

The Critical Project in Schelling, Tillich and Goodchild

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Understanding Kant means transcending Kant. (Tillich)¹

1. The Genre of Ultimate Concern

A genuinely radical theology is a theological thinking that truly rethinks the deepest ground of theology, a rethinking that is initially an unthinking of every established theological ground; only through such an unthinking can a clearing be established for theological thinking, and that is the very clearing which is the first goal of radical theology. Nor can this be accomplished by a simple dissolution of our given theological grounds, for those are the very grounds that must here be ultimately challenged, and challenged in terms of their most intrinsic claims.²

So begins Altizer's most recent 'call to radical theology' – and it is under the sign of this task of 'unthinking' that I wish to position Tillich and a tradition of critical theory in what follows. It is a call that is echoed throughout Tillich's works as the imperative that 'the concrete contents of ordinary faith must be subjected to criticism and transformation.'³

Altizer and Tillich repeat a Cartesian trope that lies at the kernel of modernity: beginnings must be destructive; they should open a space free from the orthodoxies, assumptions and doxa that clog up the airways of thought. To get at 'the deepest ground of theology' – which following Tillich one might call 'ultimate concern' or following Goodchild

¹ Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Protestant Theology*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (London: SCM, 1967), 70.

² Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Call to Radical Theology*, ed. Lissa McCullough (Albany: SUNY, 2012), 1.

³ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (London: Fontana, 1952), 172-3.

‘piety’ – one must *reorient* oneself and, most especially, one’s attention. Such reorientation is a necessarily destructive *critical* enterprise. In other words, genuine criticism is the only way to get at theology’s ground (or unground), to get at what matters most. Moreover, when Altizer theologically transposes the philosophical slogan that ‘it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things’⁴, he problematizes the very relation between theology and philosophy, challenging the possibility of any determinate, hierarchal relation between them. This is of course a recurrent move in his oeuvre. Yet, at this juncture – in the very opening words of *The Call to Radical Theology* – it raises a specific question with which all the thinkers discussed in this paper find themselves confronted: whence critique? That is, what is the optimal discourse from within which one can embark on the critical project? *What is the genre of critique?*⁵ If criticism is inherently theological but structured philosophically, are those who critique philosophers, theologians or *sui generis* (κριτικόν)?

These are questions recently discussed by one of Altizer’s heirs-apparent, Bradley Johnson, in an analysis of the above quotation. In *The Characteristic Theology of Herman Melville*, Johnson states explicitly that the reorientation of thinking to its grounds – what Altizer calls ‘theological unthinking’ and Johnson himself calls ‘the thinking of theology’s self-creation *as theology*’⁶ – necessarily occurs as ‘the ironic dissolution of genre’.⁷ He continues in a way that should remind us of Tillich’s ‘boundary’ configured as the ‘centre’ for ‘fruitful’ thinking⁸,

⁴ René Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*, §1 (in, for example, *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings*, trans. Desmond M. Clarke (London: Penguin, 1998), 112).

⁵ C.f. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s work from the late 70s which is also driven by this question (for example, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Bernard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988)).

⁶ Bradley A. Johnson, *The Characteristic Theology of Herman Melville: Aesthetics, Politics, Duplicity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 77.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See Paul Tillich, ‘Philosophy and Theology’ in *Hauptwerke*, ed. John Clayton *et al* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 4:279; Paul Tillich, ‘On the Boundary’, trans. J. Heywood Thomas, in *The Boundaries of Our Being* (London: Fontana, 1973), 297.

My conception of theology [is] a fundamental, ontological discourse that operates best when emerging in the spaces between any number of discourses and disciplines... The interdisciplinary model I hope to exemplify is invested in that which is unthought in thought – i.e. its radically disrupted, repressed aesthetic-theological excess. Only in this way does one’s thinking *about* theology (*qua* subject) become a *theological thinking* (*qua* Subject).⁹

In other words, theology is not a self-enclosed field of discourse, but an excess (produced in the very act of grounding and ungrounding) that circulates through discourse. Hence, the only criterion for the *κριτικότης* is not commentary on a *Summa* or fidelity to a church, but finding a place to stand that most effectively harnesses this excess (wherever that may turn out to be).¹⁰

We must also ask why it is that theology has traditionally been restrictive in this regard; what is it about the established field of ‘Theology’ that needs to be superseded? Again Johnson provides orientation:

Traditional theology... begins and ends with the *naming* of its ultimate concern. In this way, it says both too much and too little... There is, of course, a crucial difference between a theologian, the one who names, and a philosopher, whose attention is to the conditions of naming itself. Indeed... perhaps only the latter, the non-theologian, can be truly attuned to the promise that crosses religious divides, that of a ‘new creation’ (or ‘enlightenment’) – the creation of a new existence.¹¹

The theologian names without attending to why, how or by what right she so names; in

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁰ Significantly for this paper, Johnson employs a model derived from Schelling’s *Weltalter* to make this argument.

¹¹ Bradley A. Johnson, ‘Making All Things New: Kant and Rancière on the Unintentional Intentional Practice of Aesthetics’ in Anthony Paul Smith and Daniel Whistler (eds), *After the Postsecular and the Postmodern: New Essays in Continental Philosophy of Religion* (Newcastle: CSP, 2010), 377-8.

consequence, the theologian is insufficiently attentive to ever be able to reorient thinking's pieties (its ultimate concerns or deepest grounds). Which is not to say that Johnson rejects theology *tout court*; rather, he goes on to speak of 'a new theological thinking... concerned with why and how the naming of the unconditioned occurs at all' and so which practises 'an active ethics of thinking embodied by the attention paid to that which is unthinkable *in the thinkable*'.¹² This is a discourse that identifies itself as theological *without* trapping itself within the prison of traditional theological questions and concerns. It is concerned not just with names but with the conditions of possibility of naming (it is therefore critical in the strictly Kantian sense); yet, it also exceeds the merely philosophical insofar as its concern is that ground of discourse which is itself excessive (thereby 'express[ing] the experience of abyss in philosophical concepts'¹³). On this line of thinking, the critique of pieties and the reorientation of ultimate concern (i.e. radical theology as defined by Altizer above) is an ethos, an ethics of thinking.

In what follows, I trace this ethos through three manifestations of a distinct, if previously underexplored tradition of radical theology running through Schelling, Tillich and Goodchild. What all three have in common is a commitment to attend to that which matters most (piety or ultimate concern) and to a project of critique that radicalises the Kantian definition of the transcendental ('all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects'¹⁴) in order to get at that which eludes Kant's own thought, the unconditional or 'deepest theological' values that orient personal existence. Throughout, I attempt to not just speak the names given for such pieties, but also describe the conditions that for Schelling, Tillich and Goodchild make possible this naming process at all. What is at

¹² *Ibid.* Johnson is here quoting Goodchild (as we shall see).

¹³ Tillich, 'On the Boundary', 321.

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1929), A11/B25.

stake therefore is a genuinely *critical* theory.

2. The Neo-Schellingian Tradition

As an initial means of justifying my locating of Tillich in a tradition that spans back to Schelling and forwards to Goodchild, I provide some historical context. This context serves as a means of bringing out what is essential to Tillich's Schellingianism, therefore provisionally justifying his place in the canon of critical theory, i.e. the development of an ethos of thinking that is first and foremost a matter of criticism (in the Kantian sense).

It was as a student that Tillich first discovered Schelling's writings:

I recall the unforgettable moment when by chance I came into possession of the very rare first edition of the collected works of Schelling in a bookstore on my way to the University of Berlin. I had no money, but I bought it anyway, and this spending of nonexistent money was probably more important than all the other non-existent or sometimes existing money that I have spent. For what I learnt from Schelling became determinant of my own philosophical and theological development.¹⁵

Indeed, on 26th September 1954, the centenary of Schelling's death and over forty years after that purchase, Tillich spoke again on what Schelling had meant to him,

I felt that I could express with this speech something of the admiration I owe to my great teacher in philosophy and theology. He was my teacher, although the start of my studies and the year of his death lie exactly fifty years apart; never in the development

¹⁵ Tillich, *Perspectives*, 142.

of my own thought have I forgotten my dependence on Schelling. In all times as well as on half-alien soils his fundamental ideas have been of help to me in all sorts of areas.¹⁶

By Tillich's own admission, then, Schelling's thought permeates all of his own¹⁷ – but, of course, it was not just his own. Our understanding of the history of ideas in early twentieth-century Europe is impoverished if it does not include the category of 'neo-Schellingianism' to describe many of the concerns of Berdiaev, Bloch, Bulgakov, Frank, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, Rosenzweig as well as Tillich. Each thinker (and it is immediately noticeable that, in line with the train of thought followed in the previous section, they cannot easily be described as either philosophers or theologians) returned to the work of F.W.J. Schelling for inspiration. For, far from the mainstream view of Schelling as a pre-Hegelian relic, there emerged here a Schelling who – to quote Jaspers – is 'a prototype of modern possibilities.'¹⁸

In 1957, for example, Marcel's 'Schelling fut-il un précurseur de la philosophie de l'existence?' set out to review this obsessive return to Schelling repeated over the past fifty years. He writes,

If, for a form of thought that aims at rigour before anything else, Schelling cannot be either a master or an example; for thought that, on the contrary, regards philosophy as a heroic adventure entailing risks and skirting abysses, he will always remain an exhilarating companion, and, perhaps even, an inspiration.¹⁹

¹⁶ Paul Tillich, 'Schelling und die Anfänge des Existentialistischen Protestes' in *Hauptwerke*, 1:392.

¹⁷ This is of course to accept Tillich's later mythologising of his encounter with Schelling at face-value; for a concerted attempt to demythologise it, see the works of Christian Danz, especially *Religion als Freiheitsbewußtsein* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000).

¹⁸ Karl Jaspers, *Schelling: Größe und Verhängnis* (Munich: Piper, 1955), 332; translated in Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman, 'Editors' Introduction' to *The New Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2004), 2

¹⁹ Gabriel Marcel, 'Schelling fut-il un précurseur de la philosophie de l'existence?' in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (1957), 87.

We must remember that Marcel and other neo-Schellingians wrote in a scholarly vacuum. When Tillich wrote his first doctoral thesis on Schelling in 1910, there was no book-length study of Schelling's later philosophy on which he could draw. Schelling had not yet been domesticated by the university; instead, as the above quotation clearly implies, the wild Schelling of the early twentieth century stood alongside Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as a fresh voice for the unorthodox. More specifically, for Marcel, Schelling 'prepared the terrain for... a renaissance of metaphysics on non-traditional foundations', a renaissance sorely needed to satisfy a thinking 'increasingly wary of the encroachment of legalistic categories on the one hand, and of the Hegelian temptation on the other.'²⁰

When it comes to identifying the elements of Schellingian philosophy that Marcel, Tillich and others found so appealing, a list of two items is usually given: system and freedom (to put it in the language of Heidegger's 1936 course on the *Freiheitsschrift*). As Marcel makes clear in the above, neo-Schellingianism is premised on the rejection of a choice between neo-Kantian legalism and Hegelian metaphysics, between philosophy limited to the subject and speculation that ignores it. The neo-Schellingians were precisely those who wanted both.²¹ For Heidegger too, 'Schelling is the truly creative and boldest thinker of this whole age of German philosophy'²², precisely because he thinks through the compatibility of system (as 'the task of philosophy'²³) and freedom (with its own peculiar 'factuality'²⁴). In general, the neo-Schellingians are followers of Schelling to the extent they eschew the exclusive choice between human freedom and metaphysics. They chose both.

Tillich's second doctoral thesis on Schelling, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in*

²⁰ Marcel, 'Schelling fut-il un précurseur de la philosophie de l'existence?', 86. See further George Pattison, *Anxious Angels: A Retrospective View of Religious Existentialism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 20.

²¹ See further Gabriel Marcel, 'An Essay in Autobiography' in *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, trans. Manya Harari (New York: Citadel, 1956), 105-6.

²² Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 1985), 4.

²³ *Ibid*, 27.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 164.

Schelling's Philosophical Development, stands firmly in this tradition. Mysticism is 'the feeling of unity with the absolute'.²⁵ Only on the basis of some form of affinity between man and God, Tillich claims, can any knowledge of God – and so a speculative theology – occur. Equiprimordial with this principle, however, Tillich also posits guilt-consciousness, 'consciousness of opposition to God... the experience of contradiction between Holy Lord and sinful creature.'²⁶ Present alongside mystic union with God is always an awareness of unworthiness in His eyes. And this second element is the very principle most philosophical speculation suppresses; Schelling alone gave guilt-consciousness the status it deserved, according to Tillich. By acknowledging guilt-consciousness as well as identity, Schelling permits a moment of the irrational into his system. As Tillich writes, 'The supreme principle of all reality [becomes] the identity of essence and contradiction, of the rational and the irrational'.²⁷

That is, no theology should deny man's separation from God and radical freedom to sin; yet, on the other hand, no theology should use this as an excuse to sacrifice God's relation with the world and the systematic speculation this makes possible. Both aspects (system and freedom) must be retained, and the struggle to achieve this is the struggle to theologise.²⁸ Always, Schelling's own successes remained normative for Tillich, providing the model to aspire to. Schelling's philosophy exemplifies a 'both...and...' logic from which

²⁵ Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, trans. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), 27.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁸ Similar claims are made as early as Tillich's initial doctoral thesis on Schelling. Here Schelling is said to combine two methods in his philosophising on religion: an anthropological study of man as the giver of meaning to religion and a metaphysical examination of the structures of being that make religion possible. As such, 'To reach the essence of religion it is necessary to conceive the spirituality of man in an original and substantial relatedness to God. The method becomes speculative.' (*The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles*, trans. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), 119) The anthropological starting-point in man is combined with a speculative extension of philosophy into a concern with God. As Tillich expressed it in 1948, 'The way to ontology passes through the doctrine of man.' (Paul Tillich, 'Existential Philosophy: Its Historical Meaning' in *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 98)

results a non-dualist thinking of human freedom embedded in and commensurate with wider reality.

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Nevertheless, it is not merely the incorporation of system *and* freedom for its own sake that interests Tillich. When he returns to Schelling in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the real stakes of Tillichian neo-Schellingianism begin to emerge. Here we have Tillich's polemical insistence that Schelling was 'the predecessor of all existentialists'²⁹, and his late Berlin lectures 'the original document of existential philosophy'³⁰, but there is also something more: *the correlation of system and freedom is what allows the theologian to attend to the matter of ultimate concern itself*. That is, as we have already seen at length, Schelling 'attempts to return to an attitude in which the sharp gulf between the "subjective" and "objective" realms had not yet been created'.³¹ And, Tillich now emphasises, this is done in the name of revealing an underlying asubjective-anobjective transcendental condition of experience. Schelling 'turned toward "subjectivity", not as something opposed to "objectivity", but as that living experience in which both objectivity and subjectivity are rooted... [He] tried to discover the creative realm of being which is prior to and beyond the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity.'³² Such a realm of being is 'the Source whence springs my thinking and acting'.³³ To locate and describe this source is the very pinnacle of criticism, for this is the transcendental condition that makes all of life possible.

The correlation between man and world (freedom and system) is here recast as a means of accessing a further principle – piety, the primordial realm of ultimate concern which

²⁹ Tillich, *Perspectives*, 141.

³⁰ Tillich, 'Schelling und die Anfänge', 394.

³¹ Tillich, 'Existential Philosophy', 107.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 92.

orients both being as a whole and the human subject in particular. The transcendental source of subjective existence and objective being is the ground/abyss of all life and is obtained through a neo-Schellingian methodology. That is, Tillich (repeating German Idealism) identifies the Kantian attempt to pinpoint the psychological conditions of representation with the metaphysical search for grounds of being; he realises, that is, that ‘the transcendental stratum of knowledge corresponds to the transcendental stratum of being’³⁴, and such a speculo-critical transcendental stratum is named ‘ultimate concern’. This then is one of the core functions of Tillichean correlation in general: the determination of ultimacy through a dual discourse of man and world.

The discussion of revelation in the first volume of the *Systematic Theology* further clarifies this knot of criticism, correlation and ultimacy. Revelation is defined precisely as ‘the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately’³⁵, the refocusing of attention onto pieties. Such a process of refocusing consists in two moments (that ultimately collapse into identity): a ‘negative side’ of critique³⁶ and a positive moment of speculation where there ‘opens a new dimension of knowledge, the dimension of understanding in relation to our ultimate concern and to the mystery of being.’³⁷ It is of course the initial critical moment that concerns me here, a moment that is rigorously correlated by Tillich into accounts of the (objective) ‘abysmal element in the ground of being’³⁸ and a (subjective) ecstatic shock to the mind. In a paragraph that recalls the later Schelling as much as it foreshadows Goodchild’s Deleuzian invocation of limit-experiences, Tillich writes:

The threat of non-being, grasping the mind, produces the ‘ontological shock’ in which the negative side of the mystery of being – its abysmal element – is experienced.

³⁴ Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, trans. Elsa L. Talmey (New York: Scribner, 1936), 158.

³⁵ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), 1:110.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

‘Shock’ points to a state of mind in which the mind is thrown out of its normal balance, shaken in its structure. Reason reaches its boundary line, is thrown back upon itself, and then is driven again to its extreme situation.³⁹

Criticism – in its Tillichian, Schellingian and Goodchildian form – takes reason beyond itself to its ground and abyss, as ‘the beginning of all genuine philosophy.’⁴⁰

Therefore, to limit Tillich’s neo-Schellingianism to the inventory of freedom and system is insufficient; indeed, it does not get at what matters most. Such an inadequate account tends to pigeonhole Tillich as a metaphysician attempting to provide a cosmological account of freedom. What I am arguing in this essay, however, is that Tillich is a critical thinker, and what he takes from Schelling and bequeaths (indirectly) to Goodchild is a *critical project*, a discourse that names, and describes the conditions of naming what is of ultimate concern. Tillich is speculative insofar as he is critical and (ultimately) he is critical insofar as he is speculative. For Tillich as for the German Idealists, the post-Kantian critical project reaches a point indistinguishable from speculation, thereby ‘abolishing the contrast between metaphysics and epistemology.’⁴¹

This is (to recall the epigraph to this essay) a repetition of criticism that transcends the strictures placed on it in Kantian and neo-Kantian traditions. Of course, one can find plenty of attacks on the latter throughout Tillich’s works – from the attack on neo-Kantianism that opens *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*⁴² through the 1922 article on *Religionsphilosophie* (published in the *Kantstudien Jahrgang*) that speaks of the emptiness, formalism and fideism

³⁹ *Ibid*, 113.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴¹ Paul Tillich, quoted in Gunther Wurz, ‘An Introduction to Paul Tillich’s Philosophical Writings’ in *Hauptwerke* 1:12. On this point in relation to Goodchild, see Joshua Ramey and Daniel Whistler, ‘The Physics of Sense: Bruno, Schelling, Deleuze’ in Edward Kazarian *et al* (eds), *The Metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze* (Lexington, MA: Lexington, 2013).

⁴² Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 22.

of critical thinking⁴³ to the derogatory comments that litter the *Systematic Theology*.⁴⁴ Much of Tillich's output should indeed be defined by 'a protest against the methodological formalism of the Kantians.'⁴⁵ Nevertheless, I contend, criticism *tout court* is not thereby discarded; rather, it returns in a more ordinary form as the description, transformation and amelioration of what concerns us ultimately – or, in the language of the opening to the *Systematic Theology*, the *testing* and *interrogation* of theological concepts by means of formal criteria for ultimacy.⁴⁶ To put it bluntly, criticism returns as the critique of idolatry, where such a critique is not extrinsic to the theological enterprise but the ground from whence it perpetually begins again.⁴⁷ There emerges here, therefore, a mutant form of criticism which is also, I will argue in the next section, the most paradigmatic form of criticism ('criticism as such') to the extent that it identifies and describes *the* transcendental condition of subjective experience and objective being that Kant misses: ultimate concern – or piety.⁴⁸

3. Criticism as Such

Theology becomes critical in Tillich's neo-Schellingianism. In order to enrich this description of such criticism (and the conditions of its own possibility), I now turn to Philip Goodchild's *Capitalism and Religion*, which stands squarely in both a Schellingian and Tillichian tradition insofar as it conceives the task of thinking as an encounter with and reorientation of what

⁴³ Paul Tillich, 'Religionsphilosophie' in *Hauptwerke* 4:125-30.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:82-3.

⁴⁵ Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, 124.

⁴⁶ For these formal criteria, see Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:12-4.

⁴⁷ C.f. the discussion of Tillich's notion of 'critical reason' in the conclusion to this essay.

⁴⁸ On Kant's refusal to countenance piety (and its relation to Goodchild's work), see Daniel Whistler, 'The Discipline of Pious Reason: Goethe, Herder, Kant' in Joseph Carlisle, James Carter and Daniel Whistler (eds), *Moral Powers, Fragile Beliefs: Essays in Moral and Religious Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2011).

matters most. *Capitalism and Religion* stands under the same Marxian epigraph, ‘The criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism’⁴⁹, that is an essential component of Tillich’s ‘transcending’ of Kant. Developing the tradition of critical theology further through Goodchild’s work enables us to note three key aspects: first, the knot that exists between critique and *crisis* (one that is verified in their etymological affinity, even if it extends beyond this); second, the extensity of the crisis with which the critical thinker must engage; third, the inextricable relation between critique and futurity.

A *κριτικός* is someone able to make judgments, i.e. someone trained in the art of *κρίσις*, for *κρίσις* (as we know) originally meant judgment or the act of judging. A *critical* thinker, in consequence, is also concerned with crises. She is concerned, that is, not only with describing the conditions of already existing crises, but also with discerning new crises for thought. This could perhaps suggest a breach from Tillich’s self-understanding of the critical project: for, surely, Tillich’s early work most often takes the form of a rejection of theologies of crisis (Barth, Gogarten)? And yet Tillich’s response to the dialectical theologian is always to radicalise and intensify the crisis – ‘to submit not only dialectically *but really* to paradox.’⁵⁰ The theologian, that is, must submit completely to ‘the No’.⁵¹ At that moment, crisis (and so criticism) is not transcended, but enriched and deepened by ‘the positive paradox’, the speculative affirmation that is identical to all criticism:

The theology of crisis is right, completely right, in its struggle against every unparadoxical, immediate, objective understanding of the unconditioned. It is no transition, but something permanent, an element in the essence of theology. But it has

⁴⁹ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>; last accessed: 17/03/13); quoted in Philip Goodchild, *Capitalism and Religion: The Price of Piety* (London: Routledge, 2002), v.

⁵⁰ Paul Tillich, ‘Critical and Positive Paradox’, trans. Keith R. Crim, in James M. Robinson (ed), *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology* (Richmond: John Knox, 1968), 141; my emphasis.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 135.

a presupposition which is itself no longer crisis.⁵²

For Tillich, therefore, as for Goodchild and (as we shall see) for Schelling, the *κριτικός* thinks only of crises.

Whereas the Kantian corpus responds to the crisis of metaphysics and Tillich to the crisis of idolatry, Goodchild's early work similarly responds to the crisis of piety – a crisis which is simultaneously ecological, economic and mental.⁵³ The material nature of these crises should not be overlooked; the critical thinker is not merely provoked by ideas, but by the lack (or abundance) of matter:

The last insight to arrive [in writing this book] was the contemporary truth of suffering: a growing awareness that current trends in globalisation, trade and the spread of technology are not only leading towards a condition where the human habitat is unsustainable, but the urgency and responsibility announced by the preventable catastrophe mean that little else is worth thinking about.⁵⁴

The Goodchildian project cannot therefore consist merely in the identification and description of the conditions of these crises; it needs also to ameliorate, transform and intensify these conditions in the name of a better future, fusing criticism with activism. To put it bluntly, Goodchild's *Capitalism and Religion* is nothing other than a threefold investigation into the possibility of a future for thought: a diagnosis of the present conditions of crisis-ridden thinking, a description of the future conditions necessary for renewing thought and crucially *also* an attempt to meet these conditions. This forms 'a critical theory of piety'.⁵⁵

According to Goodchild, piety designates the process by which we select what matters

⁵² *Ibid*, 141.

⁵³ See, for example, Goodchild 247.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, xiii.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

most and maintain a relationship to it. Piety is ‘a determinate practice of directing attention towards that which matters.’⁵⁶ Piety is not the only condition of thought of course, but, because it is the arbiter of that to which thought is ultimately directed, it is both a necessary and universal condition. It ‘makes a meaningful experience of the world possible.’⁵⁷ Piety is a transcendental condition of thought, corresponding structurally almost exactly to Tillichian ultimacy.

Again, we can discern that thinkers in this critical tradition do not merely imitate the Kantian critical project; they are in fact *more critical* than Kant. And this is because the crisis of piety (or ultimate concern) is *the* crisis of thought *par excellence*. Goodchild, like Tillich and Schelling before him, situates the philosopher at the site of crisis *as such* as a form of *criticism as such*. Moreover, criticism as such is not merely a thinking *of* crisis (as objective genitive), but thinking *as* crisis (the subjective genitive). Goodchild makes this particularly clear in the autobiographical Preface to *Capitalism and Religion*:

Each of these [crises] fractured my self-consciousness, exposing an abyss beneath all my thoughts and relations to myself, to others and to the world. I became a stranger to those closest to me as well as to myself. Each issue imposed itself as a dynamic force on thought, a problem of unlimited importance that I feel barely equipped to begin to address... [On the one hand] the public consensus is engaged in a vast enterprise of evasion, sheltering in a wicked and lethal complacency. Yet each of these problems calls to and awakens the others. Anyone who carefully attends to the significance of these issue may risk having their world shattered. Thinking is nearly as dangerous as complacency.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 248.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, x.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, xiv.

Criticism is a dangerous business, for it puts itself at risk to search out, utilise and redeploy ‘dynamic forces’ liberated by the *shock* of catastrophe. It is not only the doxa of common sense but also philosophy and theology’s ‘defences and shields against the absolute’⁵⁹ which usually protect us from such danger. To confront crisis and become a *κριτικός*, one must ‘unthink’ these grounds.

According to Goodchild, such unthinking is to be achieved through practices of disorientation, such as ‘the art of cultivating ecstatic states’ or ‘an experience of the chaotic interval’.⁶⁰ At the limit, the potencies of thought (defined as ‘the unconditioned within experience’⁶¹) manifest themselves in an ‘apocalyptic experience’ that finally disciplines attention to what matters most:

Awareness is normally dim because, although it can direct attention, there is nothing which can reveal it as a focus of attention. The unthinkable, even though it is thought by right, does not normally come into thought. Piety cannot choose to indicate a potency. Yet potency may indicate itself. Whether in global catastrophe or in minor domestic cruelty, suffering is a sign that indicates an absolute: there is something that matters, something that motivates and empowers us.⁶²

In a crisis, a new, liberatory ‘ethics of thinking’⁶³ can reveal itself, one that both attends to and reorients our ultimate concern. Here thought meets ‘the challenge of contemporary ethics... to incarnate that excess of force within reason, so that reason itself becomes a force.’⁶⁴ And with this ideal in mind Goodchild concludes *Capitalism and Religion* in the following Tillich-Schellingian terms,

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 194, 174.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 214.

⁶² *Ibid*, 239-40.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 250-1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 157.

The consummation of critical piety comes in the form of awareness of potency, when a potency indicates, dramatizes and individuates itself. Such an awareness, such a rare experience, empowers attention no longer to focus simply on itself but to grant attention to what lies outside, to that which matters. Such is the aim of philosophy.⁶⁵

* *

Central to Goodchild's conception of the critical project is the futurity of piety. Goodchild defines piety as 'an orientation towards the future'⁶⁶, transforming this type of critical theory into a thinking aware of its own future. To grasp what is at stake in this conception of criticism, it is crucial to recognise the role of the three Goodchildian 'potencies' and their basis in Schelling's *Weltalter* drafts.

Goodchild repeats the three Schellingian potencies of experience as a relation between the past, present and future. He speaks of the *Weltalter* as 'a dialectic of potencies [which] must describe the construction of modes of piety and their dissolution'⁶⁷, concluding, 'In addition to the dialectic driven by lack and contradiction, Schelling indicates that the will does not merely seek to overcome the past, but actively searches for the future.'⁶⁸ At first glance, Goodchild's reading of Schelling seems derivative of Žižek's. Like Žižek⁶⁹,

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 253.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 177.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 229.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 112.

⁶⁹ Žižek's reading of Schelling concentrates on the notion of 'the Beginning' or the self-genesis of God: 'Since there is nothing outside God, [he] has to beget out of himself a Son, that is, the Word which will resolve the unbearable tension. The undifferentiated pulsation of drives is thus supplanted by the stable network of differences, which sustains the self-identity of the differentiated entities... Consciousness arises from the primordial act which separates present, actual consciousness from the spectral, shadowy realm of the unconscious' (*The Abyss of Freedom* in F.W.J. Schelling, *Ages of the World* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 32-3). In Lacanian terms, this is the 'passage from the Real to history.' (*Ibid*, 37) However, it follows from this (in an orthodox Lacanian manner) that reality is formed at the expense of the Real (the past): the Beginning 'is ultimately always ill-fitting, contingent. It "betrays" the subject, represents him inadequately.' (*The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters* (London: Verso, 2007), 43) To begin always

Goodchild makes much of the final page of the 1813 draft of the *Weltalter*: ‘The Eternal leads the force of the highest consciousness into unconsciousness and sacrifices it to externality so that there might be life and actuality.’⁷⁰ This passage continues,

This is how things had to stand if there were to be an eternal beginning, an eternal ground. That primordial deed which makes a man genuinely himself precedes all individual actions; but immediately after it is put into exuberant freedom, this deed sinks into the night of unconsciousness. This is not a deed that could happen once and then stop; it is a permanent deed, a never-ending deed, and consequently it can never again be brought before consciousness... This deed occurs once and then immediately sinks back into the unfathomable depths.⁷¹

A hasty reading of Goodchild’s interpretation could easily identify piety with the Schellingian notion of ‘beginning’. Piety, like the past, is ineluctably suppressed and forgotten in modern thinking.⁷² The potency of the past, on this reading, is a transcendental condition of existence that makes life possible, but must equally necessarily be suppressed and pushed into the past for that life to be possible. A Žižekian Goodchild would claim: both the positing and negation of piety are necessary for the possibility of thought. As the future of thinking would depend on the suppression of all pieties, criticism in any form would become impossible.

The above already indicates why Goodchild cannot subscribe to this Žižekian reading

comes at a price: ‘The price is the irretrievable *loss* of the subject’s self-identity: the verbal sign that stands for the subject – in which the subject posits himself as self-identical – bears the mark of an irreducible dissonance; it never “fits” the subject.’ (*Ibid*, 47) The suppression of the past is ‘the elusive intangible gap that sustains “reality”.’ (*Ibid*, 68)

⁷⁰ F.W.J. Schelling, *Ages of the World*, trans. Judith Norman (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 179; quoted in Goodchild 111.

⁷¹ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, 179.

⁷² Thus Goodchild claims, ‘Modern reason eliminates access to piety’ (Goodchild 6). In other words, ‘Piety [is] invisible’ because modernity ‘arises from a disavowal of the determinate practices of directing attention.’ (*Ibid*, 247-50)

of the *Weltalter* and, indeed, he explicitly distances himself from Žižek.⁷³ Goodchild does not identify piety with a necessarily suppressed and unavailable past; rather, as we have already seen, Goodchild identifies piety with the potency of the future. Moreover, he puts this Schellingian future of the third potency into battle with the capitalist future. So, on the one hand, there is that dead and empty vision of the future which asserts:

To save time is to reinvest the time we spend on time itself. This reflexive intensifying process leaves little time to spare for other needs that demand our attention. The essence of contemporary ideology is a focused and self-enclosed attention: in focusing on expectations about future rates of return, extrapolated from limited processes in the present, and in focusing on saving time, one loses sight of reality.⁷⁴

And on the other hand there is a critical future that promises transformation through asking, in Schelling's words: 'Is [the future] not just that inner spiritual matter which still lies concealed in all things of this world, only awaiting its liberation?'⁷⁵ And the key issue, of course, is how to construct the latter as resistance to the former.

4. After the Deluge

Goodchild, Tillich and Schelling all assert (in their own way) the following thesis: the future is born out of catastrophe. Crisis is a key theme in Schelling's work from 1809 onwards. The *Freiheitsschrift*, for example, is intent on charting the eruption of grounds (whether geological, metaphysical, epistemological or religious). The history of religion sketched at

⁷³ See Goodchild 124.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 144.

⁷⁵ Schelling, *Ages of the World*, 151; quoted in Goodchild 113.

the end of this work follows the ultimate ground (or in Tillich's vocabulary, ultimacy itself) as it recurs in more ideal forms, transforming itself into light, spirit and finally love.⁷⁶ However, interspersed are a series of catastrophes. For example, 'Because the principle of the depths can never give birth for itself to true and complete unity, the time comes in which all this glory decays as through horrible disease, and finally chaos again ensues'⁷⁷, or again,

At last there results the crisis in the *turba gentium* which overflow the foundations of the ancient world as once the waters of the beginning again covered the creations of primeval time.⁷⁸

History in the *Freiheitsschrift* incorporates a catastrophic flooding, or, in Grant's words, 'a geological eruption in the midst of the philosophy of freedom.'⁷⁹ A philosophy of piety (a philosophy of the future) must concern itself with these catastrophes, these moments when piety as a suppressed transcendental condition is finally revealed. Put more prosaically, what matters most to us becomes particularly clear in a crisis: such is the commonplace assertion that Schelling's geological ontology attempts to justify.

A similar mapping of the catastrophic alternation of grounding and ungrounding dominates Schelling's *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*. Historical time, and so the very possibility of the future, is constructed through crisis (an unprethinkable event of separation). Moreover, in a prefiguring of Tillichian correlation, Schelling articulates this crisis in the dual discourses of objectivity and subjectivity. In addition to the constitution of separate nation-peoples through crisis (including references once more to a primordial great flood), such an event is also 'a *spiritual* crisis that... occurred

⁷⁶ F.W.J. Schelling, *Inquiries into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. James Gutmann (La Salle: Open Court, 1936), 56-8.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 56.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 57-8.

⁷⁹ Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006), 17.

in the foundation of human consciousness itself.’⁸⁰ It ‘shake[s] consciousness in its *principle*, in its *foundation*’ as ‘a trembling of *consciousness itself*’ (words that again recall Tillich’s description of revelation).⁸¹

Thus, the necessary condition of the possibility of a future for the subject and the world is a crisis. Out of crisis, the future emerges. What is more, for Schelling, language (particularly the language of mythology, i.e. divine names) is a privileged record of this coming into being of the future through catastrophe. It is ‘a body of unprethinkable human knowledge’.⁸² Hence, Schelling’s crucial assertion: ‘In the formation of the oldest languages a wealth of philosophy can be discovered.’⁸³ Only through study of the crisis through which matters of ultimate concern are revealed can thought become adequate to itself, thereby intensifying the critical project; as the last words of the lecture course put it, the philosophy of mythology gives rise to ‘the power to expand philosophy and the philosophical consciousness itself or to determine them in an expansion beyond their current limits.’⁸⁴ And so the task of a Schellingian critical theorist is to interrogate and test names, so as to confront the crisis anew and intensifying thought.

This is, in fact, precisely what Schelling undertakes to do in *The Deities of Samothrace*. The work consists in an investigation of the Greek mystery-cult native to the island of Samothrace; it asks why the gods of that cult were given the names they were and, for our purposes, what is key is the link Schelling establishes between a geological catastrophe and these divine names (naming gods, of course, being a particularly obvious example of the process of piety or manifesting ultimate concern⁸⁵).

⁸⁰ F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselberger (Albany: SUNY, 2007), 73.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 75.

⁸² *Ibid*, 65. The Homeric poems in particular are documents of this process: ‘The crisis... takes place in the poets themselves, forms their poems.’ *Ibid*, 18.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 39.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 175.

⁸⁵ Hence, Tillich’s definition of ‘gods’ in the *Systematic Theology*: ‘Gods... are expressions of the ultimate concern which transcends the cleavage between subjectivity and objectivity.’ (1:214)

The work opens with a geological survey of the island which focuses in particular on a prehistoric flood (once more):

Ancient geographers surmised that great convulsions of nature afflicted these regions even up to human times. It may be that the waters of the Black Sea, raised simply by flooding, first broke through the Thracian Strait, and then through the Hellespont. Or that the force of a subterranean volcano altered the level of the waters. The oldest Samothrace stories, transmuted into monuments exhibited in commemoration, preserved an account of this event, and from that time on they fostered the reverence and patronage of the native gods.⁸⁶

An eruption of geological grounds gave rise to a catastrophe (commemorated in ‘the oldest Samothrace stories’) which in turn triggered a new reverence for the divine among the people of Samothrace. The Samothracian mystery-cult, Schelling insists, was born from a ‘great convulsion of nature’ (the ‘*turba gentium*’ of the *Freiheitsschrift*). The critical stakes of this opening passage should now be clear: only in crises can the thinker gain access to grounds; only then can she ‘theologically unthink’. Moments of catastrophe – like the flooding of Samothrace – make possible a critical thinking attempting to identify its own conditions. Criticism must take any and all crises as its subject matter, including the flooding of Samothrace – and this is especially true when such catastrophe has already been commemorated and attested to in the religion of those affected by it. The founders of the Samothracian mystery-cults were *κριτικοί par excellence*, for, situated at the site of a crisis, they invented new forms of discourse and (most significantly) new pieties to bear witness to the ground which was made manifest to them. This is an archetype of criticism as such – and

⁸⁶ F.W.J. Schelling, *The Deities of Samothrace*, ed. and trans. Robert F. Brown (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 15. For more on this reading of *Deities*, see Daniel Whistler, ‘Language after Philosophy of Nature: Schelling’s Geology of Divine Names’ in Anthony Paul Smith and Daniel Whistler (eds), *After the Postsecular and the Postmodern: New Essays in Continental Philosophy of Religion* (Newcastle: CSP, 2010).

it is perhaps for this reason that Schelling devotes a treatise to it. Schelling's analysis of the Samothracian mystery-cult is a means of locating the pieties which had surfaced during the crisis. Thought only has a future if such pieties can be described, and such description is dependent upon thinking (as) catastrophe (as Schelling does here). To philosophically analyse divine names is to simultaneously reveal the workings of criticism itself: *The Deities of Samothrace* is ultimately a meta-philosophical enterprise.

5. The Right to Name, or Back to Kant

The above may seem to have strayed far from Tillich; however, an analysis of two quotations can rapidly show otherwise. First:

One is enabled to speak of that which is most vital in the present, of that which makes the present a generative force, only insofar as one immerses oneself in the creative process which brings the future forth out of the past.⁸⁷

'What is most vital in the present' or what concerns us ultimately is constituted and attended to through a synthesis of time – in line with Goodchild's assertion, 'modes of piety are syntheses of time'.⁸⁸ Past events bring forth the future, and it is only a thinking that submits itself to this temporal process (in parallel to, if not in identity with, its submission to crisis) which can genuinely be called critical. Indeed, Tillich even interprets Schelling (and particularly his *Weltalter*) through this very idea of 'history viewed in light of the future.'⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation*, translated by H. Richard Niebuhr (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1956), 34.

⁸⁸ Goodchild 191.

⁸⁹ Tillich, 'Existential Philosophy', 101.

Tillich's Schelling is very much the Goodchildian Schelling of the third potency, just as Tillich's critical project as a whole is one attentive to the future of thinking.

The second quotation is taken from Tillich's typology of reason in the opening to *Perspectives*. Here he more than half-heartedly affirms the revolutionary power of 'critical reason':

It was not a calculating reason which decides whether to do this or that, depending on which is more advantageous. Rather, it was a full, passionate, revolutionary emphasis on man's essential goodness in the name of the principle of justice.⁹⁰

Tillich goes on to label it 'revolutionary reason'⁹¹, and in so doing he links critique inextricably to the power to change the future, to reorient one's ultimate concerns and to manage one's pieties differently. In his invocations of justice and revolution, he also makes explicit a theme that has been bubbling under the surface of this essay from the very beginning: criticism and politics. And it is with this link that I want to conclude.

At stake here is the right or legitimacy by which the *κριτικός* accesses what is ultimate, names it and transforms it: from where does the *κριτικός* obtain this authority? It is, I am arguing, a matter of positioning. The *κριτικός* has the right to name what grounds and ungrounds experience because she stands in the position from which the ground is most accessible. It is a matter therefore of the proximity from which one confronts the crisis – that is, of politics.

Criticism as such, I have argued, concerns itself with crises. It situates itself in limit-experiences where piety (or the future) manifests itself. What orients thinking and acting only becomes clear in a crisis – and, as this principle of orientation is a key transcendental

⁹⁰ Tillich, *Perspectives*, 32.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

condition, criticism is not criticism as such unless it thinks (in a) crisis. The *κριτικός* must seek out the crises in the *turba gentium*, because it is there that the future is manufactured. There is a danger here and it is a danger of which Kant in particular was acutely aware – the danger of proximity. A revolutionary, Kant implies, is not a critical thinker, because criticism necessitates distance from what is being described. That criticism which places itself too close to catastrophe can no longer be criticism. This danger Kant dubs, ‘fanaticism’.⁹² There are two related reasons why a revolutionary fanatic cannot be a *κριτικός*. First, the fanatic does not have the discursive distance to think *about* the crisis. In the midst of the crisis itself, there is no privileged position to describe its contents and to view the ground as it reveals itself. The fanatic is too close. Second, Kant writes, fanaticism ‘is the delusion of wanting to see something beyond all bounds of sensibility.’⁹³ For our purposes, this is the error of *impatience*: instead of awaiting the emergence of the future in the crisis, the fanatic tries to realise it too quickly, to anticipate. The *κριτικός* must be patient. Such is what Goodchild designates ‘absolute faith’: ‘Absolute faith allows the future to be constituted as a gift of the potencies. Absolute faith waits.’⁹⁴

This poses a problem. Throughout this essay, I have argued that Kant did not go far enough; he did not practise criticism as such. Is his exclusion of the fanatic another example of this failure to cultivate criticism as such or should such critical thinking follow Kant in prohibiting the figure of the fanatic from critical thought? In fact, this question need not be answered head-on, for Kant himself offers a way out of this stark dichotomy by means of an additional concept – *enthusiasm*. Enthusiasm is a means to *both* participate in a revolution

⁹² The two key discussions of fanaticism – outside the passage from the *Critique of Judgment* cited below – occur in *Essay on the Maladies of the Head*, 2:267 and *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, 2:251 (both collected in Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. and ed. Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)). My discussion of Kant in the next two paragraphs is dependent upon Alberto Toscano, *Fanaticism: On the Uses of an Idea* (London: Verso, 2010), 120-46.

⁹³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 5:275.

⁹⁴ Goodchild 237.

and be critical. Enthusiasm for Kant ‘is a straining of our forces by ideas that impart to the mind a momentum whose effects are mightier and more permanent than are those of an impulse produced by presentations of sense.’⁹⁵ It is ‘the state of mind in which it has become inflamed by any principle above the proper degree.’⁹⁶ That is, enthusiasm is an excess of attention, a state in which ultimate concern becomes more manifest. Hence, for Kant, ‘Nothing great in the world has been done without [enthusiasm].’⁹⁷ History (the future) comes to pass only through enthusiasm (attention to what is ultimate) – a pattern that has been repeated throughout this essay.

Toscano has recently drawn attention to the constructive role of enthusiasm in Kant’s political philosophy. Arguing against Arendt, Lyotard, Critchley and all those who see Kant as a philosopher of neutrality, an anti-enthusiast, Toscano develops the idea of *the philosopher as partisan spectator* from Kant’s writings on the French Revolution. Kant does not advise the philosopher (or indeed any enlightened citizen) to remain apathetic and indifferent to the events in France; instead, he recommends for any spectator regarding these events from afar to feel enthusiasm at what they see – and this enthusiasm reveals ‘a tendency and faculty in human nature for improvement.’⁹⁸ Toscano continues,

What allows these spectators’ affective participation in the good to serve as a sign of human progress is not their impartiality, but the very fact that, at the risk of persecution, they are taking sides for the revolution. It is not impartiality but partisanship that defines the universal import of political judgment... These are not disincarnate, objective spectators, judging in terms of a dispassionate vision of the whole; instead they embody a passionate yet disinterested partisanship... The

⁹⁵ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:272. Kant does not always use ‘enthusiasm’ so positively, see for example *Observations*, 2:221.

⁹⁶ Kant, *Observations*, 2:251; quoted in Toscano 123.

⁹⁷ Kant, *On the Maladies of the Head*, 2:267; quoted in Toscano 123.

⁹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties in Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. A.W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 304; quoted in Toscano 139.

spectator ‘acts’ through the risky choice of public partisanship, and that what his enthusiasm signals towards is the very capacity of the human being to be a collective historical political agent.⁹⁹

The critical thinker is an enthusiastic partisan. While she is not a fanatic militant situated in the fray (so liable to the errors of immediacy and impatience), neither is she apathetic and unconcerned. She possesses discursive distance, yet still *attends to the crisis*. What is more, and here Kant is insistent, something more is revealed to this enthusiastic philosopher than would have otherwise been: enthusiasm reveals the human faculty for improvement. Amelioration is possible for the enthusiastic *κριτικός*, the thinker of the revolution or the catastrophe. At this point, Kant approaches Tillich, Schelling and Goodchild most closely.

As a coda to this invocation of the politics of criticism or an extension of its cultural purview, one final work cited by Toscano must be brought in to enrich the problematic: Euclides da Cunha’s *Rebellion in the Backlands*.¹⁰⁰ What is remarkable about da Cunha’s book is that it takes as its subject matter all the crises covered in this essay (and more) in the name of understanding the formation and orientation of a future political community. It is the synthesis of all attempts at criticism as such. *Rebellion* begins with an extensive geological survey of the relevant region of Brazil in the manner of Schelling’s *Deities of Samothrace*. As Toscano goes on to point out, ‘Geological violence seems to presage and prepare the apocalyptic politics.’¹⁰¹ Geological crises are also crises of politics and religion: in all three, the same pieties, the same concerns, the same future, are revealed. Moreover, da Cunha explicitly invokes these links between politics, religion and geology in the name of prophecy – that is, in the name of the future. *Rebellion* sets itself the task of using these crises,

⁹⁹ Toscano 143-4.

¹⁰⁰ Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, trans. Samuel Putnam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

¹⁰¹ Toscano 62.

revolutions and catastrophes as means of uncovering the future for the people of Brazil. Brazil's future is manufactured out of these past events, because in these events the ultimate concerns of Brazilian society is revealed. Just like Schelling in the *Deities of Samothrace*, da Cunha 'joins geology and millenarianism'¹⁰², and this eclectic carnival of genres, subject matters and concepts rearranged in the name of revealing what matters most should, it is my contention, be seen as akin to Tillich's project and so be dubbed 'critical philosophy as such'.

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¹⁰² *Ibid.*

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