaking, this life could not have been accepted in faith as the revelation of God had its intention not been in such remarkable conformity with its destiny" ("The Contribution of Paul Tillich," Religion in Life, Autumn 1937, VI, 578).

12 The Protestant Era, p. 47.

13 Cf.: "Kairos" can be understood as a generalization of Tillich's personal experience, upon returning from the First World War, in recognizing participation in the
Kairos in its special sense refers to the decisive character of the present which opens the way for the "coming of a new theonomy on the soil of a secularized and emptied autonomous culture." In this type of kairos, not the demonic generally, but a special demonic structure is overcome.

Concerning the relation of kairos to logos (under which heading Tillich develops his epistemology), it must suffice to say that kairos signifies not only the invasion of the unconditional, but also the expression of ultimate truth. The truth of a time is its attitude toward the unconditional. Thus, "true knowledge is knowledge born of the kairos, that is, of the fate of the time, of the point at which time is disturbed by eternity." He who is in the kairos is in the truth.\(^1\)

3. Theonomy and "Belief-ful" Realism

The second proposition states that theonomous culture is received through an attitude of "belief-ful" or "self-transcending" realism. The concept of "belief-ful

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The Interpretation of History, p. 174
realism" was created under the impact of the transition in art from initial expressionism to a new realism. It was designed to combat what Tillich felt to be a fragmentary approach on the part of those who were sincerely seeking the deeper levels of reality and meaning. 15

"Belief-ful realism," as Tillich explains it, points to the spiritual meaning of the real by using its given cultural forms. Penetrating to their transcendent ground, it calls into question even the most fundamental dualisms and thereby overcomes them. Hence, "belief-ful realism" is the universal theonomous attitude. 16

15 Horton reports that Tillich's new term "fell into combination with all these other realisms (Steinbeck's literary realism, Niebuhr's political-economic realism, Whitehead's provisional realism), and helped the growth of a general trend toward objectivistic rather than subjectivistic thinking, toward God-centered rather than man-centered thinking—a movement wherein thinkers of many different types found themselves temporarily comrades in a broad united front" (Horton, op. cit., p. 35).

16 The opposite of "belief-ful" realism is the attitude which denies altogether the religious intuition of reality. It is identified by Tillich with Barthian supernaturalism: "If the intuition of reality were to be prohibited, however, because the contents of religion are not to be grasped in reality or even through reality, might not one ask: Does faith then look away from real things and not into their depths? Does their essential nature not lie within the field of vision as implied in the religious act? Does their being creatures, their being subject to death, guilt and salvation, their eternal destination, all lie outside their essence? Can that only be said about them, not perceived in them as their depth and meaning? It is clear that all those judgments concerning things and man, if not approachable by any intuition and in any stratum of reality,
attitude that drives underneath the cultural splits to the place where the holy and the profane are one. It can do this because it unites faith, which transcends every conceivable reality, with realism, which questions every transcending of the real.\textsuperscript{17}

Tillich clarifies this concept by proposing certain basic distinctions. He first contrasts "belief-ful" or "self-transcending realism" with a self-transcendence which is not realistic. The latter, identical with idealism, "tends to spiritualize its objects, to regard them no longer as symbols of the ultimate or as deriving their meaning from the Unconditioned but as significant in and of themselves."\textsuperscript{18}

Idealism's great mistake is in not seeing the gulf between the conditioned and the unconditional. Because of this, its claims must be rejected as sheer arrogance. But, at the same time, it must be respected in its aim to unite an "autonomous interpretation of reality with a religious transcending of reality." In this regard, idealism is always on the road to

\textsuperscript{17}The Protestant Era, p. 67. Cf. Daubney, op. cit., pp. 18-20.
\textsuperscript{18}The Religious Situation, p. xi
"Belief-ful realism," on the other hand, "does not idealize or spiritualize its objects. It is the sceptical, unromantic, unsentimental attitude which accepts the objects in their stark givenness."

Over against self-transcendence that is not realistic, Tillich contrasts "belief-ful realism" with realism which is not transcendent. This realism is of three types. The first type is called "technical" because it determines the power of things by their adaptability to rational conceptualization and by their practical utility. Later Neo-Kantianism and, more recently, logical positivism, are its philosophical expressions. Next is "mystical realism" which claims that power of being can be ascertained only through contemplation and union. This type strives to overleap the distortions of the material universe and to attain to the realm of "pure actuality." The Neo-Platonic era, together with the early and high Middle Ages stand as classical examples of "mystical realism."

Opposed to both the technical and the mystical types, abstracting from existence as they do in order to find the power of things, is a third type known as "historical realism." The latter seeks for the power of being within the concreteness

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19 The Protestant Era, p. 68.
of historical existence. It asks for the "really real" in time and space, within the framework of the historical process. Because it insists upon the unique, unrepeatable, and fateful character of the "here and now," it rises above both technical and mystical realism. Yet, it stops short of "self-transcending" or "belief-ful realism" by not penetrating to the depth, the ultimate ground of the historical situation.\(^{20}\)

Self-transcending realism may be understood as the religious dimension of historical realism.

Historical realism remains on a comparatively unrealistic level if it does not grasp that depth of reality in which its divine foundation and meaning become visible. Everything before this point has preliminary, conditioned reality. Therefore, historical realism has truth to the degree that it reaches the ultimate ground and meaning of a historical situation, and through it, of being as such.\(^{21}\)

Self-transcending, historical realism apprehends the unconditioned in and through concrete historical situations—the here and now; however, it resists the claim to have grasped it completely, recognizing that it is always at the same time unconditionally near and unconditionally far. This attitude, uniting realism and faith, affirming and negating the power of things, must prevail in order for theonomous culture to be a reality.

\(^{20}\)Ibid., pp. 68-76

\(^{21}\)Ibid., p. 76.
4. Theonomy and the "Protestant Principle"

The third proposition asserts that theonomatic culture exists in the power of the Protestant Principle. Now, the Protestant Principle occupies quite a commanding position in Tillich's thought. But just what is it? Simply put, it is, the statement of the paradox of the divine-human relationship. It is the affirmation of the divinity of the Divine over against every human activity—whether religious and done in the name of God, or secular and done without reference to God. It is the proclamation of the unconditional character of the unconditional in contrast to everything finite which tries to be like God or to influence God.

Tillich warns against confusing the Protestant Principle with

the "Absolute" of German idealism or with the 'Being' of ancient and recent philosophy. It is not the highest ontological concept derived from an analysis of the whole of being; it is the theological expression of the true relation between the unconditional and the conditioned, or, religiously speaking, between God and man.

The Protestant Principle as the statement of the divine-human relationship, is identical with what Tillich in

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22 Tillich acknowledges his debt to his teacher Martin Kähler for the initial insight into the all-controlling character of the Protestant Principle. Cf. The Interpretation of History, p. 32.

23 The Protestant Era, p. 163.
his epistemology, calls the "absolute standpoint." This standpoint is "the guardian position which prevents any knowledge from pretensions to unconditioned validity." The recognition that our knowledge is relative is the one knowledge that is not relative; it is the knowledge that transcends formal and material elements. It is the expression of the relation of knowledge to the unconditional. Hence, "the absolute standpoint as a guardian standpoint...is not actually a position, but only a battle constantly changing with the opponent, against any standpoint that wants to set itself up as unconditioned."24

The tension between unconditional threat and unconditional support inherent in the Protestant Principle determines its practical significance. On the one hand, it denotes the ultimate judgment and condemnation of everything finite, including culture and religion. In the name of the unconditional, the Protestant Principle opposes the church that makes its institutions and doctrines absolute, that sets itself above the divine judgment rather than under it. It attacks the culture that pretends to be self-sufficient, that does not point beyond itself to its inexhaustible ground of meaning. It protests against human reason which claims to produce ultimate truths about relative relations.25

21 The Interpretation of History, p. 172
25 The Protestant Era, p. 163.
On the other hand, the Protestant Principle marks the ultimate acceptance and support of everything finite. It is the absolute seriousness of the presence of the divine in spite of utter separation from it. In the name of the unconditional, the Protestant Principle gives power of being and creativity to religion and culture. It confers holiness upon human institutions and forms and makes reason transparent for eternal truth. It is the perpetual relating of finite existence to its unconditional ground which makes possible theonomous culture.

5. Theonomy and Synthesis

The foregoing analysis raises the question as to what extent Tillich, in proposing an ideally religious culture, becomes a cultural synthesizer. The discussion in Chapter II denied any final identification of Tillich with Aquinas and Ritschl, the leading exponents of synthesis. At the same time, it recognized certain tendencies towards synthesis which must now come under closer scrutiny.

In the 1919 lecture, Tillich asks how far the cultural theologian can become a cultural systematizer. His answer admits the possibility from the angle of substance. But substance exists only through forms. In so far as form is concerned, the cultural theologian is not specifically creative. That is, he is not, as such, productive in the
sphere of morals, science, or art. However, he does adopt, by reason of his religious standpoint, a critical attitude towards autonomous productions. "He draws up with the material at hand a religious system of culture by separating this material and unifying it again in accordance with his theological principle." 

The cultural theologian may go beyond the material at hand only in terms of demand, not in terms of fulfillment. He can protest against the existing cultural forms because he finds nothing in them which expresses living substance. At the same time, he can indicate in a very general way the lines along which he visualizes the realization of religious substance; but he does not produce the forms in which this substance is realized. If he tries to do so, he ceases to be a cultural theologian and becomes a creator of culture. In this regard a theologian can never produce a cultural synthesis.

On the other hand, because he is freed from the limitations that would bind him to definite forms, the cultural theologian can, from the standpoint of substance, give expression to the transcending unity of cultural functions and demonstrate the relation of one form to another through the unified substance which they express. Then, from the

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standpoint of substance, he does help to promote a cultural synthesis in the same way that the philosopher helps from the standpoint of pure form and category.27

Thus, Tillich sees himself and every cultural theologian not as one who produces a finished system or creates a completed synthesis, but as one whose task embraces every cultural function, eliminating the destructive conflict between religion and culture by a plan for a religious system of culture in which the opposition between knowledge and dogma is overcome by knowledge religious in itself; in which the distinction between art and cult forms is overcome by an art religious in itself, and the dualism of church and state by a state religious in itself.28

Here, again, Tillich maintains a consistently dialectical position which, for his theology of culture as for all the other phases of his thought, is as significant today as when it was first introduced in 1919. Although originally designed to combat the so-called "liberal theology" which surrendered the Christian message to cultural trends, it has been of equal value in opposing Barthian neo-supranaturalism which sacrifices cultural activities to the Christian message. Critics are agreed that this dialectical formulation has

27 Loc. cit.
28 Ibid., p. 41
destined Paul Tillich's theology of culture to "become a landmark in the history of modern theology." 29

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CHAPTER VI

A CULTURAL-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ECONOMICS, SOCIETY, AND POLITICS

The seriousness and sincerity of Tillich's analysis are nowhere more obvious than in his exploration of recent and contemporary economic, social, and political movements. This is altogether fitting and proper, since these movements hold the key to the present situation. One cannot arrive at a true analysis without first recognizing that the predicament of modern man "is the outcome--directly in the West and indirectly elsewhere--of the rise, the triumph and the crisis" of what may be termed the "bourgeois" or "capitalist" system. Hence, Tillich begins with a careful examination of the religious substance implied in capitalism.

1. The Religious Substance of the Capitalist System.

Early capitalism had its roots in the struggle against the heteronomous powers--political and religious--of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its commanding substance was expressed in the belief in reason as a means for the liberation of man from the demonic aspects of existence. This belief was an affirmation of the power of spirit over matter, of the sacredness of the individual and his creative power. It emphasized the essential unity of man and the world. ¹

¹The Religious Situation, p. 21

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The success of the bourgeois revolutions marked the victory of the rational principle and led to its application in every sphere of human activity. Autonomous reason applied to the economic sphere, resulted in the doctrine of "laissez-faire," "the belief that the welfare of all would best be served by the unrestrained pursuit by each individual of his own economic interests." In the political realm, it produced democratic procedures in the belief that the political decision of each citizen would lead to the right decision by the majority. In the realm of international affairs, it brought about free exchange among nations with the expectation that a balance of power and automatic harmony would follow.²

As the rational principle became more powerful, it lost touch with the living remnants of the previous theonomy and failed to meet the demand for a new theonomy. Thus it became emptier, more formalistic and less meaningful. Liberating, transforming reason became technical, controlling reason. Consequently, capitalism was invaded by economic, social and political demonries.

Under the reign of "technical reason," the individual was reduced to a unit of working power. He was made a cog in

the world-wide mechanism of large scale production and competitive economy. He was forced to pattern his personal life according to the laws of the machine.

This created the "proletarian situation," "the situation of that class within the capitalistic system whose members are dependent exclusively upon the 'free' sale of their physical ability to work and whose social destiny is wholly determined by the turn of the market." In describing this situation, Tillich is indebted to Erich Fromm's analysis of the "marketing orientation." Their pictures coincide in the person who realizes himself to be a commodity and whose self-esteem and social position are determined by his exchange value on the market.

The imperialism of industry which transformed the person into a commodity changed the "free market" into an arena of destructive competition and class conflict. This conflict appeared first in the antagonisms between management (whose interests were exclusive of those of their employees) and labor (which had lost its common creative purpose). Out of this situation a clearly defined class consciousness...

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3 The Protestant Era, p. 164
4 Cf. Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, pp. 67-82. The following excerpts throw added light on the "proletarian situation." "Since man experiences himself both as the seller and as the commodity to be sold—his self-esteem depends on conditions beyond his control. If he is 'successful,' he is valuable; if he is not, he is worthless." Thus, when "the vicissitudes of the market are the judges of one's value, the
ness was formed which decided the fate of men on every level—economic, social, religious. Even within the classes, conflicts of interest produced further insecurity and hostility.

These combined factors resulted in the disintegration of the various forms of community life.

The family disintegrated into individuals each of whom lives for himself in the service of the mechanism of society. Communities of workers were replaced by mass cooperation of a non-personal character.... Neighborhood as a form of community lost its meaning. The national community recovered reality only when attacked, and lost it again when danger passed. Even the community of friendship was destroyed by the universal sway of competition.5

The disruption of family relationships is particularly noteworthy. In capitalist society the function of the family becomes largely utilitarian: it provides for sexual satisfaction, economic security, social acceptance and mutual sympathy. But because it has lost its "spiritual centre," it is no longer able to transcend the strength and weakness

sense of dignity and pride is destroyed." (Ibid., p. 72).

Furthermore, the "proletarian situation" (or marketing orientation) "....does not develop something which is potentially in the person...: its very nature is that no specific and permanent kind of relatedness is developed, but that the very changeability of attitudes is its only permanent quality. In this orientation, those qualities are developed which can best be sold. Not one particular attitude is predominant, but the emptiness which can be filled most quickly with the desired quality" (Ibid., p. 77).

of utilitarian motives, nor is it sufficiently potent to withstand attacks from a competitive society.⁶

Out of the disintegration of personal and family life, the social mass is born. It is composed of people determined by the laws of the machine, people who have surrendered all personal distinction, people impoverished of soul and empty of hope. The mass is the ruling social structure among the de-personalized proletariat.

Since they work in masses in the big factories; since they, as masses, receive the same low wage; since they live as masses in the same type of run down houses and poor streets; since, as masses, they have the same slight chances of material or intellectual enjoyment, a mass attitude tends more and more to replace more individuated ones, to subject them to the laws of mass feeling and mass emotion; and to lay them open to the appeals of every agitator who is able to use and to abuse the laws of mass psychology. It is characteristic of the behavior of masses that every individual among them acts under the impulsion of those aspects of his personality which he has in common with everybody else, not according to those in which he is an independent, individualized person.⁷

The negative religious substance of the capitalist system is apparent also in the perversion in man's relationship to things. In the past men recognized in things a quality, an inherent power which gave them meaning. There was something holy in man's relationship to them; things were

⁷The Protestant Era, p. 223.
symbols of his participation in unconditional being. But under the influence of dominating capitalism, things are valued only for their technical use. They are exploited and deprived of their meaning. Man's relationship to them is determined by their "saleability," by their adaptability to the demands of the market. All sense of participation in them is lost.

Things became wares—objects whose meaning lies in the production of profits in transactions of buying and selling, not in the enrichment of the personal life. They are acquired and disposed of by their masters, not by beings who have some kind of community with them. Hence there is no limit to their acquisition.

Man's dominating, loveless attitude toward things is apparent in the way that they are used and shaped without any consideration for their native beauty. For example, the design of buildings, houses, and furniture is not derived from the inherent meaning of the material used; rather, for utilitarian purposes, some form is imposed upon them from the outside.

The lines and colors of most things used for commercial manufacture do not express the true nature of the material of which they are made.... They do not express any thing except the bad taste of a society that is cut off from the

\[8\] The Religious Situation, p. 72. Tillich has elsewhere called this the process of "thingification" (Verdinglichung), a term taken from early Marx: "Complete 'thingification' is the complete elimination of the relation of existence to its origin, its complete profanization. The spirit of bourgeois society is the spirit of a group of men who, after having cut through every original tie, subjected a materialized world entirely to its purposes" (Die Sozialistische Entscheidung, p. 49).
meaning and power of things. The streets of our cities and the rooms of our houses give abundant and repulsive evidence of the violation of things in our technical civilization. In every ornament produced by this attitude, in the method of trimming things which are supposed not to be beautiful in their genuine appearance, falsehood, facade and aesthetic betrayal are manifest.9 The true power of things is thus violated and they are denied genuine fulfillment of meaning.

In the political sphere, demonic distortion appeared when democracy became a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie for the preservation and extension of capitalism, when the might of the state was seized by the leading economic class for the control of the proletarian masses. The absolutization of the economic function made it possible for capital to create the majorities on which political power was conferred. And not only did it determine the rise of one group to office, but it also decided the extent of their rule. When

9The Protestant Era, p. 122. Tillich elsewhere refers to this as "the technology of transformation": It "creates structures determined by the posited purpose and by that alone; it uses a material for a purpose completely alien to it.... It does not aim at the development of a given form nor does it aim directly at the realization of spirit. It destroys vital connections with things. It fells a tree and transforms it into wood for technical use. It blasts rocks and transforms them into technical material stone. It changes the surface of the earth to make roads and canals. It presses the resisting iron into arbitrary forms according to human purpose. Consequently, it creates technical structure, a structure which has only a teleological character. When the structure loses its relation to this purpose it no longer has 'technical' existence." (Paul Tillich, "Logos und Mythos in der Technik," Logos (1927), xx1, 364)
a group resisted domination, capital deprived them of their power and indirectly established another group that could do its bidding. 10

When failure to maintain a sound balance between production and consumption brought economic crisis, government had to establish controls on the system of free enterprise. States were forced to bolster private monopolies in order to protect their own lives. Various measures were adopted by the government to "socialize the losses."

On the international front, the division of the world into self-determining states possessed of unlimited sovereignty resulted not in automatic harmony but in competitive struggles of unprecedented proportions. The democratic nations, proceeding on the assumption that the promotion of the capitalist spirit was their "divine mission," made powerful, imperialistic advances. Alliances and co-operation among nations were based on agreements for the cultivation of common interests in the world economic system with national armaments for security. 11

These developments in national and international politics resulted in the secularization of the state in capitalist society. All remnants of its spiritual meaning were lost.

10 The Religious Situation, p. 15.
11 Ibid., pp. 83-89
The only task assigned to the state is the legal protection of the economic life in internal and external relations....Interferences with the religious and spiritual sphere are out of the question for it. Its relation to religion and culture is defined by the idea of toleration; the violation of personality in its relation to the meaning of life, that is, in its faith, is eliminated, but at the same time the political community itself loses all significance for the ultimate meaning of life. The relationship of man to the eternal is removed from the political and public sphere and relegated to the private....To the extent to which this tendency increases the state naturally loses its original sanctity and becomes a rather empty, technical machine.

The ambiguous spiritual substance underlying the capitalist system is most vividly symbolized, according to Tillich, by the technological city. In the technological city something appears in immediate, concentrated form that in its effects embraces the whole earth: the earth as the "dwelling of mankind," the mastering of all the powers of reality, the victory over the portentous, the strange, the threatening elements in existence.12

All of this finds expression in the various aspects of the technological city. Each aspect represents an enormous approximation of the powers of reality. In each there is a liberation of man from the burdens of mechanical labor.

12Ibid., pp. 90-91.
13This and the following paragraphs are based on "Die Technische Stadt als Symbol," Dresden Neueste Nachrichten (May 17, 1928), No. 115.
Each represents a victory over the demons. "The technical house, the technical city, the earth ruled by the technical city, all together making the earth into the comfortable dwelling of mankind: that is the symbol of our age, of the age of fulfillment and technical utopia, of the era in which man becomes at home on earth, the age of the approximation and transformation of the earth by man."

But simultaneously, the technological city has become the symbol of the very thing that is questionable in our age. With technology there has come not only fulfillment, but also a new portentousness, a new threat which cannot be banished by science and technology. The more powerful and the more complicated the technical structures become, the more difficult it is to control them, the more they become a threat for the technicians.

Another paradox inheres in the technical city: although scientific knowledge has removed the threat of some technical things, it has not made them more familiar. The technical house and the technical city remain strange. In the very process of acquiring a life of its own the technical thing has been deprived of its inner vitality and warmth, with the consequence that no amount of Eros can now unite it with our own life. It has become rigid and it makes us become rigid and robs us of our inner vitality. Hence a
strangeness has been introduced into modern life, in spite of our knowledge and mastery, that becomes insurmountable in the large city. This situation is most acute in those who are most fully brought into the service of the technical city, those who nowhere find a compensation for the loss of vitality, who though exercising a fabulous domination over things are yet dominated by themselves, stunted in their vital and intellectual life.

Out of this arises the threat of emptiness and meaninglessness, the deep question concerning the meaning of the technical city and the well-furnished house. We do not dwell in order to dwell. We dwell in order to live. But if our whole life is in the service of the dwelling, in the service of the technical city, to what purpose is our life? The technical city does not have an answer to that question.

Thus the technical city provides an apt symbol for the ambiguity in the capitalist system: the transforming power of the modern age and the meaninglessness of the existence brought into being by this power.

2. The Present Crisis

The beginning of the First World War marks the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the present cultural crisis. This crisis is characterized in some places by the questioning of, and in others by the outright revolt

against the capitalist system. Generally, it consists of the disintegration of the capitalist principle. The moment of disintegration is the moment in which the uniting power of this principle—the idea and reality of automatic harmony—comes to an end. It is manifest in the breakdown of the belief in the mastery of rational man over the forces of nature and destiny. When this happens, capitalist society loses its spiritual center, its determining authority. And a society without a spiritual center cannot long exist. 15

To determine the causes of this crisis, one need look no further than the inherent contradictions within the capitalist system itself. Clearly stated, these are:

1) the contradiction between the rapidity of technical progress and the dependence of human life on human work, i.e., the fact of structural, inevitable unemployment; 2) the contradictions between productive power and the buying power of the masses, i.e., the fact of the increasing poverty of the masses in contrast to the increase of unproductive capital in the banks, from which is to be derived the necessity of an imperialistic foreign policy and the increasing threat of war; and 3) the contradiction between the assumed liberty of every individual and the complete dependence of the masses on the laws of the market, or in other words, the fact that, after man has overcome the fate which was once implied in the powers of nature, he becomes subjected to the fate implied in economic development. 16

16 The Protestant Era, p. 224.
Although these contradictions are present always in capitalist societies, their destructive power varies in different countries and continents. They have attained fullest expression in the industrial nations of continental Europe, particularly in Germany. In Britain and America, pre-bourgeois Protestant humanist ideals have survived to alter the structure of capitalism without a radical break-up. In Russia and sections of Asia, revolutionary activity has checked the destructive contradictions before they ever fully developed. Nowhere have they been completely victorious. These differences must be kept in mind, Tillich insists, for their neglect would result in a false analysis. Nevertheless, the structural trends in the present world situation are sufficiently universal to allow for a generally reliable analysis.

The dynamics of bourgeois society which have precipitated the present crisis have been dominant not only in the industrial nations of the European Continent with their unbalanced economies, but likewise in Britain, America and some smaller European countries with their comparatively stable situations, and also in Russia and the East where resentment against the intrusion of dominating Western exploitation has led to a leap...in modern social development, from a feudal and authoritarian society to a totalitarian order.17

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Before considering the various aspects of the present crisis, notice should be taken of Tillich's regard for the prophetic spirits who anticipated and protested against what has come about. He gives special mention to Søren Kierkegaard who reacted from the religious standpoint against rationalistic idealism; to the profound and forceful judgments against the depersonalizing forces of capitalist society by Friedrich Nietzsche from the ethical standpoint, by Karl Marx from the socio-economic standpoint, and by Sigmund Freud from the standpoint of depth psychology. That the situation is as these men have pictured it can no longer be denied.

The reality of what seemed to be mere interpretation has become visible even for the most conservative mind. Nobody can deny anymore the end of economic expansion, directly in Europe, indirectly all over the world, the consequent loss of fixed capital, the deepening of the economic crisis, the increased danger of imperialistic clashes as a consequence of the narrowing down of the world market, the tremendous speed of technical development as one of the main causes of structural unemployment which can be reduced only by a full or half-dictatorial war economy, the monopolistic-bureaucratic trends towards the centralization of economic power and ultimately towards state capitalism, the psychological effects of economic and social insecurity, expressed in indifference to freedom and democracy especially in the younger generation, and in readiness to follow anyone who promises a greater amount of security, the intellectual emptiness leading either to cynicism or to a tragic will to death as the meaning of
life—all this is a reality nobody can overlook.18

These shaking events have confirmed the judgments of the profound spirits of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who questioned the presupposition of automatic rational harmony and who had the courage to announce what favorable circumstances had obscured for almost a century, namely the irrational and antirational forces in personal and social life. The prophetic power and sensitivity of these men have made them the leaders of a new generation, first in Europe and then in America.19

19 Cf.: Paul Tillich, "Religion and the Intellectuals," Partisan Review (March 1950), xvii, 254; "Trends in Religious Thought that Affect the Social Outlook," pp. 23-23. Cf. also: "Almost all that has been creative outside of and beyond bourgeois society has been influenced from these two sources: on the one hand, from Nietzsche—the vitalistic philosophy, expressionist art and literature, the youth movement, the campaign against bourgeois conventions, the appreciation of aristocratic discipline, Stefan George and his school. On the other hand, from Marx—the philosophy of history, the passionate tension created by concerted effort directed toward the future, the campaign against the bourgeois ethos, against capitalism and imperialism, the idea of a fellowship-culture, and the protest against the alliance of the churches with the capitalistic sovereign state" (Paul Tillich, "Kairos," p. 4).

Some aspects of the economic situation of late capitalism (as described in the previous sections) have not changed substantially. However, capitalist economy as a whole is being radically questioned. State intervention which saved it from total collapse, has proven only partially successful and is therefore being replaced by some form of planned economy based on the needs of the whole. In Fascist countries, this has led to the consolidation of monopolies with the state, and the dictatorial control of both without the abolition of private ownership. In Russia, this has led to abolishing private industry and the profit motive; and the administration of the entire economy by a bureaucracy interested in promoting production and in the prestige and power connected with it. In the United States, resentment against state interference has resulted in a strong move back to industrial economy. Great Britain, veering between the two extremes of totalitarianism and monopolistic economy, is seeking a third way that will combine social security with capitalist ownership.

In the current struggle for a planned economy, no nation is unaffected by the success or failure of similar attempts by other nations. The interconnection between all parts of the earth brought about by capitalist expansion has resulted in a general and mutual interdependence, especially
in the economic sphere. Failure in one nation is bound to have a detrimental influence upon the efforts of the others.

At the same time and in a peculiarly contrasting way, all attempts at effecting economic security upon the foundations of late capitalism are doomed to failure. For the physiognomy of the world reveals...the constantly diminishing latitude for the development of capitalist dynamics. Which, forces every national group to intensify its own...economic aspirations and thus aggravate...economic crisis.20

Meanwhile the economy of all countries has been made subservient to the demands of war and military preparedness.21

4. Social Aspects of the Crisis

The split between classes, which characterized an earlier stage of capitalist society, has now been overshadowed by an internal split within all classes. For example, within the high bourgeoisie the pressure of revolting

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21 The Protestant Era, pp. 241-242; "The World Situation," pp. 41-42. Tillich does not fail to comment on the influence of Marxism in all of this: "It is an obvious fact that, partly under the influence of Marxism, the economy of free competition has been restricted to a great extent by the increasing power of labor; by frequent and radical interferences of the state in all countries; by the general trend toward state capitalism and the rise of a centralizing bureaucracy. But this transformation, although invalidating some of the anticipations of Marx, is, at the same time, the confirmation of his basic vision" (The Protestant Era, pp. 259-260).
masses has produced Fascist tendencies making for divisions within the class:

A kind of monopolistic feudalism arose, using a private bureaucracy and a private army. Without this disintegrating split in the economically leading group neither the rise of German Nazism nor the decay of France, nor the fall of the small democracies, nor the weakness of Britain is understandable.

Equally significant was the split within the proletariat between the employed and the habitually unemployed. "While the first group became 'sociable' through unions and progressivist reformers, the second group became a mass of desperadoes, entirely open to communistic or fascist propaganda, changing from one to the other, providing the 'stormtroops' of all totalitarian powers."

The effects of disintegration within the classes are made apparent by the fact that victory in recent wars and revolutions was not victory for any one class over the others, as in previous revolutions, or even for one nation over the others, as in previous wars. Internal division weakened the resistance in those classes and nations which should have been the spearhead of defense. In every class and in every nation there were groups that favored the new

\[\text{22 "Our Disintegrating World," p. 137.}\]
forces. This, Tillich maintains, is what made a limited victory possible and a final, decisive victory impossible.\textsuperscript{24}

A further symptom of the critical disturbance of social equilibrium is to be found in the feeling of loneliness that pervades contemporary society. In Tillich's view, this loneliness has its roots in the loss of community with other individuals, and in man's inability to participate in the things that he produces as well as in the world of nature about him. As has been observed, both of these factors are consequences of the inner contradictions in the capitalist system. Competitive society with its market orientation widened the gap between individual selves. It disrupted the balance between the ontological poles of self and world, individuality and participation; leaving the self isolated, deprived of direct communication with external reality. The major form of group life that survived, the mass, is so impersonal that it often merely intensifies individual loneliness.

The efforts to re-establish community life are another aspect of the social crisis discussed by Tillich. Here he concentrates upon the various "dynamic masses" or

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 136.
collectivist societies which aim to overcome a meaningless situation by the might of collective energy.

These societies are of two types: the first type includes those that have arisen under Nazism, Fascism, and Communism; the second type includes those arising under "democratic conformism" in America and Great Britain. In Nazi Germany, collectivist societies of the first type were founded on the spirit of nationalism and were reinforced by "blood and soil mythology" and the mystical deification of the Führer. In Communist Russia, they were established on the principles of a rational eschatology that approached Old Testament prophetism.25

However varied their origins, the collectivist societies that sprang up after World War I in Nazi, Fascist, and Communist countries had this in common: they offered a form of community and personal fulfillment to masses of lonely people whose meaningful self-affirmation had been undermined by the capitalist system. They gave to isolated individuals and divided classes a feeling of belongingness, of solidarity, and the courage to overcome anxiety through participation in the life of the whole. Present-day Communism makes the same appeal: The individual affirms himself by affirming the collective in which he participates, he receives himself back

25 The Courage to Be, p. 92.
from the collective, filled and fulfilled by it. He gives much of what belongs to his individual self, perhaps its existence as a particular being in time and space, but he receives more because his true being is enclosed in the being of the group. In surrendering himself to the cause of the collective he surrenders that in him which is not included in the self-affirmation of the collective; and this he does not deem to be worthy of affirmation. In this way the anxiety of individual non-being is transformed into anxiety about the collective, and anxiety about the collective is conquered by the courage to affirm oneself through participation in the collective.26

Collectivist societies of the second type, represented by democratic conformism, have the ambiguous character of proceeding from the same ground as the capitalist system, of participating in its contradictions, and at the same time providing a mild antidote to mass depersonalization. These societies, like capitalism, spring from the doctrine that the individual is the "microcosmic participant in the logical processes of the macrocosm." This doctrine implies belief in the inevitability of progress. However, its unique American interpretation—the interpretation upon which democratic conformism is built—allows that the progress of the social group is not dependent upon the metaphysical idea of progress. That is to say, when the belief in progress is shaken, as it is today, the feeling that the productive

processes of the group are divine, and the belief in the individual's participation in these processes, is not destroyed. 27

Consequently, the societies which embody these productive principles are able, on the one hand, to counteract in part the loss of community and the loneliness that result from the inner contradictions of the capitalist system. They can bring to the individual a sense of significance and brotherhood born of common involvement in the creative development of mankind. On the other hand, the conformity demanded by participation in the process is more and more drawing democratic groups into the ambiguities of bourgeois society.

Participation in the productive process demands conformity and adjustment to the ways of social production. This necessity became stronger the more uniform and comprehensive the methods of production became. 28 Technical society grew into fixed patterns. 28

Tillich has elsewhere expanded these comments on the ways and means by which democratic conformism fosters standardization, impersonality, and the stifling of creative freedom. It depersonalizes, he says,

not by commanding but by providing, providing, namely what makes individual creativity superfluous. If one looks around at the methods

27 Ibid., pp. 97-103.
28 Ibid., p. 105.
which produce conformity one is astonished that still enough individual creativity is left even to produce these refined methods. One discovers that man's spiritual life has a tremendous power of resistance....But one also sees that this resistance is in a great danger of being worn down by the ways in which adjustment is forced upon him in the industrial society. It starts with the education of 'adjustment' which produces conformity just by allowing for more spontaneity of the child than any pre-industrial civilization....At the same time, and throughout his whole life, other powerful means of adjustment are working upon the person in the technical society; the newspapers which choose the facts worth reporting and suggest their interpretation, the radio programs which eliminate non-conformist contents and interpreters, television which replaces the visual imagination by selected pictorial presentations, the movie which for commercial and censorship reasons has to maintain in most of its productions a conscious mediocrity, adjusting itself to the adjusted taste of the masses, the patterns of advertisement which permeate all other means of public communication, and have an inescapable omnipresence.29

All of this leaves Tillich undecided as to which type of society will ultimately win out. At present, the collectivist tendencies of the totalitarian type are being forced upon democratic societies, thus strengthening conformism. But, in order to counteract this tendency, individualism,

29"The Person in a Technical Society," p. 150. Cf.: "In Civilization, Capitalism, and Socialism, collective labor stifles individual creation. Civilization de-personalizes. The emancipation of the personality, which civilization claims to achieve, is fatal to personal originality" (Berdyaev, op. cit., p. 215).
particularly in its existentialist expression, is gaining power. According to Tillich, the future geography of the social sphere will depend to a considerable degree upon the effectiveness of the individualist (or existentialist) revolt.  

5. Political Aspects of the Crisis

Tillich's analysis of the political sphere is confined largely to three special phenomena, Marxism, religious socialism, and national socialism. He justifies this on the grounds that socialism, in these various forms is the greatest and most effective of the movements in opposition to capitalist society. Almost all the weapons which can be used in the war against capitalist society were forged in the socialist critique which developed throughout the whole nineteenth century and which achieved its climax in Marx's and Engel's Communist Manifesto with its sweeping and prophetic power.

The theory of socialism or "the socialist principle" as developed by Marx has its roots in the apprehension of a

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30 The Courage to Be, p. 106.

31 Tillich defines socialism as "the demand for a society in which it is possible for each one and for every group to fulfill its meaning of life, the demand for a society permeated with meaning" (Paul Tillich, "Sozialismus," Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus (1930), I, 2).

32 The Religious Situation, p. 78. Cf.: "Socialism is the revolt against this structure of capitalist society. In socialism man's essential being, though distorted and almost lost, revolts against the causes of this loss. The causes are structural, implied in the system itself, and therefore independent of the good or bad will of any social group. Socialism is the fight of man for his creative
profound religious truth which Tillich associates with the Protestant Principle. He argues, in fact, that some aspects of this truth are more adequately expressed by Marx than by organized religion. For example, at the heart of the socialist principle is a strong element of religious eschatology. The belief that the elimination of class conflict would bring the dissolution of the state in favor of local self-government represents "the secular form of the ancient religious idea of the perfect community of love in the perfect Kingdom of God." And the prophetic power of Marx's doctrine is not undercut, explains Tillich, by the fact that he fought against God and religion—a god and a religion that had become instruments of capitalist society.

The quintessence of Tillich's analysis of Marxist teaching is contained in an article answering the question, "How much truth is there in Karl Marx?" In this article, Tillich designates three levels of truth. First, there is the scientific truth of Marx's method.


behavior as it develops under special sociological conditions. He does not believe in the abstract functioning of these laws, but shows that their validity depends on the structure of the society in which they operate. Thus his method is concrete, dynamic and critical in contrast to the attempts, partly justified though they were, of theoretical economists to formulate economic laws according to the pattern of mathematical physics.34

Secondly, there is in Marx's writings a strong element of situational truth. This is to be found in his analysis of bourgeois society—its motivating forces, its pervading ideologies, and its self-destructive contradictions. It is just here, declares Tillich, that Marx made his permanent contribution to the understanding of the capitalist system and its sociological implications: "It seems to me that the whole field of historiography offers very few pieces of structural analysis that can compare in profundity,

34 Paul Tillich, "How Much Truth is There in Karl Marx?" Christian Century (September 8, 1948), LXV, 906. About the meaning of this materialism, Tillich goes on to say: "Marx's materialism was not a metaphysical idea but a theory about the influence of the economic factor in history.... According to Marx, the economic realm constitutes the 'substructure' on the basis of which the cultural and spiritual 'superstructure' arises. Movements in the superstructure are determined by movements in the substructure.... But there is an ambiguity in Marx's conception of substructure and superstructure. It may be taken to mean that cultural forms and creations have a reality of their own, though their emergence is conditioned by material factors. This is the view that Marx himself took in regard to the independent truth of science. But his analogy may also be taken to mean that the superstructure is a mere projection or reflection of the substructure, without any independent truth. This is the interpretation that Marx used in his criticism of religion and metaphysics."
scientific originality and prophetic insight with Marx's interpretation.\textsuperscript{35}

In the third place, Tillich cites the ultimate truth, the religious truth about the human situation as such, in Marxist doctrine. This is threefold: 1) the critical truth that religion may become a transcendent escape for victims of the class struggle and deaden (be an opiate for) their revolutionary passion for changing the existing order; 2) the existential truth (uttered in protest against Hegelian idealism which claimed that modern society is in a state of harmonious progress) of man's estrangement from himself in capitalist society; 3) the dynamic truth, derived from Jewish tradition, of his prophetic interpretation of history.\textsuperscript{36}

In passing from Marxism to religious socialism, we come to the movement which has been most influential in the development of Tillich's own political thought and action. Continental religious socialism had its origins in the work of the two Bluhemardts (father and son) soon after World War I. It came to consciousness first in Switzerland where a small group of ministers sought to apply the theological teaching

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{ibid.}, p. 907.
\textsuperscript{36}\textit{loc. cit.}
of father Blumhardt to the problems of social life.  

Not long thereafter, religious socialist groups were established in some of the leading cities throughout Germany. The most prominent circle, which was in Berlin, included Professors Mennicke, Heimann, Löwe, and Tillich. This group was concerned, in particular, with the theoretical foundations of the new movement. They wanted to make explicit the socialist element in the religious demand and the religious element in the socialist demand. Also, they aimed to correct the "false anthropology of Marxism" and to overcome its utopian tendencies. While rejecting the naive sense of absoluteness of the socialist party, they struggled from the socialist viewpoint

with the problems of community, of the attitude toward things, with the questions about human needs, about the formation of classes, with the problem of the masses in its economic and religious aspects, with the problem of property, the meaning of the liberal definition of the economic laws and with other similar questions. Their criticism of socialism was, often radical, more radical and profound, indeed, than that which was exercised by capitalism; yet it was, a criticism which was, at the same time an affirmation of the socialist struggle.

37Cf. Piper, op. cit., p. 113. Two of Christoph Blumhardt's ideas have been decisive for Tillich. The first is that religion is not to be interpreted as restricting itself to or possessing a special sphere, such as Church doctrine and discipline. The second is the assertion of the possibility that God's action in history can be seen in a clearer way in the secular and even atheistic anti-Christian aspirations and activities of socialism than in the expressly religious sphere of the church.

From the outset, the religious socialists engaged in an intensive dialogue with Marxism. In fact, much of their socialist theory had been founded upon Marxist principles. They had an affinity with Marxism in its prophetic interpretation of history. Both regarded history as meaningful in itself— as having an end, a beginning, and a center. Both considered the fight between good and evil to be the main content of history. Both attacked the existing social order as the embodiment of evil. Both believed that the transition from the present to the fulfillment of history would occur by means of catastrophic events. And both agreed that certain minority groups were at present the true bearers of historical and cultural destiny. 39

Furthermore, religious socialism found striking similarities with Marxism in their doctrines of man. Both maintained that man's true essence and his real existence con-

39 The Protestant Era, p. 254.
tradict each other. They saw man's existence as estranged and tragic; he had become dehumanized and had lost his dignity. Both insisted that man's nature is determined by social as well as individual factors. For both,

Perdition and salvation are universal and historical. The individual as an individual cannot escape the former and cannot reach the latter. He is a part of a fallen world, whether the fall is expressed in religious or sociological terms; and he can become a part of a new world, whether this new world is conceived of in terms of a supra-historical or infra-historical transformation.40

It follows from this that both religious socialism and Marxism agreed that in order to recognize the truth one must first do the truth. Participation is the key to knowledge.

However, Tillich and the religious socialists were bound from the Christian standpoint to attack Marxism on four important points, each marked by a different attitude toward transcendence. 1) Marxism, because of its limited transcendence fell prey to dangerous utopian elements which finally led it to affirm the fulfillment of history within historical time and space.41 Religious socialism, maintaining the belief in

40 Ibid., p. 255
41 Eduard Heimann considers Tillich's appraisal of the Marxist doctrine on this point to be faulty: "He rightly sees the barrier between religious socialism and Marxism in the latter's utopianism, but wrongly assumes that Marxism can logically be dissociated from it; he does not see that the conflict is not between the utopianism of Marxism, that is, the Marxist vision of the future, and the realism of religious socialism, but between the two doctrines of man. Tillich's error is in associating Marxist utopianism with its doctrine of revolution rather than with its doctrine of man, which, in an atheistic system, occupies the place of theology" (Heimann, op. cit., p. 320).
absolute transcendence, contended that the demonic powers of injustice and will-to-power can not be excluded from history. 2) Religious socialism, in contrast to Marxism, upheld the significance of the individual and his transformation for the outcome of history. 3) Contrary to Marxism, religious socialism found the center of history to be, not the rise of the proletariat, but the appearance of New Being in Jesus as the Christ. 4) Finally, religious socialism opposed the Marxist theory of religion. While it recognized as a probability, and in some cases as a reality, the distortion which Marx described, nevertheless it denied that this distortion represents what religion essentially is.

In his concluding paragraphs on the relation between Marxism and religious socialism, Tillich notes several philosophical principles of Marxism which in their "purified form"

42 In spite of agreement at some points between Christianity and Marxism in their doctrines of man, Tillich affirms certain fundamental differences. He has elsewhere written: "The doctrine of man is the most neglected part of Marxist and communist theory. They never revised the liberal optimism regarding the nature of man, although they have an extremely pessimistic view of its present distortion, but since they did not explain this distortion in anthropological, but only in sociological terms, the transition from natural perfection to existential distortion and from this to existential fulfillment is described in a very utopian way" (Paul Tillich, "The Church and Communism," Religion and Life, Summer 1937, VI, 353).

43 Ibid., p. 256-258.
must be retained and supported by religious socialism. They are: the demand for the unity of theory and practice (or existential thinking), the recognition of the decisive influence of material production in shaping the historical process, and the significance of the dialectical method as describing the "movements of life and history in their inner tensions, contrasts, and contradictions and in their trend toward more embracing unities."

With this dialectical relationship to Marxism, Tillich and the religious socialists set about to interpret the socialist movement in dynamic religious terms. They formulated two doctrines to help them with this task: one

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44 Cf. "Marxism...when stripped of its religious illusions and of its false promises of redemption may well contain proximate solutions for the immediate problems of social justice in our day. It is wrong to regard the socialization of property as a cure-all for every social ill; but it is no more wrong than to regard such socialization as of itself evil" (Reinhold Niebuhr, "God's Design and the Present Disorder of Civilization," The Church and the Disorder of Society, pp. 21-22).

45 Tillich, op. cit., pp. 258-259. Heimann asserts that Tillich is again fundamentally wrong "in believing that there can be a 'combination of Christianity and dialectical materialism'; he is wrong in believing that the Marxian dialectic preserves the original creative meaning of dialectic. Tillich ignores that the end of the dialectic is much more essential in Marx than in Hegel, and that it witnesses to the degradation of the noblest instrument of thought to a mere means for the final establishment of a 'universal mechanism of calculable processes.' For, according to Marx, man potentially is and dialectically becomes such a mechanism, which on the one hand cannot sin because on the other it can no longer create" (Heimann, op. cit., p. 324).
they called the "religious-socialist principle"; the other was the powerful doctrine of the kairos. Tillich has written extensively on both subjects, partly on his own and officially as co-editor of the periodical "Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus."

The "religious-socialist principle" is the theme for several of his early essays and for his book Die sozialistische Entscheidung (1933). Here it will suffice to give some indication of its general meaning. First, it must be noted that the religious-socialist principle is not an abstraction, but rather a dynamic, powerful historical reality. It is the outcome of a concrete, individual decision—"the socialist decision"—and cannot be understood apart from what has happened in and to the socialist movement.

The three major elements in the socialist principle may be stated as follows: 1) the sacramental element which affirms the powers of origin; 2) the rational critical element which maintains creative autonomy; and 3) the prophetic element which qualifies the first two through the proclamation of the unconditional promise and demand. The prophetic element creates an expectation which is neither a subjective attitude nor the expectation of an objective end; it is simply an "unobjective expectation." Something real is anticipated, but it never becomes identified with a tangible, exhaustible form. What is expected is implied in the powers of origin,
from whence comes the energy for fulfillment.

Through the doctrine of the *kairos*, largely the result of Tillich's own formulations, the religious-socialist movement tried to give socialism an expectation which is bound to and beyond the concrete situation, thereby overcoming "the unbelieving element in utopian socialism, the bondage to the finite and temporal, without abolishing the eschatological enthusiasm." The development and meaning of the *kairos* doctrine have been set out already in another connection. References have been made to the anticipation of a *kairos* which prevailed in many circles in Germany after World War I. This was what sparked the new movement. And this was what religious socialism sought to awaken in the socialist movement itself. What ever its conceptual framework, the *kairos* doctrine was the reflection of the conviction of Tillich and many of his compatriots that their homeland was in a crisis that could end in new creation:

Germany defeated, humiliated, punished for her saber-rattling overbearingness, shaken and purged and thereby enabled to bring to the world religious socialism, which the victorious nations, being all of them members of a disintegrating bourgeois world, needed no less than the defeated, but could not achieve because of their victory. The spiritual imperialism of the defeated people, the exuberance of the call to the 'kairos,' the sense of the grace

47*The Religious Situation*, p. 138
48Cf. Chapter V, section 2.
that had come in the form of defeat, to break
the old and pave the way for the new—this
is the historical background of the doctrine. 49

Opposition to the religious-socialist movement arose
from two quarters: first, from the so-called dialectical or
"neo-orthodox" theologians (primarily Karl Barth), and later
from a movement known as National Socialism.

Barth himself sustained a very curious relationship
to religious socialism. From 1918 to about 1921, he was
closely allied with the Swiss branch. 50 And when his Com-
mentary on the Epistle to the Romans was published in 1918,
it was immediately adopted as the fundamental document for
religious socialism, both in Switzerland and in Germany.
Tillich remarks that religious-socialist ideas about
the relation of God to the world as a whole
instead of to the religious-ethical personal-
ity alone...became powerful through Barth's
Commentary on Romans, which was neither a
commentary nor a system, but a prophetic call
addressed to religion and culture, to acknowl-
edge the divinity of the divine, and to dissolve
the neo-Protestant synthesis between God's and
man's creativity. 51

49 Heimann, op. cit., pp. 315-316.
50 Cf. Barth's supporting comments about Ragaz, one
of the early Swiss religious socialists, in The Word of God
and the Word of Man, pp. 158-159.
51 "The Present Theological Situation in the Light
However, after Barth came to Germany in 1921, to be Professor of Theology at Göttingen, he gradually turned against the movement and devoted his personal influence and, indirectly, the impact of his teaching and writing, to its defeat. His attacks came in the form of a denial of any connection between the religious and the humanistic interpretations of the idea of the kingdom of God. Barth stressed and still continues to stress the purely transcendent character of religious hope and the purely immanent character of political programs. He does not admit the Christian background of modern secularism, nor does he accept the Christian interpretation of the proletarian movement. He severs all relations between the kingdom of God and human history, and he has had much success in spreading this doctrine. In doing this he has helped to destroy the effects of religious socialism.

Tillich is convinced that Barth's attitude, coupled with the indifference of traditional German Lutheranism, not only contributed to the downfall of religious socialism, but also helped to create in the political realm the vacuum that made possible the rise of totalitarian powers. Before commenting on National Socialism and the totalitarian state that

52 "The Religious Situation in Germany Today," pp. 170-171. Cf.: "Today Karl Barth's pessimistic supranaturalism has helped to destroy the Religious-Socialist attempts in pre-Hitler Germany to stop Nazism by creating a better social order on the basis of Christian principles. And even when Barth became a fanatical anti-Nazi he showed in his letter to the British Christians that it was not the common fight of people of all religions and creeds against the National-Socialist distortion of humanity that interested him, but the defense of the Church as the finger pointing only to heaven and
it produced, it seems appropriate—especially in view of
the admitted failure of the religious-socialist movement in
Germany—to give Tillich's views on the place of religious
socialism in the present crisis.

When asked whether subsequent shaking events have
not shown the message of the *kairos* as proclaimed by the
early religious socialists to be in error, Tillich responds:

> The answer is not difficult to give. The
> message is always an error; for it sees some¬
> thing immediately imminent which, considered
> in its ideal aspect, will never become a
> reality and which, considered in its real
> aspect, will be fulfilled only in long peri¬
> ods of time. And yet the message of the
> kairos is never an error; for where the kairos
> is proclaimed as a prophetic message it is
> already present; it is impossible for it to
> be proclaimed in power without its having
> grasped those who proclaim it.53

As to the applicability of religious-socialist prin¬
ciples to the demands of the present situation, he writes:

> I do not doubt that the basic conceptions of
> religious socialism are valid, that they point
> to the political and cultural way of life by
> which alone Europe can be built up. But I
> am not sure that the adoption of religious¬
> socialist principles is a possibility in any
> foreseeable future. Instead of a creative
> 'kairos', I see a vacuum which can be made

not to earth....He, like all pessimistic supranaturalists,
is not interested in history as such nor in social trans¬
formation for the sake of humanity" ("Trends in Religious
Thought that Affect Social Outlook," pp. 24-25).

53 The Protestant Era, p. 51.
creative only if it is accepted and endured and, rejecting all kinds of premature solutions, is transformed into a deepening 'sacred void' of waiting. 54

Tillich deals with National Socialism as a segment of the socialist movement itself—the movement which he and his colleagues sought to interpret in the light of ultimate meaning. But because of the resistance of the Barthians and the political indifference of German Lutheranism, they were not successful. Thus, deprived of a religious orientation, the socialist movement became shallow and empty. In the ensuing vacuum, National Socialism rose to power. The victory of Nazism—that is, National Socialism in its fully developed totalitarian form—marked the final defeat of the religious socialist movement in Germany. Some of its leaders, having been dismissed from their positions upon Hitler's ascendancy, took refuge in other countries; some were driven

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54 Paul Tillich, "Beyond Religious Socialism: How My Mind Has Changed in the Last Decade," The Christian Century (June 15, 1949), LXVI, 733. Tillich later denied the implications of this title. He wrote: "It was a mistake when the editor of the Christian Century gave my article in the series 'How My Mind Changed in the Last Ten Years' the title 'Beyond Religious Socialism.' If the prophetic message is true, there is nothing 'beyond religious socialism,'" ("Autobiographical Reflections," pp. 12-13). Tillich looks upon the Frontier Fellowship (founded by Reinhold Niebuhr, Eduard Heimann, John C. Bennett, Alexander Miller and others) as the American successor and analogue of the German religious socialist movement. Cf. "The Second Focus of the Fellowship," Christianity and Society (Winter, 1949-50), XV, 19-20.
underground, others were persecuted.

The rise of the totalitarian state and its opposition to religious socialism can be understood only against the general background of late capitalism and the particular condition of Germany at the time. The inner contradictions of the capitalist system were experienced more acutely in industrial Germany than in any other place. This, in Tillich's view, made the appearance of state authoritarianism a "structural necessity." The political, social and economic disintegration called for a strong counter-measure and militant nationalism seemed the only ready answer. It was the most powerful weapon that the German opponents of bourgeois democracy could command.

In formulating its own religious presuppositions National Socialism was able to enlist the services of many of the leading German Christians. The most notable of these was the theologian Emmanuel Hirsch, Tillich's personal friend and former pupil. Hirsch hailed "the Nazi revolution as a 'holy storm,' a 'power full of blessing,' in whose 'Weltanschauung' 'Germans of Evangelical faith should find their sustaining natural historic dwelling place." He also

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appropriated some of the main categories of religious socialism—for example, the appearance of Hitler was interpreted as the kairos—directly for the German nation, indirectly for all nations.\(^56\) One of Tillich's recent critics has commented on this situation as follows:

At many points Hirsch was strikingly close to the favorite doctrines of Tillich and the religious socialists. He spoke of the crisis of 'autonomous' reason, the conflict with 'demonic' forces, the importance of the 'boundary situation'... He gave his unqualified, 'unbroken' support to national socialism, as though the year 1933 brought a new revelation comparable to the year 33; and he condemned everything connected with the Weimar Republic as though it were downright sinful.\(^57\)

In spite of its avowed antibourgeois intentions, National Socialism was overcome by bourgeois tendencies within its own existence. The very demon that it set out to destroy became its high executioner. For in its last stages Nazism, supported by the leading bourgeoisie, was fighting against labor by using labor's own ideology concerning the principles and values of capitalism. This resulted in the deepest disintegration making possible the final defeat of Nazi Germany.\(^58\)

\(^56\)"The Present Historical Situation," p. 302.

Tillich accuses Hirsch of changing "the 'kairos' doctrine which is meant to be prophetic and eschatological into a priestly and sacramental consecration of a present day event" ("Die Theologie der Kairos und die gegenwärtige geistige Lage," p. 312).

\(^57\)Horton, op. cit., p. 32.

\(^58\)"Our Disintegrating World," p. 139.
Besides these three major movements, Tillich comments briefly on certain marked antidemocratic tendencies that have appeared recently in strongly democratic countries. In some places these trends have advanced along Fascist lines, that is, one party has acquired complete control and has abolished the democratic checks on its use of power, as in Italy. In other places, democratically established bureaucracy has gained enough independence to build the framework for a planned reorganization of society, as in the United States under the "New Deal" and "Fair Deal."

Behind both types of reaction Tillich sees the distinction between "democracy as a constitutional procedure" and "democracy as a way of life." As a way of life democracy seeks to do justice to the dignity of every human being. However, under the reign of capitalism democratic procedure contradicts the way of life. Hence, the present antidemocratic tendencies within the democracies represent a quest for new methods in order to save the democratic way of life in the ethical and religious sense. 59


All of these varied developments in the economic, social, and political spheres determine as well as reflect, more

than anything else, the religious situation of the present. They imply a breakdown in the attitude of self-sufficient finitude that prevailed in the former stages of capitalist society.

The fact that the smashing victory of the Allied Nations and the discovery of atomic power have not created anything like the enthusiastic hopes of the years after the first World War, but just the opposite, shows the change in the spiritual climate during the last twenty-five years. A tragic feeling about the limits of man's spiritual power—in contrast to his almost unlimited technical power—has spread all over the Western world

...An atmosphere of unconquerable anxiety, a feeling of meaninglessness, of cynicism about principles and ideals, a despair of the future has developed.60

According to Tillich, people today are aware of the ambiguity of their situation, particularly the ambiguity of their economic, social, and political situation. They have experienced confusion in their inner lives and demonic forces in the depths of social existence. The conflict and disintegration which they find in themselves and in all culture has driven them to the abyss of meaninglessness, which is full of both horror and fascination.

60"Vertical and Horizontal Thinking," p. 10. Elsewhere, Tillich has described the period from 1900 on as "The Age of Crisis" whose basic question is "What is the meaning of existence?" Cf. "History as the Problem of Our Time," Review of Religion (March 1939), III, 255-264.
Their predicament is manifest in "their cries of despair." No longer content with a restricted or moderate optimism about man and culture, people of all classes and ages have given themselves over to despair, which for some is a "heroic despair." It is "heroic" for those who have expressed the despair of existence artistically or philosophically and thereby have discovered the meaning of meaninglessness.

The heroism of despair transcends despair through the power of the intellectual in expressing it, not in outcries, but in creative forms. By this expression of despair they are saved from the radicalism of the despair they express. For two reasons one can call this attitude negative-religious. Despair is negative-religious in so far as within it all finite securities break down and lose their power of preventing the question of the infinite, of the ultimate meaning of existence. The expression of despair is negative-religious in so far as it tries to transcend the situation of absolute despair by expressing it although confining it at the same time. These inner contradictions of the negative-religious attitude drive...towards the other, the positive-religious way....The positive-religious way transcends the human predicament radically by transforming it into a question to which religion gives the answer.61

61 "Religion and the Intellectuals," p. 255. For Tillich, the opposite of "heroic despair" is cynicism. He describes the modern cynics as those "who have no belief in reason, no criterion for truth, no set values, no answer to the question of meaning. They try to undermine every norm put before them. Their courage is expressed not creatively but in their form of life. They courageously reject any solution which would deprive them of their freedom of rejecting whatever they want to reject. The cynics are lonely although they need company in order to show their loneliness. They are empty of both preliminary meanings and an ultimate meaning" (The Courage to Be, p. 143).
This inner despair produced by and actualized in man's economic, social, and political situation and affirmed creatively by some in terms of "heroic despair," points for all to the presence of a void, a vacuum. The meaning of this void lies in its possibility of expressing, even though negatively, an ultimate concern. "Where this happens, the vacuum of disintegration can become a vacuum out of which creation is possible, a 'sacred void,' so to speak, which brings a quality of waiting, of 'not yet,' of being broken from above, into all our cultural creativity."^62

This, then, is Tillich's religious analysis of the present state of culture generally, and of the situation in economics, society, and politics, in particular. The spiritual substance which has its roots in these spheres and has become characteristic of the time, is further reflected in the realms of psychology and religion and in existentialist art, literature and philosophy, as the next chapters will show.

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^62 The Protestant Era, p. 67.
CHAPTER VII

A CULTURAL-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PAINTING.

LITERATURE AND DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

1. Painting

Although the present crisis centers in economic, social and political developments, its general effects are manifest in every branch of culture. The spiritual substance of the cultural whole is present to some degree in each of its parts. However, the aesthetic realm provides the clearest expression of the depth, range and focus of modern man's religious character. And within this realm, art is "the most sensitive barometer of the spiritual climate."

It indicates what the spiritual situation is; it does this more immediately and directly than do science and philosophy for it is less burdened by objective considerations. Its symbols have something of a revelatory character... Science is of greater importance in the rise of a spiritual situation, but art is more important for its apprehension.1

The enjoyment and study of painting was a decisive experience for Paul Tillich. It started during his four years as a chaplain in World War I. He became interested in pictures "as a reaction from the gruesomeness, the ugliness, and the destructiveness of war."2 Out of these early experiences,

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1 The Religious Situation, pp. 53-54.

2 The Interpretation of History, p. 15.
he developed an appreciation for the ability of art to express man's ultimate concern. He discovered in styles and forms the break-through of a symbolic religious power.

The significance of styles and forms, is not this or that individual psychological element, nor is it biographical or sociological or national. All of these factors are co-determinative. They provide the subjective possibilities of the style, just as the forms determine the objective possibilities. But a possible basis is not a real basis. The essence of the import lies beneath all these subjective factors. It is a certain attitude toward reality. It is an interpretation of ultimate meaning, the most profound apprehension of reality. It is the functioning of the unconditional which supports every conditioned experience, colors it and prevents it from plunging into the void of nothingness.

Further thought along these lines, together with a systematic study of the history of art, resulted in the formulation of some of Tillich’s key concepts. His concepts of the "form-substance polarity," of the "break-through," and of the "demonic" are grounded in artistic associations, particularly with the expressionist movement. Later artistic trends in the direction of a new realism furnished the urgent impetus for the formulation of "belief-ful realism" — the prevailing theme of his book The Religious Situation, dedicated to an artist friend.

Tillich's analysis of contemporary art is expressed in

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4 The Interpretation of History, p. 16.
terms of the four levels he distinguishes in the relationship between religion, as ultimate concern, and art, as a reflection of ultimate concern. The first level is called "secular art" since neither in style nor content is it directly religious.

On the second level a religious style deals with secular content. Most of contemporary existentialist art is on this level. But why can its style be called religious?

Because it puts the religious question radically, and has the power, the courage to face the situation out of which this question comes, namely the human predicament . . . . This is the all-important element in existentialism. The essential categories, time, space, causality, substance, have lost their ultimate power. They give meaning to our world. With their help we can understand things. We can understand that one thing follows the other, one causes the other, one is distinguished from the other, each has its space and its time and so on. But all of this no longer applies. Mankind does not feel at home in this world anymore. The categories have lost their embracing and overwhelming and asserting power. There is no safety in the world . . . . Things in these pictures are displaced. Displaced persons are a symbol of our time, and displaced souls can be found in all countries. This large scale displacement of our existence is expressed in these pictures.5

Those elements expressing ultimate concern, even though negatively, make the style of existentialist art religious.

The third level is characterized by a nonreligious style treating religious subjects, such as the Christ, the saints, the Holy Virgin and Child. Most of the art of the high Renaissance belongs to this level.

On the fourth level religious style and religious content are united. This is religious art in the most concrete sense. It is suitable for liturgical purposes as well as for private devotion. This level is represented today by the expressionist movement, about which more will be said later.

The art associated with capitalist society belongs to the first level and is characterized by the movement known as impressionism. Impressionism sought to apply the methods of the scientific laboratory to art, thus eliminating as far as possible the personal element. Both the masses and the individual are treated alike. They are objects only, and not subjects. Everything is subordinated to nature, not nature in the metaphysical sense, but rather nature on its surface.

The impressionist movement developed in two directions. On the one hand, under the influence of Manet, the purely objective approach was paramount. A new consciousness of autonomy in art was awakened; attention was concentrated on lines, forms and colors. Degas, Pissarro, Renoir, and Manet can be associated in this movement.

On the other hand, and more on the second level, impressionism developed along subjective lines following Cezanne’s reaction to impressionist extremes. The movement called post-impressionism or symbolism—which included Seurat, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec—made painting a means of expressing sensations. It used objective reality with all of its distortions and horrors
as material for aesthetic intuition. Van Gogh is representative. His "Night Cafe" pictures what Tillich calls "late emptiness": one solitary figure sitting at a table, and that is all. Here, in all the beautiful colors, is portrayed the "horror of emptiness." An important development of Cezanne's theories appears in the movement known as "cubism." The implied thrust toward solid geometry implicit in Cezanne's style is cultivated by Picasso, Braque,7 and Gris. By sharpening geometric forms and by moving further toward complete abstraction from subject matter, these artists try to capture the essence of reality. They aim to go below the surface to the basic elements which in the physical realm are cubes, planes, colors, lines, and shadows. From this point of view, their pictures have a tremendous religious power.

Picasso's "Guernica," for example, is profoundly religious because it expresses honestly and powerfully modern man's anguished search for ultimate meaning and his passionate revolt against cruelty and hatred. Guernica was a town in Northern Spain where the Fascist countries (Germany and Italy) helped the Fascist Spaniards to overthrow the Loyalist government. It was destroyed by a combined air attack in the first

6 Ibid., p. 12.

7 For instance, in a Braque still life note the way everything is dissolved into planes, lines and colors—elements of reality, but not reality itself.
exercise of what is called "saturation bombing."

Picasso has painted this immense horror—the pieces of reality, men and animals and inorganic pieces of houses all together—in a way in which the 'piece' character of our reality is perhaps more horrifically visible than in any other of the modern pictures.... It shows what very soon followed in most European countries in terms of the Second World War, and it shows what is now in the souls of many Americans as disruptive, existential doubt, emptiness and meaninglessness.

Tillich sees in the artistic styles created by impressionist and post-impressionist painters a double religious significance. There is the expression of the dominant trend of capitalism toward a mechanized world; and there is the disclosure of the self-alienation of man and the repression of his vital forces—a disclosure that prepared the way for revolutionary reactions.

In contrast to the artistic realism of impressionism and post-impressionism, there arose in the early twentieth century a movement known as "expressionism." Expressionism

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9 The representations of Jesus by impressionist artists were "clearly analogous to the liberal conceptions of Jesus which prevailed in the Protestant theology of the period, so that at best an ideal, finite reality but never the reference to the eternal was expressed. The religious art of capitalist society reduces the traditional religious symbols to the level of middle-class morality and robs them of their transcendence and their sacramental character" (The Religious Situation, pp. 56-57).
proper is the least ambiguous manifestation of revolt against capitalist society.

'It is a revolution against the realism of the nineteenth century. It is, a rebellion against the naturalistic critical, as well as against the realistic-conventional wing of realism, and it also trespasses the limits of the subjective-impressionistic realism from which it came. Things are, interpreted by the expressionistic painters in their cosmic setting and immeasurable depth. Their natural forms are broken so that their spiritual significance becomes transparent. Colors, expressing divine and demonic ecstasies break through the gray of the daily life.

The expressionist style offers a particularly forceful example of the relation between form and substance and the religious significance of this relation. In expressionism, content—in the sense of the external reality of objects and events—has lost its importance. Nature has been robbed of her outward appearance and her deepest depths have been uncovered. And in the uncovering, the expressionists have revealed the horror which, as Schelling has said, dwells in the depths of every living creature.

In their work a religious substance which has shattered its form is struggling to find a form, a paradox which most people find incomprehensible and infuriating. And the element of horror seems to me to be deepened by a sense of guilt, not in the literally ethical sense, but in the cosmic sense, the guilt of mere existence. The solution, however, is the merging of one individual existence

10 The Protestant Era, p. 66.
into another; the elimination of the discreet individual; the mysticism of love, of being one with all the living.

Thus a No and a Yes comes to expression in great depth in this art. But the No, the form-destroying element, seems to me to have the upper hand throughout, even though this is not the intention of the artist, for in him there pulsates a passionate will to a new, unconditional Yes.11

Expressionist art, as represented by the paintings of Matisse, Rouault, Rattner, Raciz, and Chagall, reaches the fourth level where religious form is combined with religious content. It reveals the artist’s sensitive and honest search for ultimate meaning with the aid of recognizable religious subject matter and traditional religious symbols. It gives the explicitly religious answer to the questions implied in existence. Particularly noteworthy examples of this art are Sutherland’s "Crucifixion" and Rouault’s "Christ Mocked by the Soldiers" and "Crucifixion."12

Of special interest as a reflection of the spiritual tone of the present crisis is that movement within expressionism known as "Dadaism." This movement, frankly and exclusively nihilistic, can be characterized as a "demonstration of the disillusion, despair and disgusts engendered by the war of

1914-1918, and heightened by the Second World War, a defiance of the imposition of aesthetic standards, an intolerance of restraint and a reaction from discipline. For the purposes of classification, this movement must be considered as a return to the second or existentialist level.

Still on the second level, but paralleling expressionism as a protest against naturalism, is surrealism. "In surrealism, the mechanisms of bourgeois society are used and cut into fragments at the same time, the real world disappears and objectivity is transformed into a phantasmagoria constructed out of pieces and fragments of the bourgeois reality. A panic-driven humanity reveals the doom of its world in its artistic . . . creations."

Whereas expressionism shows more of a mystical trend, surrealism is more concerned with the demonic-fantastic aspects of reality. It has little interest in the normal world, but aims at the presentation of dream-states and the world of the unconscious mind. It takes elements of reality and brings them into a context which has nothing to do with reality. The paintings of Chagall, Chirico, Dalí, and Miro may serve as examples. Note especially Chagall's "River without Edges" and Chirico's "Toys of the Prince."

13Reginald Brill, Modern Painting, p. 17.
By way of summary, modern art dominated by existentialist elements represents for Tillich a prophetic attempt to destroy the idealism which separates man from reality. It seeks to break through the surface and to uncover the ground and abyss. The shocking distortions peering out of the depths in modern paintings evoke the ultimate question about the limits and meaning of existentialism. Expressionism at its best is the attempt to give to those questions the answers of the Christian message in artistic, symbolic form.

2. Literature

The power of literature to express the spiritual substance of a period is, by virtue of the superiority of words over lines and colors, both more direct and more universal than the power of art. Hence, the dominance of existential aspects in contemporary prose and poetry.15

In the modern novel, the mood of disillusionment, disgust, and reckless discontent has crystallized into comprehensive scepticism regarding man and history, as evidenced in

15 Cf.: "The problems of Time and Being, of Death, Anxiety and Care, and of the Freedom of human decision, in their particular interrelations of existential interpretation, occur, of course, in the general context of modern writing and it would not be difficult to interpret the work of most modern authors under one or the other aspect of existentialism" (Heinrich Straßmann, American Literature in the Twentieth Century, p. 80.)
the writings of Aldous Huxley,16 Evelyn Waugh,17 D.H. Lawrence,18 and Thomas Wolfe.19 Something of the same existential import is seen in the novels of Franz Kafka—The Castle and The Trial—where "the unapproachable remoteness of the source of meaning and the obscurity of the source of justice and mercy are expressed in language which is pure and classical."20 Likewise, Sartre's hero in The Age of Reason discovers that nothing—neither friendship nor love nor politics—has ultimate significance for him. His only value is his unlimited freedom to change and his only meaning is meaninglessness.

The same situation is faced in The Stranger by Albert Camus.

His hero is a man without subjectivity. He is not extraordinary in any respect. He acts as any ordinary official in a small position would act. He is a stranger because he nowhere achieves an existential relation to himself or to his world. Whatever happens to him has no reality and meaning to him; a love which is not a real love, a trial which is not a real trial, an execution which has no justi-

16Wave New World (1932).

17Brideshead Revisited (1945).

18Sons and Lovers (1913).

19Look Homeward, Angel (1929); From Death to Mourning (1935). Cf. also the novels of John Dos Passos, particularly The Three Soldiers.

fication in reality. There is neither guilt nor
forgiveness, neither despair nor courage in him.
He is described not as a person but as a psy-
chological process which is completely conditioned,
whether he works or loves or kills or eats or
sleeps. He is an object among objects, without
meaning for himself and therefore unable to find
meaning in his world.21

Modern poetry likewise mirrors the contemporary mood of
anxiety and meaninglessness. Consider, for example, the poems
Eliot describes the "decomposition of civilization--its lack
of conviction and direction":

What are the roots that clutch, what branches
grow?
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket
no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were water we should stop and drink
Amongst the rock one cannot stop and think
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that
cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie not sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses

(The Prairie Wolf) and Hermann Broch's The Steppwalkers and
Death of Vergil.
What is that sound high in the air
Humor of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal

(366-376)

What Eliot pictures as "Waste Land" with "empty cisterns and exhausted wells," Auden describes as "The Age of Anxiety." This phrase "age of anxiety," now a catchword for the early and middle twentieth century, points to a time "When the historical process breaks down and armies organize with their embossed debates the ensuing void which they can never consecrate, when necessity is associated with horror and freedom with boredom." The situation finds powerful expression in the conversations among Auden's quartet:

Quant said:
We are mocked by unmeaning; among us fall
Aimless arrows, hurting at random
As we plan to pain

Eable said:
The fears we know
Are of not knowing. Will midnight bring us
Some awful order--Keep a hardware store
In a small town . . . . Teach science for life to
Progressive girls--? It is getting late.
Shall we ever be asked for? Are we simply
Not wanted at all?

22W. H. Auden, The Age of Anxiety, p. 11.
Quant said: We'll, you will soon
Not bother but acknowledge yourself
As market-made, a commodity
Whose value varies, a vendor who has
To obey his buyer, will embrace moreover
The problems put to you by opposing time;
The fight with work, the feud of marriage;
Whose detonating details days and night
Invest your breathing and vote sleep,
As their own answers, like others find
The train-ride between your two natures.
The morning-evening moment when
You are free to reflect on your faults still,
In an awkward hiatus, is indeed
The real risk to be read away with
Print and pictures, reports of what should
Never have happened, will no longer
Expect more pattern, more purpose than
Your finite fate.

Rosetta said:

... This stupid world where
Gadgets are gods and we go on talking.
Many about much, but remain alone.
Alive but alone, belonging—where?
Unattached as tumbleweed. Time flies.23

In selections such as these, Tillich sees the poetic
expression and confirmation of the religious substance of the
present crisis.

The same mood is reflected in modern drama. "The
theatre, especially in the United States, is full of images of
meaninglessness and despair."24 Recall Arthur Miller's Death
of a Salesman. The salesman, haunted by failure and guilt,
tries to escape into a world of make-believe. When his il-
usions are threatened by domestic despair, he commits suicide.

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Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Camino Real* and Sartre’s *The Flies* and *No Exit* depict similar moods. Even T. S. Eliot’s dramas (*Family Reunion*, *The Cocktail Party* and *The Confidential Clerk*) do not go beyond the question raised by the human situation.

Only in rare instances have modern writers confronted the meaninglessness and despair of existence with a profoundly spiritual solution. Dostoevsky is not a contemporary writer, however the rediscovery of his novels and their translation into English have had a deeply religious influence on this age.

What is religiously effective in this is the mystical realism of the Russian novelist, his contemplation of the demonic and negative elements in actuality on the basis of a present divine reality . . . . Thanks to the tremendous greatness of Dostoevsky’s characters it was not clearly perceived how alien they were to Western consciousness and their spirit was effective even where there was no hint of the thoroughness of the antithesis. 25

In the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, Tillich finds another positive religious impression. The mysticism of Rilke’s nature poems 26 and the spiritual urgency of his "Elegies" reveal a transcendent reference that is missing in more recent poetry. Even in those poems which Rilke himself called "fragmentary" (in content, not form), a transforming power breaks through

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which enables the reader to accept honest doubts as a form of faith and to fill the dreary vacuities of existence with meaningful content. Such has been Tillich's experience. Concerning the influence of Rilke's poetry, he writes:

Its profound psychoanalytical realism, the mystical fullness, the form charged with metaphysical content, all that made this poetry the expression of what in the concepts of my philosophy of religion I could seize only abstractedly. To me and my wife, who made poetry accessible to me, these poems became a book of devotion, to be taken up again and again.27

Strindberg is another in whose works Tillich finds an impulse of religious significance. In both form and content, Strindberg rises above self-sufficient finitude. He knows, but does not surrender to the disillusionment which attends the break-up of capitalist culture. Although his characters are typical in form, they transcend the accidents of existence and in this transcendence manifest an unconditional import. They are thus symbolic and transparent. The most telling example is in The Road to Damascus, Strindberg's greatest drama, first published in English in 1939.

By way of summary, it can be said that, according to Tillich, the spiritual substance underlying contemporary art and literature expresses itself in terms of meaninglessness and despair. The creative power of this substance appears

27The Interpretation of History, p. 17.
when meaningfulness leads to courage and when despair becomes heroic. In both the courage of meaningfulness and the heroism of despair is the drive toward the positive-religious way which overcomes meaningfulness and despair by transforming them into questions to which religion gives the answer.

3. Depth Psychology

While art is of more importance in the direct apprehension of the spiritual situation, science has greater immediate causal significance. For example, science under the domination of capitalist economy celebrated its greatest triumphs, which, in turn, made possible the almost unlimited expansion of the capitalist system.

Tillich's interest in contemporary science has been concentrated on developments in depth psychology which he recognizes as an integral part of the existentialist movement. It mirrors, on the one hand, the existentialist protest against the demonic aspects of late capitalism, and, on the other hand, the eventual break-up of capitalist society and the current mood of meaningfulness and despair. Depth psychology is the science that has explored the inner structures of the self involved in this situation, establishing therapeutic maxims. Concerning its overall influence, Tillich writes:

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28 The Religious Situation, pp. 13-14; 27-34.
Depth psychology has removed what remnants of the nineteenth century mechanistic world views still remained, and has come to understand the sociological, ontological and even theological implications of phenomena like anxiety, guilt and compulsion neurosis. Out of this new cooperation of ontology and psychology (including social psychology) a doctrine of man has developed which has already exercised considerable influence in all cultural realms, especially in theology.\(^{29}\)

As a protest, Freud and his early followers exposed the mechanisms of repression in bourgeois society that were being internalized and resulting in the disintegration of the personality. They showed that repression is not self-determination and therefore cannot be taken as a solid ground on which to build personality. Rather, "repression produces a psychic 'underground,' which either drives toward dishonesty or to hardening and inflexibility or to safety values, allowed by bourgeois society, such as unrestrained economic acquisitiveness, or finally, to the revolutionary struggle against the repressive psychic and social systems themselves."\(^{30}\)

The most immediate gain to come from early and recent psychological and psychoanalytic discoveries is the new understanding of man. These discoveries have brought to light man's dependence on "unconscious, individual and collective forces of an ambiguous character." They have shown that his decisions have roots in preconscious levels, and that "he is not free for good

\(^{29}\)"Beyond Religious Socialism," p. 733.

\(^{30}\)The Protestant Era, p. 133.
and evil, but dependent upon universal structures of evil and good for which he is the battlefield.\textsuperscript{31} Psychology, even more than theology, according to Tillich, has uncovered the predicament of modern man. It has led from the surface of self-knowledge into the depths of personality where things are recorded about which man has been only dimly aware.

For one thing, "existential" or "depth" psychology has rescued "from the limbo of forgotten truth" the concept of the demonic. All along the demonic has been a destructive-creative reality breaking into the center of personality. Religion knew this but under the conventions of bourgeois society had dismissed it as "old fashioned." Now the demonic has been rediscovered and identified as an attack upon the centered-self by elements of the unconscious "which, to be sure, constantly give the personality its vital impulse, its immediate fullness of life, but which in a normal state are prevented from entering into consciousness."\textsuperscript{32}

What we name these elements depends on the symbols by which the subconscious is interpreted. The symbols can be poetic, metaphysical, psychological, but always remain symbols, that is, indications rather than concepts. Whether one speaks of the 'will to power' or of the 'chaos' or of the 'ego-instinct' or of the 'libido' -- in each instance feelings or events of the formed consciousness are used as symbols of unformed psychic depth.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31}"Vertical and Horizontal Thinking," p. 105.

\textsuperscript{32}The Interpretation of History, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{33}Loc. cit.
Depth psychology has revealed also the manner in which these elements function. They are present in every conscious act; they support even those acts which are most spiritually creative. However, they arise to demonic power when the subconscious dominates the conscious in such a way that consciousness itself is driven to destructive acts.34

In exploring the unconscious, depth psychology put a new light on another phenomenon of profound religious significance, namely the "death instinct." Freud used this term to describe the unconscious striving for self-destruction that comes from the frustration of man's infinite desire for things. As such, the death instinct is an inescapable element of human existence and Freud is right in pointing it out. His insight that unfulfilled desires turn toward the destruction of others and toward self-destruction is a notable confirmation of what religion has said all along with regard to man's existential estrangement.35

But the death instinct refers to something deeper than the unsatisfied desire for things. It points, also, to man's limited power of self-affirmation and to his dissatisfaction with any stage of his finite development. Out of the exhaustion of the finite power of self-affirmation arises the desire to

34 Ibid., p. 90.
35 cf. The Courage to Be, pp. 11-12.
lose one's self-affirmation altogether. This desire is present in every life process. Thus, actual suicide is the fulfillment of tendencies which are in everyone. That explains the unconscious efforts toward suicide, not as a special act, but suicide by producing the conditions which help the individual to be rid of his own affirmation, which depth psychologists have found.\footnote{Tillich feels that the most important single achievement has come as psychology has cooperated with theology and existential philosophy in uncovering the ontological aspects of anxiety. He has written at length about this matter, both in Systematic Theology and in The Courage to Be. The tenor of his thought is presented in the following paragraphs.}

Anxiety, as an ontological quality, is the "self-awareness of the finite self as finite."\footnote{Tillich feels that the most important single achievement has come as psychology has cooperated with theology and existential philosophy in uncovering the ontological aspects of anxiety. He has written at length about this matter, both in Systematic Theology and in The Courage to Be. The tenor of his thought is presented in the following paragraphs.} This is the natural anxiety of man as man and therefore is as omnipresent as finitude. It is independent of any objective cause and cannot be eliminated by action, since finite being cannot conquer its finitude.

It has been helpful in understanding anxiety, both as an ontological and as a psychological phenomenon, to distinguish

\footnote{Systematic Theology, p. 192. Cf.: "Anxiety is finitude, experienced as one's own finitude" (The Courage to Be, p. 33).}
it from fear, a strictly psychological phenomenon. Fear, in contrast to anxiety, arises in response to a definite object which is subject to analysis, understanding, and endurance or defeat, as the case may be. Anxiety, however, has no object and therefore eludes every effort to conquer it. Because it cannot be localized and attacked, anxiety produces a feeling of complete helplessness.

Although fear and anxiety can be distinguished, they cannot be separated.

They are immanent within each other: The sting of fear is anxiety, and anxiety strives toward fear. Fear is being afraid of something, a pain, the rejection by a person or group, the loss of something or somebody, the moment of dying. But in the anticipation of the threat originating in these things, it is not the negativity itself which they will bring upon the subject that is frightening but the anxiety about the possible implications of this negativity. The outstanding example—and more than an example—is the fear of dying. In so far as it is 'fear' its object is the anticipated event of being killed by sickness or an accident and thereby suffering agony and the loss of everything. In so far as it is 'anxiety' its object is the absolutely unknown 'after' death, the non-being which remains non-being even if it is filled with images of our present existence. 38

These considerations lead to the designation of three types of "basic" or "ontological" anxiety which belong to existence as such and are a part of the "normal" state of mind. In advance, it must be stated that these three types are immanent

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38 The Courage to Be, p. 35.
in each other; they are always present and effective, provoking and augmenting one another. However, one type usually prevails over the others.

First, there is the anxiety of fate and death which, as Tillich has said, is the most basic and most universal form of anxiety. It is inevitable, for the awareness of having to die is inescapable. This awareness is the dark background against which the anxiety of fate is at work. The anxiety of fate, the relative form of the anxiety of death, appears in the consciousness of the contingent character of existence, in the realization of the lack of any ultimate necessity of man's being. This experience drives to the absolute anxiety of death, overshadowing all anxieties and giving to them their final seriousness. Fate and death were the predominant forms of anxiety at the end of ancient civilization.  

Secondly, there is the anxiety of emptiness and meaningfulness which threatens man's spiritual creativity. "The anxiety of emptiness is aroused by a threat to the special contents of the spiritual life. The anxiety of meaningfulness is

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39Ibid., pp. 39-43. Cf. The Shaking of the Foundations, pp. 169-172. Cf. also Heidegger's view of death as the capital possibility, always in view, from which all other possibilities derive their status of radical contingency. What dread (anxiety - Angst) reveals is that one is cast into the world in order to die there.
anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings."

Meaninglessness is the type of anxiety most characteristic of the present crisis. It has been awakened by the contradictions within the capitalist system which destroy personal creativity, in the sense of "spontaneous action and reaction with the contents of one's spiritual life." These contradictions have been indicated already and the consequent disruption of meaning as reflected in existentialist art and literature has been noted. Existentialist philosophy expresses the same anxiety, as the next chapter will show.

For the present, attention must be directed toward the ways by which modern man seeks to escape the anxiety of meaninglessness. Some tenaciously cling to accepted traditions, admitting doubt about them when necessary, but refusing to surrender them. Many others take refuge in authoritarianism—political and/or religious. In this way, man

flees from his freedom of asking and answering for himself to a situation in which no further questions can be asked and the answers to previous questions are imposed on him authoritatively. In order to avoid the risk of asking and doubting he surrenders the right to ask and to doubt. He surrenders himself in order to save his spiritual life. He 'escapes from his freedom' (Fromm) in order to escape the anxiety of meaninglessness. . . . He 'participates' and affirms by participation the contents

40bid., p. 44.
of his spiritual life. Meaning is saved, but the self is sacrificed. And since the conquest of doubt was a matter of sacrifice, the sacrifice of the freedom of the self, it leaves a mark on the regained certitude: a fanatical self-assertiveness. Fanaticism is the correlate to spiritual self-surrender: it shows the anxiety which it was supposed to conquer, by attacking with disproportionate violence those who disagree and who demonstrate by their disagreement elements in the spiritual life of the fanatic which he must suppress in himself. Because he must suppress them in himself he must suppress them in others. His anxiety forces him to persecute dissenters. The weakness of the fanatic is that those whom he fights have a secret hold upon him.\(^1\)

Predominantly in these two ways, modern man tries to escape the threat to his spiritual (or cultural) life which appears relatively in the anxiety of emptiness, absolutely in the anxiety of meaninglessness.

Thirdly, there is the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. This anxiety springs from the responsibility that man feels for his decisions and from the discrepancy that he sees between what he demands of himself and his actual performance. The negative judgment which he passes upon himself because of his failure to measure up, because of the ambiguity of even his best deeds, is experienced relatively as guilt, absolutely as self-rejection or condemnation. This form of anxiety prevailed in the later Middle Ages.\(^2\)


Over against the above forms of existential anxiety, which psychotherapy cannot overcome (because it cannot overcome finitude) stands the pathological or compulsory forms of anxiety which psychotherapy can remove. In Tillich's view, pathological anxiety is the result of failure to deal adequately with existential anxiety in any or all of its three forms. "He who does not succeed in taking his anxiety courageously upon himself avoids the extreme situation of despair by escaping into neurosis."43 Neurosis is the way of avoiding the anxieties of reality by avoiding reality. The neurotic lives in a world of make-believe where reality (or a part of it) is either denied or distorted. He may fear what is not to be feared and feel to be safe what is not safe. Or he may see guilt where there is no guilt and feel innocent where he is responsible in a direct way. Or he may doubt what is practically beyond doubt and be certain where doubt is more appropriate.44 Thus, the self which the neurotic affirms is a limited self. Some aspects of his existence are not admitted because they imply some form of existential anxiety which he cannot affirm. However, the self-affirmation of the neurotic, limited though it be, is often more intensive than that of the "normal" person. This accounts for the extraordinary creativity

43 Ibid., p. 62.
44 Ibid., pp. 70-72.
sometimes manifest by neurotic people.\textsuperscript{45}

Tillich accepts the conclusion of most depth psychologists that there are neurotic elements in everyone and that the difference between the healthy person and the neurotic is only a matter of degree.

The difference between the neurotic and the healthy (although potentially neurotic) personality is the following: the neurotic personality, on the basis of his greater sensitivity to non-being and consequently of his profounder anxiety, has settled down to a fixed, though limited and unrealistic, self-affirmation. This is, so to speak, the castle to which he has retired and which he defends with all means of psychological resistance against attack, be it from the side of reality or from the side of the analyst . . . . The average person keeps himself away from the extreme situations by dealing courageously with concrete objects of fear . . . . His anxiety does not drive him to the construction of imaginary worlds. He affirms himself in unity with those parts of reality which he encounters; and they are not definitely circumscribed.\textsuperscript{46}

These considerations have profound consequences as far as healing is concerned. If all anxiety is pathological, as an ever-decreasing number of physicians and psychotherapists assert, then the task as well as the responsibility of removing anxiety altogether belongs to medicine and its allied fields.

But if, as Tillich and many leading medical men assert, anxiety is an existential as well as a pathological phenomenon, then anxiety is the proper concern of theology and philosophy as well.

\textsuperscript{45}loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., pp. 61-65.
The fact that more and more representatives of medicine are asking for the co-operation of philosophers and theologians favors the latter assertion. Tillich argues that much of the confusion pertaining to this problem, particularly within psychoanalytic circles, could be cleared away by the acknowledgment of the distinction between existential and pathological anxiety. To this end, he suggests the following principle as a basic guide for cooperation between the several disciplines in dealing with anxiety:

Existential anxiety in its three main forms is not the concern of the physician 'as' physician, although he must be fully aware of it; and conversely, neurotic anxiety in all of its forms is not the concern of the minister 'as' minister, although he must be fully aware of it. The minister raises the question concerning a courage to be which takes existential anxiety into itself. The physician raises the question concerning a courage to be in which the neurotic anxiety is removed . . . . Neither of these functions is absolutely bound to those who exercise it professionally. The physician, especially the psychotherapist, can implicitly communicate courage to be and the power of taking existential anxiety upon oneself. He does not become a minister in so doing and he never should try to replace the minister, but he can become a helper to ultimate self-affirmation, thus performing a ministerial function. Conversely, the minister or anyone else can become a medical helper. He does not become a physician and no minister should aspire to become one 'as' a minister although he may radiate healing power for mind and body and help to remove neurotic anxiety.47

What has been said about cooperation with the healing

47Ibid., pp. 69-70.
profession in regard to anxiety should apply to the other problems which concern man as man. The recognition of the need for cooperation has been deepened by the insights into the psychosomatic relationship. These insights have virtually revolutionized the medical profession and have been effective in all branches of healing, including religion. Their overall significance lies in the fact that they have invalidated the mechanistic concept of man which developed under capitalism—the idea of man as a physico-chemical machine with independent psychological and spiritual functions. The psychosomatic method has restored the living unity of human existence and has resulted in an extended dialogue between medical men, theologians, and philosophers.

Notwithstanding the significant gains made by Freudian and post-Freudian depth psychology, Tillich recognizes definite limits to its healing power. In the first place, even when therapy is most successful, the individual is returned to a society in which competition, compulsion, and repression are still decisive. In the second place, psychotherapy as psychotherapy is a technical procedure subject to the inadequacies of all autonomous techniques. This limitation, in particular, points to the need for "theonomous" psychotherapy which drives beyond mere techniques to the spiritual, healing substance in

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which both the analyst and the patient participate. When psychotherapy becomes theonomous, the analyst exercises a priestly function, directing the patient to the point of responsible self-affirmation in the presence of the unconditional.\footnote{49}

Tillich feels that today depth psychology (which at first tended to be strongly autonomous, concerning itself with techniques only) is more and more acknowledging the unconditional character of the "depth" with which it deals and the spiritual substance implicit in the healing which it seeks to accomplish. He sees an ever-increasing drive for autonomous techniques to express their meaningful substance. His friendship with leading analysts, such as the late Karen Horney, and his present contact with therapists and counselors, such as Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Erich Fromm, and Rollo May, has given him an understanding of what is happening in this field. And, at the same time, it provides an opportunity for cooperation between psychology and theology in interpreting the unconditional character of personal relationships, both in the analytic situation and in society.

\footnote{49} \textquotedblleft The Person in a Technical Society,	extquotedblright pp. 144-145.
CHAPTER VIII

A CULTURAL-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

1. Philosophy

Philosophy is so directly related to the special concerns of a particular time, that the essence of a philosophic method and doctrine may be taken as a fundamental expression of the historic situation. In Tillich's view, philosophy is the immediate reflection of a period in the theoretical sphere.¹

The philosophic method and doctrine which corresponds to the crisis of modern culture is called "existentialism." It replaces interest in shaping the world according to utilitarian ends, characteristic of bourgeois philosophy, with a concern for meaning, the special concern of recent decades. Existential philosophy reveals the doubt and cynicism about human existence which permeates the Western world. It expresses also the "courage to face meaninglessness as the answer to the question of meaning."²

Present-day existential philosophy emerged as one of the major currents of German thought under the Weimer Republic. It takes its substance, however, from the reaction of

nineteenth-century thinkers against Hegel's essentialist philosophy.

The initial reaction and appeal to existence was made by Schelling in lectures delivered at the University of Berlin in 1841-42. Certain of his hearers, notably Kierkegaard and Engels, adopted and developed Schelling's existentialist concepts. Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, published in 1846, was received as the classic statement of the existentialist position. Its emphasis upon the experiencing, thinking, deciding individual found support in the writings of Feuerbach and Marx and in the impulse toward existentialism in the *Lebensphilosophie* of Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson.

Contemporary existential philosophy as embodied in Jaspers and Heidegger is the result of a combination of *Lebensphilosophie* with a rediscovery of Kierkegaard and Marx. There is, however, this notable difference: Whereas in the nineteenth century, existentialist philosophy was a movement of protest, today it is a mirror reflecting the anxiety of a meaningless human existence separated by an infinite gap from its essential nature. In enumerating the various elements of existentialism which reflect this situation, Tillich presents,

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at the same time, a comparative study of those ideas which most existentialist philosophers—past and present—have in common.

Tillich calls attention first to the distinction between "existence" and "essence" which is the foundation of existentialism, both as viewpoint and as content. In so far as it has become a conscious movement, existential philosophy has arisen in opposition to the rising tide of essentialism which reached a climax in Hegel's system. Early existentialism was a revolt against Hegel's pronouncement that everything that exists is an adequate expression of what essentially is, that "reason is real and reality is rational." Kierkegaard showed that moral man, rather than living under ideal circumstances, is the individual who decides under finitude, anxiety, and despair. Feuerbach advanced the same argument from the viewpoint of the material conditions of human existence. Marx shared the existentialist protest "in so far as he contrasted the actual existence of man under the system of early capitalism with Hegel's Essentialist description of man's reconciliation in the present world." And Nietzsche, in the name of the creative powers of life, opposed the nihilism of technical culture which had its roots in Hegelian rationalism.

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4 Ibid., p. 48.
5 The Courage to Be, p. 129.
Each of these early existential philosophers emphasized the gap between essence and existence, and infinite and the finite. This distinction, apparent in all areas of life, is the accepted presupposition of current existentialism. Philosophers such as Jaspers and Heidegger no longer labor to prove this point. Now they devote themselves to expressions of estrangement. For example,

Heidegger fills his book Sein und Zeit not with definitions of Sein-as-such or Zeit-as-such, but with descriptions of what he calls Dasein and Zeitlichkeit, temporal or finite existence. In these descriptions he speaks of Sorge (care) as the general character of Existence, or of Angst (anxiety) as the relation of man to nothingness, or of fear of death, conscience, guilt, despair, daily life, loneliness, etc.7

Jaspers describes the "boundary-situation," man confronted by historical relativity, death, suffering and guilt. He pictures existence as the "ship-wreck" (Scheitern) of the finite in its relation to the infinite. Both Heidegger and Jaspers speak about the finitude of man's experience in knowing, his limited intuition, and his need for discursive thinking. They share the belief that there is no escape from this situation, even in ontology. For the only way to ontology is to pass through the doctrine of man. And "the way to finitude

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7 "Existential Philosophy," p. 58.
is itself finite and cannot claim finality.⑧

All of the existentialists know that the awareness of finitude, of guilt, conscience, and of having to die impinges upon the individual in inner loneliness. Ordinarily, the exchange of daily life covers these realities with talk and action. But when man is cut off from the masses and from other individuals, he is confronted by his finitude with all that it implies, and in this lonely state he must make his decisions.

The analysis of finitude in existential philosophy culminates in the analysis of Time. Existence is distinguished from essence primarily by its temporal character. Heidegger puts this most radically in his differentiation between "Existentia" and objective Time.

No one has emphasized so strongly as he the identity between experienced Existence and temporality: 'Temporality is the genuine meaning of Care,' and Care is finite Existence. Heidegger carries through this idea with respect to the whole structure of experienced Existence.... In his analysis of Kant he indicates that for himself Time is defined by 'self-affection,' grasping oneself or one's Personal Existence. Temporality is Existentiality. In distinction from this qualitative Time, objective Time is the Time of the flight

⑧ Ibid., pp. 60-61. Tillich points out that Schelling and Kierkegaard set out to make a distinction between "finitude" and "estrangement," but that neither really succeeded. Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Jaspers do not even try to make a distinction.
from our own Personal Existence into the universal 'one,' the 'everyone,' the average human Existence, in which quantitative measurement is necessary and justified. 9

The consequences of Heidegger's existentialist analysis are worked out by Sartre. In the latter's statement that man's essence is his existence, the extreme anti-Hegelian pole is reached. Tillich refers to Sartre's assertion as one of the most radical, most despairing sentences ever written by a philosopher. It means that there is no essence, no criterion, no natural law, no system of values, nothing whatsoever out of which man's existence can be determined. Man is what he makes of himself, and there are no criteria to show him what he "ought to be." 10 "The will willing itself, the decision deciding for the sake of deciding and not for the sake of a content, the freedom maintaining itself by the rejection of any obligation and devotion"--this is Sartre's concept of existence. 11

These descriptions of existence are more than mere descriptions, however. "They are half-symbolic, half-realistic indications of the structure of Reality itself." 12 But the

9Ibid., p. 62.

10The Courage to Be, p. 142.


12"Existential Philosophy," p. 58.
difficulty comes, as Tillich observes, in trying to distinguish between their psychological and the ontological meanings. Nevertheless, we must recognize and appreciate the motive behind their usage: to protect modern man from the "annihilation of the 'creative Source' by an 'objective world' created out of that 'Source' which is now swallowing it like a monstrous mechanism."\(^{13}\)

Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche and the other early existentialists developed certain methods which have been generally accepted by later existentialist philosophers. They adopted the experimental method suitable to the apprehension of reality and discarded Hegel's conceptual approach which, they agreed, dealt only with possibilities. Assuming that reality in its fullness is given immediately, not in "essence" but in personal experience, they concentrated upon the existing subject. Not the "thinking subject," but the "existing subject"--"the sum in Descartes' cogito ergo sum--is the center of their philosophizing. On this basis, each develops a rational theory. "They all try to 'think Existence,' to develop its implications, not only to live in 'Existential' immediate experience."\(^{14}\) Hence, for Jaspers--to bring the

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 59.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 52.
discussion to present-day philosophers—the approach to Existence

is the immediate personal experience of the inner activity of the Self, man's Existence as 'self-transcendence'—although described in terms of an immanent psychology. For Heidegger it is the immediate personal experience of that kind of being who is 'concerned' with Being, his existence as care, anxiety, and resoluteness—although claiming to describe the structure of Being itself. For the Religious Socialist it is the immediate personal experience of man's historical Existence, the pregnant historical moment—although expressed in a general interpretation of history.15

The existentialist approach to reality through immediate personal experience has led to the current revival of the existentialist attitude, first in philosophy and then in all areas of human activity. This attitude, hallmark of the "existentialist thinker," is summarized in the word "interest" (as Marx preferred) or "passion" (as Kierkegaard preferred) or "participation" (as Tillich prefers).

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 in 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.16

15Ibid., p. 55.
16The Courage to Be, p. 117.
The "existential attitude," arising out of the demand for "existential knowledge," does not interfere with objective methods in certain cognitive endeavors. In those realms in which reality is expressed in terms of quantitative measurement, the detached attitude is still the only adequate approach. However, reality as a whole in its infinite concreteness can be known only through the existential approach. As Tillich asserts, truth about reality is for the existential thinker always "existential truth." 17

In this connection, an aspect of existential philosophy arises which is of profound religious significance, namely, the quest for reality transcending the subject-object distinction. Tillich argues that it is misleading to say that existential philosophy identifies reality with "subjective being," or with "consciousness."

Like many other appeals to immediate experience, it is trying to find a level on which the contrast between 'subject' and 'object' has not arisen. It aims to cut under the 'subject-object distinction' and to reach that stratum of Being

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17 Cf. "The Word Situation," pp. 55-58. Tillich submits that "existential truth...has no criterion beyond fruitfulness for life. The dismissal of reason as guide to truth is the surrender of any objective standard of truth. Consequently the only basis of decision beyond contradictory claims to represent concrete truth is a pragmatic test: the power of an 'existential truth' to make itself universal, if need be by force." He concludes that the "abuses of existential thinking and the self-estranged position of reason demand an answer in which existential truth and ultimate truth are united" (Ibid., p. 57).
which Jaspers, for instance, calls the 'Ursprung' or 'Source.' But in order to penetrate to this stratum we must leave the sphere of 'objective' things and pass through the corresponding 'subjective' inner experience, until we arrive at the immediate creative experience, or 'Source.'

In rejecting the identification of reality with objective or subjective spheres, existential philosophy raises the question to which religion has the answer. When Jaspers declares that personal existence is the center of reality, he is on the way toward the experience of Transcendence which is the hidden meaning of reality. And when Heidegger affirms that Existential Being (Dasein) is the only door to Being itself, he is on the threshold of that which is beyond subjectivity-objectivity and is thus the creative ground of Being.

Tillich summarizes the religious substance of existential philosophy in both positive and negative terms. What existentialism in all its forms opposes is the high spirit of rationalism which dominates the thought and life of Western culture. The existential philosophers resist the demonic forces within the rational system, "a logical or naturalistic mechanism which seems to destroy individual freedom, personal decision and organic community; an analytic rationalism which saps the vital forces of life and transforms everything,

18 "Existential Philosophy," p. 56.
19 Ibid., p. 66.
including man himself, into an object of calculation and control; a secularized humanism which cuts man and the world off from the creative Source and the ultimate mystery of existence."20

Out of this struggle they achieve startling insights into the sociological structure of capitalist society and the psychological dynamics of the bourgeois individual. Thereby, "they immensely enrich philosophy, if it be taken as man's interpretation of his own existence; and they work out intellectual tools and spiritual symbols for the European revolution of the twentieth century."21

Positively, existential philosophy represents an urgent quest for ultimate meaning for lives that have experienced the disintegration of both Christian and humanistic traditions. In their search, the philosophers turn toward the immediate experience of the existing individual, toward "subjectivity, not as something opposed to 'objectivity,' but as that living experience in which both objectivity and subjectivity are rooted."22 To the extent that this exploration of the inner world represents a venture toward union by faith with the depths of life, existentialism can be considered

20 Loc. cit.
21 Loc. cit.
22 Ibid., p. 67.
"mystical." And to the degree that it succeeds in finding a meaning in meaninglessness, it has positive religious merit.

Tillich recognizes, in conclusion, that in some respects existentialism is peculiar to the German situation. It was Heidegger and Jaspers who reintroduced Kierkegaard's dialectical psychology. Nevertheless, in the broadest sense, existentialism has become common to all European culture, and has established a stronghold in America. Its influence has gone beyond the educated groups, thus showing that the question of meaning is unconsciously disturbing more than those who are able to articulate their anxiety and who have the courage to take anxiety upon themselves. It is no exaggeration to say, then, that existentialism is the philosophical expression of contemporary Western culture. Concerning its basic truth and adequacy, Tillich writes:

In spite of the fact that existentialism has become fashionable and has been dangerously popularized, I have been confirmed in my

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23 Heidegger has transformed Kierkegaard's dialectical psychology into a new ontology, "radically rejecting the religious implications of the Existential attitude and replacing it with the unchecked resoluteness of the tragic and heroic individual" (Ibid., p. 70).

24 Tillich recognizes that England is the only European country in which the existential problem of finding a new meaning for life has had no significance, because here positivism and religious tradition have lived on side by side, united by a social conformism which prevented radical questions about the meaning of "Existence" (Ibid., p. 68).
conviction of its basic truth and its adequacy to our present situation. The basic truth of this philosophy, as I see it, is its perception of the 'finite freedom' of man, and consequently of his situation as always perilous, ambiguous and tragic. Existentialism gains its special significance for our time from its insight into the immense increase in anxiety, danger and conflict produced in personal and social life by the present 'destructive structure' of human affairs.25

2. Religion

An analysis of the situation in contemporary religion has, as Tillich puts it, the advantage of revealing more directly and more clearly the spiritual movements which are implicit in the other cultural spheres. "For it is the distinctive characteristic of religion that it explicitly intends and expresses in concrete symbols the reference of time to eternity."26

a. The religious situation in the churches

Under the capitalist system, three alternatives are open to the churches: rejection of capitalism with its spirit of self-sufficient finitude, amalgamation with it, or an attempt to overcome and transform it. Decisions for each alternative are to be found in the two major types of churches. But on the whole, the sacramental churches, such as the

Catholic and Lutheran, tend to reject the capitalist spirit, while the theocratic churches, as represented by certain branches of liberal Protestantism and Judaism are inclined to accept it and to unite with it. Groups that overcome the capitalist spirit are to be found in Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism.

The sacramental churches (predominant in Europe), by attributing holiness to special realities, are able to withdraw into their holy spheres and dissociate themselves from economic and political activities. Their concern with worldly affairs is always secondary--by consequence, never by intention. So far as they express their views, they tend to be conservative and to favor authoritarian systems. In general, these churches have the character of a mother protecting and secluding her children from birth to death, without any willing or acting on their part. 27

Two examples may be cited. Catholicism, by possessing, to some extent, a culture apart from capitalist society, can stand against the dominating spirit of self-sufficient finitude. In many of the European countries, the Catholic church has its own party organization which enables it to exercise power independent of secular, economic or political

channels. Since its objective is the total unification of all cultural forms under its own hierarchical system, it can reject liberal democracy and conservative nationalism.

In internal political relations the ruling idea is that of organic structure, again not in the conservative and aristocratic sense but as a Christian solidarity. The unifying principle in the social structure is the church with its hierarchical order superior to all mundane powers. By this means the class-conflict is to be overcome. It is scarcely possible to oppose capitalism directly in the economic life. But the whole temper of the Catholic world is unfavorable to the capitalist principle. It does not thrive there as well as it does on Protestant, Jewish or Humanist soil. With reference to the separate social problems, the church emphasizes medieval ethics as strongly as possible and frequently in opposition to the customary social views of the day.28

This may leave the impression that the Catholic church is the leading force in the battle against the spirit of capitalist culture. Notwithstanding its powerful resources, Catholicism has ignored the prophetic elements in capitalism which, for want of religious support, have become secularized. Such neglect has given free reign to demonic invasions and has meant the abandonment of the possibility of actualizing the spiritual potentialities of capitalist society. The Catholic Church has remained aloof, contending that the only sphere in which there can be an invasion of the eternal is that of church doctrine and ritual. But in binding the eternal to

28The Religious Situation, pp. 145-146.
the temporal reality of the church and its tradition, Catholicism itself has fallen prey to the spirit of self-sufficient finitude. Only if it gives up its claims to absoluteness and inviolability, can the Catholic church be fully effective against capitalist culture.

At present Tillich sees no signs that it intends to do so. Quite the contrary.

Catholic theology is being confined by the church within ever narrower limits; the scientific interpretation of Scripture is made impossible, systematic theology must accept Saint Thomas as its unalterable norm. The central, papal power is being constantly strengthened; the pope is regarded not only as the chief bishop but as the universal bishop—a change which has taken place only recently and which excludes the possibility of episcopal counter-actions against the rule of the curia.... Wherever there are movements which might develop into real revolts against Counter-Reformation Catholicism they are tolerated only so long as they are of value for purposes of propaganda. As soon as they become dangerous to the centralization and the absoluteness of the church they are destroyed.29

The sacramental emphasis is decisive, not only for Catholicism, but also for Protestant Lutheranism. In the Lutheran church the attitude toward capitalism is one of complete indifference. Following in the tradition of Luther, the church (particularly in Germany) has maintained a strict gulf between the religious and all other realms. Accordingly, up to the time that the totalitarian state actually interfered

29 Ibid., pp. 148-149.
with religious practices, it was not permissible for the Lutheran church to level criticism at the government or to disobey its commands in any political matter. All governments, even those whose laws are wrong and who rule unjustly, are established by God and therefore the Christian has no right to raise any protest whatsoever. While in theory this doctrine aims at avoiding political alliance, in practice it means support for the status quo.  

What this has amounted to, especially in Germany, is the subordination of the church to the state. After a wave of indifference destroyed financial support, the government was called upon to subsidize the churches. Thus German Lutheranism actually became dependent upon the state for its existence. It was reduced to a department of administration that could not afford to antagonize the state in any way. Any constitution was tolerated, as long as it allowed for the propagation of word and sacraments. "Throne and altar were brought into such close proximity that the only role left to the latter was the role of a servant." Consequently, the church proved to be what the industrial masses had accused it of being, an unquestioned ally of the ruling party.

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31 The Religious Situation, p. 156.
In the subordination of the church to the state, religion became a this-worldly thing, subject to the dictates of whatever group might be in power. The Lutheran church in Germany really went bourgeois when rational Liberalism gained control of the government. "Its triumph was achieved in part with the aid of liberal Protestant theologians who, under the protection of the nation’s enforcement of peace within the church, arrived at positions of influence and proclaimed Protestantism as a religion of national culture in which a self-sufficient finitude was religiously consecrated but was not invaded and questioned by the eternal." 32

Whereas, the sacramental churches tend to ignore

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32 Ibid., p. 157. Tillich elsewhere says of the religious situation in Germany in 1934: "But in Germany the atheistic tendency has been vehemently and openly expressed only by the proletariat and its leaders, while the upper classes tried to conceal it and to unite it with a vain religious liberalism. Christian ideology, being found useful in the support of the power of the ruling classes, was not given up. Thus the idea of God became completely powerless. The religious situation in Germany can only be understood in the light of this attitude on the part of the two classes. The capitalist class, though itself entirely secular, attempted to use—or rather to abuse—the idea of God in its struggle against the proletarian movement, the atheism of which was thus effectively attacked.... This fight against proletarian atheism was a very powerful weapon in the class war. It was one of the weapons by means of which the German bourgeoisie, supported by the less secularized middle class, succeeded in defeating an independent proletarian movement. But it was not and is not a sign of any real Christianity in the upper class" ("The Religious Situation in Germany Today," p. 168).
capitalism (although many of them have become its victims), the theocratic churches (predominant in America) tend to conform to the capitalist spirit. Theocratic churches have not so much the character of a protecting mother as of a ruling and commanding father. With them, holiness is demanded, not given. Thus they aim by decision and action to subject all forms, including the political, to divine obedience. They call for the use of political power to criticize and transform society. Theocratic churches tend to favor democratic leadership (as distinguished from egalitarian democracy). Hence, they stand in potential rapport with the capitalist system.

For example, Calvinism—notwithstanding its critical objectivity toward the state—faced momentous dangers in its attempt to realize the will of God in society. The principle of voluntary membership and democratic leadership brought it in close association with capitalist trends. And in its efforts to apply the techniques of big business to the affairs of the Kingdom, Calvinism showed its peculiar weakness. Expansion programs made it all the more dependent on wealthy parishioners. The office of "trustee" assumed an increasingly economic character. Along with these developments came the steady growth of individualism—a growth paralleled by

similar trends in capitalist society. More and more the isolated individual became in principle the religious individual, and increasingly, the type of person who corresponds to democratic ideals. 34

Thus the liberal tendency in the theocratic churches (Baptist and Methodist, as well as Calvinist) betrayed them into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Unintentionally, these churches had participated in the structures of capitalist society to the point that they were no longer able to criticize them. Step by step, the church's prophetic message was transformed into an unqualified sanction of bourgeois capitalism and technological culture. It propagated the idea that capitalist humanism was the realization of the Christian ideal. Consequently, liberal Protestantism has been almost wholly absorbed by the capitalist spirit.

It attempts to make religion a part of a system of finite forms, either as their crown or their unity. It represents itself to be a cultural Protestantism which is quite aware of morality but little aware of the shaking of culture by the eternal. It has relatively little significance for the religious life. Its sermons are not wanted for they contain nothing that points beyond the self-sufficient finite world. Autonomous culture does not require the religious change of names which liberal Protestantism wants to bestow upon it. It tolerates this liberalism, defends it even, but does not really respect it because it does not have the power to oppose the culture. 35

Tillich sees a not too dissimilar situation developing within Judaism. Like Protestantism, Judaism, particularly in its liberal or reformed branches, has had close contact with the spirit of capitalist society. They have in common the association of religion and morality, a high estimate of personality, a loss of a sacramental attitude, and an emphasis upon social action. These shared interests have contributed toward the absorption by Judaism of the capitalist spirit. Moreover, liberal Judaism is known historically to have exerted an influence on the rise of the bourgeoisie. "It is not strange therefore that certain groups in humanistic, cultured Judaism, readily and easily abandoned their religious heritage and transferred their loyalty to capitalist society." On the other hand, in orthodox circles and among certain types of Jewish mysticism, the spirit of ancient prophecy, though carried beneath the heavy armor of ritualism, continues to be strong and effective. 36

Earlier in this section, the question was raised as to whether Tillich supposes Catholicism to be the leading power in the fight against capitalism. Now it is appropriate to ask if he considers theocratic Protestantism, especially Calvinism, to be one of the chief factors in the emergence of the capitalist system. Certainly, he recognizes the close

36 Ibid., p. 151.
connection between the history of Protestantism and the history of the capitalist spirit. However, he deems Max Weber's thesis which finds an easy correspondence between the two as "popular exaggeration." On the contrary, it may be asserted, he says, that original Protestantism was the sharpest protest it is possible to think of against the spirit of self-sufficient finitude.... The peril of Protestantism lay in the fact that it was a protest and that it did not achieve an adequate realization. No church can be founded on a protest, yet Protestantism became a church. Consequently it needed to adopt positive elements out of tradition, but in such a way that they would not take the edge off the force of the protest; therefore it limited them and crowded them into the background to the point of neglect. As a result the protest lost its ultimate meaning and became a doctrine alongside of other doctrines.37

From the foregoing analysis Tillich concludes that the religious significance of both sacramental and theocratic churches, as well as of liberal Judaism, is seriously threatened by the current identification of the church with the interests of special political, economic, and social groups. Many people who make this identification feel justified by the practical exclusion of opposition groups from positions of responsibility within the church. From the point of view of dialectical materialism, ecclesiastical Christianity's chief opponent, the churches have

37 Ibid., pp. 154-155.
entered into alliance with the ruling political powers and thus have come in conflict with the revolutionary movements which desire in the name of justice to change the social structure based on class distinction. This is for instance said to be true of the capitalist period, with its exploitation of labor and colonial peoples, equally sanctioned by the Church. Proofs drawn from modern history...are, on the one hand Eastern Orthodoxy in its Czarist form, and on the other hand, bourgeois Calvinism, both of which have opposed the labor movement. Arguments drawn from contemporary history are the one-sided pro-Fascist attitude of the Vatican in the Spanish Civil War, Austrian 'Austro-Fascism' with its violent suppression of the labor movement, and the weakness of the German episcopate which has waited for years for an anti-socialist alliance with National Socialism. Again, the indifference of all German churches in the face of the persecution of Socialists and Jews, is often advanced as an argument to prove the solidarity between the churches and National Socialism which is only broken when National Socialism interferes with the inner life of the churches. Finally, the social structure of such churches as the Anglican Church, which have no serious desire for the transformation of society, is often mentioned in this connection. The conclusion drawn from these arguments is that...ecclesiastical Christianity supports necessarily the ruling powers against the revolutionary movements.38

In Tillich's view, Protestantism can survive in the present crisis only if it takes seriously the truth in the above accusation, and sees that the reality of the proletarian situation is decisive for its own future. There is little indication at present that it will do so, however. Tillich

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notes with distress the following “anti-proletarian” tendencies in contemporary Protestantism: 1) Petrification of doctrine into a dogmatic system and the quasi-sacramental dignity accorded to Biblical texts is making the Protestant message in its orthodox form inaccessible to the proletariat. 2) A pseudo-spiritual pietism is putting social problems beyond the scope of religion, thus classifying the situation of the proletariat as religiously irrelevant. 3) The ideal of religious personality, proposed by liberal Protestantism, is inappropriate to the thinking of the proletariat. 4) Church support of the "nationalist" ideology is obstructing the coming together of church and proletariat. These tendencies, if unchecked, will, Tillich maintains, bring an end to the Protestant era.39

b. The religious situation in extrachurchly movements

Because of the situation in the churches, Tillich finds the most important religious movements of the time developing apart from organized religion. These extrachurchly movements are decisive primarily because they serve as mediators between religion and culture.

Here Tillich is unfortunately restricted by his then (1932) limited contacts outside of Germany. Were he to bring this aspect of his analysis up to date, he would certainly

include movements not mentioned in The Religious Situation. Still there is merit in his discussion, even though provincial.

Two categories, corresponding to the two ways of conceiving of the relation of the finite to the infinite, are proposed for classifying the various extrachurchly movements. The first is composed of mystical movements which regard the eternal as present, "as that which supports and fills the present and its temporal forms with meaning." The other category includes the several eschatological movements emphasizing the transcendence of the eternal, "as that which stands beyond all time and every temporal form," laying demands upon them and judging them. Both movements are implied in a mature religion and both require expression, as Tillich rightly observes.40

It is quite to be expected that one of the earliest and strongest reactions to the capitalist spirit should come from the side of mysticism. For in essence capitalism is thoroughly antimystical. Modern mysticism has appeared in two forms. In its "esthetic" (sic.) form it presses for a new and immediate awareness of God through the rediscovery of the ancient mystics, particularly the eastern mystics. It thereby creates an atmosphere in which the forms of self-sufficient finitude can be replaced by a mystical world view. Mystical

40 The Religious Situation, p. 124.
certainty overcomes rational doubt. But esthetic mysticism lacks the power to develop new religious community. Therein lies its weakness. It uses mysticism to set positive religion aside. Ultimately, then,

it remains confined within the esthetic form and so reveals the fact that the spirit of self-sufficient finitude is stronger in it than the desire to break through to the eternal. The modern mystic does not seek the ascetic isolation of the genuine mystic, who always remains loyal to the cult-group out of which he had come, but continues in bourgeois individualism and often uses mysticism only for the purpose of refining and increasing that individualism.41

"Occult" mysticism, as represented by spiritualism, astrology, theosophy, anthroposophy, and Christian Science, has succeeded where "esthetically" mysticism failed, that is, in achieving some form of community organization. But, like the esthetics, the occults have not reached that which transcends all experience and toward which all genuine religion is directed. In the presence of the eternal, even the occult is temporal, this-worldly, finite. It achieves a world view which may be symbolic of the divine and which, to that extent, contrasts with the spirit of capitalism. Yet it does not attain to the ultimate ground and abyss which lies beyond all forms.

In this mysticism of the second order intensification of human consciousness is always confused

41 Ibid., p. 130.
with the religious attitude. Self-sufficient finitude has been split; it is divided into a lower and a higher sphere, but it is not transcended, for even the higher world remains 'world,' while in genuine mysticism the world in all its degrees vanishes in the presence of the invisible Beyond, of the Eternal itself.42 Consequently, Tillich doubts that occult mysticism can have any permanent religious significance.

The second category of extrachurchly religious movements is composed of the various eschatological groups which became popular in the second decade of the twentieth century. In some respects these groups, with their emphasis upon the end as against the idea of infinite progress which prevailed in capitalist society, were nearer to the churches than was mysticism. "For the end is the expression of the essential relationship between time and eternity."

The early eschatological movements found support in philosophy of history, as presented particularly in Spengler's prophecies of the decline of Western culture. They were not, however, without Utopian elements. But it was Utopianism directed toward the eternal as the goal of all this-worldly activity. Where this faith was lacking, the religious enthusiasm was overcome by finitude and despair. One of the purposes in the founding of religious socialism was to conquer the element of unbelief or bondage to the temporal in the eschatological

movements, particularly socialism. 43

Eschatological sects have arisen also within Protestantism. Besides an enthusiastic other-worldly hope, they manifest a strong community life. This makes them especially appealing to those, particularly in the lower middle and laboring classes, who have come to grief in their struggle with capitalist society. Yet, many such persons "lack the religious ability to recognize the actual transcendence of the eternal" and are drawn to the sects only by "the hope for a temporal, visually conceived, final catastrophe." For this reason, Tillich sees only a limited value in the current eschatological communities: "Eschatological hopes are religiously important only when they appear in union with religiously creative forces, as in the New Testament period. In the case of contemporary movements, it is impossible to speak of such union." 44

c. The religious situation in theology

The situation in theology is summarized in the three "schools" which have molded twentieth century religious thought. The first is the "school of mediation" which was dominant from the time of Schleiermacher until about 1933. This school accepted the reign of technical reason and applied

43 Ibid., pp. 136-139.
44 Ibid., p. 141.
its principles to particular theological issues, thereby dissolving certain orthodox stumbling-blocks. The mediation school is distinguished from humanism by its refusal to adapt Christianity entirely to the cultural vogue. It is distinguished from traditional orthodoxy by its readiness to re-examine theological matters in the light of modern research techniques and findings.45

In Albrecht Ritschl, this school and its movement toward a synthesis of theology and the modern mind reached its height. His influence was carried over into the twentieth century by his greatest pupil, Adolf Harnack. The latter's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, based on almost one hundred and fifty years of historical analysis and Biblical criticism, is representative of mediation theology at its best. In the year (1901) it was first published, *Das Wesen des Christentums* was translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible. Tillich recalls that for months the Leipzig railway station was crowded with freight cars waiting to carry Harnack's book all over the world.46

The mediation school, and the neo-Protestantism which it represented,


seemed to have overcome the split between Christianity and the modern mind, which plagued the Western world since the protest of Enlightenment against the traditional theology of all Christian confessions. Dogma was understood as the Hellenization of Christianity and was deprived, in this way, of its sacred, oppressive power. Theology laid a new foundation at the very source of Christianity, namely, the man Jesus of Nazareth. Biblical criticism rediscovered this source under the different strata of the early tradition, particularly in Paul's dialectics and the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel. Ritschlian theology discredited metaphysics and theological speculation, and established the ideal of a religious-ethical personality in accord with the noblest ideals of bourgeois society and which was supposed to agree with the mind of Jesus of Nazareth. The success of Harnack's Das Wesen des Christentums and of the neo-Protestant theology as a whole was guaranteed wherever a synthesis of Christianity and the modern bourgeois world view was an historical necessity, as, for instance, in this country (America). And the substance of the neo-Protestant attitude was not changed when it was transferred to America, although the social implications of the Ritschlian theology received a much stronger emphasis here than in Germany. 47

Soon after the mediation theology reached its prime, the present crisis broke. Already signs of violence and unrest had appeared: Marx in Russia, Nietzsche in Germany and

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47 "The Present Theological Situation," p. 300. Cf.: "In a time when 'modern science' and 'modern civilization' seemed to be going on from strength to strength, and from triumph to triumph, it was most natural that theology should address to the 'modern mind' a plea for reconciliation and partnership; natural that it should find its chief task in keeping up with the rapid intellectual expansion of the era, and believe that all apparent incompatibilities between Christ and Culture should be resolved by the magic formula, 'both... and!'" (Walter Marshall Horton, Realistic Theology, p. 8).
Kierkegaard in continental Protestant churches. Fired by these early protests, others raised their voices. Ernst Troeltsch, within the circle of liberal theology, attacked Harnack's synthesis. By making Christianity relative to Western culture, Troeltsch undermined the absolute claims made for the synthesis and thus robbed it of its meaning. World War I, together with the social and political catastrophes which followed, administered the death blow to neo-Protestantism in Germany. In America, however, it managed to survive until World War II.


49 Troeltsch's influence upon Tillich's early development is worthy of note: "Ernst Troeltsch caused my final transfer of interest from all mediating-theological and apologetic remnants in Church History and in the problem of historical criticism" (The Interpretation of History, p. 33). Moreover, Tillich dedicated to Troeltsch his book Das System der Wissenschaften. At that time, the latter may be said to be the point from which the former began his own reflection on the tension between the absolute and the relative, between theology and philosophy. Cf. "Troeltsch: Versuch einer geistesgeschichtlichen Würdigung," pp. 351-353.

50 Horton, writing in 1934, described the situation of liberal Protestantism in America as follows: "They now begin to see that in their endeavor to 'modernize' and 'liberalize' Christianity they brought it into a compromising alliance with the peculiar presuppositions, prejudices and illusions of a particular type of civilization (Western industrialism) and even a particular section of society (the middle class). Since this particular type of civilization has begun to suffer a decline, and since this particular section of society has passed its apogee, the liberal theology has now fallen beneath the same sentence of doom which it so often pronounced upon older systems of theology.... The thoroughness with which liberalism did its work has been its own undoing; having completely assimilated the characteristic ideas of a particular era in history, it was foredoomed to perish with the passing of the era" (Horton, op. cit., p. 5).
In opposition to mediation theology and under the influence of Kierkegaard, there arose in the 1920's a new school called the theology of crisis. The increasing emphasis on Biblical realism, with its pietistic elements, and the Luther-Renaissance, with its rediscovery of the profounder aspects of the Reformation, accelerated its growth. All of these factors have come to an effective climax in Karl Barth, the founder and head of this school. Barth and his followers stood and continue to stand solidly against every attempt at synthesis. The theological strength of their position was dramatically displayed when, in the 1930's, the so-called German Christians submitted "to something which was more of a merging of Christianity into German nationalism than a new synthesis." In this decisive moment, Barth's pronouncement of the word of diastasis proved to be the saving word for kerugmatic theology. It alone, in Tillich's view, was adequate to the historical situation.

The implications and influence of crisis theology have been touched upon already in other sections of this thesis.


52 Ibid., pp. 302-303.
Attention has likewise been given to Tillich's evaluation of Barth's position, with particular reference to its dangers.\(^{53}\)

Suffice it to say that for Tillich the main religious significance of crisis or neo-orthodox theology is to be found in its warnings against surrendering Christianity to current thought and in its preservation of the transcendent emphasis of traditional theology.

The third school, called dialectical theology, broke away from crisis theology in the moment when Barth, by trying to become conservative, lapsed into the mere reiteration of tradition.\(^{54}\) This school, continuing in the principles of Kierkegaard's dialectic, maintains that the Kingdom of God is

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53 Cf.: "The Theology of Crisis...negates the nineteenth century so vehemently that it practically drives God out of recent history and opposes liberal theology so antithetically that it manages to be wrong wherever liberal theology is wrong--but in an opposite sense.... Barthianism seems as wide of the mark on one side as humanism is on the other; it is an unstable combination of a crude realism with respect to man and a wistful idealism with respect to ultimate reality, just as humanism is an unstable combination of crude realism with respect to ultimate reality and a wistful idealism with respect to man" (Horton, op. cit., pp. 14-15; 37-38).

54 Cf.: "It seems as if Barth and his followers, in a good orthodox style, are interested only in the form of 'doctrine' in Protestantism. Moreover, the way in which they work for the doctrine is not very much affected by the 'No' of the Protestant Principle; it has itself not passed through the fire of its own protest. Indeed, it sometimes appears as if the absolute, religious criticism of the theology of crisis has strangled the relative, scientific criticism found in liberal theology" (The Protestant Era, p. 203).
at once here and not here, present in human history and culture yet not identical with any particular historical time or cultural form.

Tillich himself was the first to separate from Barth; however, he was soon joined by Bultmann, Gogarten, and finally by Brunner. In the last decades many theologians from different traditions and in different lands have associated themselves with dialectical theology. One of the most influential of these is the American Reinhold Niebuhr. Under his guidance social ethics, always the glory of American Protestantism, has been transformed on the basis of dialectical theology. Also of major consequence has been the work of Rudolf Bultmann. Maintaining the principles of higher criticism in a most radical and uncompromising way, Bultmann has used "the existentialist analyses of the human situation as the key for the understanding of the mythological elements in the New Testament." 55

One further influence of considerable religious import remains to be noted, namely, Martin Buber. An article prepared by Tillich for Buber's seventieth birthday, calls attention to his threefold contribution to Christian thought.

Buber's first contribution has been in the direction of an "existential interpretation of prophetic religion." His

"I and Thou" formula expresses the two-way or existential character of every genuine religious experience, that is, the participation of the whole man in the religious situation, and the impossibility of having God outside of it.

Buber distinguishes the 'I-Thou' relationship from the 'I-It' relationship. This distinction contains the main problem of Existentialism, namely, how to be or to become an 'I' and not an 'It,' how to be or become a person and not a thing, how to be or to become free and not determined. Long before the modern type of existential thinking appeared Buber had asked and answered these questions on the basis and by the power of prophetic religion: there is no other way of becoming an 'I' than by meeting a 'Thou' and by accepting it as such, and there is no other way of meeting and accepting a 'Thou' than by meeting and accepting the 'eternal Thou' in the finite 'Thou.'

Buber's "I-Thou" philosophy challenges both orthodox and liberal theology. It tries to show that orthodoxy does what liberal theology does, that it transforms the "I-Thou" relation into an "I-It" relation. "Wherever the 'eternal Thou' can be manipulated, whether by rational or irrational methods, whether by morals or by dogmas or by cults, the divine 'Thou' has become an 'It' and has lost its divinity." Buber's permanent contribution seems to Tillich to lie in the fact that he has pointed a way beyond these alternatives.

Secondly, Buber has exerted a strong influence upon

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Protestant theology in the direction of a "rediscovery of mysticism as an element within prophetic religion." In contrast to liberal Protestantism and crisis theology, both of which manifest vigorous antimystical tendencies, Buber has shown the possibility of a mysticism that does not contradict but rather intensifies prophetic religion. He, like Rudolph Otto and other twentieth-century defenders of mysticism, has caused contemporary Protestant theology to take the question much more seriously and to deal with it much more affirmatively.\(^{58}\)

Thirdly, in his understanding of the relation between prophetic religion and culture, Buber has had a profound effect upon Christian thought. Religion, for him, is the dedication of culture. It is neither simple acquiescence to things as they are nor escape into divine transcendence, but "consecration in the double sense of seeing the divine spark in everything created and acting to realize the divine in everything."\(^{59}\) This idea does away with the dualism of sacred and secular spheres. Buber, in his contact with the religious socialists, emphasized the responsibility of every person to apply his religious principles to his concrete historical situation; and, on this basis, to work for the creation of a

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 519.

\(^{59}\) Loc. cit.
**Gemeinschaft** in the power of a common center—the relation to the "eternal Thou."

By way of summary, Tillich clearly shows that the predominant spirit within the churches, and within extrachurchly movements as well, has been the spirit of self-sufficient finitude. Ecclesiastical religion has become identified or allied with the will to power of capitalist society. It serves the idol, the "false infinite," the demonry of a class-dominated society. But the feet of clay on this idol are every day becoming more evident, with the consequence that organized religion, particularly Protestantism, is in ever greater danger of disintegrating, of being destroyed with its idol. Concrete prophecy and creativity demand that Protestantism bring itself and capitalism under the judgment of the eternal. It must search out the creative forces which promise to provide a locus for the **kairos**. Only in this way can it achieve a meaningful historical existence, only in this way can it overcome the emptiness and meaninglessness in contemporary Western culture, only in this way can it conquer the threat of the abyss and ground of being and enter into a new **kairos**.

However, evidence of a reformation within the church is difficult to find, even now. There are some individuals and groups for whom the deeper meaning of the present crisis
is not unknown, as the Ecumenical movement shows. However, the full impact of the world situation has yet to be appreciated by institutional religion as a whole. Tillich surmises, then, that the special characteristic of this age is that the most important and most effective witness to the transcendent has come almost entirely from without the church. It is a fact that the revolt against the spirit of capitalist society has been confined largely to "secular" quarters and has in many instances arisen over the protests of the church. Because of its surrender to state and society, the church has lost sight of its prophetic message and thus has sacrificed much of its power to point to the unconditional ground of being and meaning.

Only in the field of theory has institutional religion been able to counteract to some degree the spirit of self-sufficient finitude. Two schools of theology--crisis and dialectical theology--have opposed liberalism and have endeavored to maintain an explicit reference to the unconditional. These theologians, Protestants, Catholics and Jews, know the cries of despair and meaningfulness that come out of the depth of the present situation. They seek to lead mankind to the deepest depths which hold the mystery and meaning of meaningfulness. Their theology, subjecting all forms, cultural and religious, to the judgment of the transcendent God,
is of the highest importance for the present situation of religion. "There is apparent in it the will to break through futile antitheses within the bourgeois situation. The decisive turn if it is to take place anywhere in Protestantism may be expected in theology."\(^{60}\)

3. Correlation

In the foregoing sections, philosophy and religion (in both its practical and theoretical aspects) have been treated separately. But in Tillich's view, the only way to a rich and full understanding of these disciplines is to bring them into some type of reciprocal relationship. This he seeks to do by the method of correlation, to which attention is now directed.

Tillich began to perfect this method when he was a professor at Marburg. During that time, two forces had a decisive impact on his development. The first was the negative influence of neo-orthodox theology which excluded all cultural concerns from theological thought and rejected the mediating attempts of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Harnack, and Troeltsch. A second and positive influence was exerted by Martin Heidegger, through whose lectures and writings Tillich came to "a fresh understanding of the relation between philosophy and theology." He accepted the new "existentialist" way

\(^{60}\)The Religious Situation, p. 181.
of thinking as Heidegger expounded it. And he found in the latter's description of human existence a doctrine of man which is both the doctrine of human freedom and human finiteness; and which is so closely related with the Christian interpretation of human existence that one is forced to speak of a 'theonomous philosophy,' in spite of Heidegger's emphatic atheism." Heidegger's analysis of existence and his insistence that philosophy is fundamentally ontology had a profound effect upon the formulation of Tillich's method of correlation.61

In his first major book, Das System der Wissenschaften (1923), Tillich took the initial step toward the method of correlation by establishing the scientific relation between philosophy and theology. He here defined theology as "theonomous metaphysics," a definition intended to overcome the conflict between them. The ideas developed in this book have determined his thought up to the present and have provided the structural foundation for his philosophical theology.

Tillich states his final position on the nature of theology and philosophy in Systematic Theology, Volume I, according to which philosophy is

that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object. Reality, as such, or reality

61 The Interpretation of History, p. 40.
as a whole, is not the whole of reality; it is
the structure which makes reality a whole and
therefore a potential object of knowledge.
Inquiring into the nature of reality as such
means inquiring into those structures, categories,
and concepts which are presupposed in the cogni-
tive encounter with every realm of reality.62

From this point of view, philosophy is clearly ontology (meta-
physics); it asks the question of the structure of being and
answers it in terms of categories and concepts.63 The philo-
sophical question has its roots in the "philosophical shock"
of being confronted with the question of what it means "to
be" and why there is "being" and not "not-being."64

Theology deals with "what concerns us ultimately" and
only that which "determines our being or not-being" has the
power of ultimate concern.65 Theology, then, like philosophy,
must ask the question of being.66 The attempt to avoid it,
as in biblicism and neo-orthodox theology, can only result,
according to Tillich, in dismal failure.

The Bible itself always uses the categories and
concepts which describe the structure of expe-
rience. On every page of every religious or theo-
logical text these concepts appear: time, space,

62 Systematic Theology, p. 18.
63 Ibid., p. 20.
64 The Protestant Era, p. 85.
65 Ibid., p. 87.
66 Cf. The Interpretation of History, pp. 270-272.
cause, thing, subject, nature, movement, freedom, necessity, life, value, knowledge, experience, being and not-being. Biblicalism may try to preserve their popular meaning, but then it ceases to be theology. It must neglect the fact that a philosophical understanding of these categories has influenced ordinary language for many centuries.67

Tillich discerns, then, an ontological substructure underlying both philosophy and theology. Consequently, the question of their relation is for him the question of perspective from which each approaches ontology. "Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us."68 On this basis, Tillich notes the following points of divergence and convergence between philosophy and theology. The two diverge, first, in their cognitive attitude. The philosopher strives to maintain a detached objectivity toward being and its structures; the theologian is committed to, existentially involved in, the content he expounds. Secondly, the two differ in that the philosopher finds his sources in reality as a whole, whereas the theologian looks to the special manifestation of his ultimate concern. Thirdly, the philosopher deals with the categories of being in relation to the material which they structure, while the theologian deals with them in relation to the salvation of men.

67Systematic Theology, p. 21.

The two disciplines converge in the fact that no human being is without an ultimate concern and without the influence of his existential situation. Both factors determine the work of the philosopher and the theologian. Consequently, every creative philosopher is, in Tillich's view, a "hidden 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 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. There is hardly a historically significant philosopher who does not show these marks of a theologian.

Conversely, the theologian finds himself a philosopher when he attempts to show the universal validity of his ultimate concern. For this task, he must assume an attitude of detachment. He must be critical of every concrete expression of his ultimate concern. Only on the basis of "yes" and "no" is he able to accept any tradition and authority. Furthermore,

69Ibid., p. 25. Cf.: "There is an element in every philosophy (not only in every philosopher) which is 'existential,' i.e., which has the character of an ultimate decision about the meaning of reality. The less technical and the more creative a philosophy is, the more it shows, at least implicitly, an ultimate concern. No creative philosophy can escape its religious background" (Paul Tillich, "The Problem of the Theological Method," Journal of Religion, January 1947, XXVII, 17-18).
as has already been suggested, the theologian becomes a philoso-
pher in his dependence upon and use of philosophical language
and methods. In every sentence the theologian presupposes the
categories and concepts of the philosopher. For in dealing
with the meaning of being "for us," he must know the struc-
tures of being. To the extent that he takes this seriously,
the theologian becomes a philosopher, "in critical understand-
ing if not in creative power." 70

The divergence and convergence of philosophy and the-
ology point to a double truth: that there is no necessary
conflict between the two, and, at the same time, there is no
possible synthesis between them. What, then, is the final
relation between philosophy and theology? For Tillich, it is
interdependence described functionally in terms of the method
of correlation.

The method of correlation relates philosophy and theo-
logy by relating the philosophical analysis of human exist-
ence and the questions it raises to the theological answers
given in the Christian message, and vice versa.

The questions implied in human existence deter-
mine the meaning and the theological interpretation

70 Ibid., pp. 25-26. Cf.: "As the philosopher cannot
escape his theological background, so the theologian cannot
escape his philosophical tool. Those who try to do so deceive
themselves: their language, which is shaped through philoso-
phy, betrays them (as even Earth has admitted)" ("The Problem
of the Theological Method," p. 18).
of the answers as they appear in classical religious concepts. The form of the questions, whether primitive or philosophical, is decisive for the theological form in which the answer is given. And conversely, the substance of the question is determined by the substance of the answer. Nobody is able to ask questions concerning God, revelation, Christ, etc., who has not already received some answer. So we can say: With respect to man's ultimate concern the questions contain the substance of the answers, and the answers are shaped by the form of the questions. Thus the philosophical form is ultimately related to the substance of the theological answer instead of being alien to it.  

The analysis of existence, including the formulation of the questions implicit in existence, is always a philosophical task, even if it is performed by a theologian. Likewise, the development of the answers given in the Christian message is always a theological task, even if it is performed by a philosopher.

71 "The Problem of the Theological Method," p. 25. In maintaining that the religious ultimate is presupposed in every philosophical question, Tillich is in the tradition of Augustine who identified the philosophical Absolute with the "one" element of the religious Absolute. For Tillich, as for Augustine, "God is the presupposition of the question of God." This is the ontological solution of the problem of philosophy of religion. On this basis, Tillich reconstructs the cosmological principle as follows: "The unconditional of which we have an immediate awareness, without inference, can be recognized in the cultural and natural universe." Thus, the cosmological principle in its positive form leads to a tracing of the expression of ultimate concern in every creation, i.e., to a theology of culture. Cf. "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," pp. 4-12.
Philosophy cannot answer ultimate or existential questions 'qua' philosophy. If the philosopher tries to answer them...he becomes a theologian. And, conversely, theology cannot answer those questions without accepting their presuppositions and implications. Question and answer determine each other; if they are separated, the traditional answers become unintelligible, and the actual questions remain unanswered.72

Thus, Tillich's method is expressly designed to avoid the contradictory errors of a natural theology which seeks to derive its answers from the questions themselves, as well as of a supranaturalistic theology which refuses to relate its answers to the questions that man in his very existence is always asking.73

The method of correlation determining Tillich's theological system requires that the first part of every section be given to the development of the question through an analysis of human existence and existence generally. The second part must expound the theological answer on the basis of the sources, medium, and norm of systematic theology. Accordingly,

72 The Protestant Era, p. xxvi.

73 Systematic Theology, pp. 64-65. Cf.: "Natural theology must be denied, but its intention can be saved. I try to save its intention through explaining a theology of historical revelation in which nature is replaced by history, essential necessity by existential freedom, in which the cleavage between natural and supernatural religion and theology is overcome through the one theology which has two poles: the question of human existence and the answer of divine revelation" ("Natural and Revealed Religion," p. 170).
his system unfolds as follows. Section One formulates the questions implied in the analysis of the basic structures of essential being, and develops the answer which is God. In Section Two, the questions resulting from an analysis of man's existential self-estrangement are answered in terms of the Christ. Section Three develops the questions implied in the ambiguities of life, that is, in the fact that essential and existential characteristics are found together, and answers them with the doctrine of the Spirit. These three sections compose the main body of systematic theology. The two final sections deal explicitly with aspects implied but not fully developed in the first three sections. Section Four expounds the questions raised by an analysis of man's rationality under the conditions of existence and gives the answer which is Revelation. The Fifth Section analyzes man's historical existence and the questions implied in the ambiguities of history, and develops the answer which is the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 66-67.
The method of correlation represents, in Tillich's own words, "an eschatological vision of a philosophical analysis of being which is in perfect harmony with a theological expression of the meaning of being for us."\(^75\) But if eschaton and theonomy are realities for the present as well as for the future, as Tillich insists, then the correlation must purport to be a partial realization of the theonomous union of philosophy and theology. Perhaps due modesty prevents him from making this claim in so direct and bold a manner. Nevertheless, one doubts that he would deny it.

No treatment of the method of correlation is complete which fails to recognize its practical implications for Tillich personally. It must surely reflect a prolonged attempt to come to grips with the tension in his own life between philosophy and theology. The roots of this tension appear early in his development. Tillich recalls that from his last years in the Gymnasium he wanted to be a philosopher. By that time he had developed a love for the Greek language and for classical Greek thought. These interests were accompanied by extensive readings in German philosophy, especially Fichte, Kant, and Schelling. Over against this early love for philosophy stood the strict religious tradition out of which Tillich had come. His father, a minister and district

\(^{75}\)"Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," p. 336.
superintendent of the Prussian Territorial Church, maintained orthodox religious instruction in home, school, and church. Fortunately, however, he was also well versed in classical philosophy and was convinced (a conviction which he passed along to his son through long and happy hours of discussion) that there can be no conflict between true philosophy and revealed truth.76

Nevertheless, Tillich experienced a constant tension between philosophy and theology. The result had to be "either a decision against the one or the other side, or a general scepticism or a split consciousness which drove one to attempt to overcome the conflict constructively."77 This latter way, following in the main stream of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel, was Tillich's way. It took him to the University of Breslau where, as a theological student, he pursued his enthusiasm for Schelling and wrote his doctoral thesis on "Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schelling positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien." Still "on the boundary," Tillich continued his studies in the theological faculty at Halle. Here he earned the degree of Licentiat in Theology, writing again a thesis on Schelling's philosophy of religion.

77Ibid., p. 10.
At the conclusion of his studies, Tillich received ordination into the Evangelical Lutheran Church and for two years served as assistant minister of various parishes. In 1914, he joined the German army as a chaplain. When the war was over, he accepted an appointment in the theological faculty at the University of Berlin, thus beginning his teaching career. From the very outset, his career has corresponded to his theoretical attempts to arrive at a synthesis between philosophy and theology.

Privat Dozent of Theology in Halle and Berlin; Professor of the Science of Religion in Dresden and at the same time Professor Honorarius of Theology in Leipzig; Professor Ordinarius of Philosophy in Frankfort-on-the-Main; and [Professor of Philosophical Theology] at Union Theological Seminary in New York. A constant change of faculties and yet no change in the subject! As a theologian I tried to remain a philosopher, and conversely so. To have left the border and decided on the one or the other would have been less difficult. But inwardly it was impossible; and external fate met the need of the inward necessity with peculiar opportuneness.78

So Tillich wrote in 1936. Yet, in the "Autobiographical Reflections" for The Theology of Paul Tillich, he recognizes, looking back at a long life of theological and philosophical thought, that he was and is a theologian supremely, "because the existential question of our ultimate concern and the existential answer of the Christian message are and always..."

78 The Interpretation of History, pp. 40-41.
have been predominant in my spiritual life." 79

Whereas from the standpoint of an ultimate concern, Tillich has always been within the "theological circle," on all secondary matters he has stayed on the boundary between philosophy and theology. This for him has been the most "pro-pitious place for acquiring knowledge." It has been the birthplace of the method of correlation, the ground upon which contrasting disciplines have achieved mutuality and interdependence. At the same time, to stand on the boundary has meant for him "to experience in many forms the unrest, insecurity, and inner limitation of existence, and to know the inability of attaining serenity, security and perfection." 80

Nevertheless, Tillich's supreme greatness seems to lie, as Reinhold Niebuhr says,

in his exploration of the boundary between metaphysics and theology. The difficult task of walking the tight-rope is not negotiated without the peril of losing one's balance and falling over on one side or the other. If Barth refuses to approach the vicinity of the fence because he doesn't trust his balance, Tillich performs upon it with the greatest virtuosity, but not without an occasional fall. 81

80 The Interpretation of History, p. 92.
CRITICISM AND CONCLUSION

Productive as it is in many ways, Tillich's concept and theology of culture raises almost as many problems as it solves. Several of its major difficulties are now to be discussed in the order in which they arise in the preceding chapters.

To begin with, Tillich's concept of religion seems idealistic and not substantiated by the facts of human existence. Not all types of religion are directed toward the unconditional, especially those which dissolve the unconditional into the conditioned. Thus it appears that Tillich has given not a definition but a normative concept. Would his definition not be better stated along these lines: Religion is direction toward what man considers to be the unconditional?

On the relationship between religion and culture, Tillich has said that religion is substantially and intentionally religious, while culture is substantially but not intentionally so. One may ask whether this formulation brings into sufficiently bold relief the existential difference between religion and culture. Here again, he appears to have presented a normative concept adequate for only one type of cultural attitude, namely, that which borders so closely upon the religious as to make the presence or absence of intentionality insignificant. The attitude of "self-sufficient finitude" (characteristic of the capitalistic era)
which Tillich criticizes seems to lack substantial "direction toward the unconditional" in any significant degree. In fact, "self-sufficient finitude" appears in principle to deprive culture of the substantial religious element.

This same type of question may be asked with regard to Tillich’s idea of atheism. As a protest against objectification of the divine, atheism is justified. But on its positive side atheism is intentionally anti-religious.

Relating the discussion of atheism to the discussion of the relationship between religion and culture: Is atheism as a cultural attitude to be held as substantially religious? This question does not mean to overlook Tillich’s important assertion that frequently secular culture exhibits a more genuinely religious substance than does organized religion itself. Nevertheless, one must ask whether the admittedly ambiguous character of culture does not contradict the claim that culture is substantially religious? Perhaps this whole criticism hinges upon the confusion in Tillich’s use of the word religion, sometimes as a normative concept and sometimes as a definition.

One question concerning the nature of theonomy should be posed. Tillich asserts that theonomy retains and deepens both autonomy and heteronomy. He continually emphasizes the autonomous element but does not stress the heteronomous element—the quality of obedience. Rather, Tillich’s notion of heteronomy seems negative and limited, admitting only the dis-
tortion that it may give to man's relationship to the unconditional. Now, however sound it may be to insist that theonomy is a fulfillment and transcendence of autonomy, still the unconditional is not conditioned by autonomy. The unconditional remains the unconditionally real, valid and given element that imposes its demand upon us, a demand for obedience. Does not the very core of theonomy--its relatedness to the unconditional, its orientation to the holy, require a recognition of its heteronomous quality? Perhaps there is some connection between Tillich's failure to see the negative aspects of culture and atheism and his neglect of the element of obedience in religion.

Much the same confusion encountered in Tillich's concepts of religion and culture is met again in his concept of the unconditional (Das Unbedingte). Although this is his decisive concept, curiously enough, he nowhere gives a systematic presentation of its meaning or relates it to such concepts as "being," "truth," and "value." Moreover, one is left in doubt as to the relationship between unconditional and conditioned.

Tillich is consistent in his use of the unconditional as a symbol for God, but its meaning varies in different contexts. For example: religion is "direction toward the unconditional;" "myth apprehends in a perceptible way the substance of the unconditional;" holiness is a quality of the
unconditional. More than that, one is told that the unconditional is not God, that it is only a negative-rational symbol for what is beyond positive-rational terms.

Thus, Tillich's concept of the unconditional leaves us without any criterion for distinguishing between qualitatively different aspects of reality, much less different conceptions and aspects of religion. All concepts, doctrines, sacraments and orders of cultural creation seem to be somehow related to the unconditional. But beyond this, we are left in doubt and confusion on this matter will persist until Tillich gives to the concept of the unconditional a more definitive, positive-symbolic content.

Although the details of Tillich's Christology are not directly relevant to the task at hand, its general outline appears in the exposition of New Being as the perfect overcoming of the existential split between religion and culture, the holy and the profane. On the basis of this discussion, the following questions may be raised: Tillich's statements to the effect that Jesus is the Christ only as the historical Jesus surrenders himself to the Christ seem to enforce a radical "either/or" between the human and the divine life. One suspects that the reason for this is Tillich's genuine disinterest in the Synoptic accounts of the life and work of Jesus—the historical event, the man, the concrete deeds and
remembered words. Instead, he is concerned with the Christ aspect, the dynamic, divine principle. But does not this produce a radical disjunction, an unhistorical abstraction more like Gnosticism than the historic Christian kerygma? And if it does, then the antagonism between religion and culture, the holy and the profane, is resolved only in principle, but not in terms of historical fact.

Turning to Tillich's cultural-theological analysis, one is impressed by the richness and scope of his interests. Certainly, he takes the movements within the various cultural spheres far more seriously than do most contemporary theologians. However, dissatisfaction must be expressed with certain aspects of his analysis.

That part which is developed only in Tillich's early German writings reflects a decided provincialism arising from the feeling that the major cultural events in the first decades of this century were centered in Germany. It is true that the crisis of modern culture was more acute and its problems more sharply defined in Germany than elsewhere. And it may be true that interest in theology, philosophy, literature, art and science was more alert and intense on German soil than in the English-speaking countries. But this does not justify the exclusion of significant movements in other parts of the world.

More than that, Tillich's provincialism has given a decidedly pessimistic color to his interpretation of the class
struggle. His analysis requires adjustment in the American situation because of the special character of the American labor movement. Certainly his pessimism with regard to the possibility of preserving large areas of freedom in a planned society and his tendency to overlook the political implications of socialism need to be criticized. In particular, his understanding of the immediate and long range prospects for religious socialism as a philosophy and as a movement presents serious questions—questions which, as we shall see, reappear in connection with his scheme for the preservation of Protestantism and meaningful cultural creativity.

Notwithstanding the failure of the religious socialist movement in Germany, Tillich insists that religious socialism as such still has a mission to capitalist society and the Protestant churches. He defines this mission as follows: Religious socialism must make explicit the religious element in the socialist imperative and the socialist element in the religious imperative. With regard to Protestantism, it aims to bring about an understanding of the social, political and economic aspects of the present crisis and an acceptance by the churches of their share of the collective guilt and their responsibility for reconstruction. Religious socialism must subject both religion and socialism to ideological analysis. In such an analysis both must be criticized, but the criticism must be supplemented by the spirit of Christian agape and by a proper
understanding of man's relatedness to the ground and abyss of meaning—a relatedness that makes possible a concrete Yes and a concrete No to every relative value. It is the mission of religious socialism to assist in preserving and carrying into formation the creative autonomy of the bourgeois revolution and in conserving the positive gains of the capitalist era. It must cooperate with the elements of the socialist movement that hold great promise for a transformed society in which the pseudo-competitions of capitalism are in a decisive measure overcome.

More than that, religious socialism must encourage the re-formulation of a living religious substance embodying the primary elements of both Catholicism and Protestantism. And it must direct Protestantism toward becoming a truly ecumenical Christianity.

The question now arises as to how religious socialism can fulfill this lofty mission. Tillich answers that it must do its work through small groups of individuals unbound by political and ecclesiastical alliances. These groups must consist of persons who have seen the trends of our period and who are able to resist them, who have contended for personality and community and who know about an ultimate meaning of life, even if they are unable to express it. Their influence in solving social, economic and political problems must be indirect, though they must struggle boldly, openly and critical-
ly. Out of these anonymous, esoteric groups, scattered and yet united in a nascent community consciousness, recognizing a kinship to both prophetic Christianity and secular socialism, will arise, in Tillich's view, the new, creative order.

The obvious impracticability of such a scheme seems to this writer to exceed even the utopian demands which Tillich makes of religious socialism. Can religious socialism as a philosophy (granting for a moment its general desirability) be genuinely effective apart from some consciously structured movement? Tillich thinks that it can. But does this not imply that substance can find expression apart from form? -- an idea he denies with regard to religion. How then, if the substance of religious socialism is religious, can it escape the necessity of being embodied in a definite, recognizable form in order to have reality? Here again, one has the uneasy feeling that rather than dealing with historical realities, Tillich is presenting a normative concept in which practical issues are dissolved in a general "relatedness to the unconditional."

Much the same difficulty attends Tillich's proposals for preserving the vitality of Protestantism and the freedom of culture. In both cases, he identifies the saving remnant with small, independent, esoteric groups.

The end of the Protestant era is a relative certainty in Tillich's view. The historic forces which brought it into being are now exhausted. But this does not mean the end of
Protestantism. The Protestant Principle and the proclamation of the Christian message upon which it is based are infinite and inexhaustible. Yet, how can they be made effective in the present period of transition and incorporated into the structure of the "post-Protestant Era"? By groups relatively withdrawn from the ecclesiastical realization of Protestantism and closed to the sociological forms of organized religion. These groups must uphold the Protestant Principle, not as a constitutive element of a church system, but as a corrective for all forms of church life. They must integrate masses through recognized authority, powerful symbols, and sacramental action. They must take humanism into themselves "as an esoteric means of self-criticism and self-representation, but may not enter into dependency upon it and its esoteric realization."

Once more, Tillich seems to think that dynamic substance—in this case, an explicitly religious substance—can be realized apart from its association with definite forms, whether ecclesiastical, social or esthetic. Again this proposal is a manifest contradiction of his own basic presuppositions regarding religion and culture, substance and form. In this instance, however, the contradiction is doubly serious since the substance which he aims to perpetuate by such amorphous means is identified with historical Christianity whose central

1Paul Tillich, "The End of the Protestant Era," Student World (First Quarter 1937), XXX, 49-57.
reality is the incarnation. Christianity must appear in history, must embody itself in cultural forms, or it is not Christianity.

Essentially the same problem underlies Tillich's scheme for the preservation of cultural freedom and creativity. The present crisis presents a serious threat to the individual's freedom to decide about the meaning and purposes of his creative action, to follow the objective demands involved in the nature of his work. In this period, it is more difficult for him to maintain the vital power and joy which belong to creativity. Hence, the question: How is cultural freedom and creativity to be saved?

In Tillich's view, it must be saved by some form of esoterism. Five types are possible: natural esoterism, rooted in the differentiation of human abilities; artificial esoterism, which is the abuse of natural differentiation in order to maintain exclusiveness and social prestige; mystical esoterism, rooted in the special preparation required for some religious and psychological experiences; educational esoterism, "rooted in the fact that not everything can be said to everyone at every moment, that some things can be said only at the right time and in the right place, and that some things cannot be said at all to some people"; and political esoterism, rooted in the problem of how much truth and error about the political system can be admitted as a matter of public knowledge.
and discussion without dangerous consequences for the group. Only in small groups embodying these various types of esoterism, can cultural freedom and autonomy be preserved in the crisis. And only as these groups manifest seriousness and profundity, courage and patience, vision and rationality, will the creative impulse be maintained.

There is merit, doubtless, in cultural esoterism as a means for saving autonomous creativity. But it requires a great deal more structure and content before it can be considered as an effective alternative. The impression persists that Tillich's principles are not oriented toward concrete events, that unity of theory and practice has not been realized. There is still confusion as to how creative substance finds expression in these esoteric groups. Though it must be admitted that his proposals with regard to culture generally are more realistic than his ideas for the preservation of religious socialism and Protestantism.

Passing on to Tillich's correlation, particularly his correlation between philosophy and theology, several difficulties which seriously weaken his argument must be noted.

First, a major contradiction appears in Tillich's view of philosophy. By definition he makes it a science whose chief task is the description of the nature of being. It asks and

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answers questions of fact with factual information, determined by the empirical method. The philosopher must detach himself from his work and must assume an objective attitude toward the reality he surveys. At the same time, Tillich maintains that philosophy has its roots in the "philosophical shock" — the experience of what it means "to be" and why there is "being" and not "not being." What is this experience if not a concrete aspect of the philosopher's personal life? And if it is, then how can he be detached from his work? How can he be indifferent to that which has given him an "ontological shock"?

Tillich not only contradicts himself, but also distorts the picture by restricting philosophy to the theoretical sphere and the philosopher to the empirical approach. His definition, taken literally, makes existential philosophy an absurdity. But have not recent developments shown that the existential element is indispensable to the fulfillment of philosophy. By introducing dramatic categories, imaginative symbols and historical concreteness, existential philosophy has come nearer to doing justice to the structures of being than the kind of philosophy which tries to exclude human inwardness. Hence, nothing could be more misleading than to take seriously Tillich's picture of philosophy modeled after science.

Certain difficulties also attend Tillich's correlation between philosophy and theology. In describing their points of convergence, he says that in so far as philosophy has existential
concern it is theology. If all true philosophy is existential in nature, as recent philosophers insist, then what is the real difference between philosophy and theology? In Tillich's view, all genuinely existential philosophy becomes theology and the question about the difference between the two disciplines is resolved into a debate about the different types of theology. It is doubtful that this conclusion would be acceptable to either side.

Another contradiction is manifest in the basic presupposition underlying Tillich's correlation. He reasons that the fundamental relationship between philosophy and theology must be one of inter-relation since there is, on the one hand, no necessary conflict between them, and, on the other hand, no possibility of a synthesis. There is no conflict because that would "presuppose a common basis on which to fight. But there is no common basis between theology and philosophy."\(^3\) Now that assertion clearly opposes Tillich's earlier argument for the essential ontological unity of these two disciplines. He went to great length to define both philosophy and theology in terms of their relation to being. In fact, the whole method of correlation is based upon their alleged concern with the ontological question. Then does not this denial of their common ground undercut the correlation?

\(^3\)Systematic Theology, p. 20.
Despite these criticisms, Tillich's theology of culture represents one of the most comprehensive and original productions of its kind in our time. Its profundity and comprehensiveness are evidenced in the fact that he has given a fresh statement of the motifs of Christian and Protestant prophetism and of a radically reinterpreted philosophical socialism, and both of these elements are related to a basically Christian philosophy of history. By means of his interpretation of the nature of religion and culture and their relationship, Tillich provides a religious orientation whereby the positive significance of both can be appreciated and from whence a prophetic criticism of both may arise. Even if one is not disposed to accept Tillich's "system" as a whole or some of its supporting concepts, he must gratefully concede to its accomplishments.
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