

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Ground of Being:

An Outline of the Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich and an Assessment of its Adequacy in  
Relation to Nonhuman Animals and Creation

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ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

Ground of Being: An outline of the Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich and an Assessment of its Adequacy in Relation to Nonhuman Animals and Creation

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Tillich is a one of the most prolific Twentieth Century theologians, however, his most important work academically is his three volume *Systematic Theology*.

*Systematic Theology* has attracted attention from Eco-theologians inspired by the Multidimensional Unity of Life, but there has yet to be a publication examining his system from the perspective of Animal Theology.

This thesis provides an outline of his system and looks in detail at key Tillichian concepts from the perspective of animals and creation. It utilises a three part structure.

Part I gives a methodological introduction and also an exposition of each of his system's five parts.

Part II critiques specific Tillichian concepts which are lacking in their representation of animals and creation. Each chapter looks in detail at a Tillichian concept.

Chapter three examines Tillich's concept of technical reason, arguing it provides an opportunity to consider the human utilisation animals, which Tillich misses. Chapter four looks at the relationship portrayed between the Creator and creation, examining the narrowness of his dimensions of history and the spirit and how this impacts on creation as a whole. Chapter Five investigates the implications of Tillich's Christology for animals and creation. Chapter six expounds his concept of the Multidimensional Unity of Life, and the motivation underlying its construction is examined.

Part III considers concepts within *Systematic Theology* which provide a basis for a more inclusive theology in terms of creation.

Chapter seven expounds his methodology and 'tests' his 'method of correlation' by introducing knowledge from the field of cognitive ethology to his system. Chapter eight investigates his concept of 'universal salvation' both in *Systematic Theology* and other work, in addition to providing a contrasting eschatological vision. Finally, chapter nine examines Tillich's interpretation of 'the Fall', includes insights from the Eastern Orthodox tradition and argues that his interpretation would support the view of humans as 'priests to creation'.

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**Part I:**

**An Exposition of Tillich's Systematic Theology**

## Introduction

To quote Ted Peters, Paul Tillich is 'one of the most influential theologians of the Twentieth Century'<sup>1</sup>. Tillich is indeed a giant among Twentieth Century theologians, even producing two books (*The Courage to Be* and *The Dynamics of Faith*) which appeared on the New York Times Bestsellers List, a feat never equalled before or since by any other theologian. He was in fact such a household name, that when he died in 1965 at the age of 79, his death was reported across North America on national news bulletins.

His beginnings in the United States, were much more humble however. He first came to the USA in 1933 at the request of Reinhold Niebuhr, after he was dismissed from his position at the University of Frankfurt for giving a series of public lectures with themes that brought him into conflict with the newly elected Nazi party. At the age of 47 and knowing only a very little English, he had to begin his career again. To this end, he began lecturing as a Guest Professor in the Philosophy of Religion at Union Seminary in New York. In his first few years of teaching in America, many of his students found his brand of philosophical theology difficult to understand because although he had grown up in a tradition where philosophy and theology were inseparable (he wrote his own doctoral thesis on Schelling) philosophy and theology were not fused together quite so closely in the USA. Initially it appeared that he may be too philosophical for theology departments, and too theological to be taken seriously by philosophers. Over the next few years, as he settled into his new life in America, his lectures grew in popularity to the extent that within four years he had gained tenure at Union Seminary.

He is best known by the general public for his shorter single topic books which in addition to the above included *Love, Power and Justice*, *Theology of Culture* and *Morality and Beyond*. He also enjoyed literary success with his collections of sermons, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, *The New Being* and *The Eternal Now*, and his collections of lectures, such as *A History of Christian Thought* and *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society*. Although a popular author with the general public, it was not until the release of his three volume

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<sup>1</sup>Carl E. Braaten, Carl E. and Robert W. Jenson (eds.) *A Map of Twentieth – Century Theology: Readings from Karl Barth to Radical Pluralism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). Back-jacket Review by Ted Peters.

*Systematic Theology* (1951-63) that his work received extensive academic attention. Written between 1951 and 1963, it has gone on to be influential across the globe to this day. It provided a new approach to systematic theology, combining theology with philosophy, deep psychology, sociology and even anthropology to arrive at an existential theological system unlike anything which had previously been seen. The lack of traditional terminology combined with his distinctive style or 'method' of theology sharply divided his contemporaries. His supporters waxed lyrical about this new and innovative work, glossing over inconsistencies and inadequacies which existed across its three volumes. His detractors on the other hand argued that his work was not theological enough, with its philosophical foundations and use of secular terms which they believed to be not entirely appropriate to theology. He was also accused of diluting the Christian message and even trying to secularise Christianity with his emphasis on existentialism, his belief that the Bible is only one source among several for theology and his description of key Christian concepts as mythical or symbolic rather than literal'<sup>2</sup>.

In the late Twentieth and early Twenty-First Century, his work has attracted the attention of many Eco-theologians, most notably Jeremy D. Yunt'<sup>3</sup>. The Eco-theology movement have been inspired in particular by Tillich's concept of the Multidimensional Unity of Life which will also be considered in Chapter Six below. There has not been a specific study of his *Systematic Theology* focusing on Animal Theology however. Although Eco-theology and Animal Theology have a degree of overlap in their areas of interest and concern, they 'differ considerably in their perspectives.'<sup>4</sup>

Animal Theology is a relatively young field of endeavour and there is much that can be gleaned from examining Tillich's *Systematic Theology* from the point of view of nonhuman

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst it is true that Tillich wished to de-mythologise Christianity, to suggest that he wanted to diminish participation in the faith would be absolutely false. He chose to use non-traditional language in relation to important Christian concepts in order to make them more accessible to people in their everyday lives. The methodology of his whole system is designed to be as relevant as possible for its readers. It is also the case that he argues theology can have many sources, including the Bible and revelation, but to suggest that this 'down-grades' the importance of the Bible in Tillich's thought would be absolutely wrong. He describes the Bible as one of the 'norms' of Christian Theology and makes clear that there being other sources for theology does not diminish the significance of the Bible.

<sup>3</sup> Yunt, Jeremy D. *The Ecotheology of Paul Tillich: The Spiritual Roots of Environmental Ethics* (USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> For an examination of the differences between animal theology and eco-theology, see Andrew Linzey, 'So Near and Yet So Far: Animal Theology and Ecological Theology' in Roger S. Gottlieb (Ed) *Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

animals and creation. This thesis will not only question if or how Tillich's system can benefit nonhuman animals, but also how taking proper account of nonhuman animals can benefit his system.

The dissertation is divided into three sections. Part I of the thesis is separated into two chapters and gives an overall exposition of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*. Chapter one provides a methodological introduction to the three volumes. It discusses his thoughts on what purpose a theological system should have and describes how and why he arrived at the methodology he employs throughout his system. It also sketches out the 'shape' of the system and explains why he believes that such a structure is of vital importance to the enterprise of existential theology.

Chapter Two is split into five initial parts, each giving an exposition of the corresponding part of the system. The first part focuses on the nature of finite reason and how it can become distorted under the conditions of existence. It also considers Tillich's understanding of revelation, discussing what constitutes a revelatory experience and the different types of revelation that one can 'participate' in. Part two examines the concept of 'non-Being' and introduces the idea of 'Ultimate Concern' as the means of fighting the threat of non-being. Part three concentrates on the estrangement experienced by finite beings under the conditions of existence and puts forward the symbol of 'New Being' as the answer to questions which arise out of our estrangement. Part four provides an exposition of 'Life and the Spirit' which is primarily concerned with the interlinking nature of all of creation and existence under the dimension of the Spirit. Part five examines the meaning and aim of history and the relationship between history and salvation. Finally, there is a brief account of a selection of secondary Tillichian exposition in relation to a number of his system's key notions.

Part II of this thesis comprises chapters Three to Six and provides a critical examination of a number of important Tillichian concepts, assessing how adequate these are in relation to nonhuman animals in particular and creation in general. In each of the preceding chapters it will be argued that Tillich's concepts are found wanting in relation to the nonhuman creation. It will be contended that many of Tillich's ideas highlighted in Part II simply do not extend their scope wide enough to recognise the issue of the relationship between the

Creator and anything other than the human species. Arguably worse however are the occasions where he does recognise the dysfunctional way in which humans treat nonhuman animals and creation and where he chooses to remain silent with respect to the ethical implications of this - both in relation to creation and to the Creator. In the case of each chapter in this section, Tillich's ideas will be critiqued from an internal perspective - that is, based on their consistency within his system. They will also be critiqued in relation to the specific concept's overall scope and its ability to contribute (or otherwise) towards his system reaching the goals he identifies for any theological system in the introduction of *Systematic Theology: Volume One*; crucial amongst these, providing a theonomous account of all aspects of reality.

Chapter Three deals with the notion of technical (or controlling reason) and whether Tillich gives an adequate account of its implications under the influence of existential distortion, especially in relation to nonhuman animals and creation. It will be argued that this concept provides a great deal of opportunity for the way humans behave towards nonhuman animals to be examined, and its ethical implications be considered, however Tillich fails to do this. The problem here being not so much that he does not recognise or take account of the way humans utilise the rest of creation, stripping it of its subjectivity, but rather that his only concern is how this utilisation will have negative effects on humanity. Schweitzer's influence on Tillich's thought is also examined in this chapter, especially with respect to Tillich's claim that his work, and in particular the final volume of his *Systematic Theology*, is moving 'in a somewhat similar direction' to that of Schweitzer's notion of 'Reverence for Life'. It will however be broadly rejected that *Systematic Theology* shares common ground with the thought of Schweitzer, at least in relation to the way humans should behave in regard to the rest of creation. In order to offer a different perspective on his understanding of the treatment of nonhuman animals under the predominance of technical reason, Kant's Indirect Duty Ethic is compared with Tillich's commentary on the dangers of un-checked technical reason for humans. From this examination it will be argued that his treatment of the consequences of technical reason shares more with Kant's thought than it does with Schweitzer's, in its attitude towards the morality of the human utilisation of nonhuman animals and creation.

Chapter Four examines Tillich's portrayal of the relationship between the Creator and creation in *Systematic Theology*. It outlines his definition of what constitutes history, the delimitation of the dimension of the spirit and the endowment of spirit<sup>5</sup>. It will be argued that by defining inclusion to the dimension of the spirit so narrowly, it excludes all but humanity from participation. The theological impact this has on nonhuman animals and creation will be examined and from a theological point of view, it will be asserted that Tillich's God would appear to only be directly interested in the human species. It will be countered that the scope of his portrayal of the relationship between creation and the Creator is deficient however for several primary reasons. Firstly it assumes that the Creator values *Her* creation by the same standards humans do, which may well not be the case. If the essential nature of the whole of the created order is judged to be good by its creator (as Tillich firmly believes it is) then it would seem inconsistent to posit that only a single species is worthy of direct attention from and interaction with its Creator. Secondly it will be argued that Tillich's account of this relationship does not make any attempt to allow for the interests of the Creator in relation to the entirety of the created order. Further, it will be shown that this exclusion causes serious consequences when attempting to form any sort of Tillichian animal ethic. After all, if God has only minimal and indirect interest in all but the human species, then what possible reason could there be for humans to show concern for the rest of the created order?

Feuerbach's critique of Christianity as deification of the human species put forward in *The Essence of Christianity* will also be expounded and it will be argued that without proper representation of nonhuman animals and creation, Tillich's system has little defence against many of the assertions Feuerbach makes. Additionally the symbol of the 'Spiritual Presence' is considered in relation to the nonhuman creation. From this analysis, it will be advanced that including nonhuman animals and creation in direct participation with the Spiritual Presence would actually strengthen Tillich's system rather than weakening it, and would provide a substantial defence against the Feuerbachian critique that Christianity is nothing more than the aggrandisement of the human species.

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<sup>5</sup> In *Systematic Theology: Volume Three*, Tillich defines 'spirit' as 'the unity of life-power and meaning' and postulated that only humans could meet its criteria. He arrives at this narrow definition by fusing the empiricistic view of spirit as intellect with the Latin meaning of spirit as 'breath' (*spiritus*). For a fuller description of how he arrived at this definition, see *STIII*, p.22f.

Chapter Five examines Tillich's Christology and the symbols of 'New Being' and 'New Creation', generally and in specific relation to the whole of creation. Additionally, the notion that Jesus as the Christ is the final manifestation of New Being is considered in relation to the nonhuman creation. As the New Being can only be manifest within history, and history for Tillich excludes all beings other than human beings, the question will be raised as to what happens to his concept of salvation if human life comes to an end prior to the end of all life on earth? It will be argued that in failing to allow a direct relationship between Jesus as the Christ and the whole of creation, the internal consistency of his system is damaged. It will be asserted that one of the consequences of Tillich's delimiting the dimension of history to only the human species is that God the Creator has a direct relationship with the whole of creation, whilst Christ as the Redeemer does not. In contrast to Tillich's overwhelmingly humanocentric Christology, The Christology of Linzey is outlined and its ethical conclusions considered. Ultimately, it will be argued that Tillich's Christology is found wanting by Tillich's own standards as it fails to provide a theonomous account of the central element of his systematic theology – something which he himself argues is one of the central purposes of any theological system.

Chapter Six illuminates Tillich's concept of the multidimensional unity of life and his argument against ascribing a hierarchy of levels to beings is examined. Three diagrams<sup>6</sup> accompany this chapter. The first is designed to show the original pyramidal hierarchy of levels of being which Tillich argues against, the second, a diagrammatical representation of the multidimensional unity of life and the third, a graph to show the grades of being he wishes to use in favour of the traditional pyramidal hierarchy. On closer inspection however, it becomes obvious that replacing the term 'level' with that of 'grades of being' (or for that matter any other term) without changing the underlying epistemology, has no effect at all on the hierarchical nature of the concept. The theological adequacy of his underlying motivation for advancing the multidimensional unity of life is also assessed. It will be argued that although Tillich may not wish his multidimensional unity of life model to be hierarchical, the way beings are valued within it certainly is. The problem here would seem to be that he sees the world from an entirely humanocentric perspective and simply cannot imagine a model of creaturely existence which does not place humans above the rest of

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<sup>6</sup> The diagrams related to the Multidimensional Unity of Life are located immediately before the bibliography.

creation. Further, it will be suggested that Tillich's inability to break away from a hierarchical view of the worth of nonhuman animals and creation, despite his clearly stating that he wishes to do so, may at least in part be due to his Lutheran background, so Luther's ambivalent attitude towards animals is also briefly considered.

Part III of the thesis comprises a further three chapters (Seven to Nine) and considers positive concepts in Tillich's *Systematic Theology* with respect to nonhuman animals and creation. It will be argued that although most of the concepts examined still have a primarily humanocentric outlook, their scope is more adequate than those considered in part II and they nonetheless provide the possibility of establishing a basis for a Tillichian stance on the status of nonhuman animals and creation. As with part II, each chapter will evaluate a separate idea, assessing it from the point of view of its internal consistency within *Systematic Theology* as a whole. In addition, the ability of each concept to contribute (or otherwise) to what Tillich believes to be the main goals of a theological system will be considered, that is, each concept will be evaluated for its adequacy in Tillich's own terms.

Chapter Seven focuses on the methodology Tillich utilises throughout his system and follows the instructions for using his system as an ethical guide (both given in his *Systematic Theology* itself, and in other books and papers by Tillich) in order to provide a more accurate account of the complexity of nonhuman animal life. This can then inform the place which nonhuman animals in particular should occupy within his system. The theological basis for his method of correlation is expounded, as are his concepts of revelation and participation. However, rather than an internal critique being given (that is, a critique of the coherency, consistency and scope of this method) external, non-Tillichian material will be added in order to help to provide an account of the theological status of nonhuman animals. In order to demonstrate how his method can provide the basis for a Tillichian animal ethic, various insights from the field of cognitive ethology are put forward and by virtue of his method of correlation, are used to 'update' some of his assumptions regarding nonhuman animals. It will be argued that if we are to take seriously Tillich's method of correlation, then 'better information' which more adequately addresses the ethical issues of our contemporary setting must override even beliefs and assertions which Tillich himself may have held based on the less sophisticated understanding which prevailed regarding the complexity of nonhuman animal life during his lifetime. By doing this, it will be asserted not just that this



concept improves his account of animals, but that improving his account of animals also strengthens the internal consistency of his system, allowing him to bridge the gap which is otherwise present between God the Creator, God the Sustainer and God the Redeemer.

Chapter Eight addresses Tillich's concept of 'Universal Salvation'. In order to examine this fully, the notion of 'essentialisation' and the symbol of 'salvation' will also be expounded. Crucially, his concept of 'Eschatological Pan-en-theism' will be analysed in order to ascertain its impact on nonhuman animals in particular and creation in general. It will be asserted that the concept of 'Eschatological Pan-en-theism' provides a solid theological platform to affirm that the whole of creation has direct worth to its Creator. The Biblical passages Tillich uses to underpin his eschatological perspective are also considered and it is shown that the scope of his hopes for salvation encompass the whole of the created order and are in no way limited to the human species. Not all theologians, or even all animal theologians share such an understanding of the 'peaceable kingdom' however, and in contrast, the view of contemporary Animal Theologian Christopher Southgate is examined. Finally, Tillich's sermon 'Nature Also Mourns for a Lost Good' from his collection *The Shaking of The Foundations* is considered, as it gives an illuminating and less abstract view of his eschatology relating to nonhuman animals and creation. It will be argued that in light of the great sensitivity Tillich shows in relation to a theological understanding of the entirety of creation in his sermon, weight is added to the argument that although Tillich does not deal with animals and creation in terms of theology or ethics in his *Systematic Theology*, it is nonetheless reasonable to posit that an authentically Tillichian animals ethic could be developed.

Chapter Nine examines Tillich's interpretation of the doctrine of the Fall. This includes scrutinising his understanding of the term 'Original Fact' in relation to fallenness and also what is meant by the myth of the transition from 'dreaming innocence' to 'actualised guilt'. The implications of his interpretation of the Fall will also be assessed with respect to the nonhuman creation and it will be asserted that the scope of his understanding of the Fall is consistent with his hopes for the salvation of the entire created order and not just the human species. To provide a contrasting opinion of the scope of the Fall, Southgate's belief that it is a phenomenon solely effecting humanity is critiqued and compared to Tillich's view. Finally, insights from the Eastern Orthodox tradition are also considered and it will be

argued that from the perspective of animals and creation, his understanding of the Fall could provide a basis for allowing a more positive humanocentrism, one which sees humans acting as the Creator's representatives with regards to nonhuman animals in particular and creation in general.

The thesis will conclude with a brief account of the contribution this thesis makes both to animal theology and Tillichian studies.

## Chapter One

### The shape of Tillich's System: A Methodological Introduction

#### i. *The Purpose of a Theological System*

Tillich wished to produce a system that could reaffirm the foundational truths of theology whilst remaining accessible to those receiving it in their contemporary setting. He felt that a primary role of theology was to explain the relationship between peoples' cultural context and the core message of Christianity and he attempted to achieve this by likening the relation of the human situation and Christianity to the relationship between 'questions and answers' in what he describes as the 'method of correlation'<sup>7</sup> to bring together the message of the Christian faith with the situation in which people were to receive that message.

In order to allow his system to be 'living' or dynamic, rather than advancing a simple series of dogmatic assertions, he utilises a structure which unlike mathematical or scientific systems is not directly deductive in nature, in the sense that each part of the system, whilst interlinking with the whole, is not directly dependent on the preceding or following parts. Each section comprises an existential question, to which a theological symbol is put forward as an answer. The system then can remain relevant to people, even decades after it was written because 'after the central theological answer is given to any question, there is always a return to the existential question as the context in which a theological answer is again given.'<sup>8</sup> This allows for the concrete examination of current moral dilemmas and human issues, making his system a useful ethical guide for existential questions, whether or not they had arisen, or been considered at the time the system was written. Although Tillich himself did not directly address many of the Twenty-First Century's specific existential questions, he intended his system to provide a perspective that may assist in contemporary ethical problems.

Tillich argues that theology generally has two formal criteria, the first of which he defines as 'ultimate concern'. He argues that this concept is a religious concern which

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<sup>7</sup> Tillich, Paul: *Systematic Theology Volume One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Tillich, Paul: *Systematic Theology Volume Two* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 3.

'excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance.'<sup>9</sup> Individuals may be concerned by any number of things, but to fulfil the criterion of a religious concern, it needs to be based upon that which is 'ultimate, unconditioned and infinite'<sup>10</sup>, thus he separates the notion of ultimate concern from the multitude of preliminary, every day concerns, experienced by every human being. The second theological criterion is that the concern has the power to threaten or save our being. 'Being', may be defined as 'the structure, the meaning and the aim of existence.'<sup>11</sup> This narrower definition again indicates the separation of ultimate concern from secondary ones.

He asserts that systematic theology involves many disciplines coming together, but posits that it needs to begin with philosophical questions regarding the nature of human existence. Without this starting point, it is argued that systems can easily become simple dogmatic statements, which can have little direct relevance to the everyday lives of the individuals receiving these theological truths. Once the first step of examining the human condition via philosophical enquiry has been undertaken, then apologetics, ethics and dogmatics need also be employed in order to arrive at a system which can balance the demands of proclaiming the foundational truths of the Christian message, with a message relevant to the lives of its readers.

According to Tillich, dogmatics is an important part of this enterprise as it always facilitates the defence of Christian theology's doctrinal tradition against heresies and so helps to preserve both the historical and absolute aspects of the Christian faith. For example, if dogmatics were to be dismissed from systematic theology, the basic immutable beliefs regarding the nature of God or Jesus as the Christ may be subordinated to the concrete, ever changing demands of our contemporary setting, leaving systematic theology open to a relativistic interpretation of the faith. On the other hand, the role of practical theology within systematic theology is also viewed as vital, since it takes into account the psychological and sociological structures of humans and society, along with the 'knowledge of the cultural achievements.'<sup>12</sup> This allows practical theology to become a 'bridge between the Christian message and the human situation,'<sup>13</sup> thus providing the absolute and

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<sup>9</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 33-34.

unchanging foundations of the faith which can nonetheless be applied in the concrete, contemporary and ever changing situations of human personal and social existence.

Both sides of this delicate balance need to be preserved within systematic theology, since without the role of dogmatics it is difficult to maintain a sense of the foundational and unchanging truths of the faith, whilst without practical theology, the Christian message may appear to have little relevance to the constantly changing circumstances and challenges experienced by Christians in their everyday lives. Systematic theology then must be able to remain faithful to its foundations, whilst being flexible enough to be able to engage in a meaningful way with the lives of those receiving that message.

In Tillich's estimation, the word of God is indeed a primary source of systematic theology. However, he does not limit the word of God to the Bible. Although the Bible is the primary record of the foundational events upon which the Christian Church was formed, it is pointed out that on its own it is 'insufficient'<sup>14</sup> as the source of systematic theology. Although the Bible is *a* source of systematic theology, it may be considered a source amongst others. Accordingly, the Biblical message can only be fully received and understood through participation both by the church and by the individual Christian. From this perspective, theology is intrinsically linked to church history, because to a great extent, the church informs and prepares the religious understanding of our generation as well as that of all previous generations. It is just such religious and cultural preparation that allows Christians to receive and understand the Biblical message.

Biblical-evangelical fundamentalism is denounced as having 'demonic traits'<sup>15</sup> because it fails to allow for the changing nature of the generations to which the Bible speaks. In the fundamentalist assertion that the 'theological truth of yesterday'<sup>16</sup> must be defended word for word against all-comers as the theological truth of today, Tillich holds that fundamentalism 'elevates something finite and transitory to infinite and eternal validity.'<sup>17</sup> The backward looking approach of fundamentalism, which focuses the majority of its energy on past situations, fails to address Christians in their present day dilemmas.

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<sup>14</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p.34.

<sup>15</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 3.

Along with the Bible, one of the important categories of theology may be defined as 'experiential theology'. Any type of theology requires that the religious and cultural conditions be in place and that the individual chooses to participate in them and in the Christian message they proclaim. The foundational message of the event of Jesus as the Christ when viewed from an impartial stance is empty, and in line with the Pauline tradition, it is affirmed that the Christian faith demands participation. Participation, being all encompassing, involving participation in the ethical, psychological, traditional, historical and cultural aspects of the message, which when added together allow for a theology which aims to be at once eternal or absolute and concrete or contemporary. Matters of faith require extensive involvement and immersion on the part of the Christian in order for the sources of theology to 'speak'<sup>18</sup> to the individual. This reception through participation informs our ultimate concern and gives faith the necessary personal quality required to allow it to be relevant in the lives of each participant.

#### ii. *The Methodology of Tillich's Systematic Theology*

Throughout his system, Tillich employs a method which he believes to a greater or lesser extent has been used by systematic theology over the centuries in a variety of forms. He uses this method in order to explain the contents of the Christian faith through 'existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence.'<sup>19</sup> This method involves examining the questions which arise out of everyday human existence, with its complexities and ambiguities, its personal, moral, cultural and social challenges and provides theological answers for these questions. He views the questions and answers as interdependent however, not because the questions and answers cannot be consciously posited independently from each other, rather because he believes that all questions and answers result from the human-divine relationship. On this understanding, the questions implied in human existence are informed by this relationship, as are their answers.

This correlation occurs on three levels within theology. Firstly, it may be used to indicate the relationship of the symbols used within the Christian tradition and the reality to which they point, which he refers to as 'correspondence correlation', since a correspondence may be

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<sup>18</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 60.

perceived between the symbol and the reality to which it points. The correspondence correlation then may be viewed as denoting the 'central problem of religious knowledge.'<sup>20</sup> Secondly, correlation is used to denote the boundaries of interaction between the human and the divine that Tillich refers to as 'logical correlation', as this type of correlation cognitively informs the assertions we make regarding the relationship between the created order and God.

Thirdly, he employs 'factual correlation' to describe the relationship between humans and that with which we are ultimately concerned. This type of correlation focuses on the interaction between the human and the divine in revelation specifically, and religious experience generally. Although it is acknowledged that factual correlation has often been scorned upon (especially by protestant theologians because it is often felt that correlating the divine with the human within religious experience ultimately makes God dependent, at least in part, on humans) he nonetheless holds that it is important to include this category of correlation, since although the nature of God can never be dependent upon humans, the way God is received within revelation is very much dependent upon the humans receiving it. Thus a mutual interdependence may be observed in the formulation 'God for us' and 'we for God.'<sup>21</sup>

### iii. *The Development of Tillich's 'Dialectical' Approach*

In his article '*Questioning, Answering and Tillich's Concept of Correlation*' John P. Clayton posits that Tillich's desire to produce a dialectical theology in which "'question" and "answer", "yes" and "no" stand in a strictly correlative relationship'<sup>22</sup> provides the foundations for the 'method of correlation'- the method which he would later develop and use to provide the structure for his *Systematic Theology*. In the introduction to *The Protestant Era*, Tillich argued that in opposition to the 'supernaturalism of later Barthianism'<sup>23</sup> he wished to expound a theology which was 'thoroughly and truly dialectical'<sup>24</sup> in character. Clayton adds that Tillich was particularly concerned in the early

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<sup>20</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> John P. Clayton, 'Questioning, Answering and Tillich's Concept of Correlation' in John J. Carey (ed.) *Kairos and Logos: Studies in the Roots and Implications of Tillich's Theology* (USA: Mercer University Press, 1984) p.122.

<sup>23</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947) Introduction xxiv.

<sup>24</sup> Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, Introduction xxii.

1920s to distance his own method of apologetics from that of both Gogarten and Barth which he believed lead

beyond the dialectical position to a very positive and very undialectical supranaturalism, that from the 'yes' and 'no' of relations between God and world which are essential to every dialectic emerges a simple 'no' against the world, whose destiny it is most definitely always to remain impracticable and at some point to be transformed unexpectedly into an all the more positive and undialectical "yes"<sup>25</sup>

In an article entitled *What is Wrong with the Dialectical Theology?* published in 1935, Tillich again argued that Barth's dialectical theology was not truly dialectical, rather it was supranaturalistic, whereas his theology was genuinely dialectical in character. In the introduction of *The Protestant Era*, of his own methodology, he writes that the dialectic method is

the way of seeking for truth by talking with others from different points of view, through "yes" and "no" until a "yes" has been reached which is hardened in the fire of many "no's" and which unites the element of truth promoted in the discussion<sup>26</sup>.

Clayton posits that the question – answer format eventually used by Tillich in his *Systematic Theology* was quite a 'late addition to Tillich's methodological apparatus'<sup>27</sup>. He asserts that although the basic concept of correlation was present in his work from as early as the nineteen twenties, it was not until 1935 that he specifically explained this correlation in terms of the analogy of questions and answers, indeed, he argues that even at this relatively late stage, Tillich himself was not entirely certain of their 'precise status' and tentatively put them forward as 'a simile, which I think, is more than a simile'<sup>28</sup>.

Despite any doubts he had regarding his dialectical theology, it provided the methodological foundations on which the three volumes of his *Systematic Theology* are built and in this respect, Clayton writes:

the very structure of systematic Theology suggests the way he eventually came to regard the connection between the two, for each of its five parts consist of the analysis of certain "questions" implied in the human situation and the corresponding "answers" implied in the Christian message.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Clayton, 'Questioning' in *Kairos and Logos*, p. 124.

<sup>26</sup> Tillich, *Protestant*, introduction ix.

<sup>27</sup> Clayton, 'Questioning' in *Kairos and Logos*, p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> Clayton citing Tillich, 'Questioning' in *Kairos and Logos*, p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> Clayton, 'Questioning' in *Kairos and Logos*, p. 129.



#### iv. *The Method of Correlation*

The method of correlation involves examining the sociological, psychological and physical situation which forms the setting for the questions regarding existence and goes on to correlate these questions with Christian symbols widely used within the tradition in order to answer these existential questions<sup>30</sup>. Tillich posits theology, like any other discipline requires a rational methodological approach in order that it may provide a consistent structure and basis upon which 'cognitive assertions in all realms of methodological knowledge'<sup>31</sup> may be advanced. A system in theological terms may be viewed as a 'half-way house' between a summa, which deals with a huge range of both actual and theoretical issues, and an essay, which deals specifically with one dilemma. In its in-between position, a system examines a variety of possible dilemmas which (broadly speaking) require an answer within the setting of a 'special situation.'<sup>32</sup>

In the Tillichian system, the group of dilemmas to be addressed may be defined as the questions arising from human existence and although he indicates that the 'chaos of our spiritual life'<sup>33</sup> probably warrants the creation of a summa, he accepts the unrealistic nature of undertaking such an enormous task. Instead he maintains that a rational systematic approach to our existential questions proves adequate both in scope and structure.

This systematic method forces Tillich to seek consistency and avoid contradiction; something which he believed would otherwise be a potential problem with his work, especially since *Systematic Theology* was written over a period of twelve years. Secondly, through his systematic structure, correlation becomes apparent between a variety of existential questions and theological answers which otherwise he argues may well have been missed altogether. Thirdly, he posits theology generally benefits from the production of systems because they allow for a sense of completeness, 'in which many parts and elements are united by determining principles and dynamic interrelations.'<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For a fuller examination of Tillich's Method of Correlation and how it is relevant to the status of nonhuman animal in *Systematic Theology*, see Chapter Seven, p. 161-192.

<sup>31</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 59.

<sup>33</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology Volume Three* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) p. 3.

The method of correlation, as chosen for this system is only one of a variety of possible methods. In addition to the method of correlation, Tillich indicates that the 'supranaturalistic', 'naturalistic' and 'dualistic' methods have also been evident throughout the history of systematic theology. The supranaturalistic method places almost its entire emphasis upon the 'giving' side of the divine-human relationship (hence 'supra' or above the natural) without reference to the human responsibility for the 'receiving' side. In Tillich's estimation, this almost exclusive emphasis on the giving side is unbalanced because the receptivity to the Christian message on the part of humanity is discounted, with virtually no emphasis being placed on the participation of humanity. Also, he points out that if humans do not take responsibility for asking existential questions regarding God, there can be little hope that they will be able to recognise the answers which Christianity has to offer them.

At the opposite end of the spectrum of possible methods, lies the 'naturalistic' or humanistic method, which is based on an interpretation of the Christian message 'derived from mans' natural state'<sup>35</sup>. He views this method as misleading because it produces a conclusion circumscribed by human existence without comprehension of the fact that the existential human condition itself is the source of all human questions. In his view, the deficiency of this method lies in its failure to take into account the fundamental difference between human essential nature (as creatures made in the image of God) and our existential nature, which in our estrangement from God under the conditions of existence is categorised by finitude and doubt.

In opposition to the supranaturalistic method, the naturalistic method places almost exclusive emphasis on the human side of the divine-human relationship, which seriously weakens (even to the point of distortion) the role of revelation by reducing the content of the Christian message into an examination of human religious consciousness framed within the 'progressive process of religious history.'<sup>36</sup>

The 'dualistic' method can be viewed as a form of natural theology. This method includes a supranaturalistic element in the form of a 'body of theological truths'<sup>37</sup>, that is, a set of

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<sup>35</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 65. This is a trap which Tillich believes many a liberal theologian has fallen into.

<sup>36</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 65.

divine truths, apart from humanity. However, unlike the supranaturalistic method, it places emphasis on accessing these truths via human endeavour rather than solely relying on divine agency to inform us. It is posited that this method is more appropriate in terms of scope than the preceding two, since it places greater emphasis on the relationship between God and humans (despite the vast gulf that exists between the human and divine spirit). He does reject the notion that natural theology can 'prove' the existence of God however, since he views the idea of existence with regards to God as self-contradictory. For Tillich, God alone can be viewed as infinite and unconditioned, and thus the object of human ultimate concern. If this is the case, the term existence is inappropriate when discussing the divine, because it would indicate that although the highest being, God is just one being amongst others. In addition, all existence implies finitude and since that which exists could also cease to exist, this again compromises the infinite nature of God. Rather than referring to God in terms of existence then, throughout this system the preferred term for the divine is the Ground of Being or 'Being-Itself'.

The method of correlation shares a similar emphasis to that of the dualistic method, stressing that both sides of the human-divine relationship are equally important. However, instead of attempting to prove the existence of God, the method of correlation attempts to 'resolve'<sup>38</sup> natural theology into an examination of human creaturely existence to which it applies supranatural theology as the answer implied in the questions raised by natural theology.

#### *v. The Structure of Tillich's System*

The structure of the system itself involves five separate parts, each dealing with a question which arises out of the ambiguities of human existence, with each question correlated to a Christian symbol which functions as an answer. Tillich posits this structure is the 'backbone'<sup>39</sup> of the system since when dealing with human existence it is imperative that both the ambiguities of existence and of essential humanity are examined. Firstly, he thinks it is important that an exposition be given of how humans are in their essential nature. He uses the term 'essential nature' to express that which humans have the potential to be. Then, secondly, he examines the way humans are under the conditions of existence.

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<sup>38</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 75.

<sup>39</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 66.

Throughout the system, human existence is characterised by estrangement. Humans are alienated from their Creator since they have used their free will to reject God, whilst at the same time they are still aware of their potential nature as creatures made in the image of their Creator. As a result, humans can see their limitations, their finitude, and the threat of non-being (annihilation, or complete loss of self) and in their existential predicament, they are also estranged from the power they require to resist the threat implied in contingency and finitude and to accept it with courage.

The relationship between human essential nature and its existential condition is likened to the distinction between the Christian concepts of 'Creation' and 'Salvation'. Human essential nature and the questions that arise out of being finite are analysed. In order to illustrate human essential nature, Tillich points to the Genesis myth of Paradise before the Fall. At no point however does he suggest that it should be interpreted historically. Instead, it is a symbol to indicate human potential. He does not hold that this nature involves being infinite, rather it suggests an unbroken unity between humans and their Creator, that is, an ideal situation which is not fully achievable in the current reality of our existence. To this understanding of the Fall, he correlates the Christian symbol 'God as Creator'. This symbol indicates the relationship between the human creature and the divine, and illuminates the insight that it is through union and participation with the divine that humans may (however imperfectly and transitorily) move towards their essential nature or true potential as beings made in the image of God. Thus he entitles this part of his system 'Being and God'.

Next, he examines the state of existential estrangement under which every human being lives, and the questions implied by the apparent meaninglessness and uncertainty of existence. He argued that this predicament can be illuminated by the symbol of the Fall. The despair experienced by the human condition of existence is not to be understood as despair resulting from our finite nature, instead, it comes from the knowledge either implicitly or explicitly, that we are estranged and distanced from our Creator and as a result, estranged from ourselves, others and the rest of creation. In answer to the questions which arise out of our estrangement, Tillich correlates the Christian symbol of the 'Christ' in terms of salvation, since participation in the Christ can allow reunion with the divine or the ground of our being (albeit transitorily and imperfectly, since the conditions of human existence

themselves remain unaltered). Reflecting this correlation, the second part of the system is entitled 'Existence and the Christ'.

The third part of the system examines the 'actuality' of living which involves aspects of both human essential nature and existential estrangement. According to Tillich, even under the conditions of existence, which is categorised by estrangement from God, ourselves, others, and the world, human essential nature from time to time manages to break through. This can be understood as occurring when humans, however transitorily, strive for reunion with God. Part Three of the system deals with the profound ambiguities inherent in human life, which can be viewed as a series of successful and unsuccessful attempts on the part of humanity to reconnect with its Creator, with others and with itself. It focuses specifically on humans in their social interaction and the ambiguities involved in the moral, cultural and religious dimensions of life, rather than focusing on individual human nature in isolation as parts one and two of the system predominantly do. To the questions which arise from the ambiguities of human social existence, the Christian symbol 'Spirit' is advanced as an answer. Spirit for Tillich is the most appropriate symbolic answer to the questions raised by human social life, since it is only through the impact of the 'Spiritual Presence' within communities that the ambiguities of all social, cultural and moral interactions can be overcome, even though this victory is only temporary. This part of the system then is referred to as 'Life and the Spirit'.

In Tillich's estimation, these three parts of his system represent the 'main body of systematic theology'<sup>40</sup> because they deal with the complexity of and questions raised by human existence. It could however be argued that in actuality they do not deal with the majority of creaturely existence, rather they deal purely with questions raised by anthropological existence.

Next, the epistemology underlying the aspects of human essential nature, existential distortion and social interaction, encompassing all its inherent ambiguities is examined. He maintains that it is necessary to deal with the rational structures involved in existence (along with its ambiguities of reason) separately, devoting a part of the system to them alone

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<sup>40</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 67.

because although an exposition of human rationality is required in each section, it also requires an answer of its own in independence from its parts in each of the preceding sections. To the questions raised by and implied in the ambiguities of human cognitive reason, the Christian symbol 'Revelation' is put forward, since through revelation, a reconnection, at least in part, can be achieved with the Creator, resulting in a temporary overcoming of these ambiguities. This part of the system then is entitled 'Reason and Revelation' and is expounded at the beginning of his system.

The final part of the system deals specifically with the historical dimension of life. As is the case with 'Reason and Revelation', the historical aspect of life naturally appears in all of the preceding parts. However, it is argued that because the questions and ambiguities which arise from historical existence (such as whether history has any real meaning) require their own answer, independent of the other questions which arise from life generally, they also require separate consideration within the system. In this case, a symbolic answer needs to be provided to address this aspect of human history separately. To the ambiguities implied in historical existence, the Christian symbol 'Kingdom of God' is given in answer, as the meaning and aim of human history. This final part is then referred to as 'History and the Kingdom of God'.

Although, according to Tillich it would be the most logical to begin any systematic theology with the section addressing the issue of God, rather, he begins with 'Reason and Revelation' arguing it is necessary for a variety of practical considerations. Firstly, he holds it is important that an epistemological answer can be given at the beginning of the system because it provides the basis for the 'assertions ... criteria ... [and] verification'<sup>41</sup> which are to be employed throughout the system as a whole. Secondly, since questions regarding the concept of reason appear and are built into every part of the system, he postulates that it is necessary to clarify these concepts from the outset, in order to make the rest of the system comprehensible. And thirdly, since the doctrine of revelation is also presupposed throughout the system, he argues that it makes the most sense to deal with it at the outset. Revelation, in Tillich's opinion is a concept of paramount importance and can be understood to be the 'ultimate source of the contents of the Christian faith'<sup>42</sup> because it allows in the

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<sup>41</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 67.

<sup>42</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 68.

fullest sense for participation and a temporary reunion between humanity as the 'receiver' and God as the 'giver' of revelation. Since this is such a vital concept, he focuses on this issue at the start of his work rather than dealing with revelation as the work progresses. Accordingly, my exposition of Tillich's *Systematic Theology* begins with Part One, entitled 'Reason and Revelation'.

## Secondary Exposition of Tillich's Systematic Theology

Many theologians have written expositions and critiques of Tillich's system in the sixty three years since volume one was published. To adequately cover even a fraction of these on each aspect of his system would however require a thesis of its own and due to limitations of space, would be impossible to undertake here. Instead, in the following pages, a brief selection of views on just a few key areas which under-pin the distinctive theology employed throughout the three volumes of his *Systematic Theology* will be illuminated.

The first area to be considered is the unique type of theological language Tillich employed throughout his magnum opus.

### i. *Tillich's use of Symbols in Systematic Theology*

Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price posit that for Paul Tillich, theology is the enterprise of bringing the core concepts of Christianity into the present day, and making them resonate with a contemporary audience, whether or not they are practicing Christians. To achieve this, the kerygma (or message) of faith must be explained in terms of contemporary language. They argue that 'the classic symbols and concepts related to God, Christ, Spirit and the Kingdom of God for example, must be expounded in contemporary language in order to be understood'<sup>43</sup>.

It is their contention that because he saw that culture and philosophy pose 'pertinent religious questions', Tillich believed that the answers of theology cannot be simple restatements of the Bible or Creeds, but instead require the language of the contemporary setting. To this end, he creates new ways of understanding traditional theological symbols. Instead of God, Tillich utilises the term 'Being Itself', for sin, he uses the symbol of estrangement, for Christ, New Being, for the 'Presence of God', Spiritual Presence and for Church, 'Spiritual Community'.<sup>44</sup> Anne Marie Reijnen is very much in favour of Tillich's use of new terminology to express the kerygma of the Christian faith. She describes his use of contemporary language as a 'remarkable' feature of his approach to his system, positing that 'the freedom he [Tillich] claims for the theologian to discard established terms and

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<sup>43</sup> Musser, Donald W and Joseph L. Price *Tillich* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010) p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich* p. 5.



thoroughly to revise the language of faith, forging novel word-creations where necessary'<sup>45</sup> is extremely liberating for systematic theology generally. Further, she asserts that Tillich 'offers no apologies for his 'apologetic' variety of theology'<sup>46</sup>. I fully agree with Reijnen's assessment of the importance of Tillich's use of new terminology, not just for Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, but for theology in general. Although the foundational truths of the faith must remain unchanged, the way theology reaches out to people both inside and outside the Church needs to be able to develop and change over time, just as the contemporary setting of those who receive the kerygma develops and changes over time. Reijnen is also correct that Tillich is unapologetic about his use of this new terminology. In the second volume of his system he robustly defends his use of novel terminology:

Theology must be free from and for the concepts it uses. It must be free from a confusion of its conceptual form with its substance, and it must be free to express this substance with every tool which proves to be more adequate than those given by ecclesiastical tradition<sup>47</sup>

Musser and Price however are a little more cautious in their praise of these new and unfamiliar terms, being concerned that not everyone who is exposed to Tillich's new way of expressing the Christian message will immediately warm to his system, especially those who are used to hearing the Christian message being delivered in the traditional way because 'in order to grasp Tillich's theology, one must grasp these new terms'. Beneath his use of new terminology however, Reijnen still believes that his message remains fairly faithful to the teachings of the Church 'always and everywhere'<sup>48</sup> and I would have to agree that although *Systematic Theology* uses new terminology, it still expresses the foundational Christian message.

Musser and Price believe that for Tillich, the task of utilising philosophy within his system is to draw from an analysis of the human condition, in its state of estrangement and then to 'formulate questions of ultimate significance'<sup>49</sup>. One of the sources Tillich employs in his theological task is to identify and interpret the 'symbolic expressions of culture' and it is

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<sup>45</sup> Anne Marie Reijnen, 'Tillich's Christology' Manning, Russell Re *Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 58.

<sup>46</sup> Reijnen, 'Tillich's Christology' *Cambridge Companion*, p. 59.

<sup>47</sup> Tillich, Paul *Systematic Theology Volume Two* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 142.

<sup>48</sup> Reijnen, 'Tillich's Christology', *Cambridge Companion*, p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 6.

argued that one of the materials a theologian has at their disposal is a 'repository of symbols provided by both experience and revelation'<sup>50</sup>. Symbols have two distinct qualities which makes them particularly valuable in respect of Tillich's theology. Firstly, all language can be used symbolically, so a rich vein of linguistics is open to him and this 'enlarges possibilities for understanding the world and being as such'<sup>51</sup>. Secondly, Tillich recognises the power linguistics expressions have to repeat the hopes and concerns for any given culture.

A distinction needs to be made however between the functions of signs and symbols, because although they share some features in common, such as the ability to be descriptive, Tillich recognised several fundamental characteristics which belong to symbols alone. Although signs and symbols are both figurative in the sense that they both point beyond themselves to a greater reality or meaning, in *Dynamics of Faith*, Tillich spells out the most important difference between the two: a symbol 'participates in that to which it points' whereas a sign does not. This means that while 'signs can be replaced for reasons of expediency or convention...symbols cannot'<sup>52</sup>.

For Musser and Price, a symbols ability to participate in the reality to which it points means that they have 'referential power' and this power can 'open up levels of reality – levels of meaning – and being – that in many respects would remain inexpressed and inaccessible'<sup>53</sup>. Here Richard M. Pomeroy shares a similar view of the value of symbolic language, stating that 'myths and symbols are the essential ways of addressing matters of the divine. Symbols ... represent theological truths that orthodox language is unable to convey with understanding'<sup>54</sup>. The ability of a symbol to participate in that to which it points also means that they are able to 'open up simultaneously in two directions'. By this Musser and Price mean that they are able to resonate with the culture from which they emerge, whilst at the same time they are also able to participate in the reality to which they refer. I fully agree with Musser and Price's assessment of the power of the dual directionality of symbols and this is the understanding that Tillich clearly held. In his paper 'Theology and Symbolism', Tillich writes: that a symbol

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<sup>50</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 8.

<sup>52</sup> Tillich, Paul *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957) p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Pomeroy, Richard M. *Paul Tillich: A Theology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Loncoln USA: Writers Showcase, 2002) introduction xiv.

not only opens up dimensions and elements of reality which otherwise would remain unapproachable but also unlocks dimensions and elements in our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality itself<sup>55</sup>.

Musser and Price indicate that an additional characteristic of a symbol is its 'public nature, cultural particularity and social relevance'<sup>56</sup>. Although it would be impossible for anyone to claim or invent a symbol individually, since something can only become a symbol in the context of a community which shares the symbolic nature and referent of that which serves as a symbol.

Martin Leiner also agrees that in his view a main feature of Tillich's symbols is that they are 'rooted in participation'<sup>57</sup>, that is, they participate in the 'Unconditional', or otherwise expressed, God, to which they point. In Leiner's view,

The Unconditional must be related to the concrete elements of ordinary experience, so that religion and theology can say more than merely pointing to the fact that many human actions pre-suppose truth, being and the Unconditional<sup>58</sup>

He goes on to state that these symbols participate in the Unconditional for which they are transparent. Andrew O' Neill also concurs that religious symbols need to be 'judged in terms of their unity or disunity'<sup>59</sup> to our 'Ultimate Concern'. However, as Leiner points out, although the reality to which a symbol points is unconditional, the symbols themselves are not. In this sense, all religious symbols have to be paradoxical, that is, 'they negate themselves'<sup>60</sup> and he points to Tillich's symbol of the Cross to illustrate this point. This is undoubtedly true, especially in relation to symbolic designations regarding God because in Tillich's estimation, for anything finite to be elevated to the status of the infinite would be idolatrous.

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<sup>55</sup> Paul Tillich 'Theology and Symbolism' in Tillich, Paul *Religious Symbols* edited by F. Ernest Johnson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955) p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup> Martin Leiner, 'Tillich on God' in Manning *Cambridge Companion*, pp. 37-55, p. 46.

<sup>58</sup> Leiner, 'Tillich on God', in Manning *Cambridge Companion*, p. 45.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew O'Neill *Tillich: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2008) p. 20.

<sup>60</sup> Leiner, 'Tillich on God', in Manning *Cambridge Companion*, p. 46.

Leiner asserts that Tillich's theory of religious symbols has not only allowed him to 'critically interpret all religious propositions about God and transcendence'<sup>61</sup> but additionally has enabled him to 'take a stand' on the issue of 'de-mythologising'. Leiner argues that for Tillich, mythological language is a form of symbolic language also and it should not therefore be interpreted literally, rather, it is a type of 'symbolic expression of the Unconditional'<sup>62</sup>.

## ii. *The Role of Apologetics in Tillich's Theology*

O'Neill posits that Tillich's approach to theology 'seeks to relate the contents of revelation to the human experience of it'. His theological methodology then, falls under the title of apologetic, or 'an answering theology'<sup>63</sup> which aims to demonstrate that the Christian message of revelation is relevant to the human predicament. Although a Christian theologian, it is his aim to describe revelation to an audience of his contemporaries whose experience of Christianity according to O'Neill was often one of 'questioning its authority'<sup>64</sup>. In order to address not just the Church goers, but also the wider community, he tackles specific theological challenges 'both unique to the twentieth century and those that persist throughout human history'<sup>65</sup>, setting himself the goal of being able to interpret the substance of revelation in a way that stressed its relation to the human situation. Pomeroy concurs with O'Neill's evaluation, arguing that 'of great importance to Tillich, is a theology that is relevant to the human condition as it exists today'<sup>66</sup>.

First and foremost, O'Neill argues that Tillich describes the authority of revelation as primarily ontological, that is, pertaining to the nature of 'being' and it follows from this that the Christian message is relevant to each aspect of every person's life if it is a condition of human existence itself. It is asserted that for Tillich, a primary role of theology is to illuminate revelation in order to comprehensively 'uncover' the presence of what is revealed

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<sup>61</sup> Leiner, 'Tillich on God', in Manning *Cambridge Companion*, p. 46.

<sup>62</sup> Leiner, 'Tillich on God', in Manning *Cambridge Companion*, p. 46. I would argue that this insight is of particular importance in relation to Tillich's understanding of Biblical myths, such as the Genesis narrative in Genesis.

<sup>63</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Pomeroy, Richard M *Paul Tillich: A Theology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Lincoln, USA: Writer's Showcase, 2002).

(otherwise referred to as the 'Unconditional') throughout human existence, including human creativity and thought. Tillich uses the term 'Unconditional' to describe the particular element within religious experiences which makes them uniquely *religious* experiences, that is, our Ultimate Concern. In his paper 'Tillich's Life and Works', Werner Schubler also places the role of 'Ultimate Concern' at the centre of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, describing it as being 'at the heart of his many writings'<sup>67</sup>.

However, O'Neill posits that for Tillich, another equally important role of every theology is to make itself accessible to the individuals receiving the message in their particular setting. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price are in accord with this opinion, arguing that Tillich believes the 'constructive task' of theology can be summed up by his statement that 'it does not tell us what people have thought the Christian message to be in the past, rather, it tries to give an interpretation of the Christian message which is relevant to the present situation'<sup>68</sup>.

According to O'Neill, this goal needs to be 'maintained from the outset'<sup>69</sup> in order for any systematic theology to avoid the pit falls of both supranaturalism and naturalism. He asserts that in Tillich's estimation, both methods are inadequate; supranaturalism, because it does not allow for the participation of the receivers of the revelation, and naturalism, because it replaces revelation with 'a structure of rational thought derived from and judged by human nature'<sup>70</sup>. In addition to these methods, Musser and Price also identify the 'dualistic method' which they posit is still inadequate to Tillich's mind, although it is an improvement over against either of the aforementioned methods. In its favour it does recognise the weakness of both the supranaturalistic and naturalistic methods and 'seeks to explicate a positive relation between them by positing a body of theological truth'.<sup>71</sup>

O'Neill posits that one of Tillich's earliest descriptions of the role he believed theology should occupy, appears in the first part of his *Interpretation of Faith*, published in 1934. Here, in a section entitled 'On The Boundary' which included reflection on his domestic life,

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<sup>67</sup> Werner Schubler, 'Tillich's Life and Works', in Russell Re Manning (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 3-17, p. 14.

<sup>68</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 7. Discussing and Citing Tillich, *STI*, p. 53.

<sup>69</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 27.

<sup>70</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> Musser and Price *Tillich*, p. 6.

his academic life and his life in Germany immediately preceding and following the First World War, he 'autobiographically outlines some of the experiences and situations of his own life which informed his theological approach'<sup>72</sup>. Based on these reflections, three particular sets of interactions emerged which he contends are of 'central importance' to Tillich's to understanding of the exact nature of the theological enterprise ... 'the boundaries between philosophy and theology, Church and society and religion and culture'<sup>73</sup>. In each of these pairs, it is argued that Tillich identified a relationship where traditional points of delimitation must be redefined in light of the concrete theological and cultural situation. As a consequence of this new understanding, the content of revelation remains constant, however, his understanding of it did alter in accordance with the situation in which it was received.

In regard to philosophical theology, rather than the content of revelation being structured by philosophical concepts, Tillich came to the understanding that 'the discipline of theology is shaped by the methods of philosophical self-critique'<sup>74</sup>. On this understanding, although the content and sources of authority of theology are different from that of philosophy, theology is nonetheless a rational, academic discipline which depends on philosophical principles.

In O'Neill's estimation, Tillich's situation of standing on the 'boundary' in many facets of his life was responsible for leading him to see the 'unrest of existence and the elusiveness of perfection'<sup>75</sup> as the major challenge for human existence. He argues that the result of this realisation led Tillich to take a dialectical approach to theology and ultimately brought him to the belief that existence is a dialectical experience, 'not only within the limits of cognition and experience but also between human conscious limits of existence and the 'Eternal' which is unlimited'<sup>76</sup>. By the time he writes his *Systematic Theology*, it is argued that he is thoroughly committed to undertaking a dialectical approach to theology. *Systematic Theology Volume One* bears out O'Neill's argument, with Tillich describing dialectic as 'a decision in which both 'yes' and 'no' can be applied to theological statements', thus ensuring that theology 'does not simply reflect an unrealistic series of unbroken

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<sup>72</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 28.

<sup>73</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 29.

<sup>74</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 29.

<sup>75</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 31.

<sup>76</sup> O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide*, p. 31.

assertions'<sup>77</sup>. Along with many other Tillichian commentators, I would also have to agree that the use of dialectics is one of the most important element of Tillich's methodology. It allows for the distinctive style of his system.

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<sup>77</sup> Tillich, Paul *Systematic Theology Volume One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) p. 81.

## Chapter Two

### Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology

#### Part One - Reason and Revelation

##### *i. Ontological Reason*

Part one of the system specifically deals with cognition. Since all knowledge is an intrinsic facet of our being it begins with an examination of 'being' generally, rather than specifically examining the problem of what one can know with any degree of certainty. In order to achieve this, two main types of reason are distinguished: 'ontological reason' (which refers to knowledge about the nature of being) and 'technical reason' (which refers to our "capacity for reasoning"<sup>78</sup>).

Ontological reason is defined as 'the structure of the mind which enables us to grasp and shape reality'<sup>79</sup>. This definition of reason and knowledge encompasses the majority of human interactions with the world, including the cognitive, practical and technical aspects of the mind. It even includes the emotional, which for Tillich is not to be viewed as 'irrational in itself'<sup>80</sup>. Technical reason however is much more limited. In order for humans to be able to understand and manipulate reality, and accordingly have the ability to ask questions about the nature of existence, technical reason is employed as a single facet amongst others of our ontological reason.

He further distinguishes ontological reason into the categories of subjective and objective reason. Subjective reason refers to the structure of the mind which allows us to gain knowledge of ourselves and our world, while objective reason is considered to provide the structure of reality that we wish to interact with. In order to 'know' anything, humans have to be able to understand and shape or manipulate reality. For Tillich, understanding involves being able to perceive an object or occurrence on a level deep enough to have insight into its essential nature, and objective reason provides the 'structural possibility, the

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<sup>78</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 73.

<sup>79</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 72.

<sup>80</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 73.



Logos of being'<sup>81</sup>. For example, if a pencil is viewed on a relatively shallow level, it may be perceived as wood and graphite, however, in order to perceive its essential nature as a writing implement, one must examine it beyond its simple structure.

## ii. *The Structure of Finite Reason*

Because human existence is finite, human reason is also finite and therefore finds itself constantly under the threat of non-being, that is, the possibility as contingent creatures of losing its sense of self, its meaning and direction. Such a threat of loss engenders a sense of meaninglessness and uncertainty in many of the interaction we have with the world. Within finite reason, three pairs of polar elements are identified. In order for us to effectively use our finite reason, each of the elements of these polarities must be in balance. If for any reason any of these elements become unbalanced (which under the conditions of existence they frequently do) our ontological reason is not able to function to full effect, disrupting and distorting our view of, and interaction with, the world and even ourselves<sup>82</sup>.

Since humans are finite, actual reason, or the reason we use on a day to day basis, is also finite. This means humans are unable to penetrate the 'infinite ground' via their own efforts and reason. In recognising this fact however, it is argued that humans are aware of the infinite aspect of their nature even under the conditions of existence. This then causes tension and anxiety, since humans realise that they are subject to finitude, meaninglessness, guilt and death.

Tillich believes the ultimate meaning or ground that all human reason is connected to may be viewed as the 'presence of the power of being'<sup>83</sup> which our minds are able to grasp. However, because we have a sub-conscious awareness of these ultimate meanings, even though we are often unaware of them on a completely conscious level, humans find themselves constantly alternating between relying on their own efforts (autonomy) and relying on tradition or authority (heteronomy). In order for our reason to work effectively there must be a balance between the emotional and formal elements in decision making, where the absolute and concrete are adequately accommodated and where the structure

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<sup>81</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 77.

<sup>82</sup> For a fuller examination of the potential consequences of the distortion of human finite reason, see Chapter Three, 'Tillich's Concept of Technical Reason' pp. 98-113.

<sup>83</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 111.

and depth of reason are in harmony. When these are unbalanced, we are thrown into a state of meaninglessness and uncertainty in all our interactions with the world as a whole.

### iii. *Controlling Knowledge*

The lack of balance between autonomy and heteronomy, according to Tillich, is also mirrored when the polar elements are out of balance, resulting in the possibility of a severe reduction in interaction between the subject and object in the act of knowing. Following Plato, Tillich argues that in order to know about any given thing, we need to possess the knowledge and make it part of ourselves, to integrate it and the knowledge we gain from it into ourselves and our understanding of our world. In every act of knowing, however, there is both an element of unity and an element of distance. There needs to be an element of distance between the subject and object in order for the object to be analysed. At the same time, without participation with, and interaction between, the subject and object, full penetration of the object is much less likely to be possible.

Accordingly, Tillich separates the gaining of knowledge into two separate elements. The first element he defines as 'controlling' knowledge. Controlling knowledge determines the element of detachment between the subject and object and is clearly evident in technical reason where the object of knowledge is under the complete control of the subject. The second element is described as 'receiving' knowledge and this allows for the subject to get close to the object, involving an emotional element which is not involved in controlling knowledge. Both elements of controlling and receiving knowledge are deemed essential. Controlling knowledge (or in its more limited sense, technical reason) on its own can be extremely dangerous as it fails to allow for any participation between the subject and object, resulting in a 'rapid decay of spiritual ... life, an estrangement from nature and a ... dealing with human beings as with things'<sup>84</sup>. A balance between controlling and receiving knowledge is available however through revelation because revelation is able to hold together a truth which can embrace both the concrete and the absolute standards, and which allows for the possible deficiency in receiving knowledge as well as the uncertainty involved in it and 'yet transcends it in its accepting it'<sup>85</sup>. Tillich argues that questions about revelation at this stage are relevant in view of the fact that these questions deal specifically

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<sup>84</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 98.

<sup>85</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 105.

with the disclosure of 'that which concerns us ultimately'<sup>86</sup>, with meaning in life grounded by ultimate concern. Revelation can provide illumination for humans and provide insights into the ground of being itself, which is not possible to convey in any other form under the conditions of existence. Likewise, the search for theonomous reason, that is, bringing the elements of finite reason into balance and uniting them with the ground of meaning and being, can be defined as 'the quest for revelation'<sup>87</sup>.

#### *iv. The Role of Revelation*

Throughout his system, 'revelation' is defined as the revealing of something which remains outside our normal range of experience and understanding even at the moment of revelation. This mystery transcends the ordinary context of experience in which it is received<sup>88</sup>. In order for an experience to qualify as revelation, something needs to be revealed and illuminated; however the object of revelation must still remain, at least in part, beyond our normal comprehension.

Two sides can be perceived in revelatory events; firstly the 'objective' or giving side whereby the mystery is imparted to someone, and, secondly, the 'subjective' or receiving side whereby someone is grasped by this mystery. The terms 'faith' or 'ecstasy'<sup>89</sup> are used to describe the reaction of the mind receiving and experiencing something which is outside its ordinary realm of experience. Tillich is categorical in his assertion that this does not mean that the experience is irrational, rather it simply transcends the normal subject-object structure of reality. For a miracle or 'sign-event' to qualify as revelation, three further criteria need to be met. Firstly, it should have a profound effect on the recipient otherwise it has no revelatory power. Secondly, it has to illuminate the mystery of being, otherwise it may even be 'demonic'<sup>90</sup>, and thirdly, it needs to be received in ecstasy because if it does not have the power to impress upon its recipient the 'shock of non-being in the mind'<sup>91</sup>, it is no more than the report of a revelatory experience.

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<sup>86</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 110.

<sup>87</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup> Tillich, *STI*, emphasis p. 108 ff.

<sup>89</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 112.

<sup>90</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 117.

<sup>91</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 116.

Further to the positive side of revelation, Tillich places emphasis on the negative aspect of experiencing the mystery as well. During the experience of revelation, he describes the impact on the mind when it grasps the threat of non-being as ontological 'shock', which is felt severely enough to throw the mind off its normal balance.

Within the revelatory experience itself, ultimate concern provides the means by which we gain illumination into how non-being may be resisted, since revelation may be defined as the manifestation of that which concerns us ultimately and ultimate concern may be defined as the power of being conquering non-being.

Although revelation universally has the same 'ecstatic' effect on the recipient, there are in fact different categories of revelation. The first of these, he describes as 'original' revelation. This refers to a revelation which has neither been given nor received previously. Secondly, 'dependent' revelation is identified as revelation which has been given before. He uses the example of the revelation of Christ to illustrate this. The giving side of the revelation is the same to each generation; that is, the giving of Jesus as the Christ does not alter, but, the illumination of the mystery of our ultimate concern is received anew by each generation. The third type of revelation may be defined as that of 'final' revelation. Final however does not mean chronologically last, but the benchmark upon which all other revelations may be judged ... 'the decisive fulfilling unsurpassing revelation, that which is the criterion for all others'<sup>92</sup>. It is the role of Jesus as the Christ that makes him the bearer of final revelation for two reasons. Firstly, he is in complete unity with God, and secondly he sacrificed everything he could have gained on a personal level by that unity with God. Indeed, for Tillich, Jesus as the Christ can be considered as final revelation because of his 'transparency'<sup>93</sup> to the mystery which he reveals.

In Tillich's opinion, final revelation answers the question of how humans can know anything with any degree of certainty, given the deficient state of finite reason. In final revelation the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy is overcome, producing a state of theonomy, which involves human reason being united with the 'infinite ground' to which it ultimately belongs. Through the transparency of Jesus as the Christ to the ground of being, human

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<sup>92</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 133.

<sup>93</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 135.

autonomy can access its depth which gives 'spiritual substance to all forms of rational creativity'<sup>94</sup>. Whilst in the self-sacrifice of the man Jesus to Jesus as the Christ, heteronomy or authority claimed by the finite in substitution for, or on behalf of, the infinite is thwarted in its attempts to squash 'rational autonomy'<sup>95</sup>. Finally, in participating in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, theonomy is actualised.

Revelation also overcomes the conflict between absolutism and relativism. In final revelation, rather than finite reason being destroyed, it is in fact fulfilled by divine love. Jesus as the Christ personifies divine love, which is both absolute and has transforming power. For Tillich, 'love is the power to go into the concrete situation, to discover what is demanded by the predicament of the concrete to which it turns'<sup>96</sup>. In the giving side of final revelation, the conflict between absolutism and relativism is removed by their being united without being confused, allowing for the contingent nature of human knowledge and existence to be united with the infinite ground from which it hails.

In addition to uniting the polar elements of finite reason and thus allowing ontological reason to function fully, Tillich links final revelation to the notion of salvation. He asserts that the event of Jesus as the Christ 'unites the final power of salvation with the final truth of revelation'<sup>97</sup>. By receiving final revelation through the 'divine spirit' as with salvation, it has the power to transform us. In this case, final revelation and salvation are based on one and the same event, and both are available to us through participation in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, which has an all-embracing healing power that impacts upon every aspect of our existence.

For Part One of the system then, the Christian symbol of Jesus as the Christ or Jesus as the Logos in the event of final revelation must be advanced in answer to the secular cultural question 'how can humans know any truths with any level of certainty'?

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<sup>94</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 147.

<sup>95</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 148.

<sup>96</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 152.

<sup>97</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 146.

## Part Two: Being and God

Part Two of the system deals specifically with the essential nature of humans as creatures. It also deals with the question of how we are to react to the threat of non-being and how we may resist it. Non-being may be defined, in part, as a physical loss. As finite creatures, at some point we will cease to exist, but non-being also refers to the psychological threat of losing our identity and our place in the world. As contingent creatures, all parts of our being are inherently vulnerable to disintegration and it is precisely this possibility for degradation which leaves humans open to the threat of non-being.

### i. *The Threat of Non-Being*

It is inevitable that humans are prompted to ask questions regarding the nature of being as a result of what Tillich calls 'metaphysical shock'<sup>98</sup> experienced by our encountering this threat of non-being. This includes feelings of meaninglessness, uncertainty, disintegration, guilt and the certainty of death. In our finite nature as creatures, we are constantly subject to the threat of non-being and in order not to disintegrate completely we must consistently fight this threat. For Tillich, all beings under the conditions of existence are subject to the threat of non-being, and even God could disintegrate were it not for the fact that God is 'being itself'<sup>99</sup>.

As finite creatures, humans do not have the ability within themselves to resist non-being, and since we do not actually disintegrate, we need to ask how we actually manage this apparent threat. This threat may be fought through the power inherent in being itself, that of the 'power to resist non-being'<sup>100</sup>. Although we ourselves do not possess the power to resist non-being, we must nonetheless continually fight to resist this threat, a fight which takes a considerable amount of 'courage'<sup>101</sup>, otherwise defined as the 'heritage of being' standing in opposition to 'anxiety'<sup>102</sup> or non-being.

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<sup>98</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 164.

<sup>99</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 164.

<sup>100</sup> *STI*, p. 236.

<sup>101</sup> *STI*, p. 253.

<sup>102</sup> *STI*, p. 234.

In order for us to understand the threat of non-being fully, the levels of ontological concepts which govern human existence, and under which, human psychology and social interaction experience the threat of non-being must be examined. Following this, there needs to be an examination of human finitude, under which humans experience the threat of non-being in the physical sense. Tillich puts forward four levels of ontological concept, the first of these adheres to the basic structure implied by ontological questions. This structure presupposes that there is a subject (or an enquirer) and an object about which the enquiry is made, and is in accordance with the subject-object structure of knowledge examined in Part One of the system; the structure through which we view the world. This structure provides the starting point for ontological questions, as it presupposes the 'self-world structure as the basic articulation of being'<sup>103</sup>.

#### ii. *The 'Self-World' Structure*

This structure is further divided by Tillich into three elements. The first element of the self-world structure involves the understanding that every individual being is a part of the structure of being in its entirety. Although this includes the whole of the natural order, in Tillich's opinion, 'man alone is immediately aware of this structure [of being]'<sup>104</sup>. So although humans exist as a part of the created order, under the conditions of existence they are estranged from nature and are therefore unable to understand any other species of creature in the way they can understand other humans. As fellow humans we can empathetically transpose our feelings and thoughts onto those of others facing similar dilemmas to us, but even when dealing with our own species, it could be suggested that we cannot know with any degree of certainty what existence is like for any being other than ourselves. In this state of estrangement humans can only have analogous and indirect knowledge of any other species, or indeed anything else in the world at all.

According to Tillich, nonhuman animals do not have the cognitive and psychological ability required to actually transcend their own environment.<sup>105</sup> Humans on the other hand have the ability to transcend every possible environment, a notion which Tillich describes in

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<sup>103</sup> *STI*, p. 164.

<sup>104</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 168.

<sup>105</sup> The issue of how animals fit into Tillich's system will be examined further in parts II (pp.97-159) and III (pp. 160-224).

terms of 'man having a world'<sup>106</sup>. From this perspective, there is no possibility of 'world-consciousness' without 'self-consciousness' and vice versa.

The second level of ontological concept is that of the set of polar elements which constitute the structure implied in all ontological questions, and so for all human dealings with the world. Three sets of opposing elements are identified: that of 'individuality' and 'universality' (or participation); 'dynamics' and 'form'; and 'freedom' and 'destiny'. These opposing forces give ontological questions their definite structure because one pole always stands in juxtaposition to its opposing pole. Further, each element in each pair has a distinct role. The first element expresses the 'self-relatedness of being', whilst the second element expresses the 'belongingness of being'<sup>107</sup> in terms of one being within a universe of beings. On this account then, the first element represents the concreteness and independence of being, whilst the second element represents the interrelatedness or universality of being.

In the first set of polarities, Tillich argues that although individualisation is not identical to self-hood, it is in fact 'inseparable'<sup>108</sup> from it. Individualisation is the element of the polarity which allows for humans to become fully centred and facilitates individual identity. The second element within the polarity - that of participation, allows individuals to participate in their environment, or in the case of humans (who are fully individualised beings) 'in his world'<sup>109</sup>. Although individualisation and participation are totally interdependent, participation is the key notion within the polarity since persons (or fully developed selves) must have participation with other persons in order to 'guarantee the unity of a disrupted world'<sup>110</sup>.

Within the second set of polar elements, 'form' (or structure generally) may be considered as constituting the 'rational structure of subjective reason' and therefore it is argued that form could also be referred to as 'intentionality' in terms of its role in the understanding and manipulating of reality. In this case, form may be viewed as the structure upon which human interaction with each other and the world is based. Dynamics (or dynamism and creative drive) however is implied in the human act of 'transcending itself', also referred to

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<sup>106</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 170.

<sup>107</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 165.

<sup>108</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 175.

<sup>109</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 176.

<sup>110</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 178.



as 'becoming'<sup>111</sup>. In order for humans to break free from the need to live within their environment and therefore be able to shape their world, they need to be dynamic, possessing creative drive. Interaction with the world and creativity in the world without structure (or form) may well be misguided and liable to become increasingly disordered. However, structure without creativity (or dynamics) may well lead to interaction with others in the world which become rigid and static.

Within the third set of polar elements, without the concept of human freedom within the structure of existence (that is, the sets of polar elements which provide the structure for our ontological reason) revelation would in fact be unintelligible. Freedom however can only be experienced as the opposite pole to destiny. In terms of any ontological enquiry regarding freedom, Tillich rejects the theses of both determinism and indeterminism on the basis that they fail to deal with freedom as an ontological element and in so doing 'moves on a level secondary to the level on which the polarity between freedom and destiny lie'<sup>112</sup>. Further to this, freedom is to be considered a function of the whole human, coming from the personal centre of a complete self, as opposed to being viewed merely as a function of either 'the will' or 'cognition'.

Freedom implies 'deliberation', (or the act of weighing up the possible options available to them in any given situation) from the individual, in terms of being able to consider the possible courses of action or thought. It also involves 'decision' in terms of accepting one possibility and possible outcome over against any other which could be arrived at, and 'responsibility'<sup>113</sup> in terms of the need to be able to justify why one particular decision has been reached rather than any other in the multitude of possibilities. In Tillich's view, destiny in polarity with freedom must not be perceived as the opposite of freedom, rather it functions as a shorthand term by which the conditions and limits under which free decisions may be arrived at are defined. Accordingly, there can be no destiny without freedom, since freedom is the function by which we are able to participate in 'shaping' our own destiny and there can be no real freedom without destiny on the basis that destiny provides the framework upon which freedom may be actualised.

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<sup>111</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 181.

<sup>112</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 183.

<sup>113</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 183.

### iii. *The Impact of Finitude on the Ontological Categories*

According to Tillich, humans are unique amongst the created order in their ability to look beyond their immediate concrete situation, or otherwise stated, are 'free to transcend every given reality'<sup>114</sup> and are able to examine the nature of their essence<sup>115</sup>. The fact that humans have being means the existence of non-being is necessary since they exist in dialectic relation to each other, a relation which is nowhere more evident than in the doctrine of 'human creatureliness'. As God creates *ex nihilo*, all creatures come from nothing in order to have being, but the fact that they are contingent creatures and have their being out of nothing also points to the reality that at some stage they will return to nothing. This sense of returning to nothing expresses the notion of non-being, or alternatively expressed 'the stigma of having originated out of nothing [which] is impressed on every<sup>116</sup> creature'<sup>117</sup>. This stigma is experienced by the creature in terms of the threat of non-being. Here, the unity between finite being and dialectical non-being is possible to apprehend.

Finitude can be described as 'being limited by non-being'.<sup>118</sup> The threat experienced by non-being is our anticipation of the end of our being. In Heidegger's notion of 'annihilating nothingness'<sup>119</sup> we can see the reality of the human condition in terms of its constantly being under the threat of non-being<sup>120</sup>. In a practical sense, non-being for finite creatures is not simply a conceptual possibility rather it is an 'ultimately inescapable reality'<sup>121</sup> owing to the fact that at some point each and every finite creature will cease to exist. In addition to nothingness, Sartre posits 'meaninglessness' as the result of the realisation that the very structure of being is also vulnerable to disintegration under the categories of finitude. In this case, non-being must be viewed in terms of the 'not yet' and the 'no more'<sup>122</sup> of being.

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<sup>114</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 186.

<sup>115</sup> This point is important for the later discussion of animals in parts II and III of this thesis.

<sup>116</sup> Here Tillich has both implicitly and explicitly linked the human condition to that of *every* other living being.

<sup>117</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 190.

<sup>118</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 189.

<sup>119</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 190. (Heidegger cited Tillich)

<sup>120</sup> Tillich's view of non-being does seem similar to that of Heidegger and he may well, at least in part, be indebted to Heidegger for the great emphasis he places upon the importance and impact of non-being within his system.

<sup>121</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 189.

<sup>122</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 190.

For Tillich, an existentialist examination of our situation as finite creatures can help us to gain the insight that we must continually fight against this threat and can only do so by having the 'courage'<sup>123</sup> to accept our finitude and incorporate this knowledge into our being.

Due to the polar character of the ontological elements, the elements too are inherently vulnerable to the disruptive threat of non-being. In terms of the polarity between finite individualisation and finite participation, the disruption experienced via the threat of non-being is visible in the separation which can occur between the polarities.

Since the elements of finite freedom and destiny are intrinsically linked according to their ontological structure, one pole may only be expressed as the opposition to the other. Tillich asserts that humans experience anxiety at the possibility of losing their finite freedom to the 'necessity' of destiny, or alternatively, losing their destiny to the 'contingency of human finite reason'<sup>124</sup>. In reaction to this possibility, we attempt to hold onto our freedom by consciously denying our human destiny, although it is never actually possible to negate our destiny as it provides the framework upon which human cognition (and therefore the capacity to make decisions) rests.

If humans are able to be more than a set of contingencies however, a balance must be struck between freedom and destiny. In losing one's destiny there can be no sense of a continuum, since destiny is defined in terms of being 'necessity united with meaning'<sup>125</sup>. The threat of non-being experienced in losing one's freedom then may be defined as the loss of self, whereas the threat of non-being inherent in losing one's destiny may be experienced in terms of meaninglessness and 'existential despair'<sup>126</sup>.

The categories of finitude are equally subject to existential disruption as they inherently participate in every element of finite being. Just as human nature is expressed in relation to both being and non-being, so too are the categories of finitude. As finite categories, Tillich believes they express both the positive element of finitude (that of being), and the negative element, (that of non-being).

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<sup>123</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 189.

<sup>124</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 200.

<sup>125</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 201.

<sup>126</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 201.

The category of time is defined as the 'central category of finitude'<sup>127</sup>. Because humans have self-awareness, we are acutely conscious of the threat of non-being and we experience this in terms of anxiety about the finite and thus temporal nature of all that exists. However, the positive element within this category may be perceived in the ability to affirm the temporal nature of existence. This involves embracing the knowledge that at some stage everything ceases to be, yet even under the impact of this awareness, we still have the courage to affirm also that we are here as centred selves in the present. In consequence, the anxiety experienced by the threat of non-being in relation to the categories is not produced by the actual fear of the moment when death occurs, rather it is engendered by the anticipation of the end of our lives, and to some degree, is constantly present.

As finite beings, space is an 'ontological necessity' and in order to be, one must have a 'location ... body ... [and] world'<sup>128</sup>. For humans, being spatial means being constantly open to the threat of non-being, and to having no 'definite' space, resulting in the experience of non-being in terms of 'ultimate insecurity'<sup>129</sup>. In order to be able to achieve any level of security, humans need to have the courage to accept the possibility of spacelessness as well as accepting the certainty of the spacelessness involved in the end of life, which is the ultimate conclusion of all finite existence.

In relation to causality, on the one hand, being is affirmed by this category as it indicates the origin of an event, and in the case of existence, the causal origin of every living being. However, on the other hand, causality also indicates that finite beings are not self-originating and in enquiring into the origin of ourselves, we are led to ask 'if not by our own agency, from whence did we come?' In terms of the negative element of causality, the threat of non-being is expressed in the fact that not having been self-caused, we are therefore 'contingent' upon the 'being'<sup>130</sup> of something other than ourselves for our very existence. For Tillich, it is exactly this lack of necessity, that is, the realisation that we are not self-caused, that engenders the anxiety of being we experience. At the opposite pole to anxiety, the courage implied in the category of causality is that of the ability to accept that

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<sup>127</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 192.

<sup>128</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 194.

<sup>129</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 195.

<sup>130</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 196.

our very existence is based on contingency, but still be able to rely on ourselves as independent beings.

Therefore, substance in relation to finite creatures expresses their being; although, substance only exists in relation to 'accidents'<sup>131</sup> which indicates the negative element of non-being and the anxiety engendered by it that is experienced in the realisation that substance in general, and our own substance in particular, exists beyond our control and could just as easily cease to exist. As with the category of space, it is argued that as well as having to deal with the dynamic changes in structure on a day to day basis, which threatens to change every aspect of our lives, we are subject to the final loss of substance and permanent loss of identity. In terms of the opposite pole to anxiety, the courage implied in the category of substance, that is, the atoms and molecules which make up every finite entity, and which at any time could cease to hold together, is that of accepting the threat of constant change culminating in total loss of both substance and self, whilst still having the fortitude to affirm one's own finitude and 'take one's anxiety upon himself'<sup>132</sup>.

#### *iv. Ultimate Concern*

If humans are constantly under the threat of non-being but do not possess the personal ability to resist it, it is necessary to ask where our courage to accept finitude and non-being comes from, if not from ourselves? In answer to this question, Tillich asserts that it is the source of our ultimate concern that gives us the courage to fight against the threat of non-being. Only 'that which concerns us ultimately'<sup>133</sup> can be viewed as an adequate answer to the question of how we may resist the non-being implied in our finitude. Accordingly, he argues that 'God' is the appropriate title to give to the object of our ultimate concern.

The notion of ultimate concern involves a tension, because it involves both elements of the concrete and the universal. In order to become the object of ultimate concern, it must be concrete or in its absolute can only be viewed as ultimate concern through the 'power of representing experiences'<sup>134</sup>. Without the element of the concrete it would not be possible for there to be any sort of participation in terms of a relationship between the object of

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<sup>131</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 197.

<sup>132</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 198.

<sup>133</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 211.

<sup>134</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 211.

ultimate concern and the human creature. This relational nature for Tillich is necessary for us to be ultimately concerned with something. On the other hand, there has to be an element of the absolute present also in order for the ultimate concern to transcend the multitude of preliminary finite concerns which humans' experience in concrete situations on a day to day basis.

In order for God to qualify as our ultimate concern, in addition to being able to unite the concrete and the absolute, God must be infinite in order to be able to resist the threat of non-being which all finite beings are subject to. On this basis, Tillich completely denies the existence of God, since existence necessarily entails finitude. Instead he uses the definition of the 'ground of being' or 'being itself' to express the nature of God, arguing these are adequate terms because 'being itself cannot have a beginning and an end'<sup>135</sup>. For if we were to posit the existence of God, it would put God on a 'human existential footing'<sup>136</sup> although it would allow God to be the highest of beings, God would still be a being as opposed to 'being itself' or the 'ground of being'<sup>137</sup>, terms which do not imply finitude.

Tillich also points out that unlike all finite beings, there is no split between the essential and existential being of God, since as being itself, God can transcend both the finite and the infinite and is therefore subject neither to the conditions of existence nor conditioned by something outside itself. It is precisely this unity between God's essence and existence, namely God's complete self-causality, which allows God to be completely unconditioned. For Tillich, 'only that which is unconditioned' can be an expression of our ultimate concern, because 'a conditioned God is no God'<sup>138</sup>. With the exception of the terms 'being itself' or 'the creative and abysmal ground of being'<sup>139</sup> then, any term we use in relation to God is a sign which fulfils the function of pointing to analogous human qualities in relation to the divine. Since the ontological categories which determine our 'thinking and being' are also finite, we are unable to transcend them in order to understand and express the divine nature directly and it is inevitable to refer to the divine nature in symbolic terms. Therefore, when we refer to God in terms of 'sustaining', we are simply using a human existential term by way of analogy to express the reality of the constant presence of the power of being

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<sup>135</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 191.

<sup>136</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 235.

<sup>137</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 237.

<sup>138</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 248.

<sup>139</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 238.

itself or the 'creative ground'<sup>140</sup> in which humans must participate, in order to have the courage to resist non-being. Likewise, in referring to God as living, we are simply alluding to the reality that God is 'the eternal process in which separation is overcome by reunion'<sup>141</sup>. Accordingly, to talk about God in non-symbolic terms makes God dependent upon conditional and finite categories, denying the nature of God which in reality is 'ultimate, unconditioned and infinite'<sup>142</sup>.

Tillich correlates the Christian symbol of God, that is, the infinite power of being, to represent the force which alone stands in opposition to the threat of non-being. The courage humans require in order to affirm their finitude is only accessible through continual participation in God. Accordingly, he argues that this possibility of a relationship with the divine is expressed in the symbolic phrases often used for God such as 'God creates' or 'God sustains', which allow us to allude to both the concrete and absolute elements of God and so is the appropriate object of our ultimate concern, through which we experience the courage to resist non-being.

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<sup>140</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 261.

<sup>141</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 242.

<sup>142</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 12.

### Part Three: Existence and the Christ

Whereas Part Two deals with our essential nature as beings, Part Three of Tillich's *Systematic Theology* deals with the distortions present in creation under the conditions of existence. In particular, it addresses the notion of existential estrangement. In order to fully penetrate the actual meaning of the word 'existence', Tillich considers the original Latin *existere*, which means 'to stand out'<sup>143</sup>. He argues that what we are actually standing out *of* is the threat of non-being. However, this is only a partial 'standing out' since finitude necessarily involves a mixture of both being and non-being in dialectic relation<sup>144</sup>. Estrangement should be understood as the inevitable consequence of humans not being able to separate being from non-being, which results in them turning against themselves by turning against the infinite ground which is their essential nature.

The inevitable question posed in existence must be 'where can we find the power to overcome our existential estrangement?' To this, Tillich answers that in Christian thought Christ<sup>145</sup> alone indicates the contrast between human essence and the human existential condition. Only Christ has the power to bring in a 'new reality' to conquer the old one, which is categorised by the estrangement people experience from themselves, others, the world and God.

#### i. *Estrangement*

In Part Three of the system, three distinct negative characteristics of estrangement are identified: firstly unbelief, secondly, hubris and thirdly, concupiscence. Unbelief should not be viewed as our inability or lack of willingness to believe the doctrines of the church, rather it needs to be understood in terms of the totality of the human being turning away from God. Therefore, Tillich prefers to use the term 'un-faith' since this suggests our estrangement from the ground of being, whereas unbelief expresses our relation to matters ecclesiastical or moral.

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<sup>143</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 19.

<sup>144</sup> Vide The Examination of Finitude and its Consequences in *Systematic Theology Volume Two*.

<sup>145</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 27.



Un-faith, indicated at least in part by the gulf between the divine and human will, should be viewed as an act which involves both freedom and destiny in polar unity because it involves both the individual responsibility of the person who turns away from God and the 'tragic universality'<sup>146</sup> of human estrangement under the conditions of existence. The religious interpretation of sin can be viewed as unbelief since unbelief expresses the estrangement of the individual from God in the centre of their being, a concept which is most evident in practice in the lack of connection between God and humans in essential unity. Tillich argues it also follows that where there is unbelief there is 'un-love'. Love for self and world without participation in God distorts our perception of reality because we lose our ability to gain any penetration of the finite, and with it, lose the ability to participate with the infinite ground of being beyond finite reality.

The second category of estrangement is that of hubris, which is defined as humans turning towards themselves. Hubris is the opposite side of estrangement from unbelief, or turning away from God. This form of estrangement has the ability to take effect in humans because humans are not only conscious but are self-conscious, and so have 'complete centeredness'<sup>147</sup>. This then is how we are to understand the notion of humans being in the 'image of God'.

The third type of estrangement identified is that of concupiscence. For Tillich, concupiscence is the all-embracing striving of humans to draw the whole of their reality into themselves. It includes 'all aspects of man's relation to himself and to his world. It refers to physical hunger as well as to sex, to knowledge as well as to power, to material wealth as well as to spiritual values'<sup>148</sup>. Therefore, rather than interpreting concupiscence in line with the more narrow Augustinian definition of the simple seeking of sexual pleasure, he uses the term as a means by which to describe human self-centredness. In his view, there is little value in the narrow Augustinian interpretation that concupiscence is simply a striving for sexual pleasure because it does nothing to help 'describe the state of existential estrangement'<sup>149</sup> and therefore in his opinion, it would be better to dispense with the term altogether than to use it in this format. Instead, he looked for inspiration from outside the

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<sup>146</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 131.

<sup>147</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 49.

<sup>148</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p.52.

<sup>149</sup> Tillich, *STII*, P.52

Christian tradition to help to rehabilitate the concept of concupiscence by giving it a broader meaning.

ii. *Concepts Which Underlie Tillich's Understanding of Concupiscence*

Tillich argues that Freud's notion of 'libido' and Nietzsche's concept of 'will to power' have both contributed to 'a rediscovery of the Christian view of man's predicament'<sup>150</sup> and are particularly useful when considering estrangement as concupiscence.

Firstly, he examines the Freudian notion of 'libido'. Although in common usage, the notion of libido refers solely to sexual desire, Freud, who first popularised the term, defined it much more broadly as the 'instinct energy' or force contained within the id, or subconscious structure of the psyche. In 1959 in his book *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*, describing libido, he wrote that it is 'the energy, regarded as a quantitative magnitude of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word 'love' '<sup>151</sup>. In Anthony Storr's opinion, 'Freud uses the word libido to describe the sexual drive, which he claimed was the driving force of most behaviours'<sup>152</sup>. Michael Kahn however, hints that it is possible that Freud arrived at such an extended concept of what he considered 'sexual', at least in part to 'support his theory that neuroses were caused by sexual problems'<sup>153</sup>. Whether it is the case that Freud's definition of libido came first, or his believe that the sexual drive when frustrated is the root cause of neuroses, it is this broad understanding of libido which for Tillich provides a useful 'conceptual description of concupiscence'<sup>154</sup>. It is the argument that 'libidinous elements are present in the highest spiritual experiences and activities of man'<sup>155</sup> which he believes is a wholly accurate insight, one which is born out in the 'monastic traditions of self-scrutiny as they have developed in early and medieval Christianity'<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>150</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 53.

<sup>151</sup> Freud, S. *Group Psychology and The Analysis of the Ego* (New York, W.W. Norton and Company Ltd. 1959) p.39.

<sup>152</sup> Storr, Anthony *Freud: A Very Brief Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, New Edition, 2001) p. 58.

<sup>153</sup> Kahn, Michael *Basic Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 2002) p.37.

<sup>154</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p.53.

<sup>155</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p.53.

<sup>156</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p.53.

Likewise, Tillich saw merit in Nietzsche's concept of the 'will to power' as a means to explain the human wish to 'draw the whole of reality into oneself'<sup>157</sup>.

Nietzsche was heavily influenced by the work of Schopenhauer, in particular his notion of 'will to live' as well as the works of Roger Joseph Boscovich. The themes of both will and centres of force provided the foundation for the concept of 'will to power' (*der Wille zur Macht*) which he is best known for. Throughout the 1870's and early 1880's, he had developed the idea of a 'desire for power', until in 1883 in his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he wrote:

Indeed, the truth was not hit by him who shot at it with the word of the 'will to existence': that will does not exist. For, what does not exist cannot will, but what is in existence, how can that still want existence? Only where there is life is there also will: not will to live but - thus I teach you - will to power<sup>158</sup>.

Will to power may well describe what Nietzsche believed to be the underlying driving force in human psychology – that of striving to achieve and striving to become powerful and exercise that power over oneself and others. However, although it is mentioned in several of his other works, including *Beyond Good and Evil*, as Jenny Teichman points out, 'the will to power was never systematically defined, and its interpretation has been open to debate'<sup>159</sup>.

For instance, Kevin Hill posits that will to power is 'primarily a psychological and axiological'<sup>160</sup> term which requires 'unpacking' in order to be fully understood. He argues that the word will (*woollen* in German) might be better interpreted as 'want'. Further, he suggests that the German word for power (*macht*) also corresponds to the English verb 'to make', therefore 'will to power' could equally be translated as 'a desire to make (something)'<sup>161</sup>. However, Henry Staten disagrees, arguing that the will to power is based on the principles of biology and physics, an understanding Nietzsche got in part from the

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<sup>157</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 52. The concept of the sin of concupiscence as human self-centeredness is particularly relevant to the evaluation of the adequacy of Tillich's concept of Technical Reason in relation to animals, which can be found in Chapter Three below.

<sup>158</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' in *The Portable Nietzsche* (edited and translated, Walter Kaufmann) (New York: Viking Press, 1968) p. 227.

<sup>159</sup> Teichman, Jenny 'Friedrich Nietzsche' in Teichman, Jenny and Graham White (Eds.) *An Introduction to Modern European Philosophy* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd. 1995) p. 76.

<sup>160</sup> Hill, Kevin R. *Nietzsche – A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007) p. 66.

<sup>161</sup> Hill Nietzsche - *A Guide for the Perplexed*, p.67.

works of Wilhelm Roux and Leon Dumont. For Staten, will to power is based on 'the physicists concept of force'<sup>162</sup>.

Tillich however understood will to power to be 'partly a concept, partly a symbol'<sup>163</sup> which should not be interpreted literally. The concept element of will to power denotes the unconscious desire of humankind to affirm their power of being, which leads humans to strive to exercise power over other humans. He contended that will to power also functions as an ontological symbol denoting 'man's natural self-affirmation in so far as man has the power of being'<sup>164</sup>. Under the conditions of existence, this drive to gain power of being can be immensely destructive. Here, Staten agrees with Tillich's view, arguing 'the will to power is pure quantum of energy that is waiting to be used up ... but which is indifferent to any specific goal'<sup>165</sup>. Teichman also indicates that Nietzsche himself saw that the will to power could be destructive unless it has a specific goal: 'in his notebook for 1878, Nietzsche wrote 'the unselected drive to knowledge resembles the indiscriminate sex drive – they are both signs of vulgarity'<sup>166</sup>

Although these symbols are useful to the Christian understanding of estrangement in the form of concupiscence, particularly helping to illuminate the consequences of such estrangement, they are however lacking in their scope and according to Tillich do not provide an adequate doctrine of humankind. This lack of scope is evident in the fact that neither concept appears to differentiate between the state of existential estrangement and essential human nature. When these symbols are examined in relation to human essential nature, rather than indicating marks of estrangement and destruction, they may be viewed as positive qualities. Libido, in accordance with essential human nature, may be viewed as love, and when directed towards a definite object, rather than having the characteristic of unlimited and insatiable desire it can become united and thus simply become an element of 'eros, philia and agape'<sup>167</sup>.

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<sup>162</sup> Staten, Henry, 'A Critique of the Will to Power' in Pearson, Keith Ansell (Ed.) *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2007). 565-582 p. 566.

<sup>163</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 55.

<sup>164</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 55.

<sup>165</sup> Staten 'A Critique' in *A companion to Nietzsche*, p. 566.

<sup>166</sup> Nietzsche cited Teichman 'Friedrich Nietzsche' in *An Introduction to Modern European Philosophy*, p. 78.

<sup>167</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 54.

Libido or desire is also necessary in acts of human creativity and in unison with human essential nature can be linked with the polar elements of dynamics and form. Without an element of libido and the desire to create, no human creativity would be possible. Similarly, in relation to human essential nature, the symbol of will to power expresses the natural desire of every human to affirm oneself and to reach towards 'dynamic' self-realisation, which in itself is neither destructive nor demonic. Both the notions of libido and will to power become expressions of concupiscence and estrangement only under the conditions of existence, where, under existential distortion they become separated from love resulting in destructive tendencies because they have no definite object with which they may be united.

Concupiscence then, for Tillich, is not to be defined simply in terms of the human quest for self-affirmation or self-realisation. Instead, it may be defined as a distortion of these elements which destructively pushes humans to reach beyond their concrete reality and towards universality, which necessarily implies both the aspect of self-elevation and a turning away from the ultimate ground of being.

### *iii. The Effect of Estrangement on the Categories of Finitude*

Having examined the three types of estrangement identified, the effects of estrangement on the categories of finitude will now be examined in order to gain a fuller picture of the practical effects of such estrangement.

In relation to individualisation and participation, the effects of estrangement can be extremely damaging. All beings are individualised to a certain degree; but, the more individualised a being is, the more they are able to participate. In the case of humans, as fully centred selves, in theory there is 'no limit to his or [her] participation'<sup>168</sup>. Humans can transcend their environment and in so doing 'have a world'. In the state of existential distortion, however, if individualisation becomes effective without participation, Tillich argues that humans disengage from the world. If participation becomes effective without its opposite pole however, a damaging imbalance occurs between controlling and receiving knowledge, allowing controlling knowledge to become dominant. This causes the

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<sup>168</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 65.

separation of subjectivity from objectivity and results in the object eventually enveloping the 'empty shell'<sup>169</sup> of subjectivity altogether. When this occurs, humans can no longer retain any sense of themselves as selves since they become mere parts of the whole or simply objects amongst others.

In terms of the consequences of estrangement on the category of time, Tillich posits that when humans become separated from the ground of being, their reaction to time becomes two-fold. Firstly, an element of resistance is evident, as humans attempt to do as much as possible in their finite existences in an attempt to create a personal legacy, so that they will be remembered after their death, gaining for themselves the illusion that they are in some sense everlasting. This resistance is not an attempt to directly resist time, but instead is resistance to the threat of non-being which for all finite creatures is implied in the category of time. Secondly, the anxiety experienced in this category is not so much an anxiety<sup>170</sup> experienced by humans in their knowledge that although they essentially belong to the power of being, and hence the eternal, they are estranged from infinity under the conditions of existence. It is the human reluctance to accept the temporality of their lives in the face of the category of time that causes distortions and becomes destructive, rather than any reaction to time *per se*.

Similarly, in the state of estrangement, the category of space is transformed and humans find themselves without any definite place in the world. As a result, humans attempt to resist this 'spatial contingency'<sup>171</sup> by endeavouring to mark out a place as their own permanent place. As finite creatures however, this necessarily fails, resulting in an overwhelming insecurity regarding one's place physically as well as in the overall scheme of things, finally culminating in 'ultimate uprootedness'<sup>172</sup> which is another element within the 'structure of despair'. This twofold reaction of resistance and then despair at the failure of such resistance is also apparent in the transformed categories of substance and causality. In terms of the category of substance, as with time and space, humans resist the notion that all substance changes and eventually ceases to be, by positing themselves as 'absolute substance'<sup>173</sup>, thus attributing themselves with absolute power.

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<sup>169</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 67.

<sup>170</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 69.

<sup>171</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 69.

<sup>172</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 69.

<sup>173</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 70.

In their state of estrangement from the ground of being, humans are aware of their 'potential infinity'<sup>174</sup> but in attempting to resist the transformed categories of finitude without success, ultimately they cause themselves to be further estranged from the power of being, thus transforming their essential finitude into the elements comprising the 'structure of despair'. As finite creatures which are unable to accept their finitude in their separation from the ultimate power of being, humans are constantly caused anxiety by the threat of non-being.

iv. *Tillich's Understanding of 'Symbols' Generally and of the Symbol 'The Fall'*<sup>175</sup> *Specifically.*

For Tillich, symbols have profound meaning and differ significantly from 'signs' because unlike signs which only point to something beyond them (much like a signpost points to a place-name in the distance without having any connection to the place to which it points) symbols participate in that reality beyond. A symbol is never *just* a symbol because it not only points to something beyond itself, it actually participates in the power of that to which it points. Accordingly, a sign may only be a sign, but the same can never be said of a symbol. The relation between the symbol and that to which it points can be described in terms of convention (or correspondence) and it is this convention which gives a symbol its special function. To this extent, unlike a sign, a symbol cannot be changed unless the reality it participates in is also changed.

Another difference between a sign and a symbol is that although a sign can be created, changed or destroyed at will, a symbol cannot. This is because symbols develop out of the individual, or collective, unconscious of a particular group of people and without the acceptance of the unconscious dimension of our being, a symbol cannot function. According to Tillich, symbols, like living beings, develop over time and can die out also. They grow when the circumstances are right for them to do so and die when that situation changes. The nature of a symbol means that it cannot be created and do not appear or

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<sup>174</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 70.

<sup>175</sup> Tillich's understanding of the Fall is examined more fully and in relation to the whole of creation in Chapter Nine, pp 209-224.

develop because people want or need it to and similarly, they do not cease to be because of `criticism (practical, scientific or otherwise).

Symbols are appropriate and necessary to use when discussing theological truths because they have the power to access levels of reality which would otherwise be closed to us, indeed, he argues that 'the language of faith is the language of symbols'<sup>176</sup> for this very reason. In *Theology of Culture* (and in many other of his works) Tillich uses the example that symbols are created by the arts which correspond to, and participate in, a level of reality which cannot be accessed in any other way. In addition, he argues that these symbols open up dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality. In *Dynamics of Faith*, he illustrates this notion with the example that 'a great play gives us not only a new vision of the human scene, but it opens up hidden depths of our own being'<sup>177</sup>. He argues that via engagement with the symbols such arts create, we are able to engage with dimensions within ourselves that would not be accessible for us by any other means and posits that the symbols created by other visual arts and even music can have the power to let us reach previously inaccessible dimensions within ourselves.

In relation to the symbol 'the Fall', he postulated that the Genesis account of the Fall illuminates the notion that only by participation in the eternal may humans be eternal; estranged from the ground of being, humans experience their 'natural finitude'<sup>178</sup>. This results in the transformation from anxiety which is felt by humans in their essential nature at the threat of non-being into 'the horror of death'<sup>179</sup> and it is only through participation in the power of being that the courage may be found to overcome this 'horror'.

An element of 'guilt' is also experienced under the conditions of existence, as the individual feels responsible for the ultimate conclusion of all human life, that of death, even though this is the 'universal tragic actuality'<sup>180</sup> of all finite creatures and is therefore inescapable.

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<sup>176</sup>Tillich, Paul 'Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God' in *Christian Scholar* (September 1955) p.189-197, p. 190.

<sup>177</sup> Tillich, Paul *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1957) p. 42-43.

<sup>178</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 67.

<sup>179</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 67.

<sup>180</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 68.



For Tillich then, the symbol of the Fall, usually viewed as the Fall of Adam, has 'universal anthropological significance'<sup>181</sup>. It should, however, be viewed as a symbol or myth which may provide the framework on which we can understand the transition from essential nature to existential estrangement.

He argues that theologians have attempted to project a 'time' before human history that has been symbolised in terms of 'paradise'. On a psychological level, this may be defined as a state of human 'dreaming innocence'<sup>182</sup>. He asserts that 'dreaming innocence' is an acceptable term to use because it still alludes to an element of temporality. The word 'dreaming' indicates a state of potential, present but not yet actualised. The term innocence also denotes a 'lack of actual experience, lack of personal responsibility and lack of moral guilt'<sup>183</sup>, all of which are present in our essential nature. Innocence in this sense, however, is not to be confused with the notion of sinless-ness, because even in our essential nature humans are not in a state of perfection, and the need to push beyond itself means that it is always open to 'temptation'<sup>184</sup> as the symbol of the Fall indicates.

This temptation in the state of dreaming innocence may be understood as the result of human finite freedom which by necessity is 'freedom in anxiety'<sup>185</sup> due to the dialectic relation between being and non-being in all finite creatures. God's issuing a command that Adam must not eat from the tree of knowledge indicates that even in the state of dreaming innocence, there is a distance between creation and creator even though no sin has yet been committed. The very fact that a command needs to be given is indicative of the potential for humans to use their freedom in order to sin, even in paradise.

It is 'aroused freedom' that is responsible for the human desire to sin. Under its influence, a juxtaposition occurs between the human wish to actualise their potential, whilst at the same time wishing to hold on to their state of dreaming innocence. In the transition from essence to existence, but, humans decide to actualise their finite freedom and in so doing, trade their dreaming innocence for the actualisation of their being. According to Tillich, the temptation experienced by humans arises out of the anxiety which results from the

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<sup>181</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 29.

<sup>182</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 29.

<sup>183</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 34.

<sup>184</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 34.

<sup>185</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 35.

combination of knowing that one is finite, whilst also becoming aware of one's own freedom.

The mixture then of both finite freedom and the consciousness of such freedom allows humans to make choices and thus facilitates the transition from essence to existence. The aroused freedom humans experience in their state of estrangement, therefore, causes anxiety at the possibility of failing to actualise one's potential by holding onto one's innocence, whilst concurrently anxiety is experienced if freedom is actualised and dreaming innocence is lost. The level of anxiety felt under these conditions is profound, since the loss of dreaming innocence or the loss of self-actualisation necessarily implies loss of self.

From this perspective, sin can be comprehended in relation to the universal fact of human estrangement under the conditions of existence. Therefore, sin is an act on behalf of an individual which 'actualises'<sup>186</sup> the notion of universal estrangement, in which case, although each individual is responsible for every act they commit in which they actualise estrangement, it would be fallacious to assume that all humans have completely undetermined freedom to decide how to act, since every free act or decision is linked to its opposite pole, that of destiny. If that is the case, no individual completely escapes sin, either in 'fact', that is, born out of the original fact of the Fall, or in 'act', which may be defined as 'the turning-away from God' and from 'grace' which for Tillich is to be understood in terms of 'reunion with God'<sup>187</sup>.

Because humans are estranged from the ground of being, self-salvation in any form is simply not possible. How then can salvation be secured? For Tillich, salvation is only possible through participation in New Being, or the One who brings in the new aeon.

#### *v. The Quest for New Being*

The quest for New Being, according to Tillich, is a universal one and appears in all religions because the human wish to overcome this state is also universal. There are differences, however, in the nature and expectations of this quest between different religions and cultures. This quest can either take on a vertical direction, that is, a non-historical direction,

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<sup>186</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 57.

<sup>187</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 57.

or conversely a horizontal direction, that is, through history and as the aim of history. The first type of quest is generally employed by most polytheistic and Eastern religions, whilst the second may be attributed primarily to Western culture and monotheistic religions. The differing approaches are to be viewed in 'polar relation'<sup>188</sup>, that is, they share both an element of unity and tension with each other.<sup>189</sup>

The non-historical approach also contains elements of the historical one, since although for Eastern religions salvation is not expected to be achieved *in* history, it has its basis in history because human existence cannot be understood apart from history. Unlike the historical expectation of the quest for New Being though, reality itself is not expected to be transformed, rather individuals may transcend the historical realm of existence altogether, leading to what Tillich describes as a 'negation of all beings'<sup>190</sup>, affirming only Being itself.

In tension with this notion, the historical expectation begins with the presupposition that despite the estrangement inherent in all reality, reality itself is to be considered existentially good. The expectation of the New Being, then, according to the historical approach may be said to be in a horizontal direction rather than a vertical one, because the New Being is expected to transform and lift up the whole of reality, rather than lifting chosen individuals out of the sphere of existence.

Another main tension visible between these differing world views in regard to the quest for New Being is perceived in the way that New Being is expected to be received. According to the non-historical approach, it is only the individual who receives the divine manifestation of the gods or experiences 'spiritual elevation'<sup>191</sup>, who participates in the effects of New Being. The group to which they report their experience is not considered to be directly participating instead they are considered to be bearing witness to another individual's participation. The reverse is true for the historical approach. On this view, since the transformation occurs through the historical process rather than above it, it is the group as a whole that participates in this process of transformation, with individuals only participating

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<sup>188</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 87.

<sup>189</sup> Tillich's view on world religions changed towards the end of his life. This change of emphasis towards a more inclusive worldview is particularly evident in one of the last books he wrote *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

<sup>190</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 86.

<sup>191</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 88.

indirectly via their participation in the social group which becomes the mediator of the expectation of New Being.

In opposition to the non-historical expectation of the New Being, the Messiah was expected to reaffirm finite nature by defeating the forces of estrangement under the conditions of existence.

vi. *The Symbol of The Christ as the Bearer of New Being*

For Tillich, the symbol Messiah or Christ may only lay claim to universal validity if it can be shown that it's historical expectation of the New Being is able to incorporate the non-historical approach into itself, and correspondingly that the non-historical expectation is unable to encompass that of the historical. In other words, the New Being put forward by the symbol Messiah or Christ needs to unite both the horizontal and vertical expectation of New Being in order to be universally valid.

In order to achieve this, symbols derived from Judaism which unite both the historical and the transhistorical were applied to the 'event of 'Jesus' in a universal way.'<sup>192</sup> To illustrate this, Tillich points to the use of the Jewish symbol 'Son of Man' in connection with Jesus, which combines an element of transcendence along with an existential and thus historical quality. Christian symbols also developed at an early stage within the religion which highlighted the transhistorical or transcendent quality of Jesus. A prime example of such symbols is the term 'logos'<sup>193</sup> used within the Gospel of John. Logos places great emphasis on the transhistorical, divine qualities of Jesus. In addition to these developments and utilisation of symbolic concepts, the Hellenistic influenced Pauline doctrine of the Spirit paved the way for the non-historical (or vertical) expectation of the New Being to be superimposed upon the historical (or horizontal) expectation evident within the Old Testament. In order then for the symbol 'Christ' to adequately carry the universally significant expectation of the New Being, a balance between the Old Testament's emphasis on the historical type of expectation of New Being and the Hellenistic emphasis on the

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<sup>192</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 89.

<sup>193</sup> Tillich's understanding of the symbol 'Spirit' is highly relevant to the later discussion regarding animals. See especially Chapters Four: 'The Creator and Creation in Tillich's Systematic Theology' (pp. 114-125) and Chapter Five: 'The Implications of Tillich's Christology for Animals and Creation' (pp. 126-143).

vertical expectation needed to be achieved and defended throughout the history of the church.

For Tillich, the most concrete way in which both the historical and the transcendent nature of Jesus as the Christ is made apparent is in the central notion of the 'Christ event', that of the 'Cross' and 'Resurrection' which he defines as interdependent and inseparable. In the symbol is the Cross, the horizontal is evident in the fact that this was an event that happened in time, as part of history, indicating the finite aspect of the Christ whilst the symbol of the Resurrection points to the transcendent nature of the Christ, illuminating the vertical expectation of the New Being. Unlike the other symbols used to describe the qualities of both the historical and transhistorical in Jesus as the Christ, the concept of the Cross and Resurrection are to be viewed as 'both reality and symbol' as 'in both cases something happened within existence'<sup>194</sup>, confirming the historical nature of the Cross and Resurrection. Tillich argues it is important that the symbolic nature of these events is not dismissed, since 'each of these [Cross and Resurrection] symbols shows him [Jesus as the Christ] as the bearer of the New Being in a special relation to existence.'<sup>195</sup>

In Tillich's view, the Christian belief that the New Being is manifest in Jesus as the Christ "constitutes the only all-embracing paradox in Christianity."<sup>196</sup> However, since the term paradox has been used inaccurately and indiscriminately within the Western tradition generally, he feels it necessary to explain what is meant by 'Christian paradox' before any further enquiry into the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Paradox is not to be confused or used interchangeably with the term 'reflective-rational' which may be defined as technical reason which holds to the notion that beings and 'things' can only be affirmed if they can be dismantled, reflected and understood to the fullest extent via our use of formal logic. Nor is the notion of paradox to be likened to the 'dialectical-rational' which is often used to explain the nature of life processes as it moves out from itself, returning to itself. Neither is the paradoxical to be equated with the 'irrational'.

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<sup>194</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 153.

<sup>195</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 152.

<sup>196</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 90.

The term paradoxical when properly understood indicates an opinion, notion or fact that has the power to 'contradict'.<sup>197</sup> In Christian terms, the paradox inherent in Jesus as the Christ being the bearer of the New Being, consists in that it contradicts the mind-sets such as self-reliance and its failures. The appearance of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ can be considered paradoxical because it contradicts our understanding of ourselves by acting as both 'promise and judgement.'<sup>198</sup> For Tillich, it is the power of New Being under the conditions of existence to 'conquer' the forces of estrangement which is to be considered the all-encompassing paradox of the Christian message. The New Being in Christ is not illogical, irrational or absurd because it contradicts our ordinary held beliefs about reality and the limited possibilities encompassed by it, rather it provides us with a 'new reality'<sup>199</sup> which stands in opposition to the one we accept every day.

The paradox of the New Being also follows the method of correlation throughout the Tillichian System. As with other Christian concepts put forward during this work, interdependence exists between our situation the questions asked and the answers received. The questions asked about the New Being are actually informed by the symbols put forward in answer, or as Tillich puts it;

questions and answers determine each other...the question about the manifestation of the New Being is asked both on the basis of the human predicament and in the light of the answer which is accepted as *the* answer of Christianity.<sup>200</sup>

The primary role of the New Being can be described as one of 'Mediator' between the divine and humanity in humanity's state of estrangement. Through participation in the New Being, reunion is possible temporarily, even under the conditions of existence, since estrangement can at least partially be overcome.

Although it is the totality of Jesus as the Christ that makes him the bearer of the New Being, Tillich nonetheless identifies three expressions of the Christ's function which allows him to be the manifestation of New Being.

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<sup>197</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 92.

<sup>198</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 91.

<sup>199</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 92.

<sup>200</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 93. (Tillich's emphasis).

The first expression identified can be understood as the words of Jesus as the Christ. The teaching of Jesus is obviously of great importance to Christian faith, and discipleship was actually made dependent upon the disciples 'holding to his, [Jesus'] words.'<sup>201</sup> Jesus even referred to himself as 'the Word'. However, this metaphorical use of 'Word' according to Tillich indicates that it is the entire being of Christ that is the 'final self-manifestation of God in humanity'<sup>202</sup> and it is the entire being of the Christ that informs and defines his spoken words rather than vice versa. The spoken words of Jesus then, although important for Christianity, only have transforming power on the basis that as the Christ, he *is* the Word.

The second expression of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ can be viewed as his actions. As with his words however, throughout the history of the Christian tradition there has been a temptation to separate the actions of Jesus from his being. There has also been a great temptation to simply copy the actions of Christ. Tillich argues, that this tendency has resulted from the lack of understanding in the key concept that the actions of Jesus do not define him as the bearer of the New Being, and that it is in fact the New Being that defines his actions. Accordingly, it would be a mistake (which he believes Roman Catholicism has often made) to attempt to imitate the physical life and actions of Jesus as portrayed in the Bible, leading to what he describes as 'ritualistic or ascetic prescriptions.'<sup>203</sup> When it is understood that the actions of Christ are inseparable from his nature, the notion of imitating those actions can be transformed into an appreciation that as the representative of the essential unity between humans and the divine under the conditions of existence, taking on the 'form of Christ' does not involve direct imitation, rather it requires 'participating fully in the New Being present in him.'<sup>204</sup>

The third expression of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is that of his suffering and ultimately his death, which in Tillich's estimation is an inevitable result of the 'conflict'<sup>205</sup> which exists between the conditions of existential distortion and the means by which these distortions, including estrangement can be overcome. For the bearer of the New Being to participate to the fullest extent in the conditions of existence and overcome them, suffering and death need to be experienced as inherent parts of human existence. However, it is

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<sup>201</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 93.

<sup>202</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 121.

<sup>203</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 123.

<sup>204</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 122.

<sup>205</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 122.

pointed out that although the Cross is necessarily a vital part of the role of the Christ, orthodox theologians are nonetheless misguided in their tendency to attempt to separate the suffering and death of Jesus from the totality of his being. Rather than viewing the sacrificial function of the Christ as a function *apart* from his being, Tillich asserts that it is in fact an 'inescapable *implication*'<sup>206</sup> of his being as the Christ.

In order for Jesus as the Christ to conquer existential estrangement under the conditions of estrangement, and still retain his unity with God, it is imperative that Jesus was actually subject to the same existential predicament and tensions that humans are. Indeed, Tillich posits that this is in fact the case, since under the conditions of existence, Jesus as the Christ possessed finite freedom, just as all humans do. This entails that he was also open to the possibility of temptation. This vulnerability to temptation, must be deemed a pre-requisite of his unity with God on the basis that 'Jesus would not represent the essential unity between God and man (Eternal God-Manhood) without the possibility of real temptation,'<sup>207</sup> because any real unity involves the freedom to choose to be united or conversely to turn away from such a union.

Along with the temptations inherent in finite freedom, as a finite being Jesus was also subject to the contingency involved in not being self-caused and therefore experienced the anxieties resulting from the 'lack of a definite place', being 'expelled'<sup>208</sup> by his nation of birth and left to wander, homeless in the world. In his relation with others, he experienced isolation in his inability to gain the understanding of even those closest to him regarding the message he proclaimed. As a being in possession of finite reason, he experienced the uncertainty of imperfect judgement and shared in the human capacity for error, a point which Tillich feels is evident in 'his ancient conception of the universe, his judgements about men, his interpretation of the historical moment, his eschatological imagination'.<sup>209</sup> And ultimately, as a finite being, he experienced the threat of non-being in the limit of his finite existence, anxiety over his impending death, which is graphically recorded in the Synoptic Gospels and a sense of ultimate abandonment to his finitude by God in the final moments of his finite existence.

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<sup>206</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 123, italics added.

<sup>207</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 127.

<sup>208</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 131.

<sup>209</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 131.



Coupled with experiencing the 'marks of finitude' implied in the nature of all existence, Jesus also experienced the ambiguities and uncertainties which are inherent in human social interaction. For Tillich, the defining aspect of Jesus' social interactions may be understood as his participation in the 'tragic elements'<sup>210</sup> of life Jesus experienced. He suffered the hostility of the religious leadership towards him, eventually unjustly condemning him to death and perhaps most strikingly his betrayal by Judas, a disciple and companion throughout his ministry. As well as the personal tragedy experienced by Jesus in reaction to these injustices, Jesus also participated in the 'tragic' nature of guilt 'in so far as he made his enemies inescapably guilty'.<sup>211</sup> This guilt however did not have the power to 'split his personal centre'<sup>212</sup>, and did not disrupt the unity between Jesus and God and so although resulting in anxiety, doubt it did not result in estrangement from the ground of being.

From this cursory examination of Jesus as the Christ under the conditions of existence, it seems evident that Jesus was indeed subject to the deep anxieties, personal conflicts and doubts inherent in the ambiguities of life, rather than lapsing into estrangement and despair, Jesus took the whole range of these ambiguities into 'unbroken unity'<sup>213</sup> with the divine. In so doing then, these negative aspects of existence could be transcended through the 'power' of such a unity and thus he experienced the results of living under the conditions of existence but by his 'permanent unity'<sup>214</sup> with God, overcame existential estrangement.

For Tillich, it is the unbroken unity between God and humanity present in Jesus as the Christ which provides the power to overcome the existential distortions and estrangement inherent in human existence. It is only by participation in the power of New Being mediated to us through Jesus as the Christ, who conquers the threat of existential estrangement under the conditions of existence that humans can achieve salvation in the form of reunion (albeit temporarily, since the conditions of existence themselves remain unchanged) with their Creator. Thus, to the questions implied in the despair experienced by

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<sup>210</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 133.

<sup>211</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 133.

<sup>212</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 133.

<sup>213</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 134.

<sup>214</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 135.

humans in their existential condition of estrangement, Tillich correlates the symbol 'The Christ'.

## Part Four: Life and the Spirit

Unlike the preceding parts of the system, which focus on concepts such as essence and existence in the abstract, Part Four examines the actuality of being and the ambiguities involved in the life process. For Tillich, even the term 'life' has a multitude of meanings, so he begins this part of the system with a precise account of what is meant by the term 'life' itself.

Life is viewed in terms of being the opposite ontological pole to that of death, since death has 'always coloured the word life'<sup>215</sup>. It is the polar quality of the term life which allows it to mark out a group of 'existing beings' which over time change and at some stage will die. This group of existing beings can properly be called 'living beings'. Following from this definition, it is the potential of beings (either individuals or whole species) to actualise themselves, that has led to the ontological concept of the 'actuality of being'<sup>216</sup>. Within this concept of life, as we have seen in parts Two and Three of the system, there are two main qualifications of being – that of essence and that of existence. In order for the potentiality or essence of being to become actual, it must be subject to the conditions of existence, which include finitude and estrangement. Therefore, life necessarily implies an amalgam of both essence and existence.

Since the actualisation of the potential of all beings is a universal concept and as such a 'structural condition' of all beings, the term life according to Tillich refers not just to organic life but also the inorganic elements of our universe, which are capable of growth and degradation. Accordingly, planets and rocks must also be viewed in terms of life process. When addressing the concept of life then, Part Four of the System examines both the 'unity and diversity'<sup>217</sup> of all life in its essential nature – a concept Tillich refers to as the 'multidimensional unity of life'<sup>218</sup>. It is argued that it is only when the relation between the different dimensions of life are

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<sup>215</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Systemic Theology Volume III* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) p. 11.

<sup>216</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 11.

<sup>217</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 12.

<sup>218</sup> Although Tillich's concept of the Multidimensional Unity of Life is advanced during Part Four of his system, it will not be examined in depth at this juncture. Rather it will be examined in detail in Chapter Six, 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life' pp.144-159, where its impact on the status of animals in Tillich's system will be discussed.

understood that we have an adequate starting point for an exposition of the ambiguities inherent in all life and can thus ask meaningful questions regarding 'unambiguous life'<sup>219</sup>.

i. *The Concept of Levels and its Inadequacies*<sup>220</sup>

From Tillich's perspective, humans can only make sense of the huge diversity of beings they encounter by grouping them together using 'uniting principles'<sup>221</sup>. The most universal of these is a hierarchy, where beings are placed in an order based on their species and relative attributes. In using such an order, all being can be neatly allocated their place'<sup>222</sup>. Within the hierarchy, beings are assigned to their level based on a variety of ontological attributes, examples of which may be their 'degree of universality or a richer development of their potentiality'<sup>223</sup>. When viewed graphically, hierarchical orders are pyramidal in shape, with the number of species reducing in each level the closer they get to the top of the order.

Tillich's system however rejects the notion of a hierarchical order for a variety of reasons, not least of which is that there is no room for movement between the levels, resulting in complete independence from each other. The metaphor 'level' and the world view which underlies it mean that beings occupying different levels are not able to have any sort of positive relation and it is asserted the relation of the levels remains that of 'interference, either by control or revolt'<sup>224</sup>.

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<sup>219</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 18.

<sup>220</sup> For a fuller examination of Levels, Realms and Dimensions, see Chapter Six (pp. 144-159). Examining the Multidimensional Unity of Life.

<sup>221</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

<sup>222</sup> This may work in theory, but in practice it is unworkable. Evolutionary theory dictates that species are changing and adapting all the time so the notion that beings can be placed neatly into levels is not at all realistic. In addition, humans are learning more about the capacities of other living creatures at a pace. The understanding we have of the complexity of other species, particularly in their abilities to interact, communicate and learn (cognitive ethology) is still in its infancy and continually sheds new light on other species. This means that any conclusions we make regarding their 'level' in a particular hierarchy can only ever be speculative at best. For further discussion of how cognitive ethology could be helpful in assessing the grounds on which Tillich excludes other creatures from the dimensions of the spirit and the dimension of history, see Chapter Seven 'An Examination of the Method of Correlation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology* and ' (pp. 161-192).

<sup>223</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

<sup>224</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

The concept of level is exposed as faulty when the relationship between the levels is examined, especially in terms of cultural situations. Firstly, he highlights the problems of this structure in the relation between the organic and inorganic levels of nature. When there can be no dependence between the inorganic and the organic levels, questions are raised as to whether biological organic processes may be apprehended solely by viewing the world through the eyes of mathematical physics. From this perspective, the inorganic level can take over the organic level completely.

Problems are also apparent when considering the relation between the organic and the spiritual levels. This is most clearly evident in the relation between body and mind. If the mind and body are viewed to be occupying different levels, their relation can only be understood either by reducing the mental to the same level as the body, that is, the organic level, an approach Tillich refers to as 'biologism [and] psychologism'<sup>225</sup>. Alternatively, this can be achieved by positing the control (or interference) of the mental level impacting upon the organic level which the body occupies.

The inadequacies of viewing the world and everything in it in a rigid hierarchy are also evident when the relation between religion and culture is examined. If culture is seen to be the level in which humans are self-creative, that is, they are able to create and express themselves, and religion is the level in which humans receive the 'divine self-manifestation'<sup>226</sup>, this would give religion a superior status to that of culture, allowing religion to dominate and control culture. In religion's attempt to control our expressions of culture, such as art, science, ethics or politics, culture fights back (revolts), attempting to smother religion and downplay its superior status by subjugating it to the 'norms of autonomous reason'<sup>227</sup>.

The notion of independent levels of being poses serious questions for theological thought as well. If God and humanity are on different and independent levels within the hierarchical order, Tillich poses the question as to whether there can be any meaningful description at all regarding

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<sup>225</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 14.

<sup>226</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 14.

<sup>227</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 14.

the relation of God to humans. In order to explain their relation, he believes that one must resort to either religious dualism or 'theological supranaturalism'<sup>228</sup>. This is something he is opposed to on the grounds that supranaturalism is unacceptable to theology because it resorts to the literal interpretation of mythological imagery, which in its turn leads to a 'superstitious' outlook on the divine-human relationship.

ii. *The Ontological Polarities Under the Dimension of the Spirit*

The polarity of individualisation and participation is evident in the function of self-integration as it provides the basic principle of centeredness, which facilitates the drive towards actualisation. In order for a being to be individualised, it has to be centred. Although a centred being can create beyond itself, just as it can be separated from various aspects which make up its whole being and it can even be annihilated, nonetheless, its centeredness is non-divisible. In order for a being to be fully centred it must also be fully individualised. The full actualisation of centeredness, in Tillich's opinion, is limited to the human species only<sup>229</sup>

The term centeredness itself is derived from the geometric circle<sup>230</sup> and is used primarily to indicate anything which has an effect on any part of the sphere by implication affects the whole of the sphere. The metaphor 'centre' also includes in its meaning the ability to go out of itself and return to itself because if there is a centre then there must be a circumference, or border, inside which the elements which make up the life process are united.

Individualisation is the opposite pole to that of participation. In being fully individualised beings, humans are separate from each other. But in relation to the pole of participation, a fully individualised being is also a being capable of the greatest universal participation because such an individual can participate in each dimension within the world and in so doing, can incorporate elements it chooses into its centre. The process of self-integration under the

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<sup>228</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 15.

<sup>229</sup> See the discussion of what Cognitive Ethological insights can bring to Tillich's system in Chapter 7: An examination of the Method of Correlation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, pp. 161-192.

<sup>230</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 33.

dominance of the polarity of individualisation and participation involves an oscillation between the centre of the being and the 'manifoldness which is taken into the centre'<sup>231</sup>. Under this polarity, whilst it is the case that integration can take place, disintegration is equally possible. Disintegration may be defined either as the failure to integrate or as a failure to maintain such self-integration. This failure can occur towards either side of the polarity. Firstly, it may happen if the pole of individualisation becomes predominant, when, for example the centre fails to participate and therefore fails to grow. Secondly, if the pole of participation becomes predominant, the being can go out from its centre but fails to return, resulting in a weakening of the centre and ultimately leading to self-alienation. Because life is a mixture of both essence and existential distortion, like all other aspects of life, self-integration is ambiguous, containing elements of both integration and disintegration<sup>232</sup> in every life process.

Under the dimension of the spirit, humans have the capacity for complete centeredness, however, it only becomes effective when it is actualised via the use of finite freedom through destiny. This use of freedom through destiny can otherwise be described as moral acts. According to Tillich, morality is the means or visible expression by which the spirit realm is actualised. Morality is not humans obeying either human or divine law but 'an act in which life integrates itself within a community'<sup>233</sup>.

The dimension of the spirit is presupposed only in those beings that are fully centred selves and can therefore examine themselves and their world, thus freeing themselves from their environment. Under the dimension of the spirit, humans are not merely restricted to living in a given environment, rather they 'have a world'<sup>234</sup>.

Due to the fully centred nature of beings under the dimension of the spirit, humans have the ability not just to view their world, but also to ask questions about it and receive commands. In

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<sup>231</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 33.

<sup>232</sup> It does seem ironic that although humans in Tillich view are the only creatures who possess the capacity for self-disintegration, they nevertheless manage to be at the top of the moral hierarchy.

<sup>233</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 38.

<sup>234</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 38. In this assertion, Tillich assumes that only the human perspective of life is valid- there seems to be no room in Tillich's definition of the dimension spirit to ask what the creation actually means to its Creator.

failing to obey laws, humans are not displaying an inability to perform moral functions rather they are deferring their ability to 'moral disintegration'<sup>235</sup> and in so doing are acting against the power of their own spirit. Even in anti-moral acts however, humans are expressing their moral centeredness<sup>236</sup>.

### iii. *Religion Under the Dimension of the Spirit*

It is Tillich's assertion that religion, as the 'highest expression'<sup>237</sup> of the greatness and dignity of life is not without its ambiguities either. These ambiguities are two-fold, the first of these is the resistance of self-transcendence, otherwise referred to as the profane, whilst the second ambiguity inherent in religion is that of the demonic, which entails the identification of the 'bearer of holiness with the holy itself'<sup>238</sup>. We begin the examination of the ambiguities of religion with the first of these.

The first ambiguity of religion is visible in the way that profanised elements are involved in every religious act. This holds true both in institutional religion rituals and in the personal religious rituals of the individual. In its institutional form, rather than transcending the finite, in pursuit of the infinite, churches, their authorities and the rituals they uphold become a finite reality in themselves, resulting in their being reduced to 'a set of prescribed activities to be performed, a set of doctrines to be accepted'<sup>239</sup>.

Even if these profanising tendencies are openly acknowledged by the institutional religion, due to the ambiguities involved in all life process, including those under the dimension of the spirit, it would be impossible to remove such tendencies and arrive at a position of 'pure transcendence of holiness'<sup>240</sup>. By the same token, even in the most highly profanised types of religion, the greatness and dignity of that to which it points cannot be completely engulfed by the day to day reality of religious life. Ambiguity cannot be removed from either side of the

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<sup>235</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 9.

<sup>236</sup> It appears here that Tillich is claiming that even humans' sinfulness is a theological blessing.

<sup>237</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 98.

<sup>238</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p.102.

<sup>239</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 99.

<sup>240</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 100.



equation because although life is able to transcend itself, it remains true that at the same time it remains within itself and therefore ambiguity is effective in all forms of life.

In addition to the visible ambiguities inherent in institutional religion, ambiguity is also present in the reductionist attitude of culture and morality toward religion. Because culture provides the form in which religion can function, and morality provides the solemn nature of religion, religion can become reduced to culture and morality. Such a reduction entails that religious symbols become understood simply as expressions of self-creativity within culture. Religious symbols thereby lose their power to express any sort of transcendence. Once the claim of these symbols to express transcendence is rejected, religion can be reduced further and explained in terms of being a cognitive exercise with its basis lying in psychological or sociological sources rather than spiritual ones. From this point of view, religious symbols themselves can also be substituted for 'finite objects [and] ... in some types of non-objective art'<sup>241</sup>.

The second main type of ambiguity present within religion is that of the demonic. Unlike the profane, the demonic does not resist self-transcendence, rather it distorts it by taking on a perspective of ultimate concern; a perspective which is only appropriate to the unconditioned ground of being and meaning. Tillich posits that on this understanding of the demonic, all gods of polytheism must qualify for the term because the basis of their being and meaning may be grand but it is nonetheless finite rather than infinite.

Any form of self-elevation from the finite to the infinite is demonic and where this demonic self-elevation occurs, splits or fragmentation of the centred self appears. This cleavage is the result of a claim to infinity from a finite platform. If one element of finitude attempts to claim infinite power for itself, it produces a reaction from the other elements of finitude. This type of demonic self-elevation<sup>242</sup> (which contains at least an element of hubris) is best illustrated with reference to one nation's claim over against all other nations in the name of their nations God.

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<sup>241</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 101.

<sup>242</sup> The notion of demonic self-elevation will be examined in parts two and three of this dissertation in relation to the adequacy of Tillich's account of animals and creation. In particular, the question as to whether a theological view that only humans have access to the dimension of spirit, and history can really be thought of as representing the interests of the Creator with respect to creation. Chapter Four 'The Creator and Creation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, pp. 114-125 is especially relevant to this discussion.

The 'Holy Crusades' of the Christians against the Muslims provides a striking example of such a situation.

Having examined some of the ambiguities present in life processes in general, and under the dimension of the spirit in particular, it is necessary to also consider the ambiguities inherent in the 'historical' dimension of life.

## Part Five: History and the Kingdom of God

### i. *The Scope of the Dimension of history.*

In Part Five of his system, Tillich deals specifically with the historical dimension of life. He examines it separately from the realm of social existence because in his view it is 'the most embracing dimension'<sup>243</sup>. Although the historical dimension is potential in all realms of life, it is only fully actualised from the dimension of the spirit onwards. Therefore, he makes the distinction between 'natural history', where the historical dimension of history is present in every life process, and 'history proper', which only occurs in humans. Here, he sees the distinction between nature and history as analogous to the distinction between time and space. Nature is viewed in terms of quantitative, static time, as is space, whereas historical time is viewed as qualitative, dynamic time. On this basis, it is argued that it is important to differentiate between the historical dimension that can be attributed to all life processes and history proper.

The final part of the system is an extension of Part Four, which deals with the actuality of social existence. Although social existence forms a large part of any 'doctrine of life', Tillich believes that it must also include a doctrine of the historical dimension of life if it is to be comprehensive. That is, the ambiguities implied in self-integration, self-creation and self-transcendence under the dimension of the spirit also need to be considered in the entire history of morality, culture and religion. In answer to the ambiguities implied in the historical dimension of life, Tillich posits the symbols Kingdom of God and Eternal Life.

Throughout the final part of the system, the methodology of first discussing human history with its inherent ambiguities, and from this, attempts to expand the scope of the analysis to encompass the historical dimension in all realms of life processes, is employed. Finally, he wishes to 'relate human history to the 'history of the universe'<sup>244</sup>.

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<sup>243</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 297.

<sup>244</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 298.

As in the other parts of the system, the questions implied in human history are correlated to Christian symbols. In the case of the ambiguities in history proper, he advances the symbol Kingdom of God. This serves as answer to existential questions both within and above history. In its inner-historical sense, Kingdom of God expresses the inner aim or *telos* of history and may be correlated with questions such as: does history have any meaning? In its inner-historical sense, it also points towards the symbol Spiritual Presence as an answer to the ambiguities implied in life processes. In its transhistorical sense, Kingdom of God expresses the relation of the finite to the eternal ground of being and may be correlated with such questions as: do any creative acts of history survive finitude? In its transhistorical sense, the symbol Kingdom of God also points in a vertical direction to the Christian symbol of Eternal Life.

Because the symbol Eternal Life deals with eschatological questions, from a systematic point of view, it seems reasonable to deal with it at the end of the theological system. Eschatology, or 'the doctrine of the last things'<sup>245</sup> does not chronologically mean last things in Tillich's estimation, rather, it is concerned with the way in which the temporal relates to the eternal. And although this is true of every aspect of theology, he utilises the traditional structure of examining eschatology at the end of his system because many key Christian symbols have a temporal element to them. The doctrine of Creation uses 'past' to symbolise the relation of the finite to the eternal, whereas eschatology uses 'future' to illuminate the same relationship, and as Tillich points out, 'time in our experience runs from what is past to what is future'<sup>246</sup>.

Although it may seem a relatively linear path between the 'past' of creation and the 'future' of eschatology, this is not the case. Rather, their relation is dialectical because the question of where we are going is intrinsically linked to where we have come from. On this basis, 'only the valuation of the creation as good makes an eschatology of fulfilment possible; and only the idea of fulfilment makes the creation meaningful. The end of the system leads back to its beginning'<sup>247</sup>.

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<sup>245</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 298.

<sup>246</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 299.

<sup>247</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 299.

## ii. *Human Historical Existence*

Having given a brief overview of Part Five of the system, Tillich's thought on human historical existence needs now to be examined in greater detail.

The observing and reporting of any empirical fact involves both the objective side of that which is being observed and the subjective side of how the observer perceives and reports these facts<sup>248</sup>. In relation to history, Tillich states that the subjective side of the subject-object relationship is always dominant, and the fact that 'historical consciousness ... 'precedes' historical happenings'<sup>249</sup> indicates the primacy of the subjective nature of history. He uses this idea of preceding to point to the fact that historical consciousness turns mere occurrences into acts within history. Historical consciousness is passed down from generation to generation in the form of memories and writing, and only those events which are significant to the bearers of historical consciousness will be retold and thus become history.

History is not an impartial matter and as such there can be no such thing as an unbiased historical account. Historical reports then are to be understood as much a symbolic interpretation as they are reports of events in history. For Tillich, the material being passed down as history is an inseparable fusion of actual events and their symbolic interpretation. For something to be recorded in history it must be of significance to the reporter and to the group to whom the individual reports. Historical consciousness is the mechanism that determines which facts are to be reported in any given period of time and which are to remain unreported.

An individual's historical consciousness therefore is determined by the beliefs, morality and culture of the society to which they belong and this gives history proper both its subjective and ambiguous nature.

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<sup>248</sup> See Chapter Two: 'Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology', Part One: Reason and Revelation pp. 40-46 for a fuller account of the subject-object relationship. Also see Chapter Three 'Tillich's Concept of Technical Reason' pp. 98-113 for an examination of how the subject-object relationship effects human interactions with both humans and nonhuman animals.

<sup>249</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 300.

From the point of view of the dynamics of human history, all historical events have a 'double-structure'<sup>250</sup>. They move in a horizontal direction encompassing both intention and purpose. Events in history where actions have no purpose are to be considered mere events rather than historical occurrences. Human freedom allows us to decide upon actions and pursue them to a certain end. In human freedom we can create something which is qualitatively new, that is, which is not completely determined by any preceding historical situation. In this sense, history and historical consciousness follow the polarity of freedom and destiny. It is human freedom which separates the creation of the new in human history from the creation of the new in all other realms of life. Although there is creation of the new in nature, such as the occurrence of a new species of animal via the evolutionary process, Tillich asserts it is not free and therefore merely quantitatively new. In contrast, human freedom can be considered qualitatively new because it is directed, purposeful and 'related to meanings and values'<sup>251</sup>.

In Tillich's estimation historical events are significant for three main reasons: firstly, they represent essential human potentialities; secondly, they represent the actuality of these potentialities as 'unique embodiments of meaning'<sup>252</sup> and thirdly they represent development towards the aim of history and symbolise the *telos* of history itself.

Although human history is unique in its freedom and meaning, the historical dimension is potential (if not actualised) in all realms. Tillich accepts there is an inner aim present in all dimensions but based on the lack of purposeful, conscious directedness he argues that the inner aim of the historical in all other dimensions is only analogous to history proper.

### iii. *History Bearing Groups*

Having limited the scope of history to humans, Tillich examines the mechanisms that underlie history. Humans are social creatures and in accordance with the polarity of individualisation and participation, humans cannot actualise themselves as individuals unless they have participation with others. On these grounds he posits that it is in fact groups or communities

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<sup>250</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 302.

<sup>251</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 303.

<sup>252</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 304.

who are 'the bearers of history' whilst individuals are bearers of history only in an indirect way, as part of a social group.

There are a number of conditions that a group must be able to meet in order for it to be capable of being bearers of history. Firstly, it must be able to act in a 'centred way'<sup>253</sup>, that is, there must be some sort of leadership which functions to direct and unite its individual members and allows them to retain their identity as a group when faced with other communities. In addition to maintaining a sense of cohesion, order and belonging, the centred power of a social group must also have the wherewithal to remain in power when faced with other centred powers.

Tillich postulates the modern 'state' fulfils these conditions of being able to unite its members as well as fighting off take-over bids from rival communities. On this basis 'history is the history of states'<sup>254</sup>. Calling history the 'history of states' does not however rule out earlier configurations of communities from being bearers of history. For instance clans, tribes, cities and nations are all cited as fulfilling the conditions necessary for them to be bearers of history.

Within a history-bearing group many factors may influence the consciousness of the group besides those directly holding power. Factors such as economics, culture and religious organisation all have their part to play in establishing a group's identity, traditions and direction. This sense of direction in terms of a movement towards a particular aim or purpose is defined by Tillich as 'vocational consciousness' and may take different paths in different history-bearing groups. It may also differ in its strength and motivation in its drive towards its goal but is nonetheless ever present and has been 'since the earliest times of historical mankind'<sup>255</sup>. In all history-bearing groups in any period of time, a variety of factors influence vocational consciousness, however the political realm remains the predominant force since it constitutes the historical existence. Tillich argues that it is therefore no surprise that the Bible expresses the meaning of history as the political symbol Kingdom of God rather than a cultural or economic symbol.

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<sup>253</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 308.

<sup>254</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 309.

<sup>255</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 310.

Although the vocational consciousness of 'history bearing' groups may differ superficially, ultimately they all have similar underlying goals: those of self-integration, self-creativity and self-transcendence. Under the conditions of existence these functions of the spirit are ambiguous and whereas in Part Four of the system Tillich examines these ambiguities synchronically, in Part Five of the system they are analysed diachronically within the entire history of morality, culture and religion.

#### *iv. The Interpretation of History*

Before any answers can be advanced regarding the possibility of unambiguous historical life, Tillich argues we first must analyse how history is interpreted. As we have stated, history is never just repeated facts. The subject-object character of history means there are many levels of interpretation in any given historical account. The beliefs, values and culture of the particular history-bearing group to a large extent determine the choice of facts that are reported upon in any historical occurrence and the way in which they are reported. On this basis, history cannot be understood standing outside it. In his paper entitled *Kairos*, Tillich illuminates this need to interpret history from the point of view of participation: The meaning of history ... can be discovered only in meaningful historical activity. The key to history is active participation in the life of a historical group. The meaning of history manifests itself in the self-understanding of a historical group.<sup>256</sup> This definition of the interpretation of history is problematic though, because (as has been noted) the vocational consciousness of each history-bearing group is different. Therefore it is necessary to ask 'in which historical group must I participate to be given the universal law that opens up the meaning of history?'<sup>257</sup> The answer to the interpretation of history one arrives at then is determined upon which historical group one resides in.

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<sup>256</sup> Tillich- 'Kairos', cited James Luther Adams – 'Tillich's Interpretation of History' in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, Charles W Kegley & Robert W Bretall (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952) p. 295.

<sup>257</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 349.



Tillich points out that this is an inherent consequence of the theological circle<sup>258</sup> in which systematic theology resides. This circle is 'unavoidable'<sup>259</sup> whenever questions are posed regarding the ultimate aim and meaning of history.

His systematic theology resides in the Christian tradition and therefore Christian vocational consciousness determines any answers which may be gleaned with respect to the meaning of history. The symbolic answer Kingdom of God can be advanced to the question of the meaning of history. He does acknowledge, however, that this assertion needs to be tested against other interpretations of history and the symbol Kingdom of God must also be reinterpreted in the light of these differing interpretations of history.

He identifies two main categories of thought with respect to the interpretation of history: the non-historical and the historical. The non-historical interpretations can be subdivided into three different formulations. Firstly 'the tragic' which was predominant in ancient Greek thought and posits history progressing through creation; a falling away from created goodness, and death, returning to its beginning in a circular motion. Secondly, 'the mystical' non-historical interpretation is identified, which is particularly evident in some Hindu thought and in Buddhism. This view does not credit history with any inherent meaning or purpose in itself. Rather than history being the history of groups, nations or empires, in this interpretation history only relates to the individual. The individual lives within history with the ultimate aim of reaching enlightenment and being able to recognise 'the human predicament'<sup>260</sup>.

Thirdly, Tillich identifies the 'mechanistic' non-historical interpretation. He uses the term mechanistic to denote a 'reductionistic naturalism'<sup>261</sup>. On this interpretation, although history may be an interesting, noteworthy area of study, it does not posit any aim towards which history is heading, either within history itself or above it. Nor does it allow that history has any great significance in informing us about the human existential state generally. Tillich rejects

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<sup>258</sup> For a fuller explanation of what Tillich means by the term 'theological circle' see Chapter One 'The Shape of Tillich's System' pp. 19-39.

<sup>259</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 349.

<sup>260</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 351.

<sup>261</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 349.

each of these non-historical interpretations of history because none of them allows history to be moving towards either an inner historical or a transhistorical aim and therefore none of them provides any answers to the meaning of history or the transhistorical *telos* of existence generally.

Further, he highlights two historical interpretations of history, progressivism and utopianism. Progressivism as expounded by Neo-Kantianists views progression not just as an empirical fact but instead 'use it as a quasi-religious symbol [to] indicate history marching forwards'<sup>262</sup> towards an inner-historical goal. On this view, reality is purely and simply about creation of the new without limits. Although utopianism shares its basic view of history with progressivism, it goes a step further and posits a definite inner-historical aim, that of the arrival at a stage in history in which the ambiguities of life are conquered. Utopianism envisages a progressivistic drive that will end in 'revolutionary action'<sup>263</sup> that will ultimately transform the nature of existence and result in the final stage of unambiguous history.

Tillich describes utopianism as the political expression for the 'wholly other and wholly new [which springs out of] the dissatisfaction which makes the human being human'<sup>264</sup> and although utopian ideals offer insight into the estrangement of the human condition, he argues this view is inadequate and can be destructive if taken literally rather than symbolically. One of the primary problems with the literal interpretation of the symbol of utopia is that it elevates the conditioned reality to the status of the unconditioned. Not only is this elevation of the finite to unconditional status 'idolatrous'<sup>265</sup> but because it cannot be achieved inner-historically, it leads to 'existential disappointment' resulting in apathy, dissatisfaction and despair in individuals and 'split consciousness in leading groups, fanaticism and tyranny'<sup>266</sup>.

Having rejected these non-historical and historical interpretations of history, Tillich reasserts the symbol of Kingdom of God in answer to the meaning of history. He posits it is an adequate

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<sup>262</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 353.

<sup>263</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 354.

<sup>264</sup> Tillich – 'Utopie' *Gesammelte Werke XII*, p. 172, cited John R Stumme – '*Socialism in Theological Perspective: A Study of Paul Tillich, 1918 – 1933*, (Montana: Scholars Press, 1978) p.188.

<sup>265</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 355.

<sup>266</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 356.

symbol to express the answer to the ambiguities of history because it incorporates both the inner-historical and transhistorical aspects within it. In its inner-historical sense, Kingdom of God 'participates in the dynamics of history' whilst in its transhistorical sense, it 'answers the questions implied in the ambiguities of the dynamics of history'<sup>267</sup>.

He elucidates four main characteristics of the symbol Kingdom of God which he feels make it a particularly appropriate symbol to express the meaning and *telos* of history. The first characteristic of the Kingdom of God is that of the political, which he argues is in keeping with the predominance of political activity within the dynamics of history. In Old Testament thinking the emphasis was more firmly placed on the Kingdom, which belonged to God, whilst in 'later Judaism and the New Testament'<sup>268</sup> the emphasis shifted to God as ruler of the Kingdom. In both interpretations however both elements of ruler and Kingdom were present in this symbol.

The second characteristic of the Kingdom of God identified by Tillich is that it is social in nature. This allows it to include in itself the notions of justice and peace, and in so doing it encompasses the utopian ideal. Tillich argues however that by 'the addition of God ... the impossibility of an earthly fulfilment is implicitly acknowledged'<sup>269</sup>, thus liberating the symbol from the utopian expectations of a perfect unambiguous age on earth at some future time in history.

The third characteristic is the personalistic element of the symbol. The metaphorical citizenship the Kingdom of God implies stresses the importance of the individual in history rather than exclusively emphasising one's reunion with the unconditioned. The fourth characteristic is that of universality. Tillich asserts that in the light of the principle of the multidimensional unity of life<sup>270</sup> the Kingdom of God stands for fulfilment not simply in the historical dimension because 'fulfilment under one dimension implies fulfilment in all dimensions'<sup>271</sup>.

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<sup>267</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 357.

<sup>268</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 358.

<sup>269</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 358.

<sup>270</sup> For a fuller analysis of the multidimensional unity of life see Tillich, *ST III*, Part IV IA.

<sup>271</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 359.

The notion that the personal and social elements of the fulfilment of human history are maintained whilst at the same time transcended is found not only in the symbol Kingdom of God but is also expressed in the statement by Paul that 'God will be all in all' and in the mystical symbols in the Fourth Gospel such as 'friendship with God'<sup>272</sup>.

v. *The Relationship Between History and Salvation*

Having asserted the adequacy and scope of the Kingdom of God as answer to the ultimate meaning and aim of history, he goes on to examine the relationship between history and salvation. The relation between history 'as a result of human creativity'<sup>273</sup> and salvation is not a straightforward linear one because the ambiguities of life affect all dimensions, including the historical, and salvation stands in opposition to these ambiguities of life. In the interpretation of history, Tillich writes of this relationship 'dialectic grasps truth only when the ideas themselves are dialectical. Thus from an art of discovering relationships, dialectics becomes an expression for a certain kind of relationship'<sup>274</sup>.

Although salvation stands in opposition to the ambiguities of history, at the same time its 'saving power breaks into history, works through history but is not created by history'<sup>275</sup>. On this basis the question arises as to how the history of salvation can become manifest in world history. The answer here according to Tillich is found in the manifestation of the Kingdom of God within history.

For Christianity, the appearance of the Christ is the centre of history. However, this does not mean 'centre' in terms of any quantifiable measurement and certainly not the chronological centre of time. Rather, it is a metaphorical centre which describes 'a moment in history for which everything before and after is both preparation and reception. As such it is both criterion and source of the saving power in history'<sup>276</sup>. In order for humans to receive Christ as the

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<sup>272</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Theology of Peace*, trans. Ronald H Stone (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990) p. 34.

<sup>273</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 362.

<sup>274</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The Interpretation of History*, trans. N.A. Rosetski and Elsa L. Talmay (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1936) p. 165.

<sup>275</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 363.

<sup>276</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 364.

centre of history, a progression from immaturity to maturity is required. Although this progression of maturation is effective in all periods of history, and indeed is an on-going process to the present day, particular preconditions are necessary for the reception of the manifestation of the Christ as the centre of history. In Tillich's estimation, these particular preconditions are met by the Old Testament as it contains 'an original history of preparation for the centre, leading to its appearance in time and space; and this is the history of the church'<sup>277</sup>.

In *Theology of Peace*, Tillich indicates that belief in Christ as the centre of history is essential for Christianity and has an impact upon the way history is thought of generally; 'the fact that Christian nations speak of a period before [B.C.] and a period after Christ [A.D.] shows how deeply Christian consciousness is penetrated by the belief in Christ as the centre of history'<sup>278</sup>

History is a dynamic process and if the Christ is viewed as the centre of history, it naturally leads to questions regarding the beginning and end of history. In its suprahistorical sense, history begins with 'the Fall'<sup>279</sup> and will end in 'the final consummation of the parousia of Christ'<sup>280</sup>. However, in its inner-historical meaning, the beginning in relation to the Kingdom of God can be defined as 'the moment man becomes aware of the ultimate question of his estranged predicament and of his destiny to overcome this predicament'<sup>281</sup>. And the inner-historical end of the Kingdom of God will be 'the moment in which mankind ceased to ask questions of its predicament'<sup>282</sup>.

The point at which human maturity has developed enough to be able to receive the central manifestation of the kingdom of God in history is referred to in the New Testament as the *kairos* or the 'fulfilment of time'<sup>283</sup>. In its original Greek, *kairos* means right time however Tillich uses it in a more prophetic way to mean the time in which 'all time gains its meaning and

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<sup>277</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 366.

<sup>278</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 36.

<sup>279</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 36.

<sup>280</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 37.

<sup>281</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 366.

<sup>282</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 366.

<sup>283</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 369.

qualification'<sup>284</sup>. In his prophetic emphasis of the term *kairos*, he remains within the bounds of the New Testament usage of the concept. Jesus uses the notion of *kairos* to define the future event of his passion and death and both John the Baptist and Jesus use the term in relation to the imminence of the Kingdom of God. Paul also uses *kairos* when discussing the moment God sent his son to the world. Since this moment became the centre of history, Tillich describes it as the 'Great *kairos*'<sup>285</sup>.

In addition to the great *kairos*, there are many relative *kairoi* which do not indicate the perfect completion of time but rather represent 'fulfilled time, the moment of time which is invaded by eternity'<sup>286</sup>. These fragmentary breakthroughs allow the Kingdom of God to be re-experienced, although only transitorily.

It is appropriate at this stage to inquire as to the relationship of the Kingdom of God to the churches themselves. In the social dimension of life, the churches are the ambiguous embodiment of the Spiritual Community and in this role the churches both reveal and conceal the spiritual community. Under the historical dimension, churches are the representatives of the Kingdom of God. Tillich posits that these differing emphases under different dimensions do not contradict each other though because the Kingdom of God includes the Spiritual Community and more, since the historical dimension impacts upon all dimensions of life. It is in this universal respect that the churches can be understood as representing the Kingdom of God.

Because of the ambiguities inherent in all life under the historical dimension, the churches representation of the Kingdom of God may well conceal and misrepresent as much as it represents and illuminates. Tillich asserts that these misrepresentations are nonetheless 'rooted in [their] function of representing'<sup>287</sup>. When misrepresentations occur, this does not prohibit the churches from remaining representatives of the Kingdom of God since 'distorted spirit is still spirit; [and] distorted holiness is still holiness'<sup>288</sup>.

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<sup>284</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 37.

<sup>285</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 370.

<sup>286</sup> Tillich, 'Kairos' in Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, Ed. James Luther Adams (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1948) p. 42.

<sup>287</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 375.

<sup>288</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 375.

vi. *The Inner-Historical and Transhistorical Functions of the Kingdom of God*

The churches are involved both in the inner-historical and transhistorical functions of the Kingdom of God, that is, both in the temporal conflicts of the Kingdom of God against the distortions and demonization which are inherent in all life under the conditions of existence and in the transcendent aim towards which history is moving. The churches task then is both to bear witness to and prepare for the Kingdom of God, in its inner and transhistorical manifestations.

Inner-historical manifestations of the Kingdom of God, although transitory and fragmentary, actually point towards the final transhistorical element of the Kingdom of God. Tillich uses the term 'end of history' to describe transhistorical Kingdom of God because end means both 'finish and aim'<sup>289</sup>. The notion of finishing relates to the inner-historical reality that at some stage 'human history, life on earth ... will come to an end; they will cease to exist in time and space'<sup>290</sup>. In contrast, the aim aspect implied in the term 'end' indicates the final destination or purpose of the temporal process. In theological terms, the 'aim' side of the end is of the greatest significance. The finish side is only theologically important in the respect that it 'demythologises the dramatic transcendent symbolism concerning the end of historical time, as given in the apocalyptic literature and in some biblical ideas'<sup>291</sup>.

The end of history from the point of view of its aim is far from over when historical time ceases to exist. Instead, the aim of history is eternity, or put symbolically 'Eternal Life'. The doctrine of eschatology (derived from the Greek word *eschatos*, meaning 'last things') is the Christian symbol used to express the progression from the finite to the eternal. It is a transitional symbol and similar transitional symbols appear throughout Christianity as a means of indicating the relation of the temporal to the eternal. The transition from the eternal to the temporal is symbolised by the Creation, the transition from essence to existence is symbolised by the Fall and the transition from existence to essence is symbolised by Salvation.

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<sup>289</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 393.

<sup>290</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 394.

<sup>291</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 394.

Rather than using the term *eschatos* to discuss the relation of the finite to the eternal, Tillich uses the singular (*eschaton*) and in so doing, he wishes to emphasise the fact that rather than eschatology pointing to some distant apocalypse, it actually expresses our daily situation of being in time, while facing the eternal. So, while the *eschaton* points to the ultimate aim of the finite returning to its ground of being, it also indicates the inner-historical reality of our existence. For Tillich, it is this double emphasis which gives the eschatological symbol 'its urgency and its seriousness'<sup>292</sup>.

The fulfilment of history then, lies in the permanently present end of history, which is the transcendent side of the Kingdom of God. This statement however raises questions as to the relationship of history to Eternal Life. In answer, Tillich asserts the dynamic and creative nature of this relationship allows the elevation of the positive constituents of history into the eternal life whilst rejecting all that is negative. According to this answer, every positive created act in history is incorporated into the eternal, while the negative is excluded from participation and left to its finitude. Therefore, the positive is transformed into the 'unambiguously positive' and the negative is transformed into the 'unambiguously negative'. It follows from this that eternal life includes the positive content of history 'liberated from its negative distortions and fulfilled in its potentialities'<sup>293</sup>.

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<sup>292</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 396.

<sup>293</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 397.



**Part II:**

**A Critique of Key Tillichian Concepts and their Adequacy in  
Relation to Animals and Creation**

## Chapter Three

### Tillich's Concept of Technical Reason

In the following section, Tillich's concept of reason is examined to establish whether or not he gives an adequate account of its implications under the influence of existential distortion, especially in relation to nonhuman animals.

Firstly, the structure of reason will be considered along with the relationship between essential controlling and essential receiving reason (and the ontological poles of participation and detachment which they are related to). Following from this, the impact of the predominance of controlling knowledge (or in its more limited sense, technical reason) under the influence of existential disruption (actual reason) will be examined; both from a general perspective and more specifically with respect to any insights highlighted in relation to animals specifically and creation in general. Whether or not Tillich makes adequate account of the problems actual reason cause in human attitudes to animals will also be assessed.

Secondly, the claim by Tillich that his *Systematic Theology* is indebted to Albert Schweitzer's ethic of 'Reverence for Life' with respect to his treatment of the predominance of reason will be considered. In order to do this, a brief exposition of what Schweitzer has to say regarding the ethical status of natural life will be compared to Tillich's analysis of animals. Also, Tillich's analysis of animal utilisation will be compared and contrasted with the indirect duty ethic of Kant, in order to assess whether or not there are any similarities between these positions.

#### i. *Two Concepts of Reason*

As briefly mentioned in the exposition of part one of Tillich's system, he identifies two concepts of reason. The first of these is ontological reason or 'the structure of the mind which enables the mind to grasp and to transform reality'<sup>294</sup>. Ontological reason for Tillich is the only means by which meanings, structures, processes and values may be apprehended.

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<sup>294</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 71.

Secondly he highlights the concept of technical reason or reasoning. Technical reason constitutes the cognitive methods we employ to gain knowledge of ourselves and the world around us. In making a critical analysis of certain features of Tillich's systematic theology, I am in fact using technical reason.

Technical reason is not to be viewed as inherently dangerous or faulty if it is used in combination with ontological reason. It is simply an instrument and 'like every instrument it can be more or less perfect and can be used more or less skilfully'<sup>295</sup>. It does become dangerous or faulty however when it is used as our sole means of evaluation. If relied upon in isolation, Tillich affirms that no matter how refined and logical it may be methodologically, technical reason 'dehumanizes man if it is separated from ontological reason [becoming] ... impoverished and corrupted if it is not continually nourished by ontological reason'<sup>296</sup>. In addition, he points out that it would be virtually impossible to completely separate technical reason from its ontological counterpart even if it were desirable to do so because even in means-to-ends structures of reasoning, assertions regarding 'the nature of things are presupposed which themselves are not based on technical reason'<sup>297</sup>.

He further separates ontological reason into two elements; subjective reason, that is, the rational structure of the mind, and objective reason, or the rational structure of reality. These elements are intrinsically linked since 'subjective reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and shape reality on the basis of a corresponding structure of [objective reason]'<sup>298</sup>. In opposition to technical reason, which statically examines a concrete situation, ontological reason in both its subjective and objective elements is dynamic. Our ability to grasp and shape reality is no more or less dynamic than the structure of reality which we are attempting to apprehend and manipulate.

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<sup>295</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 74.

<sup>296</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 73.

<sup>297</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 73.

<sup>298</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 76.

In order for humans to keep an appropriate balance between technical and ontological reason, in both its objective and subjective forms, Tillich points to the depth of reason, which may be described as 'Being-itself'. Being itself, is the reason which (metaphorically) precedes reason, that is, the ground of being and meaning. In essential reason, our own reason remains linked to its ground, which keeps it balanced.

In terms of the subject-object relationship, in every act of knowing, there is a union between the subject and object in which the gulf between them is bridged '... the subject "grasps" the object, adapts it to itself, and at the same time, adapts itself to the object'<sup>299</sup>. Paradoxically, this unity of subject and object in every act of knowing can only take place if there is a measure of distance between them. The subject must remain separate from the object in order to be able to view it. This notion is implicitly understood, not just in philosophical and theological terms, but in our lives generally, and although it may receive little or no conscious consideration, its presence is evidenced in the fact that it is common when struggling to arrive at an answer to a dilemma, to be advised to 'take a step back' in order to see the problem more clearly.

Knowledge in its essential nature, gives equal weight to both the ontological poles of union and detachment between the subject and object, as nothing can truly be known about anything unless both of these poles are active. It is true to say however that various human cognitive activities lean more towards the pole of union or that of detachment. Controlling knowledge, leans more towards the pole of detachment, and this is the favoured methodological approach of science and mathematics. The very term controlling, highlights the 'ultimate connection between scientific discovery and technical application, a connection that reaches into the depth of the method itself, into analysis, experiment and hypothesis'<sup>300</sup>. In contrast to the scientific emphasis on gaining knowledge through detachment and separation, metaphysics leans towards the union side of the polarity, with a strong emphasis on gaining knowledge through participation with the subject.

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<sup>299</sup>Tillich, *STI*, p. 94.

<sup>300</sup> Tillich, 'Participation and Knowledge: Problems of an Ontological Cognition', *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1988) p. 69.

In either case, Tillich argues it is only possible to have any knowledge at all because, to a certain degree, both the poles of union and detachment are active in each act of knowing. A further condition for being able to know anything is that of being a complete self, that is, a being separate from, rather than determined by one's environment:

Environmental theories of man do not take into account that in order to have a theory, namely something that claims to be universally valid, man must have transcended his environment and have a world. A being that is environmentally determined cannot fulfil the conditions of knowledge that we have called self-containment and detachment. A being that is determined by its environment is not a complete self, and therefore it is incapable of true self-containment. Nor is it capable of complete detachment, for it is essentially a part of its environment.<sup>301</sup>

Tillich initially arrived at his definitions of controlling and receiving knowledge from three terms used by Max Scheler in his book *Versuche Zu Einer Sociologie Wissens*. In this volume, Scheler puts forward three definitions of knowledge<sup>302</sup>; *hielwissen* (saving knowledge), *bildungswissen* (educational knowledge) and *herrschaftswissen* (controlling knowledge). Firstly, he dispenses with the category of educational knowledge as he does not believe that it constitutes a 'special cognitive type'<sup>303</sup>. Secondly, in order for saving knowledge to have suitable scope, Tillich extends the concept to encompass what he describes as existential knowledge, that is, all knowledge pertaining to existence. In his systematic theology, this term comes under the heading of receiving knowledge and corresponds to the pole of union and participation in the ontological polarity. Finally he leaves the concept of controlling knowledge more or less unchanged, correlating it to the pole of detachment and separation in our knowledge of reality.

As previously noted, finite reason is neither good nor bad in its essential state. However, under the conditions of existence, ontological knowledge is influenced by existential estrangement from its ground, or the depth of reason. Under existential distortion, although the unity

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<sup>301</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 67. Notice here the similarity between Tillich's condition for knowledge and the First formulation of Kant's Categorical Imperative in *Groundwork of The Metaphysic of Morals*. Also, from a practical point of view, any dog owner knows that Tillich's contention that only a being who can transcend its environment (i.e. only the human species) can have any knowledge of anything at all is patently untrue. When I pick up my dogs leads, their excited behaviour leaves me in absolutely no doubt that they know I am about to take them for a walk.

<sup>302</sup> See Tillich, 'Participation and Knowledge' in *The Spiritual Situation*, p.68f.

<sup>303</sup> Tillich, 'Participation and Knowledge' in *The Spiritual Situation*, p.69.

between subject and object is not completely destroyed, the balance is tipped overwhelmingly in favour of the pole of detachment. The 'harmonious balance'<sup>304</sup> seen in essential reason between ontological and technical reason is lost and actual reason becomes distorted. This in turn has some devastating consequences for the way we view and interact with each other and the world as a whole.

According to Mark Thomas, technical society for Tillich is 'both creative and destructive'.<sup>305</sup> It is creative in terms of its cultural and artistic achievements but also highly destructive in the way controlling or technical reason has become predominant, thus distorting our view of ourselves and the world.

#### ii. *Ambiguities of Technical Production*

In Volume Three of *Systematic Theology*, three ambiguities relating to technical production are illuminated; the ambiguity of freedom and limitation, ambiguity of means and ends and the ambiguity of self and thing. Under the conditions of existence, technical reason becomes limitless - the more humans produce, the more they want. This situation results in the production of the means (the tools, gadgets et cetera) becoming ends in themselves. It is argued that it is this trend of always pursuing greater and greater technological advances which is 'largely responsible for the emptiness of contemporary life'.<sup>306</sup>

The ambiguity of 'self and thing' is in Tillich's opinion, the most damaging of the ambiguities relating to technical production and is responsible in no small part for the estrangement humans experience from themselves, others and the world.

Although controlling knowledge can be an appropriate way of examining metal for instance; a material which can be manufactured and put to technical use, it certainly is not an appropriate means of dealing with other humans. In Tillich's estimation, it is absolutely vital that humans are not objectified in this way

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<sup>304</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 86.

<sup>305</sup> Thomas, Mark J. in Tillich, *The Spiritual Situation in our Technical Society*, Introduction, p. xiv.

<sup>306</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 74.

... if his resistance to it [objectification] is broken, man himself is broken. A truly objective relation to man is determined by the element of union; the element of detachment is secondary. It is not absent ... but this is neither the way of knowing human nature nor is it the way of knowing any individual personality in past or present, including one's self<sup>307</sup>

For Tillich then, the only appropriate cognitive attitude towards humans is based on an emphasis of receiving knowledge, which under no circumstances is 'determined by the means-end relationship'.<sup>308</sup>

In the case of receiving knowledge, the object is taken into union with the subject, rather than being controlled by it. This cognitive union cannot be complete without containing an emotional element to it since union without participation is meaningless and empty.

Under the influence of existential distortion, 'controlling knowledge claims every level of reality. Life, spirit, personality, community, meanings, values, even one's ultimate concern should be treated in terms of detachment, analysis, calculation, technical use'<sup>309</sup>, and in Tillich's opinion, it is primarily this tendency towards modern day analytical philosophy which is 'ultimately related to the understanding of man as a thing – first as creating things, and then as becoming a thing himself'.<sup>310</sup>

The imbalance in the way of viewing ourselves and the world has dangerous consequences, ultimately resulting in

[a] rapid decay in spiritual life (not only Spiritual) life, an estrangement from nature and most dangerous of all, a dealing with human beings as with things ... that which can be known only by participation and union, that which is the object of receiving knowledge, is disregarded. Man actually has become what controlling knowledge considers him to be, a thing among things, a cog in the dominating machine of production and consumption, a dehumanized object of tyranny or a normalized object of public communications. Cognitive dehumanization has produced actual dehumanization.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 98

<sup>308</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 98. Note here, Tillich asserts it is never acceptable to view humans in terms of means-end relation, but makes no such claim regarding our cognitive approach to other animal species.

<sup>309</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 99.

<sup>310</sup> Tillich, 'Thing and Self' in *The Spiritual Situation*, p. 117.

<sup>311</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 99.

When Tillich mentions the resultant effects of treating beings (which can only be apprehended via a predominant emphasis on receiving, rather than controlling knowledge) as things, he limits his lamentations to the negative effects this has on humans. Although he mentions human estrangement from nature, his emphasis is firmly placed on the humanocentric implications of such estrangement, without any apparent consideration of how this might impact upon the rest of creation, which are considered as mere things by this cognitive approach.

In relation to the natural order in general, and animals in particular, the predominance of technical reason under the conditions of existence has a devastating effect. Controlling knowledge does not engage on an emotional level with its object, as we have seen with humans. It only unites subject with object for the purpose of the subject taking complete control of the object and transforming it into a completely calculable 'thing'. Under the predominance of controlling reason, the object loses any equality in its relation to the subject. On this understanding, 'controlling knowledge looks upon its object as something which cannot return its look.'<sup>312</sup> As Peter Manley Scott asserts: 'animals are part of the commodification of nature ... animals are both brought into the human economy and rendered alien. That is, they are commodified and subjected to production processes'<sup>313</sup>.

In his lecture entitled '*Thing and Self*', Tillich highlights exactly this distinction between viewing an object in primarily the receiving sense, and viewing it in the primarily controlling sense. He tells the students attending his lecture:

In this moment, I am an object for you (you look at me) and you are an object for me (I look at you). But there is a difference. This fact does not mean that you are mere objects. Maybe I could desire to do so, and certainly I *would* desire to do so ... if I were an experimenter in a laboratory of conditioned reflexes. But I do not want to do this even if I could.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 97. This description bears an uncanny resemblance to the relation between animal test subjects in laboratories and the human researchers who conduct tests on them and impartially record the results.

<sup>313</sup> Peter Manley Scott, 'Slouching towards Jerusalem? An Anti-Human Theology of Rough Beasts and other Animals' in Drummond, Celia Deane, and David Clough (Eds.) *Creaturely Theology: On God, Humans and Other Animals* (London: SCM Press, 2009) pp.178-189 p. 178.

<sup>314</sup> Tillich, '*Thing and Self*', in *The Spiritual Situation*, p. 113 [Tillich's italics]



### iii. *Ethical Implications of Thing and Self*

In addition to pointing out the major practical (and in turn ethical) implications of controlling knowledge becoming dominant over against receiving knowledge, in the same lecture, he also goes on to indicate the distinction between logical objects and existential objects:

Everything, even God can become a logical object. I can speak about him as I can speak about everything ... although everything in the world can become a logical object, nothing in nature, not even an atom, is only or merely an existential object. Everything in nature shows resistance against becoming a mere object. But here is a power that may be able to transform it into an object that is only an object, an existential object. This power is man. The existential object in difference from the logical object, is a product of man.<sup>315</sup>

Tillich discusses the situation regarding animals being turned into mere things, but makes no reference to the ethical implications of humans ascribing mere utilitarian value to the natural world. This would have been especially relevant in the context of the use of animals in farming, for sport, for entertainment and for scientific research. The predominance of controlling knowledge in relation to animals then, is not simply objectification in a logical sense, but in turn, this results in objectification in an ethical sense. Because if an animal is just a 'thing' then no consideration needs to be taken of how it is used or whether this use causes harm or suffering to the animal.

Natural objects however are not mere 'things'. Tillich argues everything that participates in the self-world structure has to a greater or lesser extent, subjectivity. All organic life contains both spontaneity and centeredness within its structure. This is the 'universal character'<sup>316</sup> of the created order. Time and again in his formulation of the multidimensional unity of life<sup>317</sup>, he affirms the relatedness of the whole created order. So although some objects can properly be described as things (in the strict technical sense of implements or mechanical objects designed to be means-to-ends) animals, unless pushed into these roles by humans, are not and should not be viewed as such.

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<sup>315</sup> Tillich, 'Thing and Self,' in *The Spiritual Situation*, p. 13.

<sup>316</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 115.

<sup>317</sup> For a full examination of Tillich's this concept, see Chapter Six, 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life', pp. 144-159.

In Volume Three of his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich hints at the ultimate ethical implication for animals under the predominance of technical reason:

‘it belongs to man’s freedom in the technical act that he can transform natural objects into things: trees into wood, horses into horsepower, men into quantities of workpower ... in transforming objects into things, he destroys their natural structures and relations.’<sup>318</sup>

Here, Tillich also could have said: turns foxes, deer, rabbit, fish etc. into sport to be hunted, circus, zoo animals and race horses into objects for human entertainment, battery hens into egg laying machines, cows into milk, leather and beef producing units and laboratory animals into things for humans to test their behavioural theories, medicines, surgical techniques and even cosmetics on.

As is evident in his lecture ‘Thing and Self’ that Tillich gives consideration to the way turning humans into things, impacts upon them ethically. However, he is silent when it comes to the ethical implications of treating animals as tools and commodities. Rather than exhibiting ethical concern for natural, ‘logical objects’, being stripped of their subjectivity and being reduced to existential things which may be used by humans at will, he focuses entirely on the humanocentric consequences of such acts. In this regard he states that ‘something happens to man when he does this [transforms natural objects into things] as it happens to the objects which he transforms. He himself becomes a thing among things. His own self loses itself in objects with which he cannot communicate.’<sup>319</sup>

It is clear that Tillich believes it is damaging when humans allow themselves to ‘become[s] a thing by virtue of producing and directing mere things’<sup>320</sup>, but in his *Systematic Theology*, he appears to have failed to consider the harm this commodification does to the animal which is turned into a thing for human use. This humanocentric perspective of the issue is also echoed in his book *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message* where he states ‘today we have to resist the meaningless ‘forwardism’ determining our inner and outer existence. Most of

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<sup>318</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 74.

<sup>319</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 74.

<sup>320</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 74.

us can offer this resistance only as victims of the structures of objectification'.<sup>321</sup> At no point does he mention how this meaningless 'forwardism' affects the other species of animal caught up in its grip.

A serious problem in Tillich's commentary here is not so much that he does not recognise or take account of the way humans view and treat the natural order generally, and animals specifically, under the predominance of technical reason. On the contrary, it is clear that he does recognise it. The real problem is that he is so preoccupied with how this impacts on humans (how humans lose their independent self, are enslaved by their technical advances and lose their ability to commune with the natural world) that he fails to give an adequate account (either ethically or theologically) of how this affects animals, and so affects humans as well.

Time and again, when examining the predominance of technical reason in his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich misses opportunities to address the spiritual poverty exhibited in the usual human classification of animals. These omissions beg the question: if the rest of the created order is rightly considered to be for the utilisation of humans, what does this say about the Creator? Tillich's failure to represent the intrinsic worth of the whole of creation throughout his system, means that he fails to give adequate consideration to *its* Creator. This is surely a deficiency. Tillich, however, is by no means alone among Christian theologians. Carol Adams explains that throughout the history of Christian thought, animals and creation have been 'marginalised' to the point of 'invisibility as anything other than a resource for human use'.<sup>322</sup>

In other Tillichian literature however, a more positive view emerges, one which is less humanocentric and more focused on the inherent worth of animals as part of God's creation. In *Love, Power and Justice*, he writes: 'every organism, natural as well as social, is a power of being and a bearer of an intrinsic claim for justice because it is based on some form of reuniting

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<sup>321</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1996) p. 61.

<sup>322</sup> Adams, Carol *Neither Man Nor Beast: Feminism and the Defence of Animals* (New York: Continuum, 1994) p. 203.

love'<sup>323</sup>. In contrast to his *Systematic Theology*, here we see the emphasis being placed on God's love for *Her* creation and the fact that this love entitles animals, along with everything else in the created order, to a certain level of ethical consideration – if not in practice, then certainly in principle. A similar emphasis is also evident in *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* where he argues that the doctrine of creation 'emphasises the dependence on God of everything created and consequently, the ethical goodness of creation.'<sup>324</sup>

#### iv. Schweitzer's Influence on Tillich

These more positive texts notwithstanding, certainly from the point of view of examining his *Systematic Theology*, it might seem surprising that Tillich states, in many ways, his philosophical theology is indebted to Albert Schweitzer and specifically to Schweitzer' ethic of 'Reverence for Life'. But in an interview given to Jerald Brauer, first aired in the USA on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1959, Tillich makes this claim.

Schweitzer stated in his book *The Philosophy of Culture* (as elsewhere in various papers given on the topic of his notion of 'Reverence for Life') that the ethical person is one who:

... tears no leaf from a tree, plucks no flower, and takes care to crush no insect, If in the summer he is working by lamplight, he prefers to keep the window shut and breathe a stuffy atmosphere rather than see one insect after another fall with singed wings upon his table.

If he walks on the road after a shower and sees an earthworm which has strayed on to it, he bethinks himself that it must get dried up in the sun, if it does not return soon enough to ground into which it can burrow, so he lifts it from the deadly stone surface, and puts it on grass. If he comes across an insect which has fallen into a puddle, he stops a moment in order to hold out a leaf or a stalk on which it can save itself<sup>325</sup>.

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<sup>323</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications*, (Oxford: OUP, 1954), p. 98. This emphasis is also evident in Tillich, Paul *The Shaking of the Foundations: Sermons Applicable To The Personal And Social Problems Of Our Religious Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948) specifically see 'Nature, Also, mourns for a Lost Good', pp.76-86 and 'Waiting', pp.149-52

<sup>324</sup> Tillich, Paul *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (USA: The University of Chicago Press, 1955) p. 35.

<sup>325</sup> Schweitzer, Albert *The Philosophy of Civilisation* Trans. C.T. Campion (New York: Prometheus Books, 1987) p. 310. In his paper entitled 'Reverence for Life', published in *Christendom*, I (winter 1936) no. 2, 225-239, he goes on to make this profound statement: 'This is an absolute and reasonable ethic ... but it reaches its best only in the light of this universal ethic, this reverence for life, to which we come because of the boundlessness of its domain. Ordinary ethics seeks to find limits within the sphere of human life and relationships. But the absolute ethics of the will-to-live must reverence every form of life, seeking so far as possible to refrain from destroying any life, regardless of its particular type. It says of no

When asking what one's attitude should be in relation to other creatures, he argues that it should be the same as 'my attitude towards my own life ... I must regard other life than my own with equal reverence ... I see that evil is what annihilates, hampers or hinders life ... Goodness is saving or helping life'<sup>326</sup>.

According to Andrew Linzey, there are three 'characteristics' which underpin Schweitzer's principle of reverence: firstly that it is 'comprehensive' in that it is not to be considered one amongst other moral principles but that it is 'the *sole* principle of the moral law'<sup>327</sup>. Secondly, that the principle is 'universal' in that it extends to all forms of life 'human, animal, insect and vegetable'<sup>328</sup> and thirdly that the principle is 'limitless', in that ethics should extend 'without limits to all that lives'<sup>329</sup> and in no way be limited to the human species.

In his interview with Jerald Brauer, Tillich asserts on two primary grounds, that his philosophical theology is indebted to the work of Schweitzer. Firstly, he likens his notion of the multidimensional unity of life to Schweitzer's concept of the connectedness of all life, stating 'this unity of all life, as I like to call it, seems to me one point in which Schweitzer is of great importance and in which I follow him.'<sup>330</sup> And secondly, when asked later in the same interview if he felt Schweitzer's ethic of 'Reverence for life' was moving in a 'somewhat similar direction' to his 'current theological construction'<sup>331</sup> Tillich answered in the affirmative:

Yes, I think its more moving in a similar direction. But I have the suspicion that Schweitzer and I have similar fathers in spirit. The first one ... is Schelling, who

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instance of life, "This has no value". It cannot make any such exceptions, for it is built upon reverence for life as such. It knows that the mystery of life is always too profound for us, and that its value is beyond our capacity to estimate. We happen to believe that man's life is more important than any other form that we know. But we cannot prove any such comparison of value from what we know of the world's development' p. 229.

<sup>326</sup> 'Reverence for Life' in *Christendom*, I (winter 1936) no. 2, p. 228.

<sup>327</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 4.

<sup>328</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 5.

<sup>329</sup> Schweitzer, cited Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 5.

<sup>330</sup> Tillich, in *The Theological Importance of Schweitzer* (television interview first aired 11/01/1959) cited Barsam, Ara, *A Critical Examination of Albert Schweitzer's Mystical Theology and Its Focus in His Ethic of 'Reverence for Life'* (Doctoral Thesis, Mansfield College, University of Oxford, 2002) p.197.

<sup>331</sup> Jerald Brauer (Interviewer). The current theological construction in question is systematic theology and specifically *Systematic Theology Volume Three*, which he was in the process of writing at the time the interview was recorded.

produced first in the development of Western philosophy a developed philosophy of nature. And that brought him very near to Goethe, about whom Schweitzer has written one of the most beautiful papers evaluating especially Goethe's philosophy of nature ... I feel now more than in earlier years the impact of Schweitzer's idea of the inviolability of life. I even have a large section in the forthcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of my systematic theology under the title 'The Inviolability of life.'<sup>332</sup>

In Tillich's concept of the multidimensional unity of life, it seems reasonable, at least in principle, to affirm his first claim to being influenced by Schweitzer.

Some similarities are present between several Tillichian notions and emphases within Schweitzer's reverence for life, such as the relatedness of the whole of creation, and every being's ontology having its basis in the ground of being from which it is created. Similarly, Schweitzer's will-to-live does correspond quite closely to Tillich's notion of power of being, present in the whole of nature, from the atom onwards.

There are however some significant differences. In Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, although he accepts that humans use animals as instrumental means-to-ends under the predominance of technical reason, rather than bemoaning this fact, he glosses over it, instead focusing on the humanocentric concerns of how this treatment of nature has an adverse effect on humans.

For Schweitzer, to hold a utilitarian attitude towards wills-to-live is causing the wills-to-live a grave injustice, a point which although is expressed in other Tillichian works, is nowhere to be seen in any of the three volumes of his *Systematic Theology*, and particularly conspicuous by its absence in *Systematic Theology Volume Three* (the 'theological construction' Tillich specifically claimed was moving in a similar direction to that of Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life).

Based solely on Tillich's treatment of the instrumentalist use of animals as commodities in his *Systematic Theology*, it could be argued that a Tillichian animal ethic derived solely from this (rather than applying insights and emphases from anywhere else in Tillich's corpus of writing

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<sup>332</sup> Barsam, *A Critical Examination*, p. 197. Barsam however disputes Schweitzer's ethic of Reverence for Life should be read as the upholding the inviolability of life (see p.202). The part of *STIII* originally referred to by Tillich as a 'The inviolability of Life' (Part IV) but which was given the alternative title 'Life and The Spirit' in his system by the time it was published in 1963.

where he seems to view creation more theocentrically than he does in this *Systematic Theology*) would look more similar to a Kantian indirect duty ethic, than it would to Schweitzer's ethic of 'reverence for life'. This is especially so, in the sense that causing harm to, or using animals as mere commodities is depicted as being unhealthy for humans, its damaging impact on animals specifically and the spiritual status of the whole of creation generally is not dealt with at all.

#### v. Kant's Indirect Duty Ethic

To complete this examination of the adequacy of Tillich's account of nonhuman creation via his concept of the predominance of technical reason, a brief exposition of the indirect duty ethic of Immanuel Kant will be undertaken and contrasted with Tillichian insights regarding the utilisation of animals in *Systematic Theology*.

Kant posits that human autonomy and reason is what sets us apart from all other animals. He describes humans, with the possession of reason then as moral agents. For Kant, moral agents are the only beings who can be considered ends-in-themselves, whereas, moral patients (all those who cannot exhibit reason) may be used as means-to-ends by moral agents. In his book *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant puts forward his Categorical Imperative; the first formulation of which can be described as the 'Universal Law' and states: 'I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law'.<sup>333</sup>

As animals do not have objective morality, they are therefore not moral agents. They have no means by which to adhere to the Categorical Imperative and on this basis, unlike moral agents, who are ends in themselves and have intrinsic worth, animals only have the 'relative value of things'<sup>334</sup> and 'in accordance with the formula of end in itself'<sup>335</sup>, moral agents have no direct duty towards animals. Further, Robert N. Johnson points out

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<sup>333</sup> Kant, Immanuel, *The Moral Law: Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans & analysed by H.J. Paton (London: Routledge, 1991) p. 67.

<sup>334</sup> Kant, *The Moral Law*, p. 67.

<sup>335</sup> Regan, Tom, *The Case For Animal Rights* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Plc.1983) p. 117.

Kant recognises that many think that we have all sorts of duties to non-rational non-agents. However, he regards this thought as an error: someone who thinks this is mistaking his duty *with regard* to other beings for a duty *to* those beings<sup>336</sup>

Patrick Kain also concurs with this understanding of Kant's view of moral agency and its implications, positing 'Kant infamously insists that we human beings have duties to all human beings ... but a human being has duties only to human beings (himself and others)<sup>337</sup>.

In Kant's lecture 'Duties to Animals and Spirits' however, he does posit that although we have no direct duties to animals, because they are not self-conscious, with analogous situations between humans and animals, we should treat animals well in order to 'support us in our duties towards human beings, where there are bounden duties'.<sup>338</sup> In Kant's view then, harming nonhuman animals may desensitise us to causing harm to humans (whom we do have a moral duty to) and it is on these grounds that causing harm to animals could be viewed as an undesirable (though not immoral) thing to do. Johnson argues that although 'Kant recognises many moral constraints upon our behaviour towards non-human animals, he insists that these are 'duties "*with regard* to these animals," rather than duties "*to* those beings"<sup>339</sup>. In this regard, Kain posits that 'It seems as if Kant thinks an animal is no more worthy of our concern than is a turnspit on which we might choose to roast it'<sup>340</sup>.

It is in no way suggested here that Tillich would wish to follow this indirect ethical view of animals in a situation where existential reason prevailed. The ultimate conclusion of not wishing to treat animals badly, for fear of it becoming a habit which is then extended to humans interaction though does have a strong resonance with Tillich's assertion that in turning animals into 'things' with only utilitarian or instrumental value, it has the knock-on effect of turning humans into 'things' with nothing in nature that they can commune with any longer.

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<sup>336</sup> Robert N. Johnson, 'Duties to and Regarding Others' in Denis, Lara (Ed.) *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 192-209 p. 195.

<sup>337</sup> Patrick Kain, 'Duties Regarding Animals' in Denis (Ed.) *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide*, 210-233. P. 210

<sup>338</sup> Kant, 'Duties to Animals and Spirits' in *Lectures in Ethics*, translated by Louis Infield (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) p. 241.

<sup>339</sup> Johnson, 'Duties To and Regarding Others' in Denis (Ed.) *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 195.

<sup>340</sup> Kain, 'Duties Regarding Animals' in Denis (Ed.) *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 210.



The result of Tillich's failure to condemn animals being treated as means-to-ends both from a theological and ethical perspective, whilst lamenting the fact that humans are being treated this way by other humans, has parallels in Robert Nozick's assertion that often a double standard exists when comparing the ethical framework we use to assess how we may or may not treat another being.

In the case of Tillich's systematic theology's critique of the predominance of technical reason, specifically in relation to the utilisation of animals, we may feel that controlling knowledge for animals, receiving knowledge for people (in allowing that almost always animals will be sacrificed, in the absence of moral condemnation) makes animals too subordinate to persons.'<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> This is a paraphrase of the quote by Robert Nozick in *Constraints and Animals* ([http://envirolink.org/arrs/essays/nozick\\_constraints.html://](http://envirolink.org/arrs/essays/nozick_constraints.html://)) p.11, although the quote in its original wording holds true in its emphasis, by using Tillichian terminology, I believe it brings the point into sharper relief. The actual quote reads: 'we may feel that Utilitarianism for animals, Kantianism for people, in allowing that almost always animals will be sacrificed, in the absence of moral condemnation, makes animals too subordinate to persons.'

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Creator and Creation in Tillich's Systematic Theology**

This part will focus on a variety of key concepts which highlight the relationship between the Creator and creation.

The symbol of 'Spiritual Presence' and 'Spiritual Community' will also be assessed as these are vital concepts to the system as a whole. In excluding creation from the scope of these symbols it will be asked how we are to understand the role of the Creator in relation to creation and nonhuman creatures? From these analyses, it will become evident that unless the whole of the created order is to be included in the scope of these symbols, then Tillich's system is almost exclusively humanocentric in its emphasis.

In order to weigh the adequacy of the scope of these symbols, not just in relation to nonhuman animals and creation but also as fundamentally important elements of Tillich's system, the Feuerbachian critique that Christianity may be viewed as nothing more than the deification of the human species will be examined. In addition, the important Tillichian insight of 'sin' as marks of our existential estrangement will be considered. It will be argued that in order to stay true to the ultimate goal of his system, that is, to create a consistent theoretical account of the Christian faith, which expounds not merely a humanocentric (autonomous) view, but a theonomous view of faith, creation must be considered alongside humanity. It will be argued that by expanding the scope of some of the key ideas within his system, he may well be closer to achieving what he sees as the ultimate goal of theology, that is, to produce a view of the Christian faith accounting for God's perspective rather than simply from the perspective of humans. The investigation begins with an examination of Tillich's concept of history and the implications both to his system and to the status of animals in defining history in such narrow terms.

i. *Tillich's Definition of History*

Tillich wishes to give a religious interpretation of history from the point of view of the Christian belief in the Kingdom of God. In *Theology of Peace*, he makes the claim that in so doing, he is simply redressing the balance, since under the influence of Greek thought, theology has spent the majority of its time and energy examining natural and ethical problems rather than addressing the issue of 'the kingdom of God and history'<sup>342</sup>.

History, for Tillich, however, is not to be viewed as the history of the world or of the totality of creation but instead should properly be confined to an examination of human historical existence, or as he puts it 'history proper'<sup>343</sup>. In order to distinguish 'history proper' which he asserts is something 'occurring in mankind alone' from any other type of history, he makes the somewhat artificial distinction between 'history proper' and 'natural history'<sup>344</sup>. As with all life processes, all dimensions are potential, if not actual in all realms of life.<sup>345</sup> To highlight the difference between these two contrasting formulations of history, he posits the life process of a tree (starting with its emergence from its seed, through its development and growth to maturity, to its eventual death) may be defined as the history of that particular tree. However, in the absence of the tree being a free, fully centred being in the dimension of the spirit, it does not meet his criteria for inclusion in 'history proper' and thus he describes this formulation of history as 'natural history'. The main distinction between these types of history appears to be free will and the endowment of the spirit which he argues only humans possess. Whereas all creatures have an environment they are able to interact with, only humans have a fully 'centred' self and so are able to transcend their environment. In Tillich's view then, the term history is 'ordinarily and predominantly used for human history'<sup>346</sup>.

'History' is determined by free human agency and the ability to have a 'historical consciousness'<sup>347</sup>, that is, to be aware of the historical tradition of the group to which any

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<sup>342</sup> Tillich, 'The Kingdom of God and History' (1938), *Theology of Peace*, p. 25.

<sup>343</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 297.

<sup>344</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 297.

<sup>345</sup> In accordance with his notion of the multidimensional unity of life – discussed at length in Chapter Six, pp. 144-159.

<sup>346</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 298.

<sup>347</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 28.

individual belongs. As previously noted during the exposition of Part Two (*Being and God*) and Part Five (*History and the Kingdom of God*) of his system, his concept of history is also based on human freedom to manipulate and shape their world in a way he posits all other creatures are incapable of doing'<sup>348</sup>. Natural history in this sense may be described as 'becoming' since it is potential but not actual in all but the human dimensions of life. However, Tillich argues that nature itself has no history because rather than acting out of freedom as humans do, it merely acts in accordance with its essence. Humans, on the other hand, act in opposition to their essence under the influence of free will. Therefore he asserts:

Here is the difference between mere becoming and history. (Biological spontaneity may provide a transition from the one to the other, but ultimately it belongs to nature and not to history).<sup>349</sup>

Further, it is argued that by including the history of nature and creation in the definition of human history, or history proper, we are in fact devaluing history and furthermore 'missing the significance of history'<sup>350</sup>.

The exclusion of all but humans from the dimension of history is no small matter, since the *telos* of history in its inner-historical sense is categorised by the symbol 'Spiritual Presence' and in its trans-historical sense is characterised by the symbol 'Eternal Life'<sup>351</sup>. Both to the inner and trans-historical sense of history, he correlates the symbol 'Kingdom of God' in answer to the questions implied in the ambiguities of human historical existence. Although he does concede that in an anticipatory way, beings in other dimensions may participate in history, this then allows the 'valuation of creation as good.'<sup>352</sup> However, this does seem little more than an afterthought in order to support his later notion of universal salvation. For his vision of eschatology to be all-encompassing, creation must take some kind of place in it and as he puts it ... 'only the idea of fulfilment makes the creation meaningful'<sup>353</sup>.

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<sup>348</sup> See Chapter 7, especially p. 170f.

<sup>349</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 28.

<sup>350</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 32.

<sup>351</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 298.

<sup>352</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 299.

<sup>353</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 299.

There is much more that should be said regarding the exclusion of all but humans from the dimension of history, such as how the rest of creation is to participate in the 'centre of history', that is, the Christ, but this will be examined separately in relation to his Christology in the form of New Being, since it is most relevant to the relationship of Christ as the Logos to creation.

*ii. Feuerbach's Critique of Christianity as the Deification of the Human Species*

Having briefly examined Tillich's definition of history, it is useful at this juncture to examine the Feuerbachian critique that Christianity is the deification of the human species<sup>354</sup> and to ask, based on his almost exclusive emphasis on the human species in terms of his notion of the Kingdom of God (and all that is implied in this symbol) whether Feuerbach's critique can be reasonably applied to Tillich?

Many of Feuerbach's writings concerned what he viewed to be the psychological basis of religion. By this he meant that there is no objective truth to the concept of a divine being. Instead, with respect to religion Feuerbach postulated:

the Essence of Christianity has tried to show that the object of religious devotion is really the capacities which make up human nature. But those capacities were attributed to a Being who was completely 'other', outside of the world.<sup>355</sup>

For Feuerbach then, God is the objective being of humans, and humans simply project their self-consciousness and knowledge onto this divine being. The inevitable result is that God and humans are ultimately identical. Rather than including human frailties into this divine being, however, humans only project the manifestations of their inner nature that they feel to be worthy, therefore excluding all negative attributes such as capriciousness or duplicity. The outcome of this projection on the part of humans is that God becomes the deification of humanity, being credited with the exemplars of human attributes.

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<sup>354</sup> I am indebted to Andrew Linzey for putting forward this argument in relation to the importance for Christian theology in taking a theocentric view of the value of nonhuman animals specifically and creation generally. Especially see Linzey and Cohn-Sherbok, *After Noah: Animals and the Liberation of Theology*

<sup>355</sup> Gordon, Frederick M, 'The Debate between Feuerbach and Stirner' in *The Philosophical Forum*, Volume 8, Number 2-3-4 (1976).

Feuerbach concedes this is not done in a conscious manner but in such a way that humanity is not able to recognise that God is identical with human essential being. If this thesis were to be correct, the object and content of the Christian faith would be altogether human. Because there is no conscious knowledge on the part of humans that such a projection has taken place, Feuerbach argues that 'it is not I but religion that worships man, although religion, or rather theology denies it; it is not only I, an insignificant individual, but religion itself that says: God is man, man is God'<sup>356</sup>.

However, he goes on to argue that Divine Being is nothing more than the essential being of humans, or rather, the being of humans abstracted from the constraints of each individual, corporeal human and objectified. This objectification necessarily entails the worship of humanity's objectified God as another being, quite separate from humans. All determinations of the Divine Being are therefore merely determinations of the human being. It follows from this that if the predicates of God are humanocentric, so too will be their subject.

In order for theology to avoid the Feuerbachian charge that God is just the 'perfect human', it must not simply expound a God for humans, but a God for the whole of creation. By excluding the Creator's relationship with creation and concern for the whole created order, as Tillich does (with his narrow definition of the dimension of history) it does leave him with little defence against the Feuerbachian critique that God is nothing more than the deification of the human species. For Tillich to limit inclusion to the dimension of the spirit (as will be examined in due course) and the dimension of history to humans alone, leaves him open to the Feuerbachian criticism that God is merely the sum of all highly prized human qualities. By the inclusion of animals, and indeed the whole creation, within these dimensions, he would have a much stronger defence against such criticism'<sup>357</sup>.

For Feuerbach, in and through God, the human species itself is glorified. It may be true to assert that the aim of humans is God, but according to Feuerbach's formulation of the basis of

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<sup>356</sup> Feuerbach, cited Linzey, Andrew and Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *After Noah: Animals and the Liberation of Theology* (London: Mowbray, 1997) p.119.

<sup>357</sup> For an examination of how the method of correlation may facilitate Tillich's inclusion of nonhuman animals in the dimension of the spirit, and possibly the dimension of history, see Chapter 7, pp. 161-192.

Christianity, the aim of God is nothing more than the moral and eternal salvation of mankind. Ergo, the aim of humans is the moral and eternal salvation of humankind. This is the case because the divine activity does not and cannot distinguish itself from humans. From this perspective, Christianity is simple religious positivism which is the postulation of the essential being of humans outside the confines of finite humanity.

In relation to systematic theology in general (and for the purposes of this critique, Tillich's systematic theology in particular) Feuerbach makes a further point regarding the relationship between humans and God: 'the end of religion is the ... ultimate felicity of man; the relation of man to God and nothing else than his relation to his [man's] own spiritual good'<sup>358</sup>. If this is the case, then there would be no reason for God to be concerned with anything in creation other than the human species. Feuerbach even goes one step further with relation to God and creation, asserting that 'religion believes ... one day there will be no Nature, no matter, no body ... then there will be only God and the pious soul'<sup>359</sup>. It is not difficult to understand how Feuerbach concluded that Christianity is simply the deification of the human species, when throughout the Christian tradition, from St Augustine, to Aquinas, to Luther and into modern times, the emphasis of theology has been almost exclusively humanocentric, with animals and creation coming a very poor second, if they are considered at all.

Feuerbach also indicates that in his view the 'physical, natural' get in the way of the relationship between humans and God and are therefore viewed by Christians as 'irreligious or at least non-religious'<sup>360</sup>. Further, he argues that since nature and the natural world come between humanity and God, leading to a non-religious theory of the universe, over the centuries theology has come to the dualistic position that God embodies all that is positive whilst the 'world' has become the embodiment of all that is inherently negative or bad<sup>361</sup>.

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<sup>358</sup> Feuerbach, Ludwig, *Essence of Christianity*, translated by George Eliot (New York: Prometheus Books, 1989) p. 267.

<sup>359</sup> Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 269.

<sup>360</sup> Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 269.

<sup>361</sup> In Tillich's case, due to his formulation of a Universal Salvation, he has at least some grounds to avoid this particular criticism.

The notion that the natural world gets in the way of our relationship with God, may well help to give insight into why the material world of creation has often been viewed as negative or non-religious in comparison with the 'religious domain of the spiritual'<sup>362</sup>. It may also give insight into the inner thought of the Christian tradition which has led Tillich back to a systematic theology which excludes creation (other than humans) from the dimensions of the spirit and of history: the dimensions under which the divine Spirit is active and through which Eternal Life may be granted. For Feuerbach then, theology is identical to anthropology<sup>363</sup>. In order to counter the view of Feuerbach, Tillich must unite humans with the rest of the natural world – and both with their Creator.

In his principle of the multidimensional unity of life, as well as his notion of universal salvation, Tillich does try to break away from the pyramidal hierarchy of humans over the rest of creation. But it is also evident that try as he might, he is continuously drawn back into the Christian tradition of asserting the primacy of humankind over creation. Nowhere is this more evident than in his reserving the dimensions of spirit and history solely for humans. Having examined his formulation of the dimension of history, it is now necessary to give an exposition of Tillich's concept of the dimension of the spirit.

### *iii. The Dimension of the Spirit*

The dimension of the spirit is actualised (rather than remaining potentiality) from the personal-communal realm of inner-awareness, that is, the psychological realm of existence, and in Tillich's estimation 'this has happened only in man'<sup>364</sup>. He does concede that this might have occurred somewhere else in the universe but does not believe the dimension of the spirit is active on earth in any species other than humans'<sup>365</sup>. Here again, it is evident that Tillich's thought is humanocentric. It is important to distinguish between the use of Spirit (with a capital 'S') which denotes the 'Divine Spirit and its effects on man'<sup>366</sup> from spirit (with a lower case 's') which refers to humans as beings within the dimension of the spirit. Spirit then, can be viewed

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<sup>362</sup> Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 272.

<sup>363</sup> 'In practice the doctrine of creation means anthropology – the doctrine of man,' Barth cited Linzey and Cohn-Sherbok, *After Noah*, p. 118.

<sup>364</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 21.

<sup>365</sup> See Tillich, *STII*, p. 96f.

<sup>366</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 21.



as 'the unity of life-power and life in meaning'. By opting for an intellectually based view of the term spirit rather than the meaning of the term derived from the Latin *spiritus*, or Hebrew breath, Tillich is able indirectly to exclude all but humans from the dimension of the spirit. Instead, he uses the empiricistic view of spirit as mind or intellect and fuses this with the Latin formulation of 'breath' in order to arrive at the definition of 'the unity of life-power and meaning'<sup>367</sup>.

Due to his formulation of the multidimensional unity of life, although humans are the only beings in creation to qualify for inclusion in the dimension of the spirit, this dimension is potentially present (although not actualised) in every dimension of life, from the inorganic onwards. However, since the dimension of the spirit is only potential in all of creation, with the exception of humans, creation is excluded from active participation in the dimension that Spiritual Presence, Spiritual Community, and New Being are effective.

#### iv. 'Spirit' as Defined by Tillich

If Tillich had chosen to leave the definition of spirit as 'breath' then at the very least all mammals would meet the criterion for inclusion in the dimension of the spirit, as animated, psychological beings. Why Tillich decided to reduce the scope of the dimension of the spirit by including the attributes of higher intellectual capacities is evident in his contemplations on the appropriate terms he should use when making theological statements regarding the dimensions of life:

although these semantic considerations are far from complete, they may be sufficient to indicate the use of some key words ... and to provide ... a stricter use of anthropological terms in theological statements.<sup>368</sup>

Here it is clear that like Barth, Tillich's formulation of Christology (since 'Spiritual Presence' and 'Spiritual Community' are only actually active in the dimensions of the spirit and history) is actually anthropology. Due to the consequences of excluding all but humans from these dimensions, Tillich would indeed appear to have little defence against the Feuerbachian critique

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<sup>367</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 22.

<sup>368</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 25.

that theology is, in essence, the worshipping of humanity projected onto a being totally outside our realm of existence.

Although Tillich asserts that there are problems with the term 'spirit' itself, he still utilises it when discussing the relation of the human to the divine Spirit. He does so for two reasons: firstly, to provide an 'adequate name to that function of life which characterises man as man'<sup>369</sup>. Secondly, to provide a suitable symbol from which to derive the symbols that express divine Spirit, or otherwise stated 'Spiritual Presence'<sup>370</sup>. 'Spiritual Presence' for Tillich is not directly available to all of creation. Because his definition of the dimension of the spirit entails uniting the actualisation of power and meaning, it is only directly available to humans, with the rest of creation having only indirect inclusion:

Within the limits of our experience this happens only in man – in man as a whole and in all dimensions of life which are present in him. Man, in experiencing himself as man, is conscious of being determined in his nature by spirit as a dimension of his life'<sup>371</sup>.

The problem with this statement lies in its implication that only humans have direct relation to the divine Spirit, in the form of 'Spiritual Presence'. This humanocentric view of creation implies that God the Creator is only directly concerned with humans. This limited view of God's interest in creation would appear to be humanocentric rather than theocentric, which at the beginning of his system is something he asserts he aspires to produce.

In the absence of the unity of power and meaning, humans would not have access to the revelatory experience implied in the term 'Spiritual Presence'. And without this ability to mediate revelatory experiences, he posits 'no doctrine of the divine Spirit is possible'<sup>372</sup>. From this viewpoint, the divine Spirit 'dwells and works in' the human spirit, and in so doing the finite human spirit is driven to transcend itself in the moment that it is 'grasped by something ultimate and unconditional'<sup>373</sup>. This drive to self-transcendence is referred to as 'Ecstasy' and

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<sup>369</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 111.

<sup>370</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 111.

<sup>371</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 111.

<sup>372</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 111.

<sup>373</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 122.

denotes the state of being grasped by the infinite. In this state of Ecstasy, unambiguous life is created, albeit transitorily, since the conditions of existence are left unchanged. It is only through such self-transcendence of life that an awareness of our relation as finite creatures to our Infinite Ground is preserved. The effects of Ecstasy are not to fundamentally destroy or change anything within the finite world on the basis that 'God does not need to destroy his created world, which is good in essential nature, in order to manifest himself in it'<sup>374</sup>. If the essential nature of the whole of creation is indeed good and worthy in the eyes of its Creator, it seems wholly parsimonious to posit that only one single species of creature is worthy of direct attention and interaction from its Creator. Further, the trend of Christian theology throughout the centuries has been to assert that the human species above all other is the main concern of God. This was evident from the Feuerbachian critique of Christianity. Christian theology in general and Tillich's systematic theology in particular, have left themselves extremely vulnerable to the Feuerbachian notion that theology amounts to 'human self-aggrandisement'.

v. *The 'Spiritual Presence' in Relation to Nonhuman Animals and Creation*

The remainder of creation is not left totally without relation to its Creator, however, because the 'universal' nature of the 'Spiritual Presence' is able to act in all realms of life potentially as all realms are potential in all dimensions of life. From the standpoint of a Tillichian animal ethic however this indirect interest of the Creator towards the rest of the created order is extremely problematic. If God has only minimal and indirect interest in all but humans, then, what reason could there possibly be for humans to show concern for the created order? Here, it could be argued that although the interests and welfare of humans have always had primacy over creation in the Christian tradition, this perspective may well be very different from the perspective of the Creator. Tillich is not able to give any persuasive reasons why only humans are to be viewed as members of the dimension of the spirit and although he asserts the intellectual capacity of 'fully centred selves' to be the ultimate basis for inclusion, he points to no strong philosophical, theological, ethological or practical reasons why other animated, self-aware beings should not also be included. In view of the fact that the stakes theologically

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<sup>374</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 114.

speaking, are so high (that is without inclusion to the dimension of the spirit there is no direct interaction between the Creator and the overwhelming majority of creation) it could be argued that Tillich would need to advance a watertight thesis as to why a certain level of intellectual capacity is necessary for a God-created, spirit-filled being to be excluded from such a direct relationship with its Creator.

vi. *The Theological Danger of Neglecting Nonhuman Animals and Creation*

For David Clough, the exclusion of animals specifically and creation generally in many theological formulations is not just a matter for lament, but actually poses a grave danger to the validity of the theologies in question. In his book *On Animals: Systematic Theology Volume 1*, he outlines the fundamental insights of John Hildrop in relation to God and creation. Hildrop was writing some 250 years ago and whereas his arguments relying on a static understanding of the 'place' of animal species within the scheme of creation has now been superseded by our understanding of evolutionary theory (which shows species to be changing and developing over time) Clough maintains that his basic critique of the importance of the relationship between Creator and creation is as valid today as it was when it was written. Hildrop's main insight in terms of creation and redemption is 'that which God has reason to create, God has reason to redeem'<sup>375</sup>. He points out that if this were not the case, the vast majority of God's creatures would be 'disposable' and would play no part in the new creation. This would make the whole of the nonhuman creation nothing more than a backdrop for the 'redemption of the other creatures [humans] in which God is really interested'<sup>376</sup>. He argues that this view would create a discontinuity between our current creation and the new creation as only a tiny proportion of the creatures God has created (the human species) are to be included in the redemptive scheme. For Clough, it is not only theologically implausible to maintain that the Creator would wish to redeem only a tiny fraction of a creation [which in its essential state] is deemed to be 'very good' but it is a position which causes significant incoherence between the doctrines of creation, reconciliation and redemption and this has serious implications for theology as a whole:

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<sup>375</sup> Clough, David, *On Animals: Systematic Theology Volume 1* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2012) p.144.

<sup>376</sup> Clough, *On Animals*, p. 144.

Christians confess God, Father, Son and Spirit, not as the maker of some things, but all things; not as reconciling and gathering up some things, but all things (Col. 1.20; Eph. 1.10); not as bringing liberation to some things in creation, but all things (Rom. 8.18-23). What is at stake...therefore is the coherence of Christian theology as such<sup>377</sup>

Any theological system which aspires to be theocentric, with the ultimate goal being theonomy (as Tillich's is) may do well to ask themselves if their systematic theology as a whole is able to be truly coherent whilst animals and creation are excluded from direct access to the 'Dimension of the Spirit' and the 'Dimension of History'.

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<sup>377</sup> Clough, *On Animals*, p. 144.

## Chapter Five

### The Implications of Tillich's Christology for Animals and Creation in his Systematic Theology

For Tillich, the norm of systematic theology is different from that of the Reformers as well as from 'modern liberal theology'<sup>378</sup> even though the substance is the same. This is because it has to be accessible to individuals in their current, concrete situation, whilst at the same time staying true to its biblical source. He describes this norm as the question implied in our existential estrangement and how we are to overcome the 'disruption, conflict, self-destruction and meaninglessness' implied in our finitude. To this he correlates the symbol New Being as answer to how a reality of 'reconciliation and reunion, of creativity, meaning and hope'<sup>379</sup> may be achieved. This new reality of New Being brought about in Jesus as the Christ, is the 'material norm of systematic theology'<sup>380</sup> and therefore the norm of his system.

#### i. *New Being*

New Being, as the core of the Christian message, can be condensed into the Pauline message of a 'New Creation'<sup>381</sup> found in Galatians 6: 15. This New Creation at the heart of Christianity is realised, although fragmentarily, in the new reality brought about by the appearance of Jesus as the Christ and it is precisely the function of bringing about the new reality which makes Jesus the Christ. The New Creation should inspire in humanity 'passionate and infinite longing'<sup>382</sup> and rather than destroying the old creation, instead it renews it. This renewal is three-fold. Firstly, it produces 're-conciliation', secondly, 're-union', and thirdly 're-surrection'<sup>383</sup>. In order to achieve reconciliation with oneself, fellow humans and God, all that is required is to be 'grasped by' New Being and to participate in it. Participation rather than attempts at self-salvation is the

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<sup>378</sup> *STI*, p. 49.

<sup>379</sup> *STI*, p. 49

<sup>380</sup> *STI*, p. 50.

<sup>381</sup> Church, F Forrester (ed), *The Essential Tillich: An Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich*, (London: University of Chicago Press Ltd., 1987) p. 90.

<sup>382</sup> Church, *The Essential Tillich*, p. 94.

<sup>383</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955) p. 20.

means by which reconciliation is achieved: 'this is the message: a new reality has appeared in which you are reconciled. To enter the New Being we do not need to show anything'.<sup>384</sup>

The second element of renewal apparent in New Creation is the reunion of that which has been separated under the conditions of existential distortion. Jesus as the Christ is the bearer of New Being because in an historical human, subject to the conditions of existence, Jesus remained in unity with God, with humanity and with Godself. This 'undisrupted union'<sup>385</sup> with the Ground of Being, even under the conditions of existence, provides both the power of the gospel stories and makes Jesus as the Christ the representative and mediator of New Being. Since without reconciliation there can be no reunion, the first two elements of renewal go hand in hand. The new reality mediated through New Being is one in which reconciliation and reunion with God is possible. The New Creation is a healing creation precisely because it allows both reunion with God and reunion with others which under old being is lost. This separation from fellow humans is the most 'distinctive'<sup>386</sup> characteristic of old being<sup>387</sup>. When we are truly reconciled and reunited, even momentarily, with ourselves, others and God, New Creation is able to shine through the old creation.

The ultimate significance of the church as the 'assembly of God'<sup>388</sup> is in reuniting people both with other people and with the Ground of their Being. However, because the church, like all humanity, lapses into old being frequently, the third element of the renewal of New Creation is that of resurrection. He is not referring to bodily resurrection,<sup>389</sup> rather, the term denotes that the New Creation has been 'born out of the death' of the old creation. As with the symbols of the Fall and Universal Salvation, the New Creation is not to be considered as something which happens at a specific time within history, nor is it to be considered a supranaturalistic event above history. Rather, it is actualised in every moment that reconciliation and reunion are

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<sup>384</sup> Tillich, *The New Being*, p. 20.

<sup>385</sup> Tillich, *The New Being*, p. 22.

<sup>386</sup> Church, *Essential Tillich*, p. 96.

<sup>387</sup> Here the emphasis is exclusively humanocentric, focussing on inter-human relationships and the relationship between God and humans. At no point does Tillich refer to the creation's estrangement from its Creator or human estrangement from the rest of the created order.

<sup>388</sup> Church, *Essential Tillich*, p. 97.

<sup>389</sup> Tillich, *The New Being*, p. 24.

achieved. New Being leaves an indelible impression on old being, allowing that 'out of disintegration and death something is born of eternal significance'<sup>390</sup> and this is true for every moment that we are grasped by New Being.

ii. *New Being in Relation to Humans, Nonhuman Animals and Creation*

Having given a brief overview of what Tillich means by the symbol New Being, it is necessary to examine this concept in greater depth in order to provide an understanding of how New Being relates not just to humans but to the totality of creation. In order to gain insight into why failure to include nonhuman animals in particular and creation in general in the dimensions of the spirit and of history results in only indirect access to the Christological centre of his system for all but humankind, it is important to consider the specific formulation he presents regarding the historical expectation of New Being.

He begins by stating that the 'quest' for New Being is to be found in all cultures and religions because existential estrangement is a 'universal ... human predicament'<sup>391</sup>. Universal in this sense means universal to humans, not to the whole of creation, at least in his *Systematic Theology*. However, this position is inconsistent with the argument in his sermon 'Nature Also Mourns for a Lost Good', the publication of which predates even the first volume of *Systematic Theology* by three years.

During his sermon he quotes from Psalm 19:2-5, Romans 8:19-22 and Revelation

21:1, 22:1-2. Of these passages he argues:

The Bible speaks again and again of the salvation of the world, as it speaks of the creation of the world and the subjugation of the world to anti-Divine forces. And world means nature as well as man...the psalmist sings of the glory of nature; the apostle shows the tragedy of nature and the prophet pronounces the salvation of nature. The hymn of the psalmist praises the glory of God in the glory of nature; the letter of the apostle links the tragedy of nature with the tragedy of man; and the vision of the prophet sees the salvation of nature in the salvation of the world.<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Church, *Essential Tillich*, p. 97.

<sup>391</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 86.

<sup>392</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 77.



In this passage, as throughout this sermon, it is clear that he sees no distinction between humans and the rest of creation in terms of their estrangement from their Creator. Why his thought has altered so radically by the time he began to write the three volumes of *Systematic Theology* is much less clear, although it could, at least in part be due to his wish to 'provide ... a stricter use of anthropological terms in theological statements'.<sup>393</sup>

As was evident in the examination of the dimension of history, in his *Systematic Theology*, the polarities of freedom and destiny are required to produce a fully-centred self, a term he reserves for humans alone. He allows that 'nature too has spontaneity and centeredness' but denies that it possesses 'freedom'<sup>394</sup>. Therefore, any direct relation to 'history proper' including historical expectations can only be ascribed to humans.

All humans seek deliverance from their state of existential estrangement<sup>395</sup>. How the process of the transformation of reality is expected is very much a matter of religion and culture. Expectation ranges widely from a slow progression to the transformation providing the 'centre of history', to the transformation occurring at the end of history, when the entirety of history will be united with the eternal. Christianity however views the transforming event to be the centre of history and for Christianity this 'decisive event' is the appearance of Jesus as the Christ as bearer of the New Being. The fact that within Christianity, history is dated in terms of BC and AD indicates just how firmly ingrained the appearance of the Christ is within Christian historical consciousness.

### iii. *Jesus as the Christ as the Final Manifestation of New Being in Relation to the Whole of Creation*

The assertion that the final manifestation of New Being, as actualised in Jesus as the Christ provides the central point of history for Christianity is not problematic for nonhuman animals and creation in and of itself, however, the exclusion of all but humans from the dimension of

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<sup>393</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 25.

<sup>394</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 79.

<sup>395</sup> As does the whole of creation, if we are to take Romans 8 seriously – (the primary biblical passage Tillich uses to underpin his concept of Universal Salvation).

history *is* extremely problematic with respect to the formulation of a Tillichian Christology. Because the New Being, and therefore New Creation, is not only the centre of history, but also its ultimate *telos*, all beings other than humans only have contingent access to his Christology. He allows that because humans are inextricably linked to every other dimension of being, the essential goodness of the whole of creation will ultimately be reunited with its Ground of Being. This however does not negate the fact that it would appear that the God envisioned by Tillich is only directly interested in the human species. Rather than providing a theocentric view of creation, by implication, his Christology would appear to be almost exclusively humanocentric in practice. In excluding nonhuman animals and creation from direct participation in New Being, Tillich provides an image of a Creator who is largely indifferent to the overwhelming majority of her creation. From the perspective of a Tillichian animal ethic, if God appears to have little interest in the rest of the created order, what possible reason could humanity have for valuing and respecting nonhuman animals and creation?

This apparent lack of interest on the part of the Creator is even more transparent when we examine Tillich's thoughts regarding *History and the Christ* in part two of his system. Here, he speculates as to what would happen to the Christian message and in particular the actualisation of New Being in Jesus as the Christ, should humanity annihilate itself. On this matter, he posits that scripture and especially the New Testament is mindful of the need for 'historical continuity'<sup>396</sup> and indeed indicates that 'so long as there is human history – namely up to the end of the world – the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is present and effective'<sup>397</sup>. It is entirely possible however that the end of the human species may well not spell the end of all life on earth and therefore not constitute the end of creation. What then of salvation? In order to answer this question he looks to the concept of 'spatial extension' in order to illuminate the 'significance of the reality of Jesus as the Christ in terms of temporal existence'<sup>398</sup>. When backed into this theoretical corner, he argues that although New Being is primarily concerned with the relation of the Ground of Being to humanity, stating 'Christ is God-for-us', he has to

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<sup>396</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 99.

<sup>397</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 100.

<sup>398</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 100.

concede that due to his concept of the multidimensional unity of life, God is also 'for everything created'<sup>399</sup>.

Although God may show an interest in the rest of creation, historical humanity appears to be of ultimate importance and accordingly, his primary emphasis is still placed on God's relation to humans. Jesus as the Christ is predominantly related to human history, of which he is the centre, and as such he determines its starting and finishing point. On this view, direct relation between our world and God begins the moment human beings start realising their existential estrangement and raise the question of the New Being. The question however has to be raised: what of creation before historical humankind? Surely any just, loving Creator would not simply leave it to its finitude and existential estrangement? Tillich however seems to answer in the affirmative and defines the end of New Being as the point at which 'the continuity of that history in which Jesus as the Christ is the centre is definitely broken'<sup>400</sup>. This break in the continuity of human history then would spell the end of New Being as its centre, because in his opinion 'Jesus is the Christ for us, namely, for those who participate in the historical continuum which he determines in its meaning'<sup>401</sup>. He does however leave room for the possibility of 'other ways of divine self-manifestation before and after our historical continuum'<sup>402</sup> although it is unclear as to whether he is referring to what might remain of the created order once humans have ceased to exist, or whether as elsewhere in his system, he is referring to 'other worlds'<sup>403</sup> within the universe.

This humanocentric emphasis is also obvious in his examination of the New Being appearing in a personal life, or otherwise stated, the Incarnation. He posits that Jesus as the Christ is manifest in human form, and could not have been actualised in any other way. This is because humans, as the only members of creation to be included in the dimension of history, are in Tillich's view the only fully-developed, centred selves who are completely individualised and therefore able to 'participate without limits in [their] world'<sup>404</sup>. As already noted, it is the polar unity in

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<sup>399</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 100.

<sup>400</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 100.

<sup>401</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 101.

<sup>402</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 101.

<sup>403</sup> See Tillich, *STII*, p. 96.

<sup>404</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 120.

humans of freedom and destiny which allows the ability of self-transcendence and self-contradiction. It is precisely these cognitive qualities which allow humans alone access to the historical dimension and it is only in the historical dimension of life that the New Being can become manifest because 'only where existence is most radically existence – in him who is finite freedom – can existence be conquered'<sup>405</sup>. Again, because all other dimensions of life are included in historical humanity, the rest of creation is included in New Being by proxy. Although the universal participation in New Being is contingent on human participation in Jesus as the Christ, he nonetheless asserts that 'this gives cosmic significance to the person and confirms the insight that only in a personal life can the New Being manifest itself'<sup>406</sup>. His exclusion of all but humans from the dimension of history and the Christological implications of this for nonhuman animals in practical terms marginalises them, because a low theological status invariably leads to a low ethical status.

*iv. The Impact of Excluding Animals from the Dimension of the Spirit on Tillich's Christology*

Having examined the adequacy and impact of Tillich's Christology under the historical dimension in relation to nonhuman animals, the consequences of exclusion from the dimension of the spirit and its particular impact on the focus of his Christology will now be addressed.

As only humans are to be included in the dimension of the spirit, 'Spiritual Presence' and 'Spiritual Community' as functions of this dimension are necessarily only available to humans. From the point of view of Christology, this is of major significance to nonhuman animals and creation as a whole because it is through the 'Spiritual Presence' and 'Spiritual Community' that the New Being and therefore New Creation are directly mediated. In other words it is:

The Spiritual Presence, elevating man through faith and love to the transcendent unity of the unambiguous life [that] creates the New Being above the gap between essence and existence and consequently above the ambiguities of life.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 120.

<sup>406</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 121.

<sup>407</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 138.

Although all preceding dimensions of life are indirectly included in the dimension of the spirit, it is clear that for Tillich God's overwhelming interest lies in humankind rather than the whole of creation.

Although Part Four of the system primarily deals with 'Life and the Spirit', when examining the relation of the divine Spirit to that of the human spirit, Tillich asserts that history must also be considered since in his view it is 'historical mankind alone' in whom 'the new being as the creation of the spiritual presence is manifest'<sup>408</sup>. He also posits that concepts such as revelation and providence are only intelligible within the context of human historical existence. With respect to the divine Spirit's impact on the human spirit however, since individuals are to a great extent determined in their moral, cultural and religious life by the social group to which they belong, 'Spiritual Presence' only occurs in individuals via their participation in a particular group within history. This having been said, since all humans participate in a social group – be it a family, nation, political or religious group – all humans have access to the divine Spirit which is mediated through historical existence. This is the case both in preliminary revelation, which has a 'saving and transforming character'<sup>409</sup> (albeit fragmentarily, since the conditions of existence remain unchanged) and in final revelation which is the manifestation of New Being in Jesus as the Christ. From this perspective it is postulated that 'mankind is never left alone'<sup>410</sup> by the divine Spirit. This may be reassuring for humans but omits to comment on the relation of the divine Spirit and its final manifestation of New Being in relation to the rest of creation. If divine Spirit can only be mediated to human spirit, it would appear that according to Tillich's system, the Creator is only concerned with the infinitely small section of creation referred to as historical humankind.

Because humans have continuous access to the Spiritual Presence, he argues that New Being should be viewed as an element of historical existence. Participation in the 'transcendent union of unambiguous life'<sup>411</sup> may always be present; however, under the conditions of existence this participation is transitory as humans are still under the impact of existential disruption.

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<sup>408</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 39.

<sup>409</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 80.

<sup>410</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 80.

<sup>411</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 140.

Momentary and fragmentary participation in the Spiritual Presence and New Being does not indicate that this participation is ambiguous in itself, even though the life process in which it appears is. Rather, it points to the reality that humans may only participate in its unambiguous nature in specific moments when they are grasped by the Spiritual Presence. Ultimate fulfilment cannot, however, occur under the conditions of existence and instead 'transcendent union is an eschatological concept'<sup>412</sup> and not a permanent possibility within historical existence. The fragmentary nature of the Spiritual Presence and New Being does not detract from the union of the divine Spirit with the human spirit in the moment that a particular historical group participates in it. And for Tillich, it is the group's acceptance of this transcendent union between God and humans, in the moment that the union is experienced, that makes a particular historical group (albeit temporarily) a 'holy community'<sup>413</sup>.

Having examined the Christological symbol of New Being in the historical dimension and Spiritual Presence as the created manifestation of New Being in the dimension of the spirit, it is apparent that despite his concept of the multidimensional unity of life and the concept of universal salvation (which takes its primary emphasis from Pauline theology and in particular Romans 8) Tillich does indeed view humans as being vastly more important than any other part of creation. Declaring humans to have a privileged position in the created order is not necessarily in itself detrimental to the status of nonhuman animals and creation. The problem occurs when the 'rights' and privileges of humans are expounded without reference to their corresponding 'duties' as Tillich appears to do throughout his system. There is however nothing in his systems internal logic or structure that would preclude the case being made that as the only beings (to our knowledge) who possess freedom and free will; the only beings to be made in the image of the Creator, as a species should take responsibility for the care of nonhuman animals and creation. After all, humans in Tillich's thesis are the only creatures who can transcend their environment and so 'have a world'.

The limiting of the dimensions of spirit and history to humankind alone, without reference to the corresponding duties inferred on humankind as moral agents, towards creation, does

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<sup>412</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 140.

<sup>413</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 140.

however lead to the perception of a low theological status. From the perspective of Christian ethics, the low theological status inferred in the Creator's lack of interest in nonhuman animals inevitably leads to a low ethical status because if God doesn't value creation, what cause is there for humans to? The result of such a status is an instrumentalist view of nonhuman animals<sup>414</sup>. According to such a view, animals become subordinate to humans and can therefore be valued in terms of their utility rather than being treated in terms of their intrinsic value as sentient beings that are part of the creation which the Creator values as essentially good. Tillich does accept that the essence of the whole of creation is indeed good and as such, the salvation of humans goes hand in hand with the salvation of the whole created order. However, in his exclusion of all but humans from direct access to the dimensions of history and the spirit, along with the results of such an exclusion, (that is, exclusion from direct access to the Kingdom of God, Spiritual Presence, Spiritual Community and Jesus the Christ as the bearer of New Being), he expounds an almost exclusively humanocentric rather than theocentric theology. Such a theology, whilst in keeping with traditional Christian views regarding animals, is nonetheless deficient because it fails to allow the Creator to have a direct relationship with the whole of creation. After all, the value placed upon animals and creation by their Creator may well be radically different from the value we as humans ascribe to them. Also, if as Tillich argues, the symbol of the Fall encompasses the whole of creation and not just humans, then the salvific action of the Christ must also be directly effective for the whole of creation. Without direct access to the salvific action of the Christ as the manifestation of New Being, no meaningful redemption of creation can be achieved.

#### *v. Linzey's Christology*

Having seen the consequences of Tillich's failure to include animals and creation in almost all of the most important elements of theology, not least Christology, it may be useful to consider Linzey's approach to theology and animals. Although his critique was not written with Tillich specifically in mind, it nonetheless provides insights into re-establishing a theonomous and Christocentric theology which is relevant to Tillich.

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<sup>414</sup> For a fuller examination of instrumentalism in relation to animals, see Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (London: SCM Press Ltd. 1994) especially Chapter 3, pp. 45-61.

Linzey begins by addressing one of the central problems of traditional systematic theology, namely, that of reducing 'Christology to anthropology' with the created order playing a very minor role as the 'backdrop or theatre to the 'real revelation' which happens purely in the human sphere'<sup>415</sup>. Although Linzey uses the example of Barth with reference to Christology, this charge is equally, if not more, true of Tillich's thought. The created order participates in Universal Salvation but only because all dimensions of life are interlinked and it would therefore be impossible to achieve salvation for humans without the salvation of the rest of creation. Further, by excluding nonhuman animals and creation in general from his Christology, Tillich really does put humanity centre stage, with only indirect participation of all but humans in the New Creation brought about by the New Being. Linzey posits that this humanocentric view of Christology has come about primarily as a result of beliefs regarding the Incarnation.

Karl Barth's view of the Incarnation lies in the assertion that 'man is the measure of all things, since God became man'<sup>416</sup>. Although Tillich wishes to remove the supernaturalistic interpretation of the Incarnation<sup>417</sup>; that the bearer of New Being has no direct interest in the nonhuman creation would certainly lend itself to viewing Tillich's Christology as anthropology, as direct access to New Being is only open to humans. The result of viewing the Incarnation as the affirmation of humans and by inference the denigration of the remainder of creation has helped, if not caused, nonhuman animals to be viewed in an instrumental way as 'things'<sup>418</sup> to be used by humans as commodities at will.

Linzey argues that the interpretation of traditional Christian theology regarding the Incarnation has gone on to colour the entire view of Christianity towards animals and creation. Understood in its narrowest terms, the Incarnation does not simply exclude nonhuman creation but in fact excludes all but circumcised Jewish males from theological significance. If the interpretation of the doctrine of the Incarnation is to be widened to include all of humankind, Linzey posits that there is no reason not to widen its significance further. In the act of the Logos becoming flesh and blood, he asserts that this can be interpreted as 'God's Yes to creation: specifically to fleshly

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<sup>415</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 68.

<sup>416</sup> Barth cited Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p.68.

<sup>417</sup> For further explanation of Tillich's understanding of the Incarnation, see Tillich, *STII*, p.94 ff.

<sup>418</sup> Tillich, 'Thing and Self' in *The Spiritual Situation in our Technical Society*, pp. 114 and elsewhere.



and sentient life' and goes on to state that 'the Logos identifies ... not only with humanity but with all creatures of flesh and blood'<sup>419</sup>. If the Incarnation is to be understood as the Creator embracing all of fleshly existence, then although humans still possess a unique position in creation, theology must take seriously the claim of the Creator over the whole of creation and not just humankind. In allowing that the New Being is only directly concerned with humanity, rather than producing a Christocentric or theocentric theology, in practice Tillich produces a humanocentric picture of the Christian faith which fails to preserve the view of God the Creator in relation to creation.

In order to redress this traditional humanocentric bias, Linzey points out five Christological insights which rather than reducing the importance of animals within theology actually strengthens their position, in addition to providing a more theocentric perspective on creation.

The first Christological emphasis is on '*Christ as co-creator*'<sup>420</sup>. This view not only has its basis in traditional Christian theological thinking, but is also one of the main emphases of the Fourth Gospel. Christ as the Logos is the self-manifestation of God, and as such is the creator of all things. The Logos does not simply create humans, but creates every living being in the world. If this insight is taken seriously, Linzey postulates it becomes 'impossible to separate the human and nonhuman worlds of creation as though they were absolutely distinct'<sup>421</sup>. This however is exactly what Tillich does by making what appears to be an artificial distinction between humans and animals in excluding nonhuman animals from the dimensions of the spirit and history. In so doing, not only does he separate the salvific action of the Christ as bearer of New Being from the Logos, as creator of all life on earth, but he also fails to recognise the intrinsic importance and worth of the nonhuman creation in relation to its Creator. By only allowing that creation can indirectly participate in New Being through humans, Tillich drastically reduces the theological significance of the rest of the created order.

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<sup>419</sup> Linzey, 'Is Christianity Irredeemably Speciesist'? Introduction in, Linzey and Yamamoto, *Animals on the Agenda*, p. xvi.

<sup>420</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 68.

<sup>421</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 69.

The second insight concerns Christ as '*God-incarnate*'<sup>422</sup>. If we are to understand the Incarnation in its narrowest terms, as previously discussed only Jewish men would be included. Whilst the Incarnation is self-evidently an affirmation of the human species, as Linzey points out it is necessarily *also* an affirmation of all creaturely existence. Nowhere in Tillich's system is this emphasis expounded. He does accept that the Fall has resulted in the tragic existential estrangement of both humans and the rest of creation<sup>423</sup>, however, because Jesus as the Christ appeared in, and indeed was a central event in history (a dimension of life only open to humans) the emphasis of God Incarnate only has direct relevance to humans within his system. Even though he acknowledges that the whole of creation is subject to existential estrangement and disruption, he still reserves direct participation in New Being for the human species alone.

The third Christological connection is 'Christ as the new covenant'<sup>424</sup>. Following the flood, God promises Noah that never again will creation be destroyed. This statement is known as the Noahic covenant and affirms the intrinsic value of the entirety of creation to its Creator. Within this covenant, humans and the rest of the created order are included in this promise. As such, humans do not receive greater consideration than any other creature. If God establishes a covenant which encompasses both humans and animals alike, there are ethical implications. If nonhuman animals, as part of God's creation, have inherent worth in the eyes of their Creator, it follows from this that 'the covenant with humanity itself established in Jesus Christ' must be 'inseparable'<sup>425</sup> from the covenant establishing the love of the Creator for the whole of creation. Again, by excluding animals from direct access to the New Creation (as brought about by the appearance of Jesus as the Christ) Tillich puts forward a humanocentric theology rather than a theocentric one which takes account of the worth of creation from the point of view of its Creator, rather than simply expounding a human perspective on the value of creation. In practical ethical terms, Tillich's failure to view animals and creation from the theocentric perspective that they have inherent value could lead to an instrumentalist view of creation,

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<sup>422</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 69.

<sup>423</sup> The acceptance that the Fall relates to the whole of creation is something many other theologians (such as Fox and Southgate) fail to acknowledge. So at least in this respect, Tillich is relatively forward-thinking.

<sup>424</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 69.

<sup>425</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 69.

whereby humans who deem themselves to be the primary concern of God can use and exploit animals in any way they wish.

The fourth Christological connection made is '*Christ as reconciler of all things*'<sup>426</sup>. Tillich, in this respect, does (at least in principle) include the whole of creation in the sphere of salvation. In his concept of Universal Salvation, he asserts that the whole created order is good in its essential nature although under the conditions of existence all life is an ambiguous mixture of both essential goodness and existential distortion. As the ultimate *telos* of history, all that is essentially good in every being will be reunited with its eternal Ground, whereas any negative aspects of an individual's being will be destroyed. On this view, although humans have actualised themselves to a higher degree than any other animal, it is equally the case that because humans are not morally innocent, they are likely to have a greater amount of negativity (or un-actualised potential) which will be excluded from reunion with God than any other being has. Tillich's concept of Universal Salvation is a result of his multidimensional unity of life which entails that all dimensions of life are potential, if not actual, in all other dimensions. Although it is not made explicit throughout his *Systematic Theology*, evidence elsewhere in Tillich's corpus would indicate that his notion of Universal Salvation springs from a concern for the redemption of the whole of creation (as Romans 8 amongst other Pauline texts suggests) and not simply because human salvation *requires* the rest of creation due to the interlinking nature of his formulation of the dimensions of life. In either case, the concept of Universal Salvation, along with the notion that the 'Fall' effects the whole of creation, are very positive with respect to nonhuman animals in particular and creation in general and could help to provide the basis for a Tillichian animal ethic.

The final Christological connection Linzey identifies is '*Christ as our moral exemplar*'<sup>427</sup>. His final connection emphasises the insight that Jesus not only took the side of the weak, oppressed and outcast (such as lepers, the poor, tax collectors and prostitutes) but in addition suffered betrayal by his own people, imprisonment, humiliation, torture and finally death. From this perspective, Linzey asks the question:

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<sup>426</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 70.

<sup>427</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 70.

If the omnipotence and power of God is properly expressed in the form of *katabasis*, humility and self-sacrifice, why should this model not properly extend to our relations with creation as a whole and animals in particular?<sup>428</sup>

Jesus then can be seen as the perfect example of how humans should exert their 'dominion or God-given power over non-human animals'<sup>429</sup>. If a theocentric view of animals is taken, rather than a humanocentric one, it is indeed the case that as the most powerful species on the planet, given stewardship over a creation which is loved and valued by its Creator, humans have a duty to follow the example of Jesus by siding with those who are unable to defend themselves against injustice, cruelty and oppression. Animals, either domesticated or wild, fit into this category. Domesticated animals are used as commodities to provide food and clothing as well as being used for entertainment and in scientific research. Wild animals on the other hand are to a greater and greater extent losing their natural habitats as the ever-growing human population expands, in addition to being killed for meat, sport or for their skins. A Christocentric perspective would allow humans to view animals from the perspective of their Creator who deems the whole of creation to be intrinsically valuable. It also provides humans with a practical example of how they should behave towards the other sentient creatures who make up the vast majority of life on earth. Rather than using creation as a means to an end, then, we should in fact be following the example of the Christ in serving creation rather than exploiting it.

Tillich does not mention the practical implications of human treatment of animals, other than to indicate that we should attempt to relate to them as beings rather than 'things'<sup>430</sup>. Rather than showing concern for animals, his reasons for treating them with some degree of respect seems to be the product of mostly humanocentric concerns in his *Systematic Theology*, although elsewhere in his sermons<sup>431</sup> he shows a great deal more sensitivity towards the whole of creation and its longing for deliverance from its current state of existential distortion.

#### vi. *Theonomous Reason*

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<sup>428</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 71.

<sup>429</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 71.

<sup>430</sup> Tillich, 'Thing and Self' in *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society*, p. 119.

<sup>431</sup> Especially see 'Nature also Mourns for a Lost Good' in *The Shaking of the Foundations*

Having asserted that Tillich's systematic theology is almost exclusively humanocentric in its emphasis, only making passing reference to animals and creation, and even then almost always contrasting 'nature' with humanity, it is important to enquire as to whether there are any Tillichian concepts which might help to rehabilitate the humanocentricity of his system. To this question we may answer in the affirmative, as there are many insights which although left undeveloped could indeed be built upon to help provide the basis for a Tillichian animal ethic. (Theonomy as the ideal for any theological system is a key Tillichian concept which can be used as a 'yard stick' to measure how close to this ideal Tillich's concepts come when animals are considered). For the purposes of this critique on the adequacy and scope of Tillich's Christology with relation to nonhuman animals and creation, the idea of theonomous reason will be considered. Although he himself does not explore the practical consequences of the idea of theonomy, his insight nonetheless demands that humanity strives for a perspective which is united with its Ground of Being, or otherwise expressed, with God the Creator.

With regard to finite human reason, he identifies three main polarities which are active in every aspect of human thought<sup>432</sup> and are required in order for finite reason to be able to grasp reality. The first of these polarities is that of the 'formal' and 'emotional' elements to our reason, the second polarity involves the 'static' and the 'dynamic', and the third is that of 'autonomy' and 'heteronomy'<sup>433</sup>. In order for our reason to work effectively, the balance must be struck between autonomy and heteronomy, and between the structure and depth of reason. He describes the striking of such a balance as theonomy. Although Tillich does not emphasise the significance of uniting finite reason with the presence of the power of being, its meaning is nevertheless clear: theonomy demands not simply humanocentric reasoning, but in its relation to its depth, it must at least to some degree be theocentric in nature. The discussion of theonomy here is very much theoretical and abstract; however he does go on to relate his discussion of theonomous reason to final revelation and to some elements of its impact on reason as part of human life.

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<sup>432</sup> For a fuller examination of Tillich's concept of reason, see Chapter Two, Part One, 'Reason and Revelation' pp. 40-46.

<sup>433</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 83.

For Tillich, final revelation provides the key to balancing autonomous and heteronomous reason by 're-establishing their essential unity'<sup>434</sup>. The resolution of conflict between this polarity of finite reason is overcome by the two main elements of final revelation. The first element is that of the 'transparency of the Ground of being in him who is the bearer of the final revelation'<sup>435</sup>. The transparency of the divine Spirit in Jesus as the Christ then, not only reunites reason with its depth, but also gives it 'spiritual substance' and in so doing, it prevents autonomous reason from becoming 'empty and open for demonic intrusion'<sup>436</sup>. The second element of final revelation which balances autonomy and heteronomy is that of the self-sacrifice of the Christ as the bearer of final revelation. In the self-sacrifice of Jesus as the Christ on the cross, Tillich posits that heteronomy, that is, the authority claimed by the finite 'in the name of the infinite'<sup>437</sup> is unable to assert itself over autonomy because in His death, it is clear that it is the infinite divine Spirit rather than the finite human which has authority.

When theonomy is reached, 'nothing which is considered true and just is sacrificed'<sup>438</sup>.

Although he does not explore the implications of this insight with respect to nonhuman animals, it logically follows that if God perceives the whole of creation to have inherent worth and that it is good in its essential nature, then so too must humans. If, in final revelation, finite human reason is joined with the presence of the power of Being, that is, God the Creator, who sees goodness in the whole creation, then we too must advance a theocentric rather than a humanocentric view of the world.

In a practical sense, Tillich goes on to posit that under the impact of theonomy, human reason is the means by which the 'justice of the Kingdom of God'<sup>439</sup> is mediated and from a theocentric perspective, this necessarily means that animals and creation should be valued by humankind, just as they are valued by their Creator. So although it is true that his Christology is explicitly humanocentric, almost to the exclusion of the rest of creation, it is equally the case that within his system there are concepts as yet undeveloped which would allow for a more theocentric

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<sup>434</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 147.

<sup>435</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 147.

<sup>436</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 147.

<sup>437</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 148.

<sup>438</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 148.

<sup>439</sup> *STI*, p. 149.

view of creation, that is, a view which openly embraces the common origin of the whole created order and sees inherent value in it. In practical terms, a higher theological status for animals and creation necessarily leads to a higher ethical status.

## Chapter Six

### The Multidimensional Unity of Life

#### i. Introduction

In this chapter, the concept of the multidimensional unity of life, which featured in part four of the system, *Life and the Spirit* will be critically examined. This is a key concept from the point of view of Tillich's critique of the ambiguity of life in general and animals in particular. In Tillich's estimation:

The ontological concept of life and its universal application require two kinds of consideration, one of which we should call "essentialist" and the other "existentialist". The first deals with the unity and diversity of life in its essential nature. It describes what I venture to call the multidimensional unity of life. Only if this unity and the relation of the dimensions and realms of life are understood, can we analyse the existential ambiguities of all life processes correctly and express the quest for unambiguous life.<sup>440</sup>

Although this concept has been mentioned in the exposition of part four of the system, it warrants further examination. Because the idea of the multidimensional unity of life involves various considerations, for the sake of clarity, it will be broken down into a variety of subsections which, having been explained will then be critiqued in terms of their structure, scope and validity in relation to the ethical status of animals.

Firstly, Tillich's replacing of a hierarchy of levels in relation to all of life with the metaphors of dimensions and realms will be explored. Secondly, his notion of 'levels' of gradation in terms of the value of life within different dimensions will be examined, and thirdly, individual consideration will be given to the historical dimension and the dimension of the spirit, which he defines as solely human spheres of existence. Following each of these critiques, it will be argued that far from producing the promised 'changed vision of reality'<sup>441</sup>, Tillich actually upholds the status quo and remains almost entirely humanocentric in his assertions about the various values ascribed to differing forms of life.

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<sup>440</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 12.

<sup>441</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 15.



## ii. *The Argument Against a Hierarchy of Levels*

Humans can only make sense of the huge diversity of beings they encounter by grouping them together using 'uniting principles'<sup>442</sup>. The most universal of these is a hierarchy of levels, where beings are placed in an order based on their species and relative attributes. In using such an order, all beings can be neatly allocated their place. Within the hierarchy, beings are assigned to their level based on a variety of ontological attributes, examples of which consist of their 'degree of universality or a richer development of their potentiality'<sup>443</sup>. When viewed graphically, hierarchical orders are pyramidal in shape, with the number of species reducing in each level the closer they get to the top of the order<sup>444</sup>.

His system however rejects the notion of a hierarchical order because there is no room for movement between the levels, resulting in complete separation from each other. The metaphor 'level', and the world view which underlies it, means that beings occupying different levels are not able to have any sort of positive inter-relation and it is argued the relation of the levels remains that of 'interference, either by control or revolt'<sup>445</sup>.

Having rejected the notion of a hierarchical order with regards to all life processes, Tillich feels that the term level<sup>446</sup> should be dropped altogether. Instead, he wishes to replace the metaphor with that of dimension, along with concepts such as realm and grade<sup>447</sup>. This would be to no avail however, if it simply amounted to the replacement of one metaphor with another, what really matters is not 'the replacement of one metaphor with another but the changed vision of reality which such a replacement expresses'<sup>448</sup>.

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<sup>442</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

<sup>443</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

<sup>444</sup> See Fig. i. depicting a 'Traditional Hierarchy of Levels', p. 210 below.

<sup>445</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

<sup>446</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13. The term level, implying that beings or objects be grouped together and 'levelled' or otherwise stated be 'brought to a common plane and kept on it' is extremely telling.

<sup>447</sup> The difference between 'level' and 'grade' is little more than semantic. In practice, the terms describe precisely the same structure.

<sup>448</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13. Compare Fig. i, depicting 'The Traditional Hierarchy of Levels' p. 2 with Fig. iii. Showing a graphical representation of Tillich's 'Valuation of Grades of Being, p. 2. It is clear that his change of terms does nothing to alter the underlying reality.

The metaphor of dimension, like that of level, is a spatial one. However, unlike level, the term dimension provides a description of the various realms of being in a way that precludes either control or revolt in the interaction between them. It is put forward that if we view such life processes in graphical form, dimensions all meet at a central point and overlap each other without conflict or dominance. The peaceful interaction between the dimensions provides an image of life processes in which 'the unity of life is seen above its conflicts'<sup>449</sup>.

That is not to say that conflicts between different life processes do not exist, because clearly they still do (for example, humans still eat other animals, herbivores still eat vegetation), but rather than these conflicts arising out of the control or revolt between the levels, they can be seen to be merely an inherent part of the ambiguity of all life processes. From this understanding of the relation between the different dimensions, Tillich believes that the ambiguities and conflicts implicit in all life processes might be overcome without the need for any dimension to engulf any other dimension.

He acknowledges that at first glance the metaphor dimension may appear to be less accurate than that of level, especially in view of the fact that certain aspects of many dimensions appear not to exhibit the characteristics of some of the more advanced dimensions. Nonetheless, on closer inspection, this consideration does not preclude us from using the preferred term of dimension. The term dimension is adequate in its meaning and scope since it points to the potentiality of rather than merely highlighting the actuality of a group of life processes. This notion is most clearly visible in relation to the inorganic dimension. Although it is true to say that much of the inorganic dimension is devoid of actual life in the biological sense of the word, it is equally true that the potential of life to actualize itself, given the right conditions (or as Tillich puts it, the right set of constellations) is a present reality. Once viewed from this perspective, he feels that the interrelatedness of all dimensions becomes apparent and allows that all dimensions are 'always real, if not actually, at least potentially'<sup>450</sup>.

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<sup>449</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p.16.

<sup>450</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 16. Also, see Fig. ii. 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life Model', p. 2.

In order for the actualization of the potential of life to occur, two main conditions must be satisfied. Firstly, for some dimensions of life to be actualized, others must have already been actualized. The second condition is that the realm which expresses the character of the dimension already actualized (for instance, the animal realm within the organic dimension) must provide the right conditions to make possible the actualization of a new dimension. For example, the psychological dimension could not have been actualized unless the animal realm of the organic dimension had already been actualized.

Tillich primarily uses the term realm to mark out a sub-section of a dimension where a particular category of life process is evident. First and foremost, realm refers to a portion of reality in which a special dimension determines the character of every individual belonging to it 'whether it is an atom or a man'<sup>451</sup>. In each realm, all dimensions are potentially present although many are yet to be actualized.

Having given an exposition of the replacement of a hierarchy of levels in favour of a model based on the metaphors of dimensions and realms, we now examine the implications of this alteration in relation to animals.

### iii. *The Multidimensional Unity of Life*

At first glance, the multidimensional unity of life model would appear to be promising from an interdependent view of our relations with nonhuman animals. After all, if no one dimension is dominant over any other, surely it would follow that animals may enjoy greater consideration by humans. On closer inspection however, this simply is not the case.

Although this theory relates to essential life rather than existence as we experience it, it is difficult to imagine how changing one metaphor for another without fundamentally changing the mind-set which accompanies the metaphor can have any real impact upon existential life. The use of the metaphor dimension rather than that of levels does nothing to change the reality that the interaction between different sub-sections of our world remains that of 'interference,

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<sup>451</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 19.

either by control or revolt'<sup>452</sup>. In the instance of the inorganic and the organic dimensions, humans control the environment, building extensively, even on flood plains and in its turn, the inorganic dimension revolts because when heavy rainfall occurs (as it did in many parts of Great Britain in 2000-1, 2004, 2007-8, 2010) the ground can no longer soak up the water and the result is extensive flooding. This type of negative interaction between the historical realm (humans) and many members of the animal realm is also evident. In numerous instances, conflicts occur between these realms, often brought about by human interference and control. At no point does Tillich's multidimensional unity of life compel us to lead our lives differently, or even indicate that we should give greater consideration to any of the inhabitants of other realms, so one might pose the question 'why then does he wish to replace a hierarchy of levels with metaphors which according to him are non-hierarchical?' To answer this question, it is necessary to examine the specific considerations that lead him to make such a replacement. Tillich gives four exclusively humanocentric reasons.

Firstly, he points to the problems of this structure when attempting to explain the relation between the organic and the inorganic levels of nature. When there can be no dependence between the organic and inorganic levels, questions are raised as to whether biological, organic processes can be apprehended solely by viewing the world through the eyes of mathematical physics, or any other means of human perception. From this vantage point, the inorganic level can take complete control over the organic level. Alternatively, we could posit the role of a 'designer' to explain the development of organic growth, in which case organic processes may be seen to be 'interfered with by a strange "vitalist" force'<sup>453</sup> (or revolt) a view which engenders vehement opposition from physicists and biologists.

Secondly, he highlights the problems a hierarchical view of the world causes when considering the relation between the organic and the spiritual levels of life. This problem is most clearly evident in the relation between body (organic) and the mind (spiritual).<sup>454</sup> If the mind is viewed as being on one level and the body on another, their relation can only be understood either by

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<sup>452</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 13.

<sup>453</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 14.

<sup>454</sup> Also see Tillich, *The Spiritual Situation in our Technological Society*, p. 115-6.

reducing the mental to the same level as the body, that is the organic, an approach referred to as 'biologism [and] psychologism'<sup>455</sup>, or by asserting the control (or interference) of the mental level impacting upon the organic level of the body. This latter view would of course give biologists and psychologists ample reason to reject any notion of a soul as a separate entity, holding sway over psychological processes.

Thirdly, problems emerge from the inadequacies of a hierarchical way of viewing the world and everything in it when the relation of religion to culture is examined. If culture is seen to be the level upon which humans are self-creative, that is, they are able to create and express themselves, whilst religion is the level upon which humans receive the 'divine self-manifestation'<sup>456</sup>, this would give religion a superior status to that of culture, allowing religion to exert control over it. In religion's attempt to control our expressions of culture, such as art, science, ethics or politics, Tillich postulates that culture fights back (revolts) attempting to smother religion and downplay its superior status by subjugating it to the 'norms of autonomous reason'<sup>457</sup>.

Finally, the notion of independent levels of being poses serious questions for theological thought as well. If God and humanity appear on different and wholly independent levels within a hierarchical order, he is dubious as to whether there can be any meaningful description at all regarding the relation of God and humans.<sup>458</sup> In a model with an independent hierarchy of levels, Tillich argues the interaction between levels is only that of control or revolt. In order to explain their relation adequately, he believes that one must resort to either religious dualism or 'theological supranaturalism'.<sup>459</sup> This is a situation he finds unacceptable, being opposed to any move towards supranaturalism within theology, on the grounds that it requires the literal

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<sup>455</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 14.

<sup>456</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p.15.

<sup>457</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 14.

<sup>458</sup> It is interesting to note that here Tillich talks exclusively of a relationship between God and humans. At no point does he make any reference to God and nonhuman animals, or to God and the whole of the created order. If being on different levels of an independent hierarchy is problematic for the relation of God to humans, it is especially so in the case of the relation of God to the rest of creation.

<sup>459</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 15.

interpretation of mythological imagery, which in turn leads to a superstitious outlook on the divine-human relationship.

In Tillich's own words:

"the result of these [four] considerations is that the metaphor 'level' (and such similar metaphors as 'stratum' or 'layer') must be excluded from any description of life processes"<sup>460</sup>.

*iv. The Theological Adequacy of the Motivation Underlying 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life'*

It is now clear that it is the preceding, entirely humanocentric reasons which motivate Tillich to drop the metaphor of level, in favour of dimensions, realms and grades. This is not adequate from the point of view of the status of animals within his philosophical theology as a whole and his systematic theology in particular. By failing to account for the problems of interaction between the Creator and creation, not only does he fail to represent a theological account of animals, but he also neglects to account for the Creator's interests in relation to animals. If Tillich is correct that theonomy, or a God-centred account of the world is the goal of theology, then in his own terms, Tillich's account is found wanting. Based on this examination of his motives for devising his multidimensional unity of life, it is hard to imagine that Tillich considered the difficulties and theological deficiencies inherent in the hierarchical metaphor (and the world view it represents) from the perspective of the status of the Creator, animals or creation.

This assertion is all the more apparent when the notion of his valuation of different grades of being is examined. The image of levels has become the prevalent way of understanding grades of being for two distinct reasons. Firstly, the acceptance of levels of being is modelled on our social experience of hierarchical orders such as the church hierarchy or monarchy and so is inherent in the way we understand the world. Secondly, the use of this type of hierarchical order was a practical reaction to the fact that in various groups of objects, many aspects of life simply are not present at all. For example, the inorganic dimension appears to have little or no

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<sup>460</sup>Tillich, *STIII*, p. 15.

presence of the organic dimension and there are many examples of there being only minimal crossover between the psychological dimension and the organic one.

In Tillich's estimation, although all dimensions are potentially present in each other, it is only in humans that all dimensions are actually present. For instance, only humans have actualized the historical realm. This does not mean that the inorganic and organic dimensions are less important though, because without the actualization of the inorganic dimension, no other dimension could have had the conditions met that were required to actualize themselves either.<sup>461</sup> Thus he views the importance of the inorganic and organic dimensions in instrumental or utilitarian terms, because although they may not be as advanced as the historical dimension for instance, the historical dimension could not exist without them. However, the key theological question should be not what animals and creation are to humans, but what they mean to God the Creator? In his account, Tillich fails to address this question altogether.

Despite the replacing of the metaphor 'level' with that of 'grades' it does not preclude there from being a hierarchy of the valuation of grades of being in the different dimensions of the multidimensional unity of life though<sup>462</sup>. Humans are allocated the highest value since we are able to add the historical dimension to all of the other dimensions to which humans are intrinsically linked. From this humanocentric perspective, humans have the greatest capacity to actualize their potential and he asserts it follows from this that humans are the highest valued being<sup>463</sup> within the boundaries of our experience.

At this juncture it is interesting to see exactly the considerations Tillich uses to determine the value a particular grade of being should receive within his 'non-hierarchical order'. In order to ascribe a being its place, he uses the ontological criterion of degrees of power of being as the basis for the value judgements he makes regarding a being's importance or worth. Although he

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<sup>461</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 16. As Tillich points out: 'only the inorganic dimension is actualized in the atom, but all the other dimensions are potentially present. Symbolically speaking, one could say that when God created the potentiality of the atom within himself, he created the potentiality of man, and when he created the potentiality of man, he created the potentiality of the atom-and all other dimensions between them'.

<sup>462</sup> Fig. iii. showing 'The Valuation of Grades of Being, p. 2.

<sup>463</sup> One should ask "valuable to whom?"

wishes to produce a new way of looking at the world, it is evident that the hierarchical worldview never really left his thought. It would appear that he uses the term 'power of being' as shorthand for intellectual capacity ... a notion, which underlies so many hierarchical worldviews and has for centuries been cited as a reason for excluding animals from moral consideration.

In order to be absolutely clear on Tillich's thinking in this matter, it is worth examining exactly what it is he has to say regarding the valuation of grades of being:

This leads to the question of whether there is a gradation of value among the different dimensions. The answer is affirmative: that which presupposes something else and adds to it is by so much the richer. Historical man adds the historical dimension that are presupposed and contained in his being. He is the highest grade from the point of valuation, presupposing that the criterion of such a value judgement is the power of a being to include a maximum number of potentialities in one living actuality. This is an ontological criterion, according to the rule that value judgements must be rooted in qualities of the object being valued ... man is the highest being in the realm of our experience, but he is by no means perfect. These last considerations show that the rejection of the metaphor 'level' does not entail the denial of value judgements based on degrees of power of being.<sup>464</sup>

It is clear then that although he may not wish his multidimensional unity of life model to be hierarchical, the way beings are valued within it definitely is of a hierarchical nature. As George Orwell might have put it, although all are equal, some are more equal than others.<sup>465</sup>

From the perspective of a true theological approach to the status of animals and creation, the multidimensional unity of life is no more promising than the model of a traditional hierarchy, with animals at the lower end of the scale and humans at the top. In this respect, the multidimensional unity of life is similar to philosophical approaches which are hierarchical. The main problem is that of his methodology. He sees the world from a humanocentric perspective, rather than a theocentric one and this leads him back to a hierarchical vantage point with humans placed firmly at the top of the order.

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<sup>464</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p.17. Compare Fig. ii. 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life Model', p. 2 with Fig. iii. 'The Valuation of Grades of Being', p. 2. In failing to dispense with the hierarchical worldview which values humans above all else, it is clear that there can be no true multidimensional unity of life.

<sup>465</sup> Paraphrasing of the famous line from Orwell's novel, *Animal Farm*



The criterion Tillich uses to ascribe the level of worth to different grades of being seems unduly focused on human capacities when we consider that the multidimensional unity of life is part of a theological system. He uses a wholly ontological and intellectual basis for the valuation of beings and although he highlights the interrelatedness of the whole created order, he assesses all values from a humanocentric perspective and at no point does he attempt to consider the value of the differing dimensions from the viewpoint of their Creator. In order to help redress this balance, we will now briefly examine the valuation of animals from a biblical standpoint. In accordance with Tillich's views on mythology and mythological language, we will view the biblical images as metaphors, which nonetheless provide an idea of the worth of creation to its Creator.

Unlike the valuation of grades of being explicit in Tillich's multidimensional unity of life, biblical attitudes do not seem to uphold the notion that intellectual capacity is a good enough reason to assert that as a species, humans are inherently more valuable than any other. When talking of the value of a being within a theological system then, it might be more appropriate to base our sense of worth on our faithfulness to the instructions of our Creator to protect and value the rest of the created order, rather than to base our worth (and that of every other species) on ontological attributes, and specifically, intellectual capacity. It is interesting to note that if the value ascribed to any given species of being were based on their peacefully and harmoniously co-existing with the rest of creation, humans, as the most destructive creature the planet has ever known, would surely find themselves at the very bottom of the order.

Having critically examined the issue of a hierarchy of value still existing in Tillich's non-hierarchical multidimensional unity of life, it may be fruitful to examine the intellectual tradition his thought developed in to see if it can shed any light on why he constantly gets drawn back into a hierarchical view of human and nonhuman creation when he insists he sees the paucity in this view of creation.

#### v. Tillich's Lutheran Roots

Growing up, Tillich was exposed to the ideas of Martin Luther from a young age as his father Johannes was a conservative Lutheran pastor in the Evangelical State Church of Prussia. At the age of 26, Tillich also became a Lutheran minister in the province of Brandenburg. Luther's writings had a great influence on Tillich's early theology, so to understand his ambivalence with regard to creation it may be informative to briefly examine Luther's view on nonhuman animals.

In his article '*The anxiety of the Human Animal: Martin Luther on Non-Human Animals and Human Animality*', David Clough posits that

Luther speaks of animals almost everywhere in his writings. He thanks God for providing them for human use, defines what it means to be human in relation to them illustrates theological arguments using them, finds allegorical messages in Biblical texts concerning them and very frequently insults his enemies with reference to them<sup>466</sup>.

He does however go on to state that elsewhere, Luther is much less negative with regard to animals, affirming the care of the Creator for them, protesting against their ill treatment and recognising the things that humans and nonhuman animals have in common.

Much of Luther's opinion of nonhuman animals is 'resolutely anthropocentric'<sup>467</sup> and Clough argues that this is a particular emphasis in Luther's commentary on Genesis. Here, he explicitly stated that humans are made on the last day, once everything else has been created, so that by the time they arrive they will find 'a ready equipped home and when God rests from the work of creation it is because the home is finished and 'the ruler is installed'<sup>468</sup>.

In addition, Clough states that Luther often contrasts nonhuman animals with humans in order to highlight the superior characteristics of humans, although Luther argues that these differences were greater before the fall. It was Luther's belief that before the fall, Adam had 'a greater strength and keener senses than the rest of the living being'<sup>469</sup>. However, even in the

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<sup>466</sup> David Clough, 'The Anxiety of the Human Animal: Martin Luther on Non-Human Animals and Human Animality' in Drummond, Celia Deane and David Clough (Eds.) *Creaturely Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2009) 41-60, p. 41.

<sup>467</sup> Clough 'Anxiety' in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 42.

<sup>468</sup> Luther, Cited Clough, 'Anxiety' in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 42.

<sup>469</sup> Luther, Cited Clough, 'Anxiety' in *Creaturely Theology* p. 43.

current fallen state, Luther still perceived humans to be far greater in every way than nonhuman animals.

He is also known for his opinion regarding human dominion over animals and creation. When Adam is given dominion, Luther stresses that the exercise of the ruling over the rest of creation is a command from God, rather than God simply giving permission for humans to rule. Clough postulates that Luther is not entirely consistent or coherent in relation to human rule over animals though. He states that Luther admits to not being clear about the nature or extent of Adam's dominion prior to the fall as 'Adam would have not used other animals for food, did not lack clothing or money, and neither he nor his descendants would be greedy'<sup>470</sup>.

Following the fall, Luther believed that human dominion was drastically reduced as part of the punishment from God. From Genesis 9:2 onwards, dominion has changed in scope and character and Luther now describes the plight of animals under human rule:

until now the animals did not have to die in order to provide food for man, but man was a gentle master of the beasts rather than their slayer or consumer; now the animals are subjected to man as to a tyrant who has absolute power over life and death<sup>471</sup>.

Clough posits that Luther is inconsistent, as on occasion his appeals to reason and philosophy as a capacity which elevates humans above other creatures, however, on other occasions he has railed against the capacities of reason which can lead people astray. Clough uses the example of Luther's final sermon at Wittenberg in 1546 to illustrate this point. Luther tells his congregation to 'hold reason in check and do not follow her beautiful cognitions. Throw dirt in her face and make her ugly. Reason should be drowned at baptism'<sup>472</sup>.

Further, Luther is famous for insulting his enemies by likening them to other animals. Clough cites one such outburst, which he comments is 'far from unique'<sup>473</sup>: 'Listen now, you pig, dog, or fanatic, whatever kind of unreasonable ass you are ... go back to your pigpen and your filth'<sup>474</sup>.

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<sup>470</sup> Clough, 'Anxiety', in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 45.

<sup>471</sup> Clough, 'Anxiety', in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 45.

<sup>472</sup> Luther, Cited Clough, 'Anxiety', in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 47.

<sup>473</sup> Clough, 'Anxiety', in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 48.

<sup>474</sup> Luther, cited Clough, 'Anxiety', in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 48.

Despite the overwhelmingly humanocentric nature of his writings regarding other animals, Clough contends that there is another side to Luther which exhibits a less negative attitude towards creation. One of these less negative emphases is his recognition that there are many 'deep similarities' between humans and the rest of the animated creation; he frequently comments of our daily need for sustenance, water and rest, as well as procreation. Additionally, Clough puts forward an instance where Luther observes a mother hen with her chicks and is struck by how selflessly she cares for them, going without food, so her chicks can eat, protecting them from predators and allowing them to climb on her when they want to play. He then likens Christ to this hen's example of caring for the flock. So whilst it is true that Luther's writing was often overwhelmingly humanocentric in tone, it would also seem that from time to time he saw nonhuman animals as intrinsically valuable in their own right.

Tillich does wish to break away from the traditional idea of a hierarchy of beings, but ultimately is drawn back to the status quo, so at times it seems that the structure of this Lutheran mind-set may be contributing to the humanocentrism which underlies his multidimensional unity of life.

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*vi. The Interaction of the Dimensions*

As previously noted, the dimension of the inorganic had first to be actualized before any of the proceeding dimensions were able to be, and as such, it has a 'preferred position among the dimensions'<sup>475</sup>, in the sense that all other dimensions developed from it. It is however the organic dimension which is primarily considered 'when we talk about life'. Within this dimension, the 'structural differences'<sup>476</sup> between many of its members requires there to be a variety of different realms. Obviously, the vegetable realm contains significantly different types of being to that of the animal realm. Due to the interrelatedness of all of the dimensions, all possess the potential for self-awareness, although it is only from the animal realm onwards that the psychic (or psychological) realm is first actualized.

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<sup>475</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 19.

<sup>476</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 20.

Within this realm, Tillich sets the conditions for the actualization of another dimension that of the personal-communal, defined as the dimension of the spirit. In its turn, the dimension of the spirit provides the conditions under which the historical dimension can become actual, and it is historical dimension anticipated, also referred to as the 'dynamic of life' which provides the highest valued of the dimensions. Although it is potentially present in all dimensions, the historical realm is only actualized by humans. Under the historical dimension, facilitated by the spirit dimension, humans have the ability to locate themselves within the world. Since this is the only dimension in which the capacity for language exists, it is also the only dimension in which abstract concepts are actual'.<sup>477</sup>

Along with the linguistic abilities inherent in the historical dimension comes the capacity for the creation of the new<sup>478</sup>. Tillich is however opposed to the idea that the immortal soul was at some stage added to an 'otherwise complete body, with this soul bearing the life of the spirit'<sup>479</sup>. Rather than viewing the spirit separately from the psychological realm in which it emerges, he prefers to talk about the 'rise of an act of spirit out of a constellation of psychological factors'<sup>480</sup>.

Instead of the spirit dimension being viewed as a separate entity, apart from the psychological dimension, the spirit dimension needs to be understood as a characteristic within the psychological realm, displayed only by a totally centred self or otherwise stated, a being which has the possession of finite freedom. For Tillich, it is the personal centre of a being with self-awareness which allows the spirit dimension to become actual in individuals, although the personal centre is neither any of the psychological elements nor is it something added externally to the contents of the psychological realm. Rather, the psychological centre adds something unique and cohesive to the personal centre via the processes of thought and decision making.

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<sup>477</sup> Here, Tillich follows the thought of Aquinas.

<sup>478</sup> As Tillich points out, the historical dimension is indeed the dimension in which the New Being appeared.

<sup>479</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 26.

<sup>480</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 27.

According to Tillich, this understanding of the spirit realm relates solely to humans and it denies the dualism which may otherwise be observed in the contrasting of the spirit from the psychological, in just the same way as it refutes the monism which is evident when the spirit is 'dissolved'<sup>481</sup> within the psychological. In order to understand why Tillich denies the spiritual status of animals, we must evaluate exactly how he comes to his definition of spirit to begin with.

In Tillich's estimation, although the term spirit<sup>482</sup> is alive and well in Indo-Germanic languages, (its origins being in the Greek term *pneuma*, the Latin term *spiritus* and the Germanic word *geist*) it has all but been lost in English usage, being replaced by the word mind, which in turn has taken on the connotation of 'intellect'<sup>483</sup>. He believes this move has come about over many centuries and first started in antiquity where ascetic philosophies separated body from soul. This trend was developed further and became the common way to view the relationship between spirit and physicality with the English empirical movement and especially the writings of Descartes who asserted that the rational mind housed the soul, intellect thus became synonymous with spirit.

Tillich does not appear to be in favour of this development, pointing out that the term spirit was originally employed in Indo-Germanic languages and was closely linked to the word 'breath'. He posits that it was in breathing and more importantly in the cessation of breathing at the time of death that the connection was made between the breath which animates the body and sustains it and the spirit<sup>484</sup>. Indeed, in Gen 1:30, Spirit (breath) is the basis of *all* animal life.

Because he feels the original and preferred Indo-Germanic understanding of the word spirit has been lost in English, rather than linking spirit to life power or another such term, he links it to the concept of 'logos', postulating that in order for a being to qualify for inclusion in the dimension of the spirit, it must have the ability to use abstract reason and have the ability to

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<sup>481</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 28.

<sup>482</sup> 'spirit' with a small s rather than 'Spirit' with a capital S, which relates to the Divine Spirit rather than to any considerations regarding the doctrine of man [or of the whole of creation]. Tillich, *STIII*, p. 22-24

<sup>483</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 22.

<sup>484</sup> For Tillich, the symbol of spirit (with a small s) is intrinsically linked to the concept of soul, 'although it [spirit] transcends it [soul] in range, in structure and especially in dynamics' *STIII*, p. 24.

apprehend not just itself (be self-aware) but also locate itself in the world. This linking of spirit to what amounts to another formulation of 'intellect'<sup>485</sup> all but excludes nonhuman animals because as far as we are currently aware, only humans have the ability to utilize finite freedom, acting between the ontological poles of freedom and destiny. This perspective however, is unbiblical. Here, Tillich confuses spirit-driven beings with personally responsible beings.

This view is also expounded in other volumes of Tillich's work. In *The Spiritual Situation in our Technical Society*, he refers again to the dimension of the spirit in terms of intellect, centeredness and finite freedom: 'we can distinguish the different dimensions of centeredness as the centeredness of structure, the centeredness of spontaneity in the organic life and the centeredness of freedom in man: structure, spontaneity, freedom'<sup>486</sup>. From the perspective that 'spirit' is the 'unity of power and meaning'<sup>487</sup>, dependent upon the ability to apprehend 'universals in perception and intention'<sup>488</sup>, at the very least, almost all nonhuman animals will obviously be excluded.

If he had reverted to his preferred definition of spirit, viewing it in terms of 'breath' which animates, vitalizes and sustains beings with inner-awareness, and a capacity to partake in the personal-communal realm, there would be no doubting that mammals, at least, would justifiably be considered members of the dimension of the spirit. As animated, self-directing, self-aware members of the created order, one could also postulate that Tillich not only mischaracterises animals by his failure to include them, but at the same time misunderstands God as creator; a creator whose spirit is the basis of all animated beings and who is neither remote from nor indifferent to Her creation as a whole.

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<sup>485</sup> A move he himself states is faulty, *STIII*, p. 20-25.

<sup>486</sup> Tillich, *The Spiritual Situation in our Technical Society*, p. 115.

<sup>487</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 22.

<sup>488</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 24.

**Part III:**

**Positive Concepts in Tillich's Systematic Theology with Respect  
to Animals and Creation.**



## Chapter Seven

### An Examination of the Method of Correlation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*

In the introduction of Tillich's book *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, its editor, Durwood Foster, asserts that Tillich 'relentlessly insisted that authentic theology ... must speak to the burning issues of human life'<sup>489</sup>. Unlike Barth, who was an exponent primarily of Kerugmatic theology, Tillich employed apologetic and answering or mediating theology, that is, a theology which allows for a contextual interpretation of the message or meaning of Christianity in our ever changing day to day lives. In order to achieve this aim, he utilises what he describes as the 'method of correlation'<sup>490</sup> which brings together the foundational truths of the faith with the situation in which people were to receive this message.

The concept of correlation is of vital importance if one is to ask ethical questions regarding interaction between humans and nonhuman animals. Since Tillich's death, a wealth of insights into the sophistication and complexity of nonhuman animal life have come to light which simply were not available to him at the time he was writing his *Systematic Theology*. By applying such information to the abstract framework of Tillich's system, it will be shown that not only is this an authentically Tillichian way of using his system, it also allows that one is free to update some of Tillich's own less well informed assertions, especially regarding his failure to include nonhuman animals in direct contact with the Spiritual Presence in particular and the whole historical dimension in general. By firstly examining his method of correlation then expounding a fraction of the insights gleaned from the field of cognitive ethology over the last four decades,

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<sup>489</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, edited and introduced by Durwood Foster (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1996 ) Introduction p. x.

<sup>490</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 9.

it will be argued that not only could his system be interpreted to form an authentically Tillichian animal ethic, but additionally, doing so could improve the internal consistency of Tillich's system as a whole, especially with regard to his Christology<sup>491</sup>

i. *The Methodology of Tillich's Systematic Theology*

In order to allow his System to be dynamic, each of its five parts comprises an existential question to which a theological symbol is advanced as an answer. The System then, can remain relevant to people, even decades after it was written because 'after the central theological answer is given to any question, there is always a return to the existential question as the context in which a theological answer is given'<sup>492</sup>. This format allows for the concrete examination of current moral dilemmas and human issues, making his system a useful ethical guide for existential questions, whether or not these questions had arisen, at the time it was written.

His system remains dynamic because although the 'giving' side of the correlation is fundamentally unchanging, the 'receiving' side is perpetually in a state of development and change as is human social existence, out of which the questions are asked.

Tillich believes that the human experience of transcendence is to be found in the unique tensions of contemporary life and that the tensions experienced will alter from person to person, depending on the individual posing the question. Their cultural background, political and denominational persuasion, their life experience and particular interests all play a part in determining the questions which are asked. In this respect, his system falls within the tradition of mediating theology, that is, theological thinking that begins with the premise that the Christian faith and modern thought, including moral and ethical dilemmas, share common ground and can be fundamentally united.

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<sup>491</sup> Also see Chapters Four 'The Creator and Creation in Tillich's Systematic Theology' pp. 114-125 and Five 'The Implications of Tillich's Christology for Animals and Creation' pp.126-143.

<sup>492</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 3.

Religion as a discipline in isolation, however, does not possess all of the ‘tools’ required to forge this unity. Instead, he asserts that religion is related to other disciplines such as philosophy, depth psychology, politics and culture in much the same way that form is related to content. Tillich posits ‘reality itself makes demands and the method must follow; reality offers itself in different ways and our cognitive intellect must receive it in different ways’<sup>493</sup>. He maintains that by attempting to impose a rigid, exclusive method to every given question, such as the empirical method employed in the natural sciences, the theologian runs the risk of being too blinkered to render a meaningful answer to any question. Rather, he postulates that a ‘genuine pragmatism which refuses to close any door is much more realistic than a dogmatic empiricism’<sup>494</sup> in the role of uniting the universal with the concrete. Wilhelm and Marion Pauck contended that Tillich developed and honed his method of correlation between 1933 and 1937, whilst teaching systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York.<sup>495</sup> During these courses, he gave his students the opportunity to freely discuss their ideas and questions with him. Pauck posits that it was during these exchanges that he noticed the questions put to him by his students changed, as the contemporary issues changed around them. It is contended that in the light of these experiences, over a period of time his theology modified and took on an element of existential thought. Whether or not these exchanges with his students were the original catalyst for his existential theology<sup>496</sup>, it is clear that his time teaching, both before and after his arrival in the United States, had a significant impact on him. This is evidenced in his dedication of the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* ‘to my former students here and abroad’ with an even more telling paragraph at the end of its preface:

I dedicate this book to my students, here and in Germany, who from year to year have urged me to publish the theological system with which they became acquainted in my lectures ... my ardent desire is that they shall find in these pages something of what they expect – a help in answering the questions they are asked by people inside and outside their churches.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Tillich, Paul, ‘The Problem of Theological Method’, *Journal of Religion XXVI* (1 Jan 1947) pp. 16-26. p. 16.

<sup>494</sup> Tillich, ‘The Problem of Theological Method’, *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 16.

<sup>495</sup> Pauck, Wilhelm and Marion, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) p. 234. This timeline is disputed however by John P. Clayton.

<sup>496</sup> Or whether, as others have suggested, his experience as an Army Chaplain on the Western Front from 1914-18 initially pushed him in the direction of theological existentialism.

<sup>497</sup> Tillich, *STI*, final paragraph, preface.

Because the human pole of the correlation is constantly in a state of flux, adjusting itself according to the flow of social and cultural existence, the giving side of the correlation too has to allow for an interpretation of the faith which remains true to its foundation whilst maintaining its relevance as a living religion. Foster asserts therefore that 'the theological task is never finished but is always posed again somewhat differently by the incessant dynamism of history'<sup>498</sup>.

In employing this methodology, Tillich realised that without proper grounding, it may be open to relativistic interpretations. Indeed, Mark Kline Taylor argues that the method of correlation could potentially be misunderstood as a method that in 'all too sanguine a fashion seeks 'similarities' between the Christian message and the human situation'<sup>499</sup>. Throughout his System however, he recognised the element of risk involved in uniting the Christian message with the existential situation of those receiving this message. He asserts in the first volume of his System that 'such a method is not a tool to be handled at will'<sup>500</sup>. Without strong emphasis upon the foundational and timeless truth of the faith, the Christian message could well become subordinate to the receiving side of the correlation, encouraging a relativistic understanding of his System. This was certainly not his intention. Instead, he wished to produce a theological system which could be genuinely relevant to the lives of people both inside and outside the Christian faith.

He posits that rather than creating a new theological scheme, his System simply makes 'explicit the implications of old ones [theological methods], namely that of apologetic theology'<sup>501</sup>. At no point did he wish to subvert the Christian tradition, rather, it was his intention to bridge the gap between the Christian faith and modern life by taking fundamental elements of each and correlating them. He believed the main function of his System 'has been to present the method and the structure of a theological system written from an apologetic point of view and carried

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<sup>498</sup> Foster (ed.) discussing Tillich's understanding of his method of correlation in Introduction, *Tillich – the Irrelevance and Relevance*, p.xi.

<sup>499</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries* edited by Mark Taylor Kline (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991 ) p. 22.

<sup>500</sup>Tillich, *STI*, p. 8.

<sup>501</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 16.

through in a continuous correlation of philosophy<sup>502</sup>. He strongly believed his use of non-theological language to be the most appropriate method of expressing Christian teaching to a contemporary audience. In defence of his use of these non-theological terms, Tillich asserts that in any existentialist theology, questions which arise out of human existence often do not reveal themselves in strictly theological terms. Rather, they are frequently couched in 'primitive, pre-philosophical or elaborated philosophical terms'<sup>503</sup>. Therefore, in order to make his theology accessible to individuals in their concrete reality, it was necessary to use terminology which reflected the context from which the questions were posed. For him, correlation can only work as an effective theological method if the theologian both accepts the ever-changing circumstances in which these existential questions are raised *and* keeps in mind the concerns of his or her own life situation, including the political, social and cultural setting.

Questions derived from everyday life then, can be viewed as 'the experiences of an existential situation not the acceptance of an objective assertion'<sup>504</sup>. In his method of correlation, the questions implied in our finite existence are to a large extent relativistic because they emerge from the particularity of a definite social and cultural setting which is constantly in a state of flux. However, the response Christian theology makes to these questions can for Tillich be considered universal, because they are derived from the *kerygma* (foundational message of Christian theology) which is unchanging.

Although the method of correlation receives much greater emphasis in his System than more widely used methods such as dogmatics, he nonetheless did not dispense with these tools altogether. Instead, he still regarded the *kerygma* derived from a process of revelation to be at the heart of Christian theology. The core of the Christian message then for Tillich is unrelated to a given time or situation, and this acknowledgment of the universality of the *kerygma* prevents his System from lapsing into relativism.

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<sup>502</sup> Tillich, *STI*, preface, p. vii.

<sup>503</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 25.

<sup>504</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 24.

ii. *The Theological Basis for the Method of Correlation*

At the heart of the Christian faith is the concept of ultimate concern and in light of this, any statements or assertions made within existentialist theology in Tillich's opinion must contain the character of correlation. This is so because the objective, universal or giving side of faith and its opposite pole, the subjective or receiving side of faith, are inextricably linked. These opposing sides of theology must act together in interdependence. If the objective side is allowed predominance, it becomes a 'quasi scientific assertion' whereas if the subjective side is given predominance it becomes an 'emotional will to believe'<sup>505</sup>. In either case, he asserts that the power and meaning of theology is substantially lost. Without the role of the objective, dogmatic side of Christianity, it would not be possible to maintain a sense of the foundational and unchanging truths of the faith. Whereas whilst without the subjective side of practical theology, the Christian message may appear to have little relevance to the constantly changing circumstances and challenges inherent in everyday existence.

In addition to the method of correlation, Tillich maintains that both the Bible and revelation are of central importance to any systematic theology. He holds that although the Bible is a primary source for systematic theology, it is certainly not the only source and on its own it is 'insufficient'<sup>506</sup> as the foundational basis of theology. He does however identify three ways in which the Bible impacts upon theological method. Firstly, it provides a concrete vision of our ultimate concern, embodied in Jesus as the Christ. Secondly, it allows modern-day Christians to participate in the 'reception of this manifestation [Jesus as the Christ] in the original church', and finally it provides the preparation required for the reception of the bearer of New Being in the present-day church<sup>507</sup>.

Although the Bible records the foundational events upon which the Christian church was formed, he maintains that the biblical message can only be fully received and understood through participation both by the church and by the individual Christian. Without such

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<sup>505</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 24.

<sup>506</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 34.

<sup>507</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 16.

participation, Tillich believes it is impossible to draw closer to the object of our ultimate concern, arguing:

The biblical message cannot be understood and could not have been received had there been no preparation for it in human religion and culture. And the biblical message would not have become a message for anyone, including the theologian himself, without the experiencing participation of the Church and of every Christian<sup>508</sup>

He denounces biblical-evangelical fundamentalism as having 'demonic traits'<sup>509</sup> because this view is not only anti-intellectual but fails to allow for any interpretation (and therefore, meaningful participation) of any elements of biblical literature. The fundamentalist assertion that the 'theological truth of yesterday' must be defended word for word without any degree of interpretation not only 'elevates something finite and transitory to eternal validity'<sup>510</sup> but also fails to address Christians in their concrete, contemporary lives. This he finds totally unacceptable, not to mention un-theological, because it is his fervent belief that it is the function of the method of any theological system to 'mediate, not to hold fast'<sup>511</sup> to a literal and out-dated line of teaching.

In addition to biblical literature, which provides a source of revelation, Tillich makes explicit his contention that experiential or practical theology is of great importance in a living religion. Indeed, this view is born out the methodology he employs. On this matter, Paul Bischoff writes: 'In his well-intentioned desire to converse in a theology of culture with a society come of age, we've noted how *participation* is operative within his methodology of correlation'<sup>512</sup>.

### iii. *Revelation and Participation*

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<sup>508</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 31.

<sup>509</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 3.

<sup>510</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 32.

<sup>511</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 21.

<sup>512</sup> Bischoff, Paul, 'Participation: Ecclesial Praxis with a Crucified God for the World', *Journal for Christian Theological Research*, 8, (2003) 19-36 p. 27.

In order to experience a religious reality, it is essential to be a part of that religion. Tillich argues that participation in the life of any religion is a 'presupposition of all theology'<sup>513</sup>. From the standpoint of an objective observer, there is no means by which to interpret the faith 'existentially'. Impartial observation then is the domain of the philosopher of religion. The theologian by contrast 'must participate in man's finitude, which is also his own and in its anxiety as though he had never received the revelatory answer "eternity"<sup>514</sup> and it is this participation which provides the immediacy in any theological method.

The element of immediacy in theology is greatly important as it provides the 'medium of theological work'<sup>515</sup>. Without such participation in the life of the church particularly and the faith generally, he posits 'no theology is possible; it is [participation in the reality of the religion] the air which theology breathes'<sup>516</sup>.

When defining participation, he does so using its widest interpretation. Participation according to this broad understanding encompasses both physical experiences and the cognitive processing of such experience or encounter, but in every case, any religious experience shares a common link. Dowey identifies that for Tillich, 'The religions and cultures of mankind are seen to be asking implicitly or explicitly the question to which the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is the answer'<sup>517</sup>. While the questions arising out of participation in the reality of the New Being might all share a similar direction, he points out that the way any given person experiences and interprets their religious encounters is highly dependent on their circumstances. Factors influencing the experience and interpretation of it include, but are not limited to, the branch of Christianity one is affiliated with, the instruction imparted by their community of faith and their personal, cultural circumstances. Individual experience then, plays a substantial role in informing the medium of theological work because there is a mutual dependence between questions and answers. In respect to the content, the Christian answers are dependent on the

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<sup>513</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 18.

<sup>514</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 15.

<sup>515</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 21.

<sup>516</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*, p. 21.

<sup>517</sup> Dowey Jr, Edward A. 'Tillich, Barth and the Criteria of Theology', *Theology Today*, Vol. 15 No. 1 (1 April 1958) 43-58 p. 48.



revelatory events in which they appear, whilst in respect of form, they are dependent on the structure of the questions which they answer.

'Revelation'<sup>518</sup> in all its forms is an important element in Christian theology. Tillich maintains that the term revelation has been corrupted over the centuries though, and turned into an expression to describe the 'supranatural communication of knowledge'<sup>519</sup>. Although he argues that it is 'hard to save the word' from the erroneous connotations it now has to bear, it is nevertheless still necessary to use this term as there is no more suitable alternative designation for the manifestation of the ultimate ground and meaning of existence.

Unlike a theological method, revelation is not rational and does not adhere to the norms of controlling reason or empirical research. Therefore, the word 'revelation' points not to a concrete set of parameters, rather it highlights the human encounter with the divine mystery; our Ultimate Concern. Given the individual, participatory nature of revelation, he asserts that an event can only be truly revelatory for the individual experiencing it existentially. On this basis, revelation cannot be considered apart from the context in which it is received since it is 'not experience, but revelation received in experience, [which] gives the content of every theology'<sup>520</sup>. All revelation is inherently valuable to faith, as by its very definition it is characterised by the encounter of an individual with their ultimate concern. However, he further identifies a category of religious experience which he defines as 'final revelation'.

Final revelation is not to be considered final in the chronological sense of being 'last', instead revelation can be considered final when it indicates accurately and completely an *a priori* principle of life; a level all other revelatory experiences are unable to meet. The final revelation then is that which has the perfect ability to answer when questions are posed regarding the truth of human existence and the promise of its ultimate transformation. In Christian thought, the manifestation of Jesus as the Christ under the conditions of existence is considered to be final revelation.

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<sup>518</sup> Which Tillich defines as the state of being grasped by the object of one's ultimate concern

<sup>519</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*. p. 22.

<sup>520</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion XXVI*. p. 22.

#### iv. *Ethical Implications of the Method of Correlation*

At first glance, Tillich's highly abstract *Systematic Theology* does not seem to provide a great deal of material for developing a practical ethical stance on any contemporary issue. This first impression, however, is misleading. It was indeed his intention that his system should provide the intellectual basis for a wide range of Christian ethical issues. This desire to provide the framework, upon which any number of moral dilemmas may be thrashed out, is made explicit before the reader even turns to the introduction of the first volume of his system. In the final line of the book's preface, he makes his intention clear: 'a help in answering questions: this is exactly the purpose of this theological system'<sup>521</sup>. By using the method of correlation, Tillich wished to make a definitive link between the Christian faith and contemporary ethical issues, allowing the Christian message to function as answer to the burning concerns of modern day life, in all its ambiguity. In 1947, four years prior to the publication of the first volume of his system, he published the article '*The Problem of Theological Method*'<sup>522</sup> which set down the rationale behind his use of this particular method of expressing theology<sup>523</sup>. To his mind, the method of correlation 'describes things as they show themselves to the religious consciousness in the light of the human situation, the questions implied in it, and the answers given to it by the Christian message'<sup>524</sup>.

This linking of the foundational truths of the faith with contemporary ethical issues has, to a great extent, provided comfort and guidance to many Christians in the intervening years. Lawton Posey testifies to this in his 1981 article entitled 'Paul Tillich's Gift of Understanding'. Posey begins by relating the existential anxiety he experienced following the news on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1963 of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. He was distraught that this unthinkable act could happen and questioned whether he would be able to stand in front of his

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<sup>521</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p.viii.

<sup>522</sup> Many of Tillich's biographers argue that as early as the 1920's, he was devising this particular methodology.

<sup>523</sup> As previously stated, this scheme had been in the forefront of Tillich's mind, since at least 1933 when he first started teaching systematic theology at Union Seminary in New York, however, 'The Problem of Theological Method' is certainly an early publication to explicitly express the methodology for which he is now most famous.

<sup>524</sup> Tillich, 'The Problem of Theological Method', *Journal of Religion*, p. 26.

parishioners that Sunday with anything to say that might help or comfort them. In desperation, he turned to the first volume of Tillich's system and found practical help in its pages. What he found therein immediately struck a chord with him: 'when I came to read Tillich, I had the questions for which his theological methods supplied some direction, if not the answers'<sup>525</sup>. The solace he found within those pages mirrors the intentions Tillich himself had for his *magnum opus*. He believed that any theological system which stresses the existential nature of being, automatically involves an element of ethical insight on the grounds that any doctrine a system may expound in relation to existence, such as finitude, is 'equally ontological and ethical in character'<sup>526</sup>. He viewed systematic theology primarily as mediating or 'answering theology'<sup>527</sup> and in order for it to be relevant to the lives of contemporary Christians, he maintained it must be able to provide answers to questions implied in their day to day encounters with the world, in addition to the specific, moral and ethical dilemmas which occur from time to time.

Within any systematic theology, an ethical element is present. Indeed, for Tillich, this ethical component is not only 'necessary' but also a 'predominant element in every theological statement'<sup>528</sup> and for much of theological history, has been united directly with dogmatics. In relation to the separation of ethics and dogmatics, Posey posits 'through him [Tillich] I was able to hear the word of God in a new way, and to be freed from some of my dogmatic assumptions'<sup>529</sup>.

When considering how best to unite *kerygmatic* theology with the needs of a contemporary setting, he postulates: The perennial question has been: can the Christian message be adapted to the modern mind without losing its essence and unique character<sup>530</sup>? By combining apologetics with *kerygmatic* theology, in his method of correlation, Tillich is able to answer in the affirmative. The consequence of such a method, in his opinion is that a 'much richer

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<sup>525</sup> Posey, Lawton, 'Paul Tillich's Gift of Understanding', *Christian Century* (Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> 1987) 967-9, p. 967.

<sup>526</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 31.

<sup>527</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 31.

<sup>528</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 31.

<sup>529</sup> Posey, 'Paul Tillich's Gift of Understanding'. *Christian Century*, p. 968.

<sup>530</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 7.

development of theological ethics'<sup>531</sup> is indeed possible. In the formulation of his method, he is able to satisfy both the mediation of the traditional Christian message and the need to allow this message to be interpreted anew for each generation of the faithful. His theology does provide a rich source of Christian ethics, precisely because the aim of the methodology in his system was to make his understanding of Christianity relevant to the modern mind, and therefore applicable to believers in their everyday lives. The strength of his method to 'cross the bridge of words'<sup>532</sup> gives his system the ability to speak to people in their contemporary setting whilst at the same time remaining faithful to the foundational truths of the faith.

#### *v. Tillichian Ethical insights for Animals and Creation*

It may not seem obvious from the reading of his *Systematic Theology*, but in some of his other writings, Tillich displays a great sensitivity towards the nonhuman creation. A prime example of this attitude can be found in his sermon *The Shaking of the Foundations*, where he recognises the universal element of estrangement and the longing for redemption of the whole of creation. This more approachable side to his writing has been noted by many commentators of his work and on this matter the Paucks write 'it is an irony that Tillich expressed himself more convincingly in his sermons than anywhere else, including even his *systematic theology*'<sup>533</sup>. This may well, at least in part, be the result of the level of abstraction he employs throughout. The abstract nature of his system however should not be interpreted as indicating a lack of interest in animals and creation. Indeed, Tillich is one of the few mainstream theologians who perceive the tragic element of nature and its longing for salvation. On this understanding, there can be no dichotomy between guilty humans and innocent nature, no schism between human and animal salvation. The message is clear: we are firmly located within creation, not set apart from it.

Although at no point does he specifically develop an ethical stance on animals in particular and creation in general, it remains the case that a faithful interpretation of his systematic theology

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<sup>531</sup> Tillich, *STI*, p. 31.

<sup>532</sup> Posey, 'Paul Tillich's Gift of Understanding', *Christian Century*, p. 968.

<sup>533</sup> Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His life and Thought*, p. 232.

can provide much positive material and helps to inform our attitude towards the rest of creation. His symbol of 'the Fall', and especially his principle of 'Universal Salvation' can certainly help to provide the basis of a more ethical and even-handed way of dealing with the myriad of other species of being we share our planet with. In question at this juncture however, is whether or not his method of correlation adds anything distinctive to a more ethical understanding of nonhuman animals. In order to illustrate just how important and informative the method of correlation is in relation to both the theological and ethical status of animals in Tillich's system, at this juncture, thanks to his method of correlation, his system will be updated (as Tillich himself wished) using a tiny fraction of the information gleaned from the field of cognitive ethology in the decades since his death.

#### vi. *Cognitive Ethology*

In the last thirty years or so, a new field of science has opened up which has shed a great deal of light on the cognitive, behavioural, psychological and social life of animals and birds. Along with this new information, has come a new understanding of the intricate complexity of animal life and how nonhuman animals are significantly more advanced both cognitively and psychologically than was thought to be the case at the time that Tillich was writing.

Cognitive ethology, or the scientific endeavour of gaining information about all aspects of animal mental, psychological and social lives has been evident in one form or another for around a century, although until the 1970's, most of the emphasis was placed purely on behavioural studies, rather than on trying to understand the mental and emotional states underlying this behaviour. In 1976, Donald Griffin first started specifically researching the issue of animal consciousness, an area of study which although still in its infancy has proved greatly influential in informing our views regarding the complex and diverse lives of many different

species of animal. For Griffin, a being can be thought of as experiencing a simple level of consciousness if it 'subjectively thinks about objects and events'<sup>534</sup>

vii. *Consciousness in Nonhuman Animals*

Griffin highlights two important types of consciousness in his work on non-human animals. Firstly, the state or faculty of being mentally conscious or aware of anything which he defines as 'perceptual consciousness'. In order for a being to qualify as perceptually conscious, he believes it must be able to retain and think about past events (have memory) have the ability to anticipate and have simple beliefs and desires in addition to 'being able to think about non-existent objects or events as well as immediate sensory input'<sup>535</sup>.

Secondly, the recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts or affections, defined by Griffin as 'reflective consciousness'. For a being to be considered reflectively conscious, it must have immediate awareness of its own thoughts as distinguished from the objects or activities about which the thoughts are being made. Griffin argues that almost all animals and birds meet the criteria for perceptual consciousness and many are capable of meeting the criteria of reflective consciousness.

Although questions and speculations about animal mentality are not a new idea; they go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, to individuals such as Darwin and Romanes, until recently animals were predominantly thought of as devoid of conscious thought by the scientific and philosophical world. The field of cognitive ethology has proved this to be far from the case.

As Beer points out, several facts have stood in the way of interpreting animal actions as conscious ones. Firstly, the emphasis on research into animals over the past century has been placed firmly on Behaviourism that is, assessing the link between stimulation received and behaviour performed, without ever making reference to the mental states which produce such behaviour. Behaviourism has been opposed to discussing animal mental states primarily on the

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<sup>534</sup> Griffin, cited Carolyn A. Ristau (Ed) *Cognitive Ethology: The Minds of other Animals* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, 1991) p. 293.

<sup>535</sup> Donald R. Griffin, *Animal Minds* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p. 10.

grounds of intentionality. Intentionality, which encompasses 'believing, desiring, wishing, knowing, guessing, forgetting and intending'<sup>536</sup> cannot be measured with precise scientific technology. On these grounds, behaviourism has often branded cognitive ethology as speculative because subjective states by their very nature are not objectively verifiable. Instead of a mentalistic approach, or referring to an animal's inner state, words such as beliefs and desires were understood simply as 'dispositions to act in certain ways'<sup>537</sup>.

Two further factors have hampered the advances of our understanding of animal consciousness over the last century. One being that scientists have for the most part avoided any consideration of animal consciousness (except in the negative) due to their fear of the accusation that it is simply anthropomorphic. The philosopher Wade Savage however argues that in the light of the advances made by cognitive ethology in recent decades regarding the complexity of animal behaviour, to deny that any being other than humans have thoughts, beliefs, desires and feelings is merely 'the product of human vanity'<sup>538</sup>

In addition to this, a larger and until recently, seemingly insurmountable problem was evident when discussing whether animals were able to think consciously: that of language. For hundreds of years, it was taken for granted that only individuals capable of spoken language had the ability to generate thoughts of any description. However, in the last few decades, this view has slowly been eroded and although it is a view still held by some individuals, a significant proportion of philosophers, psychologists and behavioural scientists now believe that a great amount of simple thought depends on pictorial representations or on unspoken language.

MacNamara posits that knowledge of the world is 'in the form of representations whose function as representations does not depend on any resemblance between themselves and the objects represented'<sup>539</sup>. Further to this, Fodor indicates that intentional states are attitudes towards mental sentences that have semantic content, rather than necessarily requiring a spoken language to form such mental sentences. Instead of positing a verbal language, he puts

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<sup>536</sup> Colin G. Beer, 'From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Ethology' in Ristau (ed.) *Cognitive Ethology*, p. 21.

<sup>537</sup> Ryle, cited Beer in *Cognitive Ethology*, p. 23.

<sup>538</sup> Wade Savage, cited Griffin, *Animal Minds* p. 240.

<sup>539</sup> MacNamara, cited Griffin, *Animal Minds* p. 244.

forward what he describes as a 'language of thought'<sup>540</sup> which all cognitive beings possess and which, roughly speaking, allows for spoken language to be mapped onto. This would allow both prelinguistic children and presumably animals who never develop a 'surface'<sup>541</sup> or spoken language, the ability to form beliefs, memories, ideas, desires and so forth. Griffin is also firmly of the opinion that it is the role of cognitive ethology to concentrate on 'images, intentions and awareness of objects and relationships in the outside world [in order to] come to grips with the question of ... mental experience in animals'<sup>542</sup>.

From the increasing understanding of animals and their behaviour that cognitive ethology has produced, along with the new emphasis on pictorial or non-verbal thinking, Griffin believes many academics across a wide variety of disciplines have now distanced themselves from the previously widely held view that language is the only indicator of conscious thought.

Having indicated that there are no strong reasons to assert *per se* that no animal other than humans can be thought of as conscious, it is now worth examining the reasons to positively infer animal consciousness.

The first of these is by analogy. Griffin points out it would seem reasonable to believe that nonhuman animals experience conscious thought because the basic structure and functioning of neurons and synapses show marked similarities in all animals with an organised nervous system. In addition, as research into animal cognition continues, it is becoming clear that a huge variety of cognitive processes occur in animal brains and on this basis it is becoming 'more and more difficult to cling to the conviction that none of this cognition [in animal brains] is ever accompanied by conscious thoughts'<sup>543</sup>.

Secondly, Walker argues that based on the collection of evidence over the last thirty years or so, both from laboratory experiments and from observing animals in their natural environments, it seems apparent that many animals are capable of versatile adaptability of cognitive process and

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<sup>540</sup> Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (New York: Crowell, 1975) p. 33.

<sup>541</sup> Fodor, *The Language of Thought* P. 33.

<sup>542</sup> Donald R. Griffin, *The Question of Animal Awareness* (London: Rockefeller Press, 1976) p. 6.

<sup>543</sup> Griffin, *Animal Minds* p. 3.



behaviour and argues that it is almost inconceivable that animals could combine such complex cognitive processes without conscious thought. In his book *Animal Thought* he writes:

some kind of mental activity must be attributed to animals: that is, there is considered to be some internal sifting and selection of information rather than simply the release of responses by a certain set of environmental conditions, knowledge of goals, knowledge of space and knowledge of actions that may lead to goals seem to be independent but can be fitted together by animals when the need arises<sup>544</sup>

Thirdly, animals have been shown to have physiological signals from the brain that may well correlate with conscious thinking. Griffin documents electroencephalograph tests which have been carried out, both on humans and other species of animals appear to bear this out. With humans, the tests involved tasks of simple verbal or auditory discrimination, such as responding to an 'odd one out', in the case of words, or responding to a missing tonal pulse or clicking sound in the case of a series of sounds. The EEG picked up a positive wave at a frequency of 300 (P300) when a sensory input was administered, however, when the missing sound or odd word out was delivered, the P300 wave, on average was significantly higher, indicating that it was the recognition of the odd word out or missing tone, rather than just the sensory input that was being recorded. In 1981, Galambos and Hillyard carried out similar, but less complex discrimination tests with monkeys and cats and found that although there were minor differences in the frequencies of the waves recorded, the EEG results 'resembled in many ways the human P300'<sup>545</sup>. Griffin points out however that these tests indicating thinking are a first step only and tell us nothing about the content of the thought, only that the thought is occurring.

The fourth, and in Griffin's opinion, most promising reason to infer animal consciousness is the data concerning animal communication, in which 'animals sometimes appear to convey to others at least some of their thoughts'<sup>546</sup>.

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<sup>544</sup> S. Walker, *Animal Thought* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1983) p. 81.

<sup>545</sup> Galambos & Hillyard, cited Donald R. Griffin, *Animal Thinking* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1984) p. 150.

<sup>546</sup> Griffin, *Animal Minds*, p. 27.

Using the information gained by cognitive ethologists, Griffin wishes to dispute the 'negative dogma' that animals function unconsciously, in a state 'akin to a human sleepwalker'<sup>547</sup>.

#### viii. *The Ability to Learn*

Learning may take a variety of forms and as Thorpe points out, although learning may occur in different ways, each results in 'adaptive changes in individual behaviour as a result of experience'<sup>548</sup>. Along with the various forms of learned behaviour animals utilize in their day to day lives, instinct plays a role in equipping animals with a set of adaptive responses to its environment and for fulfilling its immediate needs. Williams, in particular focuses on the role of instinct in informing both the animal's ability to learn and to prosper. Rather than instinct, he refers to an animal's inherited ability to adapt to its environment as 'natural intelligence' which he describes as a sort of in-built 'unwritten and unspoken lore or set of beliefs about the world, handed down through millions of generations of animals'<sup>549</sup>. In Williams' view, this genetic history, is a separate source of information available to the animal than the source founded on experience but is equally important because an animal's ability to make predictions of the possible outcome of its actions is based on both its natural intelligence and its experience. In terms of experiential learning however, three main types have been identified; the most simple of these being trial and error, whereby an animal may try many permutations of action in order to solve a problem before they come to an effective method of achieving their goal. Even this method of learning involves a significant amount of cognition, as the animal must first have a concept of the goal it wishes to achieve and then remember on each failed attempt, which part of its actions (if any) were beneficial in reaching its goal, and which were not, using its experience on each successive attempt to help it achieve its objective.

The second form of learning in animals may be defined as 'associative learning'. In this type of learning, a previously neutral stimulus or action has sufficiently important consequences to be singled out by the animal from other such events. After some repetitions, followed by the same consequences, a long-term association is built up between the event and its results and the

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<sup>547</sup> Griffin, *Animal Minds*, p. 5.

<sup>548</sup> Thorpe, cited Manning & Stamp Dawkins, *Animal Behaviour*, p. 256.

<sup>549</sup> David A.O. Williams, *The Intelligence of Animals and Other Papers: A Theory of Learning* (London: D.A.O. Williams, 1992) forward, p. vii.

animal's response changes accordingly. Conditional reflex is a type of associative learning, the most famous example of this being demonstrated in 1941 by Pavlov. Pavlov conditioned dogs to associate the sound of a metronome or a bell ringing with being given food and once the association had been made, the dogs would salivate at just the sound of the metronome or bell, whether food was given or not. Many owners of pet dogs will be familiar with this type of learning as it is often used in obedience training. When training a dog, it often speeds up the process if a clicker (device that produces a distinctive click sound) is used. In the early stages of training, whenever the dog behaves in a way the owner wants it to such as walking at heel, or sitting or lying down when asked, an edible treat or a toy will be given at the same time as the clicker is sounded. Within a period of days or weeks, the dog comes to associate the sound of the clicker with a reward and eventually comes to view the clicking sound as evidence that its owner is pleased with it and hence as a reward in itself.

The third and most complex form of animal learning is termed 'insight learning', which Thorpe defines as 'the sudden production of a new adaptive response not arrived at by trial behaviour or the solution of a problem by the sudden adaptive reorganization of experience'<sup>550</sup>. In order for learning to be considered insight learning, it must stem from completely novel behaviour associations. This involves an animal having the ability to conceptualize the problem in detail and think through its possible courses of action in order to solve the problem presented to it, before it acts.

Many examples of such learning have been seen in primates. In 1927, in his observations of Chimpanzees, Wolfgang Kohler documented that when presented with a bunch of bananas that were placed too high up for the Chimps to reach, the Chimpanzees would pile up boxes to make a platform to stand on or alternatively, would fit sticks together to pull the bananas down. In both cases, they arrived at their solutions quite suddenly and although the chimps had to experiment in order to build the pile of boxes, for the most part, trial and error did not seem to play a major role in their reaching their goal of getting to the bananas.

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<sup>550</sup> Thorpe cited Manning & Stamp Dawkins, *Animal Behaviour*, p. 281.

In the case of wild animals, Griffin has noted a variety of instances when animals manufacture and use tools in order to achieve their objectives. Chimpanzees have been observed to break off a suitable branch, stripping it of twigs and leaves, then carry it to a termites nest some distance away. The Chimps then poke the branch into the nest and eat the termites which cling to the branch when it is removed from the nest. Similarly, Griffin cites instances of wild elephants using sticks, held in their trunks to scratch parts of their body that they otherwise would not be able to reach.

In addition, Calkins and Reidman have observed that not only do sea otters use stones to prize molluscs from underwater rocks, then use the stones on the surface to smash the shellfish open, but also will sometimes carry a particularly usefully shaped stone around with them, tucked under their armpit.

Capuchin monkeys have also been documented using 'sponge-like tools to take up liquid'<sup>551</sup> and more amazingly, in 1988, Ritchie and Frigaszy described how a mother Capuchin monkey used materials she found around her to attend to her injured offspring, '[the mother] manufactured, modified and used simple tools to manipulate her infants head wound, and applied modified plant materials to the wound'<sup>552</sup>.

Griffin posits the use of such tools and especially their manufacture indicates many animals ability to adapt otherwise unimportant objects in their environment in order to achieve a particular goal. This in turn indicates both a complex understanding of their goal and imagination and creativity in making the necessary modifications of objects around them in order to achieve their goal.

It is unsurprising that not all species of animal have the same ability to learn particular tasks or to use tools, after all, the broad term animal encompasses thousands upon thousands of different species of being.

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<sup>551</sup> Griffin, *Animal Minds*, p. 106.

<sup>552</sup> Ritchie & Fragaszy, cited Griffin, *Animal Minds*, p. 107.

Pearce posits that during the course of evolution, different species, occupying different social and environmental settings and having differing feeding requirements will naturally develop different characteristics and abilities, based on their differing needs. Predators, for instance, will have vastly different requirements both physiologically and in their mental strengths to prey animals. Likewise, solitary animals will have equally different physiological and cognitive attributes to that of highly social animals. In terms of communication, the capacity to communicate in some detail about the location of a food source will be required only by those animals that need to forage or hunt for food co-operatively and would be useless to a solitary forager or hunter. Similarly, complex communication skills will be necessary for highly social animals whereas animals that lead a primarily solitary existence will have no need to develop such complex systems of communication. In addition, forming close attachments to other individuals of their species will be an important feature of the psychology of highly social animals but will serve no adaptive value for animals that spend most of their adult lives without contact with other adults of their own species.

For animals that collect and store their food over long periods of time, such as squirrels, a highly developed long-term memory and sense of location and direction would be vitally important to their ability to prosper, whereas it would be of virtually no benefit to nomadic grazing animals.

On this basis, it is reasonable to assert that different species of animal not only have different intellectual strengths and weaknesses but also view the world very differently, based on their physical environment and the 'ecological niche'<sup>553</sup> they occupy.

It has also been shown that animals are better adapted to learning tasks and relationships if they are likely to be of benefit to them in their natural life. Citing experiments carried out by Barrett, Manning and Stamp Dawkins highlight the case of the ability of wild rats to learn the specific relationship of poison and illness. Wild rats will only nibble at small amounts of any new or unusual food source they find within their territory. However, if they experience no adverse effects from this food, they will gradually eat larger amounts or it over successive

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<sup>553</sup> John M. Pearce, *An Introduction to Animal Cognition* (East Sussex: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Ltd. 1987) p. 291.

nights. Manning and Stamp Dawkins describe this behaviour as 'highly adaptive ... and makes poisoning rats no straightforward task'<sup>554</sup>.

This relationship is by no means simple to learn because there may well be several hours between a rat eating the poison and it feeling any ill effects. Even a complex relationship such as this can be learned over a period of a number of generations by an animal utilizing both instinct (or natural intelligence) and experience, if it is of great enough significance to the animals survival.

It is clear then, that for the most part, animals develop the highest ability to learn those things that will help it to survive, and these things will undoubtedly be different for each species of animal, depending on the environment in which they live, whether they are social or predominantly solitary animals and whether they are carnivorous, omnivorous or herbivorous.

Having examined the issues of animal consciousness and cognition, the specifics of how animals interact with each other will be considered.

#### *ix. Nonhuman Animal Social Life*

All animals are social to some degree, whether they live in gregarious social groups or only have contact with other adults of their species when they wish to mate. As such, all animals exhibit some degree of social behaviour, which can be considered to be, 'any action directed by an individual towards a member of its own species'<sup>555</sup>. This can include competitive behaviour such as fighting, threat and submission as well as co-operative interactions such as parental care, group foraging or hunting, grooming and mating. Almost all highly social animals live in groups which have a relatively complex structure and set of rules or social etiquette which keeps the group functioning as a cohesive unit and serves a similar, although less complex role to the laws in human society. In the case of wild dogs, the senior adults hold a position of authority and act as leaders, while subordinate adults occupy the middle status in the pack,

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<sup>554</sup> Manning & Stamp Dawkins, *Animal Behaviour*, p. 271/2.

<sup>555</sup> T. Poole, *Social Behaviour in Mammals* (Glasgow: Blackie & Son Ltd. 1985) p. 1.

with juveniles below them. Adherence to pack rules, such as letting the higher status members of the pack eat before the lower status members, helps to reinforce the pack status of each member and reduces the number of squabbles, which could turn into actual altercations.

Altruism is also often seen in animals living in social groups, such as many species of primates, wolves, elephants and wild dogs, amongst others. In particular, individuals may help to look after other members of their group (members who are not directly related to themselves) defending them against predators and sharing food with them. In some cases, animals will even help care for another group members young. Poole, puts forward a number of possible explanations for such behaviour. He posits that kin selection<sup>556</sup> could be the reason that individuals might offer assistance to others, thus reducing their own evolutionary fitness, but increasing the fitness of the individual they help. It is the case for all mammals that an altruistic relationship occurs between a mother and its un-weaned young, presumably because the young shares half of its mother's genes. There is also a lesser extent of sharing of genes between nephews, nieces and cousins amongst others. In social groups then, where individuals are closely related, it would make evolutionary sense that by helping close relatives, an individual can promote the survival of shared genes.

Poole also posits the explanation of reciprocation in order to explain this altruistic behaviour. This notion allows that in groups of certain mammals, altruistic behaviour is offered by an individual and it is returned by the recipient at a later date. On this explanation, there is no need for the individuals to be closely related. Poole writes of this view,

Such a system of reciprocal altruism ... could play an important role in mammalian societies if it were proof against cheating ... any individuals which cheated by accepting altruism but failing to reciprocate would be identified and punished by being excluded from the social group or by having future help to it withdrawn<sup>557</sup>.

Reciprocal altruism could only operate in highly social animals with high intelligence and with good long-term memories. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that some gibbons, vervet

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<sup>556</sup> Proposed by Hamilton in 1964, cited, Poole, *Social Behaviour*, p. 6.

<sup>557</sup> Poole, *Social Behaviour*, p. 7.

monkeys, chimpanzees, elephants and some European wolves base their social behaviour to some extent on such altruism, and although Poole indicates the mammals we know to operate this form of altruism, so far are few, he argues, 'it is conceivable that the phenomenon is more widespread than it is currently realized'<sup>558</sup>.

Another important means of attempting to gain insight into the social lives of gregarious mammals is to examine the way they communicate with each other. In addition, as Griffin points out, communication also provides an important basis for discerning animal cognition.

#### *x. Nonhuman Animal Communication*

In order to 'decode' animal signals, Smith posits we need to discover both the basic features of the signal, such as how and why certain symbols or actions are decided upon and what they mean, otherwise stated, the 'referents of the signals'<sup>559</sup>. It is also important to investigate how individuals receiving the communications respond to them. When responding to signals, a variety of information must be sorted through, and its contents assessed before the individual is able to make a response. Because signalling is often context-based, the meaning of the signal may be different depending on the conditions which prompted the animal to give the communication and on this basis, Griffin, Pepperberg and Ristau amongst others posit that signalling animals have a certain amount of flexibility in the choice of signals used and that this flexibility extends to altering their communications in order to affect the response of the individual/s receiving it.

The referents of animal signals can fall into a number of categories. For instance, the signaller may be announcing its own behaviour, for instance, threatening another individual, or announcing its desire to find a mate, or it may be responding to external stimuli, such as alerting other individuals to a food source, or to the close proximity of a predator.

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<sup>558</sup> Poole, *Social Behaviour*, p. 7.

<sup>559</sup> W. John Smith, 'Animal Communication and the Study of Cognition' (p.209-230) in Ristau (Ed.), *Animal Cognition*, p. 209.



Although a signal will indicate a variety of possible courses of action on the part of the signaller, Smith indicates there is 'rarely a one-to-one correlation between their [the signallers] performance and the occurrence of any of their behavioural referents'<sup>560</sup> on the basis that at the time of making the signal, the signaller is selecting (but has not yet decided upon) which course of action should be taken.

From the information gathered by cognitive ethologist regarding the link between communication and cognition, context dependent responding to signals almost certainly involves the ability to process a wide array of information, the ability to categorize and weigh one source of information over against another. Then having prioritized the information, before an animal can respond, it would have to have the ability to arrive at the likely outcomes of a variety of courses of action, based both on its current situation and on past events or memory.

In addition to these abilities, Smith posits that animals would need to have a sense of the information they required to be able to make a judgement regarding the course of action they should take. Reflecting on the cognitive importance of animal communication, Smith writes:

Although these cognitive operations [which are required to make and respond to signals] may be feasible with a limited set of rules, they allow for considerable elaboration and flexibility and for the development of judgemental procedures. This suggests processing ... and is probably a characteristic that is widespread among diverse nonhuman animals<sup>561</sup>.

The social interaction between some species of highly social animals, as well as the link between cognition and communication is more clearly visible in the use by some animals <sup>562</sup> of misleading signals.

For many years, it was assumed that when animals communicated with each other, their signals were based on accurate and honest communication of a situation and/or the sender's disposition. However, in 1978, Dawkins and Krebs wrote an influential paper on animal

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<sup>560</sup> Smith, 'Animal Communication' in *Animal Cognition*, p. 216.

<sup>561</sup> Smith, 'Animal Communication' in *Animal Cognition*, p. 228.

<sup>562</sup> Including many species of monkeys and apes, arctic foxes, dogs and elephants, Griffin, *Animal Minds*, p. 209.

communication, which rather than stressing honest signals, indicating co-operation between individuals, highlighted the fact that sometimes signals could be used to manipulate others, both of their own species and of other species, rather than informing them.<sup>563</sup> This use of misleading signalling, although thought only to be employed by a few individuals, for some time after its discovery was put forward as a reason to assume that animal communication could not serve as an effective source of information regarding animal thoughts and feelings. Griffin postulates however, that the fact animal communication may be used at times to mislead others if it is in an individual's best interests to do so, does complicate matters since the sender could be sending accurate or inaccurate information, but nonetheless still gives important information about the sender of the signal since they still 'convey the senders feelings and thoughts, whether they are honest or dishonest ... [in fact the] deceptive communication may be more rather than less likely to require conscious thinking than more accurate expressions of what animals feel, desire or believes'<sup>564</sup>.

Having conducted extensive field studies on vervet monkeys, Cheney and Seyfarth also found that false signals can be used on occasion by vervets in order to manipulate others of their own social group, or more often, rival troops. In the course of their research, they discovered that this manipulation can either be via 'silence'<sup>565</sup>, that is, by withholding information to benefit the withholder, such as failing to alert the rest of its troop to a promising food source until the individual has eaten all that it wants. Alternatively, the manipulation can take the form of actively giving a 'false signal'.

In the case of vervet monkeys, false alarms, alerting rival troops to the presence of a non-existent predator were sometimes given in order to frighten away competitors from their territory. Cheney and Seyfarth even noted that occasionally, individuals give false signals in order to manipulate others in their own group to the sender's advantage.

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<sup>563</sup> Dawkins and Krebs, cited Griffin, *Animal Minds*, p. 195.

<sup>564</sup> Griffin responding to Dawkins and Krebs, *Animal Minds*, p. 196.

<sup>565</sup> Cheney and Seyfarth, 'Truth and Deception in Animal Communication' p. 127-148 in Ristau (Ed.) *Cognitive Ethology*, p. 147.

According to Cheney and Seyfarth however, just like the boy who cried wolf, an individual who repeatedly gives false signals will eventually be distrusted by those it tries to deceive, and its false alarm calls will be ignored; presumably because they are viewed as being an unreliable source of information. On the other hand, an individual who occasionally gives false signals is more likely to be viewed by its peers as mistaken rather than actively dishonest and provided it does not happen on a regular basis it is unlikely to produce 'permanent scepticism among others in its group'<sup>566</sup>.

Having considered the insights available on a wide range of elements of animal life, from consciousness, to the complex social and communicative lives of animals, we must now use the method of correlation in order to ask the concrete questions inherent in the existential issue that interaction with nonhuman animals present, including ethical questions regarding the worth of the whole created order to the Creation. Additionally, it will be argued that adequately accounting for nonhuman animals specifically and creation generally via the method of correlation actually strengthens rather than weakens Tillich's system as a whole, improving its internal consistency and providing it with a more authentically theonomous outlook.

*xi. Applying Insights Gleaned from Cognitive Ethology to Tillich's system.*

When we add the new information cognitive ethology provides to our existential questions and apply it to Tillich's system via his concept of the method of correlation, it is immediately obvious that many of the assumptions he makes regarding nonhuman animals are totally incorrect. When the updated information is added, key Tillichian concepts are found wanting in relation to nonhuman animals and do not represent the actuality of creaturely existence. The first of these is the assumptions made regarding the dimension and realm that nonhuman animals should occupy within his multidimensional unity of life model<sup>567</sup>. He asserts that animals occupy the organic dimension and reside within the animal 'realm' (or subset) of it. Although it is claimed that his system is non-hierarchical (as we have seen in the previous chapter<sup>568</sup>) in practise there

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<sup>566</sup> Cheney and Seyfarth, 'Truth and Deception' in *Cognitive Ethology* p. 149.

<sup>567</sup> For a fuller discussion of Tillich's concept of the inter-relatedness of the whole of creation, see Chapter Six: The Multidimensional Unity of Life, pp. 144-159.

<sup>568</sup> Chapter Six: The Multidimensional Unity of Life and in the graphical representation of Tillich's 'valuation of grades of being' Fig. iii. P. 2

is no difference between his 'grades of being' and the original pyramidal hierarchy of being he wished to move away from.

By integrating the new information (as Tillich himself would wish us to do) it is clear that nonhuman animals need to be moved into a dimension which is characterised by a higher level of 'actualisation' than the one he believed they should occupy. Of course, Tillich is not at fault for making incorrect assumptions as he was acting on the best information available to him at the time he was writing the three volumes of his *Systematic Theology* (1951-1963). But this is one of the reasons that Tillich refers to fundamentalism as demonic. Over time, situations change and knowledge increases and this should be added to our understanding, rather than being 'swept under the carpet.' Otherwise there will come a time when the foundational message of Christianity will lose its meaning in our everyday lives. Fundamentalism in the sense of rigidly holding onto a particular viewpoint when our concrete situation shows it to be faulty, is in Tillich's belief wrong. The method of correlation is his way of ensuring the Christian message can be updated allowing for the foundational truths of Christianity to remain as relevant for people today as they were in the lives of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestinian people.

The changing of dimension and realm of nonhuman animals has a variety of positive consequences both for the theological and ethical status of animals and for the coherency and consistency of Tillich's *Systematic Theology* as a whole. In the case of nonhuman animals, we have enough information regarding how advanced a species is to be confident that (at least all mammals and possibly many other classification of creatures) comfortably qualify as a minimum level, for inclusion in the dimension of the spirit within the 'personal communal realm' and possibly even within the historical dimension along with humans. This represents a jump of one-two dimensions and two-three realms'<sup>569</sup>. The significance of this change is potentially substantial though in terms of theological status. If nonhuman animals are much more sophisticated in terms of both their ability to interact and to communicate with each other than it was thought during Tillich's lifetime (and the information gleaned from cognitive ethology suggests this is the case) then it is difficult to see how their exclusion from the 'Spiritual

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<sup>569</sup> See Fig. iii, The Valuation of Grades of Being, p. 2.

Presence' would be justified. The symbol 'Spiritual Presence' for Tillich represents the inner-historical *telos* of history and it also represents the medium through which revelation is received. If nonhuman animals were to have access to the Spiritual Presence, it would follow that as 'Final Revelation' they would also have direct access to the Christ. Theologically speaking this is of huge significance and would indicate that God has a direct relationship with many other groups of creatures within creation and not simply the human species. This does not mean that humans can no longer be thought of as having a special relationship with God, on the contrary, as the creatures created in God's image, humans still have the unique ability (and many would say duty)<sup>570</sup> to take on the priestly responsibility of caring for the whole of creation in a way that no other species is capable of doing.

As Christ is both the trans- historical telos of history and centre of history, it would seem that Tillich's previous assumptions (at least as far as mammals are concerned) that only humans have access to this dimension based on humans' having 'clock' time must be over- ruled too. They have to give way to the much more theologically important insight that in light of the complexity other animals have shown, they have access to the Christ alongside humans.

From the perspective of the coherency of Tillich's system as a whole, it might be assumed that asking ethical and theological questions about animals would be damaging, or at the very least, have nothing important to contribute. However, this is exactly the opposite of the truth. As we have seen in Chapter Four, without the animal question, there is a substantial inconsistency in his system with regards to the relationship of the Creator to the whole of Her creation. This is the case because it would appear that although God the Creator, created everything on the earth, and in its essential state, saw it to all be good, there is no direct access to the logos as sustainer, or as Christ as redeemer to any part of the creation other than humans. Clearly this is not a satisfactory conclusion from the point of view of Tillich producing a theonomous system, i.e. from the point of view of the Creator, or even a consistent one since nonhuman animals do not have direct access to 'The Christ' but nonetheless seem to be directly included in universal salvation regardless of this. By allowing nonhuman animals' access to the dimension of the

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<sup>570</sup> See Linzey, *Animal Theology*, especially Chapter 3 'Humans as the Servant Species' pp. 45-61.

spirit, and by implication to the dimension of history, the inconsistencies in his system in relation to the separating of the Spirit and Son from the Father are removed. This provides an important part of the resolution of the inconsistencies present in his system's Christology'<sup>571</sup>.

Having added the insights gleaned from cognitive ethology, it is now possible to turn our attention to an extremely famous idea of Tillich's, that is, that if other worlds exist in which there is estrangement, then they must have direct access to God's redeeming agency. In *Systematic Theology Volume II: Existence and the Christ*, Tillich posits that the expectation of the Christ is restricted to 'historical mankind'<sup>572</sup>. But he does concede that:

If there are non-human 'worlds' in which existential estrangement is not just real - as it is in the whole universe - but in which there is also a type of awareness of this estrangement, such worlds cannot be without the operation of saving power within them. Otherwise self- destruction would be the inescapable consequence'<sup>573</sup>.

This does seem a positive admission by Tillich with regard to nonhuman animals. On closer inspection, given Tillich's exclusion of all but the human species from the dimensions of existence which would allow access to the Christ however<sup>574</sup>, it is unlikely that he is referring to 'worlds' presently inhabited by nonhuman animals on planet earth. It seems much more likely that he is thinking of other planets which may at some point develop humanoid life-forms. The method of correlation however can be of great service at this point and is crucial in developing the possibility of the direct 'operation of saving power' for nonhuman animals in Tillich's systematic theology. Simply by considering the new information that cognitive ethology can provide regarding the complexity and capacity of nonhuman animals in terms of their cognition, communication and learning, it would be hard for Tillich to deny that there are non-human 'worlds' in which existential estrangement is not just real – but in which there is also a type of awareness of this estrangement, currently present on earth.

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<sup>571</sup> See Chapter 5 'The Implications of Tillich's Christology for Animals and Creation' pp. 126-143.

<sup>572</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 95.

<sup>573</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 96.

<sup>574</sup> See Chapter Four 'The Creator and Creation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*', pp. 114-125 and Chapter Five 'The Implications of Tillich's Christology for Animals and Creation', pp. 126-143.

In his method of correlation, Tillich is able to speak to our concrete ethical concerns, even when many of these issues had not been recognised at the time of its writing. The methodology of his system not only anticipates the emergence of new ethical questions, but actively encourages the development of previously unexamined issues. In the introduction to Tillich's book *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, Foster bears this emphasis out, stating that

He [Tillich] always urged....that anyone with better information or different questions should bring them to the fore. Thus the priority of responsible correlation intrinsically outranked for Tillich the status of his own analysis'. Foster goes on to posit 'we follow him best when we stay "wide open" (a phrase he liked) for the reality of our time and place<sup>575</sup>.

One of the first facts to emerge, as Bischoff indicates, is that the God expounded in Tillich's system 'does not stand in private relation to man but represents the universal order'<sup>576</sup>. Therefore, any answers given in relation to existential estrangement and finitude are not exclusively answers for humanity, rather, the answer 'the Christ' is an all-encompassing symbol in which the suffering of all beings labouring under the conditions of existence may be answered. This could be taken a stage further however. Humans being the only creatures endowed with finite reason, coupled with Tillich's insistence on the need for participation in the foundational truths of the faith could be developed into a 'duty of care' ethic for creation.<sup>577</sup> By participating in the example of Jesus as the Christ, that is, in aligning ourselves with the weak, the vulnerable and the powerless<sup>578</sup>, the method of correlation can provide the basis for a practical ethic of respect and care for the rest of creation. As Posey related, having read the second volume of Tillich's system: 'I was forced to add to my prophetic, kingly Christ the crucified Christ revealing the heart of the Father'<sup>579</sup>. In aligning ourselves with the symbol of the Christ, His passion and death could provide a means of examining the innocent suffering of

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<sup>575</sup> Foster (Ed), Tillich, *The Irrelevance*, Introduction p. xii.

<sup>576</sup> Bischoff, 'Participation', *Journal for Christian Theological Research* 8, p. 25.

<sup>577</sup> There is certainly a biblical basis for the notion of stewardship, and in his method of correlation, this foundational truth of Christianity could well be made applicable to the issues of the human utilisation of animals, in addition to providing the basis for an eco-ethic.

<sup>578</sup> See Linzey, *Animal Theology*, especially Chapter 3, pp. 45-61.

<sup>579</sup> Posey, 'Paul Tillich's Gift of Understanding', *Christian Century*, p. 968

creatures at the hands of humans- either in our exploitative use of them in science, farming and sport, or in our destruction of their natural habitat.



## Chapter Eight

### The Concept of 'Universal Salvation'

Arguably, one of the most positive aspects of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, for the theological and ethical status of nonhuman animals is his concept of universal salvation. Although it still has a humanocentric emphasis in its formation in *Systematic Theology Volume Three*, it does nonetheless provide a solid theological basis for the construction of an animal ethic which affirms that the whole of creation has worth in the eyes of its Creator. This insight might seem obvious, but has in fact been neglected by the Christian Church and systematic theologians alike, dating back to such major figures as St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas. This neglect has characterised the major theological tradition concerning the world and the human species' place within it. Indeed, Tillich himself barely mentions the relation of the Creator to any being other than humans (except in the implicitly negative, for example, excluding all but the human species from the dimension of the spirit and the historical dimension) until the final twenty pages of the final part of his system.

In highlighting that the *telos*, and ultimate end of creation, is its fulfilment and that this fulfilment is both *for* creation and *for* the Creator, Tillich allows for a practical Christian animal ethic to be built. That is, it provides a truly theocentric view of animals as distinct from a humanocentric view based on their utility to humankind.

The need to reassess the importance of the rest of the created order, although not apparent in much of his systematic theology, is voiced in a number of Tillich's other writings; in particular it is illuminated in his sermon "*Nature Also Mourns For A Lost Good*"; delivered as early as 1948, predating the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* by three years, and the final part by fifteen years. The emphasis evident in this sermon gives an insight into the possibility of a more respectful and harmonious relationship with nonhuman creation and provides some clues as to what a Tillichian animal ethic could look like.

This examination of universal salvation and its practical implications for our view of the worth of nonhuman animals begins, however with an exposition of salvation in systematic theology.

i. *Salvation in Systematic Theology*

Life under existential distortion necessarily entails that in everything there is an ambiguous mix of the positive and the negative. From this perspective, the elevation of the positives in existence cannot be reserved for individuals, but instead encompass every positive thing in the universe, from single-cellular organisms to humans, and all that is in between. The symbol Tillich uses to express this affirmation of the positive and rejection of the negative in 'eternal life' is 'ultimate judgement'. In his estimation, the Greek word for judging – *krinein* (to separate) – is the most appropriate metaphor for expressing universal judgement because it emphasises the act of separating the good from the bad and the true from the false.

Since the end of history is to be understood as both ever present and involving the final elevation of history into the eternal, the symbol of ultimate justice is not to be considered simply as something which happens at the end of time, but a process that is occurring in the present as well. Through this process of the ever present progression of the finite to the eternal, all negativity (which is ambiguously mixed with the positive under the conditions of existence) is destroyed, leaving only that which is unambiguously positive. The symbol 'burning fire'<sup>580</sup> has been used to express the function of 'ultimate judgement' because it burns away all that is negative. Nothing of the positive can be destroyed though, as Tillich explains: 'God cannot destroy Himself, and everything positive is an expression of being-itself'<sup>581</sup>. On the grounds that there is nothing in creation that is unambiguously negative (since negativity is derived from the positive that it distorts), nothing that has being can be eradicated in its entirety by ultimate judgement. This means that all that is positive in creation, human and non-human alike, is elected into 'eternal memory' and so participates in eternal life.

From the perspective of animals, this is a vital insight. If nothing God has created through the Logos is unambiguous, then at least some aspect of every facet of the created order is elevated into its Creator in 'eternal life'. And since animals, unlike humans, are morally innocent, one

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<sup>580</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 399.

<sup>581</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 399.

could say that although they have less potential for positive creative acts in temporal existence, they also have less negativity which will be excluded.

ii. *The Notion of Essentialisation and the Symbol of Salvation*

In order to explain this transition of the temporal to the eternal, Tillich draws upon Schelling's notion of 'essentialisation', that is, when the temporal is taken into eternity it returns to its essential nature. When viewed as an independent symbol, the process of essentialisation is neither creative nor dynamic because nothing new can ever be added. When the concept of essentialisation is combined with the symbol of 'eternal judgement' though, it does allow for the elevation of the 'positively creative' in finitude along with essential being. With respect to the concept of essentialisation, Tillich writes:

Participation in Eternal Life depends on a creative synthesis of a being's essential nature with what it has made of its temporal existence. In so far as the negative has maintained possession of it, it is exposed to its negativity and excluded from eternal memory. Whereas, in so far as the essential has conquered existential distortion its standing is higher in eternal life<sup>582</sup>.

Another eschatological symbol which is relevant to the concept of the salvation of the whole of the created order is that of 'eternal blessedness'. 'Eternal blessedness' is a dynamic process which involves both the positive and negative in existence. The concept of being 'blessed' not only indicates the being grasped (albeit fragmentarily) by the Divine Spirit, but also involves an awareness of its opposite, that is, the 'state of unhappiness, despair, condemnation' which Tillich describes as "the negation of the negative" and it is this negation which gives blessedness its 'paradoxical character'<sup>583</sup>. The Divine Life goes out from Itself, into the ambiguity of life, and then returns with the negativities implied in existential existence conquered. And it is this circular process of going out into existence and then returning which is 'the basis for the dynamic idea of eternal blessedness'<sup>584</sup>.

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<sup>582</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 401. This is a particularly important concept when considering salvation with respect to nonhuman animals specifically and creation generally. It does not base participation on intellectual capacities, rather it bases it on what a creature has made of their existence, and since animals are morally innocent, i.e. they cannot sin, they surely will have less negativity to be excluded from participation in the Godhead than humans will.

<sup>583</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 403.

<sup>584</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 403.

Because 'eternal blessedness' is attributable to all beings who participate in the Divine Life (and because everything created by the Logos has participation in its ground of being) the symbol 'eternal blessedness' explicitly includes everything that is'<sup>585</sup> in the salvific action of Christ. In order to support this notion of universal salvation, Tillich maintains that since God is creator of the whole natural order, it follows that in its essential state everything and every being in creation, human and nonhuman alike, is good. Also, he points to Romans, Chapter 8, in which Paul speaks of the suffering of the natural world and 'it's longing for salvation'<sup>586</sup>. This concept of the universality of salvation is as important to the Divine Life as it is to the creation, however, because in Tillich's words, it 'serves the enrichment of essential being after the negation of the negative in everything that has being'<sup>587</sup>.

In the concept of 'eternal blessedness' we also see that not only are nonhuman beings longing for salvation, but also that their essential being is taken back into the Divine Life. On this basis, God is both *for* creation and creation is *for* God. Here it is evident that although humans may well be an important part of creation, creation was not made *for* humans; creation exists *for* its Creator.

The symbol 'resurrection of the body' also expresses participation in eternal life. In Tillich's view, this symbol can only be interpreted as a 'highly symbolic phrase'<sup>588</sup> and in order to gain a right understanding of this term, he says that it needs to be interpreted in the light of the Pauline symbol 'spiritual body'. The expression 'spiritual body' appears to be mutually exclusive, and indeed if understood conceptually rather than symbolically they might be. However, symbolically speaking, 'body' indicates that the spirit alone does not make up existence, and for Tillich, this emphasises the goodness of the whole of creation, whereas the spiritual side of the symbol stands against the materialistic view that there will be a bodily participation in the Kingdom of God'<sup>589</sup>. The symbol 'spiritual body', then, is adequate in

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<sup>585</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 405.

<sup>586</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 405.

<sup>587</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 406.

<sup>588</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 412.

<sup>589</sup> Conversely, it could be argued that the Incarnation highlights the importance of bodily life and how bodily life will ultimately be taken into the Godhead.

expressing the eschatological hopes of the individual because it points to 'a body which expresses the spiritually transformed total personality of man'<sup>590</sup>.

For Tillich, the symbol 'resurrection' not only expresses 'the truth that the totality of personal life, including the human body, belongs to the ultimate meaning of existence'<sup>591</sup> but also points to the universal aspect of 'eternal life'. The Kingdom of God includes all dimensions of being and when considered in combination with the idea of essentialisation (which is implicit in Tillich's understanding of the Kingdom of God), he argues that 'we can say that man's psychological, spiritual and social being is implied in his bodily being – and this in unity with the essences of everything else that has been'<sup>592</sup>. Despite the implicit universality of Tillich's understanding of 'resurrection', this symbol ultimately upholds a humanocentric rather than theocentric view of the worth of creation. Here it is painfully clear that, in Tillich's mind, that human redemption is not simply of central but almost exclusive importance. In his own terms, Tillich accepts not only the goodness of the whole of the created order and its 'longing for salvation'<sup>593</sup> but also that the nonhuman creation has worth to its Creator and serves 'the enrichment of essential being after the negation of the negative in everything that has been'<sup>594</sup>. Given this, his insistence that the symbol of 'resurrection' should mainly, if not wholly express human eschatological hopes is unacceptably narrow. He gives no sound reason why only 'man's' body or why only man's psychological, spiritual and social being is implied in this metaphor especially because, according to Tillich, all levels of creation are interrelated.

The humanocentric language implicit in much of Tillich's thought generally and explicit in his discussion of the eschatological symbol 'resurrection of the body' notwithstanding, his argument for universal salvation does provide promising material for the construction of a Tillichian animal ethic as it stands.

### iii. Tillich's *Eschatological Pan-en-theism*

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<sup>590</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 412.

<sup>591</sup> Tillich, *Theology of Peace*, p. 38. Again, the humanocentricity of Tillich's thought with regard to salvation is exposed.

<sup>592</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 413.

<sup>593</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 405.

<sup>594</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 405.

Perhaps the most promising aspect is perhaps evident in the relation of the finite to God. As an eternal and “living” God, not bound by the temporal process or structures of finitude, God has to encompass both the ‘unity and alteration which characterises life’<sup>595</sup> and which is fulfilled in eternal life. The question of how God is related to eternal life is answered in the assertion that eternal life is ‘life in God’. He argues that this symbol is upheld by the fact that everything finite comes from the eternal and its *telos* is to return to its eternal ground. This relation between essentialised beings and their Creator is also evident in the conviction of Paul that in ultimate fulfilment ‘God shall be everything in (or for) everything’, a vision Tillich describes as ‘eschatological pan-en-theism’<sup>596</sup>. This concept illuminates the ‘three-fold’ nature of what is meant by ‘in’ when we talk of eternal life as life ‘in’ God. Firstly it indicates that all creatures have their ‘creative origins’<sup>597</sup> in God, pointing to the reality that all creation has its being in the ground of being. Secondly, ‘in’ indicates the dependence of finite creatures on God as Creator for their continued existence; and thirdly, ‘in’ points to the inclusive ‘state of essentialisation’ thus highlighting our ultimate universal fulfilment.

The concept of eschatological pan-en-theism, is similarly expounded by Ernst Conradie in *Hope for Earth*. He follows the thought of process theologian A.N. Whitehead who posits the concept of objective immortality. On this understanding, everything which has ever happened, or ever will happen in the universe is ‘inscribed’<sup>598</sup> into the mind of God. Conradie argues that existing at one with the divine life via inscription is what participation in the life of God means, and this participation continues after our death for everything in the universe as we are remembered by God for eternity.

Tillich posits that the triple emphasis of life ‘in’ God indicates the dynamic motion not only of all temporal life but of Divine Life too. The progression begins with essence, goes into existential distortion and via the process of essentialisation returns to be reunited with the eternal. When enquiring as to the relation of Divine Life to ‘eternal life’ from the perspective of the Creator, rather than from the perspective of the creature, Tillich believes that although we can only

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<sup>595</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 420.

<sup>596</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 421.

<sup>597</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 421.

<sup>598</sup> Conradie, Ernst, *Hope for Earth*, (Bellville, University of the Western Cape, 2000) p. 358.

answer in the terms of 'the highest religious-poetic symbolism'<sup>599</sup> it is nonetheless reasonable to ask such a question.

He postulates that in order for God to be a 'living' God, the Ground of Being must contain an element of 'otherness' within itself, and this is made possible through the 'Logos as the principle of divine self-manifestation'<sup>600</sup> in both the creative act of letting the temporal separate itself from the eternal, and in the essentialisation and return of the temporal to the eternal. Thus the Divine Life realises itself by a progression through estrangement in the existential disruption of its creatures. This 'creation into time'<sup>601</sup> allows the Divine Life the possibility that the creation will turn its back on the Creator, and for Tillich, it is this freedom of the creature to reject God that allows God's love to find fulfilment. The process is then completed by the divine self-reconciliation in which the essentialised creatures return to being 'in' the Divine Life.

On the penultimate page of the final part of his System, Tillich explicitly acknowledges the idea that a universal theology is required if we are to do justice to God the Creator. Such a universal theology, although using highly symbolic language (to avoid trying to explain God in terms of the subject-object relation that categorises finitude) is necessary for two main reasons. Firstly, it affirms the 'ultimate seriousness of life in the light of the eternal'<sup>602</sup>. By this Tillich means that creation without participation and ultimate fulfilment in the Divine Life would be meaningless – a view contrary to that of the image of a God who displays 'infinite concern for his creation'<sup>603</sup>. Secondly, if any theology is to 'transcend the anthropocentric as well as the merely cosmocentric view' it must take account of the relationship between God and the world. For Tillich, a theology which does not 'embrace' both the Creator and the creation is not able to expound a 'theocentric vision of the meaning of existence'<sup>604</sup>.

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<sup>599</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 421.

<sup>600</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p.422.

<sup>601</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 422.

<sup>602</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 422.

<sup>603</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 422.

<sup>604</sup> Tillich, *STIII*, p. 422.

Although humanocentrism prevails in his *Systematic Theology*, in his theory of universal redemption, and in particular the concept of eschatological pan-en-theism, Tillich nonetheless offers a basis for a theological doctrine of animals.

#### *iv. Biblical Insights of a Creator who Cares for Creation*

In discussing God's relationship with non-human creation, Tillich recognises that the Bible gives witness to a Creator God who cares deeply for the whole of creation. It is worth examining briefly some of the underpinning insights. In relation to the blessedness of creation itself, Tillich points to Genesis I: 31a in which God saw worth in the whole creation and blesses it: 'God saw everything He had made and indeed it was very good'.<sup>605</sup>

Also, that there is a covenant not just between God and humans, but also in relation to all animals and even once with the earth itself. In Genesis 7: 1-4, God not only saves Noah from the flood, but also at least one pair of every species of bird and mammal. This indicates that there is a relationship between God and creation just as there is between God and humans. In Genesis 9: 8-11, we also see a change in the divine law following the flood. In this passage, God promises never again to destroy all living creatures. It is clear that this covenantal relationship is no longer limited to humans and within Genesis 9: 8-11, it is made explicit no fewer than five times that the Noahic covenant is now to encompass all living creatures.

Tillich does however make many references to Biblical insights regarding the inclusion of the whole of creation in the final redemption. This theme is made explicit in both the Old and the New Testament. In Psalms 36: 6, the theme is clearly evident: 'you save humans and animals alike O Lord'. Isaiah 11: 6-8 also bears this emphasis out 'the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid ...'<sup>606</sup>. In these passages it is clear that humans are viewed as only a part of creation and that the whole of creation will be redeemed.

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<sup>605</sup> This however refers to creation before the 'Fall'. In Gen 6:6 we see that humans make a mockery of divine hopes.

<sup>606</sup> New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition Bible (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1993).



With respect to universal redemption, Tillich draws heavily on the writings of Paul, in particular Romans 8: 18-23, which expresses the longing of all of creation to be released from its bondage. Another highly influential Pauline passage for Tillich is Colossians 1: 15-20, a passage which (amongst other Pauline writings) informed Tillich's concept of pan-en-theism. Here Paul asserts that Christ will draw all things to himself, thus redeeming the entirety of the created order: 'and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross' (Col 1: 20).

#### v. *A Peaceable Kingdom?*

It is clear from the above examination that Tillich's eschatological hopes are in line with the notion of a peaceable kingdom, however not every Christian theologian (or even Christian animal theologian) shares this vision. In his book *The Groaning of Creation*, Christopher Southgate envisions a very different type of redemption from that illuminated by Genesis, Isaiah, Romans or Colossians. He argues that it is 'very hard to imagine any form of being a predator that nevertheless does not "hurt or destroy" on the "holy mountain" of God (cf. Isa.11:9)'<sup>607</sup> In opposition to these Biblical passages, he looks to the poem *The Heaven of Animals* by James Dickey to illuminate an alternative heaven. In this vision, predators are now perfect killing machines who can kill without causing their prey pain; 'these hunt as they have done, but with claws and teeth grown perfect, more deadly than they can believe.' And prey animals accept their lot and are able to get up and walk away, renewed and whole again after they have been killed by the predator;

Their reward: to walk under such trees in full knowledge of what is in glory for them, and to feel no fear, but acceptance, compliance. Fulfilling themselves without pain ... they fall, they are torn, they rise, they walk again<sup>608</sup>.

Southgate believes that this is a more realistic version of heaven for both predators and prey as this vision of redemption 'preserves the characteristics of species, but without pain or death or destruction'<sup>609</sup>.

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<sup>607</sup> Southgate, Christopher, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) p. 88.

<sup>608</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 88/89.

<sup>609</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 89.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Southgate's vision of the shape of redemption for creation has attracted opposition from many theologians and if he were still alive, it is probable that Tillich would be one of them.

Neil Messer points out one of the primary problems of Southgate's vision of the shape of redemption for animals: 'a heaven that has a place for lethal violence and eternal victimhood seems to me to be a strange reading of the Christian hope'<sup>610</sup>. Denis Edwards concurs with Messer's view of 'God's good purpose in respect of non-human animals'<sup>611</sup>, and posits 'an appropriate theology of redemption ... will be one that refuses to locate violence in God, but reveals redemption as the act of the God proclaimed in the words and deeds of Jesus'<sup>612</sup>. This is an assessment which David Clough agrees with, stating that Isaiah's vision of peaceable relations between all creatures 'makes it absolutely clear that all creaturely enmity will be overcome in the new creation, and predator and prey will be reconciled to one another'<sup>613</sup>. And accordingly, Clough argues that 'Dickey's imaginative account of heaven for predators must be rejected as incompatible with the Christian doctrine of redemption'<sup>614</sup>.

A second problem with Southgate's view stems from his refusal to accept the 'Falleness' of creation. As such, if nature is not fallen, it would possibly follow that redemption for predators would mean being transformed into the perfect killing machines in the new creation and redemption for prey animals would mean being the perfect eternal victims. Michael Northcott disagrees with this view of creation currently being the way God intended<sup>615</sup>. He posits that as a result of the Fall, both humans and nonhuman creation have lost the ability to exist peacefully. For Northcott, violence is the 'earliest manifestation of sin as described in Genesis'<sup>616</sup>, so it is unthinkable as well as un-Biblical to posit that in the redeemed new creation, there would be

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<sup>610</sup> Neil Messer, 'Natural Evil after Darwin', Northcott, Michael S. & R.J. Berry (Eds.) *Theology after Darwin* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009) pp. 139-54 p. 153.

<sup>611</sup> Neil Messer, 'Humans, Animals, Evolution and Ends' in Deane-Drummond, Celia & David Clough, *Creaturely Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2009) pp. 211-227, p. 218.

<sup>612</sup> Denis Edwards, 'The Redemption of Animals in an Incarnational Theology', in *Creaturely Theology* pp 81-99. P. 82/3.

<sup>613</sup> Clough, *On Animals*, p. 158.

<sup>614</sup> Clough, *On Animals*, p.159.

<sup>615</sup> As would Tillich.

<sup>616</sup> Michael Northcott, 'They Shall Not Hurt or Destroy in all my Holy Mountain' Killing for Philosophy of Creaturely Non-Violence' in *Creaturely Theology*, pp. 231-48, p. 245.

any kind of predation or violence. In support of this view, he points to texts by the Hebrew prophets to inform his view of what the new creation might look like: 'In third Isaiah the renewed community of shalom will be a place where there is no more predation and the dread that prey feels for predator, memorialized in the Noah saga, will disappear'<sup>617</sup>.

Messer also takes up the point that creation is fallen and consequently not how God intends it to be at this current time. In relation to Southgate's eschatological vision, Messer argues that a view of a creation that is not 'fallen' coupled with an understanding based on the primacy of evolutionary science over against Biblical witness means that 'the use of this poem [Heaven of Animals by James Dickey] is not an arbitrary move on Southgate's part: it is entirely consistent with his argument up to this point, and some such conclusion is probably required given the earlier stages of that argument'<sup>618</sup>.

vi. *'Nature Also Mourns For a Lost Good'*

Biblical insights of the Creator's care for creation are also a strong emphasis in Tillich's sermon entitled *'Nature Also Mourns For A Lost Good'* which is taken from a collection of Tillich's sermons entitled *The Shaking of the Foundations: sermons applicable to the personal and social problems of our religious life*. In its preface, Tillich indicates two reasons he felt such a collection of sermons was desirable. Firstly, because many of his students were having 'difficulty ... trying to penetrate my theological thought' and that the 'practical or, more exactly, existential implications' of his theology were clearer to grasp in this format. He wished therefore, to demonstrate that his systematic theology could indeed be 'applicable to the personal and social problems'<sup>619</sup> of Christians. Secondly, Tillich was preaching to an eclectic mix of students, many of whom came from 'outside the Christian circle in the most radical sense of the phrase' and this necessitated him developing a way of expressing Biblical ideas in a 'language' which could point to the concepts and insights of 'Biblical and ecclesiastical terminology'<sup>620</sup> whilst still remaining faithful to the Christian message.

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<sup>617</sup> Northcott, 'They Shall Not Hurt or Destroy', in *Creaturely Theology*, p. 246.

<sup>618</sup> Messer, 'Natural Evil after Darwin', in *Theology after Darwin*, p.153.

<sup>619</sup> Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Preface.

<sup>620</sup> Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Preface.

He begins by exploring three Biblical passages, each illuminating a different aspect of the natural world: Psalms 19: 2-5, Romans 8: 19-22 and Revelations 21: 1 and 22: 1-2. He asks the congregation, as Good Friday and Easter Sunday approach and they think about the Cross, Resurrection and Redemption, who they think the recipient of this 'redemption' will be? Some men alone; or mankind including all nations; or the world, everything that is created, including nature...'<sup>621</sup>. Tillich argues that in order to answer what role nature has in relation to creation and redemption, it is necessary to look at all aspects of it. Firstly, the psalmist highlights the 'glory of nature'; Paul focuses on the 'tragedy of nature' and the prophet speaks of the redemption of nature. For the psalmist, the glory of the Creator is visible in the glory of the natural order; for Paul, the tragedy<sup>622</sup> of nature is intrinsically bound to the tragedy of humans and the prophet envisages the redemption of nature in the redemption of the world.

Reciting the Nineteenth Psalm, he tells his congregation of the belief of classical Greek thinkers that the 'heavenly bodies' produce harmonious music which cannot be heard by 'human ears' but instead speaks to us 'through the organs of our spirit'<sup>623</sup>. He argues that the psalmist could perceive this music to be proclaiming the 'glory of the creation and its Creator'. He asks his congregation if they too can hear the harmonious melodies of nature, or whether in fact 'nature has become silent to us, silent to the man of our period'<sup>624</sup>.

Via science and technology, humans know more about nature now than ever before, that nature can be taken apart and examined in a way that it could not be by previous generations, but this technical examination and technical use of nature, says Tillich, tells us nothing of the mystery or depth of nature. Indeed, 'the voice of nature has been heard by the scientific mind, and its answer is the conquest of nature. But is this all that nature has to say to us?'<sup>625</sup> To give a concrete example of science's inability to penetrate the depth of nature with its technical examination of it, he relates a story of sitting under a tree with a biologist friend of his. His friend stated that he wanted to know about the tree. Tillich was confused; after all, as a

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<sup>621</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', pp. 76-86, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 77.

<sup>622</sup> For Tillich, tragedy also implies greatness. For a fuller explanation of this notion, see Tillich, *STII*, p. 50.

<sup>623</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 78.

<sup>624</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 78.

<sup>625</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 79.

biologist, his friend knew every scientific fact there was to know about trees. When he questioned his friend on this matter, the biologist replied “I want to know what the tree means for itself. I want to understand the life of this tree. It is so strange, so unapproachable”<sup>626</sup>. What his friend was driving at was that knowing the biological facts about another life form may inform us about its life processes but it actually tells us nothing about its life or its state of being. Tillich postulates it is only possible to gain such a ‘sympathetic’ and intimate insight and knowledge of nature ‘by communion between man and nature’<sup>627</sup>.

He points out that the more humans manipulate, dominate and exploit nature, the less able they become to actually connect in any meaningful way with creation:

This technical civilisation, the pride of mankind, has brought about a tremendous devastation of original nature, of the land, of animals, of plants ... separated from the soil by a machine, we speed through nature, catching glimpses of it, but never comprehending its greatness or feeling its power.<sup>628</sup>

Our superficial and domineering attitude to nature is condemned in the strongest possible terms: ‘what blasphemy of the glory of nature! And consequently of the divine ground, the glory of which sounds through the glory of nature’.<sup>629</sup>

He reminds the congregation however that glory is merely one aspect of nature, and that the glory of nature does not simply reside in its beauty or its power. Nature is tragic too. Reading again the words of Romans 8: 19-22, he reminds his listeners that nature not only resounds with glory, but also with tragedy<sup>630</sup>. The tragedy in nature stems from its existential distortion from its essential being and its estrangement from the ground of being. He asserts that ‘none who has ever listened to the sounds of nature with sympathy can forget their tragic melodies’<sup>631</sup> but that this sympathy with the tragedy of nature, far from being ‘sentimental emotion’ is in fact an

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<sup>626</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 79.

<sup>627</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 79.

<sup>628</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 79

<sup>629</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 80.

<sup>630</sup> For Tillich, tragedy (as is the case in Greek tragedy) implies greatness. These concepts are inextricably linked. By describing the existential predicament of nature as tragic, Tillich is implying that in its essential nature it is in fact great. For a further explanation of the relatedness of these concepts, see the examination of Part III of the system: *Existence and the Christ*. Chapter Two: Part Three below.

<sup>631</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 81.

entirely realistic response to the travail of creation. Quoting Schelling, Tillich argues that the tragedy and suffering of nature are abundantly visible if we are prepared to look, and are “manifest through the traces of suffering in the face of all nature, especially in the faces of the animals”<sup>632</sup>.

When Tillich enquires as to why nature is tragic, he points to the Pauline insight that nature is also subject to the Fall. From this perspective, ‘the tragedy of nature is bound to the tragedy of man and the salvation of nature is dependent on the salvation of man’<sup>633</sup>. Nature then is inextricably linked to humans in their glory as creations of the Ground of Being, in their tragedy by virtue of the Fall, and in their redemption by universal salvation. The means of salvation for both humans and nature alike then is the Christ. In the existing order both humans and nature are estranged from themselves, from each other and from their Creator. But the Christ has the power to overcome this estrangement and bring about the final manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Tillich asserts:

Jesus is called the Son of Man ... in whom the forces of separation and tragedy are overcome, not only in mankind but also in the universe. For there is no salvation of man if there is no salvation of nature, for man is in nature and nature is in man<sup>634</sup>.

Reciting Revelation 21: 1, 22: 2, Tillich points out that this harmonious state of new heaven and new earth is not some utopia which will be achieved at a future date in time, any more than the Fall was an event that happened ‘once-upon-a-time’; rather, the ‘Golden Age’ is a symbol for universal salvation.

He argues that nature also responds when Christ dies, and again when he is resurrected. At the moment that Christ dies the earth shakes and the sun sets, likewise when he is resurrected the earth quakes again and the sun rises<sup>635</sup>. He asserts it is the bodily resurrection which is used as a metaphor for the conquering of existential estrangement and not an immortal bodiless spirit. He reminds us that ‘bodiless spirit ... is not the aim of creation; the purpose of salvation is not

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<sup>632</sup> Schelling, cited Tillich in ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 82.

<sup>633</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 83.

<sup>634</sup> Tillich, ‘Nature Also Mourns’, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 84.

<sup>635</sup> For further examination of the reaction of nature to the death and resurrection of the Christ, see Universal Salvation, pp. 175-9 in Paul Tillich, *The New Being*.

the abstract intellect or the natureless moral personality'<sup>636</sup>. In theologians' insistence of the primacy of an immortal soul, over against the physical body, Tillich asserts that they have forgotten that the first act by which the Christ 'revealed His Messianic vocation was His power to heal bodily and mental sickness'<sup>637</sup>. Tillich sees this emphasis on all things intellectual and spiritual rather than on our relatedness as part of physical bodily creation as a major reason that the sacraments have lost their meaning for many people. Our estrangement from nature is seen as the primary cause for this loss of importance for both individual parishioners and the parishes they attend, because in a very real sense 'in the sacraments, nature participates in the process of salvation ... all the great elements of nature become the bearers of spiritual meaning and saving power'<sup>638</sup>. In the reuniting of the elements of nature with spirit, the sacraments are reunited with their saving power because although the 'word' may have a cognitive effect on us, without being united with nature, the meaning of the sacraments is lost to our 'unconscious', appealing only to our rational minds. For Tillich, sacrament should ultimately be a symbol of 'nature and spirit, united in salvation'<sup>639</sup>.

He ends his sermon by urging his congregation to acknowledge their estrangement from nature and take steps to rectify this situation:

Commune with nature! Become reconciled with nature after your estrangement from it. Listen to nature in quietness, and you will find its heart. It will sound forth with the glory of its divine ground. It will sigh with us in the bondage of tragedy. It will speak of the indestructible hope of salvation!<sup>640</sup>

Although it is true that much of Tillich's system is humanocentric, it is also the case that in his concept of universal salvation we see that, despite occasional lapses, the main emphasis remains the common origin of humans and non-human creation, its common existential estrangement and its shared redemption in divine life. In the concept of universal salvation

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<sup>636</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 85.

<sup>637</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 86.

<sup>638</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 86. For a more detailed account of the relationship between nature and the sacraments, see 'Nature and Sacrament' (1929), pp. 82-95, in Taylor (Ed), *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*

<sup>639</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 86.

<sup>640</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 86.

generally, it is made explicit that God sees worth in every part of the created order. As such every part of creation will reach fulfilment, being liberated from the negative aspects of itself under the conditions of existence, and its essential being will be reunited with the Ground of Being from whom it originated.

The Pauline concept of pan-en-theism is significant in providing a basis for a Tillichian animal ethic because this notion not only stresses the goodness and worth and indeed tragedy of all creation but also provides unequivocal evidence that creation is for the purposes of God rather than humans. The incorporation of all that is positive in creation both in terms of essential being and positive creative acts within finite existence is elevated into the divine life, and actually provides the 'otherness' within God 'through the Logos as the principle of divine self-manifestation'. It is clear, then, that not only is God for creation, but in a very real and important sense creation is for God.

In '*Nature Also Mourns For A Lost Good*', Tillich goes much further than he does in his *Systematic Theology*, by actively condemning both the arrogance and poverty of humanocentrism with respect to creation. The emphasis here is placed on the unwarranted overvaluing of humanity in relation to the rest of the created order, and the assertion that 'abstract intellect and natureless moral personality' matter far less in the sight of the divine than a being's essential goodness. In this sermon, if not in the majority of Tillich's work, far from locating humans above the rest of creation, he suggests that although humans may have a higher intellectual capacity than other beings in creation, they also have a great deal more negativity which will ultimately be excluded from eternal life:

Do we not see everywhere the estrangement of people from nature, from their own natural forces and from nature around them? And do they not become dry and uncreative in their mental life, hard and arrogant in their moral attitude, suppressed and poisoned in their vitality? They certainly are not the images of salvation.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 85. The Discussion of the redemption of 'other worlds' in Chapter 7: An Examination of the Method of Correlation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, pp. 161-192.



## Chapter Nine

### Tillich's Interpretation of the Fall and its relevance to Creation and Animals.

#### i. *The Symbol of 'the Fall'*

The doctrine of the Fall is a crucial element of any Christian theology and is a key concept when examining the relationship between the created order and Creator. As a doctrine related to our ultimate concern, 'the Fall' is viewed as symbolic and mythic<sup>642</sup> rather than in literal terms. It should not be understood to be the narrative of an event that took place 'once upon a time'<sup>643</sup>. Instead, Tillich understands the story of Genesis 1-3 to be a myth that can provide the framework within which the possibility of the transition from essence to existence may be examined.

Although a literal interpretation of the Fall is strongly rejected, he posits that it is not possible to remove all elements of myth from the Genesis account, any more than complete 'demythologization' is possible when discussing any other aspect of the divine. When using the term 'the transition from essence to existence', the element of 'once upon a time' is dispensed with, however, the phrase still holds a temporal connotation hence he talks about partial demythologization.

In an attempt to illuminate the present human condition, Tillich builds on his understanding of ontological reason, in order to give an exposition of how the transition from essence to existence is possible. This analysis, then, provides the first stage in developing his thesis. The

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<sup>642</sup> Tillich uses the term myth, to describe the language used by people to express their encounter with the divine. In part one, '*Reason and Revelation*', he links mythological language to the 'depth of reason', and in part four, '*Life and the Spirit*' he argues that the nature of religious experience is qualitatively so different from any other category of encounter that it demands a means of expression, apart from our everyday language: 'mythological language [combines] the technical grasp of objects with the religious experience of a quality of the encountered that has the highest significance even for daily life but transcends it in such a way that it demands another language, that of religious symbols and their combination, the myth. Religious language is symbolic-mythological, even when it interprets facts and events which belong to the realm of ordinary technical use'. Tillich, *STIII*, p. 59.

<sup>643</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 29.

second step in this process involves an examination of the role of finite freedom. Human awareness of their finitude provides the next stage in the development, since it is finite freedom that makes this transition possible.

As the third step, he points out that the human ability to 'contradict' its own nature and so 'surrender his [her] humanity'<sup>644</sup>. This provides the final step in understanding this movement from essence to existence. Because the ontological elements of freedom and destiny are interdependent, human finite freedom is also limited by its opposite pole – destiny. Therefore, in humans throwing away their true potential by the misuse of their finite freedom, this self-contradiction is also limited by destiny. From this understanding of the transition from essence to existence, it is only possible for the concept of the Fall to be viewed as a universal transition. On these grounds, Tillich does not accept the idea of an 'Individual Fall'<sup>645</sup>.

The Fall is only possible because humans have the freedom to manipulate their environment, have language (and hence 'have a world', transcending their environment) and can contradict their own nature. It is the very fact that humans are in the 'Image of God' that enables the Fall to happen. Only beings in the image of God are able to break their unity with the Ground of Being. It is the self-same attributes and abilities that give humans their unlimited potential that must also be viewed as their greatest weakness. Although the Fall has cosmic significance, due to the unique role humans play in this myth, the Fall has often been understood primarily as the 'Fall of Man'<sup>646</sup>.

## ii. *The Fall as 'Original Fact'*

In examining Tillich's concept of the Fall as 'original fact', we must also consider his interpretation of the role of original sin within the Genesis myth. Theology has traditionally made a distinction between original sin, or the sin of Adam's disobedience and that of actual sin, or the individual sinful acts of human beings. Original or hereditary sin has been viewed by

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<sup>644</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 32.

<sup>645</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 32.

<sup>646</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 33.

classical theology as the result that Adam's disobedience has engendered in every human, and it is often considered to be the individual act which has 'corrupted'<sup>647</sup> all of humanity.

Although he accepts the basic premise that humans are all estranged from the Ground of Being, he argues that to suppose the free act of Adam's disobedience is the cause of all human sinfulness is not only 'inconsistent' but 'literally absurd'<sup>648</sup>. Instead, he links the idea of original sin directly to the ontological pole of destiny. From this perspective, there is no way for humans to avoid sin because in opposition to polar freedom, estrangement and sin need to be understood in terms of a universal destiny. Original sin, then, is not to be considered original, or even inherited from Adam but instead is the 'destiny of estrangement'<sup>649</sup>, and as such, is affective in every finite being.

It is clear that human finite freedom is the active element in the transition from essence to existence in Tillich's interpretation of the Fall. How then, does this fit with the conviction that the Fall is universal? The answer can be found in the ontological pole of universal destiny, which is inseparably linked to the pole of finite freedom under the conditions of existence. Finite freedom is only half of the story when looking at the mechanisms responsible for the Fall. Universal destiny is the other crucial factor which must be scrutinised in order to gain a comprehensive insight into his understanding of the Fall.

### *iii. The Transition from Dreaming Innocence to Actualised Guilt*

The 'original fact' emphasises the universal and tragic element of the transition from dreaming innocence to aroused freedom. 'Original' fact, in this sense, does not denote that in temporal terms it is the first fact, or even an important fact amongst others. Rather, it is the fact that gives all other facts their validity. Without the element of universal destiny, the transition from essence to existence would not be possible, any more than it would be without its opposite pole: finite freedom. It is the original fact which is affective in 'every individual person in the transition from dreaming innocence to actualisation and guilt'<sup>650</sup>.

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<sup>647</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 56.

<sup>648</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 55.

<sup>649</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p.57.

<sup>650</sup>Tillich, *ST II*, p. 36.

Although the Genesis account of the Fall is symbolically viewed as an event from distant history, the reality of the transition from essence to existential estrangement rightfully belongs to all three modes of time; past, present and future. Every time a finite being is actualised, the original fact is in operation. The story in Genesis 1-3 however, has a strongly 'psychological-ethical character'<sup>651</sup> and so points to the reality of the transition from essence to existence, set in a particular time, involving particular individuals. Tillich posits that the setting of the myth in 'special cultural and social conditions' in no way reduces its claim to 'universal validity'<sup>652</sup>. Nor does the emphasis on the psychological-ethical character of the story exclude other elements. In addition to Adam and Eve, the serpent represents the 'dynamic trends' of nature, the trees in the garden have magical properties and the curse issued by God extends not just to Eve, then Adam, but is much more far reaching, effecting all of Adam's offspring, the female body and the rest of creation.

#### *iv. Creation and Fall*

As has been shown, an ontological polarity exists between the moral element of finite freedom and the tragic element of universal destiny. It is clear then, in what manner humans are related to the Fall, what seems less certain however, is how humans are related in this to the rest of creation and how creation is related to the Fall.

It is evident that in Genesis 1-3, humans are the beings responsible for the Fall, even though it is the tragic consequence of existence. Creation too plays a part in the Genesis myth in the form of the serpent. In Tillich's opinion, the serpent represents 'the dynamics of nature in and around man'<sup>653</sup>. The serpent is able to encourage humans to contravene God's command, however, it is pointed out that without human finite freedom the serpent itself is unable to turn against God. Although the transition from essence to existence is governed by universal destiny, humans are still the only creature through whom this transition can occur. Humans not only bear responsibility for the transition from essence to existence due to their finite reason

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<sup>651</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 37.

<sup>652</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 37.

<sup>653</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 39.

but additionally, 'because all dimensions of reality are united in him [humans]'<sup>654</sup>. When this responsibility of finite freedom is offset against the tragic universality of the Fall, it is necessary to ask how exactly humans are related to the rest of the created order? And further, if the universe participates in the Fall in the same way, what is the relation of creation to the Fall?

Having rejected the answer a literalistic interpretation of the Fall would entail, that is, the Fall altered the structures of nature along with humans, what exactly are we to understand by the term 'fallen world'? In order to answer this question, Tillich highlights the symbolic character of the myth. He asserts that the Fall should not be understood as an event that took place 'once upon a time'. Instead, the transition from essence to existence is the 'transhistorical quality of all events in time and space'<sup>655</sup>. Therefore, essential humanity before the Fall and 'nature before the curse' are not actualised and so have never existed. Humans and nature prior to the Fall, represent states of potentiality, rather than states of existence and it is strongly asserted that 'there is no time in which this was otherwise'<sup>656</sup>.

Following from this conclusion, he posits there has never been an instant within existence which caused such a change in reality, and argues that to think creation went from existing in essential goodness to existential estrangement is not only 'absurd' but also has no basis either in 'experience or revelation'<sup>657</sup>.

Tillich concedes that it may seem more straightforward to dismiss the notion of the fallen creation altogether and hold a dichotomy between guilty humans and innocent nature. He is against such a move however, on the grounds that 'it is too simple to be true'<sup>658</sup>. In limiting the scope of the Fall to the 'Fall of Man', no account can be made regarding the tragic element of universal destiny. If existential estrangement could be avoided by simply exercising finite freedom in a responsible manner, humans could, in theory, remain true to their essential nature

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<sup>654</sup> *ST II*, p. 40. For a fuller explanation of what Tillich means when asserting that all dimensions of reality are united in humans, see the exposition of Part IV, *Life and the Spirit*. Also see Chapter Six 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life', pp. 144-159.

<sup>655</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 40.

<sup>656</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 41.

<sup>657</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 40.

<sup>658</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 41.

and avoid estrangement and sin altogether. Apart from the fact our experience tells us this conclusion is faulty, if humans really were able to remain entirely true to their essential nature whilst under the conditions of existence, Jesus as the Christ would be merely one of many humans who enjoyed an unbroken unity with God. Furthermore, since humans would have no need for salvation (reconciliation with the Ground of Being) Jesus as mediator of New Being would no longer be required.

The early church rejected the Pelagian line of thinking, at least in part because it did not take account of the tragic element of universal destiny, in addition to its implications for grace and salvation. In Tillich's view, the modern Christian church must also abandon the strict dichotomy between guilty humans and innocent creation. Based on our increasingly advanced knowledge of other species of animal, he posits that rejecting the idealistic separation of humans and nature is much easier in the twentieth century than it had been in previous eras<sup>659</sup>.

As our understanding of the development of life on earth increases, it makes little sense to hold a complete dichotomy between animals who only have their immediate environment and humans who 'have a world'. As Tillich points out in relation to his concept of the multi-dimensional unity of life, although there are quantifiable differences between life in different dimensions and realms, it is impossible to say at which point in the process of natural evolution, animal nature is replaced by human nature.

A second problem with a strict separation of humans and the rest of the created order with respect to the Fall is that it is very difficult to know at what point individual human responsibility starts and finishes. He asserts that even if a legal view on responsibility is taken, children are not considered responsible for their actions if they are under a certain age. Even a proportion of 'mature' adults, if suffering from certain physical or mental illnesses are not able to 'respond' as a fully centred whole.

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<sup>659</sup> In the Twenty-first century, our understanding of the capacities and complexities of other species of animals is far more advanced than that of Tillich's who was writing in the early and mid-Twentieth century. For further discussion see Chapter 7 'An Examination of The Method of Correlation in Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, pp.161-192.

In order to illuminate the notion that freewill only forms part of the equation in relation to human responsibility, he also makes a distinction between conscious and unconscious decision making processes. He argues that often individuals make a conscious decision, based on conscious reasons, whilst the unconscious mind has already decided on a course of action on completely different grounds. The decision arrived at is still in line with finite freedom, however, it is a free decision within the constraints of destiny. Rather than trying to decry freewill here, his aim is to indicate that human finite freedom only provides part of the picture in regard of 'free' decision making. Freedom, under the conditions of existence, is necessarily always tempered by destiny.

Human freedom is a function that can only be made by the deciding centre of a fully centred self and it is argued that in this respect, the whole of creation participates in every act of human freedom: 'it represents the side of destiny in the act of freedom'<sup>660</sup>. As well as creation acting as destiny to finite freedom, he also points out that analogies to finite freedom are discernible in every dimension of creation<sup>661</sup>, asserting that 'from the atomic structures to the most highly developed animals, there are total and centred reactions which can be called "spontaneous" in the dimension of organic life.<sup>662</sup> He would not define these 'structured' and 'spontaneous' reactions in non-humans as responsible actions, however, he postulates that the term 'innocent' in relation to nature does not seem appropriate either. If there is no possibility of a being becoming guilty, Tillich believes that it is not accurate to define a being as innocent; rather, blameless may be a more appropriate designation.

Further to the analogies to human freedom present in nature, he states that in his opinion, there are analogies present in nature to 'human good and human evil'<sup>663</sup>. In support of this assertion, he looks to Isaiah's prophecy of peace for all nature in the new age. The fact that peace will be established where now there is disharmony and predation would seem to indicate that Isaiah would not necessarily define nature as totally 'innocent'. He also points to the curse

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<sup>660</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 43.

<sup>661</sup> In many ways this is a vital insight with regard to developing an authentically Tillichian position on the ethical status of animals.

<sup>662</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 43.

<sup>663</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 44.

placed upon the whole of nature in Genesis 3, and the longing for deliverance from nature's bondage, in Romans 8, to support the concept of a nature which is not entirely innocent. He accepts that these biblical passages are 'poetic-mythical' but argues that the inner life of nature can only be penetrated via 'poetic empathy'<sup>664</sup>. Despite the necessary poetic-mystical emphasis of these passages, Tillich believes that they contain 'realistic substance'<sup>665</sup> which he certainly finds more convincing than the 'moral utopianism' that sharply contrasts guilty humans with innocent nature.

Finally, he argues that the symbol 'fallen world' is both possible and necessary because nature and humanity participate in each other to such an extent that they are, to all intents and purposes, inseparable. Accordingly, he postulates that the concept of existence (as opposed to essence) is an entirely appropriate designation for the whole of creation, and not just the human species.

One of the most striking elements of Tillich's understanding of this doctrine is his ability to perceive the tragedy in nature. Many theologians, both past and present, do not accept either the tragic aspect of nature, or the fallen status of creation. One such theologian is Christopher Southgate.

*v. Southgate's Argument Against a Fallen Creation*

Although Southgate goes to pains to point out that he believes the authors of Genesis provide valuable insight into the consequences of human sinfulness in chapters 3-11, he nonetheless argues vehemently against the doctrine of the Fall on a number of grounds.

The first of these is on biblical grounds. Here he makes two separate points: Firstly he posits that although a reading of Genesis 1-3 would seem to support the notion of a Fall, with the changes of emphasis between Genesis 1:29, where humans are prescribed a vegetarian diet by God to Genesis 3:6, where humans are allowed to eat meat to Genesis 3:17, where the whole of creation is cursed because of human sinfulness, he contends that the discontinuity present

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<sup>664</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 43.

<sup>665</sup> Tillich, *ST II*, p. 43.



could at least be in part due to Genesis 1-2:4a being authored by a different writer to Genesis 2:4b-3:24. Although the two traditions of the Yahwist and Priestly at work in Genesis 3 could account for a certain degree of change in emphasis, it still seems likely that this passage is indicative of the Fall.

The second point in relation to Genesis 2-3 is the argument made by Patricia A. Williams of fall narratives being misinterpretations of the Genesis text. Williams believes this misreading was made by Paul 'in order to provide the "catastrophe" from which the Christ-event is our "rescue"<sup>666</sup>. He goes on to point out that Williams argues that she and many other commentators of the Hebrew Bible have noted the lack of a 'fall tradition'<sup>667</sup> which one would expect to build on Genesis 2-3 throughout the Old Testament texts. With regard to Paul's misreading of the Genesis texts, Southgate himself seems less than convinced by Williams' argument, admitting in his endnotes that 'I do not myself altogether concede this criticism of Paul. It seems to me a perfectly appropriate strategy for the community of interpreters prayerfully to decide that a certain passage is a "hermeneutical lens" that allows a particular theme in Scripture to be understood in a particular way'<sup>668</sup> and further admits that 'disputes as to biblical interpretation are notoriously fraught'<sup>669</sup>.

The more critical grounds for Southgate's objection to the doctrine of the Fall however are practical. He contends that as humans have only existed for a fraction of the length of time that there has been life on earth<sup>670</sup> it therefore makes no sense to talk of human sin 'as the cause of struggle and suffering in the nonhuman creation in general'<sup>671</sup>. Additionally, he asserts that there is absolutely no evidence that there has ever been a time in the history of the planet when there has not been 'predation, violence, parasitism, suffering and extinction'<sup>672</sup>. However, Tillich's understanding of the Fall does not take place at any point in history, rather it takes place *at all points* in history as the 'transhistorical quality of all events in time and

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<sup>666</sup> Williams cited Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 29.

<sup>667</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 29.

<sup>668</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 146.

<sup>669</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 29.

<sup>670</sup> This is sometimes referred to as 'the dinosaurs objection'.

<sup>671</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 28.

<sup>672</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, p. 28.

space'<sup>673</sup>. Tillich's description of the transition from essence to existence therefore holds equally true for all finite beings, regardless of species and the time of their existence within the historical continuum.

vi. *Theological implications of Tillich's Interpretation of the Fall*

In combination with material from his sermon; 'Nature Also Mourns for a Lost Good', his interpretation of the Fall can help to provide valuable theological insights regarding the human species, animals, creation and the Creator. Just as importantly however, it can help to provide a more balanced, more theocentric view of the world and the vast array of creatures which inhabit it. If the whole of creation is fallen, then the whole of creation must be the recipient of salvation. This position not only takes account of *creation* in relation to its Creator, but also in the concept of universal salvation and the notion of pan-en-theism, accounts for the *Creator* in relation to creation as a whole.

The conclusions reached with reference to Tillich's understanding of the doctrine of the Fall are clear: there can be no dichotomy between guilty humanity and innocent creation; the Fall is effective throughout the whole of creation. At first glance, this may not seem to be a particularly significant insight however, in terms of providing a theological perspective on animals, it is extremely important, with far-reaching practical implications. The implications of the common bond of all of creation are three-fold. Firstly, it gives an indication of the need for redemption for the whole of creation (not simply the human species), as Andrew Linzey argues in *Creatures of the Same God*, 'the logic is inescapable: no real fallenness, no real redemption'<sup>674</sup> in relation to animals and creation. Secondly, Tillich's interpretation of the Fall allows for a more theocentric perspective on creation and finally, it highlights some theologically important facts regarding the place and role of the human species with respect to the rest of nature.

vii. *The Tragedy of Nature*

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<sup>673</sup> Tillich, *STII*, p. 40.

<sup>674</sup> Linzey, Andrew, *Creatures of the Same God: Explorations in Animal Theology* (Winchester: Winchester University Press, 2007) p. 84.

Because for Tillich, something can only be described as tragic, if it possesses greatness, by explicitly referring to nature as tragic with respect to the Fall, he is implicitly acknowledging the greatness of the whole non-human creation. Within his three volumes of his *Systematic Theology*, however, although he sees the paucity of the prevailing hierarchical view of creation<sup>675</sup>, at no point does he actually develop a concrete position on how this should inform the attitude of Christians towards animals in particular and creation in general. However, in 1948, he published a book of sermons and his comments in its preface might provide some clues as to why his *Systematic Theology* remained so abstract on the subject:

Many of my students and friends ... have told me of the difficulty they have met in trying to penetrate my theological thought. They believe that through my sermons the practical, or more exactly, the existential implications of my theology are more clearly manifest.<sup>676</sup>

This would certainly appear to be the case on the issue of animals and creation. It could be argued that each of his radically different writing styles has its role to play; on the one hand, the abstract theology of his *Systematic Theology* provides the theoretical basis for his position on animals and creation, whilst on the other hand, Tillich's sermons, and in particular 'Nature Also Mourns For a Lost Good', builds on the theoretical assertions of his System and goes on to give practical expression to his views. By examining both of Tillich's approaches to theology, it will be argued that a truly authentic and more complete perspective can be gained, than could be gleaned from his *Systematic Theology* alone.

When examining what is written about the tragedy of creation in *Systematic Theology Volume II*, several key points emerge. Firstly, creation provides the opposite ontological pole to human finite freedom, that is, universal destiny. Without nature taking on this role, the Fall could not have happened, since freedom can only operate in tandem with destiny. Secondly, in Tillich's interpretation of this doctrine, the serpent (which was instrumental in Adam's decision to disobey God) is representative of the whole of creation. Thirdly, he draws analogies between

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<sup>675</sup> For a fuller description of his views on the hierarchical way of viewing ourselves and the world, see the exposition of Part IV of his System. Also see Chapter Six 'The Multidimensional Unity of Life', pp. 144-159.

<sup>676</sup> Paul Tillich – *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Preface.

human good and evil and good and evil in nature. Fourthly, he points to the disharmony and predation which exists in nature, under the influence of existential distortion and fifthly, he cites Romans 8 in support of the longing, of all creation for liberation from their bondage. From an abstract, theoretical perspective then, the main emphases are placed on the joint role of humans and nature in the Fall, the estrangement and disruption that is real for all species under the conditions of existence, and most importantly, the longing for salvation of all creatures. Although these emphases are also present in 'Nature Also Mourns for a Lost Good'. Rather than being presented in the abstract, almost to the point of detachment, as they are in his System, they are expressed in a strongly practical way. Tillich highlights the tragic aspect of nature, and, as he does in *Systematic Theology Volume Two*, affirms the common bond between humans and nature, postulating that 'it [nature] is suffering and sighing with us'<sup>677</sup>. He also points out the joint role played by humans and creation in the myth of the Fall, describing the tragedy of nature as intrinsically linked to the tragedy of humankind. In addition, he talks of the disharmony and predation in the natural world too, as he relates the story of watching in horror as a school of larger fish chased and devoured a smaller species.

A key theme however, in his sermon, is the joint quest for salvation of human and non-human creation alike. All of the major insights into the concept of a fallen world that are present in his *Systematic Theology* are also present in his sermon although the pieces 'feel' completely different when read. The main reason for the different 'feel' of these pieces, despite their remarkably similar factual basis, is that in his sermon, Tillich is much more open and gives much greater expression to the concepts he relates. It could be argued that his sermon actually provides a unique glimpse into the practical implications of his theoretical position. Rather than shying away from emotive expression and language, as he does in his Systematic Theology, Tillich actually embraces and defends the sympathy one should feel in the face of the disruption and disharmony in nature. He posits that 'sympathy' for the tragedy that exists in nature is far from a sentimental emotion' but is in fact 'a true feeling of the reality of nature'<sup>678</sup>. A paragraph later, we see how Tillich actually feels about the chasm that exists between humans and creation:

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<sup>677</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of The Foundations*, p. 81.

<sup>678</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 82.

Have we too much secluded ourselves in human superiority, in intellectual arrogance, in a domineering attitude towards nature. We have become incapable of perceiving the harmonious sounds of nature. Have we also become insensitive to the tragic sounds?<sup>679</sup>

Further, he bemoans our lack of compassion towards the non-human creation. He describes our interaction with the natural world in terms which would not be inappropriate in describing a despotic dictator, referring both to our 'dominance and ruthless exploitation' as well as to our subjugating nature to 'the will and wilfulness of man'<sup>680</sup>. From the comparison between this sermon and his System, Tillich's main emphases regarding creation under the impact of the Fall have not altered. The real divergence between these vastly different passages is that in his sermon, he is able to give the abstractions of his System practical voice, and apply them in a concrete way which is just not possible given the constraints of his *Systematic Theology*.

The final emphasis shared by these Tillichian passages is the longing of all creation for salvation. Both passages cite Romans 8, however, the sermon goes further than his Systematic Theology does. In it, he asserts not only that nature waits in bondage for redemption, but that as it was not possible to Fall without creation, nor is salvation possible for humans without salvation for the rest of creaturely existence. On this point, Tillich is emphatic: 'For there is no salvation of man if there is no salvation of nature, for man is in nature and nature is in man'<sup>681</sup>. Instead of expounding an uncritical humanocentric view of salvation, he argues for a formulation of humanocentrism, qualified by a more theocentric view of creation.

#### viii. *Insights from the Eastern Orthodox Tradition*

The Eastern Orthodox Church has a strong liturgical tradition of celebrating the whole of creation, one where humanity as made in the 'Image of God' has the role of 'priest of creation'<sup>682</sup>.

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<sup>679</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 82.

<sup>680</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 79.

<sup>681</sup> Tillich, 'Nature Also Mourns', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 84.

<sup>682</sup> John Zizioulas, 'Man the Priest of Creation', Walker, A and C. Carras (Eds.) *Living Orthodoxy in the Modern World* (London: SPCK, 1996) pp178-88 p. 178.

John Zizioulas in particular believes it is crucial that there is a restoration of a sense of the importance of humanities mediating role with respect to creation. He argues that too much emphasis has been given to humans' rational ability whereas it is human freedom which should be stressed. Since the work of Darwin, it has become apparent that humans are not the only creature endowed with some degree of rationality. However, he argues that we are the only creature that often acts against the inherent rationality of the world, 'making freedom the measure of what it means to be human'<sup>683</sup>.

Human freedom is limited however by our finitude and that of the world, so is unlike the 'absolute freedom'<sup>684</sup> of God. He argues that although humans constantly strive for absolute freedom, it is always unattainable. For Zizioulas, the Fall symbolises humanity false claim to 'absolute freedom', arguing that it is this distorted finite freedom which has lead humanity to use creation for our own purposes in a utilitarian way, giving little or no thought to the harm our actions cause.

He holds priesthood as a model of how humanity could become the link between God and creation. He posits that 'in this hypostatic sense humanity achieves this [priesthood] through offering the world to God'<sup>685</sup> and in this hypostatic identification and act of offering, creation is itself liberated from its limitations.

He believes that Christ fulfils this role of priest to creation and provides an example of the proper relationship between humans and the rest of creation. In addition, in the Eucharist, humans offer creation back to God, and in so doing he asserts that creation is brought back into relationship with God<sup>686</sup>. Of the Eastern Orthodox Church's tradition regarding creation, he states 'Creation acquires for us in this way a sacredness which is not inherent in its nature but

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<sup>683</sup> J. Zizioulas 'Preserving God's Creation: Lecture 3', *Kings Theological Review, Volume XIII* (1990) p. 5.

<sup>684</sup> J Zizioulas, 'Preserving God's Creation: Lecture 3' p. 5.

<sup>685</sup> J Zizioulas, 'Preserving God's Creation: Lecture 3' p. 6.

<sup>686</sup> There are other animal and eco-theologians in the orthodox church such as Elizabeth Theokritoff however who feel that Zizioulas puts too much emphasis on the role of humanity as mediating between God and creation arguing that 'creation as a whole can express its praise regardless of the human presence' (E. Theokritoff, 'Creation and Priesthood in Modern Orthodox Thinking', *Ecotheology* 10.3 (2005) 344-63

“acquired” in and through Man’s free exercise of his *imago Dei*, i.e. his personhood’ and argues that as a result of the elevated position humans have with respect to creation, humanity now has ‘an awesome responsibility for the survival of God’s creation’<sup>687</sup>.

ix. *Humans as Priests to Creation*

Tillich’s understanding of the Fall can provide a strong theological basis for the practical ethic of humans adopting the role of priests in relation to the created order. In the Genesis myth, although the whole of creation is subject to the curse, it is only via human agency that the Fall could come about. Humans, as the only creatures made in the ‘Image of God’ and endowed with finite reason, are the only creatures who have the ability to turn away from their Creator. By the same token though, they are also the only creature who can work directly on behalf of their Creator<sup>688</sup>. Additionally, as the only species who are moral agents, a portion of guilt for the Fall must lie with the human species. As moral patients, the same cannot be said for any other species of animal on this planet.

Although the whole of creation is subject to the Fall, humans, as beings made in the image of God must be viewed as holding a privileged position. However, with privilege comes responsibility. As a species, made in the image of the Creator, humans could be viewed, in effect, vice regents, acting for God on earth. The principle of humans taking on the role of stewards, that is, acting as responsible caretakers to the rest of creation, on behalf of the Creator, would seem to be entirely in line with Tillich’s theological position, both in his *Systematic Theology* and in his sermon.

The concept of a fallen world, not only points to the need for humans to act as agents for God, but by virtue of there being no strict division between guilty humans and innocent nature, rather than being on a separate or higher plane than the rest of creation, humans are firmly

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<sup>687</sup> J. Zizioulas, *Preserving God’s Creation*, p. 5.

<sup>688</sup> Andrew Linzey’s concept of humans as the ‘servant species’ expounded in chapter 3 of *Animal Theology* pp.45-61 and elsewhere, is particularly relevant here.

located within the world, as a species of creature, amongst other species. It is true that humans hold a privileged position in creation and the concept of stewardship or Linzey's concept of humans as 'the Servant Species'<sup>689</sup> throws down the challenge for Christians to view the world from a theocentric perspective, rather than an unqualified humanocentric one. If creation is viewed from the perspective of its Creator, any harm inflicted upon any aspect of the creation is done to the Creator. In treating creation, and especially other sentient creatures with care and respect, in accordance with the notion of humans acting in a priestly role, the rights of the Creator (who loves and sustains all of creation) are respected.

An unqualified humanocentric position entails humans treating the rest of creation as if it belongs to our species and can be utilised in anyway our species sees fit. Whereas, a theocentric perspective such as the one necessitated by the role of humans as priests to the rest of creation, allows that creation is respected, valued and cherished on behalf of its Creator because it belongs to God. The notion of priesthood is still humanocentric however because humans have a special role to play within creation, however, not all humanocentrism is morally indefensible. In the concept of priesthood, a concept that has been demonstrated to be authentically Tillichian in emphasis, the good humans could do for the rest of creation, is both evident and theologically based. This is especially so when we bear in mind that in protecting the rights of other creatures we are ultimately protecting the rights of God the Creator with respect to their creation.

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<sup>689</sup>Linzey, *Animal Theology*, p. 45-58.



## In Summary

As has been noted, humanocentric concern prevails in almost every aspect of Tillich's theology. Even when expressing concepts which appear positive in relation to animals and creation, they are expounded in such a way that it seems as though creation was an afterthought.

Arguably, the most problematic aspect of Tillich's system in relation to animals and creation is their exclusion from the dimensions of the spirit and of history. This is no mere matter of semantics because without direct access to these dimensions, there can be no direct access to the 'Spiritual Presence' or 'New Being'. Accordingly, in his system, all but humans are excluded from a direct relationship with their Ground of Being. This is unsatisfactory from the point of view of creation, and arguably, even less acceptable from the perspective of the Creator. Allowing only one tiny part of creation direct access to God gives the theological impression that the Creator is only directly concerned with the human species.

It is also inconsistent with some of his other writings, and especially his sermons, where he demonstrates great sensitivity towards, and theological concern for animals and creation. The apparent change in attitude towards creation however, could, at least in part, be explained in the differing methods he employs in his varying texts. When delivering a sermon, he is able to deal in the concrete aspects of people's spiritual lives, whereas the highly abstract, and purely theoretic nature of his *Systematic Theology* does not allow him the same level of freedom. In particular, his sermon 'Nature Also Mourns for a Lost Good' shows an acute awareness of the value of the whole of creation to its Creator. In various places, I have used Tillich's other writings to demonstrate both the humanocentrism of his system and that this is not an attitude which is evident universally across his work. I would argue that by reformulating key concepts of his system to produce a less humanocentric perspective, it would not simply improve the internal consistency of his Systematic Theology, but would improve the consistency between Tillich's various styles of theology.

Throughout his system however, although his sermons and other papers show he sees the paucity of such an anthropocentric theology, he continually returns to, primarily, (if not completely) humanocentric ways of viewing formal theology. This is particularly true of his concept of the multidimensional unity of life. Here he explicitly states that he wishes to move away from the traditional hierarchical view of the created order. One of the ways he aims to achieve this is by dispensing with the traditional metaphor of 'levels' and replacing it with terms such as 'grades' of being instead. However, his model of grades is equally hierarchical.<sup>690</sup> His definition of spirit also ties him firmly to the traditional view that intellectual capacity and the ability to manipulate ones environment; or to 'have a world' is a key criterion in excluding most creatures from a direct relationship with their Creator.

His humanocentrism notwithstanding, Tillich still has much to offer a theological perspective of the importance and intrinsic worth of animals and creation. He is a theologian *par excellence* and great theology is always open to different interpretations. Indeed, his method of correlation explicitly encourages us to interpret the 'foundational truths' of theology in the light of our contemporary situation. At the end of the preface to the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* he writes:

I dedicate this book to my students, here and in Germany, who from year to year have urged me to publish the theological system with which they became acquainted in my lectures ... my ardent desire is that they shall find in these pages something of what they expect – a help in answering the questions they are asked by people inside and outside their churches. A help in answering questions: this is exactly the purpose of this theological system.

On page 31 of the same volume, he goes on to state that as a consequence of using the method of correlation for his system, it allows for a 'much richer development of theological ethics' precisely because it allows questions to be asked in light of one's contemporary situation. Further, in the introduction to *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, Durwood Foster contends that:

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<sup>690</sup> For a fuller examination of Tillich's notion of the multidimensional unity of life see Chapter Six, pp. 144-159. For a graphical representation of a hierarchy of levels, versus 'grades' of being see Fig. I p. 2 and Fig. iii p. 2.

He [Tillich] always urged ... that anyone with better information or different questions should bring them to the fore. Thus the priority of responsible correlation intrinsically outranked for Tillich the status of his own analysis' he goes on to assert 'we follow him best when we stay "wide open" (a phrase he liked) for the reality of our time and place'<sup>691</sup>

Even though Tillich was not aware of the complexity of animal life, as our understanding of other species was far less advanced during his lifetime, thanks to his method of correlation, I was able to demonstrate that in Chapter 7 that his system could still be used to consider the ethical and theological status of nonhuman animals, even though their status is never actually mentioned in any of its 3 volumes. My analysis of Tillich's methodology provides the biological basis for the formation of a Tillichian animal ethic, whilst my critiques which examine the internal inconsistencies which not taking proper account of nonhuman animals and creation cause within Tillich's system could be described as the theological basis for the formation of such an ethic.

i. *Contribution to Tillichian Studies and Animal Theology*

This thesis is the first full-length academic work to examine the adequacy of Tillich's *Systematic Theology* from the perspective of nonhuman animals and creation and as such has broken new ground. Tillich is a theologian of immense importance and alongside Barth, he is one of the most influential of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, his influence persists to this day, especially in North America. From the perspectives of Animal Theology this allows for a new resource. Although part II indicates a variety of key areas in which Tillich fails to adequately represent the interests of nonhuman animals throughout his system. It should be equally clear from the critique of Tillichian symbols in part III that whilst Tillich does not necessarily provide 'fully formed' arguments on the issue of the theological status of animals and creation, many of his concepts are adequate in scope and could provide a large amount of new material with which to engage. It has been demonstrated that although Tillich himself does not deal with the issue of either the theological or ethical status of nonhuman animals within his system. Some of the important

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<sup>691</sup> Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, edited and introduced by Durwood Foster, introduction p, xii.

insights which Tillich's *Systematic Theology* can provide for a theological understanding for nonhuman animals and creation are outlined below in points ii. to v.

Additionally, whilst it is thankfully the case that animal theology is growing rapidly as an academic discipline, it is still in its first few decades and as such, is a comparatively small field of endeavour. I would very much hope that this work might help towards the ongoing process of acquainting academics and the general public like with and interest in Tillich to the issues involved in taking theological account of animals. If it is able to persuade anyone interested in Tillich to consider theology from the perspective of the whole of creation, rather than simply the human species then it will have been a very worthwhile project.

From the perspective of Tillichian studies, although almost every aspect of his *Systematic Theology* has been examined to date, it is still the case that this critique of some of the major concepts of his work from the perspective of nonhuman animals and creation brings up new ideas which could help to strengthen his system.

Firstly, in *Systematic Theology Volume One*, Tillich asserts that one of the reasons he wished to use the format of a system in expounding his theology was his belief that it helped to foster consistency throughout his work. It has been argued extensively, throughout of this thesis, that taking account of nonhuman animals and creation would assist him in this goal.

Several different types of inconsistency were highlighted and the first of these is a logical one. It is clearly inconsistent to argue that in its essential state the Creator judged the whole of creation to be 'very good' and then assume that the Creator would only have a direct interest in one single species, that is the human species. By extending the scope of many of his key symbols and concepts to account for the whole of creation, this logical implausibility is easily overcome.

The second type of inconsistency which taking greater account of animals and creation can help to alleviate is the internal inconsistency present between his three most important Trinitarian doctrines. In his system's current state, it was argued that there is a serious inconsistency in the

roles of God as Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer. As it stands, God the Creator has a direct relationship with the whole of creation but God the Sustainer only has indirect access, and this is only the case due to his formulation of the multidimensional unity of life. Tillich excludes all but humans from the dimension of the spirit and this is the dimension in which the Spiritual Presence is active. Any creature which is excluded from this dimension has no ability to have any kind of direct access to God in this role. God the Redeemer too has no direct access to any species other than humans, since salvation occurs in the dimension of history, and like the dimension of the spirit, this is only open to humans. As was demonstrated in Chapter Seven however, when new information from the field of cognitive ethology was used to update his system, many species of animals (at least all species of mammals along with most species of birds and many other creatures) were indeed shown to possess the cognitive requirements for being granted access into the dimension of the spirit and therefore direct access to God the Sustainer. Many species of mammals were also shown to meet the criteria for inclusion to the dimension of history also, and even those who weren't could have been considered to meet the criteria for being creatures of 'other worlds' who were not only estranged but has a type of awareness of such estrangement and so granted direct access to the saving power of God the Redeemer. I would argue that by removing these inconsistencies from some of the most important doctrines of his system, it greatly strengthens Tillich's system as a whole.

However, it would not have been possible to add any new information to Tillich's system and hence not possible to 'up-date' it with more accurate information regarding the relative capacities of other species inhabiting creation, if it was not for his method of correlation and I would argue that his instructions regarding how his system is to be used at the beginning of Systematic Theology Volume One and elsewhere in his corpus of work indicated that although novel, this is not just an authentically Tillichian way to use his system, but is actually how he wished his system to be used.

Finally, Tillich argued that one of the main goals of any theological system is to expound a theonomous account of the Christian faith, that is an account of the Christian faith not just from the perspective of humans but one which attempts to look from the perspective of the Creator. I believe my work in this thesis has highlighted the ways in which taking greater account of

nonhuman animals and creation could help Tillich's system to portray a more theonomous outlook, an outlook which is actually supported by his notion of eschatological pan-en-theism.

ii. *Tillich's affirmation of the Common Bond Between Humans, Animals and Creation.*

It could be argued that Tillich's interpretation of 'the Fall' and his formulation of 'Universal Salvation' provide the clearest and most positive theological insights regarding animals and creation present in his *Systematic Theology*. They are vitally important in stressing a theocentric view of the significance of the whole of creation to its Creator. In Tillich's thought there is no dichotomy between guilty humans and innocent creation. For many theologians, the 'Fall' is a phenomenon which effects only humans and it follows from this that if only humankind is fallen, then only humankind are in need of salvation.

As has been noted however, although it is accepted that 'the Fall' is a consequence of human finite freedom and freewill, Tillich does not limit its scope to that of the human species. Instead, he puts forward the belief that the whole of the created order is 'fallen', or otherwise expressed, suffers the effects of estrangement from its creator under the conditions of existence. This is not a position which is held by many traditional theologians throughout the centuries, nor is it agreed upon by many of his contemporaries, including such influential figures as Barth. As was clear from the brief exposition of the concept of 'the Fall' in the work of Christopher Southgate, it is not even universally accepted within the realm of animal theology. Rather, it is generally seen as the prevailing view of mainstream theologians, that nature being 'red in tooth and claw' is exactly how it is willed to be by its Creator. It naturally follows from this that if creation is in no way fallen, then what need is there for creation to ultimately be redeemed?

The first important theological insight then, regarding creation (and particularly animals) which can be gleaned by Tillich's interpretation of a universal Fall, is that, if the whole of creation is suffering the effects of existential estrangement along with humans, then a loving God must provide salvation for the whole of creation along with humans; divine justice demands no less.

### *iii. Implications of the Fall for the Creator and Creation*

The second important insight arising from Tillich's understanding of the Fall is ethical in nature. Due to the universal nature of the Fall, unlike the Calvinist interpretation of a God who is so far removed from creation as to have little or even no relation to it, there can be no radical separation between concern for human beings, (as one infinitely tiny part of the created order) and the non-human creation. By allowing the Fall to be effective throughout the whole created order, it follows that he also allows there to be a relation between the Creator and the entirety of creation. Ethically speaking, if the Creator has little or no relation to creation, then there would be little theological reason to treat the created order with care or respect on the part of humans. In allowing a direct relation between God and creation, Tillich is actually providing a theological reason for humans to care for, rather than exploit it; namely that God as Creator sees worth in, and has a relationship with creation. In question of the Fall also raises questions about salvation, which are answered in his concept of 'universal salvation'.

### *iv. Theological Insights Based on Eschatological Pan-en-theism*

As previously examined in chapter eight, salvation in Tillich's estimation encompasses the whole of the created order. This notion is two sided. Firstly if the whole of creation is fallen then a just and loving God will not leave it ultimately unredeemed and secondly, via his concept of eschatological pan-en-theism which relates eternal life to 'life in God'. If all life will ultimately be taken into the divine life, it is not possible to speak of a Creator who has no concern for even the tiniest part of the creation. In order to support this position, Tillich appeals to the teaching of Paul. Romans 8:21 expresses the hope in a universe which will be freed from the bonds of mortality and 'enter upon the liberty and splendour of the children of God' and Colossians 1:20 highlights the concept that through Christ (as Bearer of New Being), 'God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself'.

This belief is of fundamental importance within his System, and not just because it gives a clear theological reason for taking animals and creation into greater moral consideration. It is equally important within the system because it could help to rehabilitate the role of the Christ for all creation; something which needs to be redressed in light of all but humans being excluded from

direct participation in the dimensions of the spirit and history . If the Christological function was left to only having a direct relation to humans, his system would fail to produce what he wished it to be: a truly theological and theocentric account.

In relation to pan-en-theism, there are no theological grounds to restrict direct theological consideration to the human species, because it follows that by excluding any aspect of creation from theological consideration, it could be argued that theology is in fact directly curtailing God's interests as the divine life which brings all things to herself in her creation both in terms of Creator and Redeemer. An even stronger argument could be made that rather than honouring God, a narrow definition of salvation actually makes any theological system vulnerable to becoming so overwhelming humanocentric that it subordinates theocentrism to naïve humanocentrism. This was not something Tillich would wish to achieve in his system.

*v. Christological Considerations in Light of the Common Bond Between Creation and the Creator.*

In the concepts of the universality of the Fall and eschatological pan-en-theism a view is portrayed of a Creator who communes with creation and a God who ultimately will draw to itself all that is essentially good, that is, good in its essential nature. One might reasonably ask what then of Jesus as the Christ. As noted, all but humans were excluded from direct participation from the dimensions of spirit and that of the dimension of history. The answer to this question lies in the assertion that Christ has to be the bearer of New Being for all, and not just for a single species, however important that species may be to its Creator. If the Christological function was left to only having a direct relation to humans, Tillich's system would fail to produce what he wished it to be: a truly theological and theocentric account in addition to being open to the potential charge of not faithfully portraying a triune god.

If Cobb jr. is correct that in failing to respect any aspect of the created order, or worse still, treating it simply in terms of its utility to humans, one is actually acting against Jesus as the



Christ, the Bearer of New Being, on the grounds 'that what we do to the least of our sisters and brothers we do to Christ.' The ethical implications of this then are clear. If we are to accept the interpretation that the whole of creation is fallen, and the whole of the essence of creation will be ultimately returned to the divine life, then it logically follows that there is no reason (at least theologically) to restrict scope of the Mediating powers of the Christ from animals and creation either.

## **MultiDimensional Unity of Life Diagrams**

**Fig. i. Traditional Hierarchy of Levels**

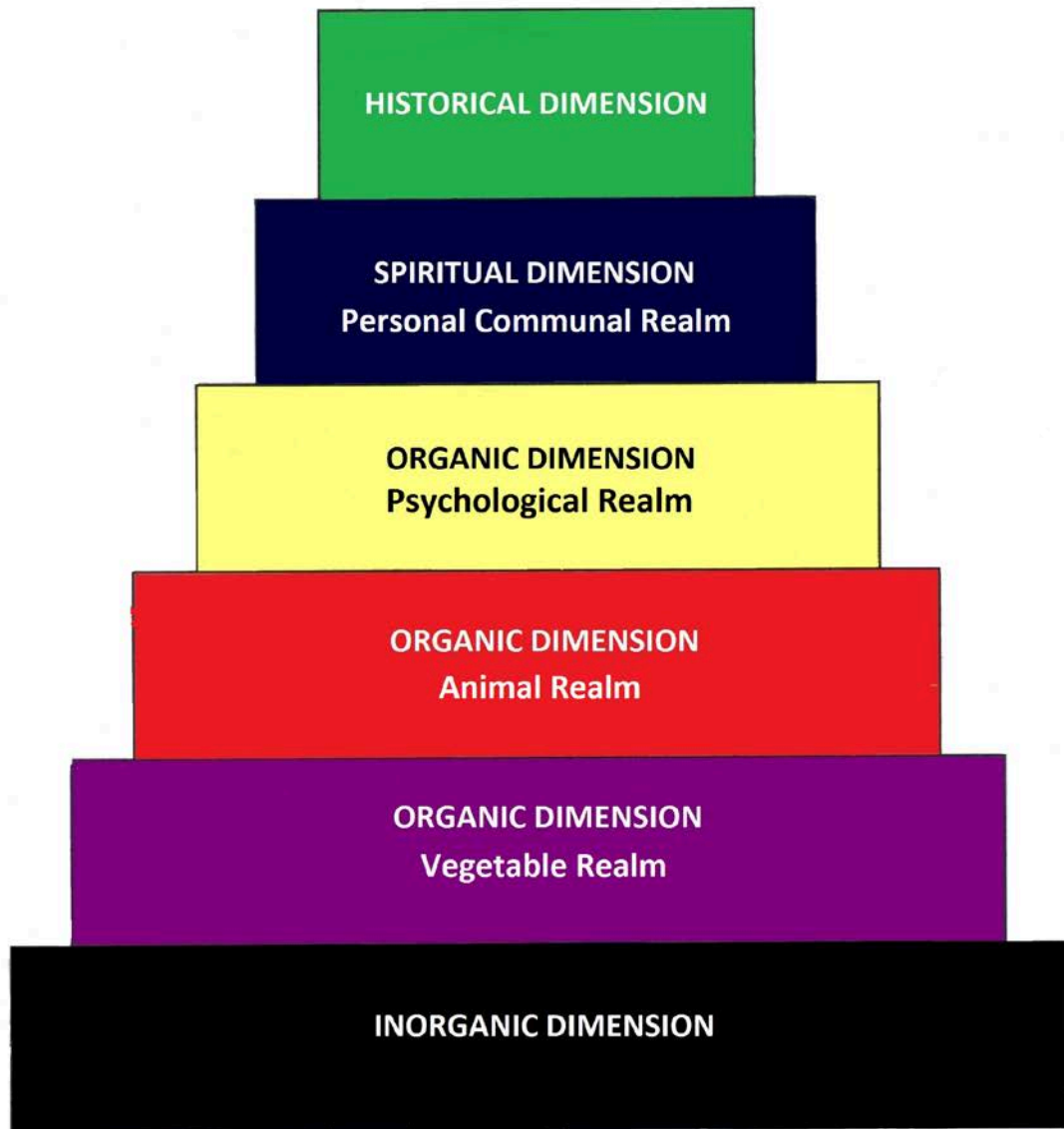


Fig. ii. **Multidimensional Unity of Life Model.**

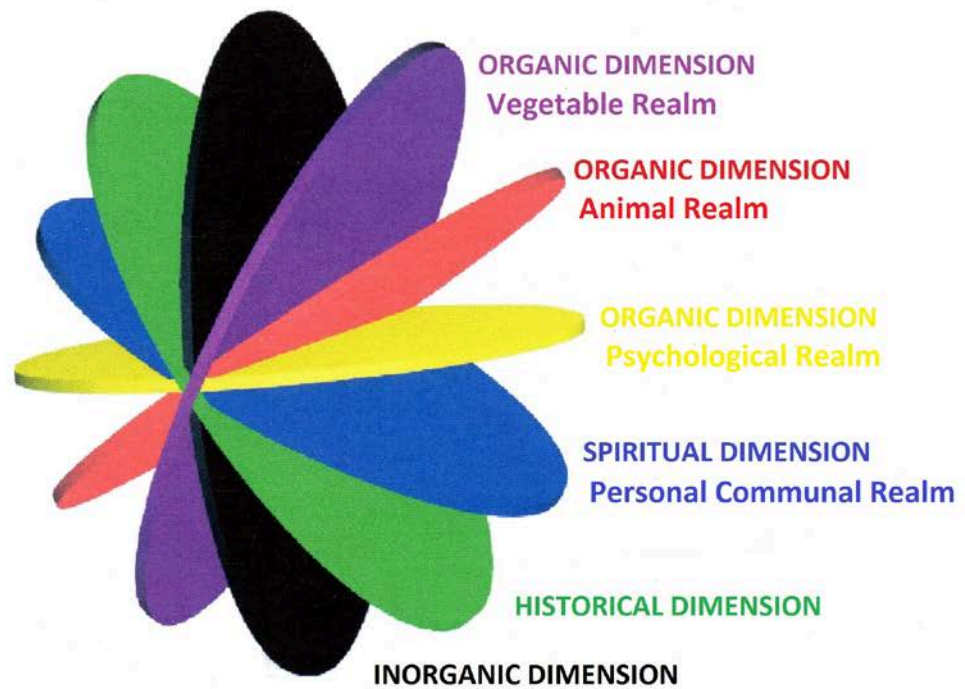
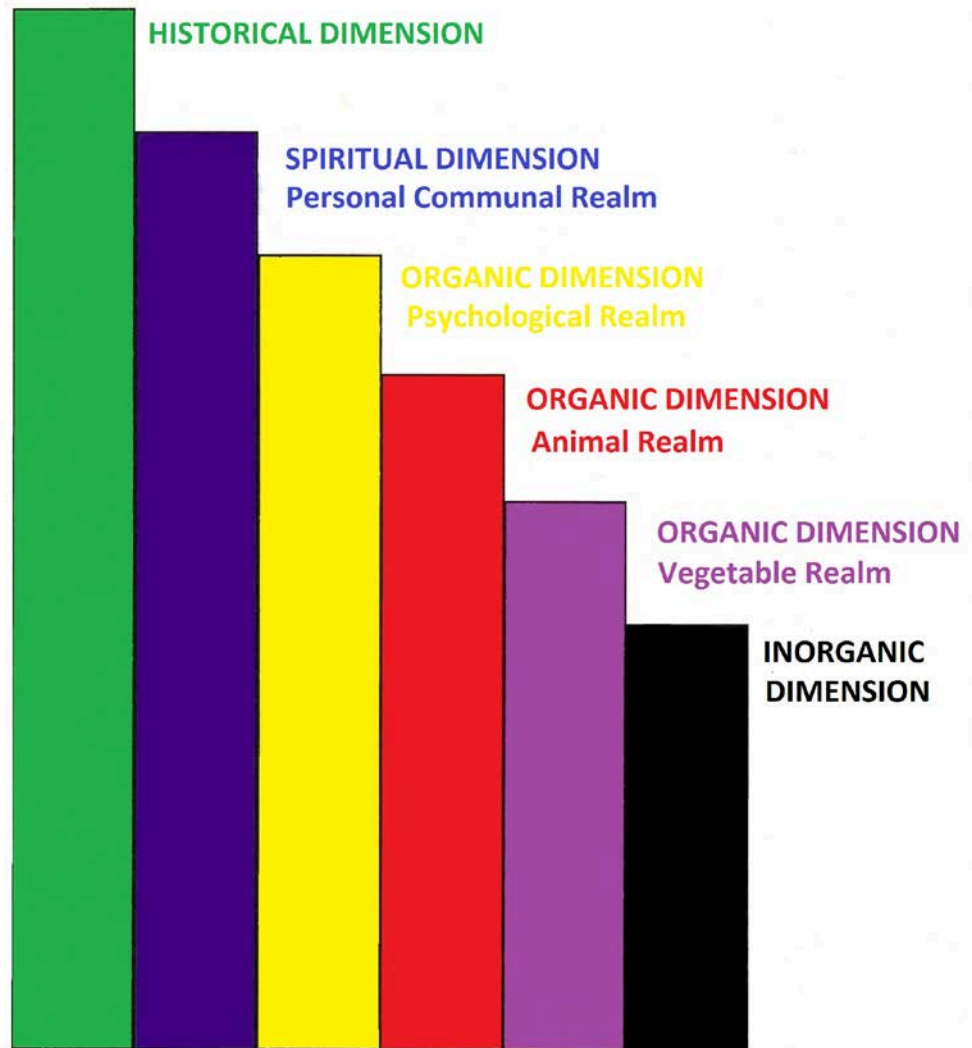


Fig. iii. Chart Representing Tillich's Valuation of Grades of Being



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2. *Self-Understanding of Man in Religion and Theology*
3. *Thing and Self*
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