

Paul Tillich and the Genesis of Existential Psychology

Paul Tillich és az egzisztenciális pszichológia keletkezése

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Abstract

This study traces back the intellectual journey of Paul Tillich, while focusing on his central role in the emergence of existential psychology. It starts with a historical overview of Tillich's German roots, and discusses his interactions with key figures such as Mannheim, Horkheimer, Adorno, Heidegger, and his move to the US, where he influenced Rollo May and the development of existentialist psychology. The core of the present study explores Tillich's work "The Courage to Be" and juxtaposes it with May's works "The Meaning of Anxiety" and "The Courage to Create", suggesting a collective reading. This part also highlights Tillich's influence on figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. The conclusion outlines possible avenues of research in existential psychology, gerontology, and the interplay between theology and psychology.

Kulcsszavak: Paul Tillich, Egzisztenciális Pszichológia, Rollo May, "The Courage to Be", "The Meaning of Anxiety", "The Courage to Create", Horkheimer, Frankfurti iskola, Yalom

Keywords: Paul Tillich, Existential Psychology, Rollo May, "The Courage to Be", "The Meaning of Anxiety", "The Courage to Create", Horkheimer, Frankfurt School, Yalom

1. Introduction

1.1. Structure of the Article

This article comprises two main sections. The initial section offers a German historical context to Tillich's work, paving the way for a more comprehensive appreciation of his theological and philosophical contributions.

The latter section investigates the central theme of fundamental human fears as investigated in his groundbreaking book. This analysis dissects the precise forms of anxiety that these fears create.

The conclusion outlines potential avenues for future research, exploring how theology, psychology, and ethics intersect to provide insights into the experiences of elderly individuals. Specific attention is paid to the role of these disciplines in facilitating coping with anxiety and encouraging courage in later life.

1.2. Tillich as Theologian

The German Lutheran theologian, Paul Johannes Tillich (1886-1965), is widely acclaimed for his exceptional integration of Christian doctrine and existential philosophy.

As a distinguished scholar in theological circles, Tillich's profound insights and existential exploration of the human predicament, particularly his groundbreaking concept of the "God above God," have played a crucial role in shaping contemporary theological thinking.

His systematic methodology presents a convincing comprehension of the divine that caters to the essential issues facing the modern-day world. But there is something more...

1.3. Tillich as social ethicist or political theologian?

Although less prominent, Tillich's ideas on religious socialism hold great significance among scholars and thinkers, particularly within the fields of social ethics and political theology. His belief was that Christian principles and socialist ideals could be fused together to establish a fair and benevolent society, rooted in the spiritual essence of Christianity, whilst encouraging the economic and societal reforms advocated by socialism.

His views on religious socialism are intertwined within his broader theological project, which aimed to reconcile faith with the prevailing socio-political circumstances. He contended that socialism, anchored by the metamorphic potential of religious principles, can tackle the existential apprehensions and socio-economic disparities that afflict contemporary societies.

Tillich has made an indelible impact on theological and political discourse through his articulation of a society where religious depth and socialist principles combine. His insights remain relevant to those navigating the complexities of faith in action, social justice, and the pursuit of a socio-political order that reflects religion's ethical imperatives. This facet of his work, whilst not attaining the same public recognition as his strictly theological writings, is nonetheless a crucial element of his intellectual legacy and continues to be examined and respected in academic circles.

1.4. Tillich as a theological psychologist or a psychologist of religion?

Amidst

1. the towering achievements of Tillich's extensive **theological work**
2. and his significant contributions to the discourse on **religious socialism**

lies a lesser-known yet invaluable gem: a succinct volume that delves into the very essence of the human condition entitled "*The Courage to Be*" (1952).

This concise work marks a departure from Tillich's previous explorations of political theology and systematic theology. It prompts an inquiry into the motivations underlying its

creation. Here, in this condensed treatise, Tillich focuses inward and delves into the intimate fears and existential anxieties that afflict the human spirit.

What prompted Tillich to write this particular piece, which diverges from his usual contributions? To answer this, we must delve deeper into the context and factors that may have influenced Tillich during this stage of his intellectual development.

Did it signal a significant shift or was it simply a moment of reflection that prompted him to explore the existential dimensions of fear and anxiety, issues that may have required urgent attention outside the broader context of his customary theological and political discourse?

By pinpointing a deficiency in the scholarly conversation surrounding existential psychology, this paper presents a crucial research query (RQ1):

Could Paul Tillich's contributions be viewed as a progression of the intellectual path pioneered by Rollo May? This inquiry emerges notably when considering Tillich's parallel themes with his student and friend May's groundbreaking "The Meaning of Anxiety" (1950), followed by Tillich's "The Courage to Be" (1952) and May's further elaborations in "Man's search for himself" (1953) and later "The Courage to Create" (1975). In a similar way, "Love, Power and Justice" (Tillich, 1954) will be followed by "Love and Will" (May, 1969). This perspective offers a potential bridge between their works, suggesting that Tillich may have expanded upon and continued the discourse initiated by May and later May took up Tillich's work to pinpoint certain concepts. The first from a philosophical-theological point of view, the latter from a more psychological perspective.

This chain of scholarly works suggests a possible intellectual dialogue between the two thinkers and friends, with Tillich's interjection potentially expanding the conceptual gap of the first book and May completing Tillich's work, after his death. My research aims to delve into the nuances of this relationship, examining the extent to which Tillich's writings may have been influenced by May's explorations of anxiety and creativity, and vice versa, and how these interlinked themes have evolved within their respective bodies of work.

The scope of this current article does not extend to the breadth of future research, which will be explored in depth in a subsequent publication.

To delve into this complex relationship, this article turns to the pioneering work of philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich, who introduced the concept of the "**Three Absolute Fears.**"

These existential fears, articulated by Tillich, offer an exclusive perspective to scrutinise and comprehend anxiety.

In his book "*The Courage to Be*", he identifies three absolute and three relative anxieties, related to different fears. In particular:

1. **Natural Anxiety from the Fear of Death (Nonbeing):** This is the most fundamental of all fears. It is the fear of annihilation, of ceasing to exist. Tillich argues that

this fear underlies many other anxieties and is central to the human condition. This anxiety can manifest as a fear of death, illness, or other forms of existential threat.

2. **Moral Anxiety from the Fear of Meaninglessness:** This fear is related to the existential question of whether life has any ultimate meaning or purpose. It involves anxiety about the lack of significance or value in one's existence.

3. **Spiritual anxiety from the Fear of Guilt and Condemnation:** This fear is linked to moral and ethical concerns. It involves anxiety about being judged, condemned, or found guilty by oneself, others, or a higher moral authority.

Tillich argues that these anxieties are inherent aspects of the human condition, and they can manifest in various ways throughout our lives. He suggests that embracing courage is essential in facing and transcending these anxieties, allowing us to live authentically and find meaning in the face of existential challenges. In his work, he defines courage as the self-affirmation of one's being in spite of a threat of nonbeing. He relates courage to anxiety, being anxiety the threat of non-being and the courage to be what we use to combat that threat.

By understanding and exploring these types of anxieties, individuals can develop a deeper awareness of their own fears and struggles, and work towards a more courageous and authentic way of being in the world.

Tillich's book emerges as a pivotal text that captures the essential elements of the human journey, offering comfort and insight. It transcends the academic rigour of his earlier writings and offers a deeply personal compass for those grappling with the intricacies of identity and the nature of courage. In its pages, Tillich presents his theological insights with incisive power, eloquently describing faith as a profound commitment to our deepest concerns and positing courage as the gateway to understanding our true existence, asserting that **"Courage reveals the true nature of Being"**.

The German philosopher explores existential themes, such as the essence of absolute fears and the turmoil of pathological anxiety. He delves into the concept of anxiety through an existential lens, drawing on the philosophical insights of Søren Kierkegaard and the psychological viewpoints of contemporaries like Richard Niebuhr and Rollo May. This book garnered notable attention, like a kind of "Von Restorff effect", the well-known psychological phenomenon, also referred to as the "isolation effect," that suggests that within a group of similar items, the one that markedly differs stands out and is thus more memorable.

With its unique approach to the subject matter of human anxiety and courage, it distinguished itself amidst a sea of homogeneous theological discussions, securing a lasting place in the collective memory of both scholars and lay readers. It's this distinctive quality that has rendered Tillich's work a classic, ensuring that his explorations into the human condition continue to resonate and influence thought across various disciplines.

1.5. Tillich as systematic Theologian, the years of maturity

Subsequently, he composed a comprehensive three-volume work, *Systematic Theology*, which delved into the complexities of existentialist thought; this three-volume magnum opus represents a monumental contribution to 20th-century theological thought. Published between 1950 and 1963, these volumes articulate Tillich's innovative approach to Christian theology through the lens of existentialist philosophy. Throughout all three volumes, Tillich consistently seeks to address the existential anxieties and questions of modern humanity, offering a theological framework that is responsive to contemporary culture and intellectual challenges. "Systematic Theology" is not just a scholarly work but a creative synthesis that attempts to bridge the gap between the depth of religious tradition and the breadth of modern secular thought.

During his lifetime, the ideas of Paul Tillich attracted the scholarly attention of many distinguished academics, like Rollo May and Irvin Yalom and others. Among these, Martin Luther King Jr. stands out for his prominence: King dedicated his doctoral dissertation to an analysis of Tillich's work.

2. The Historical context

2.1. Timeline: Paulus Johannes Tillich's life in Germany

1886: Born in the Province of Brandenburg, Germany (today's part of Poland).

1900: Moved to Berlin.

1911: Awarded a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Breslau.

1912: Received an MA in Theology from Halle University. Ordained as a Lutheran pastor.

1914: Married his first wife. Then served as a military chaplain in the First World War.

1917: November, Russian Revolution

1918: November, German Revolution, armistice

1918: His wife gave birth to a child not fathered by him. They subsequently divorced.

1919: Returning from the war, Tillich secured his first post at Berlin University as a lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion. He asserted that religious socialism was an essential enlightenment of socialism about its own historical-philosophical task. This period marked the beginning of the "Tillich Kreis" (Tillich Circle) and the definition of "Kairos".

1923: Co-founded the movement "*Religiöser Sozialismus*" (Religious Socialism) in Germany, a movement advocating for the compatibility of early Marxist principles with Christian philosophy.

1924: Married his second wife, Hannah Werner Gottschow.

1924: Joined the University of Marburg, where **Rudolf Bultmann**, **Karl Barth**, and **Martin Heidegger** were also teaching, with a regular engagement in philosophical dialogue.

1925: Moved to the University of Dresden and, shortly thereafter, to Leipzig.

1929: Succeeded Max Scheler as Professor of Philosophy at the University of **Frankfurt**, where **Horkheimer** was an unpaid lecturer at the time. He became **Adorno's** supervisor for his *Habilitationsschrift* on the Aesthetic of Kierkegaard (Avis, 1982)

1930: Hosted a forum for discussion between **Károly Mannheim and Horkheimer**, newly appointed Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Institute for Social Research, and likely with **Adorno** as well.

1931: Co-taught with Horkheimer a seminar on John Locke and with Adorno, seminars on Georg Simmel, Lessing, and Hegel.

1932: Published the book "*The Socialist Decision*".

1933: With Hitler's ascent to Chancellor, Tillich was the first non-Jewish professor prohibited from teaching, followed by Mannheim Károly and Horkheimer. **Reinhold Niebuhr** (New York), who had known Tillich since 1919, invited him to the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Tillich moved to the US with his wife on the 4th of November 1933. **Rollo May**, a young seminarian, was appointed as his English tutor and also assisted him in securing residency and eventually citizenship in the United States. He grew to be one of his closest friends.

1933: Became a Visiting Professor at Columbia University, which later provided refuge for **Horkheimer** and the members of "**The Frankfurt School**" in exile.

2.2. *Religiöser Sozialismus*

The 19th century saw an intensification of social conflicts due to industrialization, which led to the rise of a proletariat class across numerous European nations. Following a trend set by significant segments of the bourgeoisie in the 18th century, the majority of workers also distanced themselves from Christianity and the Church, perceiving them as allies of the ruling elite. The perception about Churches was a purely charitable and diaconal approach to social issues, that firmly repudiated any form of revolutionary societal transformation. "The Gospel seemed to have become a weapon for the representatives of bourgeois society and the status quo. The fighters for change gave it up in resignation." (Buess and Mattmüller, 1986, 34). Instead, they began to frame their objectives using scientific rationales. Concurrently, a new societal power took shape with the workers' movement, which was organised within trade unions and leftist political parties, aiming for a just societal structure.

During this time, Jewish and Christian theologians started to engage with the "social question". One response was the advent of the *Innere Mission*, an evolution of 17th-century Pietism, with Johann Hinrich Wichern in Wittenberg in 1848. Its proponents highlighted the importance of individual faith choice, the social duties incumbent upon all members of society, and *diakonia*, denoting Christian service to the community. However, they maintained a clear demarcation from socialist ideologies, confining their efforts to addressing poverty on an individual ethical scale rather than through socio-political reforms.

Differently, certain theologians have drawn on the principles of succession and communal sharing from early Christian ethics to argue for a congruence between the

teachings of the Gospel and socialism. This alignment, they propose, necessitates a Christian commitment to fostering a fair social system. Key advocates of this view often cite the Sermon on the Mount as their foundation. They endorse Marx's critique of capitalism and view the proletariat, specifically industrial labourers, as the pivotal agents for societal reform. Their aim has been to sensitise church-going Christians to the labour movement and acquaint them with socialism as a moral option that is not inherently linked to atheism.¹

Paul Tillich was one of them. His active participation in the religious socialism movement² in Germany and his thorough engagement with Marxist ideology and politics underscore his commitment.

For Tillich, socialism extended beyond scholarly interest. His role as a military chaplain during the First World War exposed him to the devastating impacts of capitalism and militarism, as well as the inadequate political responses of the Christian churches. After the war, he returned to a Germany transformed by the November Revolution of 1918, which saw the end of Kaiser Wilhelm II's reign and the onset of the Weimar Republic's dynamic culture. Tillich, alongside his second wife, Hannah Werner-Gottschow, immersed themselves in the republic's progressive social ethos and artistic innovation, experiencing an open marriage and mingling within the era's cutting-edge social spheres.

Shortly after the end of the war, Tillich engaged with discussion groups and intellectual assemblies of fellow religious socialists (Prüfer 2002, 202). In a pamphlet he co-wrote in 1919 (Tillich, 1998, 169), he appealed to Christian and church representatives with socialist leanings to join the socialist movement, laying groundwork for a potential convergence of Christian values and socialist principles. This idea was reiterated at various times, such as in his 1923 publication (Tillich 1923, 103).

In 1932, while Emmanuel Mounier was publishing his first number of *Esprit*, he penned *Die Sozialistische Entscheidung* (*The Socialist Decision*, 1932), a book that, although not widely recognized, he considered his finest, advocating for the indispensability of socialism in the 20th century.

It arrived as the Nazi Party evolved from a menacing political entity into a deadly autocracy. Tillich, already viewed with disfavour by the Nazis due to his political stance, saw his book swiftly banned. Reportedly, he was presented with an opportunity to secure a

¹ Marx/Marxism Article. In: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Volume 22: Malaysia - Minne. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1992, p. 248.

² Religious socialism represents the support by Christian individuals for a socialist societal structure, rooted in their religious convictions. Initially, this term denoted a movement within German-speaking Protestant circles that began in Switzerland circa 1900. During the era of the Weimar Republic, this movement led to the formation of a Protestant political party, which established itself in 1926 as the League of Religious Socialists of Germany (FRSD). Comparable movements have also appeared within various Christian sects and countries.

distinguished academic role on the condition that he disown his book and its critique of the Nazi regime. Tillich responded negatively.

Despite the Nazis' efforts to obliterate all copies of his book and the destruction wrought by war, a handful survived, preserved by Tillich's close associates. Almost four decades on, it found a new audience through its translation into English. The Socialist Decision stands as a distinctive and undervalued gem within the canon of religious socialism.

Navigating the complexities of Marxism was a thorny issue for German socialism in the early 20th century. In this book the German theologian took a considered and balanced stance towards Karl Marx, avoiding the extremes of venerating him as an oracular figure or rejecting him for his perceived materialism or economic reductionism, common critiques among Christian theologians. He valued the ethical insights in the younger Marx's dissection of capitalist estrangement and lauded Marx's later developed concept of historical materialism. However, he also was openly critical of the so-called 'dogmatic' Marxists in Germany, who, he felt, wrongly treated Marx's Capital as a prophetic text guaranteeing a socialist destiny.

Tillich observed that the conviction of an unavoidable socialist triumph acted as a dangerous delusion for many groups, who pinned their hopes on precisely predicting the timing of societal crises and revolutions. As these overconfident expectations repeatedly failed to come to fruition, a deep-rooted disillusionment ensued.

This notion that history was on an unalterable course toward socialism led to German Marxists growing increasingly aloof from the practical, materialist action needed to transform society. Rather than engaging in a vigorous campaign to seize power and implement socialist policies, many radicals succumbed to devising increasingly complex theoretical forecasts of capitalism's self-destruction. Tragically, the intense Marxist discussions over whether to join forces with the so-called "reformist" social democrats to combat fascism ended with the Nazis seizing control.

Contrary to Marxist predictions that fascism was merely the last throes of capitalism, it was the Nazis who systematically imprisoned both social democrats and communists in concentration camps.

2.3. The *Kairos Gruppe*

After World War I, Paul Tillich's close-knit intellectual group in Berlin became known as the *Kairos Gruppe*. Over time, the concept of *καιρός*³ has been embraced by Christian communities and their allies striving for profound societal transformation.

³ In Greek mythology, Kairos and Chronos are personifications of time, but they represent different aspects. Chronos (often spelled "Kronos" or "Cronus") is the personification of chronological or sequential time. In

Religious socialism constituted an element of the Kairos, reflecting a critical and opportune moment in time for significant change inspired by faith. The Kairos Circle represented a commitment to resolving the tension between activists, who believed in direct action, and determinists, who maintained that history would naturally progress to its own resolutions. The group acknowledged the necessity for action, yet emphasised that such efforts must align with the unique potential for dramatic change present in the current historical moment.

In a theological sense, Tillich used 'Kairos' to signify the crucial juncture where eternal truths intersect with history as temporal actions (*Geschichte*)⁴. In 1922, he interpreted the times as ready for the realisation of religious socialist ideals. The dynamic between history and the kingdom of God also hinges on Kairos' experiences, observed within church history. Here, the grand Kairos, the moment where the core of history aligns with relative Kairos, revealing the kingdom of God through specific breakthroughs, is recurrently experienced.

By 1932, his perspective had evolved: he believed that religion must undergo significant changes to accommodate socialism, and socialism must similarly adjust to accommodate the profound demands of religion.

ancient mythology, Chronos is often depicted as an old, wise man with a long beard. Chronos (not to be confused with Titan Cronus, the Father of Zeus) is a god of the harvest and represent the time itself.

Kairos, on the other hand, represents a concept rather than a personified deity. **Kairos is the personification of the right, critical, or opportune moment for action.** Unlike Chronos, which is quantitative, Kairos has a qualitative nature. In art, Kairos is often depicted as a young, nimble figure, sometimes with wings on his feet, symbolising the fleeting nature of opportunity.

In philosophical and theological contexts, Chronos refers to the quantitative, linear progression of time, while Kairos refers to a qualitative, opportune moment within time — a moment that is ripe for action or an event that has a significant impact on the course of history.

⁴ In the Christian narrative, history is imbued with theology and theology is inherently historical. This necessitates a differentiation between historical and constructive disciplines of knowledge (Systematic Theology, I 38).

Furthermore, history serves as a conduit for revelation: "Historical revelation isn't merely in history, but through history. [...] However, history only becomes revelatory when a specific event or series of events is ecstatically perceived as miraculous (I 145).

Amidst discussing finiteness and alienation, Tillich observes that in a state of alienation—where the bond with the eternal is severed—uncertainty intensifies to such a degree that it propels towards despair and historical patterns of destruction emerge (II 83). Redemption, being the restorative and salvific force for the New Being within history, allows for a universal participation in this healing and salvation through the New Being's redemptive power in history (II 180).

History is also subjective. Groups or even international entities can carry the weight of history, given they possess focused agency (III 353). Both the substance and causality of history orient towards the future, aiming for the kingdom of God (III 371).

The dynamic between history and the kingdom of God also hinges on Kairos' experiences, observed within church history. Here, the grand Kairos, the moment where the core of history aligns with relative Kairos, revealing the kingdom of God through specific breakthroughs, is recurrently experienced (III 421). Tillich concludes by affirming that history's ultimate purpose lifts its positive aspects into eternity, simultaneously negating the negative aspects from participation in it. Eternal life, thus, encapsulates the affirmative aspects of history, liberated from its negative distortions and realised in its full potential (III 450).

Tillich articulated the concept of *kairos* as embodying the Kingdom of God, which he viewed as both a transcendent ideal and a historical reality. In the annals of history, the Kingdom of God manifests in mere fragments. He believed that the idea of the Kingdom of God indicated ultimate fulfilment in a transcendent sense, yet it also inspired and justified action within the historical, or imminent, realm.

Personally, Tillich felt that the true *kairos* was still a distant prospect. His observations came at a time when Germany was under the sway of American and Russian influences. However, he recognized that in other parts of the world, such as through the processes of decolonization and the civil rights movement, *kairotic* moments were affecting substantial changes, blending elements of socialism, religion, and liberalism.

In his later years, Tillich revisited this concept, asserting that it was inextricably tied to the historical context. As he said in the *Systematic Theology* of 1963, the concept of *Kairos* was partly, and only partly, confirmed in the period of its emergence. His definition was: “Its original meaning - the right time, the time in which something can be done - must be contrasted with *chronos*, measured time or clock time. The former is qualitative, the later quantitative.”⁵

In this book, Tillich cautiously points out that the concept can have destructive applications. Reflecting on his 1934 dispute with Emmanuel Hirsch⁶ (Reimer 1979), he highlights how the Nazis perverted the idea in a demonic manner. He acknowledges that recognizing opportune moments, or *kairoi*, requires vision and entails risk, as individuals or groups can err in their discernment. (Müller 1992)

2.4. Frankfurt Schule

The Frankfurt School, associated with Frankfurt's Institute for Social Research established in 1923, emerged as a hub of sociological and philosophical thought during the Weimar Republic era. It was a collective of thinkers and scholars critical of the era's prevailing socio-economic ideologies, including capitalism, fascism, and Stalinist communism. They argued that traditional social theories could not adequately explain the extreme political dynamics and reactionary movements of the time, such as Nazism. Advocating for a more flexible approach to understanding and organising society, the Frankfurt School's critical theory sought to explore new avenues for societal and national progress.

The Frankfurt School's approach to critical inquiry, characterised by its open-ended and self-critical nature, draws on the foundations of Freudian psychoanalysis, Marxist theory,

⁵ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1963), 369.

⁶ Hirsch uses his theological genius to defend the cause of National Socialism, seeing it as a “*Kairos*”, a divinely inspired movement for national renewal, while Tillich, also a keen observer of the times, opts for Religious Socialism.

and Hegelian idealism. To address the limitations of classical Marxism, which fell short in tackling the social issues of the 20th century, they employed anti-positivist sociology, psychoanalysis, and existential philosophy. Their sociological analysis represents an integration of influential theories from the likes of Immanuel Kant, Hegel, and Karl Marx, along with the psychoanalytic insights of Sigmund Freud, the rationalisation theories of Max Weber, and the critical perspectives of Georg Simmel and György Lukács.

The intentions and methods of the Frankfurt School were met with dissent from some quarters. In *The Theory of the Novel* (1971, 22), György Lukács said that the Frankfurt School were:

*A considerable part of the leading German intelligentsia, including Adorno, have taken up residence in the **Grand Hotel Abyss** which I described in connection with my critique of Schopenhauer as a beautiful hotel, equipped with every comfort, on the edge of an abyss of nothingness, of absurdity. And the daily contemplation of the abyss, between excellent meals or artistic entertainments, can only heighten the enjoyment of the subtle comforts offered.*

Tillich, while enjoying a strong personal rapport with members of the Frankfurt School and even advocating for their acceptance at Columbia University during their future exile in 1933, held reservations about certain fundamental aspects of their theories.

Tillich's engagement with socialism and Marxist critique marks a rare commonality with Horkheimer and Adorno of the Frankfurt School. Their friendship, however, was not deeply rooted in shared philosophical or theological beliefs, particularly with Adorno, whose "*Negative Dialectics*" stands in stark contrast to Tillich's systematic approach. While Adorno's work challenges the separation of philosophical concepts from their expression, Tillich strives for conceptual clarity, often reflecting his personal charisma. Their mutual understanding of Heidegger's "*Being and Time*" diverges significantly. Despite this, the enduring bond between Tillich and these thinkers was less about intellectual alignment and more about a sincere, personal connection—a testament to the genuine nature of their relationship, as acknowledged by both Adorno and Horkheimer.

The divergence between Tillich and the Frankfurt School's critical theory is exemplified in their respective critiques of Károly Mannheim's "*Ideology and Utopia*." (1936)

- Tillich, in his 1929 review, reproached Mannheim for **failing to develop the concept of ideology** (Tillich 1929, 255); Mannheim intends to make the ideology concept total, so that even the intelligentsia do have a class interest, but he cannot make it total if the place at which it is total is that of the intelligentsia, a class whose ideas are not "ontically bound" (*Seinsgebunden*)

- but Horkheimer (1981, 13) critiques Mannheim's attempt **to totalize ideology** as derived from Marx. In particular, Horkheimer criticises Mannheim for converting Marx's scientific critique, which can always be only specific and partial, into a philosophical concept, which is total (Scharlemann, 1991, 332)

This nuanced difference underscores a broader proximity yet distinct separation between the Frankfurt School and religious socialism, epitomised by Tillich. An intriguing, though not further explored, aspect is the debate dynamic between Adorno and Tillich, which was intense yet rarely surfaced in direct criticism.

The likely explanation is the deep respect Adorno and Horkheimer had for Tillich's integrity and their friendship, leading them to refrain from openly challenging him in their writings, despite possibly recognizing limitations in Tillich's critiques not fully articulated by either Adorno or Horkheimer.

This article shows that the tapestry of the Frankfurt School's critical theory was intricate, tracing its roots and influence in the tumultuous socio-political landscape of the early 20th century. While the School's innovative blend of psychoanalysis, Marxist theory, and Hegelian idealism carved new paths for social critique and theory, it also encountered intellectual divergence and debate among contemporaries, including Paul Tillich.

Despite shared interests in certain domains, notably the critique of socio-economic structures, the relationship between Tillich and the Frankfurt School was characterised by both intellectual discord and a profound personal connection that defied their philosophical differences.

This interplay of concord and contention encapsulates the vibrant discourse of the era and continues to invite reflection on the evolution of social theory and its impact on modern thought.

Tillich's tenure in Frankfurt was brief, ending after just four years when, on April 13, 1933, he was relieved of his duties as a professor. His work "*Die Sozialistische Entscheidung*" faced immediate censure and destruction earlier that year. In the summer of 1933, he was presented with the opportunity to become a guest professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York and to lecture at Columbia University. After considerable deliberation, Tillich departed Germany in October 1933, arriving in New York a month later with his family and the hope of a swift return to a professorship in Berlin.

However, this hope was soon dashed as he was officially dismissed from his German public service role not long after his move to the United States (Graf 2017, 11).

3. Tillich in the US

3.1. Historical Outline

Upon arriving in New York, Paul Tillich secured a position at Union Theological Seminary as Professor of Philosophical Theology, serving from 1933 to 1955. It is worth mentioning that his first year's salary was funded by a 5% self-taxation of all his fellow lecturers.

This period also enabled Tillich to engage with American philosophical circles. He participated in the Theological Discussion Group, the American Theological Society, and the Philosophy Club. Additionally, he was significantly involved with the burgeoning depth-psychology movement at Columbia University.

But the German philosopher faced considerable challenges adapting to life in the United States (Graf, 2017). His struggles were not limited to language barriers due to his limited English proficiency, but also stemmed from the deeply German intellectual context of his theological and philosophical ideas, which were intertwined with the discourses of German idealism, neo-Kantianism, and phenomenology.

His initial significant work published in the US, "The Interpretation of History" (1936), dealt with themes pivotal to him in Germany, particularly the religious understanding of history. In his introductory autobiographical essay "On the Boundary," Tillich portrayed himself as a figure navigating various divides. While the collection included previously published German articles on his historical philosophy shaped by religious socialism, he expressed in the preface his belief in the vital connection between abstract thought and the tangible reality of historical existence.

Despite Tillich's aspirations for the book to resonate with the experiences of recent European crises, it met with only modest success.

In the meantime, the opus "Systematic Theology", that began its journey in Marburg in 1925, reached fruition with its first volume published in New York in 1951, during his tenure at Union Theological Seminary.

But only with the 1952 release of "The Courage to Be," Tillich gained significant recognition in the United States. The book, renowned as his most famous, extended his influence beyond theological circles to a broader audience. It presents a religious lens on the totality of existence, climaxing with the concept of faith as the courage to confront non-being. This literary approach was perpetuated in the 1954 publication "Love, Power, and Justice."

Post-retirement from Union in 1955, Tillich accepted a prestigious role at Harvard University as a University Professor, coinciding with the publication of the second volume of his "Systematic Theology" in 1957. His academic path led him to the University of Chicago in 1962 as the Nuveen Professor of Theology, where he completed and published the third volume of "Systematic Theology" in 1963. Tillich's influential career continued at the University of Chicago until his passing on October 22, 1965.

3.2. Rollo May⁷

"I'm not afraid to admire Paul Tillich. He has been my spiritual father. I learned from him and loved him. Strangely, that seems to enrage many people." (May 1973)

Rollo May⁸ (1909-1994) completed his undergraduate degree in English in 1930. Following his fascination with ancient Greek culture and philosophy, he embarked on an educational journey to Thessaloniki, Greece, where he accepted a position as an English instructor at the Christian institution "Anatolia College". His time in Greece opened avenues to frequent travels across to Austria, where - rejecting Freud's deterministic perspective, so laying the groundwork for what would eventually be recognized as "existential psychology" - he engaged with prominent non-Freudian psychologists and psychoanalysts, including Carl Jung, Fromm and Alfred Adler.

His intellectual curiosity led him to attend Adler's seminars in Vienna during the summers of 1932 and 1933, which significantly influenced his burgeoning interest in personality development and counselling—themes that would later permeate his early publications.

May's return to the United States in 1933 marked the beginning of a new chapter as he entered Union Theological Seminary in New York. It was here that he encountered Paul Tillich, who became not only a pivotal mentor to May, influencing his academic and professional path, but also a close personal friend.

In a role reversal, May, who had mastered English, became his English teacher and assisted the theologian and his family in navigating the complexities of U.S. immigration and ultimately obtaining American citizenship. This period was foundational for May,

⁷ My motivation to pen a brief section on Rollo May is twofold: Firstly, he was not only Paul Tillich's confidant but also the entrusted biographer, a role signifying profound mutual respect and intimate knowledge of Tillich's life and thoughts. Secondly, the intellectual interplay between the two men arguably catalysed a pivotal shift in Tillich's scholarly pursuits. This cultural and intellectual exchange may well be the most significant factor behind Tillich's transition from a focus on the theology of history to a theology deeply intertwined with psychology, a shift that played a substantial role in shaping the later success of Tillich's career.

⁸ "The second-oldest of six children, Rollo May was born in 1909 in Ada, Ohio, a small town in the Midwest, and grew up in another small Midwestern town called Marine City, Michigan. After graduating from Oberlin College, he attended brief seminars with Alfred Adler in Austria and then obtained a divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 1938. There the theologian Paul Tillich became his mentor. After a brief, unsatisfying stint as a Protestant minister, May embarked on a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Columbia University with psychoanalytic training at the William Allan White Institute. His 1949 dissertation on anxiety became his third book and attracted wide interest. For nearly the next three decades, May was a Manhattan-based psychotherapist, prolific writer, and intermittent academician. His book *Love and Will* became a bestseller in 1969. May moved to the San Francisco area several years later, where he continued to write, train graduate students as clinicians, and lecture widely.

May also still conducted psychotherapy. Among his favourite therapeutic questions was: "What is going on with you now at the deepest level that you can get a hold of?" It's a key question for all of us, and one sure to catalyse personal growth." from his official website, www.rollomay.net, as seen on the 7th of November 2023

intertwining his educational pursuits with meaningful personal relationships and setting the stage for his later contributions to psychology and theology.

Upon completing his theological studies, he briefly served as a pastor in a small New Jersey congregation, an experience that ultimately proved unfulfilling. Seeking a different path, he left his clerical position in 1940 to pursue a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Columbia University. Throughout the war years, as he juggled the responsibilities of being a father to three children, working as an adjunct instructor, and teaching night classes, the cumulative physical and emotional strain began to weigh heavily on him.

Stricken with tuberculosis, May spent 1943-1944 in a sanatorium, an experience that profoundly influenced his intellectual and personal trajectory. During extended bed rest, he immersed himself in existential literature, including the works of Kierkegaard. This period of convalescence became transformative, prompting deep reflections on the **Fear of Death** and the related anxiety, observations that were sharpened by the presence of fellow patients in the sanatorium grappling with their mortality.

During his time in the sanatorium, May began to conceptualise what he would later term the "**Fundamental fears**." These are the deep-seated existential anxieties that underpin the human experience, fears that are not merely about specific threats but are tied to the core of our being.

When back in New York, proved by this experience and guided by Tillich's mentorship, May dedicated his dissertation to exploring the essence of anxiety. Tillich became his PhD Supervisor. He successfully earned his diploma in 1949, and his significant dissertation, "**The Meaning of Anxiety**", was subsequently published, as "Publication Honors", as a scholarly book in 1950⁹.

In his book he wrote that anxiety is not a mere psychological symptom, but an existential human condition. He examines the role of anxiety in **personal and creative**

⁹ Anxiety is not a mere psychological symptom, but a fundamental human condition. His work is considered a cornerstone in existential psychology, providing deep insights into how anxiety influences behaviour and personality.

"Dr. Rollo May brings order and lucidity to the problematic subject of anxiety. Examining the various theories of anxiety, he views them in their cultural and historical as well as biological and psychological dimensions. He then seeks the common denominators in these theories, assesses points of disagreement, and, as far as possible, synthesises the various viewpoints into a comprehensive theory of anxiety. Dr. May challenges the current belief that "mental health is living without anxiety" and asserts that anxiety is essential to the human condition, that confrontation with anxiety can relieve us from boredom, sharpen our sensitivity, and create the tension that is necessary to preserve human existence. Throughout this . . . work there runs the motif of anxiety in relation to intelligence, creativity, and originality. Dr. May focuses on destructive and constructive ways of dealing with anxiety. Not only can anxiety paralyse, he tells us, but it can be the impetus for our most positive change, for it is only by confronting and coping with anxiety that self-realisation occurs. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2016 APA, all rights reserved)"

development, differentiating between **normal and neurotic anxiety**. He draws on the ideas of existential philosophers and psychologists to argue that facing and **embracing anxiety can lead to personal growth and strength**.

May's reflections led him to identify various dimensions of these fundamental fears, such as **the dread of nonexistence** that comes with the **fear of death**, the anxiety of **isolation** in the face of our need for connection, and the **fear of loss of autonomy or the dread of meaninglessness**.

Surprisingly, all these concepts will sound familiar to Tillich's readers.

This formative period allowed May to lay the groundwork for his future work in existential psychology, where he explored the impact of these fundamental fears on human behaviour, personality development, and psychotherapy.

In his book, the author examines the role of anxiety in personal and creative development, differentiating between normal and neurotic anxiety. He draws on the ideas of existential philosophers and psychologists to argue that facing and embracing anxiety can lead to personal growth and strength. His work is considered a cornerstone in existential psychology, providing deep insights into how anxiety influences behaviour and personality.

It should be noted that many of these themes and concepts, if not all of them, here drafted psychologically, are elaborated upon in Tillich's subsequent work, "*The Courage to Be*", where he introduces a new dimension to the discussion: the spiritual aspect.

In 1957, Irvin Yalom¹⁰ (Serlin 1994), underwent therapy with Rollo May while completing his psychiatry residency at Johns Hopkins, a process that was probably an integral part of his professional development and training. Yalom went on to become a prominent figure in existential psychology.

Also his extensive work in the field will focus on “the four fundamental fears” that define the human experience:

1. **Death,**
2. **Freedom,**
3. **Isolation (interpersonal, intrapersonal, and existential), and**
4. **Meaninglessness.**

He explores the human response to these existential issues, examining both adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms, as anxieties.

¹⁰ Irvin David Yalom (1931) is an American existential psychiatrist who is emeritus professor of psychiatry at Stanford University.

It's worth noting that Rollo May faced the delicate task of defending Paul Tillich's legacy against allegations made by Tillich's wife, Hannah. After Tillich passed away, Hannah published a *memoir*¹¹ (Tillich H., 1973) wherein she depicted him in a controversial light, including allegations of infidelity¹² and describing him as a woman chaser, more committed to seducing female students than to writing books on theology. In response, Rollo May felt compelled to write a fervent article (Wright, 1974) countering this portrayal and upholding Tillich's scholarly and personal reputation.

3.3. The Courage to Be

3.3.1. Terms definition

Allow me a brief preface to clarify the most recurrent terms in this book: fear and anxiety.

As indicated by Gullone (2000), **normal fear** is defined as a natural response to a real or imagined threat. It's considered to be an integral and adaptive aspect of human development, serving primarily to promote survival. In contrast, **anxiety** is often future-oriented and focused on diffuse threats. It involves a more complex response system, including cognitive, affective, physiological and behavioural aspects, and is geared towards preparation for anticipated events.

Normal anxiety¹³ may vary according to factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status and culture, and tends to decrease in prevalence and intensity with age. The content of normal anxiety also changes over time, evolving from immediate, concrete stimuli in infancy to more anticipatory, abstract fears in late childhood and adolescence ("Will I be fortunate enough to find my ideal partner, and will we have a harmonious family life with children? What if not?"). This question is an example of a future-oriented fear that creates anxiety now.).

To give another example, if we imagine an African child who has to walk from one village to another in the savannah, knowing that there are lions and snakes in that part of the territory, he will experience anxiety and this state will make him predictably more cautious. If he meets a real lion, the anxiety will disappear and be transformed into fear. Normal anxiety, to some extent, is a natural and universal part of the human experience.

A **pathological fear** occurs when I'm worried about something concrete, like lions and snakes, but in an exaggerated way, not about the object itself (a bigger lion), but about the circumstances: like being afraid of lions not on the savannah, but in the safety of an apartment in Reykjavík, Iceland. In other words, an imaginary situation such as "I'm afraid of a snake coming out of my toilet" produces a complex reaction that has nothing to do with reality.

¹¹ The Tillich Society in Germany issued a "warning" to German publishers not to issue any translation of Mrs. Tillich's book, which the society said contains "weighty distortions" and "misrepresentations" of Tillich.

¹² "It saddens me to say this, but I must speak out: I don't think Hannah's book presents an accurate picture of Paulus," May declared. "It presents him as a kind of adolescent voyeur and implies there were actual sexual relationships between him and a long series of women. That's not true."

¹³ Pennsylvania State University. (n.d.). Psychology of human emotion. Retrieved December 7, 2023, from <https://psu.pb.unizin.org/psychologyofhumanemotion/>

Pathological fear is typically a response to a specific, identifiable threat. It involves immediate, concrete responses to danger and is often characterized by acute behavioral and physiological reactions.

Pathological anxiety, on the other hand, is conceptualised as an exaggerated state of mind. It is often a response to a non-targeted, non-specific, protracted or perceived threat rather than an immediate danger. In contrast to the specific and acute response of pathological fear, pathological anxiety is characterised by prolonged, diffuse and often anticipatory responses to potential threats.

As evidenced in the work of Rosen & Schulkin, 1998, neurophysiologically, fear and anxiety activate different structures in the brain. Fear primarily activates the central nucleus of the amygdala, which is involved in responses to specific fearful events. Anxiety, on the other hand, activates the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis (BNST), part of the extended amygdala, which is activated in the absence of a specific stimulus and is associated with longer-lasting responses to negative emotional stimuli.

Paul Tillich was probably unaware of these neurophysiological explanations, but in his book he makes the same specification.

- Anxiety is without a concrete object
- Fear has an object
- I can only fight my fear with courage if it is objectified.

Please keep these points in mind as you read the next paragraph.

3.3.2. The Courage To be

The Courage to Be has become a classic of twentieth-century religious and philosophical thought. The Christian existentialist thinker describes the dilemma of modern man and points a way to the conquest of the problem of anxiety.

The essential character of courage is “in spite of.”

In his theology, courage is a central concept. Courage is not just a human virtue but a fundamental aspect of human existence. It is the ability to affirm one's being in spite of the elements of nonbeing that threaten it, such as doubt, despair, and death.

Tillich describes several types of courage.

1. The "**courage to be as oneself**" reflects the individual's assertion of their own uniqueness and identity in the face of conformist pressures.
2. The "**courage to be as a part**" represents the courage to affirm one's place within a community or group, acknowledging interdependence.
3. Lastly, "**the courage to be as being**" refers to the deeper existential courage that confronts the "anxiety of meaninglessness and nonbeing" by finding a sense of ultimate concern or meaning, which for many is rooted in faith or a transcendent reality.

In summary, courage is the existential and spiritual affirmation of life against the forces that negate it, and it is intimately connected to the concept of faith.

This faith aligns with the idea of a **“God above God”**, reflecting the introspective aspect of faith as an unveiling of consciousness's core structure, a theme present since his early works. This phrase is one of Paul Tillich's most provocative theological concepts. It appears in his work "The Courage to Be," where he addresses the existential anxieties of modern life. This concept arises from Tillich's attempt to reconcile the idea of God with the existentialist philosophy that emphasises the individual's experience of alienation and meaninglessness.

For Tillich, this concept represents the ultimate source of being and meaning that transcends traditional theistic conceptions of God. It is an acknowledgment of the limitations of human understanding of the divine, pointing to a reality of God that goes beyond the anthropomorphic depictions or doctrinal formulations found in institutional religion.

In particular, this idea is Tillich's response to the existentialist critique of religion, which often views God as a projection of human concerns and thus irrelevant in a secular, scientific age. Tillich suggests that while the traditional image of God may indeed be a human construct that is subject to doubt and disbelief, there is a deeper dimension of the divine that escapes these critiques. This motto thus signifies a divine reality that is not an object among objects but the very ground of existence itself, the basis of the possibility of any being or meaning. In this sense, Tillich's God is not one being among others but the depth of being that underlies and surpasses all finite existence. It is this understanding of God that can provide the courage to be in the face of non-being, despair, and the anxieties of life. For Tillich, then, true faith is an act of ultimate concern directed toward this "God above God," which provides a foundation for meaning in the face of life's ultimate concerns.

Tillich expanded his Yale University lectures into this book, where he incorporates the early philosophies of Socrates, Aquinas, and Nietzsche into his own philosophies about courage. Tillich believes that "courage is directly tied to being or a self-affirmation of one's being". In particular, he defines courage as the self-affirmation of one's being in spite of a threat of non-being. He relates courage to anxiety¹⁴, anxiety being the threat of non-being and the courage to be what we use to combat that threat.

¹⁴ There are slight but significant differences in Reinhold Niebuhr's and Tillich's respective use of this account of anxiety as well, despite the fact that both stems from their common reliance on Søren Kierkegaard's account of anxiety. This is especially evident when one considers their account of a related theological concern: the capacity for human self-transcendence. Accounting for these differences in their view on human self-transcendence illustrates how and why more pronounced differences exist in their respective accounts of the relationship of love and justice tempered by hope, as found in Christian Realism (for Niebuhr) and the fulfilment of time as *kairos* in Faithful Realism (for Tillich).

In order to explain how courage is connected to a personal being, Tillich also explains the metaphysical concept of "Nonbeing", saying that being embraces both itself and its negation, adding that being is eternally overcoming nonbeing.

Tillich delves into metaphysical concepts of Being and Nonbeing, leading to a crucial discussion in his book: **the lack of belief in one's personal being results in anxiety.**

Then, he discusses three absolute fears and three relative fears as part of his exploration of anxiety and the human condition. These fears are central to his existential philosophy:

Three Absolute Fears:

1. **Fear of Death (Nonbeing):** This is the most fundamental of all fears. It is the fear of annihilation, of ceasing to exist. Tillich argues that this fear underlies many other anxieties and is central to the human condition.
2. **Fear of Meaninglessness:** This fear is related to the existential question of whether life has any ultimate meaning or purpose. It involves anxiety about the lack of significance or value in one's existence.
3. **Fear of Guilt and Condemnation:** This fear is linked to moral and ethical concerns. It involves anxiety about being judged, condemned, or found guilty, either by oneself, others, or a higher moral authority.

and the Three Relative Fears:

1. **Fear of Fate:** While the fear of death is an absolute fear, the fear of fate is more specific. It relates to anxieties about the unpredictability and uncontrollability of life events, including accidents, illnesses, and the uncertain future.
2. **Fear of the Power of Being Itself:** This fear involves anxiety about the overwhelming and uncontrollable aspects of existence. It's related to a sense of awe and dread in the face of the immense power of being or reality.
3. **Fear of God:** In Tillich's theological context, this fear is not about fearing God's love but rather about fearing the mystery and transcendence of the divine. It involves awe and reverence for the ultimate reality that is God.

Tillich's work explores how these fears are interconnected and how they can lead to existential anxiety. He also discusses the concept of "courage" as the means by which individuals confront and transcend these fears to find meaning and purpose in life.

The German theologian asserts that "courage is self-affirmation in spite of anxiety." He then addresses **anxiety as the recognition of potential nonbeing**, which threatens existence

in three distinct ways, each correlating with a form of anxiety, categorising existential anxiety into three forms:

1. As related to fate and death, acknowledging that life is subject to unpredictable factors and the inevitability of death.
2. As stemming from emptiness and meaninglessness, which emerges when life's purpose becomes unclear, often leading to doubt and despair.
3. Or associated with guilt and condemnation, fueled by the sense of not achieving one's potential.

In the critical third chapter, Tillich embarks on a thorough explanation of what he labels as neurotic or pathological anxiety, setting it apart from the existential variety he has discussed prior.

Neurotic anxiety is characterised as contingent, tethered to particular life circumstances, unlike existential anxiety, which emanates from the broader human condition itself.

Such anxiety manifests within individuals who, in their efforts to dodge the confrontations of existential anxiety, find themselves ensnared in a web of unresolved internal conflicts.

These conflicts might span from the clash between conscious censorship and unconscious impulses to the discord between lofty ambitions and the sobering reality of human limitations.

The book asserts that mere psychological intervention falls short in defining or addressing the full spectrum of anxiety. A turn to Ontology is essential, providing a framework that situates the psychological and sociological data into an all-encompassing theory of anxiety.

Pathological anxiety, in Tillich's view, is but a specific manifestation of existential anxiety, its intensity and impact contingent upon the interplay between the anxiety itself and the individual's capacity for self-affirmation and courage.

He had earlier established the notion that **while courage cannot eradicate anxiety - due to its existential nature - it can envelop it**, integrating anxiety into the very act of self-affirmation.

In this way, anxiety, when acknowledged and faced "in spite of" the fears it presents, is transformed. It becomes a component of courage, echoing the philosophical idea that being naturally assimilates nonbeing.

This incorporation, this acceptance of anxiety despite its intimidating presence, is what transmutes mere self-affirmation into the noble virtue of courage.

Understanding pathological anxiety is pivotal, and it hinges on confronting one's potential non-being with courage. A failure to do so often leads to despair.

In an attempt to escape this despair, individuals may retreat into neurosis. Neurotics, in their own way, seek self-affirmation; yet, this assertion is inherently flawed as they have forfeited part of their identity, leading to a restricted and defensive sense of self.

This self-preservation manifests as a fortress of denial, safeguarded against the incursions of reality and psychoanalytic scrutiny. Such defences, while instinctual, betray an awareness that their collapse would leave only despair. Neurosis, then, is an ailment in need of remedy for one to reconnect with reality.

An average person succumbs to neurosis when they substitute their fragmented but courageously embraced reality with a delusion where fears are subdued, leading to a pathological form of self-affirmation. This avoidance allows the ominous shadow of non-being to take hold, transforming them into ardent guardians of a self-imposed order, detached from reality and plagued by an underlying, often unrecognised anxiety. Thus, it is anxiety that, when not integrated into one's courageous self-affirmation, festers into neurosis.

In his view, courage is the active embrace of self despite the pervasive dread of non-existence. It involves integrating the very anxiety that threatens to undermine one's being. Pathological anxiety, however, represents a retreat from this confrontation, as those afflicted attempt to escape anxiety and, consequently, life itself.

Unlike existentialist thinkers such as Sartre, Camus, and Kafka, who articulate the despair of life's apparent meaninglessness, Tillich does not settle on a human-centric resolution. In his concluding chapter, he turns to Christian motifs, advocating that overcoming the despair of meaninglessness hinges on transcending human capabilities and depending on a divine source of power.

3.4. Scope of research and Conclusion

While the brevity of this article precludes a more detailed exploration, it concludes by suggesting several promising directions for further research.

1. A comparative study of existential psychology and Tillich's theological approach to anxiety, examining where they converge and diverge.
2. Tillich-May-Yalom: from Existentialism to Existential Psychology
3. "Man is man because he has freedom": the influence of Tillich on Martin Luther King
4. "Sin is separation" and the racial segregation in King. "Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness?" (Martin Luther King Jr, *Why We Can't Wait* (New York, NY: Signet, 2000), 83.)
5. "*Love, Power and Justice*" as a common social political framework between King and Tillich

6. An exploration of the influence of German philosophical thought on American existential psychology during the mid-20th century.
7. A deeper biographical analysis of the personal and professional relationship between Paul Tillich and Rollo May, and its impact on their respective bodies of work.
8. An investigation into how Tillich's "The Courage to Be" and May's "The Meaning of Anxiety" and "The Courage to Create" interact and inform each other, potentially reading them as a triptych.
9. A closer look at the role of Irvin Yalom in popularising existential psychology, tracing intellectual lineages back to Tillich and May.
10. Analysis of the cultural and historical factors that shaped Tillich's shift in focus when he moved to the US and how this shift influenced American theological and psychological thought.
11. The application of Tillich's concepts in contemporary clinical settings, assessing their relevance and efficacy in modern psychotherapy.

Specifically, within the realm of gerontology, potential research avenues could include examining how ageing individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) or dementia might benefit from the existential psychological principles discussed by Tillich and May.

1. **Existential Anxiety and Fear of Mutilation:** Tillich's work delves into existential anxiety, which is the anxiety that arises from the human condition and the awareness of our mortality. Dementia patients, as they grapple with memory loss and cognitive decline, might also experience existential anxiety as they lose their sense of self and struggle to make sense of their changing reality.
2. **Loss of Identity and the Fear of Annihilation:** "The Courage to Be" discusses the importance of maintaining a sense of self despite life's challenges. In dementia, individuals often experience a loss of identity as they forget who they are, their life history, and even their loved ones. This can lead to profound existential distress.
3. **Meaning-Making:** Tillich emphasises the role of meaning-making in confronting anxiety. Dementia patients may grapple with the loss of meaning in their lives as they lose the ability to engage in activities that once brought them fulfilment. Exploring how they cope with this loss of meaning could be a significant area of research.
4. **Support and Coping Strategies in MCI and Dementia:** Tillich's work suggests that courage can be found in facing anxiety and uncertainty. Research could investigate the coping strategies that dementia patients use to confront their anxiety and how external support systems, such as caregivers and therapeutic interventions, can foster courage in the face of dementia-related anxiety.
5. **Spirituality and Transcendence:** Tillich's theology often involves themes of spirituality and transcendence. Research could explore whether spiritual practices or beliefs play a role in helping dementia patients navigate their anxiety and find a sense of courage and peace.

In conclusion, this article explores the expansive intellectual landscape of Paul Tillich's life, from his turbulent German origins during times of revolution and war, to his academic associations with luminaries such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Heidegger. It traces his voyage to America, his significant alliance with Rollo May, and the rise of existential psychology, highlighting Irvin Yalom's contributions to its evolution. A thorough examination of Tillich's "The Courage to Be" has uncovered a plausible synergistic connection with May's "The Meaning of Anxiety" and "The Courage to Create," urging readers to contemplate these works in unison.

Collectively, they provide a composite perspective to comprehend the existential difficulties and the everlasting pursuit of significance in the human encounter.

“The Courage to Be is the Courage to accept oneself,
in spite of being unacceptable”

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