

prime time

**Religion and Her Older Sister
Interpretation of Magic in Tillich's Work
with Respect to Recent Discourses in Psychology**

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Introduction

For an outline of my research question and my perspective of interpretation, I would like to call attention to three themes which are discussed recently and which – explicitly or rather implicitly – raise questions about the relation of magic and religion. It is my aim in this article to address these questions in the horizon of the philosophy of religion, and here especially in light of the work of Paul Tillich. It can be, I think, an impulse and contribution to an interdisciplinary discourse about magic and religion.

Cognitive Psychology

A discourse that suggests new reflection about the relation of magic and religion has developed in so-called cognitive psychology. Many colleagues in cognitive psychology and a growing number of colleagues in the psychology of religion take up an evolutionary perspective.¹ Most of these contributions hypothesize the origin of religion in neuronal cognitive reaction patterns which are supposed to have proven of advantage in the course of evolution. Whether the origin of religion is ascribed to shamanism² and an adaptive reaction pattern³ or is seen as by-product of evolution,⁴ magical thinking and magical

¹ L. A. Kirkpatrick, *Attachment, Evolution, and the Psychology of Religion*, New York 2005.

² M. J. Rossano, *The Religious Mind and the Evolution of Religion*, in: *Review of General Psychology* 10 (2006), 346-364; S. K. Sanderson, *Adaptation, Evolution, and Religion*, in: *Religion* 38 (2008), 141-156; M. Winkelman, *Shamanism as the Original Neurotheology*, in: *Zygon* 39 (2004), 193-217.

³ C. S. Alcorta/R. Sosis, *Ritual, Emotion, and Sacred Symbols – The Evolution of Religion as an Adaptive Complex*, in: *Human Nature – An Interdisciplinary Biosocial Perspective* 16 (2005), 323-359.

⁴ P. Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*, New York 2001 (dt: *Und Mensch schuf Gott*, Stuttgart 2004); P. Boyer, *Religious Thought and Behaviour as By-Products of Brain Function*, in: *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7 (2003), 119-124; P. Boyer/B. Bergstrom, *Evolutionary Perspectives on Religion*, in: *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008), 111-130; Kirkpatrick 2005; L. A. Kirkpatrick, *Precis: Attachment, Evolution, and the Psychology of Religion*, in: *Archive for the Psychology of Religion/Archiv für Religionspsychologie* 28 (2006), 3-47; L. A. Kirkpatrick, *Religion is not an Adaptation*, in: P. McNamara (ed.), *Where God and Science Meet: How Brain and Evolutionary Studies Alter our Understanding of Religion*, Vol 1, Westport 2006, 159-179.

rituals are considered to constitute the original form of religion.⁵ In this extensive debate, the concept of 'religion', rather than the concept of 'magic' stands in the foreground – in a rather imprecise definition however and very often not defined at all. Pascal Boyer,⁶ for instance, depicts the evolutionary origin of religion in the cult for ancestors and does not make much of distinction between gods, ghosts and ancestors. For Boyer and many other cognitive psychologists, the term "nonphysical agent" or "supernatural agent" serves as container for all kinds of transcendent beings.

Religion and Health

The discussion about the relation of religion and health is not new, but, some interdisciplinary attempts notwithstanding, used to be the domain of theologians. That Tillich's work – and with it, a new understanding of magic – has the potential to inspire this discussion, has been realized by only a few colleagues.⁷ The non-theological discussion about religion and health has completely changed however: since the 1980s we witness an explosion of interest in the relation of religion and health in psychology, nursing, sociology and other disciplines.⁸ Part of the new discussion about the relation of religion and health includes alternative ways of healing which cannot be explained in models of the established sciences. The discussion about models for understanding alternative ways of healing is only beginning.

⁵ In the context of the evolutionary approaches, we also see new interest in the magical-animistic world view of children – sometimes combined with assumptions about a relation between ontogenetic and phylogenetic development and assumptions about the origin of religion in the human individual. I refer to some exemplary studies and empirical projects: J. L. Barrett/R. A. Richert/A. Driesenga, God's Beliefs versus Mother's: The Development of Nonhuman Agent Concepts, in: *Child Development* 72 (2001), 50-65; P. Boyer/S. Walker, Intuitive Ontology and Cultural Input in the Acquisition of Religious Concepts, in: K. S. Rosengren/C. N. Johnson/P. L. Harris (eds.), *Imagining the Impossible: Magical, Scientific, and Religious Thinking in Children*, New York 2000, 130-156; P. L. Harris, On Not Falling Down to Earth: Children's Metaphysical Questions, in: *Imagining the Impossible*, 157-178; R. A. Richert/J. L. Barrett, Do You See What I See? Young Children's Assumptions about God's Perceptual Abilities, in: *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 15 (2005), 283-295; J. D. Woolley, The Development of Beliefs About Direct Mental-Physical Causality in Imagination, Magic, and Religion, in: *Imagining the Impossible*, 99-129.

⁶ Boyer 2001.

⁷ K. Grau's book, 'Healing Power' - Ansätze zu einer Theologie der Heilung im Werk Paul Tillichs, Münster 1999, is a pioneering work in this debate.

⁸ The literature about the relation of religion and health is immense. Here is a brief and incomplete selection: H. G. Koenig/M. E. MacCullough/D. B. Larson, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, Oxford 2001; D. Oman/C. E. Thoresen, Do Religion and Spirituality Influence Health? in: R. F. Paloutzian/C. L. Park (eds.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, New York; London 2005, 435-459; C. Klein/C. Albani, Religiosität und psychische Gesundheit. Eine Übersicht über Befunde, Erklärungsansätze und Konsequenzen für die klinische Praxis, in: *Psychiatrische Praxis* 34 (2007), 58-65; C. Klein/E. Brähler/O. Decker/G. Blaser/C. Albani, Religiosität und Spiritualität – Wertssysteme im Kontext therapeutischer Beziehungen, in: M. Hemer/B. Röhrle (eds.), *Handbuch der therapeutischen Beziehung*. Bd. II, Tübingen 2008, 1291-1336; cf. also: R. W. Hood/P. C. Hill/B. Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (4th edition), New York 2009, Chapter 13.

Here the most recent proposal of Harald Walach and colleagues⁹ may be interesting. The authors are psychologists who have investigated extensively alternative medicine, mindfulness and related topics. Now, Walach and colleagues propose to understand the psychological investigation of spirituality and religiosity as "heritage of parapsychology". Spirituality – the authors adapt to the new semantic trend in the psychology of religion and speak of "spirituality", rather than of "religion" – is defined as relation of the individual to the whole – a relation which includes experience, motivation and action. In order to understand spirituality, Walach and colleagues propose a model of "generalised entanglement" which is related to quantum theory and they claim that

"(G)eneralised entanglement is a formal and scientific way of explaining spirituality as alignment of an individual with a whole, which, according to the model, inevitably leads to non-local correlations."¹⁰

I wonder why Walach and colleagues did not consider extant conceptualizations of religion and of magic in their new interpretation of the relation between spirituality/religion and (alternative ways of) healing. I expect some clarification from the consideration of Tillich's concept of magic, when engaging in the discussion about the new proposal. To me, the parallels are obvious.

"Spirituality" vs. Religion?

"Spirituality" as new label enjoys a rapid increase of attraction in less than three decades, especially in the USA.¹¹ Of course, "spirituality" is in the first place the self-attribution of "people in the street"; and we need to engage in

⁹ H. Walach/N. Kohls/N. von Stillfried/T. Hinterberger/S. Schmidt, Spirituality: The Legacy of Parapsychology, in: Archive for the Psychology of Religion/Archiv für Religionspsychologie 31 (2009), 275-306.

¹⁰ Walach et. al. 2009, p. 275.

¹¹ As self-identification, "spirituality" has become more popular, especially in the US, and is often sharply contrasted with "religion". Cf. the contribution of our book about deconversion (H. Streib/R. W. Hood/B. Keller/R.-M. Csöff/C. Silver, Deconversion. Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Cross-Cultural Research in Germany and the United States of America, Göttingen 2009) and of my own more detailed analysis (More Spiritual than Religious: Changes in the Religious Field Require New Approaches, in: H. Streib/A. Dinter/K. Söderblom (eds.), Lived Religion - Conceptual, Empirical and Practical-Theological Approaches, Leiden 2008, 53-67) to an extensive discussion which can be characterized by the following selected texts: R. C. Fuller, Spiritual, but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America, Oxford; New York 2002; R. W. Hood, Spirituality and Religion, in: A. L. Greil/D. G. Bromley (eds.), Religion: Critical Approaches to Drawing Boundaries between Sacred and Secular (Religion and the Social Order 10), Amsterdam 2003, 241-264; D. Houtman/S. Aupers, The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition: The Spread of Post-Christian Spirituality in 14 Western Countries, 1981-2000, in: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 46 (2007), 305-320; P. L. Marler/C. K. Hadaway, 'Being Religious' or 'Being Spiritual' in America: A Zero-Sum Proposition? in: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 41 (2002), 289-300; B. J. Zinnbauer/K. I. Pargament, Religiousness and Spirituality, in: R. F. Paloutzian/C. L. Park (eds.), Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, New York; London 2005, 21-42.

research about this semantic trend.¹² However the attraction of 'spirituality' rapidly has invaded the scientific study of religion, especially the psychology of religion, on the conceptual level.¹³ This new semantic fashion can be characterized as attempt to eliminate or ignore the negative function, the dark side of religion. There is however another side of "spirituality": At least part of the scene featuring "spiritual" self-identifications – certainly New Age oriented people, but not only them – is open to magic views and practices. Considering these relatively new discussions, we have some reason to re-think the relation of religion and magic.

Thus the necessity to clarify the relation of magic and religion does not come in the first place from the magical or spiritualistic practices in the cultural niches or the waves of adolescent fascination with occult.¹⁴ Rather, the necessity for discussing the magic-religion relation springs also from new themes that have emerged in the midst of scientific discourses. With this broader perspective, I also see an enlargement of the question: rather than questions of theological normativity and decision-making which rituals and world views are acceptable, questions of how to explain the unexplainable, questions of conceptual clarification of 'religion' and 'magic' and of their difference stand in the foreground.

The perspective of Tillich, as I will demonstrate, is of special importance for such clarification. While Tillich did not write a book or article devoted exclusively to the topic of magic, we find a considerable number of passages in his writings where he talks about magic. This has been rather overlooked in research on Tillich's work so far. It is of special interest, how Tillich defines magic and how he conceptualizes the relation between magic and religion. Furthermore, it is interesting what kind of criteria follow from Tillich's conceptualization.

After presenting an overview of the locations where Tillich talks about magic, I will present his definition of magic, before discussing his perspective on the ambiguity of magic in the context of his view on the ambiguity of life which yields criteria for dealing with magic. In the conclusion I return to the questions raised in this introduction.

¹² See our current research project on "spirituality" at: <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/spirituality-research> in which we investigate self-identified "spirituality" in cross-cultural comparison between Germany and the USA.

¹³ Also here the amount of literature is immense. One of the most influential definitions is made by K. Pargament; I will discuss his proposal in the Conclusion. The trend is assessed by Weaver, Pargament and colleagues (Trends in the Scientific Study of Religion, Spirituality, and Health: 1965-2000, in: *Journal of Religion & Health* 45 (2006), 208-214). Together with Ralph Hood, I have summarized the most important contributions and suggest reading the classics of religion (H. Streib/R. W. Hood, *Research on "Spirituality": New Perspectives from Reconsidering the Classics on Religion*, CIRRuS Working Papers, No. 2, 2008 [online at: <http://repositories.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/biprints/volltexte/2009/3344/>]). I am *not* in favor of the polarization or even replacement of "religion" with "spirituality" in the scientific discourse, but very likely this trend is irreversible.

¹⁴ The occasion for my studies of magic in Tillich's work has been the adolescent fascination with the occult: H. Streib, *Entzauberung der Okkultfaszination. Magisches Denken und Handeln in der Adoleszenz als Herausforderung an die Praktische Theologie*, Kampen 1996 [online at: <http://repositories.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/biprints/volltexte/2009/2644/>].

Where Does Tillich Talk about Magic?

In which contexts does Tillich talk about magic? Does magic have a location in the systematic of Tillich's theology? It may be interesting to note the occasions on which a creative thinker such as Tillich associates magic. Of course, Tillich's work is rather extensive and has developed over four decades. Thus care has to be taken that our analysis and interpretation does not impose a systematic and coherence where there is no such thing in Tillich's work. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compile the locations where he talks about magic – and find that it runs through almost all topoi of the theological systematic:

(a) Revelation and miracles are locations for Tillich's talk about magic – and rather early ones: In his Marburg Dogmatics,¹⁵ Tillich says that the occult layer of things which we encounter in "paraphysical visions" could be a "Vehikel der Offenbarungserschütterung". Tillich, of course, wants to see a sharp distinction between occult and paraphysical experiences and the revelation proper. And he immediately adds the warning against a "magical misuse" of the occult and paraphysical. Tillich to my knowledge has not repeated such nevertheless positive interpretation of the occult. Instead, in his *Systematic Theology* of 1951, Tillich develops an argumentation about miracles which, in sharp demarcation to the witchcraft and the identification of miracles with the unusual and supernatural, and "in the fight against the supra-naturalistic distortions of genuine revelation", warns us against the supra-naturalistic and occultistic misunderstanding, because "it confuses God with demonic structures in the mind and in reality".¹⁶ Thus Tillich talks about magic in the context of revelation and miracle – however rather with an attitude of warning and demarcation.

(b) In the context of the doctrine about God in the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich develops a rather positive concept of magic. When discussing the possibilities of the relation of the human being to God (or gods), Tillich writes: "Insofar as the gods are beings, magic relations in both directions are possible – from man to the gods and from the gods to man."¹⁷

(c) The question of faith healing is another thematic context in which Tillich refers to magic. In his most interesting article, "The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions",¹⁸ Tillich introduces a distinction between three kinds of healing: "religious or spiritual healing, magic or psychic healing, and bodily or natural healing". These three ways of healing may interrelate in the therapeutic process and Tillich does not devaluate any one of these ways of healing – which also applies to magic healing. However, in the Third Volume of his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich

¹⁵ P. Tillich, Dogmatik. Marburger Vorlesungen von 1925, ed. by W. Schüßler, Düsseldorf 1986.

¹⁶ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (ST 1), Chicago 1951, p. 116-117.

¹⁷ ST 1, p. 213.

¹⁸ P. Tillich, *The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions* (1946), *Main Works/Hauptwerke* (MW) Vol. 4, Berlin/New York 1987, 209-238.

wants to prevent a confusion of faith healing which is magic and genuine "healing through faith".¹⁹

(d) Another context for Tillich to talk about magic is prayer and its distinction from magic enchantment:

"He (God) might or he might not use his power to fulfill the content of the prayer. In any case, he remains free, and attempts to force him to act in a particular way are considered magic. Seen in this context, every prayer of supplication illustrates the tension between the concrete element and the ultimate element in the idea of God."²⁰

Here we encounter Tillich's view explicitly that human action is always ambiguous in regard to magic and at risk to become magic manipulation.

(e) Finally a theological context has to be noted that repeatedly is the occasion for Tillich to talk about magic: the sacraments. In the *Systematic Theology*, we read:

"(I)t is not only the emphasis on the conscious side of the psychological self that is responsible for the disappearance of sacramental thinking; magical distortion of the sacramental experience, even in Christianity is also responsible. The Reformation was a concentrated attack on Roman Catholic sacramentalism. The argument was that the doctrine of 'opus operatum' in the Roman church distorted the sacraments into non-personal acts of magical technique."²¹

In the context of the sacraments, Tillich talks about magic associated with a warning against magic misunderstandings. Nevertheless, Tillich sees the necessity for theology to clarify the question of the reality and effectiveness of the sacraments, because on these questions depends the survival of the church, as Tillich says in his article about "Nature and Sacrament".²² Tillich perceives the decline of the sacramental element in ritual practice as an existential threat to the church.

Considering this list of the most important locations where Tillich talks about magic, we may doubt that these associations may constitute a theory of magic. Nevertheless we see from contexts in which he talks about magic – revelation/miracles and the "spiritual presence" in the sacraments and in healing – that Tillich develops a concept of magic as integral part of his thinking and that this concept of magic is far from being negative only. This can be unfolded in two lines of thought: 1) Tillich's definition of magic as 'psychic participation' and 2) the discussion about the ambiguity of magic.

¹⁹ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3 (ST 3), Chicago 1963, p. 279.

²⁰ ST 1, p. 213.

²¹ ST 3, p. 121.

²² P. Tillich, *Natur und Sakrament* (1930), MW 6, Berlin/New York 1992, 151-188.

Participation as Foundation of the Concept of Magic

Magic as Everyday Participative Relation

Tillich describes the presence of magic in everyday relations as something taken for granted and nothing special; this may be the reason why he does not see the necessity to discuss explanations for this kind of magic relations. In the *Systematic Theology*, in the context of the theme of "spiritual presence", he writes:

"Although magic as a technical method has been replaced since the late Renaissance by technical sciences, the magical element in the relation between human beings is still a reality – however scientifically it might be explained. It is an element in most human encounters, including such encounters as those of the listeners to a sermon or a political speech with the speaker, of the counseled with the counselor, of the spectator with the actor, of the friend with the friend, of the beloved with the lover."²³

An almost identical list of everyday situations in which we encounter magic relations can be found in the context of faith healing later in this volume. Here also, Tillich mentions propaganda, teaching, preaching, counseling, love, friendship, but also medical treatment as everyday situations in which a magic element occurs. In this context, Tillich gives some more detail about characteristics of this magic relation:

"(M)agic must be defined as the impact of one being upon another which does not work through mental communication or physical causation but which nevertheless has physical or mental effects."²⁴

For a definition, this statement does not fully qualify, because it is mainly a negation, and the positive definitional characteristic "impact of one being upon another" is not precise. But nevertheless it is an approach toward a definition in that it excludes explanations of magic as mental or physical processes.

This is more precisely defined in Tillich's article about „The Relation of Religion and Health”.²⁵ Here the interpersonal magical relations are defined as part of a relation of all parts of the universe. Here also, Tillich is more explicit about the kind of relation: it is a "sympathetic interdependence": "The essence of this theory of magic can be described as the belief in a sympathetic interdependence of all parts of the universe".²⁶ Tillich refers to the roots of this notion of magic in a stoic concept of a "cosmic symptology" ("everything is a symptom of the state of everything else"). This magic relation is not at all limited to the relation between human beings, but includes the relation between humans and things, and to all parts of the universe. And this sympathetic interdependence includes, as already quoted, the relation of human beings to God or the gods (insofar as gods are beings).

Tillich's perspective on magic, as we have discussed it so far, can be summarized: In the relation between finite things and beings – including divine beings, nature, humans –, there exists a magic element, an impact with

²³ ST 3, p. 122.

²⁴ ST 3, p. 279.

²⁵ P. Tillich (1946), MW 4, p. 209-238.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 220.

physical, psychic and mental consequences which cannot be reduced to physical or mental causation. This magic relation is called sympathetic interdependence.

Focusing the Definition: Magic as 'Psychic Participation'

Does Tillich give a more detailed explication how to understand magic as sympathetic interdependence and as part of the interdependence of all parts of the universe? In a passage in the article on "The Relation of Religion and Health", Tillich takes the definition one step further:

"Sympathein (i.e. pathein, receiving influences, and sym, in direct contact and not through physical mediation) means a psychic participation in the other being, in knowing and acting. 'Psychic' is here used, as it always should be, (1) not in the sense of occultistic, and (2) not in the sense of consciousness, but (3) as designating the sphere between the biological and the mental, as representing a middle sphere in which both these participate."²⁷

Sympathetic interdependence means *psychic* participation. Here Tillich is more precise in not only demarcating the magic from the mental and the physical/biological, but he names the middle sphere.

It is interesting that Tillich demarcates magic healing from occultistic healing. Obviously, Tillich understands the occult as associated with the biological or physical mediation, and thus as explainable with physical or biological causality. And obviously, it is Tillich's intention to exempt the concept of magic from a narrow focus on the physicalbiological. On the other hand, magic should not be associated with and confined to the mental sphere – which, again, would allow for a kind of rational explanation as interaction through channels of consciousness. Sympathetic interdependence is more. It is more of a mystery. It is the psychic sphere which is "in between", considered deeper, but influencing and embracing both other spheres.

It is still not completely clear so far what we have to associate with the "psychic". So we have to look further. In the First Volume of the *Systematic Theology* we find a short, but more precise definition which repeats some things which we already know, but is more explicit about the "psychic":

"Magic ... is a theory and practice concerning the relation of finite powers to each other; it assumes that there are direct, physically unmediated sympathies and influences between beings on the 'psychic' level, that is, on the level which comprises the vital, the subconscious, and the emotional."²⁸

Here Tillich takes the definition of magic to its final stage with the "assumption" that magic consists of influences and sympathies on the psychic level – and that this psychic level comprises the *vital*, the *subconscious* and the *emotional*. Tillich²⁹ describes the vital as the dynamic that drives living beings to self-transcendence and form-breaking. The reference to the subconscious or unconscious is a consequence of Tillich's inclusion of psychoanalytic theory, especially in his later work.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ ST 1, p. 213.

²⁹ ST 1, p. 64.

'Psychic participation' is probably the most precise definition of magic in Tillich's work. And his definition of magic is positive. Magic is part of the interdependence of all finite things and beings in the universe. In theological terms, it is part of God's creation. Magic is also a factor in a variety of everyday relations. And very important: Magic has healing power – in psychic or magic healing. How exactly magic "works" and influences the individual person is a mystery. Tillich's definition of magic excludes causal models of explanation: neither the mind or consciousness, nor the physical or biological, nor the "occult" are the primary channels of magic interdependence; it is the psychic level comprising the vital, unconscious and emotional, on which magic influences occur. Thus, Tillich³⁰ says, a person can influence another person not only through an impact on the conscious decision-making center, but a person can have an influence on the entire being of the other human including his or her unconscious. Here we see Tillich's positive notion of magic which understands magic as part of the multi-dimensional unity of life.

The "Reality" of Magic and the Search for an Adequate Paradigm

Already in his work in the late 1920s, as we see in "Nature and Sacrament",³¹ Tillich has dealt with the question of how to understand the "reality" of magic. In the context of his attempt to understand the impact of the sacraments – and ultimately motivated by his concern that the sacramental element in religious practice becomes meaningless – Tillich considers several possibilities: (1) Magic-sacramental conception of nature or pan-sacramentalism, (2) Rational-objective understanding of nature, (3) Vitalistic interpretation of nature, (4) Symbolic-romantic interpretation of nature, and (5) 'New realism'. Tillich mentions the first four of these options only to disqualify them and to argue for his "new realism". However he objects the four previous options differently. Tillich strongly opposes the rational-objective attitude, because here "the magical view of nature disappears", and ...

"(n)ature is brought under control, objectified, and stripped of its qualities. No sacramental conception can find a root in this soil. Nature cannot become the bearer of a transcendent power, it can at most be an image of it, a witness to it."³²

On the other hand, Tillich has least problems with the magic-sacramental understanding: the only – nevertheless important – problem Tillich identifies in the missing differentiation between divine and demonic holiness. What is important for Tillich is the divine power inherent in any holy objects:

"Any object or event is sacramental in which 'the transcendent' is perceived to be present. Sacramental objects are holy objects, laden with divine power. From the point of view of the magical interpretation of nature, any reality whatsoever may be holy. Here the distinction between 'the holy' as divine or as demonic, as clean or unclean, is not yet known. At this stage the unclean and the holy can still be looked upon as identical."³³

³⁰ ST 3, p. 320.

³¹ P. Tillich (1930), MW 6, 151-188.

³² Ibid., p. 177.

³³ Ibid., p. 182.

It is obvious that Tillich seeks to ascribe "reality" to the holiness of objects, to their ladenness with divine power. Thereby the "reality" of holy objects is not different in magic and religion. Insofar the magic-sacramental interpretation is adequate. The distinction within the realm of holy objects between divine and demonic, clean and unclean is a second – nevertheless theologically very important – distinction of the religious, and, as will be explained below, prophetic and "protestant" interpretation.

The question for a paradigm appropriate for an interpretation of the sacramental power – and together with it: of magic – is answered by Tillich in this 1930 article with the proposal of a "new realism". To explain this, Tillich refers to "thinkers like Schelling, Goethe and Rilke" who, Tillich says, "have proposed this way of penetrating into the depth of nature".³⁴

"The power of nature must be found in a 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')."³⁵

In the article about "Religion and Health," a similar objection against the paradigms of an objectivistic understanding of nature re-occurs. But here Tillich expands the number of concepts that are taken for granted in most parts of natural and human sciences, but are foreclosing an adequate understanding of the interdependences in the universe and in psychic participation:

"The idea of psychic participation of beings in each other by sympathetic contact excludes the application, not only of the notions of causality, substance, and ego in their ordinary sense, but also of the category of identity. For the concept of sympathetic contact breaks through the categorial idea of the exclusiveness of things and persons."³⁶

Here, again, but more focused and more radical, Tillich objects the positivistic-empiristic heritage: Categories such as causality, substance, ego, identity and exclusivity – all need to be excluded and ignored to create the open space in which an adequate understanding of the participative or sympathetic interdependence can emerge and unfold.

As can be seen in these ways of argumentation, Tillich as philosopher of religion is rather looking back: In order to understand the concept of 'psychic participation', he suggests re-considering pre-Cartesian, pre-mechanistic, pre-modern ontological and anthropological concepts. But rather than putting back the clock, Tillich is searching for contemporary explications; what he says about Schelling, Goethe and Rilke, namely that "we must follow them with the means of our present knowledge of nature and man", applies to all thinkers in history of philosophy whom he refers to in his attempt to explicate his proposal for an adequate understanding of the "interdependence of all things in the universe", the "power of holy objects", "mystical realism"³⁷ – and the "psychic participation". Especially in his later work, Tillich has found in psychoanalysis and its concept of the unconscious a way to interpret 'psychic

³⁴ Ibid., p. 178.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Tillich, 1946, MW 4, p. 220f.

³⁷ ST 1, p. 178.

participation' in terms of contemporary thought. We may thus speculate whether Tillich, was he writing today, would make reference to quantum physics and welcome models of non-locality and the proposal of "generalized entanglement" as suggested by Walach and colleagues.³⁸

The Ambiguity of Magic

Magic and the Ambiguity of Life

Tillich's fundamental definition of magic as psychic participation highlights, as far as we have discussed it, the positive side of magic. Tillich however wants also to account for the ambiguity of magic which holds that "magic can be creative and destructive."³⁹ As potential negative destructive effects, Tillich mentions a) magical-manipulative mis-use of religious rituals, for example prayer which is intended to force the divine, b) magical mis-interpretation of holy objects such as the Lord's Supper or of images of God and c) manipulative mis-use of magical relations in therapeutic and everyday situations.

The ambiguity of magic is part of the general ambiguity of life. Tillich has unfolded his view of the ambiguity of life in his reflection on "The Self-Actualization of Life and its Ambiguities" in his *Systematic Theology*. Thereby the three main functions that belong to *morality*, *culture* and *religion* are characterized by their principle, their polarities and their risks of estrangement. In Table 1, I summarize Tillich's model:

Table 1. The Three Functions of Life According to Tillich (1963)

The three functions of life	... under the principle of dependent on the basic polarity of being:	... threatened by the existential estrangement :
Self-Integration	Centeredness	Individualization and participation	Disintegration
Self-Creation	Growth	Dynamics and form	Destruction
Self-Transcendence	Sublimity (Holy)	Freedom and destiny	Profanization and demonization

Tillich uses this systematic of the three functions of life for structuring the further reflections in his *Systematic Theology*. But we can also deduce from this model criteria for understanding magic. This may even allow to see some coherence and systematic in Tillich's notion of magic – beyond Tillich's comments that may appear more or less occasional.

Tillich has applied the first function of self-integration under the principle of selfcenteredness, also to *magic*, when he insists that magic can be an expression of the multidimensional unity of life, but only under the condition

³⁸ Walach et. al., 2009.

³⁹ Tillich, 1946, MW 4, p. 222.

that magic does not by-pass or exclude the decision-making center of the person, the responsible self. After the already mentioned list of everyday situations in which magic occurs, Tillich notes the ambiguity and "demonic" danger of magic:

"As an element in a larger whole which is determined by the centered self, it expresses the multidimensional unity of life. But if exercised as a particular, intentional act – by-passing the personal center – it is a demonic distortion."⁴⁰

A parallel characterization of the ambiguity of magic can be found in Tillich's section on faith healing:

"The propagandist, the teacher, the preacher, the counselor, the doctor, the lover, the friend, can combine an impact on the perceiving and deliberating center with an impact on the whole being by magic influence, and the latter can subdue the former to such a degree that dangerous consequences result from by-passing the deliberating, deciding, and responsible self."⁴¹

In all of these situations, Tillich notes a potentially dangerous effect of magic: it can be used manipulatively, by-passing the responsible self of the other person. Magic can only be appreciated as good and helpful power in nature, as long as the deciding center of the other person is respected and not excluded.

That "magic can be creative and destructive" regards also the second function of life, the function of self-creation and the principle of growth. Growth presupposes centeredness.⁴² Growth and self-creation presuppose the unconstrained interplay of individualization and participation. Magic by-passing the center of the responsible self would become destructive.

In the third function of life, self-transcendence, Tillich notes the most important risks of estrangement: profanization and demonization.⁴³ This does apply to religion, because the relation to God and the religious rituals and the sacraments are always at risk of being misunderstood or mis-used in a magical-manipulative way. But the danger in this third function does not apply to religion only, but also to magic. Magic is unavoidable, but needs to be overcome for the sake of religion.⁴⁴

In sum, magic belongs to the realm of the profane. If magic understands itself as holy, it becomes idolatrous faith. If religious rituals are practiced as specific

⁴⁰ ST 3, p. 122.

⁴¹ ST 3, p. 279.

⁴² ST 3, p. 51.

⁴³ The criteria Tillich is using here have their roots in the 1925 Marburg Philosophy of Religion (MW 4, 117-170); thereby however the five polarities (religion and culture; belief and unbelief; God and world; the holy and the profane; the divine and the demonic) are summarized and reduced to two (Holy and profane; Divine and demonic).

⁴⁴ D. Zilleßen (Sicherheit und Bedrohung des Körpers im Ritual. Spuren sakramentalen Handelns, in: H. Streib/H.-G. Heimbrock, *Magie - Katastrophenreligion und Kritik des Glaubens. Eine theologische und religionstheoretische Kontroverse um die Kraft des Wortes*, Kampen 1994, 199-226) speaks in his interpretation of Tillich's concept of magic as "unvermeidlich-aber-stets-zu-überwinden". In parallel with this, M. Moxter (Magie als Schwellenphänomen. Die Doppelgängerthese im Licht der Religionsphilosophie Ernst Cassirers, in: Streib/Heimbrock, 1994, 227-246) proposes to understand magic as threshold phenomenon ("Schwellenphänomen").

manipulative acts to influence the unconditional, they are a distortion of religion.

Unavoidable, but Necessary to Overcome: Magic in Real Life

Also in his article "Religion and Health," Tillich uses the criteria from his philosophy of religion to evaluate magic.

"Religion is not magic and magic is not religion. Religion is the relation to something ultimate, unconditioned, transcendent. The religious attitude is consciousness of dependence (cf. Schleiermacher's unconditional dependence), surrender (cf. Eckhart's Entwerdung, mystical annihilation, or Calvin's absolute obedience), acceptance (cf. Luther's taking, not giving, as first in religion). It concerns the whole man, is person-centered and ethical. Stated in this way, the distinction between religion and magic is a clear and simple one. Magic is a special kind of interrelation between finite powers; religion is the human relation to the infinite power and value. Magic can be creative and destructive, while religion stands essentially against the destructive powers. Magic is the exercise of immanent power, religion is the subjection to the transcendent power, etc. But these differences are clearly visible only on the basis of a religious development in which prophetic or mystical criticism has definitely established the unconditional character of the Unconditioned, or the ultimate character of the Ultimate."⁴⁵

On the basis of this fundamental difference between religion and magic, Tillich then admits that this clear distinction is permanently endangered from two sides, from the necessity that the unconditional must manifest itself concretely, and from the natural desire of the human being to gain power over the divine. Tillich mentions examples. For the first danger, he notes:

"The divine beings or gods are the most important example of the first danger. They are bearers of the Ultimate in being and in what ought to be, the two sides of every religion. But they are, at the same time, 'powers,' whose plurality indicates that none of them is really ultimate. Thus they represent religious meaning, but in magic terms. The prophetic, as well as the mystical, battle against so-called polytheism was the world-historical way of liberating religion from identification with magic. But this battle can never come to an end, for the necessary ambiguity of every image of the divine is a permanent problem of religion, philosophy, and theory of man."⁴⁶

For the second danger, Tillich says:

"Examples of the second danger to a true concept of religion, arising from the human attempt to gain magical influence over the divine powers, are abundant. The magical distortion of prayer, from a form of union with the Ultimate symbolized as divine will or divine ground, into a form of using higher powers for personal purposes, is not only the most obvious phenomena in the history of religion, but it is a continuous temptation in every high religion, and every Christian minister can witness to it. The form of prayer necessarily has this ambiguity, which can not lead religion, however, to the dropping of this form, as some radical Protestant theologians are inclined to do, but only to a continuous attention to the danger of confusing the magical and the religious."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Tillich, 1946, MW 4, p. 221f.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 222.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

These are examples for the fact that magic is unavoidable in religion and that religion is permanently at risk of profanization and demonization.

A similar line of argumentation in regard to the distinction between the holy and the profane can be seen in the theme of religion and healing; here Tillich repeatedly felt the need to talk about magic. Tillich's emphasis is on a clear distinction: "the healing power of the Spiritual Presence is far removed from magic practice of 'faith-healing'."

"The term 'faith healing' is currently used for psychological phenomena which suggest the term 'magic healing.' Faith, in the faith-healing movements or by individual faith healers, is an act of concentration and autosuggestion, produced ordinarily, but not necessarily, by acts of another person or of a group. The genuinely religious concept of faith, as the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern or, more specifically, by the Spiritual Presence, has little in common with this autosuggestive concentration called 'faith' by the faith healers. In a sense it is just the opposite, because the religious concept of faith points to its receptive character, the state of being grasped by the Spirit, whereas the faith-healer's concept of faith emphasizes an act of intensive concentration and self-determination."⁴⁸

Magic healing which labels itself "faith healing", Tillich claims, misunderstands its own profane character and can become *idolatrous faith*. Nevertheless, Tillich admits, magic healing, as *idolatrous faith* in general, can display integrative power, even if this power appears preliminary and risky in light of the polarities in the philosophy of religion.

The "Protestant Principle" can be seen as Tillich's summary of his critique of magic. Under this principle, the forces to overcome the risks and dangers unite.

"The Protestant principle is an expression of the conquest of religion by the Spiritual Presence and consequently an expression of the victory over the ambiguities of religion, its profanization, and its demonization. It is Protestant, because it protests against the tragic-demonic self-elevation of religion and liberates religion from itself for the other functions of the human spirit, at the same time liberating these functions from their self-seclusion against the manifestations of the ultimate. The Protestant principle (which is the manifestation of the prophetic Spirit) is not restricted to the churches of the Reformation or any other church; it transcends every particular church, being an expression of the Spiritual Community ... 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."⁴⁹

In the Protestant Principle, the two criteria from the philosophy of religion which concern the function of self-transcendence are combined and radicalized. Tillich's vocabulary in these passages is rather radical: religion is "conquered" and "freed from itself" by the Protestant Principle. But it is obvious that this radical prophetic protest which has its ground in the Spiritual Presence is *necessary*; because magic is anywhere in religion – and unavoidable.

⁴⁸ ST 3, p. 278f.

⁴⁹ ST 3, p. 245.

Tillich's Positive Assessment of Magic – Despite all Ambiguities

Tillich's view on magic under the perspective of the ambiguities of life should not blind for the positive evaluation of magic which we find in his work. Tillich has emphasized the integrative, creative and self-centering power of magic.

We may recall the positive notion of psychic participation: that magic can be the expression of the multi-dimensional unity of life and part of the sympathetic interdependence, as long as it not by-passes the responsible center of the person. We may also recall the magic relation of the human to the divine beings which is not problematic, as long as there is no manipulation at play. Finally there is magic in a variety of everyday interactions. This all contradicts the assumption that the victory of scientific rationality, causality and disenchantment would have eliminated magic from culture and religion. Religion's older sister is still alive.

This can be seen especially in Tillich's positive acknowledgment of magic healing about which we read in the *Systematic Theology*:

"(Magic healing) is justified as an element in many human encounters, though it has destructive as well as creative possibilities."⁵⁰

And to quote from "Dynamics of Faith":

"Faith healing, as the term is actually used, is the attempt to heal others or oneself by mental concentration on the healing power in nature and man, and it can be strengthened by mental acts. In a non-depreciating sense one could speak of the use of magic power; and certainly there is healing magic in human relationships as well as in the relation to oneself."⁵¹

The quote continues:

"Idolatrous faith has a definite dynamic: it can be extremely passionate and exercise a preliminary integrating power. It can heal and unite the personality, including its soul and body. The gods of polytheism have shown healing power, not only in a magic way but also in terms of genuine reintegration. The objects of modern secular idolatry, such as nation and success, have shown healing power, not only by the magic fascination of a leader, a slogan or a promise but also by the fulfillment of otherwise unfulfilled strivings for a meaningful life. But the basis of the integration is too narrow. Idolatrous faith breaks down sooner or later and the disease is worse than before."⁵²

Despite the fact that Tillich's energetic rigor against profanization, idolatry and demonization is expressed in every instance in which he talks about the potential positive effects of profane magic, it is remarkable for the philosopher of religion and Christian theologian to have such open views on religion's older sister.

Conclusion

Concluding the course of my argument means returning to the questions raised at the beginning of this article. Does a careful reading of Tillich's work help to answer these questions, and if yes, how?

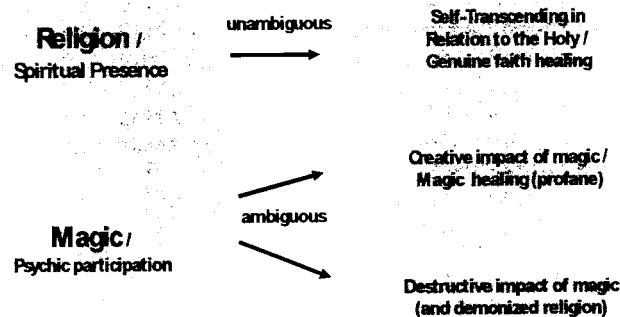
⁵⁰ ST 3, p. 279.

⁵¹ P. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, New York 1957, p. 108.

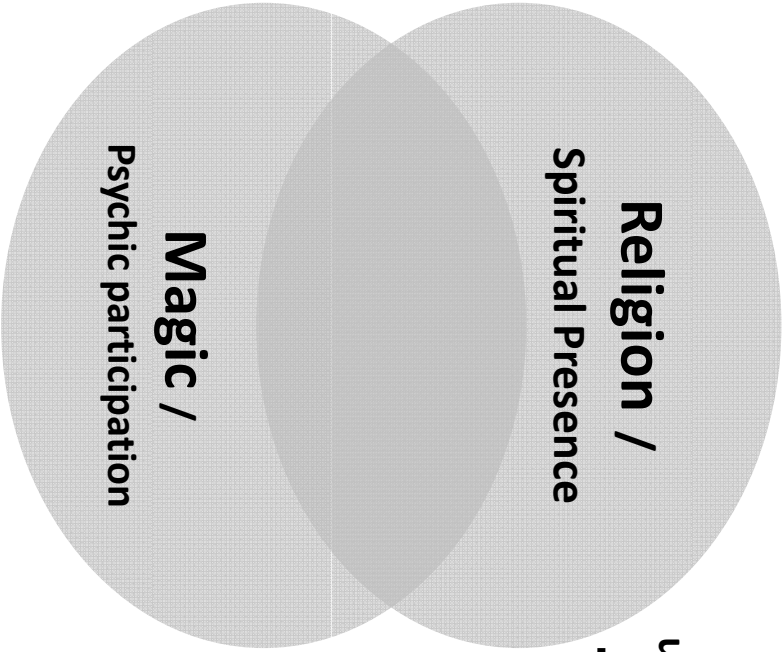
⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 109f.

Before I go into detail, I present the summary of my reading of Tillich's perspectives on magic and religion. The question of how Tillich regards magic cannot be answered simply with "positive" or "negative". Rather, he regards magic as ambiguous, as participating in the ambiguities of life. But this in the first place means that there is a *positive* meaning of 'magic.' The positive meaning is expressed by his definition of magic as *psychic participation*: Magic is part of reality, of creation. Magic is part of our relation to other human beings, our relation to the world and our relation to the Divine. The *negative* meaning of magic comes to expression in contrast to religion. Whenever magic endangers or inhibits religion – and religions' transcending of the concrete –, magic, like every other thing or being in the world, becomes demonic; in regard to such instances, Tillich then talks about magic distortions. Thus here Tillich sees the need for the protest of the "protestant principle" that fights against all profanizations and demonic distortions. Whenever Tillich deals with questions of the "reality" or the "realism" of magic, he proposes models which affect both magic and specific dimensions of religion (such as sacramental presence). This indicates the family resemblance between religion and magic. Both the positive and the negative meaning of magic, but also the kinship and common ground of magic and religion are expressed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Magic and Religion and their Effects According to Tillich



Religion as Spiritual Presence and experience of the Holy has the unambiguous consequence of self-transcendence; also what Tillich calls genuine faith healing has its roots in religion unambiguously. In the intersection of the circles of religion and of magic, certainly the magic relation to God and the gods (insofar as gods are beings) is localized, but also a variety of religious rituals when they are performed with magic understanding. Following Tillich's dictum that magic can be creative and destructive, the effects of psychic participation has to be seen as ambiguous; therefore the



unambiguous



Self-Transcending as...
Relation to the Holy /
Genuine faith healing

ambiguous



Creative impact of magic /
Magic healing (profane)



Destructive impact of magic
(and demonized religion)

figure accounts for the distinction between the creative impact of magic, including also magic healing, on the one hand, and the destructive impact of magic on the other. To the destructive effects belong also the effects of religion when religion has become demonic – and produces effects by way of magic impact.

As the figure shows, I propose, with reference to the work of Tillich, revisiting the definitions and models in the scientific study of religion in order to account for the family kinship and the common ground between religion and magic. When a concept of magic is part of the picture, also the effects of religion and magic could be more precisely distinguished: The ambiguity of magic could allow for a clear distinction between creative and destructive effects; the destructive effects, including that of demonized religion, are, it could be hypothesized, mediated by magic; finally the unambiguous effect of religion as spiritual presence could be clearly distinguished from the other effects. This may help now to answer some of the questions from the Introduction.

Magic as Older Sister of Religion in Evolutionary Perspective

On the question of an overlap of religion and magic in many recent contributions to the evolution of religion, our first answer is yes, there may be an overlap of religion and magic. And historically, magic may be the older sister of religion. But Tillich's account on the ambiguity of magic may remind us to be aware of creative and destructive effects of magic already in the early times of the emergence of non-human agents – who, as most of us may speculate, have been understood rather as beings in another (part or dimension of the) world. And strictly applying an evolutionary perspective which holds that only the evolutionary inventions have survived which were of advantage, it still is an open question why destructive effects of magic and magical religion should have survived in the course of evolution. There are many unanswered questions. But only a clear conceptual distinction between magic and religion would allow further reflection on the time and circumstances that *religion* has emerged. And also it would be the task of researching the further history of religion and magic to account for the rise and decline of prophetic movements which helped to shape religion as relation to the holy and transcendent.

Tillich's "Spiritual Presence" as Critique of Recent Conceptualizations of 'Spirituality' in Psychology

Religion has an older sister: magic. But I doubt that religion does have a twin sister with the name 'spirituality'. In other words, what has presented so far as definitions and research instruments of *spirituality*, resembles definitions and research instruments for *religion* to such extent that the question is justified whether there is need for re-inventing the wheel.⁵³ In light of my reading of Tillich's work, I can make the case even stronger: There is no need for such

⁵³ R. L. Gorsuch, Measurement: The boon and bane of investigating religion, in: *American Psychologist* 39 (1984), 228-236; Streib/Hood 2008.

new invention of spirituality, because spiritual presence and the relation to the holy and the ultimate are inherent in the (classical) definition of religion.⁵⁴ It is my suspicion that, despite all attempts to prevent a false polarization of the "good guy" (spirituality) and the "bad guy" (religion),⁵⁵ the emergence of, and the immense attraction to, spirituality has nevertheless to do with the attempt to distinguish the good from the bad, the clean from the unclean,⁵⁶ the creative from the destructive, e.g. spiritual transformation from religious confinement. Inspired from my reading of Tillich, I assume that one of the main reasons for polarizing (good) spirituality and (bad) religion is the absence of a concept of magic in the psychology of religion; a second, related reason is confusion about the distinction between the holy and the profane. Thus, summarizing my concern, I fear that centuries of reflection about religion, including the discourse about magic and religion, are cut off, when 'spirituality' should take the place of 'religion' in the scientific study of religion. Re-thinking the relation of magic and religion/spirituality would allow identifying, conceptualizing and operationalizing more precisely the manipulative, disintegrative and destructive effects of religion, the dark side of religion (or the dark side of spirituality, if this should become the new name).⁵⁷

Religious Healing and Magical Healing

Finally for a precise conceptualization of the relation between religion and healing, the perspective of Tillich has proven inspiring and helpful. Of course, in an article like this there is not enough space to unfold this theme in every detail; thus I take up the focus on spirituality, parapsychology and alternative healing and focus on Walach's and colleagues' proposal.

⁵⁴ R. L. Gorsuch, *Integrating psychology and spirituality?* Westport 2002.

⁵⁵ K. I. Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality? Yes and No*, in: *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 9 (1999), 3-16; B. J. Zinnbauer/K. I. Pargament/A. B. Scott, *The Emerging Meanings of Religiousness and Spirituality: Problems and Prospects*, in: *Journal of Personality* 67 (1999), 889-919.

⁵⁶ In light of Tillich's perspective, it appears as progress, when the concept of the 'holy' is placed at the center in the definitions of religion and of spirituality. K. I. Pargament (*The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice*, New York 1997) has contributed one of the most influential recent conceptualizations in which he defines spirituality as a "search for the sacred" and religion as "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred". While both definitions sound rather similar and spirituality is defined as "the heart and soul of religion, and religion's most central function", the distinction is more explicit, when religion is said to encompass "the search for many sacred or nonsacred objects of significance", while "spirituality focuses specifically and directly on the search for the sacred", (cf. Zinnbauer et. al., 1999). Here, a hierarchical distinction is introduced, a distinction between clean and unclean, when religion is by definition a mix of a relation to the holy and entirely profane concerns. With reference to Tillich, especially to his philosophy of religion, I object the extensive inclusion of profane concerns in the concept of religion, and I suggest working with clear polarities between the holy and the profane and between the divine and the demonic – which in turn suggests including a theory of magic.

⁵⁷ In my reading, many of the reported negative effects of spirituality (cf. G. Magyar-Russell/K. I. Pargament, *The Darker Side of Religion: Risk Factors for Poorer Health and Well-Being*, in: P. McNamara (ed.), *Where God and Science Meet. How Brain and Evolutionary Studies Alter Our Understanding of Religion*, Vol. 3: *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, Westport 2006, 91-118) are mediated by magical thinking and acting.

The first thing to note is the amazing correspondence between Tillich's view that both religion and magic are part of the multi-dimensional unity of life, a view that rests on the assumption of a participative or sympathetic interdependence for which models of mechanistic or causal explanations are inadequate, on the one hand, and Walach's and colleagues' model of "generalized entanglement" and non-locality, on the other.⁵⁸ There are, of course, differences in regard to the scientific domains from which confirmation is expected: quantum physics here and philosophy of religion there. But this should be no problem, but rather inspire a most interesting and fruitful dialog. This dialog however requires a clarification of terminology. The argumentation of Walach and colleagues would be more accessible for colleagues in religious studies and more sound in terms of the philosophy of religion, if they had more precisely conceptualized religion and, repeating myself, if they had included the more recent discourse on magic. From my reading of Tillich's work, I see at least interesting parallels between Tillich's conceptualization of religion and magic, including self-transforming, creative, healing and destructive effects, on the one hand, and the way of sitting on the fence including the search beyond the established boundaries of 19th century science, as Walach and colleagues characterize the heritage of parapsychology, on the other hand. Nevertheless, rephrasing Walach's and colleagues' topic, the question would be different, wider, but more precise: How does the entire study of religion *and magic* relate to the legacy of parapsychology? And the scope of the discussion regarding health would be wider: embracing magic and religion (both defined with reference to recent discourses).

To conclude, Tillich's concept of religion, spiritual presence and magic could serve as a bridge in the dialog between the human sciences and religious studies in general and between psychology (of religion) and philosophy of religion in particular. Of course, this would require the thorough "translation" of Tillich's concepts into the terms of human sciences and psychology – which has not been very successful to date,⁵⁹ but holds a promise.

⁵⁸ Walach et. al., 2009.

⁵⁹ This "translation" is difficult and not free from errors: Elsewhere (H. Streib. Empirisch-kulturdiagnostische Aspekte von Tillichs Symboltheorie, in: W. Schüßler/C. Danz/E. Sturm (eds.), *Das Symbol als Sprache der Religion* (Internationales Jahrbuch für die Tillich-Forschung, Vol. 2), Münster 2007, 181-195), I have noted that R. Emmons' (*The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality in Personality*, New York 1999) talk about "ultimate concerns" – for which he makes reference to Tillich – does not adequately present Tillich's perspective, because Emmons has turned into a plural what by definition can only be a singular.

German Abstract

Dass Religion und Magie nicht, wie in weiten Teilen der Theologie in neuzeitlicher Geschichte und Gegenwart angenommen, klar geschieden sind, vielmehr eng verflochten sind und die Rede von zwei Schwestern nicht deplaziert ist, löst im theologischen Diskurs immer noch Erstaunen aus. Dabei wurde und wird kaum wahrgenommen, dass im Werk Paul Tillichs Magie relativ ausgiebig thematisiert wird und Argumentationslinien entfaltet sind, die einen Beitrag zur Klärung der Beziehung von Magie und Religion leisten. Dies herauszuarbeiten ist die zentrale Intention dieses Textes. Die Thematisierung des Verhältnisses von Magie und Religion zieht sich bei Tillich durch die theologischen Topoi Offenbarung, Gotteslehre, Sakramente, Gebet und Heilung hindurch. Zentral ist Tillichs Definition von Magie als psychische Partizipation. Diese öffnet den Blick sowohl für die positive, profane Seite der Magie, wie sie in alltäglichen zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen oder in der heilenden Beziehung vorkommt, als auch für die negative Seite der Magie, die als Teil der Zweideutigkeit des Lebens eben auch manipulative und darum dämonisch zu nennende Seiten hat und den Protest des „protestantischen Prinzips“ erfordert.

Meine Interpretation des Verhältnisses von Magie und Religion bei Tillich ist, wie in einer zweiten Argumentation expliziert wird, eine gute Basis für den Blick über den theologischen Tellerrand hinaus: In der gegenwärtigen humanwissenschaftlichen Diskussion, besonders in der Religionspsychologie, ist eine zunehmende begriffliche Unschärfe zu beobachten; Bezeichnung für den Gegenstand der wissenschaftlichen Analyse schwanken zwischen Religion und Spiritualität, marginalisieren jedoch, vergleichbar mit der Theologie, die Bezeichnung Magie. Konkrete Beispiele dafür sind die neuere Diskussion über die Evolution von Religion in der sogenannten kognitiven Psychologie, in der unter dem Begriff „nonphysical agents“/„supernatural agents“ neuerdings vieles in einen Topf geworfen wird, was die religionstheoretische Diskussion sorgfältig zu unterscheiden gelehrt hat: Ahnen, Geister, Gott, Götter. Weitere Beispiele dafür sind die Diskussion um Religion und Gesundheit, besonders um alternative Wege der Heilung, sowie die zunehmend auch in der Psychologie um sich greifende Ersetzung von ‚Religion‘ durch ‚Spiritualität‘. Beide dieser problematischen Entwicklungen haben zumindest *eine* Ursache in einem unklaren Begriff von Religion und in der Ausblendung des Magiebegriffs. Darum halte ich in diesen Bereichen ein Studium der Klassiker der Religionstheorie für besonders dringlich, aber auch für außerordentlich ertragreich. Die Analyse des Magiebegriffs im Werk Paul Tillichs könnte einen wichtigen Beitrag leisten.



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im Auftrag der
Deutschen Paul Tillich-Gesellschaft (Hg.)

TILLICH PREVIEW 2010

Religion und Magie bei Paul Tillich

LIT

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

ISBN 978-3-643-10539-4

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Verlagskontakt:

Fresenstr. 2 D-48159 Münster

Tel. +49 (0) 2 51-620 320 Fax +49 (0) 2 51-922 60 99

e-Mail: lit@lit-verlag.de <http://www.lit-verlag.de>

Auslieferung:

Deutschland: LIT Verlag Fresenstr. 2, D-48159 Münster

Tel. +49 (0) 2 51-620 32 22, Fax +49 (0) 2 51-922 60 99, e-Mail: vertrieb@lit-verlag.de

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