DE GRUYTER

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Reading Wittgenstein (on Belief) with Tillich (on Doubt)

Summary: In this paper, I explore the possibility of reading Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief with Tillich's concept of existential/religious doubt, especially as developed in his *Dynamics of Faith*. I argue, first, that Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief as a deep certainty of a grammatical remark is not the same as his understanding of hinge-certainty of "hinge propositions", and that the relevant difference is that Wittgenstein leaves room for the possibility of doubt in the former but not in the latter. Second, I argue that Tillich's concept of dynamic faith by which Tillich explicates the role of doubt internal to religious believing can enrich the Wittgensteinian conception of religious belief. Despite the notable differences between Wittgenstein's thoughts and Tillich's overall system of theology, Tillich's treatment of the concept of "faith" signals a possibility of a more positive way of relating Wittgenstein's grammatical investigation and Tillich's mature understanding of philosophical theology. At the end of the essay, responding to D. Z. Phillips' negative assessment of Tillich's theology in the name of Wittgenstein, I suggest what such positive way of relating the two might look like.

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Artikel erkunde ich die Möglichkeit des Lesens von Wittgensteins Verständnis des religiösen Glaubens in Bezug auf Tillichs Begriff des existentiellen/religiösen Zweifels, vor allem in seiner Dynamik des Glaubens. Als Erstes werde ich argumentieren, dass Wittgensteins Verständnis des religiösen Glaubens als eine tiefe Gewissheit einer grammatischen Bemerkung nicht das Gleiche ist wie sein Verständnis von Angelsicherheit der »Angelsätze.« Der Unterschied ist, dass Wittgenstein ein Raum für die Möglichkeit von Zweifel im ersten Konzept lässt, aber nicht im Zweiten. Ich werde dann argumentieren, dass Tillichs Konzept des dynamischen Glaubens – in welchem er die Rolle des internen Zweifels am religiösen Glauben expliziert – Wittgensteins Konzeption des religiösen Glaubens signifikant bereichern kann. Trotz der bemerkenswerten Unterschiede zwischen den Gedanken Wittgensteins und Tillichs Gesamtsystem der Theologie, signalisiert Tillichs Behandlung des Begriffs des »Glaubens« eine Möglichkeit eines positiven Bezuges zwischen Wittgensteins grammatischer Untersuchung und Tillichs reifer philosophischer Theo-

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logie. Am Ende des Aufsatzes, als Reaktion auf D.Z. Phillips negative Beurteilung von Tillichs Theologie im Namen von Wittgenstein, werde ich einen Vorschlag machen, wie die positivere Art der Beziehung der Beiden aussehen könnte.

I Introduction

It is not common to see the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein combined with the theology, or philosophy, of Paul Tillich. With a few exceptions, theologians usually see Wittgenstein's thought as positively compatible either with Barthian or neo-Barthian (i.e. post-liberal) theologies (e.g. George Lindbeck, Hans Frei), or with Thomas Aquinas (e.g. Grammatical Thomists such as David Burrell and Fergus Kerr). Similarly, when Wittgensteinian philosophers look for a theological partner, they tend to take Barth, Aquinas or others, almost never Tillich. For example, while D.Z. Phillips described Barth as "the guardian of the grammar of the Faith",[1] he was sometimes ambivalent and at other times openly critical of Tillich.[2] More recently, Stephen Mulhall has not only embraced Grammatical Thomism but suggested significant fresh developments within this school of thought.[3] In the light of all this, it may seem at least unusual if not misguided to try to combine Wittgenstein with Tillich.

Nevertheless, I will argue that reading Wittgenstein and Tillich together can be meaningful and theologically fruitful. By relating Wittgenstein's thoughts on religious belief to Tillich's on doubt, I am not attempting to say that Wittgenstein and Tillich were engaged in the same, or even very similar projects. To an extent, their investigations were guided by disparate guiding concerns. They wrote in markedly different styles and made different conceptual moves on

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1 D. Z. PHILLIPS, "Philosophy and Theology: Too Close for Comfort: A Reply to Tage Kurten", *D. Z. Phillips' Contemplative Philosophy of Religion: Questions and Responses*, ed. by Andy F. SANDERS (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 115.

2 D. Z. PHILLIPS, "Philosophy and Theology: Too Close for Comfort: A Reply to Tage Kurten", 114–118, 122–123.

3 Most recently and elaborately, Stephen Mulhall exposited his work on Grammatical Thomism in his Stanton Lectures at Divinity Faculty, Cambridge, between January and March, 2014. Stephen MULHALL, *The Great Riddle: Wittgenstein and Nonsense, Theology and Philosophy*. Stanton Lectures 2013–14, Divinity Faculty, Cambridge. Available online in Audio format: http://sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/1637674, [Last Accessed 18.07.2014].

some vital topics for both: Wittgenstein's austere approach to philosophy and life, and his style of writing in 'gnomic remarks', contrast sharply with Tillich's lavish and sometimes poetic theological prose. Wittgenstein's anti-Platonist and anti-metaphysical remarks, too, appear to be at odds with at least some important aspects of Tillich's thought: for example, his claim that "metaphysics cannot be avoided in any theology",[4] as well as with the philosophical background which influenced Tillich, namely German idealism (predominantly Shelling, his understanding of philosophy and the grand, systematic ways of combining philosophy and theology).[5] These important differences constrain any attempt to relate constructively the thought of Wittgenstein to that of Tillich.

I want to note at the outset that I am not trying to develop anything like a 'fully Tillichian' position when combining the chosen Wittgenstein's and Tillich's insights in this essay. That is, I am not claiming that the 'Wittgenstein-Tillich combo' on belief/faith and doubt presented here fits the overall system of Tillich's either earlier or mature systematic theology. My aim is rather to explore the possibility of using strands of Wittgenstein's and Tillich's thought, respectively, in a constructive way in its own right. In other words: I am engaging with their respective understandings of "religious belief" (Wittgenstein), faith and doubt (Tillich), as a part of a contemporary philosophical-theological project which, in my view, is in important sense Wittgensteinian. I will argue:

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4 Paul TILLICH, "Relations of Metaphysics and Theology", *Review of Metaphysics*, 10/1, (1965), 61. However, Tillich's mature understanding of metaphysics is influenced by Heidegger and therefore strives to be significantly non-ontotheological. For a theological affirmation of Wittgenstein's anti-metaphysical discourse, see Kevin HECTOR, *Theology Without Metaphysics: God, Language and the Spirit of Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). However, see also David Burrell's grammatical-Thomist interpretation which, accepting that appropriate Christian metaphysics can only be "metaphysics-as-grammar" affirms metaphysical formulations with Wittgenstein: David BURRELL, *Aquinas, God and Action* (London: Kegan & Paul, 1979).

5 See Christian DANZ, "Tillich's Philosophy", *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. by Russell Re MANNING (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 173–188; and Jerome A. STONE, "Tillich and Shelling's Later Philosophy", *Kairos and Logos: Studies in the Roots and Implications of Tillich's Theology,* ed. by J. CAREY (Mercer University Press, 1984), 3–36. For Tillich's language of "participation" in relation to mysticism, see Marteen de J. JONG , "Mysticism and Prophecy: The Heritage of Another Paul", *Mystical Heritage in Tillich's Philosophical Theology*, ed. by Gert HUMMEL, Doris LAX (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2000), 125–134. Neither early nor later Wittgenstein would find a place for the language of "participation" in relation to divine, and the early Wittgenstein's understanding of "the mystical" in particular is deeply at odds with any version of (neo-)Platonistic tradition of "mysticism" – See Ulrich ARNSWALD, "The Paradox of Ethics – 'It Leaves Everything as It Is'", *In Search of Meaning*, ed. by U. ARNSWALD (Karlsruhe: Universitätsverlag Karlsruhe, 2009), 1–24.

- Firstly: that, if read responsibly, Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief as a deep certainty of a grammatical remark is not the same as his understanding of the certainty of the so-called "hinge propositions" on which all our thinking and doubting rests and "turns" (like "I exist", or "The world existed yesterday"). In other words, if we read Wittgensteinian grammaticalism regarding religious belief within the overall context of Wittgenstein's understanding of religious language, believing and experiencing, we must conclude that religious belief is not utterly indubitable for Wittgenstein in the way the "hinge-certainty" is.
- Secondly: that Tillich's notion of dynamic faith by which he affirms the role of doubt within religious faith can enrich the Wittgensteinian conception of religious belief. Despite the tensions between the surrounding conceptual contexts Wittgenstein and Tillich employ (for example, their incompatible usages of "evidence" and "verification"), this combination proves elucidating: Wittgensteinian grammaticalist understanding of religious belief lacks an articulate affirmation of the role of doubt within the life of faith (he leaves room for it but doesn't explicate it) that Tillich provides; while Tillich's understanding of dynamic faith needs a stronger emphasis of the grammatical nature of religious remarks which Wittgenstein provides.
- Thirdly and finally: Despite the notable differences between Wittgenstein's thought and Tillich's overall system of theology, Tillich's treatment of the concept of "faith" signals a possibility of a more positive way of relating Wittgensteinian grammatical investigation and Tillich's mature understanding of philosophical theology. At the end of the essay, responding to D. Z. Phillips' negative assessment of Tillich's theology in the name of Wittgenstein, I will suggest what such positive way of relating the two might look like.

II Wittgenstein's grammaticalism and beyond

II.1. Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief

In this section, I summarize how I read Wittgenstein on religion and in relation to theology. We can talk about different strands of Wittgenstein's thought on religion, and accordingly, of different ways in which Wittgenstein's thought is relevant for theology.[6] These have to be understood, of course, within the

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6 I take nearly all Wittgenstein's notes, lectures and "remarks" as legitimate resource that reflect what I call "Wittgenstein's thought on religion", and not merely the texts that were either published during his lifetime (*Tractatus*) or were in advanced stages of preparation for publication by Wittgenstein or his close friends before his death, such as Part I of *Philosophical Investigations*. It is true that Wittgenstein didn't want his lectures, like those to the relatively small group of students in Cambridge compiled posthumously in the *Lectures on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, to be published, since he felt he "talked freely as ideas came" and didn't consider these thoughts to be his fully "considered opinions"; Ray Monk, *Duty of Genius* (London: Random House, 1991), 403. I agree with Monk, however, that this doesn't mean that

broader context of Wittgenstein's thought, especially his mature understanding of philosophy as descriptive, grammatical investigation:

> [Our] investigation ... is not directed towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the *kind of statements* we make about phenomena ... Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away.[7]

There are at least four clearly recognizable conceptions of religion in Wittgenstein's thought, which I call *grammaticalism*, *instictivism*, *existentialism*, and *nonsensicalism*. I will have a bit more to say about these in the later sections. For now, I want to suggest (but not argue) that it is helpful to read most 20th Century interpreters of Wittgenstein on religion, both in the Wittgensteinian tradition of philosophy of religion (such as Rush Rhees, Norman Malcolm, and D. Z. Phillips) and in theology (such as Hans Frei, George Lindbeck, or Stanley Hauerwas), as emphasising grammaticalism above other conceptions of religion in Wittgenstein, prioritizing an important strand of the later Wittgenstein above other strands found in either later or earlier Wittgenstein, or both.

Grammaticalist understanding of religious language interprets religious doctrines – at least central ones like "God is the creator of all", "God loves the world", or "God disproves of sin" in Christianity – as "grammatical remarks" framing the rules of grammar. Accordingly, theology as a discipline which interprets those rules for the Church, should be understood as "... grammar of word 'God'"[8], where grammar "tells what kind of object anything is" (PI, § 373). In Christianity, the central doctrines determine what we can or cannot say about God and his relationship towards anything and everything. In this way, the doctrines at the same time frame and express the possibilities of Christian believing

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they don't reveal significant aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophical thinking: 'Precisely because he was speaking in a spontaneous and unguarded manner, [these notes] provide one of the most unambiguous statements of his purpose in philosophy, and of how this purpose connects with his personal *Weltanschauung*' (Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 404).

7 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations: The German Text with an EnglishTranslation*, Revised 4th Edition, transl. and ed. by G. E. M Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and J. Schulte (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), § 90 – hereafter, PI.

8 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932–1935: From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald*, ed. by Alice Ambrose (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2001), 32. Compare the slightly different notes of the same lecture from the notes of G. E. Moore, in *Wittgenstein's Lectures 1930–1933: From the Notes of G. E. Moore*, ed. by David Stern, Brian Rogers, and Gabriel Citron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), 8: 74, 77 – hereafter, MWL. For a fuller understanding of Wittgensteinian *conceptions*, see O. Kuusela, "Gordon Baker, Wittgensteinian Philosophical Conceptions and Perspicuous Representation", *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 3/2 (2014), 71–98.

and living. Wittgenstein also talks about religious doctrines/rules of grammar as "pictures": for example, he talks of the assertion "God's eye sees everything"[9] as a picture that tends to guide the believer's actions.

Saying that religious doctrines are "grammatical remarks" for Wittgenstein means that they play a very different kind of role in our life with words than do empirical statements. To present a 'non-religious' example: The statement "All human beings have minds" is, in the later Wittgenstein's parlance, a grammatical remark – it has to do with the meanings of words used in the sentence, and in a specific, all-encompassing way, with our experience. It is also certain for us: our life-experience and the entrenched uses of the concepts "human being" and "mind", with their logical interrelatedness, make it nonsensical to deny it, e.g. to state something like "Some human beings have minds, others not" (except in irony or in rare, borderline circumstances, like when talking about brain-dead patients). But this also means that this remark itself – "All human being have minds" – is not a sensible statement within the usual language-games with "mind", but delimits the bounds of sense for those language-games. On the other hand, saying "John has made up his mind about whom to vote for in upcoming elections" is doing something quite different: it is a factual claim about a recent occurrence which one has experienced/perceived, of which one may be more or less justified in claiming and believing, depending on evidence.

Religious doctrines, Wittgenstein suggests, are like the former statements and not the latter:

> Experiences do not show us God as a sense experience does an object, nor do they give rise to *conjectures* about him. Experiences, thoughts, – *life* can force this concept on us. So perhaps it is similar to the concept "object".[10]

Just like the formal concept "object" enables the talk about empirical reality although trying to prove that "objects exist" doesn't make sense, so the concept "God" enables us to speak and relate to reality Christianly while trying to prove that "God exists" doesn't make sense.[11] The frequent problem of misunderstanding the concept of God as referring to "an object" of some sort, i.e. something like a super-powerful "gaseous vertebrate" (Wittgenstein refers to such a claim by Ernst Haeckel[12]), is largely due to the fact that the "surface grammar" of

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9 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1970), 71 – hereafter LC.
10 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 97 – hereafter CV.
11 For a recent analysis of this conceptual analogy in Wittgenstein, see Genia Schönbaumsfeld, *Confusion of the Spheres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 165–170.
12 MWL, 8:75.

God-sentences has God as a *noun*. For, while nouns or "substantives" usually refer to "a *thing* or a *substance*",[13] in the case of God-talk this is not the case as indeed the "depth grammar" of "God" shows: if you ask believers "Does 'God helps people in need' mean that he has arms?", most would respond "You can't talk of god having arms."[14]

What does this mean for the nature of one's core religious *beliefs* for Wittgenstein? It means that "religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a frame of reference. Hence, although it's belief, it's really a way of living, or a way of assessing life" (CV, 64). Wittgenstein emphasises that the word "believe" is used differently, or "extraordinarily", in religious discourse from the way it is used "ordinarily" (LC, 59), i.e. in everyday or scientific discourse about empirical realities. In fact, the most harmful distortion of religion, in Wittgenstein's view, corresponds to the surface-grammatical misunderstanding of religious language and results in confusing religious statements for scientific ones, like making the question of whether to believe in Christ's resurrection "a question of science" (LC, 57). This can only be a quasi-science, and a pseudo-religion, since the belief in resurrection "doesn't rest on a historical basis in the sense that the ordinary belief in historic facts could serve as a foundation" (ibid.).

In contrast, religious belief is depicted as a passionate kind of certainty:

> Christianity is not based on a historical truth, but presents us with a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not believe this report with the belief that is appropriate to a historical report – but rather: believe through thick and thin and you can do this only as the outcome of a life. Here you have a message! – don't treat it as you would another historical message! Make a quite different place for it in your life. – There is not paradox in that! ... historical proof (the historic proof-game) is irrelevant to belief. (CV, 37)

> Go on, believe! It does no harm. 'Believing' means submitting to an authority. Having once submitted to it, you cannot then, without rebelling against it, first call it in question and then once again find it convincing. (CV, 52)

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13 MWL, 8:74.

14 MWL, 8:77. For an important and more general distinction between surface grammar and depth grammar in Wittgenstein, see PI, § 644. It is philosophy's task to distinguish between surface and depth grammar in the use of words. Surface grammar is "[what] immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word ... [i.e.] the way it is used in the sentence structure" (ibid.). But often enough, the sentence structure (syntax) deceives us and leads to confuses notions and false beliefs. In contrast, the depth grammar of words, phrases etc. can be understood by "looking", i.e. observing the ways in which these are *used* and not used in variety of contexts. Properly done, philosophy "is a struggle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language" (PI, § 109).

[If] I am to be *really* redeemed, – I need certainty – not wisdom, dreams, speculation – and this certainty is faith. And faith is faith in what my *heart*, my *soul*, needs, not my speculative intellect. For my soul, with its passions, as it were with its flesh and blood, must be redeemed, not my abstract mind. (CV, 38)

Presenting religious belief-attitude in those terms, Wittgenstein can say that "[the] man who stated [faith assertion] categorically was more intelligent than the man who was apologetic about it" (LC, 63). From this, it is hard to avoid a picture of religious belief-attitude as a kind of unwavering certainty, a total submission to what is believed in, as opposed to a speculative or scientific belief-attitude where such certainty is thought to be inappropriate.

II.2.   What kind of certainty?

Instead of rehearsing the by-gone and fruitless discussion of whether Wittgenstein was a fideist or not, I will now briefly discuss parallels and disanalogies between the remarks on religious belief by the later Wittgenstein just mentioned, and Wittgenstein's thoughts on the so-called "hinge-propositions" found in the collection of Wittgenstein's very late remarks, *On Certainty*.[15] This will then set the stage for introducing the relevant reflections of Tillich into the discussion.

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein describes something like a network of one's deepest certainties, normally taken for granted, constituting what he calls one's *Weltbild* or world-picture. Many beliefs which we typically don't (or never) subject to doubt are part of world-picture, such as: "I exist", "I spent my whole life in close proximity to earth", "Here is a hand", or "Time flows". It is because we take such things for granted that we are able to claim anything at all, to use reason, and adopt any criteria for truth and falsity of beliefs we might have. World-picture, then, provides us with the "depth grammar" and is beyond epistemic justification:

propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules (OC, § 95).

These taken-for-granted certainties have become known as *hinge propositions* or simply 'hinges', since Wittgenstein describes them with the metaphor of hinges (of the door) on which all other beliefs, doubts, and even basic procedures of reasoning turn (as does the door) (OC, § 341). What is deceptive about hinge

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15 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) – hereafter, OC.

propositions is that, although they have the form of empirical propositions, they are in fact grammatical remarks. In their actual usage in our flow of life with words, they are not in fact subject to testing, but co-constitute the very meanings of the words they include. Hinges delimit the bounds of sense for any sensible statements containing those words: "I want to say: propositions [or 'sentences', German: *Sätze*] of the form of empirical propositions, and not only propositions [*Sätze*] of logic, form the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language)" (OC, § 401).

Now, from what we've said above, one can notice parallels between Wittgenstein's descriptions of religious beliefs on one hand, and the certainty of hinges on the other. Expressions of both are described as "grammatical remarks". Both belief-attitudes appear to be related to ways of acting with complete certainty, which makes them categorically different from epistemically justifiable beliefs, i.e. potential "knowledge" (OC, § 174). When noting that our world-picture, i.e. our hinges, don't rest on argument and evidence but that we simply find ourselves "in them", Wittgenstein adds: "Isn't this altogether like the way one can instruct a child to believe in God, or that none exists, and it will accordingly be able to produce apparently telling grounds for the one or the other?" (OC, § 107) Finally, both religious and hinge certainties are sometimes described as "something animal" or having to do with "primitive reactions" instead of "ratiocination" (OC, § 359).

In the recent discussions of *On Certainty* some interpreters have emphasised these similarities. For example, Michael Kober reminds us of Wittgenstein's remark that "'knowledge' and 'certainty' belong to completely different *categories*" (OC, § 308),[16] and claims that this closely corresponds to Wittgenstein's categorial difference between scientific and religious beliefs. This means that, while scientific beliefs are knowledge-apt for Wittgenstein, religious beliefs aren't. While Kober briefly notes some differences between the two kinds of certainty in Wittgenstein's remarks[17] and doesn't lump hinges and religious beliefs completely together, his strong emphasis in the parallels presses the picture on readers of religious beliefs as strongly analogical to hinge-certainties.

Daniele Moyal-Sharrock[18] goes even further, however, and brings the two completely together, reading Wittgenstein as understanding religious beliefs to

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16 Michael Kober, "'In the Beginning was the Deed': Wittgenstein on Knowledge and Religion", *Readings of Wittgenstein's On Certainty*, ed. by Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007), 242–243.
17 Michael Kober, "'In the Beginning was the Deed'", 246, 249.
18 Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, *Understanding Wittgenstein's* On Certainty (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

be a sub-category of hinges. For example, she presents Christian belief in the Resurrection as a "local hinge" for Wittgenstein which, for Christians, replaces the "universal hinge" which says: "people don't come back to life after they die".[19] Nevertheless, she argues, both hinges somehow operate in life as completely *taken-for-granted* certainties, which is possible only because a special accommodation is made: "Where the religious or local hinges seem to challenge *universal* hinges, *local* hinges do not override, but always *accommodate* universal hinges".[20]

Both Kober's and Moyal-Sharrock's interpretations suggest (the latter more so than the former) that Wittgenstein sees religious beliefs as indubitably certain. Doubting one's own religious beliefs is then equivalent to ceasing to be religious at all. If we follow this reading to its logical end, we have to affirm that in religious faith, as in hinge-certainty, doubt for the believer is not merely "hard", but *logically* excluded!

II.2.1 The four conceptions of religion in Wittgenstein's thought

The reading of Wittgenstein on religious belief just mentioned – call it the *strong grammaticalist* interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion – is exegetically misguided, however. What we can call grammaticalist readings all emphasise, as the name suggests, the grammaticalist conception of religion in Wittgenstein's thought explicated in the section *II.1.* above: the idea that doctrines, at least in Christianity but likely also in several other traditions, are rules of depth-grammar for the central religious concepts like "God", "salvation", and "soul". Besides the strong grammaticalism of Kober and Moyal-Sharrock, there are less extreme versions of grammaticalism, like that of Norman Malcolm or D. Z. Phillips.

However, there are other conceptions of religion in Wittgenstein's work – "early", "middle" and "late" Wittgenstein – which are often ignored by grammaticalists. We can address these only briefly in this essay. What I call *instictivism* refers to Wittgenstein's emphasis that the "source" of religion (linguistic behaviour, believing, rituals, other practices), however complex and intellectually sophisticated, has much to do with "primitive" or "instinctive reactions" (LC, 56; CV, 36, 61; OC, § 475)[21] and not "cool" intellectual procedures. Wittgen-

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19 Daniele MOYAL-SHARROCK, *Understanding Wittgenstein's* On Certainty, 175.
20 Ibid.
21 See also Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, transl. by A. C. MILES (Doncaster: Brynmill Press, 1979), 8 – hereafter, RFGB; and *Zettel*, 2nd Edition, ed. by G. E. M ANSCOMBE and G. H. von WRIGHT (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 391.

stein's *existentialism* has to do with Wittgenstein's affirmation of the intimate connection between religious believing on one hand, and decisions of living importance, as well as with particular kinds of experience, on the other – especially with what, following recent phenomenological work of Matthew Ratcliffe,[22] we can call "existential feelings": for example, wonder at the existence of the world, feeling of absolute safety, or a deeper, all-pervasive "guilt".[23]

The final conception of religion in Wittgenstein is *nonsensicalism*, embraced and brought out most clearly by Cora Diamond and, more recently, Stephen Mulhall in philosophy, and David Burrell in theology. In Wittgenstein's words, religious language necessarily "runs against the boundaries of language", since the expressions of religiously and ethically salient experience, such as mentioned in the paragraph before this one, are strictly speaking "nonsensical" (LE, 11–12).

This feature of religious language is much more clearly present in Wittgenstein's earlier and middle thought than the later. The early Wittgenstein wrote in the *Tractatus*[24] *that nothing can be said about the world as a whole*, since this would require that the one saying that stands outside of the world, which is logically impossible (TLP, § 4.12). However, what the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* calls "the mystical" is exactly a perspective on, or "feeling" for, the world as a whole, expressions of which are necessarily nonsensical (TLP, § 6.44–45). In his transitional period, writing about "religious" and not about "the mystical" anymore, Wittgenstein explains that it is not despite but *because* of its nonsensicality that religious discourse can express the "absolute value" (as opposed to merely relative) (LE, 11–12). David Burrell[25] interprets it thus:

> [Religiously *appropriate* God-talk] fails to represent God. It fails not merely by falling short but by lacking the structural isomorphism requisite to any statement which purports to refer to its object. Besides being unable to say the right things about God, we can never even put our statements correctly, ... [since its subject matter lies] beyond the range of our linguistic tools.[26]

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22 M. Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

23 Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics", *Philosophical Review*, 74/1, (1965), 9–12; See also CV, 97.

24 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge, 1981) – hereafter: TLP.

25 Burrell learns this from Wittgenstein as much as from Aquinas and a thorough grammatical investigation of the formula "God is creator of *all*".

26 David Burrell, *Aquinas, God and Action* (London: Kegan & Paul, 1979), 13–15.

Note that it is possible to read Wittgenstein's later remarks, like the one that the meaning of "believe" in religion is "extraordinary" as opposed to "ordinary" (LC, 59), as exhibiting both continuity and discontinuity with the nonsensicalist strand of the earlier Wittgenstein.[27] To wit, it is possible to read the later Wittgenstein as saying the following: since religious language is intrinsically nonsensical, when we say that something makes sense to state religiously (or "in faith") we use the word "sense" in an "extraordinary" way, compared to the use of "sense" in relation to all "ordinary" fact-stating.

Any detailed examination of these fours conceptions of religion in Wittgenstein (grammaticalism, instictivism, existentialism, and nonsensicalism), let alone the interpretive task of spelling out how these might contribute to Wittgensteinian theology, is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that various interpretations of Wittgenstein on religion tend to emphasise one or sometimes two of these four, conceptions underemphasising others.[28] The way how a Wittgensteinian does this partly depends on whether she or he sees more or less continuity between the earlier and the later Wittgenstein, but also on many other factors, such as the broader philosophical or theological framework from which she or he interprets Wittgenstein. What is important for us here is the awareness of all four conceptions – that is, the awareness of the fact that grammaticalism is not all that Wittgenstein has to offer to philosophy of religion and theology. For a start, this demands a re-examination of the strong grammaticalist interpretation of Wittgenstein on religious belief-attitude. Next, it will also ease our examination of Tillich's understanding of faith with Wittgenstein in mind.

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27 For the most recent position arguing for nonsensicalist reading of the *later* Wittgenstein, see Stephen MULHALL, *The Great Riddle: Wittgenstein and Nonsense, Theology and Philosophy*. Stanton Lectures 2013 – 14, Divinity Faculty, Cambridge. Available online in Audio format: http://sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/1637674.

28 To mention just a few examples in philosophy of religion: Norman Malcolm and D. Z. Phillips emphasise grammaticalist and, to lesser extents, existentialist and instictivist strands; Brian Clack emphasises the instictivist, and to a lesser extent the existentialist strand; and Stephen Mulhall emphasises the nonsensicalist, and to a lesser extent existentialist and grammaticalist strands. See Norman MALCOLM, *Wittgenstein Themes: Essays 1978–1989*, ed. by G. H. von WRIGHT (London: Cornell University Press, 1995); D. Z. PHILLIPS, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986) and *Faith after Foundationalism* (London: Routledge, 1988); Brian CLACK, *Wittgenstein, Frazer and Religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999); and Stephen MULHALL, *The Great Riddle: Wittgenstein and Nonsense, Theology and Philosophy*. Stanton Lectures 2013 – 14, Divinity Faculty, Cambridge. Available online in Audio format: http://sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/1637674. .

II.3. Exegetical reasons to reject "strong grammaticalism"

Several remarks by the later, but also transitional Wittgenstein show that, while religious beliefs can be considered as a part of the believer's world-picture, Wittgenstein at times describes religious believing very differently from what he writes about taken-for-granted hinge-certainty. Take, for instance, the fact that the element of persistence, commitment, or *will* in religious believing is cautiously but clearly affirmed by Wittgenstein. As we've already seen, he notes that Christianity "presents us with a ... narrative and says: now believe!" We are invited to believe that narrative, not as a historical report, but by following the call: "*believe through thick and thin* and you can do this only as the outcome of a life (CV, 37).

A very similar point is made in another, often quoted passage from *Culture and Value:*

> Amongst other things Christianity says, I believe, that sound doctrines are all useless. That you have to change your *life*. (Or the *direction* of your life.) ... For a sound doctrine need not *seize* you; you can follow it, like a doctor's prescription. – But here you have to be seized & turned around by something. – Once turned round, you must *stay* turned round. (CV, 61)

The first thing to note here is that, for Wittgenstein, it is possible to follow a religious doctrine as a rule in a shallow, irreligious sense: "like a doctor's prescription". So, any grammaticalism which focuses predominantly or solely on *verbum externum* – that is, on the ways in which doctrinal formulas and the Biblical narratives frame the meanings of religious concepts "from the outside" for the believer – while disregarding the *experiential* dimension of "being seized and turned around", and feeling the wonder at the existence of the world, is not Wittgenstein's kind of grammaticalism. An example of such non-Wittgensteinian grammaticalism is George Lindbeck's.[29]

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29 See George Lᴉɴᴅʙᴇᴄᴋ, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009), 19–25. Lindbeck, purportedly inspired (also) by Wittgenstein and his "private language argument" (PI, §256; the whole context of interrelated remarks broadly on this topic in *Philosophical Investigations* is §244–271), expresses a thoroughly anti-experientialist and anti-existentialist form of grammaticalism, writing that "inner experiences are *derivative* [from] external features of religions, ... a *verbum externum*"; "an experience ... is impossible unless it is in some fashion symbolized"; so "religious experiences ... [including any feelings or moods that are thought by Tracy and other 'experiential-expressivists' to be the source of religious language] ... can be construed as by-products of linguistically or conceptually structured cognitive activities of which we are not directly aware", so that, "to become religious ... is to interiorize a set of skills by practice and training

Furthermore, due attention should be given to Wittgenstein's own emphasis on "stay" in the sentence "Once turned round, you must *stay* turned round". This means that, for Wittgenstein, a possibility of *not* staying turned round was very much alive for the believer, i.e. a possibility of failing to persist in belief, or at least failing to persist in belief fully. While religion, or Christianity, clearly has "deeper springs" than one's mere volition – that by which one is "seized & turned round" – there are stages of religious life according to Wittgenstein where a *conscious determination* is necessary in order to continue to be guided by religious belief.

We need to appreciate how *unlike* this element of religious believing is to the corresponding element in hinge-certainty. In fact, it is almost the opposite: hinges like "I have a body" are *completely taken-for-granted*. According to Moyal-Sharrock's detailed – and, on this question, correct – interpretation of *On Certainty*, hinge propositions "go without saying"; they are believed with an "*ur*-confidence" or "un-self-conscious trust", and hence indubitable or unshakeable.[30] For Wittgenstein, it is logically impossible to be "tempted" not to believe hinge-beliefs. While there are some hinge-beliefs within our world-picture which *can* be "removed from the bedrock" (OC, § 498) with a radical cultural change in what is taken for granted[31], one's will or consideration has no role in such a process. Any doubt-behaviour in relation to hinges cannot be genuine (OC, § 255). In short: Any call to persist in faith "through thick and thin" (CV, 37), or to "stay turned round" (CV, 61) in relation to hinges like "The world existed yesterday" or "My name is so-and-so" makes no sense at all. Unlike religious beliefs, hinges are "in deed not doubted" (OC, § 342).

[and become] skilled in language, the symbol system of a given religion". It is beyond the scope of this essay to explicate further why such an anti-experientialist reading of "private language argument" and application of it to religious language is a misguided reading and application of Wittgenstein.

30 Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, *Understanding* On Certainty, 192.

31 Take Wittgenstein's own problematic example, the sentence "It isn't possible to get on the Moon" (OC, § 106). At the time this remark was written (cca 1950), Wittgenstein took this sentence to be indubitable for Westerners (!), i.e. that anyone who doubted that nobody could go to the Moon was either crazy or disingenuous. Although this was, of course, a time before humanity's first moon expedition, there were already scientists and science-fiction "visionaries" around who at that time already genuinely doubted, or even abandoned the belief in, the sentence "It isn't possible to get on the Moon". The disanalogy between such give-up-able hinges and even most central religious beliefs like "God exists" is that the latter can be dubitable *and* simultaneously life-guiding, whereas the former, when they become genuinely doubted, are effectively removed from the world-picture and become "something" else: dubitable empirical beliefs. For an interesting recent discussion of this controversial "local hinge", see Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, *Understanding* On Certainty, 136–147.

This is reflected also in the expressions Wittgenstein uses to describe people who don't share our/his hinge-certainties: they are "mentally disturbed" (OC, § 71) or "crazy" (OC, § 217) for Wittgenstein. On the other hand, Wittgenstein says he *normally* wouldn't regard a person who makes extraordinary religious claims which he himself didn't share as "mad"; instead, he would "look for entirely different explanation altogether" (LC, 62). To regard religious belief as scientific or "speculative" is, at worst, a "superstition" or confused for Wittgenstein: it is a consequence of deep misunderstanding of the nature of religious language. It is futile to produce arguments for or against God, "since for every reason it gives, there is a cogent counter-reason" (CV, 34). However, something very different can be said of hinges: "everything speaks in its favour, nothing against it" (OC, § 4)!

So much, then, for the *strong* grammaticalist reading of Wittgenstein on religion. According to Wittgenstein, religious belief-attitude is not an indubitable certainty of the kind that is characteristic for "hinges".

III   Relating Tillich and Wittgenstein

III.1.   Tillich (and Wittgenstein) against the "intellectualistic distortion" of faith/belief

In his book *Dynamics of Faith*,[32] Tillich's concern is to elucidate what is faith. This concern is not merely descriptive: he is trying to show what is a balanced or a religiously appropriate faith, as opposed to the ways in which "faith" is often misunderstood, either by believers or by critics of religion. It is important for Tillich, then, to understand what faith is *not*. He tries to make this clear by describing three widespread "distortions" of faith: intellectualist, voluntarist, and emotivist.

To begin with the topic by which we concluded the previous section, examining Wittgenstein's stance: the role of volition in faith. Tillich warns against a voluntaristic distortion which interprets the act of faith as essentially an arbitrary, "wilful decision" to accept and affirm the Church's teachings. But this doesn't mean that the will doesn't have a place in the dynamics of faith-life. That place comes only after one is already "grasped by something":

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32 Paul TILLICH, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2009).

> We are often grasped by something, e.g. Biblical passages, as expressions of the objectively ultimate concern, but we hesitate to accept them as our subjective ultimate concern for escapist reasons. In such cases ... the appeal to the will is justified ... But such an act of will does not produce faith – faith as ultimate concern is already given.[33]

Note the similarity between this characterization of faith and Wittgenstein's existentialist remarks that in Christianity "you have to be seized & turned around by something", and "once turned round, you must *stay* turned round" (CV, 61). Some active role of will or persistence in faith is affirmed, but only within the larger context in which the passive element of "being existentially seized/grasped" is more prominent.

We find another parallel between Wittgenstein and Tillich's description of the next, "intellectualistic" distortion of faith, which he describes as a

> ...misinterpretation of faith [as] an act of knowledge that has a low degree of evidence. Something more or less probable or improbable is affirmed in spite of the insufficiency of its theoretical substantiation ... One believes that one's information is correct ... [The] term "faith" should not be used in connection with theoretical knowledge.[34]

Under intellectualistic distortion, Tillich also counts the "trusting" that the Bible gives us "correct information" despite its low probability, supposedly remedied by the belief that "the divine authority guaranteed its truth".[35] Such conception of faith is based on a misguided picture of both religious commitment and Biblical revelation.[36]

That doesn't mean that Tillich is anti-cognitivist about religious believing (and neither is Wittgenstein). However, Tillich (unlike Wittgenstein) differentiates between different understandings of "cognitive reason": scientific, historical, philosophical, and the one operative in faith. All of these try to reach "the truth", or the "really real", but the meaning of truth are somewhat different in each of these understandings of reason. A part of this variety of meanings of "truth" are also different ways in which "truth" is logically and practically connected with the meanings of other significant concepts in these realms, like "reasonability" and "knowledge".[37]

So, while one way to distort faith intellectualistically is to treat it as a *historical* belief (probabilistic reasoning, recognizing law-like uniformity of nature,

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33 Paul Tɪʟʟɪᴄʜ, *Dynamics of Faith*, 43.
34 Tɪʟʟɪᴄʜ, *Dynamics of Faith*, 37–38.
35 Tɪʟʟɪᴄʜ, *Dynamics of Faith*, 92.
36 For Tillich's more detailed understanding of revelation, see Paul Tɪʟʟɪᴄʜ, *Systematic Theology I*, 109–159.
37 Paul Tɪʟʟɪᴄʜ, *Systematic Theology I*, 70–91.

but not principally affirmed by repeated experimentation), another way to do this is to treat it as a *scientific* belief (induction, affirmation by repeated experiment). In the latter, "every scientific truth is preliminary and subject to changes, ... [but this] element of uncertainty does not diminish the truth value of a tested and verified scientific assertion".[38] Rather, it is an anti-dogmatism intrinsic to any scientific knowledge. It is important, Tillich maintains, that this kind of uncertainty or 'scientific' doubt is not confused for the doubt that is characteristic of faith, of which more will be said below. He warns against attempts to "defend the truth of faith against the truth of science, if theologians point to the preliminary character of every scientific statement in order to provide a place of retreat for the truth of faith".[39]

To do that is to commit a bad category mistake for Tillich. Clearly, he was a compatibilist regarding the relationship between religion and science, but not of a naïve sort. Faith and science, i.e. the respective *meanings* of "truth" appropriate to each, should not be confused. The conflict between faith and science is a conflict between "a faith and a science each of which [is] not aware of its own valid dimension".[40] For example, it was only when the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic astronomy was fused with Christian symbolism of "God in heaven", and "demons below earth" that medieval Church's message had to conflict with the then new, heliocentric picture revealed by evidence in the late Middle Ages.[41] Faith overstepped its own sphere of meaning and became quasi-science. On the other hand, when/if the modern physics affirms, not only the vast knowledge and understanding of the universe which is its legitimate sphere, but a "monstrous symbol... [of] a universe in which everything, including their own scientific passion [for truth], is swallowed by a meaningless mechanism",[42] we are dealing not only with science but with a specific kind of "faith": a metaphysical scientism.

All this has strong parallels with the Wittgensteinian understanding of the relationship between religion and science, although Wittgenstein uses "science", "scientific"[43], etc. more broadly and doesn't elaborate on the differences between what Tillich calls "scientific" and "historical" knowledge, respectively, and would certainly reject Tillich's notion of "philosophical truth" alto-

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38 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 93.

39 Ibid.

40 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 94.

41 Ibid.

42 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 94–95.

43 The sense of Wittgenstein's "scientific" stems from the German *Wissenshaftlich*. C.f. Gabriel Citron, "Simple Objects of Comparison for Complex Grammars: An Alternative Strand in Wittgenstein's Later Remarks on Religion", *Philosophical Investigations* 35/1 (2012), 18–42.

gether.[44] The parallels between their understandings become clear when comparing their respective reflections on the concept of 'the soul' in religion and science, respectively. Tillich writes:

> [Psychology] is subject to scientific verification, as is every other scientific endeavour. … When faith speaks of the ultimate dimension in which man lives, and in which he can win or lose his soul, … it is not interfering at all with the scientific rejection of the concept of the soul. A psychology without soul cannot deny this nor can a psychology with soul confirm it. The truth of man's eternal meaning lies in a dimension other than the truth of adequate psychological concepts.[45]

So, according to Tillich it doesn't make sense to scientifically investigate the existence of the soul as a hypothesis to be confirmed or disproved by psychology or related sciences. To be sure, psychology itself can produce deep confusions between "the more or less verified observations and hypotheses" on one hand, and "assertions about man's nature and destiny which are clearly expressions of faith" on the other.[46] While Tillich accepts several features of Freudian psychoanalysis as genuine advancement in the scientific understanding of human being, he, unsurprisingly, rejects the metaphysically-naturalistic elements of it as faith-assertions masked as science.[47]

Now, compare Wittgenstein's reflections on "soul":

> I have always wanted to say something about grammar of ethical expressions … / Cf. "soul" which has sometimes been described as something "gaseous". / But others haven't meant by "soul" anything like this. /… / If I restricted use of "soul" to such phrases as "His soul is at rest" or "His soul is easily stirred", you might say I'm denying that there is any soul: but you may mean by "Men have souls" simply that such propositions are true /… / By asking what he would say, & what he wouldn't, you can get at how he uses the word. / Haeckel said "God is a gaseous vertebrate", meaning that that's what people meant. / This is like saying "Soul is a gaseous human being"; & answer is *sometimes* people so use this word, but sometimes not at all. /… /… There are many controversies about meaning of "God" [and "soul", etc.], which could be settled by saying "I'm not using the word in such a sense as that you can say …". (MWL, 8: 74:78)

The parallels are striking: both Tillich and Wittgenstein reject the scientistic, i.e. the quasi-scientific interpretation of soul-language, while accepting or allowing religious interpretation of human being through the concept "soul" as retaining a religiously-important meaning.

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44 See Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 102–109.
45 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 96.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid. 96–97.

These comparisons show just how close Tillich and Wittgenstein were in their overall understandings of religious faith as something very different from scientific believing. Interestingly, it is Tillich, not Wittgenstein, who is tempted to abandon the language of "belief" in religious matters altogether and replace it by "faith", properly interpreted.[48]

III.2. Tillich on dynamic faith and existential doubt

We are now ready to direct our attention to what I propose as Tillich's major contribution to a broadly Wittgensteinian picture of religious believing: the intrinsic element of doubt in a dynamic faith.

Tillich contrasts the dynamic faith with the dogmatic or "static faith" which can't tolerate doubt. In keeping with his critique of intellectualistic distortion of faith, Tillich makes clear that the doubt he is talking about is not the methodological doubt which is a permanent and necessary feature of scientific investigation (scientific anti-dogmatism). He is also not talking about what he calls the "sceptical doubt", an intellectually paralysing attitude of "rejecting any certainty". Rather, Tillich coins for this purpose a concept "*existential* doubt". Such doubt is "aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth".[49] Of existential doubt, Tillich says

> [Doubt] is not a permanent experience within the act of faith. But it is always present as an element in the structure of faith. This is the difference between faith and immediate evidence either of perceptual or of logical character. There is no faith without an intrinsic 'in spite of' and the courageous affirmation of oneself in the state of ultimate concern. This intrinsic element of doubt breaks into the open under special individual and social conditions. If doubt appears, it should not be considered as the negation of faith, but as an element which was always and will always be present in the act of faith.[50]

Tillich claims such existential doubt can be applied to, not only this or that peripheral part of the doctrine or application of it to one's life, or to disagreements between Christians on various interpretations of the Gospel message, but to the very message of the church "that Jesus can be called the Christ".[51] He suggests that an *alive possibility* of such doubt (not its constant psychological presence) is a necessary part of both individual and the communal life of Christian faith.

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48 Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN: CV, 37, 61; LC, 56–59; Paul TILLICH, *Dynamics of Faith*, 36.
49 TILLICH, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 23.
50 TILLICH, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 24–25.
51 TILLICH, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 25.

We need to be aware, of course, that Tillich is here not merely descriptive, not even in a phenomenological sense. He is suggesting a kind of faith that is religiously or theologically (but also psychologically and socially) preferred or "healthy". So, unlike the later Wittgenstein's seeming preference for unquestioning attitude despite recognizing the possibility of doubt, the kind of faith which Tillich presents as healthy is a dynamic faith, alive to the risk of doubt intrinsic to any religious or secular-existential orientation. He contrasts that with the static faith described as non-questioning surrender, not only to the ultimate beyond all descriptions which is theologically warranted, but also to concrete elements of faith like particular doctrines as formulated by the religious authorities – the Church in Christianity. In this way something that is necessarily preliminary and conditional – namely, the human interpretation of the divine from the Biblical writers to the present – receives ultimacy and is elevated above the risk of doubt.[52]

Such an elevation of dogma above the risk of doubt in religion is manifested, Tillich says, by a "suppression of autonomous mind, culturally and religiously, in the name of the doctrinal formulations of a special faith".[53] It leads to detrimental moral, cultural and political consequences. This doesn't mean that *dynamic* faith is incompatible with affirming "creeds", however. It only means that a proper awareness of the nature of faith puts the believers into a different and religiously healthier relationship to the creeds which they affirm.

It is perhaps at this point that the Tillichian contribution to the Wittgensteinian picture of religious belief-attitude is most relevant. Two things need to be emphasised. On the one hand, Tillich's description of the "static faith" is in many ways similar to Wittgenstein's descriptions of hinge-certainty: it is a taken-for-granted, unshakable trust! But Tillich makes absolutely clear what Wittgenstein only hints at and even obscures, namely that to believe one's religious doctrines with an unshakable trust is not "a healthy religion" (normatively speaking). In other words: a Tillichian, prescriptive understanding of faith as *dynamic* demands a rejection of a strong grammaticalist view of religious belief. But, as we've seen above, Wittgenstein wasn't a *strong* grammaticalist if read in a balanced way. So the Tillichian critique of static faith doesn't straightforwardly contradict the Wittgensteinian understanding.

The Wittgensteinian-grammaticalist emphasis makes us aware that, overall, religious beliefs have a grammatical, regulative status for a believer. But they have such a status while, structurally, at the same time remaining dubitable, however strange that sounds compared to both ordinary-scientific as well as

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52 Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 32.

53 Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 26.

hinge-believing. Klaus Von Stosch points out that such an integral part of Christian religious life as the act of prayer

> helps to articulate [doubts concerning fundamental religious beliefs] without invalidating the world-picture-constitutive meaning of religious beliefs ... The peculiarity of religious beliefs seems to consist of being able to have all characteristics of world-picture-constitutive, regulative beliefs [as are hinge-propositions] without taking part in their internal undeniability.[54]

Empirically, this is manifested by the fact that there will be times in believer's life when this "*intrinsic* element of doubt breaks into the open under special individual and social conditions"[55], and not by the fact that one completely doubts one's religious commitments all the time.

Wittgenstein and Tillich do present us with different emphases here. What I am suggesting is that both of these – seeing the grammatical nature of religious remarks, as well as dubitable nature of genuinely religious believing – are important enough not to lose either from sight when attempting a balanced and constructive understanding of Christian religious believing and language, where "balanced" implies, not only a descriptive focus of Wittgensteinian philosophical ideal, but a theological-cultural message very much in accordance with Tillich's, about what kind of Christian faith-attitude is better than others (e.g. "faith as scientific belief", or "faith as hinge-certainty").

This is not to say that we don't encounter tensions if we try to read Wittgenstein and Tillich together on religious belief or faith in broader contexts of their respective philosophies. Some of those tensions are hard to reconcile. One such tension concerns the cluster of reflections on faith and doubt as exposited by Tillich in his *Systematic Theology* where he takes up the challenge of verifiability of religious beliefs, posed by logical positivism and empiricism more generally. In outlining his response, Tillich concedes that the notion of truth, which religion and theology cannot give up, is conceptually linked with the possibility of religious beliefs being false;[56] and from this, a notion of *experiential verification* is developed which is radically different from *experimental* verification characteristic for science, according to Tillich. The latter is not possible in genuine religion. Nevertheless, our life as a whole provides an experiential "test" for our religious beliefs which *can* be found to be false, although in their particular,

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54 Klaus von Stosch, "Wittgensteinian Fideism?", *The Contemplative Spirit: D.Z. Phillips on Religion and the Limits of Philosophy*, ed. by I. Dalferth & H. von Sass (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010), 129.

55 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 25.

56 Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973), 100–103.

existential way. For Tillich, experiential verification is an important notion, connected with the possibility of doubt, which is logically demanded by the very fact that we do talk of "truth" in religion.[57]

On the other hand, it is hard to see that "experiential verification" in Tillichian sense would be a sensible notion in Wittgensteinian perspective, since the concept of verification is logically connected with the concepts of "evidence" and "knowledge" for both early and later Wittgenstein, and "evidence" is for Wittgenstein (especially the later Wittgenstein) always something external and related to ordinary/scientific believing. In other words, although, for Wittgenstein, certain kinds of experiencing do have an important role in religious belief-formation as well as belief-sustenance, no experience can be "evidence" for such beliefs, and therefore, "[whatever] believing in God may be, it can't be believing in something we can test, or find means of testing" (LC, 60).

The point of pointing out this tension is to suggest that a project which would relate Tillich and Wittgenstein more intensively than the present attempt would have such interesting issues to address, and then, inevitably, some grammatical decisions to make. But this doesn't mean that, in the context of a constructive contemporary theological exploration, this would be a pointless, let alone impossible, task.

IV Wittgensteinian philosophy and Tillichian theology

In the remainder of this essay, I want to encourage such exploration by briefly examining a particular Wittgensteinian critique of Tillich by D. Z. Phillips, in which Phillips takes issue with Tillich's formulation of faith as "ultimate concern". In that essay Phillips presents what he takes to be *the* Wittgensteinian picture of the relation between philosophy and theology, and contrasts it with Tillich's. In my response to Phillips' critique I will sketch out, in broad strokes, a possibility of relating Tillich and Wittgenstein which respects Wittgenstein's understanding of philosophy as grammatical investigation, as well as some of Tillich's characterizations of philosophical theology.

In one of his final essays,[58] D. Z. Phillips responds to Tage Kurten's attempt to relate D.Z. Phillips' own philosophy with Tillich's. In a notable disagreement

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57 Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 100.
58 D. Z. Phillips, "Philosophy and Theology: Too Close for Comfort: A Reply to Tage Kurten", *D. Z. Phillips' Contemplative Philosophy of Religion: Questions and Responses*, by Andy F. San-

with Kurten, Phillips offers his own Wittgensteinian critique of the Tillichian understanding of faith. Phillips reads Tillich (through Kurten) as attempting to avoid the danger of faith (Phillips means the faith in the Christian God) dying out in an increasingly secular society, i.e. the danger of the "death of God". Tillich is said to have defined faith as "ultimate concern with being itself" in order to secure faith's continued presence and relevance even where *explicitly* Christian faith has waned drastically, i.e. in today's society in the West where a pervasive doubt in the divine reality has become a widespread life-world.[59]

Since Tillich says that the ultimate concern is a necessary element in every human life, and even that we can notice this by empirically *observing* human lives, Phillips accuses Tillich of trying to secure the validity of faith (Phillips means Christian faith) by committing a grave category mistake. Supposedly "climbing a metaphysical ladder", Tillich is anchoring the faith in something extrinsic to it: the notion of ultimate concern which, for Phillips, is a confused one.[60] For, while "on the one hand, ultimate concern is defined as a *necessary* feature of every human life. On the other hand, it is said to be an element in human life as we know it, which is simply a factual claim".[61] There is nothing more problematic for a Wittgensteinian Phillips than a confusion of categories: especially the confusion between empirical, dubitable claims on one hand, and the necessary or grammatical claims on the other hand.

Phillips' interpretation of Tillich here appears to be doubly wrong, however. Firstly: Tillich's claim that "to have faith is to be ultimately concerned" does not, in fact, describe the Christian faith as such, or a monotheistc faith, not even an "implicit" Christian faith. It means, first, to take something – whatever: the nation, one's motorbike, sex, political cause – as being of *ultimate* importance in life, so that everything else is in principle or in actuality subordinate to it. There are true and false ultimacies for Tillich, and there are "many degrees in the endless realm of false ultimacies".[62]

Secondly: for Tillich, to be ultimately concerned is not an all-present empirical reality in humans. He clearly writes that, after placing one's faith in what is not god but an idol, the resulting existential disappointment can penetrate "into the very existence of man" (ibid.), which can "lead to a loss of the center

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DERS (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 111–124; Kurten's essay in the same volume is Tage KURTEN, "Internal Realism: A Joint Feature by Dewi Z. Phillips and Paul Tillich?", *D. Z. Phillips' Contemplative Philosophy of Religion: Questions and Responses*, ed. by Andy F. SANDERS (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 95–110.

59 D. Z. PHILLIPS, "Philosophy and Theology: Too Close for Comfort", 121–123.

60 D. Z. PHILLIPS, "Philosophy and Theology: Too Close for Comfort", 116.

61 Ibid.

62 Paul TILLICH, *Dynamics of Faith*, 13.

and to a disruption of the personality"[63] so that "the meaning of one's life breaks down".[64] When Tillich claims that faith, as ultimate concern, is a "necessary" element of humanity, he doesn't make a claim that confuses the logical/grammatical and the empirical, but rather offers an alternative *religious* conceptual world with which to talk about faith, humanity, and life's meaning. It is a theological-*rhetorical* call to see humanity in a certain way: namely so that, "to be ultimately concerned" is constitutive of humanity, even in the face of the fact, which Tillich recognizes, that some people live without being ultimately concerned about anything, which is to say, live without *the* meaning of life; and that to be ultimately concerned *properly* or religiously appropriately is to have faith in the true God. There is, then, an alternative, more sympathetic reading of Tillich's language of "ultimate concern" which, at least in its central features, doesn't merit the accusation of the "confusion of the spheres" from a Wittgensteinian perspective.

I find it much easier to sympathise with Phillips' other critique, i.e. his more modest request that Tillich, or rather Tillichians, need to explain the meaning of "necessary" when claiming that "the ultimate concern is a necessary feature of human life". Is this meant as a logical necessity? Or is it a rhetorical and somewhat "preachy" use of "necessary", along the lines of "to be fully human, one *should* be ultimately concerned" – as I have interpreted it above? This request for clarity and consistency of meaning is surely legitimate, especially in the context of philosophy as grammatical/conceptual investigation.

And here we come to the final, broadest, but also the least detailed suggestion of the present essay which concerns the relation between philosophy and theology. One can only concur with Phillips that doing philosophy can and should be differentiated from religious God-talk *per se* (or any other religious or "existential" talk, for that matter). But it doesn't follow from this that philosophy and *theology* should not mix, or that these two cannot be done by one and the same person, as Phillips often claims.[65] According to Phillips's Wittgenstein,

> [theological] voices, [Christian or other], come and go, some prevailing over others at times, but subsiding at other times. Voices may die away, and new ones come to be. This is nothing less than the complexities of human life. A philosopher contemplates this tangled scene, hoping to do conceptual justice to it, whereas a theologian is a voice within it. Tillich is one such voice.[66]

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63 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 14.
64 Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 20.
65 For example, D. Z. Phillips, *Faith after Foundationalism*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 218; and *Philosophy's Cool Place*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 113.
66 D. Z. Phillips, "Philosophy and Theology: Too Close for Comfort", 115.

There is, of course, no doubt that Tillich is a Christian theological *voice*. It is also fair to say that Tillich is not always sufficiently clear when combining philosophical reflection with theology and rhetorical religious discourse, which can result in confusion. But, leaving the much larger question of examining Tillich's mature understanding of philosophy and its relation to theology for another occasion,[67] it is possible, *pace* Phillips, to bring out Tillich's insights on combining grammatical/conceptual investigation and theology without delving much into that larger question. For this purpose, we will concentrate on a few of Tillich's succinct but less ambitious statements, found in the *Dynamics of Faith* and *Systematic Theology I*.

I have in mind the formulations where Tillich engages in philosophical-as-conceptual investigation responsibly, and takes it as a task that is in principle separable and separate from "casting" a theological perspective, both of which were for him important aspects of philosophical theology broadly conceived. This, of course, is in line with a venerable tradition in Western theology which sees philosophical theology as *including* the best of what grammatical investigation of the meanings of key terms and the logical structure of statements has to offer, as a preliminary task before doing any positive, let alone confessional theology. Such is also the reading of Aquinas by the Wittgensteinian David Burrell, mentioned earlier in this essay. In his interpretation of the first thirteen questions of the *Summa Theologica* as a rigorous grammatical investigation of the implications of the statement that God is "the beginning and end of all things", Burrell reminds us that Aquinas' inquiry into the grammar of 'God' does not "pretend to supplant the awareness of God proper to a religious life ... [Considerations] like these are not religious and are at best pre-theological. They are not religious since religious activity presupposes the reality of God."[68] Philosophical theology is not something *instead* of religious life in God. Philosophy, practiced as grammatical investigation, has its crucial place *within* a broader theological project which traditionally (but not necessarily) includes, or is in a

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67 Tillich's mature conception of philosophy, although still including elements of the Shellingian idealist and system-building approach, combines existential and (pre)hermeneutical phenomenology, explicitly distancing himself from idealist heritage. It also in the end subtly "theologizes" philosophy as a whole when claiming, for example, that "[no] philosophy is without an ultimate concern in its background, whether this is acknowledged or denied. This makes the philosopher a theologian, always implicitly and sometimes explicitly." (Paul TILLICH, "Relations of Metaphysics and Theology", *Review of Metaphysics*, 10/1, (1965), 59; See also Paul TILLICH, *Systematic Theology I*, 8–28; and Paul TILLICH, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (London: Collins, 1967), 46–58.
68 David BURRELL, *Aquinas, God and Action*, 12–13.

service of, a clear "religious voice", i.e. a particular religious God-talk with its rhetoric elements.

The later Tillich sometimes presents the role of conceptual/grammatical investigation in theology in a broadly similar fashion as Burrell and, more importantly, often enough proceeds on this basis in his own reflections. This despite his overall mature formulation of philosophy as existentialist phenomenology.[69] When writing on interpretations of religious symbols (including *statements* about "the Cross", "resurrection", etc.), he says:

> Theology as such has neither the duty nor the power to confirm or to negate religious symbols. Its task is to interpret them according to theological principles and methods. In the process of interpretation, however, two things may happen: [1] theology may discover contradictions between symbols within the theological circle and [2] theology may speak not only as theology but also as religion. In the first case, theology can point out the religious dangers and ... errors which follow from the use of certain symbols; in the second case, theology can become prophecy, and in this role it may contribute to a change in the revelatory situation.[70]

Notably, when Tillich investigates the concept of "faith" and the surrounding symbols, concepts, and practices, he enters that investigation with an acute awareness of the various meanings/uses and the resulting confusions that this concept is entangled into in the (then) contemporary culture. Accordingly, he opens the *Dynamics of Faith* in the following fashion:

> There is hardly a word in the religious language, both theological and popular, which is subject to more misunderstandings, distortions and questionable definitions than the word "faith". It belongs to those terms which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men. Today the term "faith" is more productive of disease than of health. It confuses [and] misleads ... Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that the word "faith" should be dropped completely; but desirable as that may be it is hardly possible ... The only way of dealing with the problem is to try to reinterpret the word and remove the confusing and distorting connotations, some of which are the heritage of centuries.[71]

Of course, Tillich's aims in *Dynamics of Faith* go beyond conceptual investigation alone. But it clear that, in this instance, the conceptual/grammatical investigation works as a necessary and important part of Tillich's theology. To conclude – and to underline the possibility of a further, constructive relationship between Wittgenstein and Tillich hinted at in this section – I suggest we reread the above opening into Tillich's *Dynamics of Faith* with the following Wittgensteinian methodological remarks in mind:

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69 See Paul TILLICH, *Systematic Theology I*, 8–28; see also TILLICH, *On the Boundary*, 57.

70 TILLICH, *Systematic Theology I*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973), 240.

71 TILLICH, *Dynamics of Faith*, xxi.

Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (PI, § 109)

[Philosophical] investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language. – Some of them can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an "analysis" of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking a thing apart. (PI, § 90)

Sometimes an expression has to be withdrawn from usage and sent for cleaning, – then it can be put back into circulation. (CV, 39)