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THE POLARITY OF DYNAMICS AND FORM

The Basic Tension in Paul Tillich’s Thinking

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the idea of the polarity of dynamics and form in Tillich’s thinking. The tension of the polarity of dynamics and form is the starting-point of Tillich’s thinking, and the polarity has its ground in God. The analysis shows that Tillich’s thinking can be interpreted with the three functions of life: self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence. Explicitly, the polarity of dynamics and form is the basis for the self-creation of life but it can be found also in the other functions of life.

Tillich’s ontology and description of the New Being are based on the idea of self-integration: the ideal is the unity and balance of dynamics and form, and both of the elements are equally important. Form remains unbroken and form is the essence of a thing. There are forms of the self-transcendence of form: even if the form is transcended, this happens within the form. This is the way that Tillich unites the classical and the modern view of dynamics and form. If we are ready to accept Tillich’s system as coherent, we will have to accept this kind of dialectical thinking. The first two volumes of Systematic Theology emphasize the unity and balance of dynamics and form.

The situation changes when Tillich moves to the self-creation of life. In self-creation, dynamics as vitality breaks through the form and creates new forms. There is a moment of chaos between the old and the new form, and this gives a possibility for creation or destruction. This view is different compared to self-integration and the classical view of form: the modern view of dynamics and form becomes dominant. The third function of life is self-transcendence, and it can be used to interpret Tillich’s views of life and history: the Spirit or the Spiritual Presence transcends the finite forms and manifests itself in different forms. Self-creation and self-transcendence sometimes blend with each other, because they both emphasize the dynamic side of the polarity. Tillich wants to include the three functions of life in one system, and this creates the basic tension and the conceptual problems in his thinking.

In the ontological context, Tillich gives a classical definition of form: form makes a thing what it is, it is its essence; this indicates self-integration. In the self-creation of life, creation is always creation of form, and every new form is made possible only by breaking through the old form. The element of form
becomes static compared to the classical view of form. In self-transcendence, the Spirit transcends the finite forms and manifests itself in different forms: the connection between dynamics and form loosens, and the form element is expressed in “finite forms”. In self-integration, dynamics is in unity and balance with form; in self-creation, dynamics as the vitality of life breaks through the form; in self-transcendence, the dynamic substance transcends the forms.

Tillich uses the polarity of dynamics and form in a symbolic way to speak about God. In the ontological context, the ideal is the unity and balance of the elements. The power of being or the abyss or the ground of being express the dynamic side of the polarity. The element of meaning and structure is logos, which unites meaningful structure with creativity. God’s Spirit combines the ontological elements: the Spirit is the unity of power and meaning. However, the emphasis is different in the context of self-transcendence where the Spiritual Presence is dynamic and transcends all the forms.

There are three main symbols that Tillich uses to talk about God and they can be interpreted using the three functions of life: God as “Being-Itself” corresponds to the unity and balance of dynamics and form and to the self-integration of life. God as “the Power of Being” corresponds to the self-creation of life where dynamics breaks through the form. God as “the Spirit” corresponds to the self-transcendence of life where the dynamic substance transcends the forms.

The elements of the ontological polarities belong essentially together in an unbroken unity, but in finitude, polarity becomes tension where the elements draw away from one another. The New Being in Jesus as the Christ is essential being under the conditions of existence. There are no traits of existential estrangement in Jesus, and it becomes indirectly clear that the balance of dynamics and form was not distorted in Jesus’ life. The perfect balance of dynamics and form is achieved in the Kingdom of God.

Tillich’s thinking combines different influences. There is a strong Aristotelian strain in the classical definition of form and in the idea of self-integration. The description of the essential and existential state of things indicates the Platonic scheme of essence and existence and the views of existentialism. The idea of self-creation and the modern view of dynamics and form has been influenced by Schelling and the philosophy of life, and it is near the views of process philosophy. The dynamic substance in self-transcendence mirrors the idea of dynamis panton in Neo-Platonism, and Tillich’s view of history also mirrors Hegelian views.
PREFACE

I first became acquainted with Paul Tillich’s thinking more than twenty years ago when I read his Systematic Theology. I wrote to my note book that I have never read any theology so close to my own thinking. That started a process of studying and learning. Later I used Tillich’s theology in the analysis of contemporary rock culture. At that time, however, I started to notice some problems in Tillich’s thinking that I could not solve: there seemed to be a tension between the ontological starting points and the cultural theological notions of his system. This started the research process for this dissertation. Even if my text is critical at points, I still appreciate Tillich’s theology as one of the outstanding interpretations of the Christian message in the last century. In theology, we will have to go on with the questions he leaves us.

I would like to thank many people who have contributed to my work. Professor Miikka Ruokanen accepted my theme for dissertation and has given me support during the years of examination in his seminar together with Dr. Timo Vasko. Professor Pauli Annala has given me a lot of advice and criticism for my work. Professor Eeva Martikainen and Professor Tuomo Mannermaa have read the text and given valuable comments. I am deeply grateful that I have had the chance to meet Professor Langdon Gilkey and Professor John Clayton who have helped me to understand Tillich’s thinking. My English text has been corrected by Donald Smart.

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Finally, I want to thank my wife Hannele and my children Miia, Antti and Essi-Reetta for their support and endurance. In my family, the polarity of dynamics and form finds its best expression.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The starting points for the examination

Paul Tillich\(^1\) is no doubt one of the great theologians of the century. His influence has been great especially in America where he was ranked as the major influence on systematic theologians two decades ago,\(^2\) but the impulses given by his work have spread to other parts of the world as well. However, no uniform school of thought has developed after him. Many theologians have been inspired by his thoughts, but they have also interpreted and applied them in their own direction.\(^3\) Frederick J. Parrella says that “Tillich’s greatest legacy may be visible not only in the depths of his own systematic thinking but in the power of his thought to inspire others to seek answers to questions unthinkable to Tillich during his life.”\(^4\)

Tillich’s philosophical theology has evoked different kinds of responses, both critical and affirmative. There are very positive valuations of Tillich’s thinking,\(^5\) but the difficulties of Tillich’s language have also evoked an ironical accusation that, in spite of Tillich’s importance to communication,

\(^1\) Paul Tillich was born in Prussia in 1886. He became a Doctor of Philosophy in 1911 and obtained the highest academic degree available in theology in 1912. He worked in Germany until 1933 when he was dismissed because he opposed the ideas of National Socialism. After that he moved to the United States where he worked from 1933-55 in the Union Theological Seminary, and 1955-62 as a professor at Harvard University. After he retired, he was invited to work at the University of Chicago. Tillich died in 1965.

\(^2\) Newport 1984, 16 refers to a study in 1977 where 554 North American systematic theologians were asked about which person they have affinity of thought and from whom they have drawn significant insights; Tillich ranked in first place as the major influence upon American theologians. Another study found Tillich’s Systematic Theology as the most widely used textbook among North American systematic theologians. On the basis of statistics of doctoral dissertations, Newport says that no other religious thinker has been discussed as much as Paul Tillich.

\(^3\) See e.g. Tracy 1985, 260-277.

\(^4\) Parrella 1995, xvi.

\(^5\) E.g. Randall 1952, 161 concludes after a detailed analysis of Tillich’s ontology: “Tillich is ... the philosopher, whose appeal lies in his mastery of reason and rational argument. Paul Tillich seems to me not only the ablest Protestant theologian of the present day, but also by far the most persuasive exponent of the philosophy of existentialism, and what is more to the point, a real contributor to the present-day revival of metaphysical inquiry. He is a first-rate philosophical mind.”
there is no agreement about what he has in fact said. In the Introduction to the Main Works, volume 6, Gerd Hummel explains Tillich’s basic motives in the following way: "The real motive of Tillich's ontological theology hence is a pastoral or even therapeutical one. Its truth is neither to be found in the appropriate concepts nor in a self-contained system but in its offer to stand anxiety. That is what makes it so eminently related to person and situation."

Tillich has presented his views in a systematic form in the three volumes of Systematic Theology. Tillich wanted to interpret theologically the phenomena of his time and emphasized that theological work must always be connected to the other areas of life. It is not possible to build a permanent and stable theological system on this kind of base. Tillich emphasized this when he said that a theological system is not only an end point but also a starting point; it is like one station on an endless journey towards the truth.

Tillich says that a theological system should fulfill two demands: to express the truth of the Christian message and interpret this message to a new generation. Theology moves between these two poles and works in a correlation between them. One pole is the situation which is examined by the "creative interpretation of existence". It uses philosophy and other sciences, and it has to take into consideration also literature, art, and the whole field of human experience. The other pole is the Christian message, on the basis of

6 See Hamilton 1963, 32-36. Hamilton thinks that Tillich is “an artist in words”. Randall 1952, 161 mentions the problems of Tillich’s language in connection with the language of existential philosophy. The philosophers of religion in the analytic tradition have only been seldom interested in Tillich’s philosophical theology. The few who have expressed their views about Tillich’s thinking have criticized it by saying that it is at best unclear, at its worst confused. The same lack of interest has been seen in the attitude of language philosophers. See Rowe 1989, 201.

7 Hummel 1992, 12.

8 It has been claimed that Tillich’s thinking outside the system is different than within the system but we cannot go into the details of the problem here. An example of the problem is Tillich’s last public lecture where he said: “There may be - and I stress this, there may be - a central event in the history of religions”. Tillich’s starting point for his Systematic Theology is the centrality of the Christ event and yet he uses a conditional expression here - and naturally this has a great effect on all parts of his thinking. Tillich’s lecture is The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian, see MW 6, 433. For more information see e.g. Lai 1994, 56. Thomas 1990, xx-xxi sees a great problem in Tillich’s thinking, because there is, in his view, an apparent contradiction between what Tillich writes within the system and what he says outside it: "Outside the system Tillich appears to abandon much of what he would fast to within the system." The reason is, in Thomas’ view, Tillich’s encounter with other religions. Schwarz 1998, 86-88 says that, in the pressure of secularism and world religions, Tillich created a theology of the “roofless church” which in its universality lost its roots and identity.

9 See e.g. ST I, 3-4.

10 ST III, preface.
which theology tries to answer the questions connected with the interpretation of existence. Tillich calls his method the method of correlation.  

According to Tillich’s own testimony, he was always “on the boundary,” trying to combine different areas of life and thinking. Crace Calí, Tillich’s secretary in the Harvard years, relates a very revealing incident about this. Tillich was asked to write a short description of himself. At first he dictates: “Professor Tillich builds his theology on the method of correlation between questions arising out of the human predicament and the answers given in the classical symbols of Christianity.” Then he stops and asks to cross out Christianity and write instead “answers given in the classical symbols of

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11 About the method of correlation, see ST I, 3-4, 59-66. Tillich explains the motives of his correlative method in the following way: “Continuous thinking about the possibility of uniting the religious power of so-called neo-orthodox theology with the duty of every theology to address itself to the contemporary mind has resulted in the conception of a 'method of correlation' - correlation, that is, between existential questions and theological answers.” Beyond Religious Socialism (1949), 733 (MW 3, 528).

12 Horton 1952, 46 describes Tillich in an empathic way: “When he stands 'on the boundary' between two opposing views, he listens sympathetically to both parties, and the conflict between them becomes a conflict in his own soul... It is a marvel that interests as diverse as his can be unified in one mind without pulling it apart. He has known deep mental pain for the greater part of his life. Yet now that we begin to see the outlines of his system, it is evident that despite all inward stresses and tensions, it actually does have the tensile strength to hang together.”

13 Calí 1996, 70. It is always difficult to say, how a thinker’s personal life is reflected in his or her work. However, I think that Crace Calí’s book, Paul Tillich First-hand (1996) can help us understand Tillich. Calí tells us about Tillich’s strong inner tensions, and at times he was very depressed and dissatisfied with himself. He felt that people misunderstood his theology, and pressures and tensions were bearing down from all sides. Calí explains this with Tillich’s own thoughts: “...creativity and chaos are polar opposites, yet they are interdependent. The succesfully creative person has learned to organize his chaos into form while the unsuccessfully creative one, because of neurotic tendencies, or other reasons, has allowed the chaos to split him apart.” In the footnote, Calí makes a direct reference to the polarity of dynamics and form which can be used to explain Tillich’s tensions and behaviour; it seems that Tillich’s main challenge was to find the form for his inner creativity and chaos. In these tensions, Calí tells us, Tillich sees clearly two sides in himself: “'You know, Paulus,' I said hesitantly, 'I've often wondered how you have kept from becoming schizophrenic.' At my words, he bolted upright in his chair. 'But that's just it - I am!'” Calí says that he was certainly not clinically schizophrenic, but his need to speak in the broadest terms underlined his despair. Calí goes on to express her own view of Tillich and the situation: “This feeling of being schizophrenic came as no real surprise. There was a turbulent and secret side to Tillich that I had gradually become aware of -a side so alien to the one I knew daily that I deliberately chose to avoid acknowledging its presence. But he knew that I knew. And there seemed to be an unspoken agreement between us that I would not make him aware that I was aware.” For more information see Calí 1996, 20-21.
Calí mentions that it is a very significant change, and that Tillich cannot be confined even to the category of Christianity. Tillich answers: “I am always seeking the unifying thread that will tie it all together.”

Tillich’s biography by Wilhelm and Marion Pauck explains that Tillich had real difficulty in writing the third volume of his system. Finally, he and his assistant John Dillenberger worked backward beginning with part V, and then moving to part IV. About part IV, “Life and the Spirit”, Tillich said that it contained a philosophy of life for which Schelling was the teacher and he merely the student. Tillich was reluctant to submit this section to the publisher and he remained basically dissatisfied with it. This indicates that there were some problems in bringing the system to fulfilment.

Tillich himself has made some critical remarks on the consistency of Systematic Theology, for example in his text Autobiographical Reflections. He

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14 Calí tells that Tillich had a feeling of being two persons: “This Tillich they write about—it’s not really me. I am two persons. And the one has nothing to do with the other.” Calí goes on: “Tillich further surprised me by disclosing that this feeling of being two persons also was valid in relation to himself as a writer. The theologian and philosopher was also a stranger! Truly, who is the real Tillich? I would guess that the clue is in the area of personal relations. This might be his true self, from his point of view, but can the reception of him by the world as a great thinker be completely negated in trying to present the picture of the real Tillich?” For more information see Calí 1996, 59.

15 Pauck & Pauck 1976, 236.
finds the inconsistency of terminology problematic: "There is even in a well organized work such as my Systematic Theology a certain inconsistency and indefiniteness of terminology; there is the influence of different, sometimes competitive motives of thought, and there is a taking for granted of concepts and arguments which have been dealt with in other places." 

Tillich scholars have noticed that his thinking was in constant movement. When his writings were republished or translated from German to English or vice versa, he made constant changes and clarifications to them. One of the outstanding Tillich scholars, John Clayton, has observed that almost everyone writing about Tillich criticizes the way he uses certain concepts; words have different meanings in the early and in the subsequent writings. There is, however, not enough reason to draw a sharp line between “young Tillich” and “old Tillich”. Clayton says that Tillich’s position develops sometimes unexpectedly as he “seeks ever afresh to rethink even his most basic categories of thought”. Clayton even claims that Tillich had “a tendency to rethink key concepts virtually each time he used them”.

Clayton sees a difference between Tillich’s cultural theology and church theology. Clayton asks, if Tillich’s vision is unified or does he perhaps “see double”. Clayton compares Tillich with a sculptor who uses parts of his old works of art as elements of his new artistic creations: “Systematic Theology is no masterpiece, even if it should be judged by some to contain within itself 'many masterpieces.'” Clayton makes this comment about the consistency of

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16 Autobiographical Reflections (1952), 15.
18 Clayton 1987, 10.
19 Clayton 1987, 15.
20 Clayton 1980, 116: “His programme of a cultural theology, the symbol of which is the theonomous unity of faith and value, and his programme of a church theology, the symbol of which is the correlation of existential questions and theological answers, would seem to have different aims and serve different ends.” Clayton 1980, 153-249 talks about “two models of a correlative relation”. In his introduction to Tillich’s writings on philosophy of religion in the fourth part of the Main Works, Clayton puts forward briefly the view that there seems to be two different models in Tillich’s thinking in relation to autonomy and theonomy. See Clayton 1987, 25-26.
21 O’Connor 1964, 38-39 also speaks about Tillich using a parallel taken from art: "If he is a painter, then he is, like many modern philosophers, an impressionist... Nevertheless, there are limits which may not rightly be exceeded even in the freedom of this literary genre, and it may well be questioned whether it has any place in philosophy or theology.” Steinacker 1989, 61 interprets Tillich’s thoughts on the basis of another artistic view, expressionism. He thinks that in the difficult formulations of Tillich there are empty concepts, which nonetheless are not meaningless in the context of his system.
22 Clayton 1985, 285 shows with examples how Tillich changed his texts and thoughts for example about the concept of kairos.
**Systematic Theology:** "Tillich returns in the final volume of The Systematic Theology to problems which he originally worked through before formulating his method of correlation and to which he subsequently attempted to apply the new method, with sometimes unsatisfactory results."

Gilkey sees a change of thought between the first two and the third volume of *Systematic Theology*; the third volume has a more dynamic view than the first ones. The dynamic elements of Tillich’s later thought “represent only a mild reappearance of the fundamental motifs of Tillich’s process or historical view of being”. In other words, some of Tillich’s early fundamental motifs reappear in the third volume of the system. Christopherson finds a corresponding change in Tillich’s idea of nonbeing.

In his recent study, Pan-Chiu Lai makes the same kind of temporal division of Tillich’s writings. He divides Tillich’s development into three major stages: the pre-Christocentric stage in Tillich’s early years, the Christocentric stage reflected in the first two volumes of *Systematic Theology*, and the post-Christocentric stage which is expressed in the third volume of *Systematic Theology*.

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23 Clayton 1980, 19. Thomas 1995, 33-34 thinks that the interpreters overemphasize *Systematic Theology* especially at the expense of later texts, but he says that "the three volumes are a compact whole and internally consistent body of thinking". Hamilton 1963, 32-36 thinks that “Tillich’s system, when examined, shows itself to be a coherent structure, overwhelmingly consistent in its own terms, and quite comprehensible”. In Hamilton’s view, problems arise when an attempt is made to relate Tillich’s system to Christian faith. He explains that Tillich is being pulled in two directions by wanting to be an ontological philosopher and a Christian thinker at the same time.

24 Gilkey 1990, 13: “... to many readers the clearly dynamic, temporal, process emphasis of the third volume of *Systematic Theology* came as a surprise - to Tillicheans, a vindication of their sense that Tillich was not the static thinker that both process theologians and the later eschatological political theologians have maintained. These early works which we have just reviewed show the error of the common interpretation: not only is 'being' for Tillich not at all static nor the dynamic a new element, but in fact the dynamic elements of Tillich’s later thought ... represent only a mild reappearance of the fundamental motifs of Tillich’s process or historical view of being.” See also Adams 1985, 9-10.

25 Gilkey 1990, 169 says that the first and second volumes of *Systematic Theology* represent Tillich’s “neo-orthodox” side. In spite of the differences, Tillich belongs among the “Krisis” or “neo-orthodox theologians. They have a common ultimate dependence on revelation and a correlated emphasis on estrangement/sin. Barth was on the far right, Tillich and Bultmann on the left, and Brunner, Aulén, and Nygren somewhere in the middle. For more detail see Gilkey 1990, 20, 54, 102, 114, 141.

26 Christopherson 1995, 2, 48 says that in Tillich’s early works, nonbeing, as *ouk on*, is in "oppositional" relation to being; later it has a more creative or positive role where nonbeing, as *me on*, is in "polar" relation to being. However, the idea of an oppositional, nonpolar view of nonbeing can be found again especially in the third volume of *Systematic Theology*. See Christopherson 1995, 49, note 5.
Theology. In the third stage, Tillich is trying to create a synthesis of the first two stages. Lai mentions a surprising fact about Tillich studies: "Tillich’s dissatisfaction with his Systematic Theology, especially with the third volume, is not a secret, but there is still very little investigation of the reasons for this dissatisfaction." He thinks that Tillich’s encounter with other religions may be one of the reasons. Lai is one of the few who takes seriously the change in Tillich’s system and says that Systematic Theology “should not be assumed uncritically as a coherent and consistent system”.

Two recent interpretations look at Tillich’s thinking from different points of view. Langdon Gilkey, a student, colleague, and friend of Paul Tillich, emphasizes the dynamic nature of Tillich’s theology in Gilkey on Tillich (1990):

... it has for some time been recognized that Tillich's theological system represents a 'dynamic' ontology, an ontology in which process and becoming are the central aspects of being, and so in which historical passage, rather than timeless forms or static being, constitutes the most fundamental notion. This point can be argued in a number of ways: dynamic life, and not rest, is the basic symbol for God; the Spirit is in turn more fundamental than is Logos, and so on.

Gilkey sees a “Greek side” and a “modern side” in Tillich’s thinking. Donald R. Ferrell represents another view of Tillich’s theology in his Logos and Existence: The Relationship of Philosophy and Theology in the Thought of Paul Tillich (1992). He gives credit to Gilkey’s “imaginative and creative re-visioning” of Tillich’s thought which emphasizes its “dynamic, historical and dialectical character” but Ferrell himself wants to give a contrasting interpretation emphasizing the more classical ontology, “the

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29 Lai 1994, 170. “Our primary task is to investigate whether this pneumatological approach of doing theology will create tensions with his theology expounded in the first two volumes. We will see that in Volume 3, the freedom and primacy of the Spirit is stressed in a way that even the centrality of Christ seems threatened. This marks a subtle but significant difference from the earlier volumes.” See Lai 1994, 117.
30 Gilkey 1985, 314-315. Grigg 1985, 80 emphasizes also the dynamic element: "Tillich's discussion of life focuses on the dynamic element in being, the movement from potential to actual. By concentrating on this dynamic element, Tillich uncovers not only a mixture of essence and existence but also an aspect of the ontological structure not evident in the previous parts of his investigation." See also Hammond 1965, 101: "Our analysis has shown that Tillich's concept of being-itself contains a dynamic element, the overcoming of nonbeing. We have further indicated his view that this dynamic element in being-itself is essential in order to understand God as the living God who is the ground of being."
31 See Gilkey 1990, 119.
essential Tillich.”  

Ferrell says that the eternal *Logos* is the unconditioned and invariant “import” breaking through the concrete content. Thus, in Tillich’s thinking, “the historicist element ... seems ultimately to be subordinated to the eternal *Logos* and its ahistorical character”.

Ferrell says that *Logos*, which is the changeless rational structure of mind and reality, is not static but dynamic in the sense that it manifests itself in the historical process. Also, Ferrell sees problems in Tillich’s thinking: “Since Tillich could not work out of a consistently existentialist orientation, but rather attempted to graft existentialist concerns into a substantially classical structure of thought, his conception of philosophy, theology, and their relationship to each other is plagued by an ultimately unsatisfying ambiguity and inconsistency.”

In terms of dynamics and form, these interpretations set forth different views of Tillich’s thinking. Gilkey is expressing Tillich’s lifelong dynamic thinking which goes back to his early years and can be seen again in the third volume of *Systematic Theology*. Ferrell starts with the “essential Tillich” of the first two volumes of *Systematic Theology*. These interpretations raise interesting questions concerning Tillich’s thinking and the polarity of dynamics and form: is it possible to find a coherent interpretation that can explain the different views?

It is important to keep in mind that already in his early lecture Tillich said that living in God means living in the highest tension: “Leben in dieser höchsten Spannung ist Leben aus Gott.” When we talk about God, we have to use symbols and paradoxical statements. However, in *Systematic

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32 Ferrell 1992, xiii.
34 Ferrell 1992, 464.
35 Jahr 1989a, 10 describes the situation of Tillich studies: “Neben diesen beiden Extrempositionen gibt es in der Forschung vereinzelt auch Stimmen, die ein Gleichgewicht des statischen und des dynamischen Elements in der Theologie Paul Tillichs... annehmen.”
36 “Es ist die Methode des Paradox, der ständigen Durchbrechung und Aushebung der Form zu Gunsten des Wirklichen in ihr. Nicht Formlosigkeit, nicht fremde Formherrschaft darf die kritischen Form durchbrechen; das wäre Verzicht auf Methode, d.h. auf Philosophie; sondern bei vollem Ja zur autonomen, kritischen Form soll der Gehalt des Unbedingten hervorbrechen und zerbrechen, nicht formlos, sondern paradox. Leben in dieser höchsten Spannung ist Leben aus Gott. Anschauen dieser unendlichen Paradoxe ist Denken über Gott, und wenn es methodisch wird, Religionsphilosophie oder Theologie.” Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie (1922), 467 (MW 4, 87). See also Annala 1985, 56-57.
37 Morrison 1984, 59 describes the idea of “dialectical logic” in Tillich’s thinking: “The dialectical component of Tillich’s method involves the introduction of a nonmethodological logic. Tillich distinguishes between formal logic that obeys the law of
noncontradiction and dialectical logic that precedes or transcends the law of noncontradiction. He defended formal logic, but limited it to its 'legal use.' He then argued that God as a living God must be described in dialectical statements. Technically stated, Tillich's dialectical logic demands the de-absolutizing of the law of noncontradiction. Dialectical logic then replaces formal logic in the foundations of reality.” Morrison believes that Tillich’s highest hope was to achieve a world-wide acceptance for his dialectical ontology that would reverse the situation so that the nonmethodological line of Western thought would become dominant and the interpreter of the methodical line. However, this acceptance did not occur.

Tillich unites three functions of life in his system: self-integration, self-creativity, and self-transcendence. He explains them in the beginning of the third volume of Systematic Theology. They are all based on self-identity, self-alteration and return to one’s self. Self-integration means that life drives toward centeredness in the circular movement from a center and back to this center. Life also produces new centers in self-creation: life goes forward in the horizontal direction. The self-transcendence of life means that the actualization of the potential also goes in the vertical direction: life drives beyond itself as finite life. These three functions are combined in life. Explicitly, the polarity of dynamics and form is the basis for the self-creation of life.

The three functions of life provide a way to understand Tillich’s difficult thought patterns about the polarity of dynamics and form. On the one hand, self-integration tries to conserve the existence of every being, on the other
hand, self-creation tries to create new. They are in constant tension. We can interpret the same thing with the polarity of dynamics and form: form tries to conserve the existence of every being while dynamics tries to break through the limits of form and create new forms. The self-transcendence of life means that life drives beyond itself as finite life. The Spirit transcends the forms. The functions of life are combined but the beginning of Tillich’s system emphasizes self-integration, the middle of the system (in the beginning of volume 3) emphasizes self-creativity, and the end of the system emphasizes self-transcendence. This will be the framework of our study.

Tillich expresses self-integration by saying that there is a unity and balance of dynamics and form; everything happens within a form. This comes close to the classical view of dynamics and form. The idea that dynamics breaks through the form implies the self-creativity of life. We shall call it the modern view of dynamics and form. In the self-transcendence of life, the Spirit transcends the forms. We can use the concepts of form and substance to analyze these thoughts. It is easy to see that the three functions of life are in tension with each other, and so are the definitions describing them. We shall see, how Tillich succeeds in combining them in one system.

The examination of the polarity of dynamics and form can shed more light on Tillich’s thinking, and it has not been properly done so far. We shall analyse the concepts of dynamics and form and the way Tillich uses them in his thinking. The analysis is supplemented by a systematic analysis which is based on the view that a theological system forms a systematic whole, whose structure and parts of which can be examined. Finding possible inconsistencies is a part of the method.

The polarity of dynamics and form has an important role in the first two volumes of Systematic Theology and still in the beginning of the third but not before or after that. There are only a few mentions of the polarity of dynamics and form outside Systematic Theology in the writings of the 1950's and 1960's. It is mentioned in Love, Power, and Justice, in the article The Word of God, and in My Search for Absolutes. It is possible to see a pre-stage of the polarity in the article Natur und Sakrament published in 1930 where Tillich uses the expression “formlose Dynamik”. Tillich mentions that he has developed the ontological polarity in the first part of Systematic

40 Love, Power, and Justice (1954), 54. -The German translation of Love, Power, and Justice was published in 1955 under the name of Liebe, Macht, Gerechtigkeit.
42 “There are those called ‘polarities’ (a solvent word) - for example, individualization and participation, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny.” My Search for Absolutes (1967), 76.
43 Natur und Sakrament (1930), 154 (MW 6, 162).
The Courage to Be (1952), 86 (MW 5, 180-181). Consequently, the more general idea of polarity is also not very central before Systematic Theology. Since the idea of the polarity of dynamics and form appears mainly in Systematic Theology, special attention in this examination is focused on it. However, attention is drawn to all Tillich’s writings that have a bearing on the subject. Tillich’s early thinking is well expressed in the article Das Dämonische: Ein Beitrag zur Sinndeutung der Geschichte (1926).

Tillich’s thinking interests and is under discussion constantly, more than 110 years from his birth and more than 30 years after his death. His most important writings have been published recently under the name Main Works/Hauptwerke: the first volume was published in 1987 and the last one in 1998. The new edition is different from the previous Gesammelte Werk in the respect that it has Tillich’s writings in the original languages and the differences of the editions and translations have been presented in the apparatus. Also, many editions of Tillich’s last lectures and even discussions have been published, and new collections of Tillich’s writings are still being published on many new topics.

44 The Courage to Be (1952), 86 (MW 5, 180-181).
45 The idea of polarity is apparent every now and then in his older texts, see e.g. Religionsphilosophie (1925), 785 (MW 4, 130); Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (1955), 80 (MW 4, 386).
46 The bibliography of Tillich’s writings is in Gesammelte Werk XIV, 139-211; the list of the unpublished material is in GW XIV, 283-295. Systematic Theology Vol I was published in 1951, Vol 2 in 1957 and Vol 3 in 1963. The German translation of the first volume Systematische Theologie, Band I was published in 1956; Band II was published in 1958 and Band III in 1966.
47 A new translation in English by Garrett E. Paul in 1989 under the name The Demonic: A Study in the Interpretation of History.
48 More detailed bibliographic information of the “Main Works” is in the bibliography.
49 The bibliographic information of “Gesammelte Werk” is in the bibliography.
50 The abbreviations of Main Works and Gesammelte Werk will be MW and GW in the following. Systematic Theology will be abbreviated to ST. The titles of the other books and articles of Tillich will be mentioned in full, because the year of publication is not enough to distinguish them from each other. With the other books there will be mention of the author and the year of publication.
52 The theologian of the Boundaries (1991); Theology of Peace (1990); The Essential Tillich: an Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich (1987); The Meaning of Health (1984); Political Expectation (1971). Tillich’s article Art and Ultimate Reality was included in
In 1986, Tillich scholars gathered for an international symposium to commemorate Tillich’s 100th birthday. After this, the symposium has been held every other year. Since the second symposium, the lectures have also been published. All of them have been edited by Gert Hummel. In 1993 the scholars gathered for an international Paul Tillich symposium in the USA, and also its lectures have been published.

There are very many examinations of Tillich’s thinking and it has been studied from many points of view. The large number of studies shows that it is not easy to gain a consensus on Tillich’s ideas. Tillich’s theological system is complex: he uses many concepts of his own also when studying traditional themes and gives his own definition to many familiar concepts. Because of this it is not very easy to approach and understand his ideas.

In spite of the fact that there are very many studies about Tillich’s thoughts, much attention has not been paid to the polarity of dynamics and form. It is not possible to find a monograph on the subject, and it is the main subject only in a few articles. Lewis S. Ford’s article, The Appropriation of Dynamics and Form for Tillich’s God (1975) and Tom Faw Driver’s article Form and Energy: An Argument with Paul Tillich (1976) examine some ontological questions connected with the polarity of dynamics and form but

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Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (ed.), Art, Creativity, and the Sacred (1984). Many collections of Tillich’s writings have been published over the years, for example Theology of Culture (1959); What is Religion? (1969); The Protestant Era (1948) (the German version Der Protestantismus was published in 1950); the German collection Die verlorene Dimension (1962). Tillich’s sermons have been published in the collections The Shaking of the Foundations (1948); The New Being (1955); The Eternal Now (1963).


Already in 1983 Crossman classified 484 writings by Paul Tillich in English, 268 dissertations and theses about or related to Paul Tillich in English, and 662 articles about or related to Paul Tillich in English.

Ford’s article Tillich's Tergiversation Toward the Power of Being (1975) deals with the 'power of being’ in connection with finite and infinite being. The polarity of dynamics and form is mentioned on page 326: “This finite power of being is used to define the ontological element of 'dynamics’, found in polar tension with form in every being.”
they do not examine the connection of the theme to the whole of Tillich’s thinking.\textsuperscript{57}

Different interpretations of Tillich are presented by the following books: Adrian Thatcher, The Ontology of Paul Tillich (1978) is very critical towards Tillich’s ontology in its detailed analysis;\textsuperscript{58} Langdon Gilkey, Gilkey on Tillich (1990) is an appreciative interpretation, and the author calls himself a “Tillichean”; John Powell Clayton, The Concept of Correlation: Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology (1980) finds two models of a correlative relation in Tillich’s thinking and is not convinced by its coherence.\textsuperscript{59} The contents of these books and articles as well as the other writings connected to the subject will be examined later.

It is possible to get general information of Tillich’s life and background from Wilhelm & Marion Pauck, Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought, Volume I: Life (1976).\textsuperscript{60} Tillich has also written about his life for example in the

\textsuperscript{57} Trevor Williams, Form and Vitality in the World and God: A Christian Perspective (1985) is written in the spirit of Tillich but it is not a study of Tillich. Also Stuart Drummond McLean, Elements of Dynamics and Form in the Thought of Karl Barth and Jacques Maritain (1968) has been influenced by Tillich’s thoughts but it does not study his thinking.

\textsuperscript{58} Other books dealing with Tillich’s ontology are Alistair Macleod, Paul Tillich: An Essay on the Role of Ontology in his Philosophical Theology (1973); John Adam Bash Jr., The Nature of the Ontological and Theological Endeavors in the Thought of Paul Tillich (1965). John Herman Randall Jr’s article The Ontology of Paul Tillich (1952) is a short but a good presentation and criticism of Tillich’s ontology. The relation of Tillich’s ontology with the Bible and Christology is treated for example in the following articles: Reinhold Niebuhr, Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation in Tillich’s Theology (1952); Christopher Kiesling, The Life of the New Being (1964); Charles Hartshorne, Tillich's Doctrine of God (1952); Langdon Gilkey, The New Being and Christology (1985).

\textsuperscript{59} Other books about Tillich’s theology of culture are: James Luther Adams, Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion (1965); Eberhard Amelung, Die Gestalt der Liebe: Paul Tillichs Theologie der Kultur (1972); Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley (ed.), Paul Tillich on Creativity (1989). In Finland, Pauli Annala has examined Tillich’s theology of culture in his book, Autonomian tragiikka ja kulttuurin kriisi: Johdatus Tillichin kulttuurinteologiaa (1985). Annala has written the book Uuden olemisen etiikka: Tillichin etiikan perusteemoja (1983) and translated into Finnish Tillich’s book Morality and beyond (1964) under the name, Muuttuvan maailman moraali (1983). Tillich’s texts have been published in Finnish also in Perustukset järkkyvät (1966) and Rajalla (1973). From the Finnish point of view it is important that Tillich has written the foreword to Aarne Siirala’s book The Voice of Illness: A Study in Therapy and Prophecy (1964).

\textsuperscript{60} The second volume never appeared. About one third of the intended text has been published in Wilhelm Pauck, From Luther to Tillich: The Reformers and Their Heirs (1984) after the death of the writer. Also Renate Albrecht & Werner Schüssler, Paul Tillich: Sein Werk (1986) has been thought to substitute for the missing second volume.
Another basic work on Tillich’s thinking is The Thought of Paul Tillich (1985) edited by James Luther Adams, Wilhelm Pauck and Roger Lincoln Shinn. Tillich’s thought has been examined from the Catholic point of view in Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought (1964) edited by Thomas A. O’Meara and Celestin D. Weisser, and in Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment (1994) edited by Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella. It is possible to see a change to a much more positive attitude in the Catholic approach to Tillich’s thinking between these volumes. Also the following can be mentioned: John J. Carey (ed.), Kairos and Logos: Studies in the Roots and Implications of Tillich's Theology (1978); John J. Carey (ed.), Theonomy and Autonomy: Studies in Paul Tillich's Engagement with Modern Culture (1984); Hermann Fischer (Hrsg.), Paul Tillich: Studien zu einer Theologie der Moderne (1989); Karl Henning (Hrsg.), Der Spannungsbogen: Festgabe für Paul Tillich zum 75. Geburtstag (1961); Walter Leibrecht (ed.), Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich (1959).

Many examinations study the theological system of Tillich. Many scholars evaluate Tillich’s theology and place in the history of theology. Tillich’s wide work has given impulses to many kinds of studies and articles. The different parts of his theology have been studied from many points of view.

63 The following can be mentioned: Joachim Track, Der theologische Ansatz Paul Tillichs: Eine wissenschaftstheoretische Untersuchung seiner "Systematische Theologie" (1975); Alexander J. McKelway, The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich: A Review and Analysis (1964); David H. Kelsey, The fabric of Paul Tillich's theology (1967). J. Heywood Thomas, Paul Tillich - An Appraisal (1963) was published even before the third volume of Systematic Theology.

64 Of these can be mentioned: David Hopper, Tillich: A Theological Portrait (1968); James Luther Adams, Introduction: The Storms of Our Times and Starry Night (1985); Walter M. Horton, Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology (1952); George F. Thomas, The Method and Structure of Tillich's Theology (1952); Gustave Weigel, The Theological Significance of Paul Tillich (1964); Josef Schmitz, Die apologetische Theologie Paul Tillichs (1966). Leonard F. Wheat sets forth in his book Tillich's dialectical humanism: Unmasking the God above God (1970) a thesis that Tillich’s God is basically humanity. Tillich hides his true intention from most of his audience and directs his message to a small group. The book is sharp and analytical but the basic thesis is unconvincing. Another very critical book, written after the first volume of Systematic Theology, is R. Allan Killen, The Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich (1956). Giannini 1995, 147-148 finds much in common with Tillich and Thomas Merton who gained fame in the 1950's and the 1960's. Giannini emphasizes the mystical element in Tillich’s thinking. Tillich said theoretically what Merton brought forward as an ascetic: "Merton is a living example of much of what Tillich expressed in his theology. He was a person who sought to experience the ground of his being, and who sought to experience unity with God and with all creation in that ground. He was one who sought to transcend the polarities Tillich elucidated. In trying to be both an individual and a participant Merton found himself in the paradoxical situation of a hermit who drank coffee with celebrities. In his attempt to unite dynamics and form, he tried to express poetically that which he felt to be beyond the possibilities of language. In his endeavor to balance the polarities of freedom and destiny, he sought his own inner freedom within the limits of the structures which he had accepted as representing his destiny."

65 As examples the following can be mentioned: Wilhelm Pauck, To Be or Not to Be: Tillich on the Meaning of Life (1985); Robert P. Scharlemann, Tillich and the Religious Interpretation of Art (1985); John E. Smith, The Impact of Tillich's Interpretation of Religion (1985); Thomas Franklin O'Meara, Tillich and the Catholic Substance (1985); Peter Schwanz, Relation und Substanz: Relation als Strukturier: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit zentraler Tillichischer Terminologie (1972); David E. Roberts, Tillich's Doctrine of Man (1952); A. T. Mollegen, Christology and Biblical Criticism in Tillich (1952); Pauli Annala, Transparency of Time: The Structure of Time-Consciousness in the Theology of Paul Tillich (1982); Jari Ristiniemi, Experiential Dialectics: An Inquiry into the Epistemological Status and the Methodological Role of the Experiential Core in Paul Tillich's Systematic Thought (1987); Bernard Martin, The Existentialist Theology of Paul Tillich (1963); Thomas Franklin O'Meara, Paul Tillich's Theology of God (1970); William Wright Paul, Paul Tillich's Interpretation of History (1959); M. Francis Reeves, God and history in the Thought of Paul Tillich (1967); Lowell Dean Streiker, The Mystical A


Of these can be mentioned: Stephan Peeck, Suizid und Seelsorge: Die Bedeutung der anthropologischen Ansätze V. E. Frankls und P. Tillichs für Theorie und Praxis der Seelsorge an suizidgefährdeten Menschen (1991); Stanley Terrance Sutphin, A Critique of the Premises of the Premises of Rogerian Psychotherapy in the Light of Paul Tillich's Doctrine of Man (1965); Granville Douglass Lewis, Psychotherapeutic Concepts and Theological Categories: Some Problems in the Thought of Carl Rogers and Paul Tillich (1966); John P. Dourley, Jung, Tillich, and Aspects of Western Christian Development
1.2. The concepts of dynamics and form and the idea of their polarity in Tillich studies

The question of dynamics and form is one of the central ones in the history of theology and philosophy, even though the expression 'polarity of dynamics and form' has not been common. The problem itself has been expressed also with other terms. The roots of the concepts 'form' and 'dynamics' go back to Plato and Aristotle, but the meaning of the concepts and their relation to each other has changed in the course of time. The common feature in the classical thinking of Plato and Aristotle is the emphasis on form; compared to that the modern views emphasize the dynamic side of the polarity.

The English word *dynamics* has a broad field of meaning. Nowadays, it is mostly connected with the natural sciences and means for example a branch of mechanics which deals with forces and their connection to the movement of particles, and more commonly the elements of change and growth. Dynamics deals with the element of energy or force in a thing or a phenomenon. In the modern views dynamics is not usually about potentiality but of actuality.\(^68\)

Aristotle used *dynamis* to mean ability, power, possibility to do something (in Latin *potentia*, *potestas*). Aristotle made the difference between possibility and reality, potentiality and actuality. In Aristotle’s language the opposite of *dynamis* is *energeia* which is deed and action or actuality (in Latin *actus*). *Entelekheia* is the active principle aiming at some definite goal, the ability to make the possible real, and it is also identified with form which comes into reality in matter.\(^69\) The actual corresponds to the potential, and the actualization happens within the form.\(^70\) In classical thinking, form is often

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\(^68\) Nobis 1972, 302-303 claims that in the modern understanding of the word dynamics and its derivatives we can see the trend that started with late scholastics and the beginning of the modern age, where Aristotle’s concept of *dynamis* was interpreted in the physical direction. It is possible to differentiate both the kinetic and the ontological meaning in Aristotle’s own vocabulary. See Plamböck 1972, 304.

\(^69\) For Aristotle’s thinking see e.g. Jones 1970, 220-233.

\(^70\) Aristotle thought that there are several sources of motion, including soul and active qualities. He calls the receiver of forms primary matter but unlike Plato it is not in motion. Matter is in combination with substantial form, and the composite they make together has a nature. The source of action is the natural tendency of bodies to move. Behind the movement of each sphere, there is an intelligent mover that could be compared to the
used as a synonym for essence or nature, it makes a thing what it is.\textsuperscript{71} In theology the basic meaning of \textit{forma} is form, shape, form-giving principle.\textsuperscript{72}

The concepts of matter and form are important in Aristotle’s thinking: an active element of form (\textit{entelecheia}) is connected to a non-active element of matter. In the medieval period, Thomas Aquinas used the Aristotelian distinction between matter and form and its more basic formulation of potency and act. Substantial form was for him an act by which things actually exist, the principle of activity. The substantial form of man is his soul by virtue of which man exists.\textsuperscript{73}

In Plato’s thinking, there is a difference between the apparent world and the world of forms; the distinction between essence and existence is rooted in Plato’s thinking.\textsuperscript{74} The highest form is the “Form of the Good”. Plato’s forms are eternal and changeless.\textsuperscript{75} The Platonists made the distinction between \textit{ouk on} and \textit{me on}. The former means nothing at all, and the latter that which does not yet have being but can become being if it is united with forms. When Augustine called evil “nonbeing”, he did not mean “nothing at all” but something with no positive ontological standing. The Neo-Platonic thinking is based on the idea of \textit{dynamis panton}: the One is above being, absolutely transcendental, and it gives life to everything else through emanation.\textsuperscript{76} Tillich has chosen the concepts of dynamics and form which indicate from the outset an active role to the element of dynamics.

The expression \textit{dynamism} means a philosophical view which says that power is the ultimate principle, or a primitive religious view that nature is ruled by impersonal forces.\textsuperscript{77} Modern dynamism contains the view that all

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\item Platonic souls. Beyond everything, there is an absolute Prime Mover, which was identified in medieval philosophy with the Christian God. See Collingwood 1967, 1131-1132.
\item For a more precise treatment see Wallace & Collingwood 1967, 1013-1017. It is possible to separate quantitative, qualitative and intelligible form.
\item Behind the word form there are the words \textit{eidos} or \textit{idea} and \textit{morphe} which meant originally the visible or the observable. Substantial form gives something its very being, while accidental forms determine one or the other of the accidental modes of a thing in question but do not characterize it fully.
\item Wallace & Collingwood 1967, 1014.
\item Plato postulated the existence of a world of forms or ideas that subsist in themselves, while Aristotle directed attention towards the natural world and connected form to the common features of these things. See Bormann, C.v. & Franzen W. & Krapiec, A. & Oeing-Hanhoff, L. 1972, 979. For the problems of matter and form in the history of philosophy, see pages 977-1030.
\item For Plato’s thinking see e.g. Jones 1970, 124-146.
\item For more information about Plotinus and Neo-Platonism see Merlan 1967, 351-359.
\item For a more precise treatment see Lanczkowski 1972, 304; Collingwood 1967, 1131-1133; Fascher 1959, 415-458.
\end{itemize}
phenomena of nature are manifestations of force.\textsuperscript{78} The dynamic view or reality was further developed by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, Whitehead and the so called “philosophy of life” (\textit{Lebensphilosophie}). For many nineteenth-century thinkers “force” meant “energy”, and thus they emphasized the creative energy at work in the process of life. Dynamics can be described as the creative and animating principle that breaks through the form and creates new forms; energy underlies the forms and directions of all processes.

It is possible to see an expression of the dynamic side of the polarity in such terms as the \textit{Unggrund} (Böhme) or “meonic freedom” (from Greek \emph{me on}, non-being) which designate ultimate reality as dynamic, non-objective and indeterminate. Schelling thinks that the blind power principle and the principle of form belong together. Böhme, Schelling, and Hegel located dialectical negativity in God himself.\textsuperscript{79}

In esthetics as well as in the art and literature studies since the 18th century, the idea of \textit{form and contents} has been important. It is possible to focus one’s interest either on the outside form or on the content and message.\textsuperscript{80} The corresponding German words are \textit{Form und Inhalt}, \textit{Gestalt} or \textit{Gehalt}, which Tillich uses in his German texts.\textsuperscript{81} This is close to the distinction of form and substance, which Tillich uses in his English texts. One of our questions is, how Tillich relates these pairs of concepts to the concepts of dynamics and form.

The idea of \textit{polarity} became more common in the English-speaking world since the 17th century as a phenomenon connected with magnetism.\textsuperscript{82} In the philosophy of nature of the German romanticism, the idea got a new meaning: everything in nature was seen to be made in a polar way like a magnet. These ideas were given a philosophical form most clearly by Schelling, who thought that polarity and duality of nature is the first principle of nature philosophy.

\textsuperscript{78} It has been influenced by the scientific and philosophical work of Newton and Leibniz. For more information about Dynamism see Čapek 1967, 444-447.
\textsuperscript{79} For more detail see Randall 1952, 156.
\textsuperscript{80} See Schwinger 1972b, 975-977. In esthetics there is also a concept of inner form. For a more precise treatment see Schwinger 1972a, 974-975. In philosophy there is also a concept of logic form. For a more precise treatment see Stenius 1972, 975.
\textsuperscript{81} We shall deal with the meaning of these words later.
\textsuperscript{82} Walter Bloch’s book \textit{Polarität} (1972) examines the meaning of polarity in philosophy, physics, biology and psychology. The polarity of dynamics and form is not apparent. Instead he deals with e.g. Apollonian and Dionysian (165-166), dynamic and static (176), conscious and unconscious (200) and the polarity of yang and yin (248-249). He mentions the philosophers Herakleitos and Goethe (246-), and theologians Cusanus and John of the Cross (269). Bloch says that the unity of the poles is vital, and it is not possible to emphasize only one of the poles (272-273).
Polarity is a general law of nature according to Schelling. He tried to find the identity behind the seeming opposites.\textsuperscript{83}

Hegel adopted the idea of polarity from the nature philosophy of his time. Schleiermacher adapted the idea of polarity on thinking, and he started the adaptation of polarity to knowing and psychology. Later the idea of polarity has been adapted in the philosophy of life.\textsuperscript{84} The concept of polarity is not very common in theology.\textsuperscript{85} It is possible to see a polar structure in the thought of Nicholas Cusanus in the union of the opposites \textit{(complexio oppositorum)} and in the mysticism of Jacob Böhme.\textsuperscript{86} In oriental thinking, the opposite pair \textit{yang} and \textit{yin} is very important.

Tillich’s philosophical and theological background is very wide.\textsuperscript{87} He did both his doctoral dissertation of philosophy\textsuperscript{88} and his theological thesis\textsuperscript{89} on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} Probst 1989, 1026-1027. The idea of polarity got its expression also in the work of the philosopher and poet Goethe. The difference compared to Schelling was that he was interested in the tension created by the polarity and did not so much try to find the identity behind the opposites.
\item \textsuperscript{84} For a more precise treatment see Probst 1989, 1027-1028.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Williams 1985 uses the polarity of form and vitality to analyse biblical material, doctrinal questions and issues of politics and other religions. For the definition of the polarity see pages 2-3.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Ford 1975, 44-45 thinks that they have both influenced Tillich’s views.
\item \textsuperscript{87} For Tillich’s philosophical background see e.g. Randall 1952, 132-134: Tillich is both as a theologian and as a philosopher in the Augustinian tradition, and thus in the central Christian Platonistic tradition against Thomism and Aristotelism. Other influences are the philosophy that developed after Böhme, Schelling, reactions against Hegel (e.g. Feuerbach), early Marx, Nietzsche and the philosophy of life, existentialism, especially Heidegger. Keefe 1971, 334-335 says: "In the course of fairly recent history, the dominant theology of the Catholic Church in the West has been Thomist in some sense, while Protestant theology has found the Augustinian point of view more sympathetic. This is particularly true of the theology of Paul Tillich." Pauck 1966, 25-26 mentions thinkers that have affected Tillich’s thinking: Parmenides, Plato, Plotinus, Augustine, Eckhart, Cusanus, Luther, of the German thinkers Schelling, Kant and Hegel, and of the newer ones Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud. Arthur C. Cochrane, The Existentialists and God presents Tillich’s idea of being and the being of God along with such existentialists as Sören Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. See also Bernard Martin, The Existentialist Theology of Paul Tillich (1963); Otto Schnübbe, Paul Tillich und seine Bedeutung für den Protestantismus heute (1985).
\item \textsuperscript{88} Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien (1910). It was published in English in 1974 under the name The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling’s Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles. In his preface, the translator Victor Nuovo presents Schelling’s view of potency (pages 16-17) and maintains that it has influenced Tillich’s ontology (pages 23-24): "In his Systematic Theology, the potencies appear as the principles of Tillich's doctrine of being: in the self-world polarity, and the further elaboration of this polarity in the concepts of individuality, dynamics and freedom on the
the thinking of Schelling, so it is clear that he knew Schelling’s thoughts very well. Many scholars think that Schelling had a crucial influence on the starting-points of Tillich’s ontology: Schelling presented as the first post-Hegelian philosopher a form-resisting principle which was with the form principle; it means that which is formed by the form. In Schelling’s own time, his thinking was rejected but later it has received a lot of support. The Hegelian idealism which emphasized the pure forms of thought was followed by the emphasis of the vitalistic principle which later on was presented in Schopenhauer’s, Nietzsche’s and Bergson’s thinking. According to Schelling, it is wrong to deny this “barbaric principle” or “the principle of darkness” for without it the world would vanish.89

Schelling’s view of God has a vitalistic, non-determined principle and a principle of form. Schelling’s first potency is an irrational element in God which is balanced by a rational element of *logos*. Applied to God, the first principle is a principle of darkness or a barbaric principle or a principle of potentiality or a blind power principle; it is almost impossible to define what it is. It is balanced and tamed by the *logos* principle that gives structure.91 The first potency in Schelling is the primordial power of being and the basis in God. It is the abyss element in God because it is also the basic power of negation. The second potency is the affirmative motion out from the abyss into existence. It is the basis of cultural world and it limits the first potency. The third potency provides the bond between the Spirit and the world. It is the potency of unity, and all existence is posited and fulfilled in it.

Schelling also interprets the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of the potencies: The potency of the Father, the first potency, is the primordial cause which creates nature, and brings the external manifestation of being into existence. The potency of the Son, the second potency, is the *Logos* which gives form to the material of creation and indicates a tendency toward the return into God the Father. The potency of the Spirit moves toward fulfilment in existence, and in it existence is related to eternity.92 Tillich has very similar thoughts in his system.

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89 Mystik und Schuld bewusstsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung (1912).
91 Thatcher 1978, 66. Steinacker 1989, 46 says that Schelling’s threefold pattern “das Seinkönnende”, “das Seinmüßende”, and “das Seinsollende” has a resemblance in Tillich’s thinking. The ontological expressions for the same are “das Sein”, “das Nichtsein”, and “das Übersein”. In the anthropological context, the first element is “der Wille” which is dynamic but blind. The second is “der Verstand” that gives form to the aimless will. The third, uniting principle is “der Geist”.
It has been argued that Tillich adopted the polarity of dynamics and form under the influence of Schelling and that Schelling’s term *Potenz* had an influence on Tillich’s term ‘dynamics’. However, Tillich denied Schelling’s influence on his ontological polarities when Ford asked him about the matter: I have not been influenced by Schelling’s concept of polarity in my doctrine of God and in my theory of religious symbols, not even in my conception of the basic ontological polarities. Potencies in the sense of Schelling are not polarities; the very term ‘potency’ points to a kind of hierarchy, while polarities lie on the same level. I believe, but without a complete certainty, that the doctrine of ontological polarities is rooted in the thought-experiences similar to those which have led to the concept of complementary in physics: It is impossible to grasp reality with one or two contrasting concepts, e.g. freedom or destiny, contingency or necessity, dynamics or form, vitality, or spirituality, etc. Both are needed and even more: The two are dependent on each other in their validity - which, I believe, is a step beyond the present understanding of complementarity.

The answer provides us interesting information about Tillich’s thinking behind the ontological polarities: it is not possible to grasp reality with one concept; it has to be done with pairs of concepts which complement each other. Tillich points to the ideas of modern physics, and this has probably influenced his understanding of dynamics in the modern sense. Elsewhere, Tillich says that Part IV of the system, “Life and the Spirit”, contains a philosophy of life of which “Schelling was the teacher and he merely the student”. If that is the case, Tillich’s theology of culture is a direct application of Schelling’s thinking but in his ontological polarities Tillich has developed Schelling’s thinking to a new direction. The Schellingian

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93 For more detail see Thatcher 1978, 65-66.
94 Ford 1975, 37 quotes Tillich’s answer which is published in Sydney and Beatrice Rome (eds.), Philosphical Interrogations (1964), 358.
95 The answer did not change Ford’s view about Schelling’s impact on Tillich’s thinking; Ford thinks that Tillich adopted his polar thinking and all his polar pairs from Schelling’s philosophy. Ford thinks that the polarity of dynamics and form is more emphasized in Tillich than the other pairs. He sees that behind this polarity is Schelling’s distinction Das Reale und das Ideale, which, according to Ford, was even more emphasized in Schelling than in Tillich. The polarity of individualization and participation is comparable to Schelling’s Selbstheit und Liebe and the polarity of freedom and destiny is comparable to Freiheit und Notwendigkeit. See Ford 1975, 36-37.
96 Pauck & Pauck 1976, 236.
97 See also Carey 1984, 12: “The ontological polarity, ’dynamics and form,’ contains a number of confusions that cannot be clarified in this essay. It is enough to say that it is not simply a reiteration of the being/nonbeing dialectic rooted in Schelling’s two potencies, but a new way of describing the metaphysical participation of the infinite in the finite.”
Some books have ‘dynamics’ in their title. Seward Hiltner, Theological Dynamics (1972) has been influenced by Tillich, but he says that there is a difference in the way he uses the word ‘dynamics’: Tillich began from an ontological perspective, and combined dynamics with form. Hiltner’s main source is the dynamic psychology beginning with Freud with some reference to dynamics in sociology. Hiltner defines the word ‘dynamics’ by pointing to the Greek word for power, force, or energy; dynamics is a study of the energy components. It includes the “conflicts among energy dimensions, the tensions and counterbalances among forces, and the variety of equilibriums”. Dynamics is more than not standing still, and, it is more than a metaphysical contrast with form or shape. See Hiltner 1972, 14, 182-183. Hiltner 1972, 182 mentions that he knows of “no other general book in theology that has pursued dynamics as its principal method of clarifying the teachings”. Neville A.C. Heuer, Interpretative Theological Dynamics: A Critical Analysis of the Concept of Dynamics in the Thought of Paul Tillich, Siegmund Freud and Erich Fromm, in Relation to Certain Aspects of the Etiology of Criminal Theory (1979) uses Hiltner’s definitions to explain Tillich without taking into consideration the difference that Hiltner made between Tillich and himself. See e.g. Heuer 1979, 1, 49. Heuer gives valuable information about the relation of Tillich especially to Freud. He says that the thinkers Tillich is referring to in his definition of the term dynamics - Böhme, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, Hartmann, Freud, Scheler and Jung - can be classified under two general headings: 1. religious; and 2. psychoanalytical. Heuer includes Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson among the psychoanalysts because, as he mentions, “Tillich equates psychoanalysts and existentialists in connection with this type of dynamics”. Heuer 1979, 6-7. Roger Haight, Dynamics of Theology (1990) does not deal with dynamics as its subject.

As we have mentioned, it is not possible to find a monograph on the polarity of dynamics and form, and it is the main subject only in a few articles. The Appropriation of Dynamics and Form for Tillich's God by Lewis S. Ford says that Tillich uses the concepts of dynamics and form inconsistently. It is difficult to define dynamics because according to its nature it resists all definitions. In order to be understandable it ought to have a form, and dynamics is just the ontological element which is the polar opposite of form in everything that is. Ford says that “dynamics, in polar contrast with form, is the element of power and potentiality within every being”.

According to Ford, “form may be defined as the structure which makes a being what it is and which gives reason an opportunity for grasping and

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98 Some books have ‘dynamics’ in their title. Seward Hiltner, Theological Dynamics (1972) has been influenced by Tillich, but he says that there is a difference in the way he uses the word ‘dynamics’: Tillich began from an ontological perspective, and combined dynamics with form. Hiltner’s main source is the dynamic psychology beginning with Freud with some reference to dynamics in sociology. Hiltner defines the word ‘dynamics’ by pointing to the Greek word for power, force, or energy; dynamics is a study of the energy components. It includes the “conflicts among energy dimensions, the tensions and counterbalances among forces, and the variety of equilibriums”. Dynamics is more than not standing still, and, it is more than a metaphysical contrast with form or shape. See Hiltner 1972, 14, 182-183. Hiltner 1972, 182 mentions that he knows of “no other general book in theology that has pursued dynamics as its principal method of clarifying the teachings”. Neville A.C. Heuer, Interpretative Theological Dynamics: A Critical Analysis of the Concept of Dynamics in the Thought of Paul Tillich, Siegmund Freud and Erich Fromm, in Relation to Certain Aspects of the Etiology of Criminal Theory (1979) uses Hiltner’s definitions to explain Tillich without taking into consideration the difference that Hiltner made between Tillich and himself. See e.g. Heuer 1979, 1, 49. Heuer gives valuable information about the relation of Tillich especially to Freud. He says that the thinkers Tillich is referring to in his definition of the term dynamics - Böhme, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, Hartmann, Freud, Scheler and Jung - can be classified under two general headings: 1. religious; and 2. psychoanalytical. Heuer includes Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson among the psychoanalysts because, as he mentions, “Tillich equates psychoanalysts and existentialists in connection with this type of dynamics”. Heuer 1979, 6-7. Roger Haight, Dynamics of Theology (1990) does not deal with dynamics as its subject.

99 Ford 1975, 39-40. Also Ferrell1992, 43-44 sees the polarity of dynamics and form as a highly problematic one. The problem with the concept of dynamics is that only that which has being can be conceived and only that which has form has being. Yet, dynamics is supposed to be the polar contrast to form.

100 Ford 1975, 35. Track 1975, 32 defines dynamics in the same way: “Dynamik muss verstanden werden als Möglichkeit zum Sein, die mit der Schöpfung gegeben ist, aber noch nicht verwirklicht ist. Dynamik ist der Ausdruck für die Potentialität des Seins.”
Ford says that Tillich’s view of form is similar to Aristotle’s view of substantial form which is necessary for a certain actuality and which is connected to the potentiality of growth of organic things. Form defines the content of a thing by giving a defined structure where its dynamics or power of being can actualize itself. Form both defines and individualizes.

However, says Ford, Tillich’s view of dynamics and form emphasizes the tension and the dialectical interaction of the polar elements. He sees this as a typical emphasis of Tillich. He thinks that Tillich’s view of form is very much the same as Aristotle’s but his view of potentiality has more tension with form: in Aristotle, the potentiality tries to fulfill the substantial form even in its most active state, while in Tillich, dynamics does not only fulfill the form but also breaks and transcends it. Ford thinks that this is close to Whitehead’s view of creativity according to which every created being and every stage of development is transcended by the creative power.

Ford says that there are all the time two opposing tendencies in Tillich’s thought: dynamics tries constantly to transcend the limits of form and create new forms while form tries to conserve the existence of every being. Both tendencies belong together without separation but there is also a possibility of contradiction in them. As Ford mentions, the idea of form which tries to conserve the existence of every being is close to Aristotle’s view. We shall use the expression ‘classical view of dynamics and form’ to indicate cases where form is trying to conserve the existence of every being. The idea that dynamics tries to transcend the limits of form and create new forms can be seen in many modern views. We shall use the expression ‘modern view of dynamics and form’ where dynamics transcends the form and creates new forms.

Tom F. Driver, in his article Form and Energy: An Argument with Paul Tillich, has a critical view about the “tension” of dynamics and form: he thinks that the phenomena that we encounter are not made of a tension but are actions, there are no static or dynamic elements behind actions where they could be derived from. Driver has a critical attitude towards Tillich’s ontological model which becomes complex as a result of an “ontological

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101 Ford 1975, 39.
102 Ford 1975, 39.
103 Ford 1975, 40. Eugene Peters, Form, Unity and the Individual: A Study of the Concretely Real (1960) compares the views of Tillich and Whitehead but in spite of the name, the concept of form is not under a special consideration.
104 Ford 1975, 41. See also Track 1975, 32.
105 Driver 1976, 111: "...the phenomena we experience are not made up of 'tensions' but are 'actions'." Driver speaks about form and energy, even though Tillich does not use this pair of concepts, and he combines dynamics and form in the discussion about the feminine and masculine principle in theology. For more detail see Driver 1976, 103-105.
fall”. He thinks that a non-dynamic form or formless dynamics are not conceivable. Driver himself stresses becoming instead of being: “The form of my life is coming to be. For that reason, and only that, it now is.”

The relation of dynamics and form to form and substance has been seldom examined in Tillich studies. Some studies examine separately the concepts of dynamics and form on one hand and form and substance on the other hand, but they are not related to each other. Sometimes dynamics and Gehalt are connected even though their relationship is not under consideration. Sometimes Gehalt has been connected also to being. The dynamic

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106 Driver 1976, 106.

107 Driver 1976, 112. In the end, Driver’s criticism exceeds the boundaries of Tillich’s thinking: more important than building logical systems of concepts is listening to the “music of the spheres” and experiencing like children. “There is a venerable tradition that speaks of the sublime as ’the music of the spheres.’ I am suggesting that such a metaphor be taken much more seriously and, indeed, more literally than we are taught to do. If perchance the heavens do resound with the music of the spheres, then we are but slow children learning to attend to a performance. All our tendencies to reduce the performance to a set of concepts in logical relation to each other would then be aspects of our fall from an original grace in which we heard and danced better than we do now.” Driver 1976, 112.

108 For example Clayton’s book, The Concept of Correlation deals in many ways with the concepts of form and substance but does not mention the polarity of dynamics and form. See e.g. Clayton 1980, 196-199. Hannelore Jahr examines in her article Der Begriff der ”Gestalt” als Schlüssel zur Metaphysik im Frühwerk Paul Tilmichs (1989) largely the concepts of Form and Gehalt in the early writings of Tillich but the polarity of dynamics and form is not apparent. Richard 1995 examines Tillich’s view of history in the light of Form and Gehalt but does not connect it to the polarity of dynamics and form.

109 For example, Rolinck 1976, 148-151 examines the polarity of dynamics and form from the point of view of historical self-creation and discusses the problems of Form and Gehalt (footnote 22 on page 148) but does not examine the relation of the pairs of concepts to each other. Wenz 1979 deals with Form und Gehalt (e.g. pages 122-123) and Dynamik und Form (e.g. pages 242-247) but does not connect them to each other.

110 It is possible to interpret the thought in Track 1975, 35 this way: “Das emotionale Element ist betont auf die besondere Form gerichtet, auf den Gehalt, auf das Dynamische.”

111 See e.g. Scharlemann 1989, 104: ”Das reine Sein ist der unbedingte Gehalt; es offenbart sich in den Sonderformen der Dinge, die die Wissenschaft ergreift.” Reimer 1994, 117 presents the metalogical method (die metalogische Methode) in Tillich’s writings from 1920’s. Tillich defines it as the unity of thought and being. According to the method, thought represents the rational, forming and form-bearing element, being represents irrational, vitalistic, unlimited, depth and creative power. Of these definitions the first one is close to form and the other one is close to what Tillich earlier called Gehalt, later dynamics. Tillich connects here the dynamic element to being, which is different from his later writings where both dynamics and form are connected to being. Reimer points to the English translation of Tillich’s Das System der Wissenschaften (1923), The System of the Sciences (1981), pages 40-41; in the original text it is on page 116 (MW 1, 217).
substance has been given priority over the rational form.\textsuperscript{112} Sometimes the relationship of Form and Gehalt is called the basic polarity\textsuperscript{113} or the dynamic polarity (die dynamische Polarität).\textsuperscript{114} Tillich does not normally speak of polarities in connection with Form and Gehalt. Similarly rare is the expression of ontological structure in connection with Form and Gehalt.\textsuperscript{115} Here it is possible to see the influence of Tillich’s later ontological polarity on the study of his older writings. The relation of dynamics and form to Form and Gehalt (form and substance) needs further clarification.

We can see that some of the problems in Tillich’s thinking have been expressed in the previous examinations, but many questions remain open. No general treatment of the polarity of dynamics and form has been presented. I believe that a careful examination of the subject can improve our understanding of Tillich’s thinking and its problems.

\textsuperscript{112} Kodalle 1989, 313 talks about “dynamischer Gehalt” or “dynamische Substanz”. He says that “Tillich die Substanz, das tragende produktive Sein, gegenüber der Rationalität, der Form, favorisiert”. He has a chapter titled “Die ontologische Priorität von Substanz/Gehalt gegenüber Subjekt/Form”.

\textsuperscript{113} Buchter 1975, 103-104.

\textsuperscript{114} Amelung 1972, 204-207.

\textsuperscript{115} Jahr 1989b, 109.
2. SELF-INTEGRATION: THE UNITY AND BALANCE OF DYNAMICS AND FORM

2.1. The ontological unity and essential balance of dynamics and form

In his answer to the question about the ontological polarities Tillich said that it is impossible to grasp reality with one or two contrasting concepts; both are needed and the two are dependent on each other in their validity. We can use the phrase ‘the unity and balance of dynamics and form’ to express this idea. In the beginning of the system Tillich wanted to give equal significance to both. This means that in the essential state of things, everything happens within the form and the form is not broken. The emphasis is on the self-integration of life, even though the other functions of life are also present: even if the form is transcended, this happens within the form. Considering Tillich’s whole system, this means more emphasis on form than in some other places. Under the conditions of existence, the polar elements can draw away from each other, and this is the consequence of estrangement. In the first two volumes of *Systematic Theology* the ideal is the unity and balance of the elements.

Tillich said in one of his last lectures that he has been asked if he was an existential theologian, and his answer was short: fifty-fifty. To him, essentialism and existentialism belong together: “It is impossible to be a pure essentialist if one is personally on the human situation and not sitting on the throne of God”. On the other hand, also pure existentialism is impossible. Essentialism and existentialism belong together:

Existentialism is possible only as an element in a larger whole, as an element in a vision of the structure of being in its created goodness, and then as a description of man's existence within that framework. The conflicts between his essential goodness and his existential estrangement cannot be seen at all without keeping essentialism and existentialism together. Theology must see both sides, man's essential

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1 See Ford 1975, 37.
2 My Search for Absolutes (1967), 245.
nature, wonderfully and symbolically expressed in the paradise story, and man's existential condition, under sin, guilt, and death.

A corresponding distinction can be seen in Tillich’s view of the “ontological” approach of the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition and the “cosmological” approach of the Thomistic tradition: the ontological approach is characterised by immediate “awareness” of God, not as a possible object of experience, but as the *prius* in which all being is grounded; the cosmological approach begins with our knowledge of the external world from which it tries to draw inferences about the existence and nature of God. Tillich thinks that the cosmological approach has significant contributions to make in the areas of theology of nature and culture but the ontological approach is the necessary foundation for any philosophy of religion that is worthy of being taken seriously.

Tillich’s ontological analysis gives a description of the polarity of dynamics and form along with two other polarities. First, we shall examine their status in Tillich’s ontology. According to Tillich, both philosophy and theology ask the question of being, but they ask it from different perspectives: philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself, theology deals with the meaning of being for us. The concept of being has a long history, starting with Parmenides, but the strongest influence on Tillich’s thinking comes from the existential ontology of the twentieth century. Kant’s philosophy had proposed to show the limits of reason, and after that many philosophers tried to approach the ultimate through the existing self. Tillich often speaks of the influence that Martin Heidegger had on his thinking, and for a short time they both taught at Marburg in 1924-25, even though they did not have any personal relationship during that time.

Heidegger approaches being through an analysis of human existence. The task of philosophy is the clarification of the structure and meaning of being; it is a task of existential, not traditional ontology. Man is the only self-conscious being and thus can ask what it means “to be”; this existential analysis opens up the way to being-itself. Tillich’s ontological thinking is clearly on the same line. Existential analysis discloses that there is a distinction between subject and object in the human experience. Tillich follows Heidegger when

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3 My Search for Absolutes (1967), 245.
4 See Clayton 1987, 11-12.
5 ST I, 22. We shall deal with the question of being and God in more detail in the next chapter.
6 See e.g. Autobiographical Reflections, 14.
7 For more detail about Tillich’s relation to Heidegger see e.g. Thatcher 1978, 2-4, 13-18; Clayton 1980, 169-175; Gilkey 1990, 29, 82, 87; Randall 1952, 132, 152-154.
he assumes without question that the epistemological subject-object distinction is absolutely ultimate also for being.⁸

The first level of the ontological examination is the basic structure of being, which is also the presupposition of the ontological question. This question presupposes both the subject who asks and the object of which the question is asked. In Tillich’s view, the basic ontological structure is “the interdependence of ego-self and world”.⁹ The starting point to deal with being, is an ego-self which has a world. This leads to a twofold situation where man at the same time belongs to the world and is separated from it. The basic structure of being is polar and this has to be accepted as a starting point. Neither side can be derived from the other as philosophers have tried to do.¹⁰ When man asks what is behind the polarity, reason reaches its limits. In Tillich’s view, the question can be answered only by revelation.¹¹ This shows that Tillich follows the Augustinian view of illumination.

The questions can be looked either from the outside or from the inside:

Here it must be said that there is no reason for preferring concepts taken from “outside” to those taken from “inside.” According to the self-world structure, both types are equally valid. The self being aware of itself and the self looking at its world (including itself) are equally significant for the description of the ontological structure.¹²

For example, Tillich deals with the category of time both “from the outside” and “from the inside”, and the analysis creates a question of our own temporality: the self-awareness of the finite self as finite is anxiety, which is overcome by courage when the power of being appears in our existence.¹³

This division of “inside” and “outside” can lead to two different positions from which to look at questions: one is the “outside”, transcendent, essential position; the other is the “inside”, existential, human position.¹⁴ Scharlemann

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⁸ See Randall 1952, 153.
⁹ “The interdependence of ego-self and world is the basic ontological structure and implies all the others.” ST I, 171.
¹⁰ For a more precise treatment see ST I, 170-171.
¹¹ ST I, 174.
¹² ST I, 192. See also Randall 1952, 158-159.
¹³ ST I, 192, 193. For more detail see Gilkey 1990, 88, 93-97, 103-105. For example, Randall 1952, 158-159 argues that existential ontology is an expression of the “age of anxiety” and Tillich’s thinking expresses the feeling of Continental Europeans after the World Wars; in a different culture and situation anxiety does not have such a central role: “It takes a good German Romanticist like Heidegger to get really excited over the natural conditions of human life.” This is certainly true up to a point, but existential questions have to be met universally one way or the other.
¹⁴ One could compare these positions with the roles of an actor and a spectator of a play: both deal with the same things but one is subjectively involved with the happenings while
has noticed that Tillich’s definition of self-world polarity leads to a double usage of ‘self’: on the one hand, it means ‘self-relatedness’, the immediately experienced ‘I’ in such acts as “I think”; on the other hand, ‘self’ refers to a kind of being, namely, a self-reflective being, or any man, or a structure of centeredness. The experiencing self can become a “metaphysical spectator”. Tillich’s intention was to keep the essential and the existential sides of his thinking in balance, but we can argue that in the beginning of the system Tillich is more a “metaphysical spectator” that gives value to the form element than in the end of the system.

On the next level of Tillich’s ontological analysis, there are three pairs of ontological elements which have the same polar nature as the basic structure. These three polar pairs create the formal structure of being before it actualizes itself in existence. The ontological basic structure presupposes the subject-object structure of knowing and the ego-world structure of being. These polar pairs are individualization and participation, dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny. In the third volume of the system, three functions of life are based upon them: the polarity of individualisation and participation is the basis of self-integration, the polarity of dynamics and form is the basis of self-creation, and the polarity of freedom and destiny is the basis of self-transcendence. Tillich emphasizes that each polar pair is a whole where one

the other is outside trying to see the whole picture. It is a different thing, for example, to describe doubt and despair in the light of the Christian message and really to experience them in one’s own life.

15 Scharlemann 1969, 22
16 Scharlemann 1969, 28: “...I am deliberately excluding from consideration the self now engaged in thinking these things and am taking up the position, as it were, of a metaphysical spectator, who sees before him a basic division of finite being into two kinds, self and world.” However, a historically conscious thought raises the question about the possibility of taking a metaphysical spectator’s position at all. Scharlemann 1969, 92: “...my acting I is unconditionally subjectival - I can never get a look at it; and second, the character of existence is such that I am split from my true self, and cannot, therefore, see my actual self in my objectival self”. Instead of the categories of subject and object, Scharlemann uses the categories of subjectival subject, subjectival object, and objectival object. See Scharlemann 1969, x-xi. See also Lounibos 1976, 82. Also Wenz 1989, 19 brings forward two positions in Tillich’s analysis of self: "As a self-conscious I, man consequently not only belongs to the world, but is also separate from it. Tillich vigorously strives to maintain both aspects, the world immanence and the world transcendence of man."

17 See Thatcher 1978, 64-65.
18 ST III, 32.
side cannot be without the other. Their polar character makes them principles and prevents them from becoming highest generic concepts.\textsuperscript{19}

The elements of the ontological polarities belong essentially together in an unbroken unity: the one is not without the other. Thus, also dynamics and form belong together. Being something means having a form, and every form gives form to something which Tillich calls dynamics. Thus he writes:

'Being something’ means having a form. ... Whatever loses its form loses its being.\textsuperscript{20}

Every form forms something. The question is this: What is this 'something'? We have called it 'dynamics’, a very complex concept with a rich history and many connotations and implications.\textsuperscript{21}

According to the definition, dynamics and form do not exist without each other: they are necessary ontological elements of everything that is and some kind of combination of them can be found everywhere: "Actualized being of life unites dynamics with form. Everything real has a form, be it an atom, be it the human mind. That which has no form has no being.”\textsuperscript{22}

Tillich gives a short explanation of form: “according to the polarity of individualization and participation, there are special and general forms, but in actual being these never are separated”.\textsuperscript{23} The polarity of individualization and participation is connected to the function of self-integration through the principle of centeredness.\textsuperscript{24} In a tree, form is what makes it a tree. It includes both the common nature of trees and the individual features of an individual tree. In connection with culture, the relation of form and content is more complicated: man can use the materials and things of nature to create new products of culture. In the cultural sphere, it is not possible to separate form and content.\textsuperscript{25}

Tillich states that “the form which makes a thing what it is, is its content, its \textit{essentia}, its definite power of being”.\textsuperscript{26} The definition sounds quite classical:

\textsuperscript{19} "They share the polar character of the basic structure, and it is just their polarity that makes them principles by preventing them from becoming highest generic concepts.” ST I, 165.
\textsuperscript{20} ST I, 178.
\textsuperscript{21} ST I, 179.
\textsuperscript{22} Love, Power, and Justice (1954), 54.
\textsuperscript{23} ST I, 178.
\textsuperscript{24} See ST III, 32.
\textsuperscript{25} ST I, 178. Tillich deals with the question of the immortality of the soul with the distinction of matter and form, and says that it is possible to remove the contradiction between the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; the reason is that soul is the form of the life process and its immortality includes all elements which constitute this process, though it includes them as essences. See ST III, 410.
\textsuperscript{26} ST I, 178.
form is essentia, the essence of a thing; as the power of being it resists non-being. Ferrell says that the polar elements of dynamics and form reveal Tillich’s closest link with Aristotle and the medieval philosophy, although the tradition undergoes significant transformations in his hands.  

The classical view emphasizes the element of form: form is essential to a thing, and dynamics does not break the unity of the form. Tillich emphasizes this kind of thought in his words about logos in the first volume of Systematic Theology: “Nothing falls outside the logos structure of being. The dynamic element cannot break the unity of the form; the abysmal quality cannot swallow the rational quality of divine life.” Everything tends to conserve its own form. This indicates the idea of self-integration.

However, at the same time “the dynamic character of being implies the tendency of everything to transcend itself and to create new forms”. This is caused by the dynamic side of the polarity. Tillich does not distinguish between self-creation and self-transcendence: he says that there is a tendency in the dynamic character of being “to transcend itself” and “to create new forms”. This description combines self-creation and self-transcendence. Both are caused by the dynamic side of the polarity.

Tillich says that ’dynamics’ is a very complex concept. In his view, the problem is based on the fact that everything that can be conceptualized has to have some kind of form of being. This is just the problem with dynamics:

Dynamics, therefore, cannot be thought as something that is; nor can it be thought as something that 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.

According to this definition, dynamics is the potentiality of being; it cannot be thought as something that is or something that is not; it is non-being compared to things that have form, and the power of being in relation to pure non-being. Dynamics is nonbeing and the power of being at the same time.

Tillich uses the Greek expression me on to describe dynamics. In another context, he uses me on to describe the view of matter in the Greek philosophy; at those instances me on is non-being which resists form:

The Greek doctrine of a matter (the me on, or nonbeing) which resists form establishes two ontological ultimates, even though the

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27 Ferrell 1992, 42-44.
28 ST I, 279; see Ferrell 1992, 106.
29 ST I, 181.
30 ST I, 181.
31 ST I, 179.
second is described as that which has no ultimate ontological standing.\textsuperscript{33}

Just as the gods of Homer banished the demons into the underworld, the philosophers relegated the intractable and resisting element of existence into the realm of nonbeing, into the me on, into that which is without any power of being. But this me on retained in its very impotence the power to resist form and knowledge...\textsuperscript{34}

Tillich’s view of me on unites the positive power of being and the negative form-resisting principle. As Thatcher argues, Tillich tries to combine the Augustinian me on and the Schellingian me on. The first one means non-being, negative power of being and the latter positive power of being or the blind power principle.\textsuperscript{35} Tillich’s endeavour to combine both the negative power of being (traditional me on) and positive power of being (Schelling’s me on) leads to problems with the concept of dynamics;\textsuperscript{36} it also leads to different definitions of dynamics and form:\textsuperscript{37} the negative power of being has

\textsuperscript{33} ST I, 232. Realism and Faith (1948), 70 (MW 4, 346): “Matter, although without form or essential being, has a negative, half-demonic power which cannot be overcome in the material world.”

\textsuperscript{34} Philosophy and Fate, 7 (MW 1, 323).

\textsuperscript{35} Thatcher 1978, 64-70 says that Schelling’s me on changes the traditional expression unrecognizable: non-being has changed in Schelling’s thinking to the ground of all power and life, although chaotic, uniformed and undirected.

\textsuperscript{36} Randall 1952, 154 thinks that dynamics is an unfortunate term, however he does not give any arguments for his view. Thatcher 1978, 64-70 thinks that the indefinite nature of the principle makes it a difficult component for an ontological system. He does not think that the polarity of dynamics and form is a good view at all. He maintains that Tillich uses the concepts of dynamics and form unsuccessfully and, moreover, his thinking is not coherent on the matter. Thatcher says that Tillich’s view of form is too static because it needs a compensatory principle of dynamics or growth; form is a flexible concept which is not destroyed by the process of growth. It is possible, for example, to say that the form of man includes development and it does not need a concept of dynamics to complete it. Even if one accepts Tillich’s static view of form, according to Thatcher, it is almost impossible to unite it with Tillich’s view of form as essentia and power of being, because just these express the change from potentiality to actuality. These features do not have anything in common with the form that is in polar opposition with dynamics, they are on the dynamic side of the polarity and are in polar opposition with form. Thatcher says that Tillich’s thinking would be clearer if the opposites would be, like in Schelling, the blind power principle which acts both creatively and destructively, and, as its pair, a static and defined principle of form.

\textsuperscript{37} Thatcher 1978, 64-70 thinks that their combination is impossible. The absolute non-being and the non-being that is dialectically connected to being are so far from each other that they should not be given the same name. Thatcher is very critical towards Tillich’s arguments: “It makes little sense to claim, as Tillich does, that dynamics is both ’non-being in contrast to things that have form, and the power of being in contrast to pure non-being’ (ST I.198). Dynamics is given the range of Schelling’s first potency with the result
as its pair a more positive and active form principle than the positive power of being which is accompanied by a static form element.

Tillich’s starting point is the polar tension of the elements: in the essential state they are in balance, in the existential state they are also in conflict with each other. Both of the elements are active and both can be described as ‘the power of being’, both of the elements can have negative or positive features. This tension shows also the tension between self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence. When we analyse Tillich’s ontological description we can find features of the classical and the modern views. However, the relation of dynamics and form to each other is very different in these two views. In the classical view, form works actively giving meaning and essence to that which is potential and deformed; dynamics fulfills itself within the form. In the modern view, the active and purposive element is dynamics as vitality, and this gives a static nature to the element of form; dynamics breaks through the limits of form and creates new forms. On a conceptual level Tillich’s description includes many problems.\(^{38}\)

Tillich explains the creative role of dynamics with many ancient and modern examples. He says that dynamics is not the philosophers’ invention,
but it can be found behind most mythologies, and it is apparent in the chaos, darkness and emptiness which preceded creation. In metaphysical speculations, its expressions are *Urgrund* (Böhme), will (Schopenhauer), will to power (Nietzsche), unconscious (Hartmann, Freud), *élan vital* (Bergson), strife (Scheler, Jung). All these point symbolically to that which cannot be named, and they should not be taken conceptually. They point to that which “does not yet have being”. The last examples connect dynamics to the modern views of *Lebensphilosophie*, which emphasize the vital nature of life. Tillich defines *élan vital* as “the creative drive of the living substance in everything that lives toward new forms”. This indicates the idea of the self-creation of life and the modern view of dynamics and form.

The polarity of dynamics and form becomes known in man’s experience as the polarity of vitality and intentionality. In this idea Tillich utilizes the existential and psychoanalytical thinking of his time. Vitality is the power which keeps a living being alive and growing. In its full sense, vitality is connected to man, because man has also intentionality; man has the ability to create a new world besides the given one. Intentionality means that man can be in relationship with meaningful structures, use concepts, and understand and change reality. Tillich emphasizes the unity of vitality and intentionality: man’s dynamics or creative vitality is not without direction nor chaotic, but...
Therefore, we recommend the use of the term ‘intentionality,’ which means being related to meaningful structures, living in universals, grasping and shaping reality... Man’s dynamics, his creative vitality, is not undirected, chaotic, self-contained activity. It is directed, formed; it transcends itself toward meaningful contents. ST I, 180-181.

The Courage to Be (1952), 84 (MW 5, 180).

ST I, 180.

ST I, 181.

ST I, 181. Thatcher 1978, 68 concludes that Tillich unites dynamics with becoming and form with being. This is not accurate because being unites dynamics and form. Tillich tries to avoid the contradiction between being and becoming by saying that becoming is included in the dynamic nature of being. The opposites expressing the polarity of dynamics and form are rest and movement, identity and alteration, preserving and change. Sturm 1994, 194-195 thinks that Tillich’s views are close to process philosophy (eine

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philosophy prefers the idea of self-creativity or self-transcendence at the
expense of self-integration; that means also a preference for the modern view
of dynamics and form.

Instead of the traditional concepts of matter and form (which give room for
an active form element) Tillich has chosen the concepts of dynamics and form
(which emphasize the active role of dynamics from the outset). This shows
that he is also moving towards the modern position compared to the classical
view. However, Tillich did not want to move entirely in the direction of
process philosophy, and so he combined features of the classical view and the
modern view in his ontology.

In this context, Tillich mentions “the tendency of everything to transcend
itself”; usually, the idea of self-transcendence is connected to human beings:
Self-transcendence and self-conservation are experienced immediately by man in man himself. Just as the self on the subhuman
level is imperfect and in correlation with an environment, while on
the human level the self is perfect and in correlation with a world, so
self-transcendence on the subhuman level is limited by a constellation
of conditions, while self-transcendence on the human level is limited
only by the structure which makes man what he is - a complete self
which has a world. On the basis of achieving self-conservation (the
preservation of his humanity), man can transcend any given situation.
He can transcend himself without limits in all directions just because
of this basis... Man is able to create a new world of technical tools
and a world of cultural forms.

There is a tension between self-conservation and self-transcendence in man;
it is the same kind of tension as that with self-integration and self-creativity,
but in self-transcendence man has even more freedom from the forms. On the
human level self-transcendence is limited only by the structure which makes
man what he is, while on the subhuman level it is limited by many conditions.
Man can transcend any given situation and create a new world with its tools
and cultural forms. Man’s cultural creativity is endless, he uses the material

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50 See Gilkey 1990, 90-91.
51 ST I, 181.
given by nature and turns it into technical tools or cultural products which have meaning and value. Man also bears their meaning and is at the same time the result of their influence. In this direction the self-transcendence of man is endless, but on the biological level, self-transcendence has reached its limits. The growth of an individual is an example of self-transcendence which is based on self-preservation. The new that is brought with the growth gradually destroys that which does not change. Growth that goes in a wrong direction transcends itself without preserving itself, and thus destroys itself. Biological evolution is an example of something totally new: life forms develop from less developed ones. The example of growth shows that in his ontology Tillich has not clearly made the distinction between self-creation and self-transcendence; later he connects growth to self-creation: “The second polarity in the structure of being is that of dynamics and form. It is effective in the function of life which we have called self-creativity, and it is effective in the principle of growth.”

Tillich’s analysis of the existential position brings a new element to the polarities: in finitude, polarity becomes tension where the elements draw away from one another. It means the possibility to lose one’s ontological structure and with it oneself:

Finitude is actual not only in the categories but also in the ontological elements. Their polar character opens them to the threat of nonbeing. In every polarity each pole is limited as well as sustained by the other one. A complete balance between them presupposes a balanced whole. But such a whole is not given. There are special structures in which, under the impact of finitude, polarity becomes tension. Tension refers to the tendency of elements within a unity to draw away from one another, to attempt to move in opposite directions.

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52 “Man uses material given by nature to create technical forms which transcend nature, and he creates cultural forms which have validity and meaning. Living in these forms, he transforms himself, while originating them. He is not only a tool for their creation; he is at the same time their bearer and the result of their transforming effect upon him. His self-transcendence in this direction is indefinite, while the biological self-transcendence has reached its limits in him... ’Super-man,’ in a biological sense, would be less than man, for man has freedom, and freedom cannot be trespassed biologically.” ST I, 182.

53 ST I, 181.

54 ST III, 50.

55 “Being, limited by nonbeing, is finitude. Nonbeing appears as the ‘not yet’ of being and as the ‘no more’ of being. It confronts that which is with a definite end (finish). .. However, everything which participates in the power of being is ‘mixed’ with nonbeing. It is being in process of coming from and going toward nonbeing. It is finite.” ST I, 189.

56 ST I, 198.
If this is applicable to all the polarities, dynamics and form are drawn away from one another and attempt to move in opposite directions. What does this mean? If dynamics is the negative power of being, it resists form and can remain without form; if dynamics is the positive power of being, it breaks through the rigid forms and can produce chaos.

Tillich explains the threat of a possible break in the following way:

Finitude also transforms the polarity of dynamics and form into a tension which produces the threat of a possible break and anxiety about this threat. Dynamics drives toward form, in which being is actual and has the power of resisting nonbeing. But at the same time dynamics is threatened because it may lose itself in rigid forms, and, if it tries to break through them, the result may be chaos, which is the loss of both dynamics and form.\(^{57}\)

Positive and negative features are connected to both elements: being is actual in form in which it has the power of resisting nonbeing, but forms can become “rigid forms”; dynamics drives toward form and is threatened by the rigid forms, but if it tries to break through them, the result may be chaos. The description combines features of the classical and the modern views.

There is a possibility of tension in vitality and intentionality in the same way as in dynamics and form in general:

Human vitality tends to embody itself in cultural creations, forms, and institutions through the exercise of creative intentionality. But every embodiment endangers the vital power precisely by giving it actual being. Man is anxious about the threat of a final form in which his vitality will be lost, and he is anxious about the threat of a chaotic formlessness in which both vitality and intentionality will be lost.\(^{58}\)

Man’s vitality expresses itself in the forms of culture and in institutions, but every formed creation is a threat to man’s vitality. The tension expresses itself in the fear of a final form, which annihilates man’s vitality or as the fear of chaotic formlessness which annihilates both vitality and intentionality.

This tension can be seen in literature from Greek tragedies to the present day, but it has not been taken enough into consideration in philosophy nor in theology. The exceptions are the philosophy of life and some Protestant mystics. Philosophy has stressed the rational structure of things but it has forgotten how things are born. Theology, for its part, has stressed the divine law and mixed creative vitality into the separation of vitality from intentionality which has destructive effects. In this way philosophical

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\(^{57}\) ST I, 199-200.

\(^{58}\) ST I, 200.
rationalism and theological legalism are the reason for the fact that the tension of dynamics and form has not gained enough attention.  

Tillich says that the polar elements and the polarity can be lost:

Our own ontological tension comes to awareness in the anxiety of losing our ontological structure through losing one or another polar element and, consequently, the polarity to which it belongs... It is the anxiety of not being what we essentially are. It is anxiety about disintegrating and falling into nonbeing through existential disruption.

Tillich describes the anxiety of losing our ontological structure, but what does it mean that man loses one or the other polar element? According to the definition, dynamics and form do not exist without each other: if you lose one, you lose the other and the whole ontological structure. However, Tillich clearly wants to use the polarity to explain different phenomena in life, and elsewhere he gives examples of their distorted appearances in life.

Tillich uses the phrase: “not being what we essentially are”. This indicates some essential state of things which does not actualize itself in life because of “existential disruption”. This includes a twofold idea: on the one hand, dynamics and form are necessary ontological elements of everything that is and some kind of combination of them can be found everywhere; on the other hand, Tillich uses the polarity of dynamics and form as a basis for value judgements, in which case there is a right essential balance of dynamics and form and a possibility of existential disruption. Then we have to ask, what is the right balance of the elements and how do we know it. These questions take us to Tillich’s analysis of essence and existence and the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Before that we shall examine how Tillich uses the polarity of dynamics and form to talk about God.

59 ST I, 200.

60 ST I, 199. Kiesling 1964, 262 describes finity in the following way: "The ambiguities of life are rooted ultimately in the tensions and threats to dissolution which are inherent in the polar structural elements of finite being - essence and existence, potentiality and actuality, self and world, subject and object, individualization and participation in the universal, dynamics (motion) and form, freedom and destiny. Precisely because of the composite ontological character of finite being, finite life is marked by tensions and forever threatened with dissolution: the functions of such life are necessarily ambiguous. But God is being-itself. In him essence and existence are identical. All the structural elements of finite being have their analogous counterpart in God as the ground and abyss of being: but in God, their opposition, tensions, threats of dissolution are transcended."

61 See e.g. ST II, 64.
2.2. The polarity of dynamics and form in God

In Tillich’s view, the basic question of theology is the question of God, which is united inseparably with the question of being. In the previous chapter we have analysed the structure of being and now we can proceed to Tillich’s view of God. Tillich applies his basic view of correlation to philosophy and theology by saying that philosophy formulates the question to which theology gives the answer based on the Christian message. Man can ask what it means “to be”, because he is the only self-conscious being. The existential analysis opens up the way to being-itself. In Tillich’s system the question of being receives a theological answer that God is being-itself. This is the only thing that can be said about God directly, without symbols. Everything that is added is symbolic speech. Tillich maintains that everything we say about God has to be understood symbolically. Otherwise, God becomes a finite being. Symbolically speaking, the polarity of dynamics and form has its ground in God; without God there is no polarity of dynamics and form.

Tillich talks about God by using both the polarity of dynamics and form and the scheme of form and ground/depth/abyss/substance. In the polarity, the elements “lie on the same level” while the scheme of form and substance indicates the Schellingian hierarchy of the potencies. Tillich’s basic view of God combines the idea of depth with form; the view resembles the idea of form and substance:

The divine life is the dynamic unity of depth and form. In mystical language the depth of the divine life, its inexhaustible and ineffable character, is called ‘Abyss.’ In philosophical language the form, the meaning and structure element of the divine life, is called ‘Logos.’ In religious language the dynamic unity of both elements is called ‘Spirit.’ Theologians must use all three terms in order to point to the ground of revelation.

In a Schellingian way Tillich says that God as depth is the inexhaustible and ineffable Abyss which at the same time is the ground of being. If taken...
symbolically, the ideas of *prima causa* and *ultima substantia* can be used to designate God: both mean that he is the “creative and abysmal ground of being”. However, this does not mean a substance that is completely expressed by its accidents: “It is an underlying in which substance and accidents preserve their freedom.” It is possible to explain this idea with the distinction of *potentia dei absoluta* - *potentia dei ordinata* in nominalism: God has created the form and structure of the world but his potentiality, his absolute power has not been exhausted by that. However, in another context, Tillich says that “there is no substance without accidents” and that “substance is nothing beyond the accidents in which it expresses itself”.

The abysmal character of the divine life makes revelation mysterious; Tillich also says that theology has tried to find a place for non-being “in the depth of the divine life”. The logical character of the divine life makes revelation of the mystery possible. The form element is called *Logos* which is the meaning and structure element of the divine life. The dynamic unity of both elements is called *Spirit* which creates the correlation of miracle and ecstasy in which revelation can be received.

Tillich’s idea of the depth of reason and the structure of reason can be seen in a similar way. The depth of reason can be connected to the Neo-Platonic One. For the Platonic tradition this stands one step “above” intellect; Tillich

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66 ST I, 238.

67 Annala 2000, 8 uses the distinction to analyse mystical experience.

68 “In contrast to causality, substance points to something underlying the flux of appearances, something which is relatively static and self-contained. There is no substance without accidents. The accidents receive their ontological power from the substance to which they belong. But the substance is nothing beyond the accidents in which it expresses itself.” ST I, 197. See also ST III, 314, 321-326.

69 ST I, 179-180. Gilkey 1990, 92 feels there are two polar streams at work in Tillich’s thinking: “One, the classical stream (both Greek and Patristic), stresses the clear opposition of being and nonbeing. The other (the more modern stream of nineteenth-century *Lebensphilosophie*, of modern dynamic ontologies, of existentialism, possibly of Buddhism, and even some of the implications of the New Testament), seems to see being, whether in finitude or in God, as a polarity of being and of nonbeing.” See also Gilkey 1990, 108-113. Christopherson 1995, 179-180 says about *me on* (the relative non-being) and *ouk on* (the absolute non-being): “Generally, one finds that when God is the subject of a sentence in Tillich’s writing, nonbeing is addressed as *me on*. However, when humankind is the subject, then *ouk on* comes storming into the picture.” From the “vantage point” of God, nonbeing is seen as *me on*, from the “ground level” of the humanity, it is seen as *ouk on*. About the meaning of non-being to Tillich’s view of religion and religious experience, see Petit 1989, 221-229.

70 See ST I, 71-81.

71 Randall 1952, 143: “Reason, in other words, points to something that is one step beyond the intelligible structures it actually finds. This further step is the Source or the One of Neo-Platonism, the Imprinter of the seal, the Original of the copy, of Augustinian
follows Böhme and Schelling, and locates it one step “below”, in the “depths”.

According to Tillich it is not possible to grasp God directly, we have to use symbols. When Tillich uses the ontological polarities to talk about God, he emphasizes that this is also symbolic speech. It is always important to balance one polar element with the other without reducing the symbolic power of either of them. Some important symbols about God are based on the polarity of dynamics and form:

The polarity of dynamics and form supplies the material basis for a group of symbols which are central for any present-day doctrine of God. Potentiality, vitality, and self-transcendence are indicated in the term ‘dynamics,’ while the term ‘form’ embraces actuality, intentionality, and self-preservation.

God’s potentiality, vitality and self-transcendence are based on dynamics, God’s actuality, intentionality and self-preservation are based on form. We can see here both self-integration and self-creativity or self-transcendence. In Tillich’s concept of God these both are present or included.

Tillich claims that in theology we should create a balance between the emphasis on dynamics and the emphasis on form: he wants to maintain the unity and balance of the ontological elements in God:

If the element of form in the dynamics-form polarity is applied symbolically to the divine life, it expresses the actualization of its potentialities. The divine life inescapably unites possibility with fulfilment. Neither side threatens the other, nor is there a threat of disruption. In terms of self-preservation one could say that God cannot cease to be God. His going-out from himself does not diminish or destroy his divinity. It is united with eternal ’resting in himself.’

The symbolic use of the form element expresses that God’s coming out from himself is united with eternal rest in himself. In God, possibility is united with fulfilment without either side threatening the other. This sounds quite classical.

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72 “The symbols provided by the ontological elements present a great number of problems for the doctrine of God. In every special case it is necessary to distinguish between the proper sense of the concepts and their symbolic sense. And it is equally necessary to balance one side of the ontological polarity against the other without reducing the symbolic power of either of them.” ST I, 244. Nörenberger 1966, 105-106 points briefly to the polarity of dynamics and form when he deals with the relation of symbolic expressions to the material they use.

73 ST I, 245-246.

74 ST I, 247.
Referring to Plato, Tillich equates being with the power of being:

Many confusions in the doctrine of God and many apologetic weaknesses could be avoided if God were understood first of all as being-itself or as the ground of being. The power of being is another way of expressing the same thing in a circumscribing phrase. Ever since the time of Plato it has been known... that the concept of being as being, or being itself, points to the power inherent in everything, the power of resisting nonbeing. Therefore, instead of saying that God is first of all being-itself, it is possible to say that he is the power of being in everything and above everything, the infinite power of being.\(^{75}\)

Accordingly, God who is being-itself, is the power of being.\(^{76}\)

This definition includes conceptual problems for Tillich.\(^{77}\) We have seen that he describes both dynamics and form with the expression 'the power of being'. Now he identifies also being and the power of being. The conceptual problem can be seen when we ask what is the relationship between the power of being and form: if the power of being is the source of form, it can be identified with being, and in that case the power of being differs from dynamics which is the polar pair of form; if the power of being is not the source of form, it can be connected to dynamics as “divine dynamics”, but then it cannot be identified with being. Ford says that there is a systematic ambiguity in Tillich’s thinking: sometimes he identifies the power of being with being-itself or God, sometimes he identifies it with the element of dynamics.\(^{78}\) The idea of God as being-itself indicates the unity and balance of dynamics and form, the idea of God as the power of being indicates an emphasis on the dynamic side of the polarity.

Tillich wants to maintain the balance of the polar elements, and soon after the previous quotation he gives a new definition:

Since God is the ground of being, he is the ground of the structure of being. He is not subject to this structure; the structure is grounded in

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\(^{75}\) ST I, 235-236. See also ST I, 189, 196, 203, 230-231, 233, 251, 272-273.

\(^{76}\) Annala 1983, 50 emphasizes God as the power of being in Tillich’s thinking. He calls Tillich’s view of being as “vitalistic-dynamistic-existential”, see Annala 1983, 51.

\(^{77}\) Thatcher 1978, 68-69 pays attention to the contradiction that Tillich sometimes identifies being and the power of being and thinks that this raises doubt about the consistency of the whole system.

\(^{78}\) Ford 1975, 48. Ford concludes that in Tillich power takes precedence over structure. He thinks that the finity attached to form prevents it from being identified with being-itself. Dynamics is not finite or limited, and it can be identified with God who is the power of being. “It is the finitude and exclusiveness inherent in form which precludes the identification of form with being-itself. Pure dynamics, however, is neither finite nor exclusive, and can be properly identified with God as the power of being.” Ford 1975, 50.
him. He *is* this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure.\(^{79}\)

On the one hand, Tillich says that God is the power of being, on the other hand, he says that God is the ground of the structure of being or he is this structure.\(^{80}\) It is possible to understand these definitions in the light of the polarity of dynamics and form. The power of being and the structure of being belong together without separation,\(^{81}\) always, when one side is mentioned, the other side is also included.\(^{82}\) However, it seems that Tillich is not always consistent in using both sides of the polarity to talk about God: we shall see that in the subsequent parts of the system his view moves to a more dynamic direction.

Tillich maintains that being also includes becoming. Life is a process, where potential being becomes actual. This indicates that the polar elements actualize themselves with each other and in tension with each other. Life ends if there is separation without unity or unity without separation. Because God is being-itself, he is alive. He is the eternal process, in which unity frequently conquers separation.\(^{83}\) However, Tillich rejects the view of process theology that God is ‘becoming’ because it disrupts the balance between dynamics and form:

These assertions include a rejection of a nonsymbolic, ontological doctrine of God as becoming. If we say that being is actual as life, the element of self-transcendence is obviously and emphatically included. But it is included as a symbolic element in balance with form. Being is not in balance with becoming. Being comprises becoming and rest, becoming as an implication of dynamics and rest as an implication of form. If we say that God is being-itself, this

\(^{79}\) ST I, 238.

\(^{80}\) Randall 1952, 160 says that Tillich seems to identify “the structure of being” with “the ground of being”, and both with “the power of being”, but “ontologically speaking, these seem to be three very different concepts, and surprisingly enough, Tillich never attempts to distinguish or clarify them... But a structure is hardly in itself a power.” Randall would take “the power of being” as a polar element.

\(^{81}\) See e.g. Schwarz 1989, 183.

\(^{82}\) Tillich claims that the Greek philosophers emphasize the identity of rationality and inner power, see Realism and Faith (1948), 69 (MW 4, 345): "But for the Greek philosophers from Parmenides to Plotinus, the rationality and the inner power of things are identical, which is clearly expressed in their belief that the highest goal of reason is, at the same time, the highest goal of the movement of every life."

\(^{83}\) "Life is the process in which potential being becomes actual being. It is the actualization of the structural elements of being in their unity and in their tension... If we call God the "living God", we deny that he is a pure identity of being as being; and we also deny that there is a definite separation of being from being in him. We assert that he is the eternal process in which separation is posited and is overcome by reunion.” ST I, 242.
includes both rest and becoming, both the static and the dynamic elements. However, to speak of a 'becoming' God disrupts the balance between dynamics and form...84

Tillich’s view of being-itself includes both the static and dynamic elements: becoming is an implication of dynamics and rest is the implication of form. Also the idea of self-transcendence has to be balanced with form. To speak of God as becoming disrupts this balance. Tillich combines, on one hand, dynamics, self-transcendence and becoming, on the other hand, form, rest and being static. All of these express the polarity that Tillich mainly describes with the concepts of dynamics and form, but which comes forward also with other concepts. Once again, we can see self-integration and self-creativity or self-transcendence which indicate the classical and the modern view of dynamics and form. In Tillich’s view, the expression that God is being-itself includes both sides of the polarity in balance: becoming and rest, or the static and dynamic elements. To talk about God only as becoming shatters the balance between dynamics and form.

In like manner, Tillich criticizes the view of God that emphasizes too much form; he thinks that it is the old Catholic view.85 In Tillich’s view, the idea of God as actus purus has meant the disappearance of the dynamic side from the view of God:

Potentiality and actuality appear in classical theology in the famous formula that God is actus purus, the pure form in which everything potential is actual, and which is the eternal self-intuition of the divine fulness (pleroma). In this formula the dynamic side in the dynamics-form polarity is swallowed by the form side... Life includes the separation of potentiality and actuality. The nature of life is actualization, not actuality. The God who is actus purus is not the living God.86

Once again, Tillich wants to keep both sides of the polarity. In this context, his view of form is static because the pure form in which everything potential is actual means the absence of the dynamic side. Pure actuality is not life, and the God who is actus purus is not the living God.87 This idea is based on existential philosophy and Schelling’s view of God.

McLean criticizes Tillich’s view from the Catholic point of view by saying that Thomas’ God is not static but on the contrary very dynamic: following

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84 ST I, 247.
85 ST I, 247.
86 ST I, 246.
87 See ST I, 246.
the Aristotelian tradition, form is active in Thomism. The mistake is based, in his view, on the habit of modern philosophy to interpret form passively in a Platonic way. Thatcher thinks that it is a major mistake that Tillich unites actus purus with a fixed and static form: “Wrongly assuming that actus means actuality rather than activity, Tillich places it on the fixed, static form side of the polarity. We shall see that the Greek concept underlying the actus purus is energeia, and that as the English word ‘energy’ suggests, it is dynamic in character.”

Tillich says that many theologians have tried to unite the notion of actus purus to the dynamic view of God by distinguishing two elements in God which are in constant tension with each other. Tillich sees it as an attempt to prevent God’s vitality from becoming pure actuality. In Tillich’s view, the dynamic side has been brought forward by the Old Testament and the experience of the Christians, and this has happened especially under Luther’s influence. As representatives of such duality, Tillich names Böhme, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Berdyaev and Hartshorne. Tillich thinks that all these individuals have tried to express what he calls dynamics.

Also the Protestant mystics tried to bring back the dynamic element in God with the help of the thoughts of Duns Scotus and Luther. In the last century, the dynamic element has been emphasized in God, and in this respect, Tillich maintains that the late romanticism, philosophy of life, existentialism and process philosophy are in agreement. In Tillich’s view, an ontology which depreciates the dynamic element of being is incapable of explaining the process of life and to speak meaningfully about divine life. Tillich thinks that

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88 McLean 1964, 78. Dourley 1995, 130 presents Tillich’s view in a positive light: “To follow this line of thought one step further, just as ousia is alive with the life of the divine, so also does Tillich consider the divine to be an intensely living power far removed from the static rest of that Aristotelian God who is pure act... On the contrary, God for Tillich is a seething unity of opposites constantly enlivened by the battle between its polarities for that blessedness the Spirit eternally confers in their resolution.”

89 Thatcher 1978, 67. Thatcher thinks that the difference between Tillich and Thomism is partly terminological: “For Aquinas, God, angels and creatures exist alike. They are. But Tillich’s concept of existence is drawn, not from Thomas or the Scholastics, but from the modern existentialists. That is the reason why, in his ontology, it cannot be applied to God, because it signifies estrangement and non-being and because it has fallen from essence.” See Thatcher 1978, 75. Thatcher says that Tillich’s notion of existence of God would have been entirely foreign to Thomas; Thomas’ idea of existence is preserved in Tillich’s view of the power of being. Tillich’s God does not exist because existence is synonymous with estrangement. However, Tillich has overlooked the fact that Thomists and ordinary Christians alike do not say “God exists” in the existential sense. Usually, the meaning is the same as Tillich’s phrase “God is”. For more detail see Thatcher 1978, 71-78.

90 See ST I, 246.
the danger of these views is that the divine loses its divinity. This talk about God points symbolically to something which is analogous to dynamics in the ontological structure. God’s creativity and involvement in history are based on this dynamic element. It includes “not yet” and “already now”. Neither of them is absolute but they express the negative element of the ground of being which expresses itself in a creature as a threat and potential disruption.

The divine form must be conceived in analogy with intentionality which is balanced by vitality on the human level. This polarity of dynamics and form appears in theology as the question of will and intellect in God. Thomas Aquinas submitted will to intellect and Duns Scotus raised will above intellect. In Tillich’s view, it was not a question of metaphysical psychology, but of how to use the polarity of dynamics and form and the psychological concepts based on them to talk about God. This question of God is analogically the same as the question of vitality and intentionality in man.

According to Tillich, both sides of the polarity are equally important.

Moreover, when we talk about God’s Spirit, we apply symbolically features of the human spirit; the treatment of the Spirit is preceded by the analysis of the human spirit. Tillich defines spirit in the following way:

Spirit is the unity of the ontological elements and the telos of life. Actualized as life, being-itself is fulfilled as spirit.

Spirit combines the ontological elements and the telos of life, and all the elements of being participate in spirit. In a Hegelian way Tillich says that being actualizes itself as life and comes into fulfilment in spirit. Spirit is not in contradiction with body, and it transcends the distinctions of mind and body or body, soul and mind.

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91 ST I, 179-180.
92 "They point symbolically to a quality of the divine life which is analogous to what appears as dynamics in the ontological structure. The divine creativity, God’s participation in history, his outgoing character, are based on this dynamic element. It includes a 'not yet' which is, however, always balanced by an 'already' within the divine life. It is not an absolute 'not yet,' which would make it a divine-demonic power, nor is the 'already' an absolute already. It also can be expressed as the negative element in the ground of being which is overcome as negative in the process on being-itself. As such it is the basis of the negative element in the creature, in which it is not overcome but is effective as a threat and a potential disruption.” ST I, 246-247.
93 For more information see ST I, 247. About the relation of Tillich and Thomas Aquinas, see Keefe 1971, 212-215; Ford 1966, 248-258.
94 For a more detailed account see ST I, 249.
95 ST I, 249.
96 "Spirit is not a `part`, nor is it a special function. It is the all-embracing function in which all elements of the structure of being participate." ST I, 250.
Tillich uses the three polar pairs to define spirit as the unity of power and meaning: power includes centered personality (individualization), self-transcending vitality (dynamics in the modern sense) and freedom of self-determination. Meaning includes universal participation, forms and structures of reality (form) and limiting and directing destiny. Dynamics and form are included with the other polar pairs as elements in the concepts of power and meaning, which also become a polar pair of concepts. Tillich interprets dynamics in the modern sense as self-transcending vitality and combines forms and structures. Dynamics is connected with power and form with meaning. The consequence is that Tillich’s views concerning power and meaning attach themselves indirectly to dynamics and form. Accordingly, spirit is the unity of power and meaning and implicitly includes also dynamics and form.

Both sides of the polarity are once again important:

Life fulfilled as spirit embraces passion as much as truth, libido as much as surrender, will to power as much as justice. If one of these sides is absorbed by its correlate, either abstract law or chaotic [it should be chaotic] movement remains.

Passion, libido and will to power can be connected to dynamics; truth, surrender, and justice to form. Totally separated from their counterparts the different sides lead to abstract law (form) or chaotic movement (dynamics).

It is impossible to understand the meaning of Spirit (with a capital S) unless the meaning of spirit is understood. The Spirit is the symbolic application of spirit to the divine life. Tillich uses the polar pairs to talk about the Spirit:

The statement that God is Spirit means that life as spirit is the inclusive symbol for the divine life. It contains all the ontological elements. God is not nearer to one ‘part’ of being or to a special function of being than he is to another. As spirit he is as near to the creative darkness of the unconscious as he is to the critical light of cognitive reason. Spirit is the power through which meaning lives, and it is the meaning which gives direction to power. God as Spirit is the ultimate unity of both power and meaning.

Spirit is the unity of power and meaning. Both sides of the polarity are equally important. Spirit includes all the ontological elements and life comes

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97 “In terms of both sides of the three polarities one can say that spirit is the unity of power and meaning. On the side of power it includes centered personality, self-transcending vitality, and freedom of self-determination. On the side of meaning it includes universal participation, forms and structures of reality, and limiting and directing destiny.” ST I, 249-250.

98 For Tillich’s view of the Spirit see Gilkey 1995, 174-178.

99 ST I, 249-250.

100 ST I, 250.
Reisz 1978, 307 emphasizes these two sides of the Spirit from the point of view of dynamics and form: "God as Spirit is not just Life-power, the dynamic pole, but also Life-in-meanings, the formal pole." Reisz thinks that Tillich’s view of God as Spirit gives a basis for a dialog with the theology of liberation and a possibility to create liberating theology. See Reisz 1978, 300-313. Dourley 1995, 132 summarizes Tillich’s view as follows: "Summarily put, he is arguing that all of life consists of the successful unification or syntheses of the many conflictual polarities that make life up. Essentially life, the life of God, unites these polarities through the Spirit from eternity. These potentially disruptive opposites are rooted in the divine life as the basis of their working in human life but are there in divine life as overcome in the Spirit."

When Tillich examines the presuppositions of the doctrine of the Trinity, he says that it is impossible to make a doctrine of the living God and creation without making the distinction between divine ground and form. Human intuition has always made the difference between the divine depth and the fullness of its content:

God’s life is life as spirit, and the Trinitarian principles are moments within the process of the divine life. Human intuition of the divine always has distinguished between the abyss of the divine (the element of power) and the fullness of its content (the element of meaning), between the divine depth and the divine *logos*.102

Here, Tillich connects depth and abyss to the element of power, the fullness of content to the element of meaning and to the divine *logos*. As we have seen, Tillich defines power and meaning in Spirit also with the ontological polarities: dynamics is connected to power and form to meaning. These definitions connect dynamics and depth closely to each other and form can be connected to the divine *logos* in both descriptions.

The first element in God is the basis of the divine majesty: it is the power of being which resists non-being and gives the power of being to everything that is. Tillich says that the best name for the element of meaning and structure is the classical term *logos*, which “unites meaningful structure with creativity”. In this context, the second element is as important as the first one. Without the latter element the first one would be chaos and burning fire, but not a creative basis. God would be demonic and separated from everything else.103

Tillich thinks that it is better to deal with the presuppositions of the Trinity starting with the Spirit rather than with *Logos*; the actual formation of the

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102 ST I, 250.

103 ST I, 251.
doctrine of the Trinity has to be started with the confession that Jesus is the Christ. But also, apart from the Christological question, some kind of doctrine of Logos is needed. Logos is the inner word which God speaks to himself, “the Word of God”:

‘Word of God’ can be and has been understood as the inner word which God speaks to himself, and in which he becomes manifest to himself. Such a statement is highly symbolic, but it can be understood in terms of the Parmenidisan sentence that where being is, there is also the logos of being, the "word" in which being grasps itself. This is the basis for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity which also describes in symbolic terms the outgoing of God from himself and the reunion of God with himself. It is a description of life in its duality of dynamics and form... It means, in the most simple terms, that being is not only hidden but also manifest, and that it is first of all manifest to itself. The “Word of God” in this sense is the symbolic expression of that element in the ground of being which breaks its eternal silence and makes life and history possible.

Tillich also says that the structure of reality defined by Logos is the basis of values. Spirit is more than reason, but without the logos structure it could not express anything. Logos is the principle of form according to which reality is structured. Tillich says that the expression Logos used by the early church of Jesus combines rational structure and creative power; Tillich’s view of logos “unites meaningful structure and creativity”; it indicates the classical view of form. Tillich connects logos with form and gives a broad field of meaning to both.

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104 See also Schwarz 1989, 185-186.
105 See ST III, 288.
107 See ST III, 29. See also Philosophy and Theology (1941), 28 (MW 4, 284).
108 See ST III, 22-24. See also ST III, 335, 367.
109 “The last example for the development of the christological symbols is that conceptual symbol which became the main tool for the christological work of the church, 'the Logos.' ... It unites rational structure and creative power.” ST II, 111. See also ST I, 251. About the concept of Logos in the formation of the Christological dogma, see ST II, 138-142; About the combining of Logos with Jesus, see ST III, 289-290.
110 ST I, 251.
111 In another context, Tillich gives a wide field of meaning to the concept of logos: “Heraclitus, in his words about the logos, the law which determines the movement of the kosmos, applies the concept of the logos both to the laws of nature and to the laws of the city. According to Plato, justice is the unifying function in the individual man and in the social group. It is the embracing form in both cases. Their power of being depends on it. In Stoicism it is the same logos which works as physical law in nature and as moral law in the human mind. It judges as the principle of justice all positive laws. It gave the Roman
Spirit as the third principle is the actualization of divine power and meaning: what is potential in the divine ground and manifested in the divine *logos* becomes actual in Spirit. Trinitarian principles come forward always when someone wants to speak of a living God. Tillich calls these three sides of God also God as ground, God as form, and God as act. It is also possible to interpret the three functions of life in a Trinitarian way, even though Tillich has not done so directly. Self-creation can be connected to “the Father”, the first person of the Trinity; self-integration to “the Son”, the second person of the Trinity; and self-transcendence to “the Spirit”, the third person of the Trinity.

2.3. Dynamics and form in existence and in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ

The center of Tillich’s theological system is called “Existence and the Christ”. It is the largest of the five parts of the system and is published as a separate volume. In his ontology, Tillich makes a difference between being and existing and deals with them at four different levels: The first level is the self-world structure which is the basic ontological polarity. The second level deals with the three polar pairs (individualization and participation, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny). The third level deals with existence and

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112 The Word of God (1957), 123-124 (MW 4, 406). Ford 1975, 47 thinks that Tillich’s view of Trinity which is based on the polarity of two elements is not a good solution.

113 ST I, 251.

114 “This consideration brought us to the distinction of God as ground, God as form, and God as act, a pretrinitarian formula which makes trinitarian thinking meaningful.” ST III, 284.

115 For the ontological concepts, see ST I, 164-168.
The difference between essence and existence has been one of the most important questions in the history of philosophy. The concepts of essence and existence have been given different meanings and different values at different times. For example, essence can be defined as that which makes a thing what it is. It is also possible to make value judgements about essence and existence: in that case essence can be held as the real state of things and existence as the fall. Randall 1952, 157 says that "essence is an ambiguous term: its meaning oscillates between an empirical and a valuational sense, between the actual logical nature of the thing, and its 'true' and undistorted nature, that from which being has 'fallen'". Existence is likewise ambiguous: "Whatever exists is more than it is in the state of mere potentiality and less than it could be in the power of its 'essential' nature." The contrast between essence and existence has been the contrast between idea and fact, and the contrast of value between the ideal and the actual.

In Tillich’s view, Plato has a negative view of existence; to him the real being is essential being. On the other side Ockham thinks of existence positively; to him essence is just the reflection of the human mind. Aristotle is between the two. From Renaissance and Enlightenment on existence is not falling, but the fulfilment of potentialities. Hegel’s philosophical system takes into completion this essentialistic view. Tillich says that the birth of existentialism is in many ways a protest against Hegel’s views. See Theology of Culture, 80-91; ST I, 202-204; ST II, 23-26.

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117 See ST II, 20-21. Track 1975, 361 sees that this duality in Tillich’s thinking gives reality its dynamic nature: “Der Mensch vermag negative Urteile zu setzen, weil er gleichzeitig am Sein und am Nichtsein partizipiert. Gerade die dialektische Beziehung zum Sein, die unsere Wirklichkeit bestimmt, und der dialektische Charakter des Nichtseins als me on (Potentialität) und als ouk on (reines Nichts) sind es, die unserer Wirklichkeit ihre Dynamik und ihre umkehrbare Richtung auf das Ende hin geben.” Tillich makes a difference between existential and existentialist philosophy, see ST II, 26. About the relation of Christianity to existentialism, see ST II, 21-28.

118 In Tillich’s view, Plato has a negative view of existence; to him the real being is essential being. On the other side Ockham thinks of existence positively; to him essence is just the reflection of the human mind. Aristotle is between the two. From Renaissance and Enlightenment on existence is not falling, but the fulfilment of potentialities. Hegel’s philosophical system takes into completion this essentialistic view. Tillich says that the birth of existentialism is in many ways a protest against Hegel’s views. See Theology of Culture, 80-91; ST I, 202-204; ST II, 23-26.

119 ST II, 22.
succeed.\textsuperscript{120} We can draw the conclusion that Tillich is following the line of Plato in his thinking.

Tillich also values the ideas of existentialism. He says that it analyses the situation of the “old aeon”, in biblical language, man and world in the state of estrangement. The term “the Christ” points to the “new aeon”, new reality. In this respect, existentialism is a natural ally of Christianity; it is the “good luck” of theology.\textsuperscript{121} With the help of existential analysis and depth psychology, it is possible to reinterpret the Christian view of sin and condemnation, which have lost their expressive power, but not their truth value.\textsuperscript{122}

According to Tillich, man’s essence is determined by creation and he cannot determine the nature of existence himself.\textsuperscript{123} Creation is good in its essential nature, but as actualized it falls into universal estrangement:\textsuperscript{124} to live under the conditions of existence inevitably means losing and corrupting essence. Tillich unites the Christian view of the fall to transition from essence to existence and identifies the actualized creation and estranged existence. Referring to Plato, he says that the transition to existence is not an essential necessity; otherwise, existence would become itself an essential reality. The transition from essence to existence is an original fact, but it is not possible to derive existence from essence.\textsuperscript{125} That is why it is not totally possible to demythologize the way we talk about it.\textsuperscript{126}

The basic features of existence are freedom and finitude: “finite freedom is the turning point from being to existence”.\textsuperscript{127} Tillich explains the fall with the polarity of freedom and destiny: finite freedom makes possible the transition

\textsuperscript{120} See ST II, 22.
\textsuperscript{121} ST II, 27.
\textsuperscript{122} ST II, 27-28.
\textsuperscript{123} See Annala 1983, 27.
\textsuperscript{124} For more about estrangement see ST II, 44-59. See also Thietmar Wernsdörfer, Die entfremdete Welt: Eine Untersuchung zur Theologie Paul Tillichs (1968), 275-278.
\textsuperscript{125} ST II, 44. Tillich thinks that the polarity of freedom and destiny can solve the problem of divine determinism and biblical personalism: "A divine determinism often seems to conquer biblical personalism, and in men like Augustine, Thomas, Luther, and Calvin this determinism reaches its sharpest expression. But at no point do these men and the biblical writers allow their emphasis on the divine activity to destroy the divine-human reciprocity. This can be understood only through the ontological polarity of freedom and destiny and through a distinction between the levels of being, namely, between the ground of being, which transcends all polarities, and finite being, which is subjected to them." Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (1955), 80 (MW 4, 386).
\textsuperscript{126} ST II, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{127} See ST I, 165.
from essence to existence. Man has freedom, unlike the rest of the nature, and man’s freedom means that he can contradict himself and his essential nature; he has freedom even from his freedom, which means he can give up his humanity. However, freedom is limited by destiny, and even the freedom to contradict oneself is restricted by destiny; it is possible only with the universal transition from essence to existence. There is not just one ancient fall, but finite freedom is bound up with universal destiny. Symbolically speaking, the image of God in man gives the possibility to fall.

In the story of the fall, the snake represents the dynamics of nature in man and around him. Alone it is, however, without power. In later interpretations, rebelling angels were connected to the fall. In Tillich’s view, angels and demons are mythological names for the creative and destructive forces of being. They are not beings but powers of being which are dependent on the whole structure of existence. However, man is responsible for the transition from essence to existence because he has finite freedom.

In the state of estrangement, man contradicts his essential nature. This leads towards self-destruction. The polar elements of essential being are driven against each other and try to destroy each other. The destruction is not caused by some outside forces, divine or demonic. The structure of destruction can be seen both in the basic structure of being and in the polar pairs. The basic structure of finite being is the ego-world relationship. Existential estrangement can lead to losing oneself or losing the world. To lose oneself means to lose the determining center and the unity which belongs to a person. In the same way, the world breaks into pieces. The finite ego can strive to be the center of everything but ceases to be the center of anything. The same thing that happens to the basic structure happens to all the polar pairs. Under the conditions of existence the elements of the polar pairs are in tension with each other or are driven apart from each other.

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128 “Man can say that nature is finite necessity, God is infinite freedom, man is finite freedom. It is finite freedom which makes possible the transition from essence to existence.” ST II, 31.

129 “Finally, man is free, in so far as he has the power of contradicting himself and his essential nature. Man is free even from his freedom; that is he can surrender his humanity.” ST II, 32.

130 ST II, 32-33.

131 ST II, 39-40.

132 Tillich describes the situation in a dialectical way as the structure of destruction, which shows that destruction does not have an independent position in reality, but it is dependent on the structure where it works destructively. See ST II, 59-60.

133 ST II, 59-62.

134 See e.g. ST II, 64.
Tillich gives examples where the balance of dynamics and form is existentially disturbed:

Under the control of hubris and concupiscence, man is driven in all directions without any definite aim and content. His dynamics are distorted into a formless urge for self-transcendence. It is not the new form which attracts the self-transcendence of the person; the dynamics has become an aim in itself. One can speak of the 'temptation of the new,' which in itself is a necessary element in all creative self-actualization but which in distortion sacrifices the creative for the new. Nothing real is created if the form is lacking, for nothing is real without form.\textsuperscript{135}

Hubris and concupiscence can control man so that he is driven to all directions without aim and content. Tillich uses the phrase “temptation of the new” to describe situations, where dynamics is distorted into a formless urge to self-transcendence: dynamics is not directed towards new form (the modern view of dynamics and form), but it has become an aim in itself. The necessary element of creation is disrupted and creativity is threatened in its drive towards the new. However, nothing real can be created without form.\textsuperscript{136}

Hubris and concupiscence are examples of the situation where the dynamic side of the polarity has become an aim in itself. It is equally destructive if form is without dynamics:

Yet form without dynamics is equally destructive. If a form is abstracted from the dynamics in which it is created and is imposed on the dynamics to which it does not belong, it becomes external law. It is oppressive and produces either legalism without creativity or the rebellious outbreaks of dynamic forces leading to chaos and often, in reaction, to stronger ways of suppression.\textsuperscript{137}

In this description, form becomes negative and restrictive. It becomes an outside law, if it is separated from the dynamics to which it belongs and imposed on another one. The consequence is either legalism without creativity or rebellious outbreaks of dynamics. This can lead to chaos or strong ways of suppression. Tillich’s description is based on the situation where both sides of the polarity are equally important. Any one-sided emphasis on either side is distorted: it does not manifest the essential unity and balance of the elements.

Consequently, Tillich criticizes philosophical systems where the essential unity of dynamics and form is not acknowledged. In those systems man is described one-sidedly either from the point of view of dynamics or from the point of view of form:

\textsuperscript{135} ST II, 64. For more details see ST II, 49-55.
\textsuperscript{136} ST II, 64.
\textsuperscript{137} ST II, 64.
If man is understood as essentially unlimited libido or unlimited will to power, the basis for such understanding is not man’s essential nature but his state of existential estrangement. The inability to reach a form in which the dynamics of man’s nature are preliminarily or lastingly satisfied is an expression of man’s estrangement from himself and the essential unity of dynamics and form. The same criticism must be applied to interpretations of human nature which deprive him of the dynamics in his being by reducing his true being to a system of logical, moral, and aesthetic forms to which he must conform. Common-sense philosophies, as well as some rationalistic and idealistic doctrines of man, eliminate the dynamics in man’s self-realization. Creativity is replaced by subjection to law – a characteristic of man in estrangement.138

In this context, Freud’s view of libido and Nietzsche’s view of will to power can be seen to emphasize dynamics as vitality, but they describe man in the state of existential estrangement and do not express man’s essential nature. In another context, Tillich criticizes vitalistic philosophy in general for having as its goal power without meaning (in the German text “eine Mächtigkeit ohne Form”).139 Peeck uses expressions like “blind” or “aimless” to describe Tillich’s thought of libido in the state of estrangement; its opposite is essential vitality which is orientated towards meaning and aim.140 If ‘libido’

138 ST II, 65. For more detail about Tillich’s criticism of Freud and Nietzsche see ST II, 51-55.

139 See Nature and Sacrament, 101 (MW 6, 177, 187).


141 In the English translation of Tillich’s German article Natur und Sakrament (1930) there is an addition where Tillich criticizes Nietzsche’s vitalistic philosophy of nature: ”The power of nature must be found in the sphere prior to the cleavage of our world into subjectivity and objectivity. Life originates on a level which is ‘deeper’ than the Cartesian duality of cogitatio and extensio (‘thought’ and ‘extension’). It was the wish of the vitalistic interpretation of nature to reach this level. But a philosophy of life that denies intellect and spirit has deprived life of its strongest power and its ultimate meaning, as even Nietzsche realized when he said: ‘Spirit is life which itself cutteth into life.’ The difficult problem for all attempts to reach the unclut level of reality is the necessity to penetrate into something ‘nonsubjective’ with categories of subjective mind and into something ‘nonobjective’ with categories of objective reality. This necessarily falsifies the pictures, which can be corrected only by a strict understanding of the indirect, symbolic character of terms used for the description of the power and meaning of nature.” Nature and Sacrament (1948), 102 (MW 6, 178).
and 'will to power' give too much weight to the dynamic side of the polarity, some common-sense philosophies, rationalistic and idealistic views of man try to eliminate dynamics from man’s self-realization. In that case creativity is replaced by submission to law, which is also typical to man in the state of estrangement. Both sides of the polarity are needed in the essential description of man.

Experiences which originate from the tension of dynamics and form are a part of man’s social life, religion, and culture. Law and chaos struggle with each other in the same way as vitality and form. However, dynamics and form need each other: without form dynamics, vitality, and form-breaking lead to chaos and emptiness; without dynamics form, structure, and law lead to rigidity and emptiness. Both disappear if they are separated from each other. In Tillich’s own words:

There is a continuous flight from law to chaos and from chaos to law. There is a continuous breaking of vitality by form and of form by vitality. But, if the one side disappears, the other does also. Dynamics, vitality, and the drive to form-breaking end in chaos and emptiness. They lose themselves in their separation from form. And form, structure, and law end in rigidity and emptiness. They lose themselves in their separation from dynamics.  

Tillich uses here quite loosely as parallel concepts, on one hand, dynamics, vitality and chaos, and on the other hand, form, structure and law. This is important to note, when we try to explain, not only the concepts of dynamics and form, but also the idea Tillich expresses with them.

Dynamics and form are in unity and balance on the essential level but the actualization of the polarity in existence is sometimes one-sided or inappropriate to the situation. The emphasis on dynamics leads to chaos and disorder, the emphasis on form leads to legalism and suppression of life. It is not possible to describe life only with one side of the polarity; both are needed and they complement each other. Here we can see that the elements of the polarity “lie on the same level” and they are equally important. It is an expression of Tillich’s thought that the concept of complementary in physics has had an effect on his doctrine of ontological polarities. In this context, Tillich is not talking about dynamics and form as potentiality and actuality in the classical sense but as two complementary elements that are both necessary to describe actual life.

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142 ST II, 64. Roberts 1952, 127 compares Tillich with Freud: "Similarly, when the unity of vitality and intentionality is broken, the former becomes lawless desire and the latter becomes a legalistic strait jacket. Where Tillich says that sin is simultaneously lawless desire and bondage to the law, Freud speaks of conflict between the id and the superego.”

143 See Ford 1975, 37 who quotes Tillich’s comment which is published in Sydney and Beatrice Rome (eds.), Philosphical Interrogations (1964), 358.
The analysis of being brings forward the difference between potentiality and actuality. In Tillich’s view, there are structures which have no existence, and there are things that have existence because of structures:

Treehood does not exist, although it has being, namely, potential being. But the tree in my back yard does exist. It stands out of the mere potentiality of treehood. But it stands out and exists only because it participates in that power of being which is treehood, that power which makes every tree a tree and nothing else.144

In his ontological description of dynamics and form, Tillich uses the example of the tree to explain form: “The form of a tree is what makes it a tree, what gives it the general character of treehood as well as the special and unique form of an individual tree.”145 This is the classical view of form. Treehood does not exist but it has potential being. Treehood is called ‘the power of being’.

Tillich says that ”every living being (and, in terms of analogy, every being) drives beyond itself and beyond the given form through which it has being.”146 This indicates the idea of self-creativity or self-transcendence and the modern view of dynamics and form. How is it possible to unite the idea that every living being drives beyond itself and beyond the given form to the idea that form is the essence of a thing and everything happens within the form? Tillich says that “there are forms of the self-transcendence of form”:

In man’s essential nature, dynamics and form are united. Even if a given form is transcended, this happens in terms of form. In essential being there are forms of the self-transcendence of form. Their unity with the dynamics of being is never disrupted.147

This is the way Tillich tries to unite the classical view and the modern view of dynamics and form: even if the form is transcended, the form actualizes its essence under the conditions of existence. There are forms of the self-transcendence of form. If we are willing to accept Tillich’s system as coherent, we will have to accept this kind of dialectical thinking.148

In this discussion, Tillich has moved from the ontological necessity of dynamics and form to the idea of essential balance and existential disruption of the polarity of dynamics and form. What is the right balance between the elements and are we able to get any knowledge of it? This question takes us to

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144 ST II, 21.
145 ST I, 178.
146 ST II, 64.
147 ST II, 64.
148 See See Morrison 1984, 59, 64. Randall 1952, 161 says that his doubts begin “when in the recent German fashion Tillich is inclined to leave ultimate matters to a final ’dialectic’.”
Tillich’s view of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Tillich says that the gap between essence and existence has been conquered in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. New Being is essential being under the conditions of existence. It is the restorative principle of his whole system and it can be used in dealing with the essential nature and existential estrangement of life.\footnote{149} The New Being is new compared both to the potential nature of essential being and the existential estrangement;\footnote{150} the New Being applied to Jesus Christ expresses power to conquer existential estrangement and power to resist estrangement.\footnote{151}

Jesus as the Christ is the final revelation and universally valid, it includes the criterion of every revelation which precedes or follows:

It is the criterion of every religion and every culture, not only of the culture and religion in and through which it has appeared. It is valid for the social existence of every human group and for the personal existence of every human individual. It is valid for mankind as such, and, in an indescribable way, it has meaning for the universe also.\footnote{152}

The mystery of the divine is the presupposition of all theology, but it does not exclude the \textit{logos} of \textit{theos} which must be expressed in reflective,
dialektical, and paradoxical terms. The idea “Logos became flesh” means that God is manifest in a personal life-process as a saving participant in the human predicament. “The Logos” became the main tool for the Christological work of the church, and it can be called a conceptual symbol. It unites rational structure and creative power. Again, Tillich attaches himself to the traditional understanding of logos which is based on a positive and active view of form.

It is crucial for Tillich that the New Being has appeared in a personal life: “Only if the existence is conquered in one point - a personal life, representing existence as a whole - it is conquered in principle...” However, the search for the historical Jesus in order to discover a minimum of reliable facts to provide a safe foundation for the Christian faith is a failure. Christianity is

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153 ST II, 92.
154 ST II, 95.
155 ST II, 111.
156 ST II, 98.
157 Clayton 1980, 232-233 says that Tillich has a tendency to treat esthetically or symbolically the biblical picture of Jesus: German expressionism had an influence upon young Tillich, and “it should have come as no surprise to learn that he explicitly identified the biblical picture of Jesus as an expressionistic portrait”. Clayton says that Tillich has been influenced by his former professor Martin Kähler and his idea of analogia imaginis: the biblical picture of Jesus is not just an idealized composite portrait of the highest hopes of man, but in it we encounter the historical Christ within a tradition which possesses the power to convince us of its divine authenticity. For more detail about the similarities and differences of Tillich’s and Kähler’s views see Clayton 1980, 232-233. Clayton 1980, 234 says that, in Tillich’s view, the concrete material of the biblical picture is not guaranteed by faith but the expression of the power of the New Being is guaranteed. And here is a similarity to Tillich’s view of the religious meaning of art: it is not the content or subject matter of a piece of art which makes it a medium of religious meaning; it is the power (Gehalt) which comes through that gives it the religious meaning. It is not the historical Jesus which is the foundation of the Christian faith but it is the symbol of Jesus as the Christ. Clayton points to the characterization of Tillich’s view as the verbal icon. Clayton 1980, 233 gives an interpretation of the New Being with the help of ‘the concepts of Form, Inhalt, and Gehalt. He thinks that aspects of Tillich’s interpretation of the biblical picture become more intelligible when seen in relation to the esthetic model: “... ‘a personal life’ may be regarded as the form of the biblical picture; ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ and specific information about his life and teaching, that is, biographical material, supply its content in the sense of Inhalt; and ‘the power of New Being’ must I think be understood as the portrait’s Gehalt. Those individuals who have been grasped by this power in and through the biblical picture can certify the experience of the powerful Gehalt of new being, although they cannot certify the objective factuality of the specific content of the picture...”
based on the witness to the messianic character of Jesus. This has evoked different interpretations of Tillich’s thinking.

Tillich says that the New Being has become real in a personal life, and it could not have happened otherwise: the polarities of being become manifest only in a person. Only a person is totally individualized and only a person can participate without limits. Only a person has unlimited power to self-transcendence and full rational structure. And only a person has freedom and destiny. Tillich says that there are no traits of existential estrangement in Jesus, no hubris nor concupiscence, no separation from God, but the polar elements do not get much attention.

The ontological polarities are the foundation and presupposition for the manifestation of the New Being in a personal life, but Tillich does not explain in detail, how the separation of the polarities from each other and the threat of their disruption have been overcome in Jesus’ life. Tillich’s idea of the New Being is based on his description of being with its polarities. When Tillich

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158 ST II, 105.
159 Clayton 1980, 234 is critical towards Tillich: “… it is not sufficient to say that one can be certain that the power of new being became actualized in a ‘personal life’ and then express indifference as to whether his name was ‘Jesus of Nazareth’. For, if one cannot specify with some certainty the particular person in whom existential estrangement is alleged to have been conquered, what warrant is there for the claim that it has been conquered in an individual person?” Gilkey 1990, 150 says that both sides of the revelatory event are important for Tillich’s Christology: the objective event and the responding witness. It is important to emphasize this, because “Tillich has frequently been interpreted as regarding that actual life as irrelevant to faith, as not only unknowable by us but even more as unimportant in comparison with the picture of the New Being in the Gospel records, a picture clearly created by the responding witness of the believing community”. Gilkey thinks that the problem has been caused by Tillich’s novel view of the roles of historical inquiry and faith in relation to this actual and personal existence. For more detail see Gilkey 1990, 150-153. Both of these views find support in Tillich’s thinking. The idea of the powerful Gehalt in the New Being has its roots in Tillich’s theology of culture, the idea of the New Being actually conquering the existential estrangement in the life of Jesus of Nazareth is based on Tillich’s ontological ideas and their development in the analysis of existence.

160 Gilkey 1990, 149 emphasizes the actuality of the New Being in a historical person: “As the implications of our remarks to date indicate, the actuality of the historical person (“Jesus”) is crucial to Tillich. To deny that actuality, to deny that essential humanity entered existence and submitted to its conditions ... is to deny Tillich’s whole point, the crux of the Gospel message. If this paradox is not real, if no essential humanity actually entered existence, then nothing ultimately significant or new has happened, the New Being remains merely a hope, religion merely a quest - and there is no message, no faith, and no hope (ST II: 98).”
161 ST II, 120.
162 See ST II, 125-126.
deals with existential estrangement, he describes the disruption of the polarities. This creates an expectation that he would talk about the New Being as a reunion and new balance of the polar elements, but this idea is not under consideration. Neither does he use the concepts of vitality and intentionality which he has claimed to express the polarity of dynamics and form in man. However, if we follow the development of Tillich’s system from the ontological starting-points, it is easy to be convinced that the existential estrangement has been conquered by the actuality of the New Being under the conditions of existence.

The polarity of dynamics and form is briefly under consideration when Tillich talks about Christ’s temptations:

Positively expressed, this means that life in unity with God, like all life, is determined by the polarity of dynamics and form and, as such, is never without the risk implied in the tensions between dynamics and form. The unity with God is not the negation of the desire for reunion of the finite with the finite. But where there is unity with God, there the finite is not desired alongside this unity but within it. The temptation which is rooted in desire is that the finite is desired alongside God or that desire becomes concupiscence.

Tillich makes a difference between natural self-transcendence and concupiscence: the former wants reunion with everything while the corrupt concupiscence does not want reunion, but the exploitation of everything. Temptation tries to turn desire into concupiscence. If Jesus had accepted that, it would have meant the loss of his messianic nature. Earlier, Tillich used the polarity of dynamics and form to explain concupiscence, and so it becomes indirectly clear that the balance of dynamics and form was not distorted in Jesus’ life in this respect.

Tillich asks how desire is possible at all, if unity with God is unbroken. The answer is that under the conditions of existence temptation can rise from desire to finite fulfilment. Desire and contact with God are not contradictory

\[163\] See ST I, 180. Williams 1985, 170 says that the polar dialectic of vitality and form was restored in Jesus’ life. He is not referring directly to Tillich but his views have been influenced by Tillich’s thinking. For more detail about the polarity of vitality and form in Jesus see Williams 1985, 170-176, 190-199.

\[164\] ST II, 129.

\[165\] “The difference between the natural self-transcendence, which includes the desire for reunion with everything, and the distorted concupiscence, which does not want reunion with anything but the exploitation of everything through power and pleasure, is one which is decisive for the evaluation of desire in the state of temptation. Without desire, there is no temptation, but the temptation is that desire will become changed into concupiscence.” ST II, 128.

\[166\] See ST II, 64.
If, however, man in essential unity with God (Adam) and man in actual unity with God under the conditions of existence (the Christ) are tempted on their desire for finite fulfilment, then desire and unity with God cannot contradict each other (this would include the statement that *eros* and *agape* cannot contradict each other).” ST II, 129.

Tillich explains this by saying that life in unity with God, in the same way as all life, is determined by the polarity of dynamics and form. In that case, it cannot be without the risk, which is implied in the tension of dynamics and form. Temptation is based on wanting finite things besides God and not in unity with God; the desire can become concupiscence. Tillich describes the features of the New Being as opposite to estrangement: there is faith instead of unbelief, surrender instead of *hubris* and love instead of concupiscence.

We can see features of both the classical view and the modern view of dynamics and form in Tillich’s description of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. In spite of their differences, there is one common feature in this context: the emphasis on the unity and balance of dynamics and form. The first two volumes of *Systematic Theology* share this idea.

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167 "If, however, man in essential unity with God (Adam) and man in actual unity with God under the conditions of existence (the Christ) are tempted on their desire for finite fulfilment, then desire and unity with God cannot contradict each other (this would include the statement that *eros* and *agape* cannot contradict each other).” ST II, 129.

168 "Obviously, the characteristics of the New Being are the opposite of those of estrangement, namely, faith instead of unbelief, surrender instead of *hubris*, love instead of concupiscence.” ST II, 177.
3. SELF-CREATION: DYNAMICS BREAKS THROUGH THE FORM

3.1. The self-creativity of life

In the third volume of the system, Tillich starts to deal with the processes of life. When he explains the self-creativity of life, the emphasis is on the modern view of dynamics and form: “Self-creation of life is always creation of form... Every new form is made possible only by breaking through the limits of an old form.”¹ His view of the self-creation of life resembles the ideas of process philosophy and the philosophy of life.² In the preface of the third volume of *Systematic Theology* Tillich gives a positive estimation of the views of Teilhard de Chardin concerning the process of evolution. However, he notes that he cannot share his optimistic view of the future.³

Tillich defines life in the ontological sense as the actuality of being; in the life process, potential becomes actual: “Potentiality is that kind of being which

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¹ ST III, 50.

² Hartshorne 1952,166 emphazises Tillich’s similarity to process theology: ”I therefore (joyfully) acclaim him as one of the rapidly growing company of ‘dipolar’ theists or ‘panentheists’ to which some of us are proud to belong.” ”...in short, by what Tillich calls the divine Life, which on the dipolar view is Process-itself, the definitive process.” (188)

² For more about Hartshorne’s view, see John P. Mahoney, Charles Hartshorne's Dipolar Concept of God (1974). King 1955, 252 says that ”Wieman and Tillich have much more in common than is ordinarily supposed”.

³ ST III, 5. Dourley 1995, 139-140 compares the views of Tillich and Teilhard de Chardin in the following way: ”...Tillich speaks with critical admiration of the work of Teilhard de Chardin... Briefly put, Teilhard came to identify the very energy that worked through evolution in the creation of the human brain and so of humanity and which now works through humanity toward a final completion of deity in the Pleroma with the reality of Christ taken in an extended or cosmic sense. Tillich drew back from the optimism and progressivism he saw in Teilhard... No doubt Teilhard's identification of the underlying energy empowering evolutionary creation as Christic is itself an imperial imposition on universal natural energies. But such an extended vision would breed a sense of God active in all cohesive or organic life and community, and make the various religions relative but valuable servants of a universal energy working toward a hopefully emerging theonomous human communion.” See also Weigel 1964, 17: ”The final chapter of his The Courage To Be can have a depressing effect, for it seems to equate God with the basic energy at work in the universe, but interpreted in terms of human concern.”
This generic concept of life is the pattern after which the ontological concept of life has been formed. The observation of a particular potentiality of beings, whether it is that of a species or of individuals actualizing themselves in time and space, has led to the ontological concept of life-life as the 'actuality of being.' This concept of life unites the two main qualifications of being which underlie this whole system; these main qualifications of being are the essential and the existential.... We use the word 'life' in this sense of a ‘mixture’ of essential and existential elements.” ST III, 11-12. Cruz 1995, 118-124 thinks that Tillich’s ontological view of life is relevant also to modern science.

The ontological concept of life and its universal application require two kinds of consideration, one of which we should call ‘essentialist’ and the other ‘existentialist’. The first deals with the unity and diversity of life in its essential nature. It describes what I venture to call 'the multidimensional unity of life'. Only if this unity and the relation of the dimensions and realms of life are understood, can we analyze the existential ambiguities of all life processes correctly and express the quest for unambiguous or eternal life adequately.” ST III, 12.

Thatcher 1978, 154 says that Tillich has two concepts of existence in Systematic Theology: “In one, existence is actuality, the realm which has fallen from essence, the realm of estrangement into which the Christ comes, and overcomes. In the other, existence is non-actual, and only contributes to life. As Tillich says 'existential characteristics are abstractions’. In this second concept, existence is only a contributory element to the one concrete actuality, 'life’.” Thatcher thinks that the problem is a serious one: “The student of Tillich is free to choose which concept of existence he prefers, but he cannot have them both.” See Thatcher 1978, 156. Thatcher 1978, 156 says that “unfortunately Tillich’s Christology can only make any sense if existence is actuality.” Thatcher prefers the view of existence as actual, and thus wants to save Tillich’s Christology. Thatcher argues that the definition of life as a mixture of essential and existential elements is an example of Hegelian dialectic: life is the synthesis, essence and existence the thesis and antithesis. With this mould, Tillich has tried to combine two-term Platonic (essence-existence) and Aristotelian (potentiality-actuality) contrasts into a three-term (essence-existence-life) Hegelian mould. As a result, existence is sometimes actual, sometimes non-actual. For more details see Thatcher 1978, 153-157. Thatcher’s solution to the problem is, however, too simple: “... we can take the Platonic contrast, essence-existence, at its face value, without bothering about the third term 'life'. Christology is saved, and the existential and the actual world are one and the same. If we take this option, what has to be abandoned?

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4 ST III, 12.
5 “This generic concept of life is the pattern after which the ontological concept of life has been formed. The observation of a particular potentiality of beings, whether it is that of a species or of individuals actualizing themselves in time and space, has led to the ontological concept of life-life as the ‘actuality of being.’ This concept of life unites the two main qualifications of being which underlie this whole system; these main qualifications of being are the essential and the existential.... We use the word ‘life’ in this sense of a ‘mixture’ of essential and existential elements.” ST III, 11-12. Cruz 1995, 118-124 thinks that Tillich’s ontological view of life is relevant also to modern science.

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Not all the dimensions of life are always actual but, nevertheless, they are potentially real. In the life process, suitable conditions make possible the actualization of what has always been potentially real. Tillich connects this, for example, to the analysis of inorganic, organic and spiritual life. Life is a multidimensional unity.\(^8\) This kind of view of life designates potential as something inside the process of life: it is the dynamic vitality of life and thus something immanent. The view is different compared to the view of life as fallen or estranged from the essential in the Platonic sense. Thus, there is a crossing of horizontal and vertical lines in Tillich’s thinking.

This problem can be seen in the account of potentiality and actuality. In the second volume of the system, Tillich explains Plato’s account: “...man’s existence, his standing out of potentiality, is judged as a fall from what he essentially is. The potential is the essential, and to exist, i.e. to stand out of potentiality, is the loss of true essentiality”.\(^9\) He also says that Aristotle tried “to close the gap between essence and existence through his doctrine of dynamic interdependence of form and matter in everything” but that his protest could not succeed. In the second volume, Tillich uses the Platonic distinction of essence and existence.

However, in the third volume, Tillich refers to Aristotle’s views:

In terms of the history of philosophy we can say that we envisage the Aristotelian distinction between dynamis and energeia, between potentiality and actuality, from an existentialist viewpoint. Certainly this is not too different from Aristotle’s own view, which emphasizes

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Does the whole of Volume 3 have to be jettisoned? Again the answer is a simple one. All that need be abandoned is the unnecessary dialectical mould which is largely responsible for the present difficulty. What is at fault is the structure of the ST, its pattern of development. The discussion in ST 3 about life has to be interpreted as a continuation of the discussion about existence. Both existence and life are actual.” Thatcher 1978, 157. Thatcher is looking at the problem from the point of view of Tillich’s ontology, and that is why he does not see the problems that his suggestion would bring to Tillich’s theology of culture, religion, and life.

\(^8\) “It can point to the fact that, even if certain dimensions of life do not appear, nonetheless they are potentially real. The distinction of the potential from the actual implies that all dimensions are always real, if not actually, at least potentially. A dimension’s actualization is dependent on conditions which are not always present.” ST III, 15-16. In the question of the organic species there are in Tillich’s view two opposing views: the Aristotelian view emphasises the eternity of the species from the point of view of dynamics or potentiality, the evolutionary view emphasizes their manifestation from the point of view of energeia or actuality. Tillich thinks that seen this way they do not have to be in conflict. See ST III, 20.

\(^9\) ST II, 22.
the lasting ontological tension between matter and form in all existence.\textsuperscript{10}

There is no explanation about the “existentialist viewpoint” in this connection, but usually “existentialist” has a strong connotation of estrangement and falling from essence in Tillich’s thinking.\textsuperscript{11} We can ask does the actual correspond fully to the potential as it does in Aristotle’s thinking - or does the “existentialist viewpoint” mean that there is “a fall” between the potential and the actual. In that case the view is something very different compared to Aristotle.\textsuperscript{12} Tillich does not relate the concepts of dynamis and energiea or potentiality and actuality to the polarity of dynamics and form. Ferrell raises questions regarding Tillich’s use of the concept of potentiality to designate both dynamics and form.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{10} ST III, 12.

\textsuperscript{11} Thatcher 1978, 114 says that it is possible to see both Platonic and Aristotelian thoughts at work in Tillich’s thinking, but it is difficult to harmonize these two accounts. Existence is falling from essence in the Platonic account and emerging out of potentiality in the Aristotelian account. In the Platonic account, me on is the negative principle which limits and conditions the eternal forms; in the Aristotelian account, me on is the created potentiality and the source of existence. Tillich is trying to put these together, but they are in tension with each other.

\textsuperscript{12} Bayer 1994, 214-215 examines Tillich’s view in relation to Aristotle: "Tillich fasst seinen Begriff des Lebens als 'Bewegung' und bedient sich dabei des aristotelischen Schemas von Potenz und Akt (dynamis und energiea). Was der Möglichkeit nach, was nur Materie (hyle) ist, drängt zur Verwirklichung, in die Wirklichkeit; dies geschieht kraft der Form (eidos). Im Blick auf das geschöpfliche Sein verknüpft nun Tillich die Möglichkeit mit der Essenz und die Wirklichkeit mit der Existenz. Die geschaffene Essenz verwirklicht sich erst in der Existenz, die als solche aber schon von der wahren Essenz entfremdet ist (ST II, 51f.). Dies steht freilich in Spannung zu Aristoteles, für den die Wirklichkeit den ontologischen Vorrang von der Möglichkeit hat. ... Das Wort 'Essenz' gebraucht Tillich äquivok. Wendet er es auf Gott als das 'Sein-Selbst jenseits der Unterscheidung von Essenz und Existenz' (ST I, 239) an, dann finde solche 'Essenz' bei Aristoteles ihre Entsprechung im actus purus. Wendet er es auf das geschaffene Sein an, meint es nur dynamis, nur potentia; die 'Schöpfung ist gut, aber sie ist reine Potentialität' (ST II, 52). Die Aktualisierung geschieht erst mit der Entfremdung; die Sünde macht das Mögliche erst wirklich. 'Verwirklichte Schöpfung und entfremdete Existenz sind materialiter identisch.' (ST II, 52)"

\textsuperscript{13} Ferrell says that in Tillich’s view the general form (e.g. treehood) is potential being and as such it is a power of being; dynamics is also the potentiality of being, which as sheer potentiality has no form, but which, in contrast to pure nonbeing, is the power of being. “It is not at all clear, then, just how form in the sense of general form is to be distinguished from dynamics if both are defined as the potentiality of being and the power of being... it should be clear that Tillich's attempt to work out the distinction between potential and actual being in terms of the dynamics-form polarity calls for further analysis and clarification.” Ferrell 1992, 44.
The classical view and the modern view of dynamics and form lead to different accounts of potentiality and actuality: in the classical view, the form element is active and gives shape to the deformed; the potential corresponds fully to the actual and the actualization happens within the form. In the modern view, dynamics as vitality is the active element; it breaks through the static form and creates new forms. Because Tillich uses both of the views, he can call either one of the elements the power of being or the potentiality of being according to the situation.

In any case, we have to ask, what does the essential unity and balance of dynamics and form mean to potentiality and actuality and what does the fall or the idea that dynamics and form are against each other mean to potentiality and actuality: at what stage of the process does “the fall” happen? If we think that there is a right essential way to actualize the potential, we need form which makes a thing what it is: we are back in the classical view. In the classical view, the actualization is distorted if it does not happen within the form - in the modern view it is normal to break through the form. There is a tension between the two views.

The actualization of the potential in life process is the movement out of the center and back again; the life process goes on through identity, change and coming back. There are three basic functions of life: self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence. They are dependent on the three basic polarities of being. The polarity of dynamics and form is the basis of self-creation:

The second polarity in the structure of being is that of dynamics and form. It is effective in the function of life which we have called self-creativity, and it is effective in the principle of growth.

The polarity of dynamics and form is connected to the self-creation of life and to the principle of growth. It is possible to examine them from the point of view of dynamics and form.

Tillich defines the role of dynamics in the following way:

Growth is dependent on the polar element of dynamics in so far as growth is the process by which a formed reality goes beyond itself to another form which both preserves and transforms the original reality.

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14 ST III, 30-32.
15 ST III, 31-32.
16 ST III, 50.
17 For more about the role of dynamics and form in the process of growth, see also Rolinck 1976, 150.
18 ST III, 50.
Here, dynamics is clearly understood in the modern sense as the vitality of life which breaks through the old form to a new one. However, Tillich wants to unite self-integration and self-creativity: the new form both preserves and transforms the original reality. Life creates itself by growth. It is not the original creation, which as the divine creativity is the basis of all life processes. From this given basis, life creates itself, and this happens through the dynamics of growth. According to Tillich, growth is emphasized by the pragmatistic philosophers who reject all unconditional norms, and process philosophers who emphasize becoming more than being.

Tillich emphasizes also the meaning of form in growth:

But dynamics is held in a polar interdependence with form. Self-creation of life is always creation of form. Nothing that grows is without form. The form makes a thing what it is: a poem or a building or a law, and so on. However, a continuous series of forms alone is not growth. Another element, coming from the pole of dynamics, makes itself felt. Every new form is made possible only by breaking through the limits of an old form.

Again, there are features of the classical view and the modern view: the form makes a thing what it is (the classical view), but self-creation of life is always creation of form and breaking through the old form (the modern view). In the modern view, form is a static concept; in the classical view, it is the active form-giving element what makes a thing what it is. Form is important for growth: self-creation of life is creation of form. The concept of form has a wide meaning in the quotation; form becomes manifest also in the artistic form.

Tillich has wanted to maintain the meaning of form: even if the form is transcended, the self-transcendence takes place within a form. In this context, Tillich goes one step further from the classical view: he says that there is a “moment of chaos” between the old and the new form:

In other words, there is a moment of ‘chaos’ between the old and the new form, a moment of no-longer-form and not-yet-form. This chaos is never absolute; it cannot be absolute because, according to the structure of the ontological polarities, being implies form. Even

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19 “This process is the way in which life creates itself. It does not create itself in terms of original creation. It is given to itself by the divine creativity which transcends and underlies all processes of life. But on this basis, life creates itself through the dynamics of growth.” ST III, 50.

20 See ST III, 50.

21 ST III, 50.

22 Annala 1985, 80 n. 61 maintains that Tillich understands form in two ways: according to the classical Greek philosophy, in which case form is the same as essence, and as an artistic form.
relative chaos has a relative form. But relative chaos with relative form is transitional, and as such it is a danger to the self-creative function of life. At this crisis life may fall back to its starting point and resist creation, or it may destroy itself in the attempt to reach a new form.23

Tillich calls this chaos relative, but anyway there is a moment of not-having-form which means that form has been suppressed by dynamics, even if in a relative way. This is something that the classical view could not accept. We could think that it is a symptom of estrangement but Tillich does not say that. A relative chaos can resist creation or destroy life. An example of this crisis is the birth of a human being or a new species or the development of a new artistic style.24

The “moment of chaos” between the old and new form leads Tillich to argue that creation and chaos belong together. The element of chaos appears in the Old Testament and other creation myths. It is reflected in the idea of divine depth or the anger of God, and also in the picture of God as the burning fire. In God, the element of chaos does not endanger eternal fulfilment. In the created world, under the conditions of existence, the element of chaos leads to the ambiguity of self-creation and destruction.25 Destruction is defined as follows: "Destruction can then be described as the prevalence of the elements of chaos over against the pole of form in the dynamics of life."26 In this definition, form has a positive value, and chaos leads to destruction. One could relate the definition to the polarity of dynamics and form in the following way: chaos is a state where dynamics is prevalent in such a way that form cannot give meaningful structure to growth or the creation process. This leads to destruction.

In the life process the powers of creation and the powers of destruction are united in such a way that it is impossible to separate them unambiguously. Mere negativity does not have being, and that is why there is no pure destruction in any life process. It is also impossible to say with certainty,

23 ST III, 50-51.
24 See ST III, 51.
25 "The chaotic element which appears here is already manifest in the creation myths, even in the creation stories of the Old Testament. Creation and chaos belong to each other, and even the exclusive monotheism of biblical religion confirms this structure of life. It is echoed in the symbolic descriptions of the divine life, of its abysmal depth, of its character as burning fire, of its suffering over and with the creatures, of its destructive wrath. But in the divine life the element of chaos does not endanger its eternal fulfilment, whereas in the life of the creature, under the conditions of estrangement, it leads to the ambiguity of self-creativity and destructiveness.” ST III, 51.
26 ST III, 51.
whether the creative or destructive forces are prevailing. 27 Tillich rejects the thought that integration could always be connected with creation and disintegration with destruction; there are different ontological polarities behind integration and creation: self-integration creates an individual being, which has a center, and self-creation gives an impulse, which causes a change from one state to another. Merely having a center is not growth and disintegration does not necessarily lead to destruction. In Tillich’s view, disease represents disintegration and death represents destruction. 28

According to Tillich, growth is a common function of life, though it is directly united with the organic dimension of life. It has to be applied symbolically to other dimensions. The concepts of self-creation and destruction as well as growth and decay are in their own area when they are used to describe organic life. In every process of growth, the conditions of life are at the same time conditions of death: the moment of birth is not just the beginning of life but also the beginning of death. 29 One of the basic features of life is struggle. Life reaches a preliminary balance by the survival of the strongest, but the balance is threatened by the dynamics of being and growth in life. It is possible to maintain the balance only in such a way that nature wastes seeds of generative power and individuals. 30

The different elements of life process - identity, change and coming back - are inseparably connected. Under the conditions of existence, the unity of the process is in danger of breaking up. In this case, self-integration turns into disintegration, self-creation into destruction and self-transcendence into profanization. 31 The forces of disintegration resist the process of integration:

27 “But there is no pure destruction in any life process. The merely negative has no being. In every process of life structures of creation are mixed with powers of destruction in such a way that they cannot be unambiguously separated. And in the actual processes of life, one never can establish with certainty which process is dominated by one or the other of these forces.” ST III, 51.

28 “Self-integration constitutes the individual being in its centeredness; self-creation gives the dynamic impulse which drives life from one centered state to another under the principle of growth. Centeredness does not imply growth, but growth does presuppose coming from and going to a state of centeredness. Likewise, disintegration is possibly, but not necessarily, destruction. Disintegration takes place within a centered unity; destruction can occur only in the encounter of centered unity with centered unity. Disintegration is represented by disease, destruction by death.” ST III, 51.

29 ST III, 51-53.

30 ST III, 54.

31 “The three functions of life unite elements of self-identity with elements of self alteration. But this unity is threatened by existential estrangement, which drives life in one or the other direction, thus disrupting the unity. To the degree in which this disruption is real, self-integration is countered by disintegration, self-creation is countered by destruction, self-transcendence is countered by profanization. Every life process has the
every state is a compromise between these forces. This gives a dynamic character to the inorganic realm. However, Tillich does not explain these forces in more detail. Also, from the psychological point of view, successful or unsuccessful integration is dependent on forces which lead either towards self-identity or towards self-alteration. A disruption can occur, if the psychological self cannot assimilate the new influences into the centered unity, or if it is not able to resist the impacts drawing it to contradictory directions.

We have seen that Tillich sometimes combines self-creation and self-transcendence, e.g. by saying that “the dynamic character of being implies the tendency of everything to transcend itself and to create new forms”. The ideas of self-creation and self-transcendence blend with each other once again: “The individual life process transcends itself in two directions, by labor and by propagation in the self creation of life”. Tillich uses to some extent crosswise the concepts of self-creativity and self-transcendence. On one hand, he says that “self-creation gives the dynamic impulse which drives life from one centered state to another under the principle of growth”. On the other hand, he says that “the growth of the individual is the most obvious example of self-transcendence based on self-conservation”.

Self-transcendence is the main category when Tillich deals with life and the Spirit but the ideas of self-creation and self-transcendence blend in Tillich’s view of culture. In principal, self-creation transcends the form in the horizontal direction and self-transcendence transcends the form in the vertical direction.

Ambiguity that the positive and the negative elements are mixed in such a way that a definite separation of the negative from the positive is impossible: life at every moment is ambiguous.” ST III, 32.

32 “The ambiguities of self-integration and disintegration are effective in these processes, and they are effective simultaneously in the same process. Integrating and disintegrating forces are struggling in every situation, and every situation is a compromise between these forces. This gives a dynamic character to the inorganic realm, which cannot be described in exclusively quantitative terms.” ST III, 34.

33 “Conscious of these limitations, one may say that the structure of health and disease, of successful or unsuccessful self-integration in the psychological sphere, is dependent on the working of the same factors which work in the preceding dimensions: the forces driving toward self-identity and those driving toward self-alteration. The psychological self can be disrupted by its inability to assimilate (i.e., to take into the centered unity an extensively or intensively overpowering number of impressions), or by its inability to resist the destructive impact of impressions drawing the self in too many or too contradictory directions...” ST III, 37.

34 ST I, 181.
35 ST III, 54.
36 ST III, 51.
37 ST I, 181.
direction but what is the difference between the two? If the dynamic side of
the polarity causes transcendence in self-creation, what causes transcendence
in self-transcendence? In other words, what is the difference between the
Spirit and the dynamic vitality of life? We shall return to the question.

The beginning of Tillich’s system has implied the self-integration of life. It
means that there is an essential unity and balance between dynamics and form.
Under the conditions of existence they can be separated and fall in conflict
with each other. Following this idea, the essential actualization obviously
maintains the unity and balance of dynamics and form. However, in the self-
creation of life there is “a moment of ’chaos’ between the old and new form,
a moment of no-longer-form and not-yet-form”. In the light of self-integration,
this sounds as a distortion of the unity and balance of dynamics and form.
The moment of chaos includes another problem: in another context, Tillich says
that breaking the form is the symptom of the demonic; it is not always easy to see
the difference between breaking the form and breaking through the form.

Tillich’s description of the self-creation of life shows a change of emphasis
compared to the self-integration of life in the beginning of the system: the
classical view of dynamics and form is in the background and Tillich is
moving toward the modern view of dynamics and form. In other words,
Tillich’s thinking is moving to a more dynamic direction.

3.2. Self-creation under the dimension of spirit: culture

Tillich’s view about the self-creativity of life leads to the notion that, in the
sphere of man’s spirit, the self-creation of life creates culture. Tillich defines
culture as taking care of, keeping something alive and growing. Man
cultivates or makes culture of everything. The self-creation of life acts in
many ways in the cultural sphere, and esthetic and cognitive functions are
present in everyday life. The individual is the bearer of cultural self-creation
and shares the tensions of culture. A culturally creative person is one who
takes part in the creation and destruction of culture, but everybody is creative
to some degree, just because they are living in a culture and talk and use

38 ST III, 50.
39 Religionsphilosophie (1925), 809 (MW 4, 150): “Göttliches und Profanes stehen
gemeinsam dem Dämonischen gegenüber. Sie bejahen gemeinsam die Form im Gegensatz
zum Dämonischen, das die Form zerbricht.”
40 ST III, 57.
41 ST III, 64-65.
tools. Also the content of morality is the product of the cultural self-creation of life.

The cultural self-creation of life becomes manifest in the duality of *theoria* and *praxis* which is based on the polarity of individualization and participation: *theoria* means receiving something and *praxis* means changing something. Consequently, the basic functions of culture are language and technical acts. This leads to the notion that language and making tools belong together: the ability to free oneself from the limits of the environment and to use concepts is the presupposition for the ability to make tools.

Tillich says that *logos* is before everything else: the expression **homo faber** includes implicitly the expression **anthropos logikos**. Man’s reason is a finite manifestation of the divine *Logos*. The concept of *logos* brings forward the meaning of form in the classical sense, and Tillich maintains that form is necessary in the self-creation of life. Man receives parts of reality in esthetic images and cognitive concepts. These are structural wholes. The structure of reason is “the static element in the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit.” Reason is the structure of both mind and world, but it is only one element “in the dynamics of life and the functions of spirit.” Thus, the dynamic side is also important. The artist’s work is his dynamic vision of the world; Tillich speaks even of the “productive enthusiasm of cultural dynamics.”

Tillich does not relate these ideas to the polarity of dynamics and form, but it is possible to see dynamics as the moving power that is needed to create anything in culture, and form as the structure element of culture and its phenomena. Creation takes place according to the polarity of individualisation and participation, so that man receives impulses from the world and at the same time changes it.

Labour and propagation are especially the means of the self-creation of life. The curse laid on Adam and Eve in the story of the Fall powerfully expresses

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42 ST III, 68.
43 ST III, 57.
44 "Man produces tools as tools, and for this the conception of universals is presupposed, i.e., the power of language. The power of tools is dependent 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.” ST III, 61.
45 "Nothing divine is irrational - if irrational means contradicting reason - for reason is the finite manifestation of the divine Logos.” ST III, 284.
46 ST III, 63. Tillich corrects the definition of reason which he has given in the part dealing with reason and revelation, see ST I, 77-78.
47 ST III, 119.
the ambiguity of labor as a form of the self-creation of life. All life has to give up resting in itself and struggle. Labour prevents an individual from losing his dynamics and becoming empty, and propagation is the most obvious form of self-creation of life. At the same time, it brings into fulfilment and annihilates the meaning of individuals that represent the species. A healthy life works according to the principle of self-creation. It fulfils something towards which the inner dynamics of life is directed; the classical name for this is *eros*.

All technical acts of all times are at the same time creative and destructive. The technical possibility can become social and individual temptation, an end in itself. Man can choose goals, which are not necessary but optional. It is a depravity of culture, if means become ends just because they are possible. Tillich has called this “the temptation of the new”. The meaning is lost, and so is the resistance coming from the ultimate end. This is a typical feature of technical culture and shows the ambiguity of technology. Also, many contemporary problems of culture arise from this tension.

Culture creates the universe of meaning as the actuality of what is potential in man. The ultimate aim of the cultural self-creation of life is that the universe of meaning is the fulfilment of the universe of being. In other words, culture manifests that which has been potentially present in being. The actualization of the potentialities takes place in man. The ambiguity of culture can be seen in the fact that the cultural act both creates and destroys the meaning. For example words free us from the limits of the environment and give possibilities to express universal meanings. At the same time they separate meaning from the reality to which they point. The main reason for the cultural ambiguities is the difference between subject and object; the

48 ST III, 54.
49 ST III, 54-55.
50 ST III, 56.
51 See ST II, 64.
52 “However, this leads to a tension from which many conflicts of our contemporary culture arise: the perversion of the relation of means and ends by the unlimited character of the technical possibilities. Means become ends simply because they are possible. But if 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... Such distortion may affect a whole culture in which the production of means becomes the end beyond which there is no end. This problem, intrinsic in technical culture, does not deny the significance of technology but shows its ambiguity.” ST III, 61-62.
53 ST III, 84.
54 ST III, 68. Peeck 1991, 118-119 examines the twofoldness of creation and destruction from the point of view of pastoral counselling.
understanding of an object opens a gap between the object and the meaning. The same problem is connected with other cultural phenomena, for example perception and argumentation.\textsuperscript{55} Only parts of the potentialities connected to a thing actualize themselves.\textsuperscript{56}

The ambiguity of culture is obvious in education: authoritarian discipline threatens the personality of a human being, and liberalism prevents him from gaining any form.\textsuperscript{57} Here we can see the idea that rigid form (authoritarian discipline) and chaos (no form at all) are equally bad alternatives. The humanistic view of man has to be combined with the ambiguities of man and culture.\textsuperscript{58} If humanism absolutizes the self-creation of life and rejects self-transcendence, it has to be rejected. Only self-transcending humanism can answer the questions of the meaning of culture and the aim of education.\textsuperscript{59}

Tillich gives an analysis of a moral personality and makes a distinction between self-identity and self-alteration in a person. We can see that the question is analogical to the problem of self-integration and self-creativity. The centered self can be lost in an empty self-identity or in a chaotic self-alteration; both have to be united. The question is, how many potentialities man can actualize without losing his power to actualize anything seriously, and how many potentialities man must actualize in order to avoid the state of mutilated humanity.\textsuperscript{60} “The Spiritual Presence maintains the identity of the self without impoverishing the self, and it drives toward the alteration of the self without disrupting it”.\textsuperscript{61} The Spirit can overcome the double anxiety of not actualizing one’s essential nature or losing oneself in self-actualization. Tillich says that “where there is Spirit, the actual manifests the potential and the potential determines the actual”.\textsuperscript{62} This resembles the classical view of

\textsuperscript{55} See ST III, 68-72.
\textsuperscript{56} See e.g. ST III, 85-86.
\textsuperscript{57} ST III, 75-76.
\textsuperscript{58} ST III, 85.
\textsuperscript{59} ST III, 85-86. See also ST III, 249-250.
\textsuperscript{60} ST III, 268.
\textsuperscript{61} ST III, 269.
\textsuperscript{62} “In this way the Spirit conquers the double anxiety which logically (but not temporally) precedes the transition from essence to existence, the anxiety of not actualizing one’s essential being and the anxiety of losing oneself within one’s self-actualization. Where there is Spirit, the actual manifests the potential and the potential determines the actual. In the Spiritual Presence, man’s essential being appears under the conditions of existence, conquering the distortions of existence in the reality of the New Being.” ST III, 269.
potential and actual. Man can give way to the forces of moral disintegration and act against the spirit in the power of spirit.\textsuperscript{63}

In this context, Tillich does not mention the polarity of dynamics and form very often. However, when he deals with the social groups, he exceptionally uses this polarity:

According to the polarity of dynamics and form, a social group could not have being without form. And the social group’s form is determined by the understanding of justice effective in the group.\textsuperscript{64}

The polarity of dynamics and form is used to claim that all social groups must have a form which is determined by the understanding of justice in the group. This can be explained by the fact that, e.g. in Love, Power, and Justice, justice is defined as the form of being\textsuperscript{65}. However, Tillich does not say what kind of form this would be. We can see that he is using the polarity of dynamics and form in the meaning of ontological necessity (everything must have form) and the idea of justice determining in principle the form of the group; however, he is not saying what kind of form would be the right one in practice.

These theoretical principles have to be applied according to the situation. In many social problems, the question is trying to find an adequate form in the changing situations.\textsuperscript{66} Efforts to remove the structure of leadership as in anarchy are not successful because it creates chaos, which in turn promotes dictatorship; it is not possible to win the ambiguities of life by creating a vacuum.\textsuperscript{67} Also legal form is ambiguous because it is supposed to create justice, but it creates both justice and injustice.\textsuperscript{68}

We can see that, occasionally, Tillich uses the polarity of dynamics and form to explain phenomena of actual life, as in the case of social groups. This indicates that it is not possible to solve the many questions of dynamics and form by thinking that the polarities have their place only in ontology.\textsuperscript{69} Adams says that Tillich sometimes uses the concepts of dynamics and form to provide a conceptual apparatus for a typology of cultural creations of all sorts: “For example, works of art can be identified in terms of the relative emphasis placed upon dynamics and form. Thus neo-classicism so much stresses the element of form that the dynamics is approaching the vanishing point; on the

\textsuperscript{63} “Every moral act is a responsible act, a response to a valid command, but man can refuse to respond. If he refuses, he gives way to the forces of moral disintegration; he acts against the spirit in the power of the spirit.” ST III, 39.

\textsuperscript{64} ST III, 79.

\textsuperscript{65} See Love, Power, and Justice (1954), 54.

\textsuperscript{66} ST III, 80-81; see also ST III, 262-263.

\textsuperscript{67} ST III, 81-82; see also ST III, 263-264.

\textsuperscript{68} ST III, 83-84; see also ST III, 264-265.

\textsuperscript{69} ST III, 79-80.
other hand, Expressionism so much stresses the dynamics that form approaches dissolution.\textsuperscript{70}

Unfortunately, in his short comment, Adams does not give detailed information about which Tillich’s texts he is referring to or consider the problem he mentions last: the relation of dynamics and form to the concepts of form and content (Inhalt) or import (Gehalt). The typology that he mentions is not a common one in Tillich, even though it would be a logical one if the polarity of dynamics and form is understood in a complementary way as the two sides of all being (cf. Tillich’s idea of the modern physics). One interesting point in Adam’s presentation is that in it Tillich is critical also towards expressionism which he usually sees positively just because it breaks the form and lets the substance come through; in the typology based on the polarity of dynamics and form, expressionism is criticized for its overemphasis of the dynamic element.

In his article Über gläubigen Realismus in 1928 Tillich says that expressionism breaks the outside form and emphasizes the substance (Gehalt): “der Expressionismus hatte die äussere Form zerbrochen, um den inneren Gehalt auszudrücken”.\textsuperscript{71} Here we can see Tillich’s changing attitude towards form: usually he says that revelation is breaking through the form and not breaking form apart (“Durchbrechungen, keine Zerbrechungen der Form”);\textsuperscript{72} normally, breaking the form is demonic: “Göttliches und Profanes stehen gemeinsam dem Dämonischen gegenüber. Sie bejahen gemeinsam die Form im Gegensatz zum Dämonischen, das die Form zerbricht.”\textsuperscript{73}

We can understand these different ideas on the basis on self-integration and self-transcendence: In self-integration the emphasis is on the unity and balance of dynamics and form; both sides of the polarity are equally important and too much emphasis on either side means disruption. In self-transcendence, the spiritual substance breaks through the form. This means that when Tillich talks about ontological matters, the classical view of form is also present; when Tillich talks about culture and art, the form only manifests the deeper substance. The distinction of form and substance alone does not give enough tools to build a typology or to create a criterion to evaluate culture; it can only lead to the question, whether the cultural form is empty or manifests the

\textsuperscript{70} Adams 1989, 35-36.

\textsuperscript{71} Über gläubigen realismus (1928), 110 (MW 4, 194): “Der alte Realismus hatte den Dingen ihren Gehalt, ihre Mächtigkeit genommen um ihrer äusseren Form willen; der Expressionismus hatte die äussere Form zerbrochen, um den inneren Gehalt auszudrücken; der neue Realismus wendet sich in voller Hingabe an die äussere Form, um in ihr und durch sie die innere Mächtigkeit der Dinge zu schauen.”

\textsuperscript{72} Religionsphilosophie (1925), 825 (MW 4, 162).

\textsuperscript{73} Religionsphilosophie (1925), 809 (MW 4, 150).
religious substance, but it gives no answer to the question, how to separate these two.

Tillich’s different views of form in the ontological and in the artistic sphere can be seen in his discussion with Dr. Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, a distinguished Zen master. At first, Tillich strongly emphasizes the meaning of logos against the idea of the formless self as the only ontological principle: “The logos is a very active principle, because it is the principle of love, or agape. But, in any case, it is not the formless self. The formless self is the divine abyss out of which we come. But everything that happens in our world is mediated through the logos, which is the form in which the formless comes to form.” Tillich describes this logos - or spark or seed - as the potentiality; it is different from the potentiality in Zen because logos is not formless.

However, when they are discussing art as an expression of the basic principles, Tillich and Hisamatsu suddenly agree. A quotation of the conversation shows the change:

Hisamatsu (in Japanese): Hence, things with form are really without form. Whatever has form has its authentic import in having no form. DeMartino for Hisamatsu: Consequently, a form expresses its genuine nature in transcending or negating its form - in other words, as a 'form-without-form', or again, as a 'formless-form'.

Hisamatsu (in Japanese): The mark of Zen aesthetic appreciation, accordingly, is to see within form what is formless - which means to see in things with form the Self-Without-Form. DeMartino for Hisamatsu: The key to appreciation of Zen art, therefore, is to appreciate in the artistic form the Self-Without-Form that is being expressed... (Tillich: In it?)... yes, or through it. Tillich: That is quite similar to my own thinking. The 'depth of being in it', I would call it.

Here, the meaning of art is to mediate the “depth of being”, or the “formless self” or “formless-form”. In this context, it is enough for Tillich to describe the ultimate reality with the depth of being without the need for logos, and he is willing to see the religious meaning of the deformed, expressive art. Tillich’s identification of the depth of being with Self-Without-Form shows

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74 The discussions took place in 1957. They are reported in The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-Religions (1990), 73-170. Negation and Theology (1992), edited by Robert P. Scharlemann, contains two articles about Tillich and Buddhism: Langdon Gilkey, Tillich and the Kyoto School; and Masao Abe, Negation in Mahayana Buddhism and in Tillich: A Buddhist View of "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian".

75 The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-Religions (1990), 88.

76 The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-Religions (1990), 104-105.

77 The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-Religions (1990), 94-95.
that when Tillich uses the depth of being to talk about God, it is only the first element of Tillich’s polar view of God which combines dynamics and form in balance and in unity in God.

Tillich does not develop very much a typological view of culture based on the polarity of dynamics and form. He can criticize views that give too much emphasis on dynamics or form, but he does not consider very much what is their right balance in culture. When Tillich deals with the questions of culture, he seldom mentions the polarity of dynamics and form directly. Instead, he uses the concepts of form and substance. The concepts of Form and Gehalt, sometimes supplemented by the concept of Inhalt, have been central since Tillich’s early German texts, and the English version form and substance has an important role again in the third volume of Systematic Theology. The distinction of form and substance can express the deeper (“religious”) meaning of culture and art, and it can be used to explain how the Spirit transcends finite forms. Usually, when the polarity of dynamics and form is present, the distinction of form and substance is in the background and vice versa.

Tillich uses the polarity of dynamics and form mainly in the context of self-integration and self-creation; the distinction of form and substance is used mainly in the context of self-transcendence. The distinction of form and substance is older than the polarity of dynamics and form, but the latter is not just a simple development of the former, since both are used in Systematic

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78 See e.g. ST II, 65. See also The World Situation (1945), 13 (MW 2, 173).
79 See e.g. ST III, 60. See also Annala 1985, 78-94; Clayton 1980, 191-197; Scharlemann 1985, 161. Etymologically substance means something that is below or as basis. It is especially a term of traditional metaphysics, which means the ultimate being, that what really is. See Lotz 1975, 1648-1650. About Plato’s view, see Jones 1970, 124-146; about Aristotles view, see Jones 1970, 218-222.
80 Clayton 1980, 191 describes their study as “the plunge into those dark depths of Tillich’s thought where, if not all, certainly most of the cows are black”.
81 Tillich uses them to describe different aspects of culture, life, and religion. See for example Kairos (1922), 344 (MW 4, 66); Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie (1922), 466 (MW 4, 88); Religionsphilosophie (1925), 785 (MW 4, 130), 799-834 (MW 4, 141-169); Über gläubigen Realismus (1928), 109-110 (MW 4, 194). Still, in the late period of his life Tillich called the concepts of Form and Gehalt the basic categories of his philosophy of religion and culture. See Auf der Grenze (4. Vorlage 1962), 23. See also Religionsphilosophie (1962), 36.
82 Bandy 1984, 12 says that the original description of the polarity of dynamics and form is the polarity of form and import (which is another modification of form and substance). He refers to a description of import by James Luther Adams as “the meaningfulness giving every particular meaning its reality and power; it is the ground for an inner infinity of meaningfulness”. Import conveys the fullness of spirit and gives an entity reality and power. Scharlemann 1969, 123 sees in the concepts of Form and Gehalt a pattern for the
Theology. The identification of substance and dynamics would lead to great problems, because then the impact of the divine could be found on the dynamic side, and in self-integration, both sides of the polarity are equally important. Tillich also emphasizes the meaning of the form element (Logos) in God. Tillich usually does not talk about polarity in connection with form and substance, so the whole polar view is something different compared to form and substance: here, we can recollect Tillich’s denial of the influence of Schelling on his ontological polarities.

Tillich claimed to have formulated the triad of Form-Inhalt-Gehalt under the impact of certain paintings done in an expressionistic style. Thus, Tillich’s use of these concepts is comparable to the way the separation is made in esthetics between the outside form and the content or message of an artistic creation. Tillich was interested in expressionistic art, so it is understandable that it is not always easy to define what Gehalt is: it is something that is experienced and that makes an effect. Sometimes Tillich connects Gehalt and power: "The empirical reality of the object was searched for anew, not for its own sake, but as an expression of objective Gehalt, of its inner power."
Clayton says that in Tillich’s earlier writings the presence of powerful Gehalt was regarded as that which makes an object or event ‘religious’.\(^{85}\) He mentions that almost all scholars agree about the fact that Gehalt is one of the most diffuse concepts that Tillich uses.\(^{86}\)

The German word Gehalt cannot be translated by a single English word. Scharlemann uses three different translations depending on the context:\(^{87}\) Sometimes Gehalt is equivalent to Inhalt and is contrasted with form, then the English translation is ‘content’; sometimes Gehalt is contrasted with content as well as with form, then the translation is ‘depth’ or ‘substance’ (some commentators use ‘import’ for this meaning); in still other cases Gehalt refers to the aspect of objectival which cannot be grasped, then the translation is ‘power’ or ‘presence’. The translation problems give a good illustration of the problems of Tillich’s thinking as well.

Tillich does not consider separately the relationship of the pairs dynamics-form and form-substance, but the article Natur und Sakrament has as opposites “formlose Dynamik” and “sinnhafter Gehalt”.\(^{88}\) Dynamik is connected to the vitality of nature and is without Form while Gehalt is connected to meaningfulness. Mostly substance (Gehalt) can be seen as dynamic; this is emphasized by the fact that form is a separate element in the distinction between form and substance.

\(^{85}\) Clayton 1980, 91 gives a dynamic interpretation to the concept of Gehalt: "He calls it Gehalt, which he contrasts sharply with Inhalt as well as with Form. (GW. IX. 236ff) For the moment, let us call it ‘meaning-giving substance’ which is thought by Tillich to be the life-force not only of all 'concrete religions' but every cultural act as well." Clayton 1980, 215 explains Tillich’s development at the end of the 1920’s.

\(^{86}\) Clayton gives many examples where Gehalt means different things, see Clayton 1980, 197. See also Clayton 1987,21; Ringleben 1989, 166-167. Annala 1985, 94-95 points to Clayton’s finding that Gehalt is a very diffuse concept in Tillich’s texts. He wants to give a coherent interpretation of Gehalt. See also Annala 1985, 81-85. Annala has studied the basic thoughts of Tillich’s theology of culture in his book Autonomian tragiikka ja kulttuurin kriisi, but the polarity of dynamics and form is not under consideration. Annala’s book Transparency of Time: The Structure of Time-Consciousness in the Theology of Paul Tillich (1982) deals with the concepts of form and substance for example on pages 13-14, 15-16, 55, 73-77.

\(^{87}\) Scharlemann 1969, 36.

\(^{88}\) Natur und Sakrament (1930), 154 (MW 6, 162): "Erreichbar ist die Sachmächtigkeit nur in derjenigen Schicht des Seins, die vor der Spaltung in Gegenständlichkeit und Geistigkeit liegt, im ungespaltenen, vorgegenständlichen Sein. Dieses Sein aber darf wider nicht gedeutet werden nach Art der vitalen Naturauffassung, also als formlose Dynamik, vielmehr muss es aufgefasst werden als sinnhafter Gehalt, als Mächtigkeit, die zugleich Sachlichkeit ist. Hätten wir die Möglichkeit, diese sachgetragene Mächtigkeit der Naturdinge zu schauen, so hätten wir zugleich die Möglichkeit, ihre Bedeutung als sakramentales Element zu verstehen."
Sometimes “subject matter” is the third element with form and substance, and this view has its basis in Tillich’s theology of art. The variation between form-substance and form-substance-subject matter makes Tillich’s thinking ambiguous. In the beginning, he used the scheme of Form and Gehalt, and the scheme of Form-Inhalt-Gehalt developed after the First World War, in Tillich’s own words as a consequence of artistic experience. Following Clayton, we can say that Inhalt is the 'stuff' which has meaning (Gehalt) and which is structured and shaped in a particular way (Form); Gehalt is that which formed stuff signifies or means. However, Tillich brings back the distinction of Form and Gehalt to which he assimilates Inhalt thus reducing its meaning, if not eliminating it totally.

According to the scheme of form-substance-subject matter, we can distinguish three elements in cultural creativity. For example, language chooses among all the possible objects the ones that have meaning to religious or scientific language. They form the subject matter of cultural activity. The same matter is used differently in different contexts. In Tillich’s view, the difference is caused by the form:

The form makes a cultural creation what it is - a philosophical essay, a painting, a law, a prayer. In this sense form is the essence of a cultural creation...

The third element in this distinction is the substance:

Whereas its subject matter is chosen and its form is intended, its substance is so to speak, the soil out of which it grows. Substance cannot be intended. It is unconsciously present in a culture, a group, an individual, giving the passion and driving power to him who creates and the significance and power of meaning to his creations.

Substance is the spiritual impact manifested in a culture or in an individual phenomenon of culture. Substance points to the deeper meaning, while form is connected to the visible side. There can be conflicts between the demands of form creation and substance.

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89 Clayton 1980, 196-197.
90 ST III, 60.
91 “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 or scientific universe of expression. They constitute the subject matter in cultural activities although differently in each.” ST III, 60.
92 ST III, 60.
93 ST III, 60.
94 "This makes style a key to understanding the way in which a particular group or period encounters reality, although it is also a source of conflicts between the demands of form-creation and of the expression of the substance.” ST III, 60-61.
How can we put together the polarity of dynamics and form and the scheme of form-substance-subject matter? When Tillich explained the meaning of form in the self-creation of life, he said that “the form makes a thing what it is: a poem or a building or a law, and so on”. \(^95\) It sounds the same as the description of form above: “The form makes a cultural creation what it is - a philosophical essay, a painting, a law, a prayer.”\(^96\) But the idea of substance is not present in the polarity of dynamics and form, and the polarity of dynamics and form is not present in the scheme of form-substance-subject matter. It is best to accept that Tillich is using two different views that cannot be totally harmonized.

When we compare these two views, the important question is the relation of substance to form. In the classical sense, form is the essence of thing, it makes a thing what it is. This explains the concept of form in the polarity of dynamics and form. In his ontology, which is heavily existentially loaded, Tillich connects meaning and significance also to the element of form. In the previous quotation he says that substance gives the significance and meaning to a thing. Consequently, substance is separated from form which is connected to the visible object. Tillich’s description of form in his ontology has a strong Aristotelian strain, his view of substance (Gehalt) in his cultural theology can be interpreted in the Neo-Platonic way.\(^97\) This explains the tension between the views and concepts. The classical view of form indicates self-integration, the view of form and substance indicates self-transcendence; self-creation is the bridge between them.

When Tillich uses the concepts of form and substance, he looks at the questions from the human, existential position and wants to maintain the dimension of “depth” or substance that can be encountered in life; when Tillich uses the concepts of dynamics and form, he starts with the ontological analysis as a “metaphysical spectator”. When these two ideas meet, there is a tension between them.

### 3.3. Morality, culture, and religion

The three functions of life, self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence, are based on the three ontological polarities: individualization and participation, dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny. In turn, the three functions are the basis for morality, culture, and religion.\(^98\) Tillich’s

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\(^{95}\) ST III, 50.

\(^{96}\) ST III, 60.

\(^{97}\) See e.g. Annala 1985, 94-98.

\(^{98}\) See ST III, 30-106.
basic view in *Systematic Theology* is that morality, culture, and religion belong together: "In accordance with their essential nature, morality, culture, and religion interpenetrate one another. They constitute the unity of spirit, wherein the elements are distinguishable but not separable."  

 Usually, the relation of religion to morality and culture can be explained with form and substance. Culture provides the contents of morality, and religion gives to morality the unconditional character of the moral imperative and the ultimate moral aim, it reunites the separated and gives the motivating power of grace. Religion is essentially related to morality and culture:

The religious element in culture is the inexhaustible depth of genuine creation. One may call it substance or the ground from which culture lives. It is the element of ultimacy which culture lacks in itself but to which it points. Religion, or the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit, is essentially related to morality and culture. There is no self-transcendence under the dimension of the spirit without the constitution of the moral self by the unconditional imperative, and this self-transcendence cannot take form except within the universe of meaning created in the cultural act.

This description connects depth, substance, ground, and the element of ultimacy to each other.

Often, Tillich deals with the relation between religion and culture without the third element of morality. Religion is the substance of culture and culture is the form of religion. The religious substance of culture is that which opens up the possibility of “depth” or divine, gives the deeper meaning to culture, and also is the manifestation of the divine or the Spirit or the Spiritual Presence. Religion cannot express itself without culture, and culture needs religion as the source of depth and unconditional meaning. There is a two-way connection between religion and culture, as Gilkey says: "... he establishes the presence and significance of the religious dimension of life of the human spirit, or, put in the reverse way, the modes in which the divine Spiritual Presence makes itself known in human experience..." 

If we think of Tillich’s idea of the essential unity and balance of dynamics and form, can we say that the unity and balance is achieved when the religious

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99 ST III, 95. See also ST III, 38, 57, 96, 157-161.
100 ST III, 95.
101 "These two principles are rooted in a third, that of the 'essential belongingness of religion and culture to each other.' I have expressed this principle frequently in the statement that religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion." ST III, 248. See also Annala 1985, 99; Smith 1985, 255-258. Clayton 1987, 21 notes that the concepts of form and substance (Gehalt) are central also when Tillich deals with the relation of philosophy and theology.
102 Gilkey 1990, 164.
substance is expressed in culture? According to Tillich, the separation of dynamics and form from each other is the threat of existential estrangement. Can we say that apart from the religious substance culture is threatened either by the overemphasis of form or the overemphasis of dynamics? Tillich does not combine these ideas this way: he has moved from self-integration, through self-creation, to self-transcendence, and the unity and balance of dynamics and form does not have direct bearing on the religious substance and its manifestation in culture.

The Spiritual Presence in culture creates theonomy. Theonomous works of cultural creation express the ultimacy of meaning: “The first quality of a theonomous culture is that it communicates the experience of holiness, of something ultimate in being and meaning, in all its creations.”

There is no outside law in theonomy, it is directed and determined by the Spirit. It takes into fulfilment the human spirit and does not break it. Theonomy is in a constant struggle against independent heteronomy and independent autonomy. Theonomy is the basis of autonomy and heteronomy, and the factor uniting them: “Theonomy is prior to both; they are elements within it. But theonomy, at the same time, is posterior to both; they tend to be reunited in the theonomy from which they come. In the polar view, theonomy both precedes and follows the contrasting elements it contains.” It fights against both the independent autonomy and independent heteronomy.

Theonomous culture means culture which is created under the impact of the Spirit. The law (nomos) which is effective in it, directs the self-creation of life towards the ultimate in being and meaning. It is unfortunate that theonomy is sometimes understood as the submission of culture under divine laws. It is possible to use the term heteronomy in those situations where an outside law (heteros nomos) destroys the autonomy of cultural creativity.

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103 About the autonomous, heteronomous and theonomous culture, for more detail see ST III, 249-252. Amelung 1972, 205-206 notes that Tillich’s thinking changed over time, so that in the beginning he only spoke about autonomy and theonomy but later heteronomy became the third element. See also Scott 1985, 138-141; Smith 1985, 257-258. About Tillich’s view of the Spirit, see e.g. Sturm Wittschier, Paul Tillich: Seine Pneuma-Theologie (1975). The polarity of dynamics and form is looked at briefly on page 40.

104 ST III, 250-251. For more about the theonomous morality, see ST III, 266.

105 ST III, 251.

106 ST III, 251-252.

107 “At this point the word is used for the state of culture under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. The nomos (law) effective in it is the directedness of the self-creation of life under the dimension of the Spirit toward the ultimate in being and meaning.” ST III, 249.

Clayton has noticed that Tillich’s description of autonomy and heteronomy seems to vary: sometimes, heteronomy is totally negative, sometimes, it has also a positive meaning; in some cases, theonomy is self-transcending autonomy which is not compatible with heteronomy, in other cases, both autonomy and heteronomy are united in theonomy. Sometimes Tillich connects heteronomy to an outside law which he in turn has connected to the element of form; sometimes he says "the more the form, the more the autonomy, the more the Gehalt, the more the theonomy," thus connecting form to autonomy. These differences can be explained by the three functions of life, but it is not possible to do this in detail here.

Tillich emphasizes that the forms of creative process are autonomous, and it is not possible to interfere from the outside with the justified actions and views of culture. Only after culture had released itself from theonomy which was based on mythology, could a culture develop its potentialities. However, this should not lead to independent autonomy. The reaction of religion against autonomy easily takes the form of rejecting creativity and even the justified demands of culture. The religious substance, however, gives dynamic creativity to culture:

With the loss of its religious substance, culture is left with an increasingly empty form. Meaning cannot live without the inexhaustible source of meaning to which religion points.

The religious element in culture is the inexhaustible depth of a genuine creation.

The Spiritual Presence creates theonomous forms in the different areas of cultural self-creation, and this leads to the conquest of cultural ambiguities. Under the influence of the Spiritual Presence, the difference between subject and object disappears: “Philosophers, mystics, lovers, seekers of intoxication - even of death - have tried to conquer this cleavage.” Once again, Tillich gives a positive estimation of expressionistic art. It is possible to distinguish between stylistic elements of naturalism, idealism and expressionism, and expressionism breaks into the vertical reality. That is why there is a genuine

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109 Clayton 1987, 25-26. Clayton says that there seems to be two models of autonomy and heteronomy in Tillich’s thinking.
110 Clayton 1980, 196 refers to GW IX, 19. In Clayton’s view, Form-Gehalt tries to answer the question, how is it possible to avoid a new heteronomy.
111 ST III, 97.
112 ST III, 95.
113 ST III, 252. For the concept of Spiritual Presence see e.g. Schepers 1964, 248-248.
114 ST III, 252-253. Irwin 1991, 7-8 says that Tillich defines love as the drive toward the reunion of the separated. This connects eros to the other forms of love. Love is “the moving power of life” and life’s “inner dynamics”. See also Love, Power, and Justice (1954), 25; ST III, 137.
theonomous element in expressionism. But how do we know, when an
artistic creation or a cultural product is theonomous: is it a subjective
matter?

In his cultural theology, Tillich does not relate theonomy to the polarity of
dynamics and form, though according to his ontology and analysis of
existence it is just the imbalance of the polarity which expresses existential
estrangement. It would be logical to say that in theonomous culture, dynamics
and form are united in balance. The element of form would also give a
possibility to estimate the contents of culture. However, this is one of the
basic dilemmas of Tillich, because he does not want to do this: the outward
defining of culture leads to heteronomy in his view. Tillich wants to give
culture an independent status, and because of this he has to remove almost all
features concerning content and form from his views of culture. Then the
question arises, what is the meaning of the unity and balance of dynamics and
form, if it has no bearing on how things happen in actual life and culture.

Tillich mentions exceptionally the polarity of dynamics and form when he
deals with institutionalized religion: he says that it cannot be criticized for
having a form because everything that has being has a form; without form
there is no dynamics. This resembles the ontological necessity of dynamics
and form but Tillich does not make any conclusions concerning the actual
forms of religion. These thoughts are similar to the thoughts about social
groups in the previous chapter. The criticism towards religion is adequate if
institutionalized religion does not transcend finite reality but becomes a part
of it. Religion expresses the self-transcendence of life.

The essential unity of morality, culture, and religion is destroyed under the
conditions of existence. An ambiguous reunion is possible under the impact of
the divine Spirit. The Spiritual Presence creates a theonomous culture and a
theonomous morality. This unites the three functions of life: “Religion, the
self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit, gives self-
transcendence to both the self-creation and the self-integration of life under

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115 “In relation to the question of theonomy, we cannot distinguish styles; we can only
distinguish stylistic elements... Naturalism, when predominant, produces acceptance,
idealism, anticipation, and expressionism the breakthrough into the vertical. Thus
expressionism is the genuinely theonomous element.” ST III, 257-258.

116 Also Baumgarten 1995, 149-157 criticizes Tillich for identifying the expressive or
religious element with the emotional element: Tillich looks too much from the point of
view of theology or substance, and the evaluation of art is not adequate. Palmer 1984, 176-
212 and Palmer 1990, 22-23 present the same kind of criticism.

117 “The institutional way is not restricted to so-called institutionalized religion, for, as
psychology has shown, there are institutions in the inner life of the individual... The
relentless attacks on ‘organized religion’ are mostly based on a deeply rooted confusion,
for life is organized in all its self-actualizations; without form it could not even have
dynamics, and this is true of the personal as well as the communal life.” ST III, 99.
the dimension of spirit". In this way, Tillich unites self-integration, self-creativity, and self-transcendence: religion as the self-transcendence of life gives self-transcendence to the self-creation and the self-integration of life.

Morality gives seriousness to culture and the moral imperative gets its concrete content from culture. In this way it is possible to avoid a cultural attitude that seeks pleasure and lacks eros towards creation. Where this seriousness is found, there is also the force of the moral imperative. When Tillich deals with the theonomous ground of the moral law, he says that agape affirms and transcends the moral law at the same time: “It is accepted as the expression of what man essentially or by creation is. It is transcended in its form as love...” This indicates the idea of self-transcendence. Agape is an ecstatic manifestation of the Spiritual Presence and it can be understood as the dynamic substance which manifests itself in the form of the moral law but at the same time transcends its content.

Tillich’s analysis of love combines the different types of love (agape, eros, philia, epithymia). Love unites the separated and it is the inner dynamics of life.

Love is the drive toward the reunion of the separated; this is ontologically and therefore universally true. It is effective in all three life processes; it unites in a center, it creates the new, and it drives beyond everything given to its ground and aim... Agape is unambiguous love and therefore impossible for the human spirit by itself.

Tillich describes agape often in very dynamic terms: it is a spiritual power and it is possible to speak about it even before its actualization in life. It is comparable to sin and faith, which are all powers controlling life.

118 ST III, 266.
119 ST III, 160-161.
120 See ST III, 272.
121 ST III, 137.
122 Irwin 1991, 13-15 says that sometimes Tillich makes distinctions between the different types of love but sometimes “eros seems capable of absorbing all human forms of love into itself”; sometimes Tillich explicitly says that eros can be used as a global term. Irwin says that the relation of agape and the other types of love remains problematic: “Agape reshapes and elevates the other forms of love. Yet Tillich maintains that this relationship does not imply that the other forms of love are somehow 'inferior.' What, then, does agape contribute? How does it elevate human love without denying the original character of that love?”
123 ST III, 137. For more information see ST III, 136-138. See also ST III, 240.
124 ST III, 134-135.
125 “All this is said of agape as Spiritual power, prior to any personal or social actualization. In this, it is the equal of sin and faith as powers controlling life.” ST III, 138.
Agape is called “the ultimate norm” and connected to man’s essential nature:

Man’s essential nature and the ultimate norm of agape in which it is expressed are both hidden and manifest in the processes of life. We have no unambiguous approach to the created nature of man and its dynamic potentialities.\textsuperscript{126}

The expressions are dynamic: there is no unambiguous approach to the “dynamic potentialities” of man’s created nature. There is no law in the state of potentiality, because man is still in unity with the divine ground where he belongs essentially. Under the conditions of existence this unity is broken, and moral law has the power to motivate to partial fulfilment, even though, at the same time, it resists fulfilment.\textsuperscript{127} The motivating power of the moral principle is not law but the Spiritual Presence which is grace.\textsuperscript{128}

Tillich emphasizes also the absoluteness of the moral imperative by saying that it expresses the essential being of man: "The moral imperative is the demand to become actually what one is essentially and therefore potentially."\textsuperscript{129} In another context, Tillich says that “the logos is a very active principle, because it is the principle of love, or agape”.\textsuperscript{130} We have seen that the meaning of logos indicates the classical view of form. These ideas can be understood in connection to self-integration: morality indicates the self-integration of life. Thus, Tillich sometimes deals with the moral law in the context of self-integration, sometimes in the context of self-transcendence, and this leads to different notions.

Consequently, Tillich gives different definitions about the criterion of ethical judgments. On the one hand, he says that “the principle of agape expresses the unconditional validity of the moral imperative, and it gives the ultimate norm for all ethical content”.\textsuperscript{131}

This oscillation makes every ethical judgment ambiguous and leads to the question of an unambiguous criterion for ethical judgments. Love, in the sense of agape, is the unambiguous criterion of all

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See also ST III, 233: ”...the principle of increasing relatedness cannot be imagined without the reuniting power of agape to overcome self-seclusion fragmentarily.”

\textsuperscript{126} ST III, 48.

\textsuperscript{127} ST III, 48-49.

\textsuperscript{128} ST III, 159-160. "If we ask the question of the moral imperative’s motivating power, the answer in light of the Spiritual Community is not the law but the Spiritual Presence, which, in relation to the moral imperative, is grace.” ST III, 159.

\textsuperscript{129} Morality and beyond (1964/1995), 20.

\textsuperscript{130} The Encounter of Religions and Quasi-Religions (1990), 88.

\textsuperscript{131} ST III, 48.
ethical judgments. It is unambiguous but, like every creation of the Spiritual Presence in time and space, remains fragmentary.\textsuperscript{132}

So, agape is “the unambiguous criterion of all ethical judgments” but it remains “fragmentary” because every creation of the Spiritual Presence in time and space remains fragmentary.

On the other hand, he says that the New Being is the manifestation of the essential being under the conditions of existence and is the criterion for everything: “It is the criterion of every religion and every culture... It is valid for the social existence of every human group and for the personal existence of every human individual.”\textsuperscript{133} The New Being in Jesus as the Christ expresses the unity and balance of dynamics and form and is the criterion for everything else.

The difference can be understood on the basis of self-integration and self-transcendence: in self-integration, essence is described as the unity and balance of dynamics and form, and this gives us the possibly to use it as a criterion. In self-transcendence, essence is the dynamic substance which is described in dynamic terms; it is difficult to define its content because the form element appears only in finite forms. In the context of self-integration, the moral law expresses the created state of essence; in self-transcendence, love fulfils and transcends the moral law.\textsuperscript{134}

As we have seen, Tillich’s system develops from self-integration through self-creation to self-transcendence. When we were discussing Tillich’s view of existence, we noticed that \textit{hubris} and \textit{concupiscence} were expressions of estrangement: the balance of dynamics and form was distorted under the conditions of existence, and the New Being in Jesus as the Christ could resist this disruption. It is not surprising that in his cultural theology, Tillich defines these concepts anew. We can explain this by the fact that the ideal in the ontological description and in the analysis of existence is the unity and balance of dynamics and form; in the self-creativity of life, dynamics as vitality breaks through the form by nature and it is not estrangement in itself;

\textsuperscript{132} ST III, 273.

\textsuperscript{133} ST I, 137. See also Gilkey 1990, 52, 77, 139.

\textsuperscript{134} In Love, Power, and Justice (1954), Tillich deals with the ontological foundation of love, power, and justice, but he does not connect the matter with detail to the polarity of dynamics and form. In some places, it is possible to see this polarity behind the thoughts. See for example pages 63, 67, 71. It is problematic to seek the basis for three united concepts in the ontology which has been built in \textit{Systematic Theology} upon pairs of two polar concepts. In Love, Power, and Justice, Tillich identifies love and power: “the basic formula of power and the basic formula of love are identical” (49). He also defines justice as “the form of being” (54). In terms of dynamics and form, we could define love as the main concept which includes power and justice in a polar way: power could be connected to dynamics, justice to form, and love to being-itself. However, Tillich does not develop the ideas to this direction. See also The Protestant Era, XXV (MW 6, 299).
in self-transcendence, the dynamic substance gets its manifestation in finite forms that can also restrict the manifestation of the substance.

*Hubris* and *concupiscence* that previously only had negative definitions now get a twofold meaning: *hubris* can be attached to real greatness and *concupiscence* to *eros*; however these are trying to surpass the limits of finitude and thus cause destruction to themselves and to others. Typical to this kind of *hubris* is that the tragic hero identifies himself with the great to which his self-transcendence is directing; he is captured by his own power of self-transcendence.

In this context, self-transcendence gets the tone of being freed from the bondage of form: the greatness of *hubris* and *concupiscence* is not that they seek form and try to get in balance with it, but that they try to get free from the limitations of life. Their tragic fate is that during life, it is not possible without destroying life and oneself. In the modern definition of dynamics and form, dynamics as vitality breaks through the static form; it is only one step further to think that the static form is restrictive and prevents the substance from manifesting its vitality.

Tillich describes the laws of life as a necessity which cannot be passed. He says that the laws of life, determined by *logos*, react against that which goes over its own limits: there is something, which is forced to be in the limits of the law of life, even though it tries to surpass these limits. But trying to surpass *logos* and the laws of life in self-transcendence is not estrangement, but greatness connected with tragedy. This is a different view than the idea of the balance and unity of dynamics and form.

Tillich describes the self-transcendence of life as follows:

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135 “We have used the term *hubris* to describe one element in man’s estrangement; the other element is ‘concupiscence’. In the description of existence (in Part III of *Systematic Theology*), *hubris* and concupiscence appear merely as negative elements. In the present part, dealing with life processes, they appear in their ambiguity - *hubris* ambiguously united with greatness and concupiscence with *eros*. *Hubris* in this sense is not pride - the compulsive overcompensation of actual smallness - but the self-elevation of the great beyond the limits of its finitude. The result is both the destruction of others and self-destruction.” ST III, 93.

136 “If one asks what the guilt of the tragic hero is, the answer must be that he perverts the function of self-transcendence by identifying himself with that to which self-transcendence is directed - the great itself. He does not resist self-transcendence, but he resists the demand to transcend his own greatness. He is caught by his own power of representing the self-transcendence of life.” ST III, 94.

137 “All beings affirm themselves in their finite power of being; they affirm their greatness (and dignity) without being aware of it. They do it in their relation to other beings and, in doing so, bring upon themselves the reaction of the *logos*-determined laws, which push back anything that trespasses the limits given to it. This is the tragic explanation of suffering in nature...” ST III, 93.
The vertical transcends both the circular line of centeredness and the horizontal line of growth. In the words of Paul (Romans 8:19-22), the longing of all creation for the liberation from the 'subjection to futility' (R.S.V.) and 'the shackles of mortality' (N.E.B.) is described with a profound poetic empathy. These words are a classical expression of the self-transcendence of life under all dimensions. One can also think of Aristotle’s doctrine that the movements of all things are caused by their eros toward the ‘ unmoved mover’. 138

Self-transcendence is explained with Paul’s words as the longing of all creation for liberation. It is movement away from life and not the fulfilment of the essential unity and balance of dynamics and form under the conditions of existence.

In the previous quotation, self-transcendence is connected to Aristotle’s doctrine of eros which is mentioned with Paul’s longing for the liberation of all creation. In Love, Power, and Justice, Tillich says about eros: “In Aristotle we find the doctrine of the universal eros which drives everything towards the highest form, the pure actuality which moves the world not as a cause (kinoumenon) but as the object of love (eromenon).” 139 In another place in the same book Tillich defines eros referring to Plato: “We have, following Plato, defined eros as the driving force in all cultural creativity and in all mysticism. As such eros has the greatness of a divine-human power.” 140 Thus, Tillich sometimes defines eros referring to Aristotle, sometimes to Plato and this creates tensions in his thinking.

Tillich’s thinking has moved from the unity and balance of dynamics and form to the idea that dynamics breaks through the form in a way that there is

138 ST III, 86-87.

139 Love, Power, and Justice (1954), 22.

140 Love, Power, and Justice (1954), 117. Irwin 1991, 1-7 points to Tillich’s definition of eros as “the driving force in all cultural creativity and in all mysticism”, and as a “divine-human power”. He says that eros is an important topic in all stages of Tillich’s thinking, even though it has been, in his view, neglected by scholars. Irwin thinks that it is not easy to get a clear picture, of what Tillich really thinks of eros: he does not give an exhaustive analysis of the concept and he connects it with a wide variety of things from sexuality to mathematics, to the highest forms of human spirituality, to cultural practices and relationships. Eros is not oriented primarily toward pleasure but strives for a union with that which is the bearer of the values. This gives a wide scope of possible objects to eros: it can be the beauty manifested in the human form but it can be also the beauty in nature as well. Eros is the drive towards the reunion of the separated. This gives eros a mystical tone. Irwin says that, in Tillich’s view, eros is missing in a situation where the other is used as a tool for gaining pleasure and not as an object of reunion. Irwin 1991, 19-42 sees Tillich’s thinking as an opposition to Anders Nygren, and as a more positive contribution to the thinking of Freud. The main influence for Tillich has been Plato. See Irwin 1991, 39-45.
a moment of chaos between the forms. Gradually, dynamics as vitality drives toward self-transcendence which is prohibited by the forms: the conflict of the elements that was described as the threat of existential estrangement becomes the natural way of life. We have seen that the ideas of self-creation and self-transcendence blend. This leads us to ask, what is the difference between them. On the one hand, “the growth of the individual is the most obvious example of self-transcendence based on self-conservation”.[141] The agent of self-transcendence in this idea is the dynamic vitality of life which creates new forms in the self-creativity and self-transcendence of life. On the other hand, the Spirit is the agent of self-transcendence. How can we unite Tillich’s accounts about self-transcendence? Even though the Spirit is dynamic, it cannot be equated with the dynamic vitality of life, at least not in the light of the unity and balance of dynamics and form in Tillich’s ontology.

In his ontology, Tillich defines the Spirit using both sides of the polarity: the element of form is as important as the dynamic side of the polarity. The Spirit is the unity of power and meaning which is based on the polarity of dynamics and form along with the other polarities. This indicates self-integration. Tillich criticizes the views of process philosophy for being too one-sided in the light of the polarity of dynamics and form. In self-creation, Tillich seems to move to the same direction himself. In self-transcendence, he takes even one step farther. If our analysis about the Aristotelian strain in Tillich’s ontology and the Neo-Platonic emphasis in the cultural theology is correct, this explains the difference: in self-integration, the Spirit combines dynamics and form in unity and balance, in self-transcendence, the Spirit is dynamic and transcends the forms.

This is one of the collision points of Tillich’s system; as we recall, he wrote the third volume of the system starting from the end and moving backwards. He said that part IV of the system contained a philosophy of life for which Schelling was the teacher and he merely the student. However, he denied the influence of Schelling on the ontological polarities. Tillich’s cultural theological views in the third volume of the system resemble his early cultural theological notions and he was not able to unite them seamlessly to the ontological ideas of the system. As a consequence, the difference between self-creation and self-transcendence and the view of the Spirit remain ambiguous.

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141 ST I, 181.
4. SELF-TRANSCENDENCE: THE SPIRIT TRANSCENDS THE FORMS

4.1. The Spiritual Presence and its manifestation

In the third volume of *Systematic Theology*, the idea of self-transcendence is combined to the Spirit or the Spiritual Presence. Tillich says that when we talk about God’s Spirit, we apply symbolically features of the human spirit. The relation between Spirit and spirit is answered by the statement that the divine Spirit works and dwells in the human spirit. This idea implies all the problems of the relation of the divine to the human. Tillich explains this relation as follows:

If the divine Spirit breaks into the human spirit, this does not mean that it rests there, but that it drives the human spirit out of itself. The “in” of the divine Spirit is an “out” for the human spirit. The spirit, a dimension of finite life, is driven into a successful self-transcendence; it is grasped by something ultimate and unconditional. It is still the human spirit; it remains what it is, but at the same time, it goes out of itself under the impact of the divine Spirit. “Ecstasy” is the classical term for this state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. It describes the human situation under the Spiritual Presence exactly.

Revelation is always a subjective and an objective event, and it appears subjectively in terms of ecstasy; ecstasy is the receiving side of revelation. Ecstasy points to a state of mind where mind transcends its ordinary situation. When Tillich deals explicitly with ecstasy and structure, he says that the Spiritual Presence creates an ecstasy which drives the spirit of man beyond itself; however, this does not destroy the rational structure of man:

The Spiritual Presence creates an ecstasy ... which drives the spirit of man beyond itself without destroying its essential, i.e. rational, structure. Ecstasy does not destroy the centeredness of the integrated

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1 Spiritual Presence is the title of the chapter dealing with the Spirit in *Systematic Theology*, see ST III, 111. For the definition see ST III, 107-110. Also Lounibos 1976, 264 says that self-transcendence dominates in the third volume of *Systematic Theology*.

2 See See ST I, 249; ST III, 111.

3 ST III, 112.

4 For more detail see ST I, 111-112.
self. Should it do so, demonic possession would replace the creative presence of the Spirit... When it grasps man, it creates unambiguous life. Man in his self-transcendence can reach for it, but man cannot grasp it, unless he is first grasped by it.5

The Spiritual Presence creates unambiguous life. Man can reach for it in his self-transcendence, but he cannot grasp it, unless he is grasped by it. Man is driven to ask the question of unambiguous life by his self-transcendence, but the answer comes through the Spiritual Presence. Man must use finite material and the language of symbols to express any relation to the divine ground of being. One expression that Tillich uses is the “dimension of depth” which means something different than the other dimensions of life: it is “the ground of being of them all and the aim toward which they are self-transcendent”.6 We have seen that the idea of depth can be connected to substance or import or ground of being.

The view of ecstasy and structure resembles the idea of the depth of reason and the structure of reason and can be expressed with form and substance: the ecstasy-creating Spiritual Presence is the dynamic substance the impact of which is received through the rational form. Ecstasy does not break the form, but the dynamic substance is more than the manifestation it gets in and through the form. The idea indicates self-transcendence. Even though Tillich calls the rational structure essential, this view does not emphasize the unity and balance of dynamics and form as in self-integration. Thus, the idea can be connected to the idea of the ontological necessity of dynamics and form: everything has to have a form. Tillich insists that there is some structure in the experiences of the Spirit, but he does not define any specific forms where the impact of the Spirit is to be experienced.

In Tillich’s view, Paul’s teaching about the Spirit clearly shows that ecstasy does not destroy structure.7 Paul emphasizes the ecstatic element for example in the phrase “to be in Christ”. At the same time Paul resists tendencies that could lead to a situation where ecstasy would break the structure. Paul’s teaching about the gifts of the Spirit in the first letter to the Corinthians is an example of this. Paul rejects speaking with tongues if it causes chaos, emphasis of the personal spiritual experiences if it causes hybris, and bringing

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5 ST III, 112.
6 ST III, 112-113.
7 Cooper says in his study The "Spiritual Presence" in the Theology of Paul Tillich: Tillich's Use of St. Paul (1997) that Tillich has used St. Paul’s thoughts quite a lot when he has developed his Christology and pneumatology and made ontological conclusions about the thoughts that are implicit in Paul’s writings, for example, in the phrase “to be in Christ”. Cooper thinks that in this sense, Tillich is more faithful to Paul than the so-called neo-orthodox theologians.
forward the other gifts of the Spirit if they are not submitted to love. There is
a unity of the moral imperative and ecstasy in Paul’s thinking. In the same
way, the experience of the Spirit does not oppose knowledge but it is
knowledge about the divine depth. The words gnosis and agape mean such
forms of knowledge and morality that unite ecstasy and structure.

The church has a constant problem in following these thoughts of Paul. On
one hand, ecstasy must not be mixed up with chaos, and thus structure has to
be defended; on the other hand, the church has to avoid the institutionalized
profanization that took place in the early Catholic church where kharisma was
substituted by the office. In addition, also secular profanization in
Protestantism where ecstasy is replaced by doctrinal and moral structure has
to be rejected. Paul’s ideas that emphasize the unity of ecstasy and structure
are a constant obligation and risk to the churches. If the institutional forms are
emphasized too much leaving aside the ecstatic, it opens the possibility of
chaotic and disordered ecstasy; taking seriously the ecstatic movements
includes the danger of confusing the impact of the Spirit with psychological
overexcitement.

The stories of the Synoptic Gospels show that the earliest Christian
tradition was spirit Christology: they constantly express ecstatic experiences,
and the Spiritual Presence gave Jesus divine power towards man making him
the conqueror of the demonic powers. Tillich says that Logos Christology
replaced spirit Christology since the Gospel of John. In Tillich’s view, this is
one of the questions behind the separation of the churches of east and west.

Tillich makes a difference between ecstasy and intoxication: ecstasy
transcends the subject and object structure, and it is more than this structure.
Intoxication does not actualize consciousness, so it is less than the subject and
object structure. Intoxication is an effort to escape from the burdens of the
spirit. It can give momentary relief but in the long run it is destructive: it lacks
the productivity and creativity of the spirit. It is falling back to subjectivity.

8 ST III, 116-117.
9 “The relation to the divine ground of being through the divine Spirit is not agnostic (as
it is not amoral); rather it includes the knowledge of the ’depth’ of the divine... In ecstatic
language Paul points to agape and gnosis-forms of morality and knowledge in which
ecstasy and structure are united.” ST III, 117.
10 ST III, 117. See also Realism and Faith (1948), 80-81 (MW 4, 354).
11 ST III, 117-118.
12 For more detail see ST III, 148-149. It can be concluded from Tillich’s thoughts that
the east emphasizes more the dynamic side, while the west emphasizes the formal side.
13 ”Ecstasy, in its transcendence of the subject-object structure, is the great liberating
power under the dimension of self-awareness. But this liberating power creates the
possibility of confusing that which is ’less’ than the subject-object structure of the mind
with that which is ’more’ than this structure. Whether it takes biological or emotional
In Tillich’s view, ecstasy can be compared to the enthusiasm of cultural productivity, because it has the richness of the objective world. The preacher, meditator or prayer know the structure of the world but they see it under the impact of the Spirit. This creates unity between subject and object.\textsuperscript{14} How can we separate ecstasy from intoxication? Tillich says that creativity is the only criterion to decide whether an extraordinary state is ecstasy created by the Spirit or subjective intoxication; ecstasy is united with creativity but intoxication is not. It is difficult to separate the two, and Tillich calls it with the biblical expression “judging the Spirit”.\textsuperscript{15} An example about the difference between ecstasy and intoxication can be seen in the Old Testament: it is the struggle of the prophet Elia with the priests of Baal; the ecstasy of Elia was a contact of persons through prayer while the priests of Baal were intoxicated.\textsuperscript{16} The basic feature of the first Pentecost was ecstasy which united faith, love, communion, and universality. There was the unity of ecstasy and structure.\textsuperscript{17} The influence of the Spirit can be seen in man as faith and love, “within the structure, functions, and dynamics of man’s spirit”.\textsuperscript{18}

Tillich rejects miracles in a supranaturalistic sense of the word because God does not need to destroy the world he has created.\textsuperscript{19} The stories that tell about the bodily or psychological effects of the Spirit express the universal and unique nature of the impact of the Spirit. He mentions the historical problems of the stories but does not deal with them more precisely.\textsuperscript{20} Tillich argues that Protestantism has avoided using the word ‘infusion’ because it has a magical-materialistic secondary meaning in which Spirit is like some matter being transmitted by the sacraments. However, this rejection is not totally justified because the story of Pentecost speaks about the infusion of the spirit and because the psychological views about man’s subconscious have given new insights into the meaning of the sacraments and symbols.\textsuperscript{21}
Tillich defines ‘inspiration’ as the influence of the meaning-bearing power to man in an ecstatic experience. It is not a lesson giving information about divine things, and the analysis of the experience takes place only afterwards.22

We must not confuse the subjective impact of the gospel preaching to the spiritual impact that transcends the subjective and the objective. The influence of the emotional outburst is only temporal and it does not create a connection to the Spiritual Community. The church must not confuse overexcitement with ecstasy,23 but it is also not possible to reduce ecstasy to psychological dynamics; sometimes this is done, when the church tries to remove unwanted experiences and emotions.24 Tillich says that the whole part of his system that deals with the Spirit is a defence of ecstasy towards its critics in the church;25 the criticism towards the established churches by the spiritual movements has its place in connection to this.26

This kind of emphasis sounds different compared to the beginning of Tillich’s system. Lai has noticed a change in Tillich’s view of the Spirit-movements between the first and the third volumes of Systematic Theology.27 Tillich appears to place much more emphasis on the freedom of the Spirit in the end of the system than in the beginning: "When regarded in light of the doctrine of the Spirit, as we have developed it, the truth in these ideas is their emphasis on the Spirit’s freedom from any of the ambiguous forms in which it is received in religion.”28

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22 “In the discussion of revelation, we sharply rejected the distortion which occurs when the experience of inspiration is turned into an informative lesson about God and divine matters. The Spiritual Presence is not that of a teacher but of a meaning-bearing power which grasps the human spirit in an ecstatic experience. After the experience, the teacher can analyse and formulate the element of meaning in the ecstasy of inspiration (as the systematic theologian does), but when the analysis of the teacher begins, the inspirational experience has already passed.” ST III, 115.

23 ST III, 196. See also ST III, 220.

24 "However, because of the multidimensional unity of life, all dimensions, as they are effective in man, participate in the Spirit-created ecstasy. This refers directly to the dimension of self-awareness and indirectly to the organic and inorganic dimensions. It is a reductionist profanization of self-transcendence to attempt to derive religion, especially in its ecstatic side, from psychological dynamics.” ST III, 118.

25 See ST III, 118.

26 ST III, 126.

27 Lai 1994, 124-126 says that Tillich’s attitude is reserved and negative towards the enthusiasts and firmly on the side of Luther in the first volume of Systematic Theology; in the third volume, he expresses his appreciation of the positive results of the Spirit-movements and sees them as an embodiment of the Protestant principle in the sense of a rejection of heteronomy. Tillich’s position in the third volume seems to be, in Lai’s view, more sympathetic to the Spirit-movements than to the Reformers.

28 ST III, 126.
In the third volume of *Systematic Theology* Tillich emphasizes the freedom of the Spirit in a way that seems to contradict what he says about revelation in the beginning of the system:

Word of God is the Spirit determined human word. As such it is not bound to a particular revelatory event, Christian or non-Christian; it is not bound to religion in the narrower sense of the term; it is not tied up with a special content or a special form. It appears wherever the Spiritual Presence imposes itself on an individual or a group.\(^{29}\)

This idea that the Spirit is not bound to a particular revelatory event wants to give the Spirit freedom to manifest itself in all forms of life. The idea that the Word of God is “not bound to a particular revelatory event, Christian or non-Christian” and that it is “not tied up with a special content or a special form” leads us to ask, is it not bound to the *Logos* manifested in the life of Jesus? Tillich does not say this, but there is a tension between what he says about the revelation in Jesus as the Christ and the freedom of the Spirit to transcend all forms. The Spirit is not bound to any forms: all forms can be and have to be transcended. However, Tillich has not drawn these conclusions when he deals with Christology and the Trinity: the form element as *logos* is based on the classical understanding of form, and the unity and balance of dynamics and form is Tillich’s ideal. This is the place where the tension in Tillich’s thinking can be seen most clearly.

The idea of self-transcendence can be interpreted with the concepts of form and substance: the dynamic substance transcends all the forms. In Tillich’s cultural theology, the dynamic Spirit transcends all the forms. The forms are often called “finite forms”, which shows the difference compared to the classical view of form. Tillich’s ontology emphasizes the unity and balance of dynamics and form: the Spirit is the unity of power and meaning and includes dynamics and form in unity and balance. In Tillich’s cultural theology, the Spirit can be interpreted with the concept of substance or depth which can manifest itself in different forms. The dynamic Spirit and the idea of finite forms (in the plural!) indicates that Tillich’s thinking moves to an even more dynamic direction.

Tillich’s emphasis of the freedom of the Spirit contributes a positive attitude towards other religions and cultures. However, the centrality of the Christ event and the freedom of the Spirit contradict each other. Lai says that “though a pneumatocentric approach can contribute to a more positive and open attitude towards other religions, it will have difficulties in affirming the centrality of Christ.”\(^{30}\) Reisz emphasizes the symbol of the Spirit in Tillich’s

\(^{29}\) ST III, 254.

\(^{30}\) Lai 1994, 141. "The dilemma which Tillich faces is that on the one hand, if the teaching of the Spirit transcends the teaching of Christ in the way that Christ is not
ultimately important and becomes only a preparatory revelation, this contradicts Tillich’s basic idea of the centrality and finality of the Christ event. On the other hand, if the teaching of the Spirit in no way transcends the teaching of Christ, the Christian openness is restricted and the freedom of the Spirit is limited.” Lai finds a Logos Christology in the first two volumes of Systematic Theology, and a Spirit-Christology in the third volume. See Lai 1994, 131-146. In Lai’s view, this problem shakes the foundations of Tillich’s system. Lai 1994, 146: “In short, Tillich’s emphasis on the freedom and universal presence of the Spirit will create tensions with his former Christocentric approach and will shake the very foundation of his theological system and the method of correlation.”

The three phases of Tillich’s thinking give ground for different interpretations. Our analysis indicates that there are three main symbols that Tillich uses to talk about God, and we can interpret them in the light of the three functions of life. God as “Being-Itself” corresponds to the unity and balance of dynamics and form and to the self-integration of life. God as “the Power of Being” becomes understandable on the basis of the self-creation of life where dynamics breaks through the form. God as “the Spirit” corresponds to the self-transcendence of life where the dynamic Spirit transcends the forms.

Tillich’s views of the church and Christian life can be expressed with the help of self-transcendence. When Tillich describes the impact of the Spirit upon man and community, he uses the phrase dynamic essence; in Tillich’s ontology, essence combines the elements of dynamics and form in unity and balance, here essence is dynamic. Tillich defines a new category, essentialistic, which he separates from realistic, idealistic and supranaturalistic; the essentialistic is one of the determining powers behind every life process and becomes expressed in the existential.32

The Spiritual Presence creates the Spiritual Community. It is not identical with the Christian churches but their dynamic essence. Tillich mostly uses this phrase, and only when he starts to examine the matter does he speak in a balanced way about the essential power and structure: ”In so far as they are determined by an ultimate concern, the Spiritual Community is effective in its thinking and asks “is ’Being-itself’ the most adequate theological symbol for God in Tillich’s theology”; he says that the Spirit is the central symbol for God.31

Reisz 1977, 1: “We will develop the thesis that ’Spirit’ is the most adequate and appropriate theological symbol for God in Tillich’s theology. Such an approach will enhance an understanding of the dynamic nature of God in Tillich’s thought.”

32 “This calls for a category to be used in interpreting reality which is neither realistic nor idealistic nor supranaturalistic but essentialistic - a category pointing to the power of the essential behind and within the existential. This analysis holds true of every life process: everywhere, the essential is one of the determining powers. Its power is not causal but directive.” ST III, 164. About essentialization as the aim of life and history, see ST III, 400-401, 405-409.
hidden power and structure in all such groups.” The Spiritual Presence gives the churches a regenerative power and the power to fight against the ambiguities of religion and churches. The ambiguities of religion resist the dynamics of the Spirit but the aim of the churches is to conquer these ambiguities through the power of the Spiritual Presence.

The Spiritual Community is the dynamic essence of the churches. In the same way, the dynamic essence of every member of the Spiritual Community is the Spiritual personality, because of which man is holy in spite of the lack of holiness. Man’s relation to the church is, in a visible stage, an individual’s relation to a social community, but on the deeper level, it is the relation of a man, whose dynamic essence is the Spiritual personality, to a group, whose dynamic essence is the Spiritual Community. This idea can be interpreted with form and substance: the Spiritual personality represents the substance of a man and the Spiritual Community represents the substance of a group; the substance gets its actual form in man and community.

The morality of the Spiritual Community is theonomous. The power of the Spirit struggles against the ambiguities that are caused by the separation of culture from morals. In like manner, the Spiritual Community makes churches the community of love and faith in principle. This means, in the original meaning of the word, the power of the beginning which remains the controlling power of the process. The Spirit and its embodiment, the Spiritual Community, also resist the disruption of love and faith. In this way the church becomes involved in the ambiguities of authority and power.

As the dynamic essence of the churches, the Spiritual Presence works through the churches toward the self-transcendence of culture. We can see

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33 The expression *dynamic essence* is found for example in the following places: ST III, 162, 165, 168, 169, 172, 173, 177, 178, 182, 185, 217, 221, 244. For the meaning of the phrase, see e.g. Schepers 1964, 240-242.

34 ST III, 181.

35 “They are involved in the ambiguities of life - above all, of religious life - and their aim is to conquer these ambiguities through the power of the Spiritual Presence.” ST III, 183.

36 ST III, 217. See also ST III, 218, 221.

37 ST III, 161.

38 “The phrase ’in principle’ does not mean *in abstracto* but means (as do the Latin and Greek words *principium* and *arche*) the power of beginning, which remains the controlling power in a whole process.” ST III, 172-173.

39 “But at the same time, there is a power of resistance against the manifold distortions of faith - the divine Spirit and its embodiment, the Spiritual Community.” ST III, 173. ”And in the power of the Spiritual Presence the church must fight against the ambiguities of the threefold manifestation of love through Spirit-determined individuals and movements.” ST III, 180.

40 ST III, 179.
that the Spiritual Presence is the dynamic substance which transcends the
forms in the processes of life. Because the relation of the churches to the
Spiritual Community is ambiguous, also their relation to culture is ambiguous.
This prevents both the subjection of culture to the churches and the seclusion
of the churches from the culture.\textsuperscript{41} The relation between religion and culture
is not the same as the relation between the churches to culture. The churches
are at the same time representatives of the Spiritual Community and its
distortions, and their relation to culture is itself culture. They are not any
direct answers to the questions of culture. The examination of the relation of
the churches to culture presupposes a dual treatment, which is based on the
duality that exists in the relation of the churches to the Spiritual Community.\textsuperscript{42}

The Spiritual Community expresses itself in a latent and in a manifest way:
the impact of the Spiritual Presence on cultural creativity presupposes its
representation in the churches, but the cultural groups and movements can
express it in a latent way. It can mean the preparation of the full manifestation,
or the consequence of an earlier manifestation which has lost its power in the
churches but still keeps the self-transcendence of culture alive.\textsuperscript{43} Latency is a
state which is partly actual, partly potential.\textsuperscript{44} In a latent way, the Spiritual
Community can become manifest both within the churches and outside the
organized churches. These can be, for example, youth groups, artistic,
educational and political movements.\textsuperscript{45} Here we can see clearly that Tillich
wants to keep the work of the Spirit and the Spiritual Community free from all
form that is given beforehand; the Spiritual Community is the dynamic
essence and there is no form to direct how it becomes manifest in life.

Tillich maintains that the Spirit is free from the media it has created, and
this includes the churches and their media, word and sacraments.\textsuperscript{46} Once again
this can be seen to emphasize the freedom of the Spirit from all forms. The

\textsuperscript{41} "In so far as the Spiritual Community is the dynamic essence of the churches, their
existence is a medium through which the Spiritual Presence works toward the self-
transcendence of culture. In so far as the churches represent the Spiritual Community in
the ambiguous way of religion, their influence on the culture is itself ambiguous. This
situation stands against all theocratic attempts to subject the culture to a church in the
name of the Spiritual Community, and it also stands against all profanizing attempts to
keep the churches in seclusion from the general cultural life." ST III, 246.

\textsuperscript{42} ST III, 245-246.

\textsuperscript{43} ST III, 246.

\textsuperscript{44} ST III, 153.

\textsuperscript{45} ST III, 153.

\textsuperscript{46} "This implies that the divine Spirit is not bound to the media it has created, the
churches (and their media, word and sacrament), but that the free impact of the divine
Spirit on a culture prepares for a religious community or is received because such a
community has prepared human beings for the reception of the Spiritual impact." ST III,
246.
examination of the constructive functions of the church leads to the polarity of form-transcendence and form-affirmation. This duality has its place in the context of self-transcendence but it is different compared to the classical view of form in the context of self-integration. In self-transcendence, it is normal to transcend the forms; why is it suddenly important to affirm the forms? Tillich does not give any ontological reasons for this, but by this division he finds some grounds for the forms and practices of the church. For example, the churches use styles and methods created by culture in a way that both affirms and transcends their cultural forms. As creations of the Spiritual Presence, the churches have an ecstatic, form-transcending character, but they become demonic-repressive, if the form-transcendence is emphasized over form-preservation. In this context, the relation of the Spirit to the finite forms is thus twofold: on one hand, the Spirit transcends the forms but on the other hand, it does not break them.

The church manifests itself as a church only if the Spirit breaks into the finite forms and uses them as a media of esthetic, cognitive, personal or social self-expression or action. Here, there is no direct connection between the Spirit and the forms: the Spirit as the dynamic substance can manifest itself or not. In all this, the form has to be preserved: religious art or knowledge cannot injure the artistic or cognitive rules, and religion cannot demand culture to obey its cultural forms in the name of the New Being. The relation of the holy and the finite forms is equal to the relation of the Spirit to the forms: the holy fills forms that are empty in themselves. The holy and the secular belong together; the holy has to use all the forms of the secular to manifest itself. If the holy tries to reject the secular form, it has to become silent and empty of all finite content.

The institutions of the church are based on certain functions which can lead to different institutions in different situations. Not one of the institutions of the church, including priesthood, ministry or sacraments, follows directly from the nature of the church, even though the functions that are their basis do follow. The argument behind this view is the freedom of the Spirit. The

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47 ST III, 187.
48 ST III, 193.
49 ST III, 248.
50 "The institutions are dependent on the functions they serve, but the functions may exist even where no institutions serve them, and this is often the case... If an institution becomes obsolete, other ways of exercising the same function may grow up spontaneously and take shape in a new institutional form. This agrees with what we have said before about freedom of the Spirit; it liberates the church from any kind of ritual legalism, in the power of the Spiritual Community. No institution, not even a priesthood or ministry, special sacraments or devotional services, follow necessarily from the nature of the church, but the functions for the sake of which these institutions have come into being do follow from it."
The same view is in the treatment of the legal forms of the church: they are not based on the order given by God’s Spirit but are based on human wisdom and social suitability for the purpose. However, every community needs some kind of form, and the endeavours of sects to live in an anarchic state have not been successful. Here we can see Tillich’s idea that every social group must have a form because of the polarity of dynamics and form; he uses the idea of the ontological necessity of dynamics and form but he does not say what kind of form is the right one.

These general ideas about religion and the Spirit can be seen in Tillich’s appreciation of Protestantism. Sometimes he defines Protestantism as the protest against form, as in the article Der Protestantismus - Prinzip und Wirklichkeit:

Gestaltung ist die Macht, Form zu schaffen. Der Protestantismus ist Protest gegen Form. Wie ist beides vereinbar? ... Es soll gefragt werden, wie Gestaltung der Form und Protest gegen die Form zusammen in einer Kirche leben können, wie Form und der Protest gegen Form eine neue, sich darüber spannende Form schaffen können.

The answer to the question, how can protest and form live in the same church, is that also the protest is dependent on form; in a dialectical way “no” is based on “yes”. Here, we can see Tillich’s dialectical thinking again.

Protestantism rejects all the absolutizing of the forms of church activities: Der Protestantismus verneint die Sicherheit sakramentaler Systeme mit ihren unverlezlichen Formen, heiligen Gesetzen, ewigen Strukturen. Für ihn ist jeder Anspruch auf Absolutheit fragwürdig. Er bleibt dynamisch, auch wenn er konservativ zu verden versucht... Sie überschreitet jede Form, die sie gestaltet, aber sie überschreitet nicht die Wirklichkeit der Gnade, die sich in diesen Formen ausdrückt.

Protestantism is the strongest inner power in the history of Christianity and religion, regardless of how weak it is externally. Tillich combines the influence of the Protestant spirit to Protestantism; the less its influence, the more features of the law. Tillich has connected law to the form element, thus the Protestant spirit can be attached to the dynamic substance.
However, this creates a conceptual problem, because Tillich usually makes a distinction between the Catholic substance and the Protestant principle: does the Catholic substance express the traditional side of Christianity? Tillich says that no church can claim to represent the Spiritual Community in a full and unambiguous way. This is Tillich’s Protestant principle according to which every concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Community is to be criticized. As its pair, it needs the Catholic substance, which can be seen in the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence. The Protestant principle is the self-critical power in every church. No church can claim that it is the only one who represents the Spiritual Presence, and the Protestant principle expresses the victory of the Spirit over religion.

In this description, the Protestant principle is connected to the freedom and victory of the Spirit over religion: the description of the Protestant spirit resembles the description of the Spirit in general. The Catholic substance is connected to the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence, and this creates a dilemma concerning the use of ‘substance’ in this expression: either the Catholic substance points to the same substance which transcends all the concrete embodiments and forms and, in the end, is equal to the Protestant spirit; or the Catholic substance should be called the Catholic form of the Spiritual Presence according to Tillich’s normal vocabulary. In both cases, the Protestant spirit indicates the dynamic substance of religion.

In this context, we can ask, how Tillich’s view would change if he always used the phrase dynamic and structural essence instead of the one-sided

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55 Cooper 1997, 196 says that Tillich’s idea of Catholic substance and Protestant principle expresses also his dual attitude toward the Christian faith: “The third hermeneutical principle which we may identify as an interpretative symbol in Tillich’s thought is a genuine polarity between the mutually dependent and complementary elements of Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle. This principle sums up Tillich’s dual attitude towards the Christian faith. On the one hand, he is deeply committed to the ancient Christian symbols, and on the other, he stands as a self-conscious modern man, critical of the distortions and misunderstandings of these symbols that have so characterized the history of the Church.” For the Catholic substance, see also O’Meara 1985, 290-306.

56 “The Protestant principle (which is the manifestation of the prophetic Spirit) is not restricted to the churches of the Reformation or to any other church; it transcends every particular church, being an expression of the Spiritual Community. It has been betrayed by every church, including the churches of the Reformation, but it is also effective in every church as the power which prevents profanization and demonization from destroying the Christian churches completely. It alone is not enough; it needs the ‘Catholic substance,’ the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence; but it is the criterion of the demonization (and profanization) of such embodiment. It is the expression of the victory of the Spirit over religion.” ST III, 245. See also ST III, 247. Tillich spoke also in the plural about the protestant principles, see Our Protestant Principles (1942), 8-14 (MW 6, 247-254).
dynamic essence. The idea of ‘dynamic and structural essence’ would be in accordance with the unity and balance of dynamics and form where both sides of the polarity are equally important. This shows once again the change from self-integration to self-transcendence: Tillich’s ontology is based on self-integration, his ecclesiology is based on self-transcendence. Based on the unity and balance of dynamics and form, Tillich developed the idea of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ: “The divine Spirit was present in Jesus as the Christ without distortion. In him the New Being appeared as the criterion of all Spiritual experiences in past and future.” Now he says that ”the unambiguous, though fragmentary, union of religion and culture in the Spiritual Community is the criterion of the religious and cultural communities and the hidden power within them which struggles against separation and ambiguity”. In this context, also the New Being gets a new tone: Tillich speaks of “New Being’s hidden presence in Jesus”. There is a difference of emphasis between “the New Being in Jesus as the Christ” and “the Spiritual Presence”. Tillich’s idea of the New Being is based on the unity and balance of dynamics and form. The element of form is expressed by the concept of logos which is based on the classical understanding of form. The New Being can be used as a criterion for everything else just because of this form element. The Spiritual Presence transcends all forms and, as a consequence, every embodiment of the Spiritual Presence is only transitory. They cannot be used as a criterion for the other embodiments of the Spirit. In this way, the Spiritual Presence remains vague and abstract and cannot be used as a criterion for anything real.

4.2. The divine-demonic vitality

Dynamic themes are important in Tillich’s early writings and again in the third volume of Systematic Theology which, as Gilkey mentions, is “only a mild reappearance of fundamental motifs of Tillich’s process or historical

57 Reimer 1991, 56 puts forward a critical question, if Tillich has an adequate ecclesiology at all: "If I have a critical question of Tillich’s eschatology, it would be along the lines identified by Schmidt; namely, does Tillich have an adequate ecclesiology, and how does his eschatology relate to his doctrine of the church?"

58 ST III, 144. Gilkey 1985, 309 expresses the relation of the New Being and the Spirit in the following way: "To repeat, the category of the Spirit is the symbol for the divine forces of redemption and healing (1:251); correspondingly, the category of the New Being represents the way in which the creative and redemptive work of God is experienced in human history---."

59 ST III, 158.

60 ST III, 150.
Here, we shall analyze the divine-demonic vitality in the third volume of *Systematic Theology* and in Tillich’s early thinking. There are many similarities but also differences. In Tillich’s ontology, the polarity of dynamics and form is expressed in man as the polarity of vitality and intentionality of which vitality is examined in more detail. He combines vitality with the fight of the divine and the demonic in man. This can be understood in the light of self-transcendence and it is in harmony with the dynamic emphasis of Tillich’s theology of culture. Because the form element is inferior, the dynamic forces obtain a twofold divine-demonic nature.

In his early writings, Tillich talks about “the primal powers of existence” and the “vital original forces”. Especially in the early German texts Tillich connects erotic with the deep, nonrational life-drives that are described in the philosophy of Nietzsche and in the literature of psychoanalysis. The other elemental forces are “soil”, “blood”, and the primitive “social group”. These connect man to the earth, to the cosmos, to the life-death cycle, to the structures of the primal community. This aspect of human being is the source or ground of our vitality.

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61 See Gilkey 1990, 13. Fox 1968, 175-182 gives a characterization of Tillich’s thinking using Plato’s distinction between *eros* and *logos* where *eros* is seen as a feminine and *logos* as a masculine principle. Fox thinks that the masculine and rational *logos* principle has dominated the Christian and, more general, the Western view. Fox says that “Tillich’s work may be regarded as a useful corrective to the undue masculinity of much Western theology, but it is doubtful whether it does not fall itself into the opposite error”.

62 Irwin 1991, 101-102 says that Tillich rejects the tendency of popular language to use erotic as a synonym for sexual or libidinal; he affirms that libidinal drives are present in every form of *eros* but he insists that *eros* transcends pure physical desire. However, Irwin notes that in “the preserved traces of Tillich’s private speaking and writing... ’eros’ takes on a much more explicitly sexual character than is the case in most of Tillich’s published treatments of the eros theme”. Irwin thinks that Tillich was unwilling to draw attention to this subject because of his private life. He sees that the “erotic solution” of Tillich is highly problematic because of the problems it caused to the persons closest to him. See Irwin 1991, 113-119. Ulanov 1989, 133 mentions that even though Tillich was a man of boundaries there is one boundary missing in his writings: the boundary between masculine and feminine, between man and woman. Anyway, it was a boundary that he lived, and he struggled “to receive the feminine within himself, which accounted in part for his great appeal to women”. See also May 1973, 29, 52-55. About Tillich and feminist theology in general, see Mary Ann Stenger, The Limits and Possibilities of Tillich's Ontology for Cross-Cultural and Feminist Theology (1989) and A Critical Analysis of the Influence of Paul Tillich on Mary Daly's Feminist Theology (1984); Judith Plaskow, Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich (1980); Ann Belford Ulanov, Between Anxiety and Faith: the Role of the Feminine in Tillich's Theological Thought (1989).

63 Irwin 1991, 46-47.
Tillich distinguishes in his early thinking the sacramental attitude from rational or prophetic criticism. Gilkey says that “the sacramental attitude is clearly the spiritual or psychological equivalent to the powers of origin” and that “this presence of the sacred through symbols (soil, blood, and community) and through social relations (the status, ranks, and privileges of rulers and owners) sanctifies and empowers these realities.” The sacramental attitude is the consciousness of the presence of the divine within a finite object, and here lies the root of sacred symbols and forms. Tillich says that all authority is founded cultically and sacramentally by participation in the powers of origin.

Tillich’s early thinking is expressed in the article Das Dämonische: Ein Beitrag zur Sinndeutung der Geschichte (1926). It does not use the concept of dynamics or an explicit idea of the polarity of dynamics and form, but, instead, speaks about the form-creating (Formschöpfung) and form-destroying (Formzerstörung) functions of the demonic. It is interesting to see these thoughts of early Tillich in the light of the polarity of dynamics and form.

Tillich starts his early analysis of the demonic with examples of primitive and Asian art which express depths that, he thinks, may have vanished from our consciousness, but not from our unconscious. They express vital powers (“die vitalen Kräfte”) and principles of destruction (“die Prinzipien des Zerstörerischen”) which seem to be a positive antithesis of form, the demonic (“die menschheitliche Kunst die Tatsache des positiv Formwidrigen, des Dämonischen offenbart”). In this definition, demonic has a positive evaluation, it is a “positive antithesis of form”. It is possible, on other grounds, to define “demonic as the form-destroying power of the

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64 Gilkey 1990, 14. Lounibos 1976, 330 says that manifold elements of nature can become bearers of transcendent power in ritual acts in Tillich’s thinking. He mentions “numbers, earth, air, fire, water, stones, light, color, plants, animals, stars, seasons and the life cycle, the human body where nature enters history and spirit is experienced, an finally the power of words”. All these can be bearers of transcendental, sacramental power.

65 Gilkey 1990, 14. For more detail see Gilkey 1990, 4, 6-7, 10, 14-18.

66 The article has been published in the fifth volume of the Main Works, 99-123. A new English translation by Garrett E. Paul has been published in Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley (ed.), Paul Tillich on Creativity (1989). The translation has an unfortunate error: the Greek expression me on (written in Greek letters in the original German text) has been translated as ouk on (compare pages 79 and 83 of the translation to pages 59 and 63 of the original). The translation has usually used the English word ’form’ for both German words ’Form’ and ’Gestalt’, and this makes it difficult to see in the English text if Tillich has wanted to make some kind of difference between the two. See e.g. page 89 of the translation and page 70 of the original: “schöpferisch-zerstörenderischen Gestalt” has been translated as “creative-destructive form”. Jahr 1989a, 58 makes a difference between ’Form’ and ’Gestalt’: “Die jeweilige individueller-schöpferische Integration von Form und Gehalt nennt Tillich ’Gestalt’.”
unconditional” and divine as “the form-creative power of the unconditional”, as Gilkey does, but the example shows that Tillich is not consistent in this division; rather, he operates with an idea of dynamic divine-demonic which has either positive or negative effects according to the situation. In this context, Tillich says that the basis of the demonic is a tension between form-creating (“Formschöpfung”) and form-destroying (“Formzerstörung”); the demonic is to be distinguished from the satanic which does not have any creativity.

Tillich points to the depth (“die Tiefe”) of things which is an expression of the unconditional, transcendent mystery beyond which thought cannot go. He describes it as the pure existence of things (“reine Existentialität der Dinge”), the presence of the Ground of Being (“Getragensein vom Seinsgrund”), or their participation in the fullness of being (“Teilhaben an der Seinsfülle”). This depth is also the abyss (“Abrand”). It is inexhaustible and cannot be fully emptied to any subject, form, or world. As the productive inner infinity of being, it is the consuming fire and the abyss of every form. Tillich clearly emphasizes the depth or abyss - or in the light of the polarity of dynamics and form, the dynamic element - over the form element: it is the difference between self-integration and self-transcendence. Tillich mentions only briefly that the form of being and the inexhaustibility of being belong together; their depth and unity in essence are divine and their separation in existence is demonic.

Tillich is trying to find a combination between a dynamic and a more balanced view, but his basic emphasis is clearly dynamic. At points, he expresses this directly, as in the comparison of possession and grace: “Besessenheit und Begnadetheit entsprechen sich, dämonisches und göttliches Überwältigtsein, Inspiriertesein, Durchbrochensein sind Korrelate. In beiden Erscheinungen sind es die schöpferischen Urkräfte, die formzersprengend in das Bewusstsein einbrechen.” Possession and grace use the same powers, but grace unites these powers to the highest form (“der höchsten Form”) while possession uses them to contradict the highest form. This brings in unexpectedly the concept of “highest form” without explaining it any further. It seems to imply that the effect of grace is in accordance with this highest form while possession is against it, and that naturally raises the question of the

67 See Gilkey 1990, 8.
68 Das Dämonische (1926), 42-44; MW 5, 100-101.
69 Das Dämonische (1926), 46; MW 5, 102.
70 Das Dämonische (1926), 46-47; MW 5, 103-104.
71 Das Dämonische (1926), 49, MW 5, 105.
72 Das Dämonische (1926), 49; MW 5, 105.
meaning of this highest form to life in general; it could be used also as a criterion to separate the effects of grace and possession.

As examples in his analysis of the demonic, Tillich uses the unconscious, will to power, chaos, libido, the vital powers, the ecstatic, overwhelming and creative ability of the abyss to shatter the limits of personality - and yet he hastens to say that it is not necessarily bound to the unconscious - without giving grounds or examples to convince us of this conclusion.\(^{73}\) It seems that Tillich is not willing to draw the conclusions that his analysis grants him: the divine-demonic is to be found in the unconscious and in the dynamic forces of life.\(^{74}\) Many of the examples Tillich uses are the same that he later uses to explain the element of dynamics. Tillich wants to see a third dimension besides form and matter, both divine and demonic, above and beneath, breaking through form\(^ {75}\) but often it is difficult to see how it is different from the dynamic forces of life - or at least it seems that it is to be found in the “depths” of the dynamic side.

Tillich says that there is a form of antiform (“eine Form der Formwidrigkeit”); here we can see Tillich’s dialectical thinking again. He emphasizes that also the demonic has to have a form, but in his analysis it remains quite unclear what the forms in themselves are and where they come from. He says that secularisation realizes pure rational form, and that the forms can grow empty or be filled with finite and mundane dynamic. So the forms just seem to be “there”, either filled with the divine-demonic or remaining empty. Again the emphasis is on the dynamic side: if the forms have grown empty, the subhuman demons replace the superhuman ones because the vital, primal powers cannot be banned, and they return in erotic symbolism, brutal gestures and franzied forms (“Die vitalen Urkräfte können ja nicht gebannt werden... So kehrt die Erotische Symbolik, die Geste brutalen Machtwillens, die Darstellung aller Rauschformen in naturalistischem Gewande wieder.”)\(^ {76}\)

At times, however, Tillich gives totally opposite claims about forms, as if they represented the divine; in connection with Greek philosophy, he calls *me on* or the matter principle which resists rational form as the element of the demonic (“dämonisches Element”), and when he talks about the unconditional being which is beyond the sensible forms, he says: “Insofern nun die

\(^ {73}\) Das Dämonische (1926), 49-51; MW 5, 104-106.

\(^ {74}\) Mallow 1983, 118 makes the conclusion that “in the human personality, the foundational structure of the demonic is in the subconscious level of the human soul.”

\(^ {75}\) “Die dritte Dimension nach oben und unten, die göttlich-dämonische, formdurchbrechende.” Das Dämonische (1926), 62; MW 5, 116.

\(^ {76}\) Das Dämonische (1926), 65; MW 5, 118.
Zerstörung dieser Formen Merkmal des Dämonischen ist...” 77 Again, he writes: “Insofern im Göttlichen die Forderung enthalten ist, dass die reine Form verwirklicht werde, ist Profanisierung Bejahung der Göttlichen.” 78 However, the divine demands transcending every form: “Insofern im Göttlichen die unbedingte Transzendenz gegenüber jeder Form enthalten ist, bedeutet Profanität Entgöttlichung.” This indicates the idea of self-transcendence that can be seen again in the third volume of Systematic Theology.

The problems of Tillich’s thinking can be seen when he uses the idea of “depths” to explain the sacred history: the sacred character lies hidden in the depths of history; if it is brought up to surface, it loses its unconditional, meaning-giving significance (“unbedingt sinngebende Bedeutung”). 79 Usually, the depths contain the divine-demonic forces, now, all of a sudden, they carry the meaning-giving significance. Tillich connects meaning to form in the context of self-integration but in the context of self-transcendence meaning can be connected to substance. Thus, on one hand, the depths contain the dual divine-demonic forces, on the other hand, the depths contain the unconditional, meaning-giving significance. This leads to accidental statements: there is no general way to say when the depths have a dynamic, form-destroying effect, and when they have an unconditional, meaning-giving effect. 80

Without any definite content, the form-creating and form-destroying divine-demonic and the idea of form-affirmation and form-transcendence can be used in accidental and contradictory ways. There is no objective or even formal way to say when something is demonic and when it is divine: Tillich’s analyses of culture and society have a highly prophetic character. Tillich says that the demonic unites both the rational and the anti-rational within itself inseparably. 81 Tillich wants to keep the divine and the demonic together - or even the demonic inside the divine - , and this gives irrational features also to

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77 Das Dämonische (1926), 59; MW 5, 113.
78 Das Dämonische (1926), 64; MW 5, 117.
79 Das Dämonische (1926), 56; MW 5, 110.
80 Reisz 1984, 150 also finds a dilemma in Tillich’s thinking: “The forms that the demonic creates are forms that contain evacuated, superficial, essence-destructive, or perverse meaning. How is it possible that the power of Being is at once the ground of the demonic and that which overcomes the demonic?” See also Meitzen 1989, 10-13 about “the question of demonic creativity”.
81 “Die Tiefe des Dämonischen ist gerade die, dass das Sinnhafte und Sinnwidrige in ihm unlöslich verbunden sind.” Das Dämonische (1926), 70; MW 5, 122.
82 Reisz 1984, 144-145 says that “for Tillich, non-Being, the meonic, is an intradivine reality” and a positive element. Also “abyss” and “ground of Being” are used to refer to God, or an element in God. In Reisz’s view, the influence of Böhme and Schelling is clear.
the divine. The influence of Böhme and Schelling is clear. This kind of view gives also a tragic and irrational strain to life.

In connection to the social demons, Tillich says a bit unexpectedly that the truly demonic is a majestic, overwhelming, unassailable, life-bearing form that holds in itself the image of destruction and the power of creativity. This could be understood on the basis of the polarity of dynamics and form and the two modes of the demonic, as over-emphasis of either side - thus also of the form side of the polarity; or on the basis of the demonic as the elevation of the conditional to the unconditional, but it is not well grounded in the context of the article. However, the idea that the social demon has the image of destruction and the power of creativity is in accordance with Tillich’s description of the demonic.

Tillich’s attitude towards the dynamic forces seems to differ: in the polar thinking of Systematic Theology, dynamics needs the element of form as its polar counterpart, and the one-sided expressions of dynamics are described as consequences of estrangement; in the early texts Tillich seems to make a much more positive evaluation of the dynamic forces, the powers of origin. They are, true, divine-demonic and can have also a negative effect but on the whole the meaning of form is secondary compared to the dynamic side. These ideas are closely connected to Tillich’s view of the demonic.

Reisz develops a view of the demonic “that grows out of Tillich’s own work but is not explicit in his writings”. It is based on Tillich’s postulation of two elements in God: “Life-power” and “Life-in-meanings”; both of these involve both elements of dynamics and form, although dynamics might...
dominate in the first and form in the latter. The two major modes of the demonic are: (1) a mode that primarily emphasizes meaning, and (2) one that primarily emphasizes power.\(^85\)

These two modes are in accordance with Tillich’s polar thinking where the balance of the polar elements expresses the essential being, and one-sidedness to either direction is an expression of the existential estrangement. However, it can be seen that the main emphasis of the demonic in Tillich’s early thinking is on the dynamic side, even though many of the thoughts seem to imply the later polar thinking and become more understandable in the light of it. In *Systematic Theology*, there is also another definition of the demonic as “the elevation of something conditional to unconditional significance”,\(^86\) and also glimpses of it can be seen in the early thinking of Tillich.

Some of the dynamic themes can be found also in *Systematic Theology*. Tillich says that the primitive *mana* religions emphasize the Spiritual Presence in the depth of everything: the divine power is invisible and hidden, and accessible only by certain rituals. This connects the Spiritual Presence clearly on the dynamic side of the polarity. He says that “this early substantial vision of the Spiritual Presence survives with many variations in almost all the so-called high religions”.\(^87\) The psychoanalytic movement has shown that even the spiritual actions of man have their roots in the vitalistic tendencies of human nature. It is not possible to reject vitality as the Christian and humanistic moralism try to do, but it is not always possible to express everything, and that is why discipline is needed, supported by creative *eros* and wisdom.\(^88\)

Seeking harmless pleasure and depreciating vitalistic forces is, however, dangerous: it leads to repeated outbursts of the rejected or only partly approved forces. The acceptance of the vitalistic forces includes the acceptance of life in its divine-demonic ambiguity. The victory of the Spirit is to take control over these forces and not to substitute them with some harmless things. Tillich says: “He who tries to avoid the demonic side of the holy also misses its divine side and gains but a deceptive security between them.”\(^89\) In this description, the holy has a demonic and a divine side, and it becomes also divine-demonic. Tillich uses a picture of a battle field, where

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\(^85\) Reisz 1984, 155.
\(^86\) ST I, 141.
\(^87\) "It seems that the original *mana* religion places strong emphasis on the Spiritual Presence in the 'depth' of everything that is. This divine power in all things is invisible, mysterious, approachable only through definite rituals, and known to a particular group of men, the priests.” ST III, 141-142.
\(^88\) ST III, 240.
\(^89\) ST III, 241.
one is in the middle of the divine and the demonic, fighting against the
demonic and anticipating the victory of the divine.

When Tillich examines the threat of the demonic, the context often
connects it to the vitalistic forces, even though it is not always directly
mentioned. Because the form principle is in the background, also the divine
has a vitalistic nature - and not the nature of uniting dynamics and form - and
this makes the view complex: there are no criteria of content to make the
difference between the divine and the demonic; subjective evaluation becomes
important.

In this context, Tillich’s language is dynamic: he rejects the view that the
demonic could be defined as the influence of the demonic forces to individual
and community; the claim of the absoluteness of some forces creates a
reaction from other forces, concluding in a split of consciousness, which leads
to a state of being possessed by the power producing the split. Tillich tries to
balance his view in a dialectical way by calling it the demonic structure; the
change is possible only by the divine structure, which is also a structure of
grace. The concepts are used crosswise: to be under the powers shows the
demonic structure, and the divine structure is grace, which he also calls the
motivating power. Tillich wants to keep both the dynamic and the structural
elements and uses dialectical statements, but when the polarity is not clearly
expressed, the picture becomes confused.

The progress of Tillich’s system opens a very interesting perspective to his
view of the self: what happens to the self in the development of Tillich’s
thoughts? The basic question is whether the ontological polarities and their
unity and balance are found also in the self or is the self only one (dynamic)
pole of the polarity. In Tillich’s description of the ontological polarities, the

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90 ST III, 102.
91 “The demonic self-elevation of particular forces in the centered personality and the
claim of their absolute superiority leads to the reaction of other forces and to a split
consciousness... A consequence of these splits, connected with the nature of the demonic,
is the state of being ’possessed’ by the power which produces the split.” ST III, 103.
92 “Demonic structures in the personal and communal life cannot be broken by acts of
freedom and good will. They are strengthened by such acts-except when the changing
power is a divine structure, that is, a structure of grace.” ST III, 103. See also ST III, 173.
93 See ST III, 95.
94 Randall 1952, 154 claims that there is “a basic unclarity” in Tillich’s thinking: “At
times he follows Heidegger in looking for the structure of being ’in man.’ This is the
characteristic method of idealism, as Heidegger has more explicitly recognized since his
Sein und Zeit. But at other times Tillich, following his own insights rather than another’s
thought, holds that the structure of being is found by man in his encounter with the world-
that it is not the structure of man, but of man’s cooperation with the world, a cooperation
of which man is but one pole. This is a quite different ontology, not that of idealism, but
of what I should call empirical naturalism, and accept.”
first elements (individualisation, dynamics, and freedom) are connected more to the self than to the world, which in turn is on the same side with participation, form and destiny. The self is placed on the dynamic side of the polarity even though Tillich’s ontology emphasizes self-integration and the balance of the polarities; it is easy to turn from the ontological balance of self and world to a view where the dynamic self is restricted by the forms or possessed by some powers that cause a split; this indicates the idea of self-transcendence.

What kind of view of the self emphasizes dynamics at the expense of form? It leads to an appreciation of the subconscious and prerational in man: the dynamic vitality. In self-integration and still in self-creativity, Tillich maintains the importance of form, but in self-transcendence, form is more suppressed. Tillich has emphasized the dynamic vitality especially in his early texts but the idea of the divine-demonic vitality reappears in the third volume of the system.

Occasionally, Tillich combines the overemphasis of the finite forms to the demonic: religion can become demonic if it claims a superb position for itself and for the finite forms with which it points to the infinite. It is a demonic

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95 Anderson 1990, 66-70 makes a distinction between the existential self and the faithful self which transcends the human condition. Anderson describes Tillich’s view of the human condition as one permeated with estrangement, much in line with the humanistic psychology. This state threatens the essential nature of the self as a whole, integrated being, and is experienced in anxiety and fear. The human condition is that of finitude, and it is experienced in the awareness of having to die. Anderson says that to be finite means for Tillich to be limited by time and space. The human being exists as a person in a particular body and place, and experiences himself as an individual self in the world. This causes the self to make the distinction between self and world. The reason for this is that the self in its estranged condition cannot see the structure of reality in its wholeness. The self creates the self-world correlation, and attempts to create meaning. “Thus, we must look through the eyes of the self in order to see the world. The self is not the center of everything that exists, but it is the center of its world.” This is a description of the existential self. Anderson says that the essential nature of the self is found in the union of the self-world correlation. The polar ontological elements are in unity in the essential self. The estrangement and the separation of the polar elements is derived from the self’s separation from the ground and source of being. Anderson 1990, 128 says that the faithful self transcends the human situation: “Paradoxically, the faithful self accepts its estranged condition as acceptable because it is only through its estrangement that the self can exist. For Tillich, the faithful self transcends the human condition of estrangement by accepting its position in relation to the ultimate which transcends the human condition. By participating in the dynamic power of being, Tillich sees that the faithful self can transcend the human condition in which the self exists. For Tillich, the self is dynamic since it can participate in the ultimate which transcends the human condition while at the same time the human condition is the only one in which the self can exist.”

96 ST III, 105-106.
disruption, when, for example, in the name of a consecrated art form, the effort of new styles to express their period is rejected; the overemphasis of the finite form is demonic in suppressing life. The truth should unite dynamic change and creative form. The ontological polarity of dynamics and form gives both an equally important foundation, so it is logical to connect the threat of the demonic to the overemphasis of one or the other. The idea of uniting dynamic change and creative form would give a good basis to develop Tillich’s views further.

Tillich’s view of the divine and the demonic raises the question of divine and demonic potentiality: in another context he calls dualism the attempt to concentrate all the demonic potentiality into one feature and to liberate the opposite divine feature from all demonic contamination. Are there both good and bad potentialities (which leads to a dualistic view of God and Satan) or is the demonic the actualization of the dynamic potentiality apart from the form with which it is essentially united (in which case the demonic is the disruption of essential being and the divine)? Because the essential form element is mostly lacking in Tillich’s theology of culture, there are no clear criteria of content to make the difference between the divine and the demonic. The expression ‘demonic potentiality’ is interesting but unfortunately Tillich does not explain in more detail what he means by it.

Tillich uses dynamic expressions also with other central concepts: the divine Spirit is the power of breaking through the walls of self-seclusion, representatives of the power of the New Being can be found in the religious as well as in the secular realm, and its saving power drives away doubt. In connection with sanctification, Tillich says that man has to be aware of the powers that struggle around him. The consciousness of both the divine and the demonic gives power to affirm life and its vital dynamics. It is a matter of growing in the power of the spirit.

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97 "Divine power lies behind religious doctrines and religious art. But the demonic distortion begins when new insight presses toward the surface and is trodden down in the name of the dogma, the consecrated truth, or when new styles seek to express the drives of a period and are prevented from doing so in the name of religiously approved forms of expression.” ST III, 106.

98 “The conflict arising here is one between the consecrated truth of the dogma and the truth which unites dynamic change and creative form.” ST III, 106.

99 See ST III, 142.

100 ST III, 234.

101 ST III, 238.

102 ST III, 239.

103 ST III, 231.

104 ST III, 232.
In the polarity of dynamics and form, the elements belong together and their imbalance and separation is the expression of the estrangement. Without this explicit polar thought Tillich has to make dialectical divisions inside the elements: the dynamic side is both form-creating and form-destroying, and there is a form of antiform - both highly problematic statements which cannot explain how the dynamic divine-demonic element can be form-creating and how form can include a form against form. At least these questions are better answered with the polarity of dynamics and form. In Tillich’s early thinking, the divine-demonic is more often to be found in the “depths” of the dynamic forces, in his polar thinking, both elements are equally important and too much emphasis on either side could be called demonic.

Tillich’s early thinking is existential by nature and it indicates the idea of self-transcendence. The idea of self-integration and the unity and balance of dynamics and form can be used to explain the basic thoughts in the beginning of Systematic Theology. However, the idea of self-transcendence and many of the early views come back in the third volume of the system. In the frames of the system, this means moving to a more dynamic direction compared to the starting points of the system. From the historical point of view, it is obvious that the classical strain in the beginning of Systematic Theology is “static” compared to the rest of his writings.

In the third volume, Tillich emphasizes that the Spiritual Presence does not destroy the rational structure of man; otherwise, it would be demonic. This is a point where it is possible to see a change of emphasis between Tillich’s early and later dynamic views: in the early thinking, Tillich says that the divine-demonic both creates and breaks the form; in the third volume of Systematic Theology - at least in the part dealing directly with the question - he emphasizes that the Spiritual Presence does not break the form which would be demonic. In a more general way, the change can be seen in the replacement of the divine-demonic depth by the idea of Spiritual Presence or the Spirit. In Tillich’s polar view, the divine-demonic is the first element of God which is balanced by the form or logos principle. This view has its effect on Tillich’s view of the Spirit and the Spiritual Presence, even though the emphasis is again on the dynamic side.

**4.3. Self-transcending history and the Kingdom of God**

The fifth part of Tillich’s system is “History and the Kingdom of God”. This part of the system is an extension of the fourth, separated from it for “traditional and practical reasons”. Tillich says that “in the analysis of the dimensions of life given in the fourth part of the system, the historical
dimension was put in brackets”. The historical dimension of life demands its own treatment in the theological system, because it is the most all-exclusive dimension; it preconceives the others and adds a new dimension to them. It is possible only after the dimension of life has actualized itself. The Hegelian and Neo-Platonic strains of Tillich’s thinking can be seen in his view of history.

Tillich describes the liveliness and movement of history with the expression ‘dynamics of history’, which emphasizes the change and development of history. Life creates itself and can destroy itself when the dynamics of history drive toward the new. Tillich explains that he chose the expression ‘dynamics of history’ to remind philosophy that it is necessary to deal with history also from the point of view of its dynamics, and not only from the point of view of its logical and classifying structure. History is a dynamic force: ”History does not move in an equal rhythm but is a dynamic force moving through cataracts and quiet stretches.” This indicates a dynamic view of life.

When Tillich deals with life and history, he uses the concepts of potentiality and actuality, and the emphasis is on self-transcendence. The historical dimension is potentially present in all dimensions of life in an anticipatory way, partly potential, partly actual. The historical dimension combines all the other dimensions, and the potentialities of the inorganic become actual in history. These thoughts show that the term potential points to a state somewhere in history. As we have seen, along with this horizontal line of thought there is a vertical line of thought that sees and explains life under the conditions of existence as the estrangement from the essential state of things. There is a tension between these two ways to explain life.

105 ST III, 297.
106 For Tillich and Hegel see e.g. Clayton 1980, 131-140; Newport 1984, 79; Annala 1985, 20-23, 46-49. Annala sees also many similarities between Tillich and Plotinus, see Annala 1985, 94-98. He points also to Rowe 1968, 62-72 and Thatcher 1978, 31-33, 83-88, 95 concerning the similarities of Tillich and Plotinus. Jones 1975, 141 says that “in the Introduction to the Logic Hegel states that this work is ‘the account of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and any finite spirit.’ Here Hegel sounds like Plotinus, for whom the universe was a sequence of emanations issuing from, and returning to, the Absolute... Hegel’s concept of the Weltgeist - a term that is variously translated as ‘world spirit’ or ‘universal mind’ - fits in with this interpretation of his philosophy.”
107 ST III, 331.
109 ST III, 371.
110 ST III, 318-319.
History means most of all man’s history, though the historical dimension attaches itself to all processes of life.\textsuperscript{111} The treatment of life includes the treatment of history, and the description of the ambiguities of life must include the ambiguities of history. Life actualizes itself fully in the history of man.\textsuperscript{112} Man is free and can transcend the given environment:

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.\textsuperscript{113}

Man can also lose his potential freedom and interest to transcend the environment. The continuous effort to actualize the unforseen potentialities can lead to the destruction of life.\textsuperscript{114} Prehistory became history when the potentiality of the prehistorical man turned from potentiality to actuality;\textsuperscript{115} it is also possible that the history of mankind will end. The future is open to possibilities that arise from the present. It is possible that the self-destructive forces of mankind will get power and lead us to destruction.

Man can leave the real in order to gain the potential. As a consequence, one basic feature of man’s history is to create the new; as an act of the spirit “creating means transcending the given in the horizontal direction without a priori limits, and it means bringing something into a definite, concrete existence.”\textsuperscript{116} There is a duality in creation: it means transcending the given and bringing something into existence. In the light of self-transcendence, the concrete form at the same time manifests and hides; the reality behind the visible form is more than the form it gets in life. The relation of the potential and the actual is the same: actuality expresses and hides the possibilities of the potential; all potentialities do not actualize themselves. The potential includes more than the actual, the invisible includes more than the visible, dynamic substance is more than the form it gets in life.

\textsuperscript{111} ST III, 297.
\textsuperscript{112} ST III, 298.
\textsuperscript{113} ST III, 303.
\textsuperscript{114} ST III, 308.
\textsuperscript{115} ST III, 306.
\textsuperscript{116} ST III, 317. Samse 1980, 28-29 examines the relation of Tillich’s ontology to his eschatology and his view of the relation of time and space in the light of the polarity of dynamics and form: "Pointiert kann die Schlussfolgerung gezogen werden: Die Ontologie Tillichs empfängt ihre Dynamik aus der Verklammerung mit der Eschatologie, und die Eschatologie empfängt ihre Form durch die Ontologie; beide zusammen bilden ihre Kombination die spezifisch Tillichschen polar-ontologischen Elemente von Dynamik und Form... Die Form-Dynamik-Spannung lässt sich auch als Raum-Zeit-Polarität beschreiben; Tillich ist der Ansicht, dass die Dimension des Raumes in die Richtung einer statischen Ontologie weist, die lediglich entfaltet, was als Potentialität bereits in ihr enthalten ist."
In self-transcendence, the form at the same time manifests and limits the vitality of life or the dynamic substance. The view of form is different compared to the classical view of form which is important in the self-integration of life. In the classical view, the potential fully corresponds to the actual. In self-transcendence, the dynamic substance is free from the limitations of form: substance can manifest itself in different forms but it is not tied to any form; forms can express the deeper substance but forms can also remain empty. In the development of Tillich’s system, we can see the change of emphasis from the balance and unity of dynamics and form to the breaking through the form by dynamics, and, finally, to the transcendence of the forms by the dynamic substance.

In Tillich’s view, the processes of life are united in history to one big process directed towards an aim. Tillich uses all three processes of life to describe the movement toward an aim:

There is still self-integration, but not as an end in itself; self-integration under the historical dimension serves the drive toward universal and total integration. There is still self-creativity, but not for the sake of particular creations; self-creativity under the historical dimension serves the drive toward that which is universally and totally new. And there is still self-transcendence, but not toward a particular sublimity; self-transcendence under the historical dimension serves the drive toward the universally and totally transcendent.117

What gives meaning and aim to history? In his ontology, Tillich has connected meaning and value to the element of form. Tillich’s view of history is based on the idea of self-transcendence where forms are transcended by the dynamic substance: in self-transcendence, form is static and substance contains meaning and aim. In Gilkey’s words: “…vitality, élan, ’life,’ which ’is the creative drive of the living substance,’ represents a drive ’towards new forms’ (ST I:180). As the eros or drive toward the new form, vitality represents, therefore, the secret essence of intentionality or purpose, and it is the latter that propels the living self beyond itself into the next moment, into ’transcending itself.’”118

Tillich says that "the horizontal direction under the dimension of the spirit has the character of intention and purpose".119 In a historical event, human purposes are the decisive factor. The new that history creates can be defined as new actualizations of value in centered persons.120 A deed which makes

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117 ST III, 332.
118 Gilkey 1990, 90-91.
119 ST III, 302.
120 ST III, 303.
man a person, a cultural creation which has meaning, and a religious experience where infinite meaning breaks into the world of finite meanings are examples of events that have infinite meaning. In the dimension of the spirit, life can experience the ultimate and create symbols and embodiments of the ultimate.\textsuperscript{121}

The events that express the human potentiality in a unique way can become historically meaningful. These potentialities must actualize themselves and express the directedness of history towards the aim.\textsuperscript{122} Also nature creates new, as new species in evolution, but if the dimension of the spirit is not actual, the events do not have absolute meaning and uniqueness; not even the creation of species in evolution has this meaning.\textsuperscript{123} The new that history creates is combined with meanings and values.\textsuperscript{124}

The ambiguities of the self-creation of life are expressed in the tension of old and new. In history, this leads to the tension of revolution and reaction. Tillich has defined self-creation on the basis of dynamics and form, and from the point of view of the polarity, this duality is unexpected: the duality of revolution and tradition would express the dynamic and the formal elements of the polarity. Tillich’s view of history is dynamic. The emphasis on development can lead to progressivism, but it is not justified to believe in an endless development.\textsuperscript{125} The tension between revolution and reaction is most destructive, if one or the other claims ultimate position for itself;\textsuperscript{126} it can lead to demonization. This is the basis for the struggle of the sacred old and prophetic new in religion.\textsuperscript{127}

The ambiguities of the historical self-creation lead to the questions of social growth. The relation of the old and the new leads to conflicts between tradition and revolution; now Tillich uses this pair of opposites. It is wrong to oppose revolution in principle, because the chaos that follows revolution can be creative. Here we can hear an echo of Tillich’s thought that there is a “moment of chaos” between the old and the new form in the self-creation of life. The destructive effects of social growth are conquered in the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{128} However, it is not the victory of the Kingdom of God if the

\textsuperscript{121} ST III, 305.
\textsuperscript{122} ST III, 304-305.
\textsuperscript{123} ST III, 305.
\textsuperscript{124} ST III, 303.
\textsuperscript{125} ST III, 352-356.
\textsuperscript{126} Also Rolinck 1976, 150-151 presents Tillich’s view of the tension of the old and new and the relation of revolution and reaction in connection with dynamics and form, although Tillich does not mention them directly when he is dealing with the matter.
\textsuperscript{127} ST III, 344-346.
\textsuperscript{128} ST III, 388.
revolutionary groups try to break cultural and political structures. This can be explained by Tillich’s thought that every group has to have a form because of the polarity of dynamics and form.

The Kingdom of God conquers the ambiguities of historical growth when revolution is built upon tradition and every problem finds a creative solution aiming at the ultimate end of history. Religion, including Christianity, has been mainly in the conservative-traditional side. Those times when the prophetic spirit has challenged the doctrinal and ritual traditions of the priests are exceptions. These occasions are rare because slow growth is normal. This explains the majority of religious tradition over religious revolution.

When Tillich deals with the life-processes in connection with the Kingdom of God, he says that it is important to examine the ambiguities of power. Power is essentially divine, because God as power is the source of particular powers. Power is the possibility to resist non-being. The Kingdom of God conquers the disintegrating forces. Tillich thinks that from the point of view of history, groups are more important than individuals, and groups must have a power centre that can keep the individuals together and preserve the group’s power to deal with other such groups. Groups must have ways to preserve their power and an authority which makes laws. These conditions are best fulfilled in a state. The potential and actual endeavours of individuals become manifest in groups.

The feeling of belonging to a group and the acceptance of its laws and authorities are behind the organised structures of the groups. If this acceptance comes to an end, it takes away the basis of the power structure. The group is destroyed, if the feeling of belonging to it is replaced by compulsion. The vocational consciousness of the group is dependent on its goal, and if the goal disappears or is not developed, the element of power becomes determining. Germany and Italy in the 20th century are examples of this. Here we can see the need for the unity of power and meaning which

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129 ST III, 388-389.
130 ST III, 389.
131 ST III, 389-390.
132 ST III, 385.
133 “The basic theological answer must be that, since God as the power of being is the source of all particular powers of being, power is divine in its essential nature.” ST III, 385. For this reason Tillich thinks that most pacific declarations are unbiblical and unrealistic. See ST III, 385.
134 ST III, 308-309.
135 ST III, 312-313.
137 ST III, 310-311.
Tillich has developed on the basis of dynamics and form and the other polarities.

Tillich warns that the churches should not forget eschatological dynamics. The power of the New Being effective in them conquers the demonic powers and the forces of profanization. The churches should feel that they are leading forces striving towards the fulfilment of history.\textsuperscript{138} The demonic forces can be seen also in the church, but Christ is the conqueror of them.\textsuperscript{139} Tillich speaks of the New Being, demonization and profanization as forces. At the side of the New Being he places also bad forces or powers. In Tillich’s ontology, being is a polar concept combining in balance dynamics and form and the other polarities; compared to that, these definitions are much more dynamic.

The idea of \textit{kairos} expresses the self-transcending nature of history: there was a moment at which “history... had matured to the point of being able to receive the breakthrough of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God”.\textsuperscript{140} The New Testament calls it “the fulfilment of time”, \textit{kairos}. Tillich says that this must be contrasted with \textit{chronos}, measured time. The great \textit{kairos} is the appearance of the center of history, and it is re-experienced through relative \textit{kairoi} in which the Kingdom of God manifests itself in a particular breakthrough. Awareness of a \textit{kairos} is a matter of vision and involved experience.\textsuperscript{141} Tillich says: “The Kingdom of God is always present, but the experience of its history-shaking power is not. \textit{Kairoi} are rare and the great \textit{kairos} is unique, but together they determine the dynamics of history in its self-transcendence.”\textsuperscript{142} He also uses the phrase ’self-transcending dynamics of history’\textsuperscript{143} which shows that the emphasis is on self-transcendence as it is in the theology of culture in general. The idea that the Spirit breaks through the forms is obvious: “For although the prophetic Spirit is latent or even repressed

\textsuperscript{138} ST III, 375-376.
\textsuperscript{139} ST III, 380-381.
\textsuperscript{140} ST III, 369.
\textsuperscript{141} The concept of \textit{kairos} was important in Tillich’s early texts. In \textit{Systematic Theology} he estimates his old view: “This term has been frequently used since we introduced it into theological and philosophical discussion in connection with the religious socialist movement in Germany after the First World War... And, above all, \textit{kairos} should express the feeling of many people in central Europe after the First World War that a moment of history had appeared which was pregnant with a new understanding of the meaning of history and life. Whether or not this feeling was empirically confirmed - in part it was, in part it was not - the concept itself retains its significance and belongs in the whole of systematic theology.” See ST III, 369-371.
\textsuperscript{142} ST III, 372.
\textsuperscript{143} ST III, 369.
over long stretches of history, it is never absent and breaks through the barriers of the law in a kairos.”

The idea of kairos indicates the self-transcendence of history:

A last question arises as to whether there are periods in history in which no kairos is experienced. Obviously the Kingdom of God and the Spiritual Presence are never absent in any moment of time, and by the very nature of the historical process, history is always self-transcendent.

The search for unambiguous life leads to the symbols of Spiritual Presence, Kingdom of God, and Eternal Life. The symbol of the Kingdom of God is both inner historical and trans-historical. It participates in the dynamics of history, and as trans-historical gives the answers to the questions involved in the ambiguities of history. History comes to end when biblically speaking “God is all in all”. The demonic powers cannot prevent history from reaching its aim. In Eternal Life, morality, culture, and religion come to an end as separate functions. There is “no ought-to-be in it which, at the same time, is not”, “there is no law where there is essentialization, because what the law demands is nothing but the essence, creatively enriched in existence”. Eternal Life can be called the life of eternal and perfect love.

Eternal Life is also the end of culture. In Eternal Life, culture is united with the creativity of the Spirit, and there is no separate culture based on the self-creation of life. In the fulfilled Kingdom of God, the human spirit’s creativity is revelation by the divine Spirit, and man’s creativity and divine self-manifestation are one. Culture comes to an end as an independent human enterprise. The aim, telos of the individual is determined by the choices he has made by the potentialities that destiny has given him; man can waste his potentialities or fulfill them. In either case it does not happen completely.

In Eternal Life there is no religion. Religion is the consequence of man’s estrangement from the ground of being and the attempt to return to it; in

144 ST III, 370.
145 ST III, 371.
146 ST III, 297-298.
147 ST III, 356-359.
148 See ST III, 373.
149 ST III, 402.
150 ST III, 402-403.
151 “Beyond this, culture as spiritual creativity becomes, at the same time, Spiritual creativity. The human spirit’s creativity in Eternal Life is revelation by the divine Spirit - as it is fragmentarily already in the Spiritual Community. Man’s creativity and divine self-manifestation are one in the fulfilled Kingdom of God. In so far as culture is an independent human enterprise, it comes to an end in the end of history. It becomes eternal divine self-manifestation through the finite bearers of the Spirit.” ST III, 403.
Eternal Life this return has taken place. Also, the gap between the secular and religious is overcome. Tillich says that in biblical terminology, “Heavenly Jerusalem” is “a city in which there is no temple because God lives there.”

Tillich uses the phrase essentialization in this context to describe, how negative is verified as negative and remains in non-being, while the positive is preserved in Eternal Life. In Tillich’s view, God is not separated from the world, and the system reaches its climax in the theocentric vision where the meaning of all existence opens up from the divine life.

The Kingdom of God has ontological implications, and Tillich brings up ontological considerations more than in the other parts dealing with life and history. He wants to combine the starting point and the conclusion of his system, and in the end he is again “a metaphysical spectator”. Tillich refers to the polarity of dynamics and form when he deals with the meaning of the unambiguous self-creation as a feature of Eternal Life:

The second question is: What is the meaning of unambiguous self-creativity as a characteristic of Eternal Life? The answer points to the second pair of polar elements in the structure of being: dynamics and form. In Eternal Life these two poles are also in perfect balance. They are united in that which transcends their polar contrast: the divine creativity, which includes the finite creativity without making it into a technical tool of itself. The self in self-creativity is preserved in the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

Thus, Tillich wants to unite the beginning and the end: the perfect balance of dynamics and form, which was the ideal of Tillich’s ontology, is achieved in the Kingdom of God; in life, the polar elements are in tension and in conflict, but in the end, they are in perfect balance. They are united in the divine creativity which transcends their polar tension. The divine creativity

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152 ST III, 403.
153 Newport 1984, 69 explains essentialization in Tillich’s thinking: “In essentialization through New Being there is a return to the integration of Trinitarian life and a unity from which man never fully departs in so much as he retains essence even in existence. In essentialized (reunited) man this participation becomes more intense as man’s union with his essence becomes his union with God. Essentialization is thus a return to fulfilled essence.” Newport says that the concept essence-existence-essentialization was first articulated by Schelling and then developed by Tillich.
155 ST III, 422-423.
156 ST III, 402.
157 Gelder 1991, 165 emphasizes that the Kingdom of God as a symbol means the manifestation of the unity of the polar pairs here and now, in the historical existence. However, it is important to keep in mind that the essential and the existential features are mixed in life and the complete unity and balance of the polar pairs is not possible before the final fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.
includes the finite creativity in itself. In Eternal Life, all the ontological polarities are in perfect balance.

Creation is creation for the end. The new is created between the beginning and the end but the aim is already within the foundation. Thus, creation has its potential roots in the foundation and in this sense it is not new.\textsuperscript{158} This sounds again as the classical view of dynamics and form with which Tillich combines the end with the beginning. Tillich’s system develops from self-integration through self-creation to self-transcendence. Tillich wants to combine the three functions of life in his system, and this creates the basic tension and the conceptual problems of the system.

\textsuperscript{158} ST III, 398.
5. CONCLUSION

The subject of this study is the polarity of dynamics and form in Tillich’s thinking. The analysis shows that Tillich’s thinking can be interpreted with the three functions of life: self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence. These are based on the three ontological polarities: individualization and participation, dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny; in turn, they are the basis for morality, culture, and religion. Explicitly, the polarity of dynamics and form is the basis for the self-creation of life.

The tension between dynamics and form is the starting point for Tillich’s system, and the tension is ultimately grounded in God. That means that the tension between the classical and the modern view of dynamics and form is also the starting point for Tillich’s system. Tillich’s ontology and description of the New Being are based on the idea of self-integration: the ideal is the unity and balance of dynamics and form, and both of the elements are equally important. Form remains unbroken and form is the essence of a thing. There are forms of the self-transcendence of form. This is the way Tillich unites the classical view and the modern view of dynamics and form: even if the form is transcended, it happens within the form. If we are willing to accept Tillich’s system as coherent, we will have to accept this kind of dialectical thinking.

In self-creation, dynamics as vitality breaks through the form and creates new forms, and this indicates the modern view of dynamics and form. There is a moment of chaos between the old and the new form, and this gives a possibility for creation or destruction. This view is different compared to self-integration and to the classical view of form. In the self-transcendence of life, the Spirit or the Spiritual Presence transcends the finite forms and manifests itself in different forms: the ideas can be expressed with form and substance. Tillich wants to include the three functions of life in one system, and this creates the basic tension and the conceptual problems in his thinking.

At first, Tillich gives a classical definition of form: form makes a thing what it is, it is its essence; this indicates self-integration. In the self-creation of life, creation is always creation of form, and every new form is made possible only by breaking through the old form. The element of form becomes static compared to the classical view of form. In self-transcendence, the Spirit transcends the finite forms and manifests itself in different forms: the connection between dynamics and form loosens, and the form element is expressed in “finite forms”. In the classical view of dynamics and form, the potential corresponds to the actual, and this indicates self-integration. In self-
creation, dynamics as the vitality of life breaks through the form. In self-transcendence, the dynamic substance transcends the forms.

Tillich’s thinking combines different influences. There is a strong Aristotelian strain in the classical definition of form and in the idea of self-integration. The description of the essential and existential state of things indicates the Platonic scheme of essence and existence and the views of existentialism. The idea of self-creation and the modern view of dynamics and form has been influenced by Schelling and the philosophy of life, and it is near the views of process philosophy. The dynamic substance in self-transcendence is influenced by the idea of dynamis panton in Neo-Platonism, and Tillich’s view of history also mirrors Hegelian views.

Tillich uses the polarity of dynamics and form in a symbolic way to explain God. In the ontological context, the ideal is the unity and balance of the elements. The power of being or the abyss or the ground of being express the dynamic side of the polarity. The element of meaning and structure is logos, which unites meaningful structure with creativity. God’s Spirit combines the ontological elements and the telos of life: the Spirit is the unity of power and meaning. God’s potentiality, vitality and self-transcendence are based on dynamics, God’s actuality, intentionality and self-preservation are based on form. Tillich rejects the view of process theology and the idea of God as actus purus because they disrupt the balance between dynamics and form.

There are three main symbols that Tillich uses to talk about God and they can be interpreted with the three functions of life: God as “Being-Itself” corresponds to the unity and balance of dynamics and form and to the self-integration of life. God as “the Power of Being” corresponds to the self-creation of life where dynamics breaks through the form. God as “the Spirit” corresponds to the self-transcendence of life where the dynamic substance transcends the forms. It is also possible to interpret the three functions of life in a Trinitarian way: self-creation can be connected to “the Father”, the first person of the Trinity; self-integration to “the Son”, the second person of the Trinity; and self-transcendence to “the Spirit”, the third person of the Trinity.

The first two volumes of Systematic Theology emphasize the unity and balance of dynamics and form. This means there is more emphasis on form than in the subsequent parts. In Tillich’s ontology, the elements of the ontological polarities belong essentially together in an unbroken unity, but in finitude, polarity becomes tension where the elements draw away from one another. Existential estrangement means the possibility to lose one’s ontological structure and with it oneself. Dynamics and form are necessary ontological elements of everything, but the unity and balance of dynamics and form is also a basis for value judgements. The relation of dynamics and form can be existentially disturbed: either dynamics is distorted into a formless urge to self-transcendence or form becomes negative and restrictive. The polarity of dynamics and form becomes known in man’s experience as the polarity of
vitality and intentionality, and there is a possibility of tension also between them.

The New Being in Jesus as the Christ is essential being under the conditions of existence. The idea that “Logos became flesh” means that God is manifest in a personal life-process as a saving participant in the human predicament. The polarities of being become manifest only in a person. There are no traits of existential estrangement in Jesus, and it becomes indirectly clear that the balance of dynamics and form was not distorted in Jesus’ life. However, Tillich does not deal separately with the questions of dynamics and form. He does not use the concepts of vitality and intentionality. We can see features of both the classical view and the modern view of dynamics and form, but the emphasis is on the unity and balance of the elements.

When Tillich explains the self-creativity of life, he uses mainly the modern view of dynamics and form: self-creation of life is always creation of form, and every new form is made possible only by breaking through the old form. However, he wants to combine self-integration and self-creation also in this context; in man, there is a corresponding tension between self-conservation and self-transcendence, but in self-transcendence man has even more freedom from the forms. The polarity of dynamics and form is the basis for the self-creation of life. The new form both preserves and transforms the original reality. In self-creativity and growth, Tillich maintains the meaning of form, even though dynamics as vitality breaks through the form. Tillich goes one step further away from the classical view when he says that there is a moment of chaos between the old and the new form. Creation and chaos belong together. Tillich’s thinking moves to a more dynamic direction.

In the life process, the powers of creation and the powers of destruction are united in such a way that it is impossible to separate them unambiguously. Growth is a common function of life. The ideas of self-creation and self-transcendence blend with each other. Under the conditions of existence, the unity of the life process is in danger of breaking up. In this case, self-integration turns into disintegration, self-creation into destruction and self-transcendence into profanization.

In the life process, potential becomes actual. This kind of view of life designates potential as something inside the process of life: it is the dynamic vitality of life. The view is different compared to the view of life as fallen or estranged from the essential in the Platonic sense. Thus, there is a crossing of horizontal and vertical lines in Tillich’s thinking. Tillich does not relate the concepts of dynamis and energeia or potentiality and actuality to the polarity of dynamics and form. In the classical view, the form element is active and gives shape to the deformed; the potential corresponds fully to the actual and the actualization happens within the form. In the modern view, dynamics as vitality is the active element; it breaks through the static form and creates new forms.
In the sphere of man’s spirit, the self-creation of life creates culture. In Tillich’s system, this part is the bridge toward the third phase: self-transcendence. Self-transcendence is the main category when Tillich deals with life and the Spirit but the ideas of self-creativity and self-transcendence blend in Tillich’s view of culture. In his interpretation of culture, Tillich does not use the polarity of dynamics and form very much. The ultimate aim of the cultural self-creation of life is that the universe of meaning is the fulfilment of the universe of being. The ambiguity of culture can be seen in the fact that the cultural act both creates and destroys meaning. Only parts of the potentialities connected to a thing actualize themselves.

All social groups must have a form which is determined by the understanding of justice in the group. Tillich is using the polarity of dynamics and form in the meaning of ontological necessity. He does not very much develop a typological view of culture based on the polarity of dynamics and form. Sometimes Tillich uses the distinction of form and substance, sometimes he has a distinction of form-substance-subject matter. It is difficult to combine them to the polarity of dynamics and form: the polarity of dynamics and form has a strong Aristotelian strain while the distinction of form and substance can be understood in the light of the Neo-Platonic ideas of Tillich’s cultural theology.

Morality, culture, and religion belong together. Culture provides the contents of morality, and religion gives to morality the unconditional character of the moral imperative and the ultimate moral aim. Religion is the substance of culture and culture is the form of religion. The Spiritual Presence in culture creates theonomy. There are variations in Tillich’s view of autonomy, heteronomy, and theonomy which correspond to the variations of his thinking in general. In this context, expressionism breaks into the vertical reality and has a genuine theonomous element.

The Spiritual Presence creates theonomous forms in cultural self-creation, and that leads to the conquest of cultural ambiguities. The forms of creative process are autonomous, but this should not lead to independent autonomy. The reaction of religion easily takes the form of rejecting creativity and even the justified demands of culture. The religious substance gives dynamic creativity to culture. Tillich wants to give culture an independent status, and because of this the idea of the essential form is in the background in his views of culture. Tillich mentions exceptionally the polarity of dynamics and form when he deals with institutionalized religion: he says that everything that has being has a form.

An ambiguous reunion of morality, culture, and religion is possible under the impact of the divine Spirit. The Spiritual Presence creates a theonomous culture and a theonomous morality. The centered self can be lost in an empty self-identity or in a chaotic self-alteration. The Spirit can overcome the double anxiety of not actualizing one’s essential nature or losing oneself in self-
actualization. Where there is Spirit, the actual manifests the potential and the potential determines the actual. Man can give way to the forces of moral disintegration and act against the spirit in the power of spirit.

Tillich connects *agape* to all three life processes. On one hand, *agape* manifests itself in the form of the moral law but at the same time transcends its content. On the other hand, Tillich maintains the absoluteness of the moral imperative by saying that it expresses the essential being of man. The view changes between the polar view of dynamics and form and the view of form and substance. Sometimes essence is the unity and balance of dynamics and form, sometimes it is the dynamic substance; in those cases form and structure are connected only to existence as finite forms.

In his cultural theology, Tillich defines *hubris* and *concupiscence* anew: self-transcendence is associated with being freed from the bondage of form. In the modern definition of dynamics and form, dynamics as vitality breaks through and transcends the static form; it is only one step further to think that the static form is restrictive and preventing vitality from manifesting its vitality. Gradually, dynamics as vitality drives toward self-transcendence which is prohibited by the forms: the conflict of the elements that was described as the threat of existential estrangement becomes the natural way of life.

The Spiritual Presence creates an ecstasy which drives the spirit of man beyond itself; this does not destroy the rational structure of man. The impact of the Spiritual Presence is received through the rational form. Tillich insists that there is some structure in the experiences of the Spirit, but he does not define any specific forms where the impact of the Spirit is to be experienced. Ecstasy transcends the subject and object structure; intoxication does not actualize consciousness, so it is less than the subject and object structure. Creativity is the only criterion which can be used to decide between ecstasy and intoxication. Tillich warns us not to confuse the subjective impact of the gospel preaching to the spiritual impact that transcends the subjective and the objective.

Tillich emphasizes the freedom of the Spirit in the end of the system more than in the beginning. He says that the Word of God is not bound to a particular revelatory event, Christian or non-Christian and that it is not tied up with a special content or a special form. This is understandable on the basis of self-transcendence where the Spirit transcends all the forms. The Spirit can manifest itself in different forms but it remains free from all the forms.

The Spiritual Presence creates the Spiritual Community which is the dynamic essence of Christian churches. The dynamic essence of every member of the Spiritual Community is the Spiritual personality. The Spiritual Presence works through the churches toward the self-transcendence of culture, and cultural groups and movements can express it in a latent way. The constructive functions of the church lead to form-transcendence and form-
affirmation; the churches have an ecstatic, form-transcending character. Religion cannot demand culture to obey any specific cultural forms. The church manifests itself as a church only if the Spirit breaks into the finite forms. Religious art or knowledge cannot injure the artistic or cognitive rules. The churches become demonic-repressive, if form-transcendence is emphasized over form-preservation. In the opposite case, the danger is profanization and emptying of the form. The holy fills forms that are empty in themselves.

The institutions of the church are based on certain functions. The legal forms of the church are not based on the order given by God’s Spirit but are based on the human wisdom and social suitability to the purpose. Every community needs some kind of form, and the endeavours of sects to live in an anarchic state have never been successful. Protestantism rejects all the absolutizing of the forms of church activities. The Protestant principle needs as its pair the Catholic substance, which can be seen in the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence. The Protestant principle expresses the victory of the Spirit over religion, and the Protestant spirit indicates the dynamic substance of religion.

Tillich’s view of self-transcendence is problematic. On the one hand, the agent of self-transcendence is the dynamic vitality of life which creates new forms in the self-creativity and self-transcendence of life. On the other hand, the Spirit is the agent of self-transcendence. What is the difference between the dynamic vitality of life and the Spirit? This is one of the collision points of Tillich’s system: he started to write the third volume of the system from the end and, as a consequence, Tillich was not able to unite seamlessly the idea of self-trascendence coming from his older cultural theological views to the idea of self-transcendence coming from the ontological starting-points of the system.

Tillich combines vitality with the fight of the divine and the demonic in man. The dynamic forces obtain a twofold divine-demonic nature. In the early texts, Tillich seems to make a much more positive evaluation of the dynamic forces, the powers of origin. The meaning of form is secondary compared to the dynamic side. In the third volume of *Systematic Theology*, the acceptance of the vitalistic forces includes the acceptance of life in its divine-demonic ambiguity. Also, the holy has a demonic and a divine side. Tillich talks in a dialectical way about the demonic structure. Occasionally, Tillich combines the overemphasis of the finite forms to the demonic. In Tillich’s early thinking, the dynamic side is both form-creating and form-destroying, and there is a form of antiform. The divine-demonic is more often to be found in the “depths” of the dynamic forces.

In his early thinking Tillich says that the divine-demonic both creates and breaks the form; in the third volume of *Systematic Theology* he maintains that the Spiritual Presence does not break a form which would be demonic. The
change in Tillich’s thinking can be seen in the replacement of the divine-demonic depth by the idea of Spiritual Presence or the Spirit. In Tillich’s polar view, the divine-demonic is the first element of God which is balanced by the form or logos principle.

When Tillich deals with life and history, he uses the concepts of potentiality and actuality, and the emphasis is on self-transcendence. The term potential points to a state somewhere in history. Life creates itself and can destroy itself when the dynamics of history drive toward the new. History is a dynamic force. Man is free and can transcend the given environment. One basic feature of man’s history is to create the new; as an act of the spirit, creating means transcending the given in the horizontal direction without a priori limits, and it means bringing something into existence. In the light of self-transcendence, the concrete form at the same time manifests and hides.

The processes of life are united in history to one big process directed towards an aim. The new that history creates is combined with meanings and values. Tillich’s view of history is based on the idea of self-transcendence where the static forms are transcended by the dynamic substance. The breakthrough of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God is kairos, the appearance of the center of history; it is re-experienced through relative kairoi. The idea that the Spirit breaks through the forms is obvious. The idea of kairos indicates the self-transcendence of history. The Kingdom of God participates in the dynamics of history and as trans-historical gives answers to the questions involved in the ambiguities of history. The demonic powers cannot prevent history from reaching its aim.

Tillich wants to unite the beginning and the end: the perfect balance of dynamics and form is achieved in the Kingdom of God. They are united in the divine creativity which transcends their polar tension. In Eternal Life, all the ontological polarities are in perfect balance, and the three functions of life come to an end as separate functions. Tillich says that creation is creation for the end. The new is created between the beginning and the end but the aim is already within the foundation. This resembles the classical view of dynamics and form with which Tillich combines the end with the beginning. Tillich’s intention was to keep the essential and the existential sides of his thinking in balance, but we can argue that in the beginning and again in the very end of the system, he is more a “metaphysical spectator” than in the other places. Tillich’s thinking develops from self-integration through self-creativity to self-transcendence, and this creates the basic tension and the conceptual problems in his thinking.

Some of the main results of our examination have been gathered in the following table. In the table we have to move to lower levels to follow the development of thoughts. It is also possible to sketch back the corresponding views that are implicit in the different views; in the table this means also moving from the right edge to the left in the lower levels.
SELF-INTEGRATION
Classical view of dynamics and form
Greek thought
Plato and Aristotle
Neo-orthodox
Church theology
Catholic substance
Western Essential Tillich “metaphysical spectator”

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<td>Essence: unity and balance of dynamics and form</td>
<td>God is Being Itself</td>
<td>Ground (dynamics) + Logos (form) = Spirit in balance Unity of power and meaning Western view Logos Christology</td>
<td>New Being - dynamics and form in unity and balance - essential being under the conditions of existence appeared in Jesus’ life - balance of inside elements</td>
<td>Dynamics and form are both essential and equally important - critique of one-sided phenomena - New Being as a criterion Purpose, aim, and meaning of culture</td>
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SELF-CREATION
Modern view of dynamics and form
Lebensphilosophie
Process philosophy
Schelling
Mediating position

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<td>Dynamics as vitality breaks through the form</td>
<td>God is the Power of Being</td>
<td>Dynamics as vitality breaks through the form and creates new forms = self-creativity of life -&gt; growth</td>
<td>Self-creativity of life creates culture Form element is also important Unity of morality, culture, and religion Depth of culture Ambiguities of life</td>
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SELF-TRANSCENDENCE
Form and substance
Cultural theology
Hegel
Neo-Platonism
Protestant Principle
Existential Tillich

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<td>The Spirit transcends the forms</td>
<td>God as Spirit (ST 3) or Divine-Demonic depth or ground or abyss (early writings)</td>
<td>Spiritual Presence or the Spirit - Dynamic element more important Spirit Christology</td>
<td>- “New Being dwells in Jesus” Powerful Gehalt shines through the historical person</td>
<td>Form-transcendence and form-affirmation (ST 3) or form-creation and form-destroying (early writings)</td>
<td>Dynamic view of life and Spirit Manifestation of the Spiritual Presence Spirit is free and takes different forms in religion, life, and history - finite forms, form is static -&gt; lack of essential form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
The table is, naturally, an abstraction because the elements are combined with each other and Tillich does not jump from one position to another. Tillich’s thinking is like a kaleidoscope that shows the same particles in a different order.

The extremes are the classical view of dynamics and form in self-integration and the idea of dynamic substance which transcends the finite forms (plural). The modern view of dynamics and form is in the middle building a bridge between them, and sometimes the idea of form and substance comes close to that: when Tillich deals with culture, he talks about form and substance in the singular and maintains the meaning of form. The self-creation of life has common features with the other ones making it possible to move from one position to another but if the extremes are taken alone, it is difficult to combine them without contradiction.

Tillich’s endeavour to unite the three functions of life creates conceptual problems. It is not possible to unite without tension Tillich’s ontological and cultural theological views. In self-transcendence, the Spirit transcends the forms: the view of form is static. Following this kind of definition of form in the Trinity would lead to the emphasis of the dynamic side in God: the form principle of the Trinity would be submitted to dynamics. However, in the view of the Trinity, Tillich uses the concept of logos which is based on the classical view of form. Following this kind of view of form throughout cultural theology would lead to the emphasis of the meaning of form in a different way than Tillich has done.

Tillich’s ontological and Trinitarian views are based on the unity and balance of dynamics and form: when the balance and unity is maintained, the difference between the polarity of dynamics and form and the view of form and substance is not very apparent. However, cultural theological views indicate the Protestant view of the Spirit which transcends the forms and is free to manifest itself in all religions and cultures; the dynamic substance is accompanied with finite forms. Tillich wants to appreciate all the manifestations of the Spirit without losing basic Christian insights, but this creates the tension in his system.

When we evaluate Tillich’s system, the basic question is, how do we see the need for the three functions of life: is it possible to create an adequate system only from one point of view or is it necessary to involve all the three in one system in spite of the problems? If it is correct to unite the three functions of life to the three persons of the Trinity, this is a common question for all Trinitarian theology: is it inevitable that there are logical and conceptual problems always when we want to say something in a Trinitarian way? Tillich maintains the dialectical nature of theology, but this is a major parting of the ways in theological and philosophical thinking: the dialectical thinking can be seen also as a contradiction of ideas and incoherence of the system.
We have seen that the dynamic view and the idea of self-transcendence express Tillich’s lifelong thinking. Why did he not create his ontology and his whole system in accordance with these views? Why did he want to combine the three functions of life and take a new starting point for his system? We do not know what would be Tillich’s own answer to the questions that his system raises: would he have kept the three functions of life in spite of the problems for logical consistency or would he have developed his views and found better ways to express them? Would he have been willing to go on with the correlation of the Christian message with the situation or would he have taken a new “non-provincial” approach, as some of his latest texts indicate?

Tillich was aware of the problems of his system: it can be seen in his difficulties to complete the system and in his dissatisfaction with the third volume. However, he has made one of the outstanding efforts of the last century to interpret the Christian message in a new cultural situation. He shared the basic Christian views but at the same time maintained that the Spirit is free to transcend all the forms and manifest itself in different forms. He wanted to be a “church theologian” and a “cultural theologian” at the same time, and that caused the tension in his thinking.

If the analysis of the three functions of life in Tillich’s thinking is correct, it gives different possibilities to develop a theological system from Tillich’s foundation:

1. The first possibility is to accept Tillich’s idea of the three functions of life and to look for better conceptual ways to express the idea. The approval or disapproval of the dialectical thinking is crucial.

2. The second possibility is to take one of the three functions of life and the corresponding view of dynamics and form and to create a theological system based on it.

3. The third possibility is to give up the idea of one coherent system and to create a system of different modes which are developed as well as possible in order to see the points of contact and conflict. This kind of system would be in line with the ideas of the postmodern age.

Tillich saw clearly that theological work is a continuing one. He leaves us with many questions and many possibilities: we are in a station with many intersecting paths, the choice is ours.

Yet a system should be not only a point of arrival but a point of departure as well. It should be like a station at which preliminary truth is crystallized on the endless road toward truth.159

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159 ST III, preface.
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