THE DIALECTICS AND DIALOGICS OF SPACE AND TIME

THE DIALECTICS AND DIALOGICS OF SPACE AND TIME: A DISCUSSION OF TILLICH'S CONCEPT OF TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

What this thesis aims at is a discovery of the point at which technical rationality, as an historical power, can be superseded by history. To do this I must cover themes in Tillich ranging from the connection between meaning and freedom, to the dialectic of logic and truth. The aim of this thesis contained the demand that I approach technology from two directions. The first direction was through categories of cultural self-interpretation, a broad discussion of history and meaning. The second was approaching technological rationality in terms of its structure and logic, an analysis of Tillich's thinking concerning representation. These two levels come together in a third discussion where Tillich's ideas concerning language and truth, his ontology, meets his broader historical concerns. What this means is that I focus on progressively more abstract issues ending in a discussion of the relationship between logic and concepts in Tillich. This allows me to bring forward the role which ethics plays in Tillich's logic. As in many German thinkers following in the tradition of Schelling and Hegel, the structure of logic opens into the realm of historical theory and practice; the abstract resolves itself in the ethical. I wrote this thesis with the intention that its content would educate its form. Though the issues covered here are not new, I hope that this thesis will serve as an example of this attention to form.

Acknowledgements

Before I thank others I would like to give special thanks to my parents for their gift of the foundation of learning and inclination by which academic studies became a possibility for me. I have only begun to realize how much I am indebted to them, and the extent to which time spent with them in conversation or exploring untrodden regions of British Columbia and Yukon continues to inspire. Next I would like to thank Frank and Sharon, my brother and sister-in-law, for making their dinner table available this autumn for daily gatherings of the extended family. This has been a season of good food and my parent's excellent home-made wine. I also thank Jessica and Isaac, my niece and nephew and Emma and Brigete, the children of my roomates, for visiting me while I was writing some of the more difficult sections of this thesis and bringing me gifts of power (or so these gifts were explained to me). And I reserve my final thanks for Professor John Robertson, my supervisor, for his help and encouragement, and for introducing me to Tillich.

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Reference Codes for Tillich

CB   *The Courage to Be*; *Main Works v.5*; ed. Robert P. Scharlemann; De Gruyter, Berlin, 1988.

Idea   "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture"; *Visionary Science*; trns. Victor Nuovo; Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1987.

Kairos   "Kairos"; *Main Works v.4*; ed. John Clayton; De Gruyter, Berlin, 1987.

ST1   *Systematic Theology: Volume I*; University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951.

ST2   *Systematic Theology: Volume II*; University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951.

ST3   *Systematic Theology: Volume III*; University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951.

TC   *Theology of Culture*; Oxford University Press, New York, 1959.

TS   *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technological Society*; Mercer, Macon, 1988.

Word   "The Word of God"; *Main Works v.4*; ed. John Clayton; De Gruyter, Berlin, 1987.

Introduction:

This thesis can be described as a conversation with Tillich's texts. In a conversation ideas gradually come to clarity in a mutual involvement in those ideas. Conversation does not limit one to personal view-points or one-sided definitions, but allows for a synthesis of ideas with a quality of concern. It should be remembered that Tillich's thought itself was not created out of nothing but was developed through an interaction with the issues important to his time and through conversations with other people. Though much of his life was spent in North America, Tillich was a German theologian of the inter-war period and his thinking reflects this milieux of thought. As such this thesis is also in conversation with that milieux of thought.

Another way of describing the form of this thesis is through reference to Heidegger's injunction to search out the truth by way of the correct. My analysis is structured on a series of reconciliations whereby one-sided definitions are proposed, expanded upon, and only later fulfilled in a more inclusive definition. This serves the purpose of a formal demonstration of the substance of the themes being considered. It has been my intention that the form of this thesis be educated by the content of this thesis. This thesis is a conversation concerning separation, concerning Fallenness, but, as a conversation it contains the concept of reconciliation, and it is Tillich's idea of

reconciliation which this conversation continually returns to.

My thesis concerns technology, but also revelation. It describes Tillich's notion of history, but also his ontology. Tillich argues that when the technical sets the agenda for cultural creativity, when the technically possible takes precedence over those notions of truth which ground ideas of a rational and moral society, that a culture loses the capacity for free self-creation. What my analysis aims at is a discovery of the point at which technical rationality, as an historical power, can be superseded by history. To do this I must cover themes in Tillich ranging from the connection between meaning and freedom, to the dialectic of logic and truth.

The aim of this thesis contained the demand that I approach technology from two directions. The first direction was through categories of cultural self-interpretation, a broad discussion of history and meaning. The second was approaching technological rationality in terms of its structure and logic, an analysis of Tillich's thinking concerning representation. These two levels come together in a third discussion where Tillich's ideas concerning language and truth, his ontology, meets his broader historical concerns. What this means is that I focus on progressively more abstract issues ending in a discussion of the relationship between logic and concepts in Tillich. This allows me to bring forward the role which ethics, or any rendering of the unconditional plays in Tillich's logic as its principle of truth. In Tillich, as in many German thinkers following in the tradition of Schelling and Hegel, the structure of logic opens into the realm of historical theory and practice; the abstract resolves itself in the ethical.

Because this thesis aims at analysing Tillich, my project is not Tillich's project. As

such, the contrast between the language Tillich uses and the language I employ in my presentation is due to the fact that I am employing language proper to my project. I am aiming at analysing levels of Tillich's thought which he does not present systematically, or which he clothes in religious language proper to his time and project. This does not mean that I aim at demythologizing Tillich, only that I wish to translate some of his ideas into the philosophical language which they imply. But my choice of language does need to be explained on another front as well. My translation is not a translation into common language, because I am suspicious of arguments concerning the merits of common language. The notion that an idea is not understood until rendered in common language usage is highly questionable, although the notion that understanding is necessary for translation of ideas into different terminology is not. The priority that common language holds is as the receptacle of the common self-interpretation of a culture. What if that self-interpretation is a distortion? This is a question which is spoken to in the following discussion, a question which became a directive for the form of my discussion. Similar to Hegel's notion that speculation is the corrective on common sense,[1] one of the roles of philosophy is to challenge cultural self-interpretation and in this allow new vistas for cultural expression to be opened. Philosophical language is a vehicle by which those vistas come to expression.

In the first two chapters of this thesis I lay down the important ideas for a series of reconciliations which take place in the third chapter. Chapter three is structured around a

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[1]   Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trns. A.V. Miller (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977) pp.42-45.

close reading of a short section of *Systematic Theology III*. What I mean by a close

reading is not a detailed summary, but rather an attention to structure, metaphor,

underlying logic, as well as the context of conversation and the broader themes which

Tillich had in mind as he was writing. As such, in places where I seem to be diverging

from the text, where my references seem to be in tension with my analysis, I am favouring

the underlying sense or logic of the passages, or the broader context for the formulation of

the passage, over the letter of the passage. What this means is that I remain obedient to

the demands which the text places on interpretation while avoiding a simple repetition.

In chapter one I analyze Tillich's notion of temporality, under the guiding idea that,

for Tillich, time is meaningful. Time is not merely a quantitative measure of phenomena,

but is also a form of cultural self-interpretation. Fundamentally, time is the measure of

freedom, and is opposed by space which aims at resisting the historical realization of

freedom. An analysis of Tillich's notion of the battle between time and space sets down the

basic ideas by which a culture based on self-transcending self-interpretation is to be

differentiated ethically from a culture based on self-perpetuating self-interpretation. The

question which guides this chapter is what is the relationship between meaning and

freedom in Tillich's notion of history, and how does this relationship change with differing

cultural self-interpretations?

In chapter two I claim the author's prerogative to position myself so that I can

participate in a conversation between Tillich and Adorno concerning historical truth and a

theory of representation proper to that truth. Adorno claims that after Auschwitz culture

has been revealed as being beyond hope. The search for truth involves the imposition of an

absolute which acts to negate any notion of difference. In the absence of a notion of difference, there is no way to supersede cultural self-destruction. Through a discussion of what negation signifies for thought and for culture, Tillich seeks to answer Adorno's pessimism. The broad question which guides this chapter is really an amalgam of three questions. First, what is Tillich's notion of truth? Second, how does this notion of truth relate to the ideas concerning history set down in chapter one? Third, how does Tillich retain a notion of hope in his concept of historical dialectics, or preserve the possibility to affirm the truth in western self-interpretation, given Adorno's criticism of western culture and also Tillich's own contention that hope in historical dialectics is fundamentally misplaced hope? Taken together, these questions ask: where is to be found the principle for discerning what is to be affirmed in culture, and what is to be negated? In his idea of the sign-event Tillich answers these questions. The sign-event is an idea of representation in which the concept of truth does not act to negate difference, but rather allows for self-transcendence by the realization of difference at the heart of the search for truth.

The third chapter is where the interplay of form and content of this thesis becomes most apparent. I undertake a detailed analysis of a section of *Systematic Theology III* where Tillich introduces and lays the groundwork for his thinking concerning culture. It is apparent that in this section of text Tillich is in conversation with Heidegger, and that he accepts Heidegger's contention that thought must be based on a consciousness of fundamental ontology. But Tillich is also a socialist. His analysis of the world situation is based on a Marxian dialectic. How are Heidegger and Marx to be reconciled? But to confound the problem further, Tillich is also a metaphysician. How are metaphysics,

Heidegger and Marx to be reconciled? Though this is not the central concern of my thesis,

my analysis dwells in the field of these reconciliations, and here my choice of language can

be explained further. I not only had to point out that Tillich, in some way reconciled these

opposing view-points, I also had to illustrate how he did this while remaining consistent.

In this light my analysis demanded a terminology and a level of abstraction which was able

to both to express these view-points, as well as account for them in Tillich's thinking; I

needed a terminology which, while not implying a complete identity among the various

projects this thesis is in conversation with, did not act to alienate any of these projects

from my field of concern.

For Tillich, language and technology are basic to human relationality, they

represent the conditions for the possibility of culture. But in a technological epoch, they

appear in a distorted form. Chapter three of this thesis asks: what is the nature of this

distortion, and following from ideas presented in chapter two, what is the relationship

between distortion and truth? What does this distortion represent for freedom and

meaning? What is the direction which thought must take in order to see its way clear of

distortion? The primary question which chapter three is concerned with is: what is the

nature of form, and its relation to what is most basic to human existence? Given Tillich's

ontology of Fallenness, this question translates into: what is the nature of estrangement as

it is expressed in cultural creativity? This leads to questioning concerning the possibility

for the end to estrangement, and how estrangement is to be confronted as an historical

power. Through the process of reconciling what are usually understood as divergent view-

points Tillich confronts these questions. Through reconciliations, the problem which

Fallenness represents for humanity, separation between humanity and the essence of humanity, is spoken to on the existential, metaphysical, and historical levels. Tillich's notion of truth as the dialectics and dialogics of the sign-event is revealed as the possibility for these reconciliations and the justification for hope.

On a final note, I want to address again the issue of language. In this analysis of Tillich I wanted to avoid as much as possible reducing Tillich to the phraseology of the entry "Tillich, Paul" in encyclopaedias of continental theology, and to the lecture given over to Tillich's thinking in the undergraduate course on Modern Protestant Thought. This is not to say that a general discussion of "the method of correlation" or of "questions and answers of ultimate concern" are wrong-headed, or necessarily imply a falsification of Tillich. Nor am I suggesting that such discussions are in any way inferior to my discussion. I say this, because in my discussion of language I risk being misinterpreted as claiming a hierarchy of sophistication, where truth in interpretation is judged in terms of this hierarchy. Rather, I am making two different points. The first, already stated, is that there is a connection between language and project, in which a project demands the type of language proper to that project. Secondly, I am saying that the scope of thinking which went into the writing of all of Tillich's works are in no way exhausted by traditional phraseology. The Tillichian corpus is massive and masterful, and Tillich scholarship needs to be involved in pushing beyond itself. I am not making the claim that I have some kind of secret knowledge of Tillich, or that the my thesis contains the magical formulae by which these secrets can be unlocked in their totality, only that there is room for exploring the ways in which Tillich can be interpreted, and that this search is not antithetical to

understanding Tillich, but can only bring new things to light.

Returning to the questions which will be covered by this thesis, there progression can be seen clearly by laying them out in order. *What is the relationship between meaning and freedom in history, and how does this relationship change with differing cultural self-interpretations? What is truth? How does this notion of truth relate to history? Where is to be found the principle for discerning what is to be affirmed in culture, and what is to be negated? What is the nature of form, and what is the relation between form and what is most basic to human existence? Given Tillich's ontology of Fallenness, what is the nature of estrangement as it is expressed in cultural creativity, in technology and language? How is estrangement to be confronted as an historical power?* In Tillich, all cultural expression, or those forms of communicating cultural values through which a culture interprets itself, are renderings of the basic structure of human relationality. In looking for the point in Tillich in which technological rationality can be superseded as an historical power what is being sought is the possibilities for forms of expression where the choice is made to communicate the basic structure of human relationality and its attendant demands in an undistorted form.

Chapter One:
Here there be Dragons: A Discussion of Historical Self-transcendence.

What is the relationship between meaning and freedom in history, and how does this relationship change with differing cultural self-interpretations?

a) Time and Meaning: Broad Historical Categories

i. *A qualitiative definition of time*

> "Time is an empty form only for abstract objective reflection, a form that can receive
> any kind of content; but to him who is conscious of an ongoing creative form of life
> it is laden with tensions, with possibilities and impossibilities, it is qualitative and full
> of significance" (**Kairos** 328).

This meditation of Tillich's is grounded in the argument that history, as the most

embracing dimension of life, involves levels of meaning, mythic and magical, which are

bound to existence in time, thought and language. He makes the primary claim that there

is meaning rather than no meaning. Connected to this he describes two kinds of thinking,

one rationalistic and quantitative, the other existential and interpretive. Finally, implicit in

these two kinds of thinking, this meditation speaks of two types of representation, one

empty and one creative; one abstract, and in and of itself without existential meaning, the

other full of significance. The type of thinking which sees time as full of significance is

connected to "a creative form of life". This describes a union of thought and life, meaning

and power, life in its multi-dimensional unity mediated by and not alienated from the

guiding cultural images basic to the interpretations of an historical consciousness. In an exploration of this notion of time, a discussion of meaning will be introduced which will lead into issues relating to the relationship among truth, representation and freedom. When Tillich argues that time is meaningful he is making the statement that the presently real is not an absolute limit, but also that the absolute can be manifest for the presently real; power and meaning are not exhausted by the human will.

To say that time is an empty form is to suggest, in the spirit of Descartes' idea of extension, that time is merely quantitative, an objective measure of reality which only achieves objectivity when it is abstracted from the phenomena of which it is a medium. As such, time becomes more a physical than a cultural category and loses its capacity to be descriptive of history. This strange state of affairs acts to reduce temporal succession to vacuity, where even death, as the cessation of temporal existence cannot be conceived of as a temporal event. This is Tillich's concept of *chronos*, where temporality ceases to be descriptive of existential problems. If time is an empty form, reflection on death as a symbol of temporal existence becomes meaningless, even though it has always occupied human consciousness, as on the one hand a tragic and on the other a transformative symbol. Defining time as a purely scientific category involves a cognitive dissonance which places in question the validity of defining humans as cultural beings, both as individuals whose lives are mediated by cultural symbols, and as historical groups who define and are defined by epochs through the creation and transmission of guiding mythologies. The presence of apocalypticism, utopianism, and ideologies of progress illustrate the fact that time and culture are not separate entities, and points to the possibility that time does not

mean anything for human consciousness until it is interpreted culturally.

ii. *The historical consciousness defined*

Tillich argues that the historical consciousness

transforms mere happenings into historical events...[O]ccurences are elevated to
historical significance, but the way in which it is done transforms the occurrences
into symbols of the life of a historical group. Tradition unites historical report with
symbolic interpretations. It does not report "naked facts," which itself is a
questionable concept; but it does bring to mind significant events through a symbolic
transformation of facts (*ST3* 300-01).

Cultural memory, or the consistency of the historical present with the historical past,

supplies the interpretive cues, as well as the symbolic material, by which a collection of

occurrences, meaningless in and of themselves, are arranged as the human story.

Occurrences, or historical facts, are imbued with significance, and interpreted in light of

ultimate cultural values. Temporal succession, in this way, coheres as cultural mediation,

as the bearer of cultural vision and self-understanding. The statement that humanity is

historical, is no different than the statement that time is meaningful. Following Tillich's

broad definition of meaning, time is structured by "the functions of the spirit and the

norms and principles controlling them" (*ST3* 303), as the coherence of humanity's cultural

life.

It should be mentioned that Tillich argues that the "historical consciousness does

not precede in temporal succession the happenings of which it is conscious" (*ST3* 300).

Such precedence would, of course, lead to the very abstraction of time from event which

Tillich wishes to avoid. If the observing subject is able to perceive a happening in its vacuity as non-historical, an observable thing-in-itself is posited in terms of a pure, or uninterpreted, temporal category; it is seen as temporal, but not historical. Rather, Tillich argues that the historical consciousness precedes happenings in such a way that perception is already interpretation; as a cultural *a priori*, a world-view is a culture's destiny, the limitation on freedom which allows a group to be defined as cultural, as bearing a common consciousness. But Tillich is not advancing a complete determinism. Though myth and interpretation perpetuate themselves through the transmission of tradition, and in the continual assimilation of the present to tradition, cultural destiny does not negate freedom. Though Tillich seems to be advancing a closed circle of cultural reproduction, the historical consciousness in fact opens up possibilities for the new.

As *chronos* time is vacuous, but an understanding time mediated by the historical consciousness, or thinking which understands culture as temporal, makes time necessarily meaningful. This necessity, grounded in self-consciousness and self-interpretation where interpretation is perception is not a complete determinism, however. Rather, this union of interpretation and perception as a temporal process can be described as the union of freedom and meaning.

b) Freedom and Meaning: The Possibility for Truth in History

Tillich argues that,

Man, in so far as he sets and pursues purposes, is free. He transcends the given situation, leaving the real for the sake of the possible. He is not bound to the situation in which he finds himself, and it is just this self-transcendence that is the

first and basic quality of freedom. Therefore no historical situation determines any
other historical situation completely. The transition from one situation to another is
in part determined by man's centred reaction, by his freedom (*ST3* 303).

As the most embracing analogue of Tillich's basic idea of life processes (i.e. self-alteration

which maintains its self-identity in a new self-integration), the historical dimension can be

described with reference to the polarity of freedom and destiny which self-transcendence is

dependant on (*ST3* 30-32). The historical dimension embraces humanity's spiritual life of

theory and practice, making out of it, symbolically and mythologically, a coherent cultural

purpose. The purpose as a possible reality is favoured over the real, or present reality. This

movement from present reality to future possibility describes an intention toward self-

alteration and self-integration of the new. What is described is a tension between the real

and the possible which drives a group of people toward a resolution of this tension by

means of an alteration in cultural self-understanding and in that the drafting of new modes

of interpreting the human story. But also, this idea of favouring a purpose over the

presently real describes the possibility for truth in history because a culture brings guiding

principles to bear on historical development.

The following discussion outlines Tillich's mythological rendering of cultural

origins or that which is foundational to a culture's self-interpretation. It is a primary

context for an understanding of Tillich's discussion of history which outlines two modes of

cultural expression, one oriented toward freedom and the other directed by self-

preservation toward a curtailment of freedom.

c) Time and Space: Modes of Cultural Self-Interpretation

i. *Time and space defined as cultural categories*

When Tillich claims that "time and space should be treated as struggling forces"

(*TC* 30), he is making a mythological statement. This is made clear in his suggestion that

these forces should be seen as "living beings, as subjects with power of their own" (*TC*

30). Like Freud's battle between Eros and Thanatos, the battle between time and space is

so basic to existence that it can be descriptive of both non-historical and historical

phenomena, it describes two competing formative principles or categories, it is an original

tension, and as such is basic to structures of meaning.

Tillich argues that time and space cannot be separated but always condition

existence as structures of and for phenomena,

> [b]ut while time and space are bound to each other in such an inescapable way, they
> stand in tension with each other which may be considered as the most fundamental
> tension of existence. In the human mind, this tension becomes conscious and gets
> historical power. Human soul and human history, to a large extent, are determined
> by the struggle between space and time (*TC* 30).

An important idea here is that, in becoming conscious, something attains historical power.

This goes beyond the positing of an historical consciousness to the assertion that

consciousness, considered by rationalism to be a static substance, is actually structured as

temporal; it is incomplete at any given moment and does not rest in itself as

indistinguishable from its essential truth. Further, the idea that this tension "becomes

conscious" defines this whole drama in terms of temporal succession, or "becoming",

giving priority to time, a position which Tillich goes on to clearly state. Life processes, in

the most basic manifestations are dominated by space, but under the influence of time "the

process of life goes from birth to death...growth and decay...a direction which cannot be

reversed" (*TC* 31). The fact that life-processes are directed by a purpose which cannot be

reversed suggests that even in unconscious existence time defines an object's inner *telos*.

Time allows for the manifestation of an existent's purpose or meaning. What the

consciousness of this *telos* establishes in history, however, is increased freedom of

purpose, the conscious embodiment of meaning.

Both growth and decay and existing toward death suggest the victory of time over

space. But Tillich argues that these processes are cyclical. Growth and decay exist to

foster more growth and decay, and existence toward death cannot supersede what it

intends toward. These processes are not purposeful beyond their own reproduction. They

are repetitive and unchanging, the unchanging nature being the condition for repetition.

Given this fact, growth and decay and existing toward death can be seen as highly

conditioned by space because the logic of the condition for their processes is a static

nature. Here, says Tillich, space conditions time, and purpose is confronted with the

tragic; meaning is limited to what *is*, a continual repetition of a cyclical process. When the

struggle becomes conscious, however, humanity

> is able to have history, and he is able to transcend even the tragic death of families
> and nations, thus breaking through the circle of repetition towards something new.
> Because he is able to do so, he represents the potential victory of time, but not
> always the actual victory. What has happened in nature unconsciously happens in
> man and history consciously: The same struggle and the same victory (*TC* 31).

For the actual victory of time freedom must be actualized as the historical consciousness;

in purposeful activity humanity becomes the author of its life processes, of its history.

ii. *The political and religious meanings of time and space*

The victory over time can be identified with freedom, because freedom suggests

the ability to actualize the new through the extension of purpose beyond the presently real.

Even though a choice of the real is also an extension of freedom as choice, the ability to

see choice, or recognize the possible as a choice which can survive self-alteration,

characterizes true freedom. By this, a situation where a self or a collective is either blind to

the choice of the possible over the real, or in a blindness of judgement defines the idea of

the possible as fundamentally dangerous, is a situation where freedom is curtailed, and

with this the conscious embodiment of meaning.

But these concepts of time and space need more definition. Tillich approaches

them through a discussion of paganism and monotheism. Paganism, and its related political

analogue, nationalism, represents the victory of space over time. Tillich argues that

"[p]aganism can be defined as the elevation of a special space to ultimate value and

dignity" (*TC* 31), and that "[m]odern nationalism is the actual form in which space is

ruling over time, in which polytheism is a daily reality" (*TC* 33). What this argument

indicates, again, is that space and time, for Tillich, are not units of measurement, but rather

categories of existence, and, in the case of religion and politics, modes of cultural

expression. Tillich argues that both polytheism and nationalism operate through the

exclusion of difference. He says that

> there are many soils and many sections of the earth and each of them has creative force for some group of people, and consequently claims divine honour by this group. Divine honour means ultimate honour, unconditional adoration, because the divine, by its very definition, is ultimate, unlimited power. But every space is limited, and so the conflict arises between the limited space of any human group, even of mankind itself, and the unlimited claim which follows from the deification of this space. The god of the one country struggles with the god of the other country (*TC* 32).

Tillich goes on to say

> our generation has experienced again and again the most terrifying mutual destruction of space-centred powers. The "beside-each-otherness" necessarily becomes an "against-each-otherness" in the moment in which a special space gets divine honor (*TC* 33).

The attempt is made to transcend the obvious finitude of a space, its delimitations, not through a negation of the special sense of soil of a specific space, and not through the negation of what separates one people from another - "beside-each-otherness" remains as an important aspect of self-definition. Rather, what is other is denied a special sense of soil, meaning or ultimacy. If what is other claims meaning for itself, the sense of space which all meaning is referred to is somehow compromised. Nationalism is the claim that this particular nation, defined in its essence as this particular place and these particular people are what gives life meaning and history power. What this means is that the borders of a state, or the borders within which a certain god has preeminence are symbolic of the delimitation of what is actual. Everything outside of those borders is considered threatening and symbolic of nonbeing - *here there be dragons.*

In the victory of space, the real becomes a purely self-referential concept which

rests in itself and cannot develop beyond this self-referentiality. Tillich argues that the

"power of space was overwhelming in Greek mind and existence. The symbol found by

Greek philosophy for the immovable being is the sphere or the circle, the most perfect

representation of space" (*TC* 34). This idea of immovability and circularity is seen in

Aristotle's logic which Tillich claims is "spatial logic, unable to express the dynamic trend

of time" (*TC* 34). In Book XII section 7 (1072b, 20-25) of his *Metaphysics* Aristotle

discusses the actuality proper to the unmoved mover in terms of the perfection of the

circle. This is his description of the active intellect which defines actuality and also life.

Aristotle argues that

> in partaking of the intelligible it is of Himself that the Intellect is thinking; for by
> apprehending and thinking it is He Himself who becomes intelligible, and so the
> intellect and its intelligible object are the same. For that which is capable of receiving
> the intelligible object and the substance is the intellect, and the latter is in *actuality*
> by possessing the intelligible object; so that the possession of the intelligible is more
> divine than the potency of receiving it, and the contemplation of it is the most
> pleasant and the best. If, then, the manner of God's existence is as good as ours
> sometimes is, but eternally, then this is marvellous, and if it is better than this is still
> more marvellous; and it is the latter. And life belongs to God, for the actuality of the
> intellect is life, and he is *actuality*, and His *actuality* is in virtue of itself a life which
> is the best and is eternal. We say that God is a living being which is eternal and the
> best; so life and the continuous duration and eternity belong to God, for this is God.[2]

Actuality is defined by a self-relation in which the intellect becomes an object for its own

contemplation. Furthermore, actuality is described as the continuous duration and

eternality of life. To explain nationalism in terms of this fulfilment of the Greek's "most

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[2]   Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Aristotle: Selected Works*, trns. Hippocrates G. Apostle
and Lloyd P. Gerson (Peripatetic Press, Grinnell, 1986) p.404.

perfect representation of space", the circle would involve the idea that the real is captured in the orientation toward self-preservation of life. This is another way of saying that all that is considered meaningful finds its source in the self-expression and self-interpretation of a specific nation, and that this self-expression and self-interpretation has the intention of self-preservation. This type of self-relation is not able to transcend death because in the death of a state the self-relation, which is indistinguishable from the real, dies. All that can happen is that a new god can take over from the old, but the self-relation is fundamentally the same. The self-relation, therefore becomes a struggle for life which is based on an absorption of that otherness, or "beside-each-otherness" which is both an existential reality as well as that which threatens a state with death. All other states, or competing grounds of ultimacy, represent the potential negation or absorption of a state. The circle of life and death, fate, or the tragic, duration defined as infinite repetition, is pre-eminent in this situation.

The victory of space over time represents a death to freedom by its limitation of the real to an ideal of self-preservation, which, resting in itself can be defined as nihilistic according to Heidegger's definition.[3] Furthermore, it can be argued, following Heidegger, that this ideal is grounded in the will, a subjective autonomy which in the quality of its self-relation cannot transcend itself. In his discussion of the tragic tension between greatness and self-transcendence Tillich makes this point. Describing the tragic hero Tillich argues that "he does not resist self-transcendence, but he resists the demand to transcend his own

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[3]   Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'", *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, ed. William Lovitt (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1977).

greatness. He is caught by his own power of representing the self-transcendence of life" (*ST3* 94). Tillich claims that all living beings posses a greatness: "Life, transcending itself, appears in the mirror of man's consciousness as having greatness and dignity" (*ST3* 88). As self-transcending, life comes to represent the holy - "the great in the qualitative sense shows a power of being and meaning that makes it a representative of ultimate being and meaning and gives it the dignity of such representation" (*ST3* 88). The tragic hero, her understanding of her own greatness, represents a self-relation where self-transcendence, though not resisted, is understood as only relative to the hero's greatness. In a sense, the greatness of the hero is the measure by which everything else is approached. Therefore, greatness does not represent divinity beyond the finitude of the tragic hero. The tragic hero confuses essence with representation and therefore any kind of striving for greatness does not involve a searching or receptivity beyond the tragic hero's self-relation. As there is *nothing* beyond the power and meaning of the tragic hero, anything which disrupts the self-relation will destroy the tragic hero. The tragic element is that, because of the confusion of essence and representation, the tragic hero is not altogether conscious of the limits of her own finitude and in an understanding of her greatness seeks to blindly push beyond these limits thus incurring divine punishment. The tragic hero is blind to the idea that there is power and meaning beyond herself and that the possibility exists for a realm of meaning not dependant on her own power and autonomy.

Returning to the idea of space, and its equation with paganism and nationalism, Tillich contrasts it with prophetic monotheism. Here, the one god is not bound to borders - there is a "separation of God from His nation" (*TC* 36), between *essence and*

representation - but is rather concerned with a purpose. God is not coextensive with or even symbolic of the delimitation of the real implied by nationality, but rather empowers the creation of the new. God is symbolic of a self-transcendent movement of humanity toward an ultimate goal. The idea of historical truth, here, is drawn from a Marxian notion of historical truth and will be returned to in chapter two of this thesis were in its development it also corrects problems associated with the Marxian notion. For now, the holy is seen as that which gives historical meaning ultimate meaning, and ultimate meaning historical meaning. Tillich claims that this is the victory of time over space.

> The God of time is the God of history. This means that He is the God who acts in
> history toward a final goal. History has a direction, something new is to be created
> in and through it. This goal is described in many different terms: universal
> blessedness, the victory over the demonic powers represented as imperialist nations,
> the coming of the Kingdom of God in history and beyond history, the transformation
> of the form of this world...(*TC* 37).

The victory of time is equated with the Kingdom of God, and space is equated with demonic powers, but also with form, or that which delimits the actual. Time is equated with transformation of this world and the realization of the holy as a temporal event, but space resists this type of transformation and realization. Tillich defines the demonic as a "distor[tion] of self-transcendence by identifying a particular bearer of holiness with the holy itself" (*ST3* 102). Transformation, as an orientation toward a cultural symbol is not negated, but the symbol itself, the form through which the divine is represented to a culture is given divine status and enduring power, *its greatness is seen as essential greatness*, as "the life which is the best and is eternal". This "continuous duration" is put in place of a divine purpose in history and, therefore, instead of transcending particular forms

for the expression of that purpose, turns transformation into an event relative to a particular culture; a culture does recognize the divine as transcendant, and therefore ultimate purpose is conflated with those very immanent possibilities which form the delimitations of that culture. Transformation, therefore, is transformation *to* what is established as cultural form, rather than beyond those forms in the creation of the new.

The demonic, as the power of enduring forms, is the victory of space over time. It implies a type of cultural self-interpretation which does not recognize power and meaning beyond its own power and meaning; it confuses essence and representation. The problem with this situation, of course, is that "meaning" comes to represent the power of self-perpetuation, meaning is equated with will, and a culture fails to recognize that by this it attains to the very vacuity which it accuses all that is other to it of subsisting in. Such a culture blinds itself to what it truly represents, by blinding itself to what is truly meaningful. The risk of the possible is avoided through giving up the basis for purposeful deliberation.

This first chapter began with Tillich's notion that time is meaningful. This meaning is fulfilled in the extension of freedom seen in the purposeful actualization of the new. But in the confusion of representation and essence the human will is raised to an absolute mediator. This endangers freedom and meaningful transformation through threatening arbitrariness and nihilism. But what is essence, and what does it mean to describe a purpose as a true purpose? In the next chapter, by contrasting Tillich with early Frankfurt School thinking, I will discuss in more detail the relationship between representation and essence, and also representation and deliberation. Here, through a discussion of Tillich's

concept of anxiety and the related concept of representation, two understandings of

negation will be described.

Chapter Two:
Grasping the Abyss: Discernment in *Verstand* and *Vernunft*

What is truth? How does this notion of truth relate to history? Where is to be found the principle for discerning what is to be affirmed in culture, and what is to be negated?

a) Dialectics and Dialogics

i. Vernunft *and* Verstand *in Adorno's idea of truth*

Martin Jay argues that, for Critical Theory, truth "is whatever fosters social change in the direction of a rational society";[4] fundamentally truth is the transformative impetus of a utopian ideal. Jay's commentary on this idea is that it encounters problems in its marriage to the negative. In Adorno's rendering of this notion the idea of a rational society is not elucidated, the irrational, however, is the source of powerful imagery by which culture becomes its own critique. Adorno, because of his inability to encounter a positive guiding reference for its utopian impetus joins a weak yes to a, sometimes over-inflated, No.

To expand on Jay's commentary, this problem of Adorno leaves Critical Theory's more positive project of a reemergence of *Vernunft* over *Verstand* open to difficulties. Adorno was trying to rescue Marxism from its more positivist and mechanistic interpreters, and was also trying counter the trend toward rationalization in western

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⁴   Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Little-Brown, Boston, 1973) p.63.

society described by Max Weber, a trend which Marxism had become a part of. *Verstand,*
like the empiricist notion of common sense, reduced reason and rationality to a tool, and,
in Hegel's understanding of it, condemned reason to a shallow formalism with value only
relative to a specific cultural synthesis. What this amounts to is that reasonable thinking is
defined at the outset by the conditions of how a specific culture functions; reason is that
faculty of problem solving which allows for a culture to remain stable in the face of what it
cannot control, adjusting itself to challenges without having to change fundamental
presuppositions. In *Verstand,* reason becomes pure technology, it becomes an instrument
for the maintenance of the delimited designs of a particular cultural organization, and loses
any kind of vision beyond that specific culture, critically or otherwise. This can be seen in
this very notion of a chance event. *Verstand* does not search for the roots of such an event
with the intention of understanding it in terms of the existential condition of humanity.
Rather, it prefers to define the event as chance and thereby defines itself as reasonable
over-against the existential conditions which challenge its self-maintenance. *Verstand* is
not interested in existential questions, it is not interested in the foundation of lived
existence, rather it puts culture in opposition to its environment, it fosters a dualism of
culture and nature.

    Vernunft, however, is a more classical notion of reason which seeks the connection
among things, and the relationship between appearance and essence. Instead of defining
that which challenges it as pure chance, *Vernunft* is that type of reason which understands
a challenge to its presuppositions as a self-transcendent opportunity, an opportunity for
increased wisdom. In this, reason becomes dynamic as a principle of change and social

vision. This form which reason takes, as wisdom in search of wisdom, as self-transcending is the utopian impetus. It strives for understanding beyond the immediately given. It strives to bring its own principles of truth to fruition. In this it is both critical and positive. *Vernunft* recognizes its limitations in the recognition of that which challenges it, but this acceptance of challenge is also a statement of faith in the power of reason; both negation and affirmation are basic to the structure of *Vernunft*.

But for Adorno a positive understanding of the whole which would allow for the vision promised by *Vernunft* cannot be forced, as such presumption is akin to the totalitarian consciousness. Kierkegaard's relentless critique of existential systems, particularly Hegel's, influenced Adorno profoundly, and inspired his commentary on the dehumanizing influence of mass-culture. The search for the existential condition of humanity, the search for fundamental ontology, suggests a wish for a totality of vision, or an absolute perspective which is similar to a desire for absolute control.[5] The utopian idea itself must be met with suspicion, but the utopian impetus cannot be avoided because it is the negative suggestion of social criticism. For Adorno, truth, the search for a rational society, is served only through the negation of what is false or irrational in society. This of course presents problems. *Vernunft* is both the negative and positive encounter with authentic being. Adorno reduced this truth to a utopian ideal, a rational society not yet

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[5]   Adorno presents the logic and basic concepts of these arguments very concisely in pages 24-28 of *Negative Dialectics*; Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trns. E.B. Ashton (Seabury Press, New York, 1973). Kierkegaard's clearest, or most direct, rendering of his ideas concerning existential systems and their tendency to obliterate the subject can be found in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp.99-113; Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trns. Swenson and Lowrie (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968).

present. As such, he condemns what it present to negation, and is left without the affirmative moment of *Vernunft*. Can it be argued then, that Adorno has resurrected *Vernunft*? Pessimism is not a surprising result of Adorno's thought.

The resurrection of *Vernunft*, or ontological reason, was also a concern of Tillich, but his ability to grasp, within culture, indications of his utopian ideal, theonomy, in the religious symbol, allowed his critique of *Verstand*, technical rationality, both a positive and a negative movement.

ii. Vernunft *and the religious symbol: Tillich's notion of historical truth*

Describing the religious symbol Tillich argues that "it says Yes and No to the material that it uses. It says Yes to it as a necessary and adequate material. It says No to it if it claims to be more than material". He goes on to say that "symbolic language unites positive and negative theology. The symbol is the language of religion" (*Word* 413). Three things are to be gleaned from these statements: 1) the intention of a symbol cannot be limited to its form, because the form acts to mediate something beyond itself. 2) Something which is beyond form is not bound to a particular form. 3) Religion is the union of both the affirmation and the negation of particular forms, as mediated by the movements of positive and negative theology. From these can be drawn the idea that the religious symbol unifies, as language in a very broad sense, affirmation and negation. Or, the religious symbol is a structure of meaning which intends toward the realization of the sacred as an event within temporal succession. This is underlined by Tillich's definition of revelation as a "sign-event" (*STI* 115-117).

The term "sign-event" is, of course, a compound term, and I suggest that it is also a dialectical term. For Tillich, a sign is something which simply indicates something other than itself, it does not have any religious intent, or it is a degraded religious symbol which has lost its true intent. The word "event", however, conditions "sign" in terms of the historical consciousness, and therefore historical purpose. To call a religious symbol a "sign-event" defines it as representing ultimate historical purpose. But an event is also a special occurrence bound to a particular historical epoch. Though it stands out from the mundane in its intention, it is also in relation to the mundane, as the mundane forms the context for its intelligibility. A "sign-event" is a dialectical union of history and ultimate purpose, it represents a victory of time over space, but only in so far as the intent or substance of the sign aims at over-coming, or superseding the form or the temporal duration of the sign.

In Tillich, the definition of historical truth given to Critical Theory by Martin Jay translates into something like this: historical truth is that which grasps the holy and shapes consciousness in its perception of the holy through the mediation of relative forms; the holy, or the essential, that which concerns a society ultimately, appears as an injunction which guides representation in the symbol, but in a dialogue between essence and history, intention and interpretation, the symbol resists its form through its very genesis as formal. Truth *is* that which fosters change in the direction of a rational society, but the very intention which dissolves the formal, is the same intention which educates new forms. The idea of grasping the holy as the event of historical truth is not the assertion that truth is an immediacy of vision by which history and the ultimate are suddenly made coextensive.

Rather, this notion of truth describes a process of thought and cultural creativity in which

reason is true to its structure as *Vernunft*; in this sense truth is both the affirmative and

negative moments of the sign-event. The negative cannot become an anti-utopian, self-

contradictory, impulse, because the affirmative moment of change, the affirmation of the

holy as holy holds an authenticity which is not negated in the dialectic of revelation. This is

not to say that the negative does not play the role of representing the holy for Tillich, for it

does do this; the holy is that which condemns representation as necessarily false, or

historically conditioned. But Tillich allows the religious symbol, as a sign-event, the status

of a conscious realization of the unconditional in human life. The holy is assimilated to and

gives directing power to the transformative *praxis* of consciousness, it allows for a

dialogue between the unconditional and the historical consciousness without conflating

them.

iii. *Tillich's response to Adorno: the sacralized dialectic*

Tillich criticizes dialectical interpretations of history for the simple reason that they

supply no rationale for why a specific cultural synthesis comes to represent the end of

negation or the end of history. He argues that

> [a]n absolute stage as the end of the dialectical process is a contradiction of the
> dialectical principle. It is an idea taken from the revolutionary-absolute
> interpretations of history. In this ambiguity the limits of the dialectical
> interpretations of history become manifest: either it must stop the dialectical process
> arbitrarily, or it must fall back to a doctrine of infinite repetition (*Kairos* 334).

Either the clock-work set in motion by dialectics must be broken by some arbitrary

upsurge of a social will, the realization of the "revolutionary-absolute" doctrines of

Muenster or the Third Reich, or dialectics loses its historical character and becomes the

metaphysics for paganism. But, of course, for Tillich, the former would be no different

than the latter, as both represent a victory of space over time. Adorno realizes this

problem with historical dialectics and tries to overcome it with a greater concentration on

subjectivism and nature, the attempt to incorporate psychoanalytic theory and

Lebensphilosophie to Marxism, but dialectics remains the basis for his civilizing of the

individual consciousness, and for his understanding of life. His analogies between

individual and social psyche, and his attempt to unify inner and outer nature, are grounded

in the dialectical process. In history they cannot find the way to transcend the increased

rationalization of society and the despoliation of nature, and in the individual Adorno

cannot see his way clear of the narcissism of the autonomous, bourgeois, ego and its

objectification of life.

In Tillich's doctrine of *Kairos*, and in his description of a "sign-event", Tillich

attempts to sublimate dialectics to a higher process. Through subordinating dialectical

logic to the relational quality of dialogue, through giving dialectics the quality of dialogue,

Tillich subsumes logic to the religious. The pure mechanism of logical thought, which does

not require an ultimate reference for its operations, becomes thought concerning what is

ultimate; dialectics becomes the medium through which dialogue between humanity and

what is ultimate is enacted. In dialogue, the spatial propensity of dialectics is superseded,

allowing for the victory of time. Tillich subordinates the dialectical element of historical

meaning to its dialogical element. In the *Kairos*, the unconditional becomes both the

driving force as well as the recognized end of the dialectical process of history. The logic of dialectics is made meaningful as the bearer of *Kairos*. Time ceases to be the simple linear repetition of thesis, antithesis, synthesis, but becomes the qualitative affirmation of the unconditional. Tillich, without giving up social criticism, is able to see within the present the principles by which the present can be transcended.

From the perspective of the spatial, utopia and God represent a pure Otherness and a pure negation. What this means is that, like Adorno's notion of truth, his negative dialectics, truth is only served by negation, there is no affirmative moment in the movements of truth. In the sign-event, however, utopia and God come to inhabit consciousness and cultural memory in definite forms and in definite purposes. This allows for the victory of time.

Tillich argues that:

> There exists no direct way from the unconditional to any concrete situation. The unconditional is never a law or a promoter of a definite form of the spiritual or social life. The contents of the historical life are tasks and ventures of the creative spirit. The truth is a living truth, a creative truth, and not a law. What we are confronted with is never and nowhere an abstract command; it is living history, with its abundance of new problems whose solution occupies and fulfils every epoch (*Kairos* 341).

The idea that time is meaningful, as a description of *Kairos*, means that the true is not something that can be held before the utopian imagination as rules for a political programme. The true is not an abstraction which can be imposed from without as a measure for historical progress. The true is not exhausted by the logic of historical dialectics. Rather, the true is that very process of mediation, through the dialectical and

dialogical nature of representing the unconditional, by which the unconditional is made manifest in temporal succession, and can appear as purposeful in any cultural epoch. The manifestation of the unconditional is not dependant on the negation of those structures of existence which point to the possibility of its manifestation; negation need not be negated absolutely. In the doctrine of *Kairos* the logic of dialectics is sacralized through dialogue with the divine.

b) Anxiety and Representation

i. *Tillich's notion of wisdom: the possibility for discernment*

When Tillich argues that, "Anxiety is finitude, experienced as one's own finitude" (*CB* 157), he is arguing that the understanding that death is inevitability, either actual physical death of the individual, or the death anticipated by the threat otherness represents to spatial subsisting, results in an experience of anxiety. But more, anxiety is that experience which points to the fact of finitude. It pervades the understanding of finitude to the extent where the two are inseparable. Anxiety is "the existential awareness of nonbeing" (*CB* 157). What this means is that anxiety is the result of that which challenges the actuality of a conscious existent. Anxiety is the tension between actuality and finitude; it is that which challenges the very notion of spatial subsistence; it is the realization that no self-relation can endure in an unchanging form.

An understanding of the temporal as defined by specific forms, a particular world-view or a particular body and individuality, a fundamentally spatial interpretation of the

tensions of existence, leads to indefinite feelings (vague dread) toward an indefinite

otherness (the inchoate). Tillich claims that this results in a distrust in and an inability to

affirm existence. The negative places in question the validity of all representation, of all

forms of existence, and by that endangers any notion of existential meaning. For meaning

to be preserved, negation must be encountered from an attitude of courage.

Like Socrates, Tillich points to the idea of courage without creating out of it a

dogma. It appears as a mode of being in the world which includes a concept of wisdom.

Tillich argues that,

> an understanding of courage presupposes an understanding of man and of his world,
> its structures and values. Only he who knows this knows what to affirm and what to
> negate (*CB* 141).

Courage is mediation between knowledge and will, ontology and ethics, which promotes

authentic being. In this light, it can be argued that for Adorno courage is that

transformative impetus which grants him his notion of truth. The same can be said of

Tillich. For Tillich, courage is that quality of being which allows form to be superseded

without the negation of ultimate purpose, where the very negation is the affirmation of

purpose. Courage, while accepting finitude through an understanding of the structures of

existence, transcends this finitude through the preservation of meaning even in the advent

of the "death of god". Tillich quotes Nietzsche,

> Have ye courage, O my brethern? ...*Not* the courage before witnesses, but anchorite
> and eagle courage, which not even a God any longer beholdeth? ...He hath heart
> who knoweth fear but *vanquisheth* it; who sees the abyss, but with *pride*. He who
> seeth the abyss but with eagle's eyes, -who with eagle's talons *graspeth* the abyss: he
> hath courage ([*Zarathustra*] IV, 73, sec.4) (*CB* 155).

Courage allows one to grasp (begreifen) the abyss, to gain mastery over it, or to understand its true implications. What is required for this is an attitude of understanding, or a type of representation, which itself is not negated by the encounter with the abyss. Tillich argues that for courage to supersede anxiety, anxiety must be translated into fear. Whereas anxiety has no object, fear does. The indefiniteness of anxiety betrays it as grounded in unconscious and ahistorical and therefore unfree and non-discerning existence. Mastery over the abyss is possible only through an historical consciousness which can discern those forces in history which threaten meaningful existence, those forces which should be feared. But mastery over the abyss also implies an understanding of what negation is. Those forces in history which should be feared, as historical, have historical form - they are objective. Tillich argues that from an attitude of courage one "knows what to affirm and what to negate" (*CB* 141). Mastery over the abyss implies a freedom from spatial determinations which allow an historical purpose to supersede, to consciously negate, cultural forms which hinder that purpose. The abyss, in this case, becomes symbolic of an unconditional ethical concern.

The abyss as inchoate and threatening is the substance for a dialectical drama where the demonic and the unconditional meet, both appearing as the power of the negative. Grasping the abyss involves the ability to discern between the demonic and the unconditional and in that realize what to affirm. In the grasping and shaping moments of ontological reason (*Vernunft*) Tillich, as well as Adorno, wishes to achieve the necessary discernment. I will return to ontological reason after exploring in more detail the idea of

representation implicit in Tillich's notion of anxiety.

ii. Does Adorno allow for true discernment concerning what to affirm and what to negate?

The joining of finitude and anxiety can be approached as a continuation of the

discussion of Adorno's pessimism. Thought which cannot transcend itself, and encounters

the negative as a judgement on its efficacy, becomes anxious concerning its ability to

survive. Can *Vernunft* survive the trend of rationalization in western culture, and can

criticism survive the authoritarian consciousness of the Third Reich and Stalinism? These

were questions central to Critical Theory; What becomes of any attempt at critical self-

transcendence after Auschwitz? Tillich approaches these questions through a survey of the

appearance of the demonic in history since the Enlightenment. Tillich maintains that the

"revolutionary reason" which sought the end of feudal absolutism is the same historical

force which resulted in the exaggeration of the demonic which accompanied the twentieth

century. The totalitarian strategies to force a mediation between individual and economy

came about because of the loss of faith in automatic harmony. To create a situation in

which all needs were accounted for a revolution was needed by which such harmony was

engineered rather than simply assumed and awaited (*TS* 8-9).

Tillich argues that

> the revolutionaries did not foresee that Leviathan was able to assume another face,
> no less formidable though disguised behind the mask of liberalism: the all-embracing
> mechanism of capitalist society, a "second nature," created by man but subjecting
> the masses of men to its demands and its incalculable oscillations. Since the First
> World War, the demonic face of this Leviathan has been unveiled. The battle against
> the destructive consequences of this mechanism has led to the totalitarian

organization of national life...(*TS* 9).

In the dialectic which Tillich describes the battle against feudal absolutism results in
capitalism and the battle against capitalism results in totalitarianism. What Tillich describes
is a cyclical movement of history in which, despite the good intentions of enlightenment
thinking, revolution leads to a reemergence and perhaps an intensification of the tyranny
which enlightenment thinking pitted itself against. Adorno had the same realization as
Tillich, but this realization of finitude, the realization that modernity was structurally
incapable of realizing its utopian ideal, because it was involved in a dangerous epistemic
stance, set him in an unbreakable orbit around, for him, unanswerable questions; his
anxiety did not find a resolution. But, to be fair, the question *After Auschwitz?* represents
an existential dilemma which Tillich's level of abstraction seldom encountered so
powerfully.

iii. *Adorno's response: What is true after Auschwitz?*

    Adorno argues

in philosophy we experience a shock: the deeper, the more vigorous its penetration,
the greater our suspicion that philosophy removes us from things as they are - that
an unveiling of the essence might enable the most superficial and trivial views to
prevail over the views that aim at the essence. This throws a glaring light on truth
itself. In speculation we feel a certain duty to grant the position of a corrective to
common sense, the opponent of speculation. Life feeds the horror of a premonition:
what must come to be known may resemble the down-to-earth more than it
resembles the sublime; it might be that this premonition will be confirmed even
beyond the pedestrian realm, although the happiness of thought, the promise of
truth, lies in sublimity alone.
        ...If negative dialectics calls for the self-reflection of thinking, the tangible
implication is that if thinking is to be true - if it is to be true today, in any case - it

must also be a thinking against itself. If thought is not measured by the extremity that eludes the concept, it is from the outset in the nature of the musical accompaniment with which the SS liked to drown out the screams of its victims (*Negative Dialetics* 364-65).

Thought aims at uncovering the truth. But what if this very notion of uncovering, of thought searching for something beyond itself were to collapse in the realization that this beyond, a possible sublimity, or powerful beauty of human existence, were simply a story we tell ourselves in order to perpetuate a safe distance from a fundamentally pedestrian existence. What if the search for truth itself comes to challenge the notion that there is meaning in life? This question captures thought in a curious bind. Though implicitly critical of the search for truth, it perpetuates this search for "what must come to be known". This circle points to the idea that thought may have to betray the sublimity of its search in order for its search to uncover what is to be known. On the one hand thinking can turn against itself in the form of Adorno's negative dialectics. On the other it can take the form of thought which refuses to be "measured by the extremity which eludes the concept". What Adorno means by this is thought in which the search for truth does not risk that supreme criticism by which speculation is given over to the pedestrian, or thought in which the sublime is used as an aesthetic tool by which the horrors of human interaction are given meaning within a system of thought.

Adorno goes on to argue that "[a] new categorical imperative has been imposed by Hitler upon unfree mankind: to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself" (*Negative Dialectics* 356). What this means is that we must adopt a type of thinking in which the temptation to answer Auschwitz through giving it some kind of

meaning beyond itself is made impossible. Adorno says that

> dealing discursively with it would be an outrage, for the new imperative gives us a
> bodily sensation of the moral addendum - bodily, because it is now the practical
> abhorrence of an unbearable physical agony to which individuals are exposed even
> with individuality about to vanish as a form of mental reflection.
> ...The somatic, unmeaningful stratum of life is the stage of suffering, of the
> suffering which in the camps, without any consolation, burned every soothing
> feature out of the mind, and out of culture, the mind's objectification (*Negative
> Dialectics* 365).

For thought to truly challenge itself it must be willing to let go of strategies of denial

which disallow the acknowledgment that death has more to do with the "repulsively sweet

odor of putrefaction" (*Negative Dialectics* 366) than it does with transcendent truth. What

happens to the mind-body dualism so prevalent in western culture when the mind can no

longer give answers for the suffering of the body? In his rendering of the story of the Fall

Adorno says:

> A child, fond of an innkeeper named Adam, watched him club the rats pouring out
> of holes in the courtyard; it was this image that the child made his own image of the
> first man. This has been forgotten, that we no longer know what we used to feel
> before the dogcatcher's van, is both the triumph of culture and its failure. Culture,
> which keeps on emulating the old Adam, cannot bear to be reminded of that zone,
> and precisely this is not to be reconciled with the conception that culture has of
> itself. It abhor's stench because it stinks - because, as Brecht put it in a magnificent
> line, its mansion is built of dogshit. Years after that line was written, Auschwitz
> demonstrated irrefutably that culture has failed (*Negative Dialectics* 366).

Western culture "abhors stench because it stinks". It is involved in a willed forgetfulness of

the fact that its processes, the relations which it is grounded in, are condemned and

therefore obscured by the values culture claims to have. Adorno believes that western

culture has its basis in "clubbing rats", in a fascination with death, a visceral understanding

that nothing survives death; death represents an absolute negation of identities; there is no

soul which transcends death. This realization is mirrored in western self-interpretation.

Western culture perpetuates a pure self-identity through death; in its negations western

culture admits no remains. Western culture does not grant life to that which does not take

part in its self-identity. Adorno says that "Auschwitz confirmed the philosopheme of pure

identity as death" (*Negative Dialectics* 362). Here the visceral sense of death as admitting

no remains meets the metaphysical or mystical obscuring of this sense in the idea that

identity with the absolute means a dissolution or destruction of individuality. Death takes

on the meaning of a spiritual or philosophical journey. Death is abstracted from the

material. Death becomes ideology, and the notion of absolute identity, or "the destruction

of non-identity", the destruction of that which remains beyond the delimitations of western

culture, is given the character of truth. Western self-presentation, its differing expressions

of truth, while on the one hand claiming that there is a mind, or a soul which survives

death, are built on the understanding of the absolute nature of death. Where, then, in that

self-presentation can be found a self-transcending message of hope? Culture has failed in

its promise to conquer death. It has failed because its separation of mind and body by

which death becomes a metaphysical category is no longer tenable. In Auschwitz death

can no longer represent the reunion of individualities with their transcendant essence, it

can only be seen as a tool by which a regime administered itself. The desire for identity

which is at the heart of the west's fascination for death reveals itself and betrays itself

when that identity can no longer claim to be sublime.

What concerns Adorno is the tendency of thought towards systematization, a tendency of thought which he believes mirrors mass society. Here the influence of Kierkegaard is apparent. The levelling of the individual in culture appears in thought as a glorification of identity with the absolute as the principle of truth. Adorno believes that this ideal of identity has its roots in an authoritarian consciousness which seeks to demolish all difference or resistance. Here his concept of death takes on full meaning as both an impetus for thought - identity, or death is the final authority - and as a political programme - the nationalism which seeks an identity in pure self-realization as definitional of its power. It can be seen that this is very similar to Tillich's notion of the victory of space. But Adorno's belief that culture has no redeeming qualities as an epi-phenomenon of western society's fascination with death, stands in tension with Tillich's call for a unification of affirmation and negation.

Adorno is wary of affirmation because culture stinks. Its forms of expression are determined by a cultural substance which intends toward domination. Western culture has an unconscious urge toward self-destruction through self-identity - it is determined by the death drive. Therefore any purpose it conceives will be *a priori* implicated in the drive toward death, unless an element of difference can be introduced by thought "thinking against itself". This means not allowing for the return of the aesthetic veneer over death, after Auschwitz revealed the truth of western culture.

The aesthetic veneer over death was the very agent by which Auschwitz in its material manifestation was resisted, but, following Freud, the repressed always returns, a veneer which hides the truth will one day crack and cease to function as a controlling

agent; the repressed will become manifest in one way or another. Adorno rejects the route

of a recreation of obscuring ideology, and in this places himself in a quandary. His

imperative, that we must work and think so that Auschwitz does not happen again calls

for no less than a change in the unconscious motivations of western culture, because it

demands that Auschwitz remains manifest while at the same time losing its power of

negation. But where is the positive ideal to be found in a culture deeply motivated by the

destruction of any such ideal?

Adorno turns his attention on dialectics which, he argues, assumes the absolute,

and identity in terms of this absolute as a necessary stage in its dynamic. Dialectics moves

through stages of false consciousness, it takes on the illusory as the truth proper to its

stage of development toward absolute knowledge or the negation of negation, a point

where all illusory content is negated from the conception of truth. As such, dialectics

itself, its very logic, is implicated in the drive toward death, unless it turns against itself.

Adorno argues

> [t]o this end dialectics is obliged to make a final move: being at once the impression
> and the critique of the universal delusive context, it must now turn even against
> itself. The critique of every self-absolutizing particular is a critique of the shadow
> which absoluteness casts upon the critique (*Negative Dialectics* 406).

Criticism, or "that which fosters change in the direction of a rational society" must become

an end in itself. This is Adorno's notion of negative dialectics and also his notion of the

negation of negation. Negative dialectics is that form of criticism which does not allow the

truth implicit in the critique to become a positive or self-absolutizing truth. In this sense,

the utopian impetus which underlies negative dialectics, is a critique of the very notion of

utopia itself - "a critique of the shadow which absoluteness casts upon the critique".

Negative dialectics is a criticism of the notion of meaningful representation itself, in it

utopia is always and forever the "negation of negation that will not become a positing"

(*Negative Dialectics* 406). But in this, as Marcuse asked, where does one find the positive

representation of the possibility for culture in the transformation of unconscious

motivations. The death drive might be sublimated into negative dialectics but what is the

representational basis for hope, what is to be anticipated? Negative dialectics seems like an

eternal battle against death, waged through a shift in logic. But is there any hope to be

found in those events by which the logic becomes meaningful as an historical movement?

Or is negative dialectics dependant on the assumption that culture stinks and that we

cannot transcend our origins of "clubbing rats"? Adorno's question "After Auschwitz?", a

question of ultimate concern, and one which challenged the abyss, does not find a

resolution in Adorno's logic. In denouncing the route of an arbitrary upsurge of the social

will, Adorno chooses to follow the route of infinite repetition.

iv. *Tillich and Adorno: mutual acceptance and rejection*

I will not argue that a resolution was not discovered because Adorno was an

atheist. Tillich, also, would not argue this point because Adorno asked his questions in the

spirit of existential seriousness; he was not irreligious. Rather, his pessimism was not

resolved because he was unable to represent to himself his negative principle. He was

involved in the paradox that utopia was impossible yet describable in an absolute sense. He

was suspicious of utopia because its absolute nature was a requirement of dialectical

materialism, as argued above. The paradox he was implicated in, therefore, becomes that

utopia was his greatest hope, but also his greatest fear; utopia represented the end of

irrationality in society, but as absolute also represented totalitarianism. He was incapable

of the necessary discernment between negation represented as the demonic and negation

as the unconditional, even though this discernment was a requirement of his logic. As

utopia was his negative principle, utopia became a highly ambiguous and intangible ideal,

something fundamentally inchoate, suggested but not objective.

Tillich argues that anxiety, unlike fear, has no object,

> in a paradoxical phrase, its object is the negation of every object. Therefore
> participation, struggle, and love with respect to it are impossible...It expresses itself
> in loss of direction, inadequate reactions, lack of "intentionality" (the being related
> to meaningful contents of knowledge or will). The reason for this sometimes striking
> behaviour is a lack of an object on which a subject can concentrate (*CB* 158).

The utopia of Adorno can only be explained as a lack of an object on which he could

concentrate, because nothing objective could become a suggestion of his concept. I am

not trying to place Adorno under a psychoanalytic microscope, rather I am attempting to

illustrate on the one hand the problems inherent in a type of thinking with which Tillich

was well-acquainted and in dialogue with, and on the other, the way by which Tillich

attempted both to analyze and supersede this type of thinking. I am undertaking this

discussion through a description of Tillich's notion of anxiety because in it Tillich presents

an idea for the representation of the inchoate, and a dimension for thinking by which

paradox loses its deadly character. Furthermore, I am not criticizing Adorno's question. In

fact, Adorno's question is a question of ultimate concern which constitutes a serious

criticism of Tillich's belief in the virtue of systematic theology. After Auschwitz can anyone be as confident in his thought as Tillich is? Tillich never places his system under the eye of Adorno's challenge: What if the answers to ultimate questions turn out to be pedestrian and mundane? Tillich does not believe that it is in the purview of theology to ask whether his system is simply furthering the "noble lie" of western estheticism. In this, his theological circle favours some boundaries over others and remains confident in its self-presentation; the abyss is only admitted in some circumstances. Tillich, too, is implicated in the mechanics of self-perpetuation through a careful delimitation of the possible. He asks only those questions which allow for the maintenance of his system. Can Tillich's system transcend itself? Does it contain within its logic the possibility for its own critique? What is the question concerning the validity of systems to be correlated to? Or, to allude to Kierkegaard's rejection of Hegelianism, does Tillich silence Kierkegaard's subjectivity by making him an aspect of his system? Is the system the measure of Kierkegaard's existential seriousness? Does Kierkegaard's idea of revelation only come to the truth in its coincidence with its opposite as mediated by Tillich's discussion of revelation, as a corrective of subjective experience (*ST1* 119)? One can only hope that Tillich's belief in the virtue of systematic theology was not connected to his utopian vision, but that a sign-event outside the delimitations of his system was seen as a possibility. But even if Tillich's notion of the sign-event is the implicit critique of his system, the very confidence which his system exudes, the illusion that ambiguity is somehow contained within and does not protrude beyond the borders of Tillich's mastery over his thinking, is readily translatable into a dogmatism. Tillich "knows" where everything belongs. Every

thinker has a place in his system, every doctrine and heresy, dot and tittle of western tradition. But what about those things which can never take on the mantel of the sublime? Adorno reminds Tillich that there are not necessarily turtles all the way down which support his system through infinite proportional similarity.

But to return to the critique Tillich represents for Adorno, it is evident that in asking his question Adorno succumbs to a numbing and non-self-transcending notion of finitude. His transformative notion of truth was in tension with his notion that utopia should be more than symbolic, the wish for absolutism without absolutism, or non-relative relativism. Tillich's concept of sign-event mediates between the absolute and the relative in such a way that utopia, as a symbol of a mode of being or consciousness, can be manifest at any time as a dialogical event. What this means is that Tillich avoids unbreakable orbits around unanswerable questions; finitude, though questioning hope, does not lead to pessimism.

Tillich argues that,

The anxiety of meaninglessness is anxiety about the loss of ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all other meanings. This anxiety is aroused by the loss of a spiritual center, of an answer, however symbolic or indirect, to the question of the meaning of existence (*CB* 163).

Adorno felt that Auschwitz marked an entry into an era where questions of meaning were mocked by historical reality. But he also demanded for this era some light which could offer dialectical hope. He asked questions of ultimate concern, but was unable to find answers to the loss of meaning in capitalist and technological society, and in this they gave voice to a prevalent anxiety. In his inability to perceive within modernity symbols of his

idea of truth beyond the logic of his method, he was unable to discern between the negative as demonic and the negative as symbolized in the unconditional.

The inchoate as the anticipation of death or nonbeing can be symbolized through deliberation in a culture concerning what to affirm and what to negate. This process of symbolization is fundamentally the education of a culture in what actually constitutes a threat, what truly stands in the way of the affirmation of truth in history. Anxiety becomes fear through the symbolization of nonbeing as the feared object, and the affirmation of truth in the face of this object, because it is based on deliberation concerning the truth, is the courage which is inseparable from wisdom. This process by which the inchoate, that which is absolutely other is symbolized, is very similar, and is a part of a process by which the holy is manifest as an historical event in the religious symbol. Here, the judging aspect, or the negative moment of the sign-event is given the ethical force of the unconditional. Here, nonbeing as a character of the demonic is superseded by the negation proper to divine judgement, if nonbeing as the negation of truth is not allowed the priority which anxiety would give it. What this means is that questions which seek to explore beyond the purview of a society negating the validity of its borders, and intending toward the victory of time, questions of ultimate concern, can be met with answers, symbols of the divine purpose, through the dialectical and dialogical nature of revelation; nonbeing need not triumph in its challenge of the hope by which questions of ultimate concern are nourished. Adorno's mistake was not that he was an atheist, or an interpreter of Marx, rather it was his acceptance of utopia as an absolute, and his view that negation precedes being, that truth is only served in the negative moment of the dialectic and the positive is not worthy

of affirmation. Adorno falls short of a needed hope because he allows utopia as demonic nonbeing to supersede utopia as a symbol created by the dialectic and dialogic of deliberation concerning the truth. He did not believe that hope was justified by any sign within his society, any intention toward truth seen as an historical power. Justice was somewhere beyond modernity and in that modernity was forever implicated in the tyrannical.

Fundamentally, Adorno's concept of representation is educated by a spatial notion of historical mechanics the absence of which would place in question the foundation for his critical method; the negative must be negated, the representation of utopia must be absolute. Utopia cannot itself be a symbolic idea which speaks to an ever-present or potential quality of existence. As already suggested, though the desire in Critical Theory to resurrect *Vernunft* indicates a fundamentally religious attitude, Adorno's inability to symbolize his notion of truth, because he could not differentiate between the formal and the unconditional, did not allow for a grasping of the abyss and a self-transcending courage. Tillich's ontology, and the theory of representation it implies, allows for the symbolic rendering of utopia, and in that the affirmation of existence even in a demonic overwhelming of the utopian ideal, even if his belief in systematic theology represents an avoidance of necessary questioning.

c) *Verstand* and *Vernunft*: **Ontological Reason and Technical Rationality**

In the distinction between ontological reason and technical rationality, Tillich's

rendering of *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, and in a brief return to his notion of revelation in the

sign-event I will now explore further Tillich's notion of meaningful representation.

Tillich argues that "only the cognitive side of the classical concept of reason

remains, and within the cognitive realm only those cognitive acts which deal with the

discovery of means for ends" (*ST1* 73). What this means is that in the rule of technical

reason (*Verstand*) the idea of reason as an essential structure of existence (*Vernunft*)

which defines an identity between subject and object, mind and being, temporal and

eternal, has been forgotten. In this situation "reason is reduced to the capacity for

"reasoning" (*ST1* 72-3), the cognitive functioning of the mind. In the absence of reason as

logos, which is the historical manifestation of truth, ends are overshadowed by the means

of expression for this truth, which is formal, logical and organizational. This is problematic

because in isolation "reason in the technical sense determines the means while accepting

the ends from 'somewhere else'" (*ST1* 73). Technical reason, in and of itself, is not

capable of determining truth of content, it acquires content, or ends, in conformity with

historical expedience; "ends are provided by nonrational forces, either by positive

traditions or by arbitrary decisions serving the will to power" (*ST1* 73). This of course is

Tillich's critique of dialectical materialism.

This obedience to logic at the expense of truth content can be seen in the concept

of the valid argument from formal logic. The logical form itself is what determines truth,

and the content, no matter how absurd, is variable - there is no structural unity between the meaning of the statement and the meaning of the logic. For formal logic, form describes the intention of its statements, the intention having no true relation to content. In fact, in the absence of an intentional unity of form and content (form and substance), form is equated with the unconditional. In ontological reason, or its analogue, revelation, form and content are inseparable. This can be seen in Tillich's description of systematic theology itself.

Tillich argues that technical reason is the organizational capacity "to express [theological] truth in a methodical way" (*ST1* 53). As such, technical reason does not contain the conditions for thinking and defining theological content, but is strictly involved in the construction of a systematic framework for theology. On the other hand "the organ with which we receive the contents of faith [Tillich calls] `self-transcending,' or ecstatic, reason" (*ST1* 53). The important qualification in this definition is that truth is *received*. Reason may grasp theological truth, but it does not "produce its contents" (*ST1* 53). Ecstatic reason "is reason grasped by an ultimate concern" (*ST1* 53), it is the quality of mind which allows for the reception of divine revelation. Form and content are inseparable, but the theological content, the substance of theology, is not reducible to form as it is received from elsewhere.

But Tillich argues that the reception of divine revelation is not a simple or neutral activity, that there is a dialectic of form and substance in the theological enterprise which involves a simultaneity of "receiv[ing] by ecstatic reason and conceiv[ing] by technical reason" (*ST1* 54). This union of the technical and the ecstatic Tillich calls ontological

reason. It is "the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and shape reality" (*ST1*

75). Implied in this definition is that subjective and objective reality, mind and being, share

a structure - reason or *logos* - which allows for a relatedness between subject and object.

Tillich says,

> [t]he mind receives and reacts. In receiving reasonably, the mind grasps its world; in
> reacting reasonably the mind shapes its world. 'Grasping,' in this context has the
> connotation of penetrating into the depth, into the essential nature of a thing or
> event, of understanding or expressing it. 'Shaping,' in this context, has the
> connotation of transforming a given material into a Gestalt, a living structure which
> has the power of being (*ST1* 76).

Because both subject and object are structured on reason, the mind, through reason, is

able to realize the corresponding reason in the object and to express it. Furthermore,

through reason, the subject can draw the object into its *Lebenswelt* where it assumes a

definite form. But one's *Lebenswelt* is also altered in the same activity of reason.

Ontological reason is both dialectical and dialogical.

Tillich goes on to argue that

> [w]e transform reality according to the way we see it, and we see reality according
> to the way we transform it. Grasping and shaping the world are interdependent. In
> the cognitive realm this has been clearly expressed in the Fourth Gospel, which
> speaks of knowing the truth by doing the truth (John 3:21). Only in the active
> realization of the true does the truth become manifest.

Only in reflection on action and action educated by reflection is the truth served.

Ontological reason, following Tillich's idea of historical truth, is transformative, it is self-

transcendent. But, as historical, it is not simply thought in the abstract, but is thinking

which pervades doing in such a way that it cannot be separated from doing. Theory and

practice, the life of the mind and the life of the body, cannot be separated as a dichotomy or dualism, but they can be separated as two different moments of the manifestation of truth. Thought can reflect on practice and practice can conform itself to the direction of this reflection. They meet in a common intention to transform reality in the direction of the true where the means of transformation are educated by the truth which is the end. In its dialogue with objective reality, ontological reason aims at preserving objects in their truth while transforming the world historically so that that truth is manifest as an historical event. This is in marked contrast to Marx's notion of ideology defined by Tillich as "an attempt to preserve existing evil by a theoretical construction which justifies them" (*ST1* 76). Ontological reason is that type of discernment which knows what to affirm and what to negate. In its dialectical movement of grasping and shaping it allows theory or an understanding of what is essential to its objects to be a radical critique of how those objects are meaningfully arranged. Tillich goes on to say that "[s]ome of the impact of instrumentalist thinking on our contemporaries stems from its emphasis on the unity of action and knowledge" (*ST1* 76). In instrumental thinking, or technical rationality, thought and action work to justify each other rather than mutually challenge in the direction of mutual transformation. They are united through their co-operation in preserving the state of things rather than united in a mutual mediation of a truth which seeks to historically transcend the state of things. That Tillich understands this as an illusion will be returned to in chapter three, as it represents a possible tension with his idea that technological reason is a distortion of fundamental ontology.

In the following chapter I will explore the notion of grasping and shaping in

greater detail, through an analysis of Tillich's ideas concerning fundamental ontology. Tillich argues that language and technology are basic to the cultural life of humanity. Foundational to language and technology is a receptivity to what is other, or the ability to listen, and a shaping of the environment or the constitution of a realm of freedom, possibilities beyond those possibilities basic to natural processes. Chapter three of this thesis will be concerned with the distortion of this foundation of language and technology, and the situation emerging from this distortion in which dialogics is transformed into its opposite; dialogics becomes anti-dialogics.

Chapter Three:
Knowledge and the Fall

What is the nature of form, and what is the relation between form and what is most basic to human existence? Given Tillich's ontology of Fallenness, what is the nature of estrangement as it is expressed in cultural creativity, in technology and language? How is estrangment to be confronted an an historical power?

1. A Redefinition of Strife

The battle between space and time, defines strife as original to existence, but in his refocussing of the metaphysical eye away from hierarchical orders of being and toward his concept of dimensions of existence, Tillich does not give this tension an essential or causal priority to existence. All beings are existentially implicated in strife. The fact that there is strife is accounted for by Tillich in what he calls the fact of Fallenness (*ST2* 29-44, *ST3* 50-57). For Tillich Fallenness means strife, it is the condition for the subject-object division which occasions existential ambiguity, and further, it is that which drives people to seek answers to questions of ultimate concern.

For Tillich, it is a fallen being who strives to bring essential nature to consciousness through questions concerning the Being of beings, and this Fallenness, cannot be over-come through a destructuring of the history of ontology, as Heidegger attempts, though it can be understood. Strife is the existential state of humanity and all

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attempts at understanding the human condition are implicated in strife. Another way of saying this is that all attempts at interpreting the human condition are grounded in that situation which makes interpretation necessary. Strife indicates a lack of immediacy of meaning, or the need to find meaning in life through some kind of interpretation. The situation which makes interpretation necessary is strife. But, for Tillich, strife also challenges meaningful existence because in it ambiguity becomes basic to the human condition. The human condition is lived existence, but "life lives on life" (*ST3* 54); living things must use other living things in order to continue living. The search for meaning, a search which, in Tillich's idea of the dimensions of existence, seeks that which unifies life processes in a common intention, is implicated in an urge to objectify living things and in that undercut its own intention. The search for meaning is implicated in contradiction. This makes self-criticism necessary as part of interpretation, but the self-criticism too is implicated in strife as it can lead to self-reification; self-criticism can lead the critic to make an object out of himself. This is the hermeneutical circle. The intention toward truth which drives interpretation, is grounded in that which makes for the distortion of truth. This hermeneutical circle, for Tillich, requires something beyond strife, God, in order for it not to become a tragic or non-transcendable circle.

Tillich accounts for and explains the transcendence of the hermeneutical circle, historically in his concept of the theological circle, and ontologically in the connection between theology and the sign-event. Theology overcomes the inertia of simple repetition of form through receptivity to the divine, through renewing its meaning in the ultimate ground of meaning, or the dialogic and historical dialectic of the religious symbol. This

meeting of history with the ground of meaning is repeated in ontological reason.

Whereas in technical rationality the subject perceives itself as over-against the object, in ontological reason, subject and object are in dialogue; ontological reason aims at superseding strife, or the structures of Fallenness. This dialogue is one based on receptivity to what is existentially other, in an understanding that there is something which transcends the existential and unifies subject and object in their essential natures (*ST1* 79-81, *ST3* 119). But this unity is also an existential unity. Tillich's idea of dimensionality is based on an understanding that all existents are implicated in the same condition or structure of Fallenness (*ST3* 15). This ground is seen in the analogical or proportional similarity of life-processes among the dimensions. All existents have the capacity for self-transcendence, each is defined by a *telos* which includes an intention toward the essential, and it is in the unity of power of being with meaning that the existential condition of an existent can give way to greatness (*ST3* 88-97).

As outlined before, each existent becomes symbolic of ultimate meaning in its greatness. The symbolic, for Tillich, is always and forever an aspect of existence as it comes into being only as a response to the need for mediation between individual *telos* and ultimate meaning (*ST1* 111). As such, it is relative, or, as Tillich states, the unity achieved is a fragmentary and non-absolute unity (*ST3* 140). Greatness, as symbolic and universal, unifies subject and object existentially as a unification of the *telos* of subject and object, but this unification is dependant on the event of its unification, it is a sign-event. As a sign event, the unity is achieved only on the condition that the form of this unity is superseded. Unity between subject and object is an existential event only in so far as it is also a unity of

affirmation and negation, otherwise it is a distortion of unity. To expand on the notion that

time is meaningful, for Tillich consciousness of existential unity is always mediated by

temporal becoming, and because the condition for becoming conscious of one's essential

nature is the structure of Fallenness - ambiguities which give rise to questions in the need

for answers, in the realization of ultimate concern - consciousness will never attain to

absolute knowledge. The mediation brings about a situation where the division of subject

and object does not represent strife, but the actuality of this mediation, though attaining its

meaning from the absolute, is relative to events as understood by the historical

consciousness (*ST3* 396). Consciousness of humanity's fallen nature is consciousness of

the fact that humanity is forever becoming conscious, and that there is no immediate

experience of the divine. Furthermore, because the truth of a sign-event is dependant on

the recognition that its form must be continually superseded because of the impossibility of

immediacy, the truth is only served through humanity being conscious of its fallen nature.

In the absence of this, there is always the danger of the demonic seen as the power of

enduring forms. Unity of subject and object can only come to consciousness through the

consciousness of strife. And the language of Fallenness, which is basic to technical

rationality, is that mode of representation or symbolization by which Fallenness is

obscured.

Through his idea of revelation Tillich radically alters Heidegger's project of a

destructuring of the history of ontology. In his critique of technical rationality Tillich aims

at bringing to consciousness humanity's fallen nature as fundamental for ontological

understanding. The concentration on the ontic in western epistemology results in an

obscuring of humanity's essential nature only because it obscures humanity's fallen nature.

Or, as already stated, for Tillich existential structure is no different than the structure of

Fallenness, and any search for the existential must begin with questioning concerning

Fallenness. And as it is through a sacralization of existential structure in the sign-event that

the unity of essential natures can be recognized, the search for ultimate answers begins

also with questions concerning Fallenness. Humanity must become a problem for itself.

But in the realization of its problematic nature, humanity must avoid self-reification, as

self-reification leads back to the reification of the other; self-reification creates barriers

against dialogue. The transcendence of the hermeneutical circle begins with what is most

basic to human relationality, the coincidence of the relationship of self with self, and self

with other self. What this means is that criticism must be grounded in fundamental

ontology.

Up to this point I have attempted to define some concepts basic to Tillich,

primarily the idea that time is meaningful and its connection to the dialectical and

dialogical nature of the sign-event. I have also differentiated Tillich's notion of history

from that of early Critical Theory. In the following section, for the purpose of defining

further the problems inherent in technical rationality, I will describe Tillich's notion of

fundamental ontology through a detailed analysis of a short section of the *Systematic

Theology*. This description will also differentiate Tillich's project from Heidegger's even

though in this section Tillich's debt to Heidegger is particularly apparent.

Of primary importance to this analysis is the fact that Tillich accounts for technical

rationality as based in a distortion of fundamental ontology. In other places he accepts the

idea from Critical Theory that when technical rationality becomes a cultural ethos, it becomes an ideology, or an epiphenomenon of class interests. But Tillich first wants to illustrate the structural similarity between technical rationality and that from which human relationality originates, before allowing for a critique of ideology. Technical rationality both reveals and conceals the ontology of human relatedness; it can become the focus of a genealogical study of ontology in that it contains the same structure as that ontology, although in a distorted manner. Following Heidegger, distortion can only be defined through a detailed description of that very type of relatedness where distortion becomes a problem. In a discussion of language as basic to the creation of human relatedness to its environment, the creation of a *world*, Tillich points to fundamental ontology and also defines the idea of distortion, but, unlike Heidegger, he then shifts his attention toward the *transformation of culture in the direction of a rational society*. Tillich's ontology educates his thinking concerning the structure of ideology, and how that ideology can be superseded historically. But furthermore, unlike Heidegger, his answer to the question of the Being of beings is always and forever God.

2. Reconciliations: An analysis of pages 57-62 of Volume III of the *Systematic Theology*

a) The Most Important Type of Knowledge

Tillich begins the section entitled "The Basic Functions of Culture: Language and the Technical Act" with the clear statement that what he is speaking about is culture. But

he speaks about culture as it appears as united to or not alienated from life-processes;

"Culture, *cultura*, is that which takes care of something, keeps it alive, and makes it grow"

(*ST3* 57). This, of course, is made clear in the title of the larger section this discussion

appears in - *The self-creativity of life under the dimension of the spirit: culture*. But in

invoking the latin root "cultura", Tillich is regrasping a meaning of culture from before the

technological era in which such a meaning may be forgotten or ignored. Culture is not an

industry, but rather the condition for human spiritual and historical self-transcendence.

From the beginning of this section Tillich is working out the basis for a contrast between

an authentic and a distorted understanding of culture, and it is this word "distortion"

which is key to his contrast.

The regrasping of a forgotten understanding of culture is further pointed to in

Tillich's grounding of the union of language and technology in the creation myth,

> [Language and technology] belong together. In the first book of the Bible, man in
> paradise is requested by God to give names to the animals (language) and to
> cultivate the garden (technology) (*ST3* 57).

The union of language and technology is an original union which, even in the division of

thought into specific disciplines or technical pursuits, is maintained;

> Socrates discusses the meaning of words by referring to the technical problems of
> craftsmen and of military and political technicians. In pragmatism, the validity of
> concepts is measured by their technical applicability (*ST3* 57-8).

For Tillich the fact that "speaking and using tools belong together" (*ST3* 58) is an

ontological fact. That this union is always assumed, even in post-paradisiacal societal

forgetfulness, where ontic pursuits are not consciously grounded in fundamental ontology, is precisely this point. I should note here that Tillich's use of the Garden of Eden myth is not meant to indicate the difference between essence and existence, in this instance. But rather, the allusion to a forgotten primeval state sets the stage for a contrast between an authentic and distorted union of technology and language, given the structure of Fallenness. Tillich is not speaking out of his metaphysical separation of essence and existence, unified truth and the fragmentary, but rather out of his description of the structure of Fallenness itself.

Tillich goes on to describe language. This description is primarily an account of how language operates as originary for culture. Tillich also introduces a concept of distorted language, in the figure of the compulsive talker, to which he returns at the end of this section. This image of distortion as introducing and concluding his discussion of language and technology completes his distinction between fundamental ontology and the contemporary tendency to ignore ontology in favour of the purely ontic; the distinction between authentic and distorted union of language and technology. That distorted language is characterized as a break-down of communication in "the inability to listen" (*ST3* 58), suggests the idea that technological rationality can be anti-dialogical.

Tillich argues that language "communicates and denotes" (*ST3* 58). These two aspects of language condition each other, such that communication "reaches its fulfilment only when there is denotation" (*ST3* 58). This fulfilment, the union of communication and denotation, Tillich characterizes as "mutual participation in a universe of meanings" (*ST3* 58). What is important here is that in denotation, language becomes more then

vocalizations and gestures relative to a particular encounter, but allows human relatedness

to be mediated by shared conventions of meaning. The concept of a "universe of

meanings" Tillich approaches through his distinction between environment and world.

Language transcends the immediate environment, "it liberates [people] from bondage to

the concrete situation" (*ST3* 58). It allows for the creation of a realm of freedom for the

self-creation of humanity beyond a complete determination by ahistorical and immediate

forces, it allows for the creation of a world. Fundamentally, in the union of communication

and denotation, individuals are liberated from a non-unified sense of surroundings and of

their own power, they enter a realm of freedom. But this freedom is a result of mutual

participation and in this the realization of a concept of humanity.

Tillich argues that "man has the power of communication because he has a world

in correlation to a completely developed self" (*ST3* 58). He goes on to say that "man

experiences world in everything concrete, something universal in every particular" (*ST3*

58), and completes these assertions with

> Man has language because he has world, and he has world because he has language.
> And he has both because in the encounter of self with self he experiences the limit
> which stops him in his unstructured running from one "here and now" to the next
> and throws him back on himself and enables him to look at the encountered reality
> as the world (*ST3* 58).

Neither language nor world have ontological priority to the other, but rise out of a

subject-object relationality. This relationality, prior to a union of communication and

denotation, is "an unstructured running from one 'here and now' to the next"; it has no

continuity. The continuity of a universe of meanings or world, however, is co-extensive

with a completely developed self, or a self which is self-creative. As such, language, world, and the self-constitution of the self simultaneously rise out of an unstructured subject-object relationality. The question therefore, is in what way subject-object relationality becomes structured. Tillich argues that subject-object relationality becomes structured in the "encounter of self with self" (*ST3* 58).

The "encounter of self with self" can be read in two ways, but the two readings are not exclusive. Rather they are wonderfully inclusive of each other and clarify each other. This encounter, genealogically and not causally prior to the correlation of self and world is both an encounter between two individual selves and also a reflexive encounter of a self with its own self. Although Tillich concentrates on the former reading the latter is implied in the idea that the recognition of the other self "throws [a person] back on himself and enables him to look at the encountered reality as a world" (*ST3* 58). The fully developed self is involved in self-relation in a transformative sense as a being becoming related to a world, and in other-relation as realizing the very possibility for mutual participation in the need to communicate and denote. The self, through the simultaneous encounter with its own self and the other self, reconstitutes itself within a universe of meanings, realizing the self-world correlation. And it is this correlation, that both self and world, self and other self participate in the universe of meanings, that defines the realm of freedom.

articipation in the world of meanings involves two related moments actualized through language, the realization of the union of the universal and the particular as a relationship to objects, and the realization of the relation of the universal and the particular as it relates to other selves; the creation of a concept of a creative and self-creative

humanity as the universalization of the individual self-world relation. The "encounter of self with self" contains the idea of humanity involved in self-creation through constituting itself within a realm of freedom which is at the same time a realm of meaning. The "encounter of self with self" is the ground of the union of communication and denotation, and is at the same time the possibility or condition for culture; "here lies the common root of morality and culture" (*ST3* 58), the ordering of self-relation and other-relation within a universe of meanings. This is a union of power and meaning, of life and language, a perfection of freedom.

But it is at this point in Tillich's discussion that he introduces the image of the compulsive talker (*ST3* 58). As a way of illuminating the fundamental nature of the encounter of self with self to the self-creativity of humanity, Tillich illustrates the break-down of the encounter of self with self, through presenting a distorted union of communication and denotation. As stated before, it is this idea of tension between authenticity and distortion which forms the backdrop for the interpretation of this section. Tillich speaks of this distortion in two primary ways: a mental disturbance, and a cultural distortion and moral fault. The former characterization can be described as an unhealthy self-relation which gives rise to a state in which the self-world correlation disappears; the person "is never aware of the `wall' of the listening thou" (*ST3* 58), and because of this "a stream of words without denotative structure or communicative power pours out of him" (*ST3* 58). This is a reversion to unstructured relationality and the collapse of world into environment. It can be described as the loss of both meaning and freedom.

The second characterization, less dramatic, but as such more insidious, open to

criticism, and more socially pervasive, is described as "the inability to listen" (*ST3* 58).

Though described as an inability, and in its relation to the former characterization, an

assault on meaningful existence, it takes place within the realm of freedom and meaning,

as moral and cultural. The former characterization, as a non-awareness of the other self is

cast in the language of consciousness and unconsciousness and how they relate to

freedom. The second characterization, however, is cast in the language of formal

delimitation and self-transcendence and how they relate to freedom. The inability to listen

as a "cultural distortion and moral fault" (*ST3* 58) is a distortion of the union of

communication and denotation foundational to the event of a specific cultural or individual

synthesis. It is a self-willed or freely chosen inability, or a self-constitution which acts to

delimit the universe of meaning to the requirements of this inability. The inability becomes

that realm in which self-creation takes place, and as such it forms the realm of the possible.

As a cultural ethos, the self-constitution of a culture within this type of realm is identical

with systemic anti-communication, it is anti-dialogical. Communication is unified with an

idea of denotation which, though allowing for a creative self-relation, does not mediate an

encounter between self and self, as a simultaneity of self-relation and other-relation. What

language mediates in this case is an encounter between subject and thing, a situation which

collapses the world into a realm of subjective autonomy. This distortion of language can

be described as a distortion of freedom.

To step aside from my analysis of this section for the moment I would like to do a

bit a synthetic work, tying together some of the themes of my discussion as a whole. The

encounter of self with self is foundational for both dialectics and dialogics. The

constitution of the self within a world of meaning is a dialectical process, as it is both self-integration and historical integration of a world-view, the constitution of a universe of meaning. It is dialogical in a horizontal sense simply because the encounter is a recognition and a listening to another. And this dialogic accounts for or allows for the emergence of the historical dialectic - it forms the basis for the victory of time over space. This forming the basis for the victory of time over space is connected to the quality of encounter which appears as a demand to participate, a demand to constitute selves within shared structures of meaning, or the creation of the possibility for culture and morality. A demand for shared structure of meaning implies a notion, or an indirect or undefined concept, of the unconditional, as this demand implies an authority which has more than relative strength - both selves are beholden to it. Therefore, in this notion, a vertical dialogic is pointed to, and the notion gains definition as that which justifies and urges a reconstitution of the self as historical and cultural. As both demand, as well as an intuition of a ground for meaning, the encounter of self and self points to revelation; it is that meeting of the logic of relationality with its purpose by which the possibility for revelation is prefigured in human interaction.

To presuppose some of the conclusions of my analysis, the encounter of self with self is a condition for the possibility of revelation but is also, in and of itself, a sign-event. Furthermore, because it is also the condition for the possibility of culture and morality, the encounter between self and self holds the unity of culture, morality and religion as its originary intent. By this, the fact of the fragmentation of this encounter into various spheres for human interaction, illustrates a distortion of originary intent, or an inauthentic

expression of this encounter. The division of the human world into various modes for

interpretation and therefore various universes of meaning (eg. moral, scientific,

technological, and religious), and a further step of division into disciplines each using its

own specialized language (eg. neuro-biology, contractual law, and medical anthropology)

potentially resists the very demand to participate which gave rise to a universe of meaning

in the first place. This illustrates the ambiguity of human relationality, because the division

of meaning into meanings is also a result of the freedom realized by the demand to

participate.

To continue my direct analysis of Tillich's text, following his initial discussion of

the distortion of language, Tillich looks more deeply at the anatomy of language. While

repeating his primary argument that

> Language has been at the beginning of our discussion of the self-creation of life
> under the dimension of the spirit because it is fundamental for all cultural functions
> (*ST3* 58),

he now shifts his concentration from its fundamentality as the encounter of self with self,

to the realm of its distortion in differing "cultural functions". And here the idea of

distortion loses some of its derogatory predication, while at the same time its extent and

pervasiveness is underlined. To approach cultural activities in order to understand the

nature of their function within human life, Tillich must describe the way in which language

has been distorted so as to constitute a specific cultural activity.

> In order to actualize this omnipresence, language is endlessly variable, both with
> respect to the particular cultural function in which it appears and with respect to the
> encounter with the reality which it expresses. In both respects language reveals the

basic characteristics of man's cultural activities and affords a useful approach to their nature and their differences (*ST3* 58).

While language is basic to all cultural activities, the way in which language develops from its originary intent into a specific cultural function, in a sense the mode in which this originary intent either appears or disappears, is the basis for the requirements of that particular cultural function. This mode is determined by "the encounter with reality which [a certain function] expresses", or in a very basic sense, what a certain cultural function experiences as world. What this means is that the encounter of self with self is reinterpreted in terms of an epistemology or mode of experience which focuses the attention of encounter or relationality onto a specific group of objects. The development of a cultural function is the development of a language which distinguishes between what is and what is not an important object, what is and what is not important knowledge. This idea of the important object is the delimitation of what is understood as meaningful, a language being formed to the expression of this meaning, a specific language has a specific epistemological intention. To ask a very Socratic question of Tillich: *What is the most important type of knowledge?*

Tillich makes reference to Heidegger's distinction between *Zuhandensein* and *Vorhandensein*, being at hand or disposal and being in existence. These are two different ways of encountering reality and Tillich says that

> the first form denotes a technical, and the second a cognitive, relationship to reality. Each has its particular language - not excluding the other but trespassing on it. The language of "being at hand" is the ordinary, often very primitive and limited language, and the others borrow from it (*ST3* 59).

Zuhandensein, as that which orders the world through encountering it, into a world for

human meaning, or "managing [encountered reality] in order to reach ends" (*ST3* 59),

Heidegger understands as the most basic type of language. It is grounded in the process of

universalization and abstraction which makes language possible and therefore in the very

structure of language.

But Tillich does not want to give *Zuhandensein* a complete priority for human

interaction. He argues that, temporally "mythological language seems to be equally old", if

not older (*ST3* 59). Because he is speaking of a temporal rather than ontological priority,

historically, rather than structurally, the priority given to religious language is one having

to do with the event rather than the precondition for the encounter of self with self.

Whereas a technical grasp of the environment is coextensive with the ability to

universalize, culture and morality are not immediately suggested in this faculty, simply

because universalization is only one part, the logic of the event of encounter. Tillich

argues that mythological language

> combin[es] 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 the religious symbol and
> their combination, the myth (*ST3* 59).

As stated in the above analysis of the encounter of self with self, the implication of this

understanding of Tillich's is that an experience of the unconditioned, of a demand found in

a unification of intent, or ground of meaning, supersedes the purely technical

spontaneously, even if logically the technical has ontological priority. This spontaneity is

dependant on "the ability to listen", but the encounter of self with self already presupposes this ability, and this ability is based on a sensitivity to the very demand which the encounter grows out of. This of course creates a circle, but it is here that Tillich parts ways with Heidegger, as, for the former, the resolution of this circle, the ground of meaning which is both concealed and revealed by any ontological investigation, is God. God has absolute priority as that which absolutely transcends all sign-events while at the same time being revealed in them. And it is for this reason that religious language has perhaps more than temporal priority in the structures of humanity's spiritual life, as it is only through religious language that any hermeneutics, or ontological enquiry can ultimately listen to and receive its direction from the ultimate ground of meaning it seeks.

When Tillich claims that "the contemporary confusion of [technical and religious] language is the cause for one of the most serious inhibitions for the understanding of religion" (*ST3* 59), he is not making the claim, contradictory to my above analysis, that the unity of cultural functions is actually inauthentic. What he is saying is that, as they appear in the abstract origins of humanity's cultural life, as differentiated by specific epistemological intents, it is harmful to confuse the intention of religious language with the intention of the technical. Tillich, having given to religious language an authenticity which supersedes the ontological priority of a logical structure of language, can now concentrate on intention as the mark of authenticity. The danger in confusing different types of language is that language forms itself to the demands of its objects of interest and the intention toward these objects which a specific mode of encounter implies. Religious language expresses realities which cannot be encountered through the intention of

technical language.

Tillich argues that the problem of confusing kinds of language

is especially true of the cognitive function and the language created by it. It has been confused with all others, partly because it is present in them in a prescientific form, partly because it gives a direct answer to the question which is asked indirectly in all functions of man's cultural self-creativity - the question of truth (*ST3* 59-60).

Though the search for truth is prefigured in the structure of language, and by that appears in all types of language, what this truth consists of is determined by the intention of the specific language. Therefore, to confuse a metaphysical notion of truth with the technical notion, would lend the technical an absolute validity, or would turn metaphysics into pragmatism. Truth is defined here as the object, result, or purpose which correlates to a specific epistemology. This idea is not only the positing of an idea of authenticity based on a correspondence between intention and truth relative to that intention, but also suggests, because truth as a notion is prefigured in language, that there is a truth beyond these relative correspondences. A notion of truth which is basic to or transcendent of specific truths is suggested in the idea that language involves the search for truth. To restate the question above - *What is the most important type of knowledge?* - Tillich must now be asked: *What form of language finds its authenticity in an intention toward this truth beyond truths?* Given the above discussion, for Tillich, the answer to this question would be religious language. The most important type of knowledge is knowledge of God.

To expand on this idea that the most important type of knowledge is knowledge of God, I will now revisit some of the major points of this analysis. Technical rationality is described as, potentially, a distortion of fundamental ontology and is therefore suspect.

The distortion is described as an inability to listen, or a problem emerging within the simultaneous encounter of self with itself and with another. What is hinted at is that self-reification leads to the reification of the other, just as reification of the other leads to self-reification; the two movements are identical. What is at stake, therefore, is a problem in the very idea of relationality itself. This gives rise to questions concerning meaning: In what do all things find their place or ultimate ground, and given this, where do I place myself? How does each part relate to the whole thus allowing for a coherent *world*? And the problem gives rise to questions of epistemology: What way of thinking best expresses the relationship to objects which results in the greatest truth concerning objects? Of course questions concerning meaning and questions concerning epistemology are dependant on each other, and are separate only in a formal sense. But to separate the questions in this way illustrates the circular nature of questioning concerning relationality, a problem Heidegger encountered in his hermeneutics, and has subsequently been called the "hermeneutical circle", and what Tillich is assuming in his discussion of the theological circle (*ST1* 8-11). All epistemological questions, questions concerning truth, have their foundation in a history of questions concerning truth, the very questions themselves rise out of a universe of meaning already established. But more basic still, the questioner, as questioner, is implicated in relationality prior to the asking of questions. In fact without relationality there could be no questioning. It is this insight which prompted Heidegger in his *Dasein* analytic, the search for fundamental ontology through questioning concerning the being of the exemplary being, human being, or that being which asks questions concerning its own being. Also, this is the insight which Tillich has in mind while he is

laying down the foundation for his thought concerning the functions of the spiritual

dimension. All functions of the spirit are expressions of human relationality. Tillich asks,

what form of relationality would be the condition for the possibility of a spiritual

dimension. The form of relationality which allows for this possibility is language, and a

condition for that language which is based on the demand to participate, is the ability to

listen. The ability to listen allows language to give form to the basic ethical demand.

But the understanding of Fallenness cannot be reduced to an understanding of

fundamental ontology, such as Heidegger's *Dasein* analytic. The understanding of

Fallenness is an understanding of that tension between fundamental ontology, existence,

and the essential nature of humanity as seen in the divine nature. This is hinted at in

Tillich's idea that religious language is somehow prior to technical language by being

qualitatively richer. But in saying this I am contradicting my prior statement that Tillich's

use of the creation myth does not concern the distinction between essence and existence,

in this instance, but rather the distinction between fundamental ontology and the distortion

of fundamental ontology. I will revise my earlier assertion but only in so far as to say that

in the myth of the garden, for Tillich, the distinction between essence and existence is

always assumed. For Tillich, this distinction is an inescapable distinction, and is forever

present in what religious language wishes to say, as an aspect of its stories, but also as a

structural precondition for religious language; the mediation of the holy through the

religious symbol is an aspect of Fallenness; the symbol "Fall", and the necessity to mediate

the holy in special things, places and times, form a conceptual unity.

And so I come to a central problem with my analysis of Tillich. How is an idea of

distortion, an idea drawn from phenomenology and central to the anti-metaphysical projects of Heidegger and those he influenced, such as Foucault and Derrida, to be reconciled with Tillich's metaphysics, his distinction between essence and existence? Based on the discussion of the religious symbol and the sign-event of revelation an answer can be suggested. Tillich reconciles these opposing view-points through his understanding that the religious symbol is logically dialectical and qualitatively dialogical. The structure of human existence, though fallen, can be sacralized. There is something within the structure of human existence, within the logic of dialectics, within the structures of language and technology, within human relationality, which does not represent human forgetfulness of the essential nature of humanity, and which represents an existential authenticity in tension with existential distortion. This remains a metaphysical idea because the meaning of relationality still finds its ground, ultimately in a metaphysical essence, there remains an idea of shared substance between humanity and the divine, which allows for a unification of meaning and intent. But the idea reconciles the two understandings of the fall through suggesting that in religious language existential authenticity and metaphysical truth are reconciled. Like the sign-event, this reconciliation is qualified with the idea that it is only possible so long as truth acts to both affirm and negate this reconciliation. The reconciliation does not supersede its temporal nature, even though it is more than relative in nature.

What this means is that existential distortion is the distortion of the existential condition for the possibility of revelation. The condition for the possibility of revelation is not only an aspect of religious language, but finds its fulfilment there in being reconciled

with the truth. I should point out that I am using a different notion of truth here than I did

in the previous chapter where I suggested that for Tillich truth is that which *grasps the*

holy and shapes consciousness in its perception of the holy through the mediation of

relative forms; the holy, or the essential, that which concerns a society ultimately,

appears as an injunction which guides representation in the symbol, but in a dialogue

between essence and history, intention and interpretation, the symbol resists its form

through its very genesis as formal. I would now like to reintroduce this idea of truth with

the suggestion that the reconciliation of existential authenticity with metaphysical truth

results in this very notion of historical truth. Existential structure is reconciled with

essential truth through the symbolization of the divine as an historical event. But this

symbolization is not simply the crafting of an image. What is meaningful in the religious

symbol is that, in its crafting, the temporal dialectic, or process, or structural logic of

symbolization transcends itself through the existential event of its crafting; the structure of

language is not suspended but fulfilled by reconciling its intent toward the truth with the

truth beyond yet suggested in the truths relative to particular languages.

b) Distortion and Form

Following his warning against confusing the different types of language, Tillich

undertakes a description of "the triad of elements of cultural creativity" which he claims

are "prefigured in language" (*ST3* 60). To analyze this section I will set its basic principles

in the context of the sign-event and its relation to form. In his discussion of form, the

second of the triad of elements of cultural creativity, Tillich says that "form is one of those

concepts which cannot be defined, because every definition presupposes it. Such concepts

as this can be explained only by being put into configuration with other concepts of the

same character" (*ST3* 60). *Form*, like *subject matter* and *substance*, has the character of

being an element of cultural creativity prefigured in language. Therefore form is elucidated

through its relation to subject matter, substance, and to itself. Placing this discussion in the

context of the sign-event, and particularly in conjunction with the idea of the power of

enduring forms will allow the major themes of this thesis to come together as a discussion

of Tillich's notions of form and distortion. The guiding question for this discussion is: what

is form?

i. *Form and subject matter*

Tillich argues that

> out of the inexhaustible manifoldness of encountered objects, language chooses
> some which are of significance in the universe of means and ends or in the religious,
> poetic, and scientific universe of expression. They constitute the subject matter in
> cultural activities although differently in each (*ST3* 60).

This is the idea alluded to above, that each language contains within itself a notion of what

is and what is not important to it. Furthermore, the idea that these important objects are

selected from the "inexhaustible manifold of encountered objects" means that implicit in

the notion of importance is a negative moment in which the negation of all that is other to

the notion is chosen. It should be pointed out that language is a function of the realm of

freedom, of culture, and also that Tillich accounts for subject matter in the language of

freedom, "language chooses". A delimitation of subject matter is not something which happens in the spontaneity of the evolution of the logic of language as language, but is a development of the cultural activities of human beings.

To view this idea of subject matter, with its freedom of affirmation and negation, in relation to form and distortion, I propose a revisiting, and expanding on Tillich's argument against metaphysical notions of levels of being. Tillich's understanding of dimensions of existence was the proposal that all objects in the inexhaustible manifoldness of encountered objects have a greatness, as part of a common life-process, by which they can symbolize the holy. The tendency of a metaphysics based on levels of being, however, is to construct a hierarchy of being out of these levels and attribute progressively more being the closer a level is to the divine nature - air has more being than earth, male is higher than female, angels are higher than humans - and there is a spiritual battle which takes place by which lower and higher constitute mutual threats. In fact one group of objects represents the negation of another. The role of the negative as over-coming what is antithetical to a level plays a role in the spiritual life of individuals, and also in religious national identities. If a form of cultural expression is believed to be eternal truth, and is composed of that notion within a specific language which acts to negate the unimportant, a form is encountered which can be ethically problematic and which Tillich would call distorted language. If subject matter is conflated with form, or if form achieves the power of endurance through its conflation with particular objects in a grounded epistemology, participation, or dialogue, is limited. This situation is a seizing of the attribution of greatness to objects. In it greatness becomes the category of importance and the negated

objects are denied the greatness inherent in them.

To connect this notion to the universalization basic to the origins of culture, a delimitation of what is important educates the process of universalization in its affirmative and negative moments. As such, a concept of humanity, basic to the notion of culture, can be distorted through the raising of certain objective phenomena as formal requirements. This, of course, leads to racism, gender bias, the preference of specific character traits, and similar things, as cultural ideologies. It is evident that what I am speaking about is the victory of space over time in its genocidal implications.

In the encounter of self with self, a recognition of difference leads naturally to the universalization of sameness as the possibility for communication. There is an ambiguity in language from its inception in the original encounter. In the creation of the realm of freedom where choices are made concerning what is or is not important, what facilitates and what impedes communication and denotation, the ambiguity becomes dangerous, and this danger indicates a need for an answer to the question: What is humanity? The danger calls for a type of discernment by which the danger is mastered. This leads back to the notion of grasping the abyss, the need for the resurrection of *Vernunft* and the ability to listen which is basic to *Vernunft* in its rendering by Tillich as ontological reason.

ii. *Form and form*

The question of what facilitates and what impedes communication and denotation, and the call of that question to a mastering of the abyss also leads to questions concerning the hermeneutical circle, or the relationship of form to itself. These are questions which

concern self-transcendence. Tillich's statement that "Form is one of those concepts which cannot be defined, because every definition presupposes it" (*ST3* 60), is another way of saying, as was presented in the first chapter, that the historical consciousness precedes happenings in such a way that perception is already interpretation. Objects, or happenings which are considered important, the subject matter of history, are organized into a coherent story. But reflection on that story is also part of the interpretive enterprise by which the story was created to begin with. Interpretation, whether constructive or negative in its relationship to historical form does not transcend form. Reflection is never abstraction from form, although it can be abstraction from particular forms. The logic of this is similar to the notion above that languages, or specific linguistic sets, intend toward particular truths, whereas language as language contains a notion of the truth above truths. The only difference is that form is always and forever existential in nature, and the positing of form as an immutable concept, "form", involves a process of abstraction where meaning dissolves. Form in and of itself is a vacuous notion, and its vacuity is the occasion of its problematic nature. How is form, forever relative, to express the truth?

To reiterate material from my first chapter, form is something which must have existential meaning, time is the condition for existential meaning, therefore form cannot transcend itself by transcending time. The self-transcendence of form is always historical self-transcendence. Form as the concept "form" can never attain to an absolute nature, and for it to do so endangers the very freedom which allows form to supersede form in historical change. This is another way of saying, as was described in the analysis of Tillich's tragic hero, that the confusion of essence and representation results in the tragic.

Form is a rendering of the intention toward truth implicit as authenticity in all communication and denotation. But to confuse form with the intention toward truth involves a false mediation between authenticity and truth which disallows Tillich's notion of the sign-event. For Tillich, a break-down of this notion of truth would result in thinking similar to the absolute-revolutionary doctrines of history which part ways with reason in favour of the arbitrary power of the will. To call for the negation of negation as an historical era is the same thing as making an absolute out of a notion of form. It is a denial of the meaning of history which results in a denial of reason and the will rushes in to fill the vacuum. To return to the central argument from my second chapter, the assault on meaning occasioned by an arbitrary act of the will cannot be confronted with the complete rejection of culture found in pessimism. This leads to anxiety which cannot be resolved; unbreakable orbits around unanswerable question; a situation in which the hermeneutical circle turns vicious. The distortion resulting in a false relation of form to itself is an assault on both freedom and meaning.

iii. *Form and substance*

Tillich's discussion of substance, the third element of cultural creativity, presents difficulties, not only because Tillich uses substance in two different ways throughout his writings, but also because he is speaking of something which is prior to conscious existence. Substance is "unconsciously present in a culture, a group, an individual, giving the passion and driving power of meaning to his creations" (*ST3* 60). Tillich argues that a quality of form is its translatability into different languages, mathematics being a good

example as strictly formal, whereas "in poetry...translation is essentially impossible

because poetry is the most direct expression of the substance through an individual" (*ST3*

60). This may be a case of comparing apples and oranges, the most general in one

category with the most particular in another, but in "On the Idea of Theology of Culture"

Tillich argues "*the more form, the more autonomy; the more substance, the more*

theonomy" (**Idea** 26), and

> [t]he revelation of an overwhelming substance occurs in this way: form becomes
> more and more inadequate for the reality that is supposed to be contained by it, so
> that this reality in overwhelming abundance shatters it (**Idea** 26).

Furthermore in the *Theology of Culture* Tillich argues that

> [r]eligion as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of a culture, and
> culture is the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself.
> In abbreviation: religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion
> (*TC* 42).

He goes on to say that

> the fact that every act of man's spiritual life is carried by language, spoken or silent,
> is proof enough for this assertion. For language is the basic cultural creation. On the
> other hand, there is no cultural creation without an ultimate concern expressed in it
> (*TC* 42).

These ideas are very similar to his discussion of dynamics and form from the first volume

of the *Systematic Theology*. Tillich says that

> [e]very form forms something. The question is: What is this "something"? We have
> called it "dynamics," a very complex concept with a rich history and many

connotations and implications. The problematic character of this concept, and of all concepts related to it, is due to the fact that everything which can be conceptualized must have being and that there is no being without form. Dynamics, therefore, cannot be thought as something that is; nor can it be thought as something which is not. It is the *me on*, the potentiality of being, which is nonbeing in contrast to things that have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure nonbeing (*ST1* 179).

In all of these cases an idea of something universally pervasive, though perhaps unconscious, is held in tension with particular forms, as both an empowering and negating agent. In the *Theology of Culture* substance is equated with ultimate concern, "religion as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of a culture". In "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture" theonomy, the rule of God, is marked by cultural creativity with a preponderance of substance over form, and, like Tillich's notion of truth in the sign-event, form is placed under judgement, and negated in its truth value because of the preponderance of substance. This is repeated in *Systematic Theology I* in the discussion of form and dynamics which can serve as a summary of my discussion of the sign-event in the second chapter of this thesis. Substance as the power of being is the affirmation of form, but is also the negation of form; "It is the *me on*, the potentiality of being, which is nonbeing in contrast to things that have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure nonbeing" (*ST1* 179). Suddenly to make an about face and explain the relation of from to substance in terms of the possibility for translation seems remarkably strange.

But the basic elements of the metaphysical notion of substance remains in the more existential notion which Tillich outlines here. Substance is "unconsciously present" in cultural creations, and it gives "passion and driving power" as well as "significance and power of meaning" to the process of cultural creation. These qualities, however, are to be

seen in light of the authenticity relative to particular languages. Tillich argues that

> the encounter with reality on which one language is based differs from the encounter
> with reality in any other language, and this encounter with reality in its totality and
> depth is the substance in the cultural self-creation of life (*ST3* 60).

Though this seems like a direct contradiction to Tillich's idea of the unification of human

concern in a theonomous epoch, where theonomy indicates a predominance of substance

in the cultural self-creation of life, the key to understanding his use of substance in this

instance is that it does not indicate a challenge to the demands of the existential, as can be

seen in the fact that this characterization of substance does not include an idea of

continuous negation. Substance as the *me on* is related to form, as essence is related to

existence, and as such represents the negation of form. Substance in this instance, is purely

an affirmative power relative to particular forms. As such, Tillich can speak about differing

cultures in terms of the substance peculiar to that culture. Substance is the unconscious

determination of a culture's way of existing which becomes conscious through its

expression as formal, it is that which allows for self-understanding, or a culture's

recognition of itself in its creations.

Following the logic of the reconciliation of authenticity and truth in the sign-event,

the relationship between form and substance becomes distorted in the event of a false

reconciliation. If relative substance is given the power of negation proper to substance as

the *me on*, an absolute nature will be attributed to a specific language, style, or culture;

truth will be limited to a relative reality, and all else will be subject to negation. This is

qualitatively different than the type of negation found in the distortion of the relationship

between form and subject matter, as a distortion of subject matter still allows for relative

transformation whereas a distortion of substance is fundamentally a negation of the

dynamic nature of substance. Both, however represent a victory of space over time, and

both represent the power of the demonic. Both represent an inability to listen to what is

other. This similarity has to do with a false understanding of form common to both

situations.

Furthermore, both are connected to an understanding of greatness and what

greatness signifies. In substance as the basis for meaning and power, Tillich's notion of

greatness finds its true expression. Tillich argues that "the great in the qualitative sense

shows a power of being and meaning that makes it a representative of ultimate meaning"

(*ST3* 88). The problem for a culture, therefore, is to come to an understanding that its

substance only represents the ultimate, but also that representation, though not identity,

does not mean a loss of dignity. But, connected to this idea of greatness is also the notion

of self-transcendence. Greatness finds its expression in substance, but this representation

of the ultimate only finds expression in existents transcending themselves in the direction

of the ultimate. An undistorted understanding of substance, therefore, includes an

undistorted understanding of form's relationship to itself. Though substance is

unconscious, substance comes to consciousness through form and the freedom involved in

the self-transcendence of form, and it is the consciousness of what greatness truly signifies

which is the fulfilment of substance. This of course is the idea of the historical

consciousness being fulfilled in the sign-event.

iv. *Form and relationality*

So what is form? Is form an idea, or is it a structure or logical procedure? Is the form itself the really real, or does it express something different from itself? In chapter one space and time were presented as concepts which describe two conflicting qualities of form. Space and time where manners of cultural self-presentation where an attitude of self-relation defined an attitude of other-relation. Therefore, form also includes a relationship to what is other than itself, as affirmation, as negation, or as the coincidence of affirmation and negation. Form is bound up with the problems involved in the "grasping of the abyss", spoken of in chapter two. In the spiritual and historical dimensions it involves a knowledge of what to affirm and what to negate, but also what affirmation and negation signify for the self-relation implicit in form.

Form involves an epistemic stance, a special relation to a specific group of objects. But form also involves the hermeneutical circle, or a self-relation which in wishing to define self contains the intention to transcend the self. The very wish to explain or define form is dependant on the ability to stand outside of or to transcend form. This demands a relationship to one's own thinking which recognizes its nature as formal and therefore bound to a relative epistemology. But, both the demand for this epistemic humility and the urge which brings this demand to light, indicates an idea of the unconditional beyond relative form, and also a notion of self-transcendence somehow connected to this unconditional. The challenge of the hermeneutical circle as a recognition of the dependence for thought on form is to discover the absolute within the relative, without creating a transcendent notion of form.

One thing that becomes clear is that form is more a relationship than it is a static idea. This is not a strange notion for Tillich, as Tillich's ontology is based on a logic of relationality. In fact form is a specific historical and conscious rendering of the relationality found in fundamental ontology. To discover the absolute within the relative, therefore, is not the discovery of a thing, the absolute, as a quality or accident, or even cause of a specific thing, a form. Rather the absolute is to be defined in terms of relationality. By this, to discover the absolute within relative form is to discover a specific type of relationality definitional of the manner in which form becomes form. This requires a concentration on temporal becoming, rather than in spatial subsisting, a concentration on the relationship between the affirmation and negation proper to substance as the *me on*, or the dialectic and dialogic of the sign-event of revelation.

The distortion of form, therefore, is a result of a misappropriation of form and temporality. It occurs when form as based on relationality is conflated with form as a specific thing, set of logical rules, specific group of objects, cultural substance, or style. What this conflation results in is an attitude to negation where negation is not part of the process of becoming formal, as it would be for Tillich's notion of historical truth. Rather, a logic of delimitation is actualized, where form is maintained through negating what is other to form. What this allows for is a type of negation whereby relative truth, or the authenticity of a specific language is put in the place of the truth beyond relative truths.

v. *Form and Fallenness*

Before undertaking the last leg of my analysis of this section in Tillich, a discussion

of technology and language, illusion and distortion, I would like to suggest another reconciliation. I made the claim that the result of distortion was the fragmentation of the originary intent of language, the intention toward the truth. I will now revise this notion with the claim that distortion is the result of a false mediation between an authenticity to existential structure in any language or cultural expression with the truth beyond truth. The first idea of distortion however, can serve the purpose of highlighting the idea that specific languages, even though based on an intention toward a truth relative to their idea of importance, need not negate the truth beyond relative truths, but do present a fundamental ambiguity in human existence. If either notion is held over-against the other as a dogma, the ability to listen to the judgement of the sign-event is denied, and the reconciliation of essence and existence will be resisted. Ambiguity is the condition for the possibility of distortion. Fallenness is that state of existence where distortion is a possibility. Therefore fragmentation, as a fact of Fallenness, is at the heart of the possibility for distortion. In fact, distortion is that manner of existing in which the fact of fragmentation is obscured; distortion obscures the possibility for distortion. When a language perpetuates itself through confusing the relative with the absolute, through confusing an authentic rendering of the logic of its intention with that which would give that logic ultimate meaning, that language is involved in obscuring the fact of the possibility for distortion.

c) Technology and language, illusion and distortion

In this chapter, through my analysis of Tillich, I have characterized technological reason in three primary ways. The first was the anticipatory claim that technological reason is based on a language of Fallenness, or that mode of representation or symbolization by which Fallenness is obscured. The second claim was that technical rationality is a chosen inability to listen, a choice which limits the realm of freedom to the possibilities inherent in that inability, and therefore perpetuates that inability as systemic anti-communication. Third, technical rationality has been contrasted to ontological reason. Technical rationality is a type of thinking which places subject over-against object, whereas ontological reason aims at allowing the subjectivity of the object to become apparent as an ethical demand. In all of these cases, technical rationality is being described as a distortion of fundamental ontology.

An analysis of distortion can take place by way of an analysis of fundamental ontology because distortion has the same structure as fundamental ontology, it has its ground in the coincidence of the relationship of self and self, with self and other self. As such, distortion has been described in four primary ways: distortion of freedom; distortion of the condition for the possibility for revelation; misappropriation of the temporal nature of form; that which obscures the possibility for distortion. The difficulty in describing distortion is that distortion never appears as itself, but rather in the guise of language and grounded epistemology. As such distortion is always distortion of something. It is similar

to form in that the abstraction of an idea "distortion" from particular instances for the sake of defining an absolute itself risks distortion, because distortion is a relational idea rather than something which exists in and of itself. As such, the four characterizations of distortion can be found in my ultimate characterization: *distortion is the result of a false mediation between an authenticity to existential structure in any language or cultural expression with the truth beyond truth*. What this means is that the notion "authenticity" is not antithetical to distortion. Distortion can result in those truths relative to a particular language; the language proper to technical rationality does involve statements of truth. Facts, mathematics, and formulations of cause and effect by which effects can be foreseen correctly and exactly reproduced, are all based on statements of truth. This can be seen in those situations where the application of the logic of mechanics beyond the immediately given state of technological achievement perpetuates itself through being proven pragmatically; the laws of mechanics work, and this is proven by their not being limited to what people have made in the past. Distortion is not distortion of statements of relative truth. To argue this would be to conflate distortion with the incorrect, with simple mistakes, with instances of bad judgment, with mistaking Picasso for Klee, or Wagner for Mahler. Distortion is something which pervades the truth statements of particular languages, as it is the language itself, the logic of its relationality, which constitutes distortion. This was seen in the analysis of the triad of elements which make up language. The distortion which results from a false relationship of form with subject matter, form with itself, or form with substance, is not antithetical to authenticity, though it might create a situation in which a language has no access to the truth beyond truths. It is for

this reason that distortion can be insidious, as there is nothing within a distorted language which challenges its demonic aspect. A distorted language is not in a conscious relationship to the negative as the *me on*, or that which is symbolized as divine judgement. A distorted language is one which does not give voice to Tillich's notion of historical truth, because it does not allow for a dialectic and dialogic between authenticity and the truth beyond truths. Distorted language does not involve a union of affirmation and negation, and the temporal nature of form is not recognized. The idea that form attains to truth in the moment of its negation in self-transcendence, is a completely alien notion, and one which would promote anxiety.

i. Logos: *technology and language*

My conversation with Tillich's text has reached the point where technology is reintroduced and its relationship to language defined. Tillich argues that

> As language liberates from bondage to the "here and now" through universals, so the technical handling of the encountered reality liberates from bondage to the naturally given conditions of existence by the production of tools (*ST3* 61).

He narrows his definition of technology to the lived world of humans in his assertion that while "[h]igher animals use things at hand as tools under particular conditions...they do not create tools as tools for unlimited use" (*ST3* 61). What is involved in this distinction is the notion that technology as a human cultural way of appropriating a *world* involves the "use [of] tools beyond the scope of [immediate] plan[s]" (*ST3* 61). Involved in the creation of tools is the notion of liberation "from the bondage to the `here and now'".

Because of this tools serve the general function as that by which the environment is superseded and transformed into a world. This can be seen in the fact that their specific functions are defined by an idea which is valid in all instances where their specific function can be employed. Tools have their origins in general concepts or universals. In them the immediately given gives way to the realization that there is an underlying structure, or *logos*, by which the environment can be apprehended in terms of general principles. It is through this reasoning that Tillich joins language and technology as foundational to culture, because the genesis of universal concepts is also basic to the origins of language. Tillich argues,

> [m]an produces tools as tools, and for this the conception of universals is presupposed, i.e., the power of language. The power of tools is dependant on the power of language. Logos precedes everything. If man is called *homo faber*, he is implicitly called *anthropos logikos*, i.e. man who is determined by the logos and who is able to use the meaningful word.

This statement, while remaining true to Tillich's earlier discussion of language, also contains a significant development on that discussion. Tillich's ontology, or that structure or logic which is fulfilled in the dialogical nature of the sign-event, is now placed under a determining power. Tillich agues that "logos precedes everything" and that *anthropos logikos* is "man who is determined by the logos and who is able to use the meaningful word". In my interpretation of passages above I said that in the creation of tools the immediately given gives way to the realization that there is an underlying structure, or *logos*, to existence. Fundamentally, that fact that there are tools which are specifically tools points to the notion that existence has a meaningful structure which can be

interpreted rationally. The creation of tools is an anticipation that that structure exists and persists, that in the next moment the tool will not be betrayed by an existential subversion of the universal which gave rise to its creation.

Fundamentally, this idea of *logos* as basic to encountered reality is the ground of the event by which the encounter of self with self and self with the other self becomes a demand for ethical interaction. It is the basis for the idea of humanity, or that which is the truly universal. *Logos* is the existential condition for the possibility of meaningful interaction, and therefore the condition for the possibility of dialogue.

To say that the *logos* structure of reality is the condition for the possibility of meaningful interaction is also to say that it is the condition for the possibility of both listening to the other and responding to that other in the recognition of a fundamental unity of intention. To revisit my discussion of Tillich's notion of ontological reason, this notion of meaningful interaction is captured in Tillich's statement that "the mind receives and reacts. In receiving reasonably, the mind grasps its world; in reacting reasonably the mind shapes its world" (*ST1* 76). In ontological reason, that reason which is based on the logic of fundamental ontology, technology and language are unified in their intention to create a world of meaning beyond the immediately given. This is the same intention which allows for the interrelation of reflection and action, the grasping and shaping moments of ontological reason.

ii. Logos: *society, distortion and illusion*

To incorporate a central theme from chapter two, the *logos* structure of reality, as

grasped in ontological reason represents the possibility for a rational society. In fact, to say that there is a *logos* structure is to say that rationality is not exhausted by *Verstand*, but has its roots in something beyond the simple union of thought and action which Tillich claims is the problem with instrumental reason. To posit a *logos* could be construed as ideological, or a "theory which is not based on a will to transform reality...an attempt to preserve existing evils by a theoretical construction which justifies them" (*ST1* 76). This could be argued because the positing of a *logos* defines reason as somehow existing over-against or beyond humanity. Reason is a static entity which transcends human history and therefore is not necessarily involved in human transformation, its only contingent relation to history used to justify an ahistorical search for the more satisfying realm of the necessary. But the concept of ontological reason discounts this possibility. To say that *logos* is somehow disinterested is to forget Tillich's notion that the mind is also structured as *logos*. In fact, to construe *logos* with an entity is extremely problematic. It is rather a structure, a way by which existence appears so as to make language and technology possible. Furthermore, *logos* as already mentioned, is not exhausted by any particular language, but could be conceived as that which makes the authenticity of a particular language possible by supplying the notion "truth", but in that granting of the notion urges particular languages to transcend themselves. *Logos* is that suggestion of the possibility of reasoned transformation which makes the shattering of illusions possible. Its suggestion is fundamentally anti-ideological, and as such is the corrective on notions of common sense, or the ground of speculation in Adorno's Left-Hegelian rendering of the concept "wisdom". This brings my analysis to another reconciliation anticipated at the end of my

second chapter. The reconciliation of distortion and illusion.

I have argued that, for Tillich, technological reason is not an epi-phenomenon of class-interests, or is not an ideology in the Marxian sense, defining it as a distortion of fundamental ontology. But in the immediately previous discussion, and at the end of chapter two, instrumental reason (*Verstand*) is defined as ideological. It is a unity of action and knowledge which justifies or acts to preserve existing evils. In this sense it is an illusion of rational activity because it seeks an end other than the one pointed to by its concept.

A reconciliation of distortion and illusion, the difficulty of which kept Foucault posthumously arguing with Habermas, can be approached in Tillich's statement that

> [p]reservation and growth in the organic dimension are surpassed wherever tools as tools appear. The decisive difference is that the inner aim (*tele*) of the organic process are determined by the process, whereas the external aims (purposes) of technical production are not determined but represent infinite possibilities.

The ontology of culture describes the point at which *telos* becomes purpose, or the possibility for life to supersede its internal determinations or determining processes, is actualized. This is another way of saying that life, through a concept of purpose, comes to consciousness of itself and in that becomes free. In technology organic processes can be conceptualized, understood, and directed toward a purpose not suggested in the processes themselves, and these purposes can generate more purposes. Tillich's commentary on this is that

> this leads to a tension from which many conflicts of our contemporary culture arise: the perversion of means and ends by the unlimited character of the technical

possibilities. Means become ends simply because they are possible. But if the possibilities become purposes only because they are possibilities, the genuine meaning of purpose is lost. Every possibility may be actualized. No resistance is forthcoming in the name of an ultimate end. The production of means becomes an end in itself, as in the case of the compulsive talker talking becomes an end in itself. Such distortion may effect a whole culture in which the production of means becomes the end beyond which there is no end (*ST3* 61-62).

This, of course, is a type of bad infinity. A veneer of meaning is given to an infinite self-perpetuation of a type of rationality in which logic is divorced from its concept. Logic is the suggestion of reason, *logos*, *telos*, and rational purpose. The claim of logic is that there are rules in thought which supersede the particular instances of thought where the particular instances do not determine the form of the universal. Logic is the suggestion that there is a correspondence between structures of thought and structures of the objective world which can be anticipated. This idea is repeated in the *logos* structure of reality, where the structure of reality is such that words can be applied to it as universal concepts, and that tools can be crafted for purposes beyond the immediately given. This idea is also implicit in the idea of *telos* which suggests that natural processes can be interpreted in terms of universal concepts, and as such, the dynamics of particular instances of those processes can be anticipated. As such, logic is not simply self-positing, but is the statement that there is an intelligibility beyond this particular instance of logic. Each instance of logic, though driven by the internal exigence of its rules, and the relation between those rules and its particular statements is without meaning unless correlated to the generalized principle which states that logic aims at the truth concerning things. In this, to speak of a situation where logic becomes divorced from its concept is to speak of an infinite self-positing which lacks a generalized notion of truth which directs this self-

positing.

What results is a one-sidedness where negation occurs only for the sake of self-positing; or a type of thinking which is not self-critical. In Adorno's understanding thinking which is not self-critical is thinking which does not admit difference. What this means is that the concept becomes vacuous, or does not challenge the form of its rendering and is reduced to a value relative to its particular rendering; the concept, as an ultimate end does not appear as a challenge and a negation of the form. The idea of purpose is obscured by a multitude of purposes, purposes which cannot be universalized as a guiding reference.

In this degradation of the notion of purpose, the word "purpose" experiences a fissure between its expressive and denotative aspects which mirrors the fissure between logic and its concept. This can be seen in the idea that possibility becomes the concept associated with purpose. Purpose is only meaningful when its concept contains the notion that the new, actualized through purpose, bears a structural and conceptual similarity to that purpose. As was argued in chapter one, purpose is meaningful only as that mode of historical consciousness which ensures the union of freedom and meaning. When the "production of means becomes an end in itself", when there is "[n]o resistance forthcoming from an ultimate end", purpose loses its status as that which interprets the progress of its own manifestation as the perfection of freedom.

In a technological epoch, purpose, as a concept, becomes an ideology, or something which hides its vacuity behind the remaining shadow of its meaning, for the sake of perpetuating a social illness. It is something which cannot risk Adorno's question *After Auschwitz?* because in doing so its sense will be seen in stark contrast to its

intention. What it represents will bear no real conceptual relation to its self-presentation. The self-positing of technical rationality aims only at the perpetuation of the vacuity of its concept; the idea which technical rationality joins with the word "purpose" is this very notion of self-positing.

In technical rationality correctness is maintained as the measure of its individual purposes, but this notion of correctness is a degradation of the concept of truth. Technical rationality, in creating a fissure between the denotative and expressive elements of the word "purpose" or "truth", becomes an infinite positing of the same, with no negation; "the production of means becomes an end beyond which there is no end" (*ST3* 62).

But this is not a necessary state of affairs for technological rationality. The technical can be taken under the wing of a higher purpose. This is where Tillich's image of the compulsive talker is useful. Talking does not always imply compulsion. As already seen, for Tillich, talking is basic to the creation of meaning, it is generally thought of as expression governed by meaning; talking is expression which refers to something beyond itself. Talking employs signs. Signs are only intelligible, only become referential when there is a mutual recognition between two talkers of what the signs refer to. Talking generally means mutual expression within shared structures of meaning. Talking implies an idea of community, or a purpose or *telos* beyond a particular event of talking. But compulsive talking is a distortion of the concept of community which gives talking meaning. "Talking" as the logic or form of communication is divorced from its concept. The denotative aspect of language is superseded by the expressive aspect. Talking becomes pure expression without any reference beyond self-reference. Talking, as a form

or logic of communal expression, gives a veneer of meaning to a self-referential

compulsion. But the true meaning of compulsive talking bears no true conceptual relation

to the self-presentation involved. The fact that a sense of truth, or the veneer of the

original intention of talking remains and throws light on the contradiction involved

indicates that this distortion of language is not necessary. The same argument applies to

the distortion of technology.

iii. Logos, *Distortion and illusion: the reconciliation of logic and concept*

But what my analysis is aiming toward is the point at which distortion and illusion

meet and are reconciled. This is already pointed to in the idea that the true meaning of

compulsive talking bears no true conceptual relation to its self-presentation, but the idea

should be dealt with further. When logic is divorced from its concept, the remaining

veneer of meaning turns against the concept from which it is derived in order to obscure

the vacuity of self-presentation. This can be seen most clearly when Tillich speaks about

distorted language as the inability to listen. Here the distortion is encountered as cultural

distortion and a moral fault; the inability to listen is a freely chosen inability. The freedom

connected with cultural creativity is central to the meaning of culture. Culture furthers

freedom and freedom furthers culture. But the concept behind the unity of denotation and

expression, the concept of truth, implies limitations on freedom, it is a "resistance

forthcoming in the name of an ultimate end", or the condition for the possibility of

"thought thinking against itself". What this means, is that the concept represents a

dialogical challenge to the dialectic of cultural creativity. The inability to listen, a freely

chosen inability is a mode of thought which denies the subjectivity of that which it is in relation with. As such, it is a phantom of objectivity which through the appearance of promoting freedom through rationality, through a directing self-limitation, obscures its own bad infinity. The culture of technology which Tillich warns against is not necessary. Rather it is constituted within the realm of freedom. In technical rationality freedom is maintained through the anti-dialogical strategy of restricting the actual to the self-relation of the subject. Technical culture is concerned with its realm of freedom, it is concerned with itself as cultural, and it is this concern for freedom which serves as a concept of truth, or the veneer of meaning which obscures that fact that the sense of technical culture bears no true conceptual relation to the intention of technical culture. In the realm of self-constitution distortion can become ideology.

Technical culture intends toward self-perpetuation through the destruction of difference in the name of furthering freedom. The meaning attributable to this through reference to the concept proper to a union of denotation and expression, is as a social evil. A distortion of denotation and expression, is freely chosen as a mode of cultural self-constitution, as a form of self-limitation which parades as a rational furthering of freedom. This is a clear example of the logic of morality divorced from the concept of its logic, where the very word "moral" (rational, freedom, purpose) casts a shadow of legitimacy on something antithetical to its concept. The simultaneity of the encounter of self with self and self with other self is the condition for the possibility of a union of freedom and meaning. A mode of thinking which is anti-dialogical is therefore antithetical to the union of freedom and meaning because it refuses to hear the demand for the clarification of the

concept of humanity which the other represents.

3. *But where the danger is, grows the saving power also*: the Fall revisited

The original encounter is self-transcending because basic to it is the demand to reconstitute its relationality within a concept of humanity, a concept which both guides and challenges the logic of a given culture. But what if the concept is not allowed to form itself? Worse, what if the concept is degraded because the demand of the original encounter is no longer felt? The word humanity remains, and the notion that it refers to the communal life of people, but it becomes a sign in search of the event of its manifestation; it can be interpreted in terms of the demands of the delimitations relative to a particular culture. Humanity can become a spatial and demonic notion. Here the "Fall" is apparent as an historical event, because the event by which the sign of humanity is made manifest can only be described as humanity's separation from the unconditional demand found in the origins of humanity. When distortion becomes ideology, distortion becomes an historical power used for self-definition. In this situation self-destruction or death becomes the creative power of culture. One is left with Adorno's question and perhaps his pessimism.

It was stated earlier that *Fallenness is that state of existence where distortion is a possibility*, and that *when a language perpetuates itself through confusing the relative with the absolute, through confusing an authentic rendering of the logic of its intention with that which would give that logic ultimate meaning, that language is involved in*

obscuring the fact of the possibility for distortion. Ideology is a use of the fact of

Fallenness for the sake of the perpetuation of existing evils. A technological culture, in fact

the culture which Tillich sees Western culture gravitating toward, persists in its

degradation of the concept of humanity though the use of that very degradation as a

measure of truth; the freedom perceived in unlimited technical possibilities. Technological

rationality, in this case, is involved in using distortion to hide the fact of distortion, using

relative truth for the sake of seperating itself from ultimate truth, because its relative truth

cannot survive the corrective on it which ultimate truth represents.

It was also stated that *fragmentation, as a fact of Fallenness, is at the heart of the*

possibility for distortion. In fact, distortion is that manner of existing in which the fact of

fragmentation is obscured. When technical rationality becomes the dominant mode of

cultural relationality, fragmentation, that fact of Fallenness by which relative truth can

come into conflict with ultimate truth, becomes the basis for relationality. This is another

way of saying that technical rationality employs that type of language which aims at the

destruction of language; it is the type of culture which aims at the destruction of culture.

The true meaning of the language of technical rationality bears no conceptual relation to

its self-presentation. The language of technical culture claims to be interested in

meaningful human interaction, in freedom, purpose and truth, but is involved only in the

separation of humanity from these things. In its nature as anti-dialogical, it aims at the

separation of existence from essence, of the truths relative to particular languages and the

truth beyond relative truths. The language of technical culture is the language of

Fallenness, and through employing this language a culture chooses the route of untruth,

distortion, illusion, and death.

But fundamental ontology shows that anti-dialogics is a chosen state, or a state which is the result of the self-constitution of a culture within the delimitations of a chosen inability; it is something which takes place within the realm of freedom and meaning. It is in this idea that anti-dialogics is chosen that Adorno's question can be answered. In the notion of anti-dialogics, Fallenness becomes a matter of choice, and Tillich's ideas of the metaphysical and existential notions of the Fall are reconciled. When distortion becomes an ideology, when its self-contradictory nature is made use of as an historical force, both the separation of essence and existence, and the forgetting of the original encounter between self and self become a moral problem which can be comprehended historically. What this means is that the Fall becomes a problem for the historical consciousness. The Fall becomes the very horizon of self-questioning which gives rise to notions of ultimate concern. In becoming an historical event, the separation between essence and existence loses its necessary and absolute character. Separation does not disappear, but it can be spoken to in the dialectic and dialogic of historical self-creation. Through an understanding of the meaning of technology, humanity can once again experience the demand to inhabit its concept. I will, therefore, end this analysis, these reconciliations, with Tillich's words of hope which also formulate the challenge:

> It also - liberating technology - must be liberated. Its mythos must also flow from the great mythos of the groaning of all living creatures and the yearning for a new being in which spirit and nature are reconciled (*TS* 60).

Conclusion:
A Conversation with Parmenides

Much of my analysis of Tillich has revolved around the ideas of historical power, becoming historical, and historical self-interpretation, or the interrelationship of time, meaning and freedom. But I have also discussed Tillich's ontology, his myths of origin, or his redefinition of strife, or the fact of existential disunity. Bringing these two levels of meaning together results in the conclusions that history is that stage where existential tensions receive form. Another way of saying this is that history is that stage where facts receive form. Tillich only refers to things as factual if they are originary, if they are basic to structures of meaning. Thus Fallenness is a fact, whereas historical events are not. Historical events are first manifestations of existential tensions, and second formed by historical self-interpretation. Everything is involved in the realm of the factual, but no one thing or event can claim factuality. The claim that something is factual is merely tautological, it does not advance understanding. Where questioning becomes interesting is when it aims at discerning the relation between form and factuality, between existential structure and the historical expression of that structure.

This idea of factuality is fundamentally the notion that historical self-consciousness is consciousness mediated by symbols, or structures of meaning. It is also the understanding that the negation of something as untruthful presents very basic problems.

The reduction of truth to a non-existential notion of factuality, the realm of common-sense, positivism, and instrumental reason, makes out of negation the positing of a dualism between the factual and the non-factual, those things which have being and those things which have no being. But what does this line truly represent? My conversation with Tillich has aimed at an answer to this question.

Lectures on Parmenides have always troubled me, especially when unicorns are held up as examples as things which do not exist. If they do not exist, in some manner, how can we posit them as things which do not exist? Do they not occupy the consciousness of our culture? What is the status of mythical beasts, and of myth in general? When the knowledge of the cartographer reaches its limits is the positing of dragons, chaos monsters, a mere phantasy or a mistake? Why does he not write "here is the point at which something becomes nothing"? Or is this what dragons mean for the burgeoning of the sciences which cartography represented? Positivism does not realize the conversation it is involved in. Or, as Gaston Bachelard would argue, the sciences do not realize that their conclusions have their bases in reveries,[6] that describing is always interpreting, and that interpreting is not limited to one specialized faculty of consciousness. Interpretation has a deep origin in the processes of life and in it the line between conscious and unconscious existence is not always respected.

Bachelard says

[a]nd it is always like that, through a kind of extra pleasure - like dessert - that fire

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[6]   Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, trns. Alan C.M. Ross (Beacon Press, Boston, 1964).

shows itself a friend of man. It does not confine itself to cooking; it makes things crisp and crunchy. It puts the golden crust on the griddle cake; it gives a material form to man's festivities. As far back in time as we can go, the gastronomical value has always been more highly praised than the nutritive value, and it is in joy and not in sorrow that man first discovered his intellect (*Psychoanalysis of Fire* 15-16).

This is a thought which I kept in mind when reading Adorno's discussion of death, as a sort of remedy. But, as *pharmakon*, as both cure and poison, it prompted two questions. Is Bachelard saying the same thing as Adorno, but in reverse? Is he affirming the value of ideology, of a culture of aesthetics which uses beauty, pleasure and the sublime in order to hide deeper, contradictory motivations? But this would mean that, for Bachelard, ideology is prior to the phenomenon of which it is an epi-phenomenon. Bachelard does not make this mistake, and therefore he is not justifying cultural evil. And so my second question. If it was in joy that humanity discovered her intellect, that her environment became meaningful, how is it that the intellect has become so deadly?

This question of how thought has become dangerous is very similar to the questions asked by Critical Theory, Heidegger, and Tillich. In my analysis of Tillich I approached this question in several ways by asking: What is truth? What is form? What is distortion? What is illusion?; and I outlined Tillich's response to the danger inherent in thinking with the guiding question for the thesis as a whole: What is the point at which technical rationality, as an historical power, can be superseded by history? I suggested that central to Tillich's understanding of this question was his idea of the battle between space and time, that fact of existence which presents thought with two types of negation, negation which aims at self-perpetuation through a negation of difference, and negation which aims at self-transcendence through negating the possibility for the former. Self-

transcendence becomes a possibility only when difference is recognized, when a culture realizes that it stands in tension with the essential nature of humanity, that its logic is divorced from its concept. Self-transcendence is a recognition of difference which seeks reconciliation through dialogue with that which gives the concept of humanity its meaning, with that in which the demand to participate is based. Reconciliation is not an obliteration of difference, but is rather the event in which logic is fulfilled in its concept, when dialectics and dialogics meet.

But what of the danger, what of that type of thinking in which the intellect becomes deadly? Tillich points to technical rationality, or the technological epoch as the genesis of deadly thought. A technical epoch represents a chosen inability, and a divorce of logic from its concept in which human degradation becomes a systemic necessity. This involves anti-dialogics, a situation in which a listening and responding other is not recognized, and a situation in which the logic of human degradation aims at an obliteration of this listening and responding other. For thought, this means a continual positing with no negation, a situation in which criticism of thought is denied; thought cannot turn against itself. For culture, this type of self-relation has been seen most clearly in the totalitarian organization of life under Stalin and Hitler.

In the Fall, the intellect is expelled from the joy in which it was discovered, and is set to labour in a land of war waged between giants, a battle between time and space, between tyranny and freedom, dogmatism and critical thought. And in the origins of intellectual labour, positivism and instrumental reason, empiricism and technological rationality themselves are comprehended mythologically, as fantastic beasts. But are they

beasts of chaos or order and what names do they give to these opposing giants? How do they interpret themselves mythologically? For them to turn against themselves and do so would represent a turning away from that dualism in which non-being is seen as a realm of phantasy over-against which being must be infinitely posited. This is not to say, merely, that technological rationality is not as objective as it believes itself to be, but rather aims at the clarification of that discussion which technical rationality is engaged in. For positive sciences phantasy is dangerous, the region of dragons becomes a region of flesh and blood dragons, they are not engaged in shadow boxing. A technological epoch takes over this superstition that dragons, if posited, must be hot to the touch, and unlike the dragon portrayed on the cathedral in Basil whose, "size seriously challenges his ability to inspire terror", as my father will tell his students, should be subject to a system of measurement which can truly ascertain their ferocity. In a technological epoch, the region of dragons is a true danger to health and safety and must be closed down indefinitely for repairs.

An epoch of technical rationality is engaged in a curious state of affairs in which, through demythologizing, it gives mythical entities bodies and geographical locations, it divorces "facts" from the existential structure, "factuality"; its principle of chaos becomes a thing out there which can and therefore should be controlled. But in doing this it challenges the notion of subjectivity, because that thing out there is itself a subject. In challenging subjectivity it challenges the encounter of self with self, and in this the concept of humanity. A technological epoch represents the transformation of humanism into its opposite, in its cartography the region of dragons is the realm of freedom and meaning; freedom and meaning are given the name of chaos. But in marking this region on its map,

a threshold remains for the possibility of humanity's self-transcendence.

My thesis aimed at locating this threshold in Tillich's thought. In contextualizing Tillich's discussion of fundamental ontology in his notion of history and the attendant relationship between freedom and meaning, form was defined as an historical rendering of that which is fundamental to human relationality. This rendering may appear as either true or distorted, where a distorted rendering implies some kind of fissure between subject and object, or between authenticity and truth. When distortion becomes a freely chosen mode of relationality, however, as it does in technical rationality, when it becomes an ideology, or the clothing of cultural evil in the illusion of a correspondence between authenticity and truth, distortion can be dealt with historically; a culture can become conscious of the distortions it is involved with. For Tillich, distortion is an historical expression of existential estrangement as estrangement represents the possibility for distortion. This means that, for Tillich, human Fallenness becomes an historical power, a mode of cultural self-interpretation, when the distortion of fundamental ontology becomes an ideology. Fallenness is chosen, but as chosen it can be confronted with movements toward reconciliation. Reconciliation, too, becomes an historical power. Tillich's notion of the sign-event is the medium for historical reconciliation, and though always a fragmentary or non-absolute reconciliation remains a vision of that truth by which utopian anticipation does not betray itself.

As Adorno has shown, utopian anticipation betrays itself in the denial of difference at the heart of the search for truth. Both Tillich and Adorno seek to bring to light a type of thinking in which a notion of difference is an ever-present challenge to positive

predication. For Tillich, the search for the divine name contains two interrelated moments. In the first moment, the divine as absolute Other is given a cultural designation. This can result in a domestication of the concept of divinity where Otherness is forgotten by the process of naming, cultural form given priority over the fundamental strangeness of what is Other. But this naming can also occur from the perspective of a type of representation (ie. ontological reason and the sign-event) by which a recognition of Otherness is always given priority over form. This type of representation allows the second moment in naming the divine to be historically manifest, to be part of the self-consciousness of a culture, this being the recognition that the divine represents a truth which forever subverts any historically conditioned notion of truth. The point at which this subversion becomes the historical challenge which points to the reconciliation of history with its concept, of culture with humanity, is that moment in which technology can become a vehicle for human fulfilment, rather than a vehicle for self-degradation.

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