

## Revelation and Innovation of Value

*Interaction between revelatory theology artistic creativity and small business model innovation context*

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# **REVELATION AND INNOVATION OF VALUE**

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN REVELATORY THEOLOGY,  
ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS  
IN A BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION CONTEXT

**BY  
KRISTIN FALCK SAGHAUG**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2015



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK



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IN A BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION CONTEXT

by

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**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
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## CV

Kristin F. Saghaug has a background as an artist as well as a theologian. She was educated as a theologian from Aarhus University in 2006. She specialized her studies within philosophical theology and art. Since 2007 she has been employed as a researcher at Aalborg University, Center for Industrial Production.

Her research aim is to explore whether theology, understood as a discipline in which the metaphysical and ontological presuppositions of the previous era's religiosity are formally articulated, *can* contribute to contemporary life and experience. This PhD project has involved the investigation of the interaction of revelatory theology, artistic creativity and small business owners in a business model innovation context.

Kristin has taught and supervised bachelor and master students in theory of science, philosophy of science, organizational development and integration of it-systems in organizations.

A narrative on her experience of coming from philosophical and theological studies and entering the area of business management is depicted as *Coming from the Ivory Tower to the Tower of Babel* in the Chapter 1. and it provides a further explanation of the beginning and the area of her research.

## ENGLISH SUMMARY

The reflection upon ‘value’ in our society seems to depend upon the context, and to innovate and create value seems ever more to be defined by a mainstream business management notion of what this creation implies. Even so this is something usually perceived as taking place in a process of innovation moving from A to B. This project challenges mainstream business management’s concept of value and adds to the understanding of the innovation process.

Despite the interactions between art and business and the focus on this in some of the business management literature of the last decade, they are still widely perceived as unconnected: there is one perception of value in business and another of value in art; there is one way of thinking in business and another in art; and, there is one way of addressing reality in business and another in art. That business and art belong to different spheres or aspects of life seems to be assumed in our culture. Apart from these two fields there is another area, theology, which is assumed to belong to a different aspect of life from both of the two others; instead, it is usually considered to be an antiquated perception of the world that occupies a realm of its own. But this project will challenge that assumption as it is pioneering a conversation across different specialized domains.

This PhD project has involved the investigation of the interaction of revelatory theology, artistic creativity and small business owners in a business model innovation context, and in doing so it will seek to develop some more widely applicable insights. The project asks the question: How can philosophical theology, namely, Paul Tillich’s theory of revelation, contribute to productive reflection on the innovation of value among small business owners in a business model innovation context?



The study has involved participating, observing and designing workshops related to business model innovation amongst small business owners. The empirical material consists of observations of events, conversations in situ, artefacts from workshops, interviews and meetings.

The form of this PhD thesis is an extensive analytical and theoretical synthesis disseminating and reflecting on my papers. But it also goes beyond the papers and frames the thesis as a reflexive auto-ethnographical story reporting from the research journey that I have been on. It is most correct to call the thesis a hybrid of these forms. The PhD thesis is based upon the work made in a collection of 8 papers, that document the background of my research journey. It does not attempt to connect all the papers, but to shed light on some of the central theoretical and methodological areas that these papers deal with. As well as presenting the papers, it primarily intends to provide a reflection on the research journey and the findings, combining (personal) experiences of events and encounters with business owners in the field. One could say that it is trying to answer from another perspective, as I am now looking back on the process, what I was looking for in writing these papers and why I did it. This method is also an academic hybrid which is inspired by Tillich's correlative theology (Tillich 1951), Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer 2004) and auto-ethnography (Ellis et al. 2011; Van Maanen 2011).

The journey has focused on three concepts. At one level the three concepts used mainly represent different domains. Value is related to business, meaning is related to art and revelation is related to theology. The buzzword different thinking and the experiment of a theological recontextualisation is the first interaction in this project between these areas. It shows through the use of Tillich's ontological pairs of polarity that it can be understood as an existential question. This challenge mainstream business management addressing the lack of human centered models. And evolves the concept of value and replaces it with meaning which again is moved towards a quest for revelation. Empirical findings show that many of the business owners in this study try to balance between their ultimate concern and

personal values and economic values. A further investigation into this results in a model of innovation of value from a theological perspective in respect to business model innovation. It is namely the very understanding of values that are innovated as they are “broken through” using Tillich’s notion of revelation in art and his anthropology. Further it adds to the understanding of the innovation process as it focuses on the moment as a breakthrough, a fragmentary revelation that unites past, present and future. Mainstream innovation processes do not capture this: For some business owners there seem to be a strong connection between a former experience of passion as pain and the current innovation of value expressing passion as love.

# DANSK RESUME

Dette Ph.d. projekt udfordrer mainstream managements værdibegreb og bidrager til en bredere forståelse af innovationsprocessen. I vort samfund er refleksioner over værdi meget kontekstafhængig. At innovere og skabe værdi synes stadig mere at være defineret af, hvad mainstream business management mener at værdiskabelse indebærer.

Trods stigende samspil mellem kunst og erhvervsliv, og øget fokus på dette i dele af management litteraturen fra det sidste årti, opfattes de to verdener stadig i vid udstrækning som adskilte: Der er én opfattelse af værdi i erhvervslivet og en anden i kunsten; der er én måde at tænke i erhvervslivet og en anden i kunsten; og der én måde at tackle virkeligheden på i erhvervslivet og en anden i kunst. At erhvervsliv og kunst tilhører forskellige sfærer eller aspekter af livet synes at være forudsat i vores kultur. Teologi indtager en tredje position og antages at vedrøre et andet aspekt af livet end de to andre. Teologi anses for at være en forældet opfattelse af verden, som optager en plads for sig selv. Dette projekt udfordrer disse antagelser og etablerer en banebrydende samtale på tværs af de tre specialiserede domæner.

Ph.d.-projektet undersøger samspillet mellem åbenbaringsteologi, kunstnerisk kreativitet og små virksomhedsejere i en forretningsmodel innovation kontekst, og stiller spørgsmålet: Hvordan kan filosofisk teologi, nemlig Paul Tillich's teori om åbenbaring, bidrage til produktive overvejelser om innovation af værdi blandt små virksomhedsejere i en forretningsmodel innovation sammenhæng?

Undersøgelsen har involveret deltagelse i og observation og design af workshops relateret til forretningsmodel innovation blandt små virksomhedsejere. Det empiriske materiale består af observationer af begivenheder, samtaler in situ, artefakter fra workshops, interviews og møder.

Afhandlingen er en hybrid mellem en monografi og en artikelbaseret afhandling. Den tager form af en omfattende analytisk og teoretisk syntese som formidler og reflekterer over otte papers, der er udarbejdet undervejs i projektet. Syntesen er en rapportering fra den forskningsrejse, som jeg har været på, og udgør en refleksiv auto-etnografisk historie, som går ud over og indrammer de præsenterede papers. Syntesen forsøger ikke at forbinde alle papers, men tilstræber at kaste lys over nogle af de centrale teoretiske og metodiske områder, som disse papers beskæftiger sig med. Samtidig som afhandlingen præsenterer de otte papers, er det primære sigte at give en refleksion over forskningsrejsen og resultaterne, som kombinerer personlige erfaringer, hændelser og møder med virksomhedsejere i felten. Man kunne sige, at den forsøger at svare fra et andet perspektiv, idet jeg nu ser tilbage på processen, på hvad det var jeg var på udkig efter, da jeg skrev disse papirer, og hvorfor jeg gjorde det. Denne metode er også en akademisk hybrid, som er inspireret af Tillich's korrelative metode i hans teologi (Tillich 1951), Gadamer's filosofiske hermeneutik (Gadamer 2004) og auto-etnografi (Ellis et al 2011; Van Maanen 2011)

Rejsen fokuserer på tre begreber. I denne sammenhæng repræsenterer de tre begreber forskellige domæner. "Value" er relateret til management, "Meaning" er relateret til kunst og "Revelation" er relateret til teologi. Domænerne mødes første gang i projektet i en interaktion mellem management begrebet "different thinking" og Tillich's ontologiske polariteter, hvor different thinking i en teologisk rekontekstualisering forstås som et eksistentielt spørgsmål. Det udfordrer traditionel management og peger på mangelen på menneskecentrerede modeller.

Den videre rejse udvikler værdi begrebet, erstatter det med begrebet mening og bevæger sig mod en søgen efter åbenbaring, hvor "ultimate concern" og øjeblikket er centrale begreber.

Med baggrund i empiriske resultater og teoretiske refleksioner bidrager rejsen med mange erfaringer fra grænselandet mellem de tre domæner i relation til "business model innovation". Afhandlingen præsenterer især to hovedbidrag, der begge

vedrører det menneskelige element i modellerne. Det ene vedrører value begrebet. Mange af projektets virksomhedsejere forsøgte at finde en balance mellem deres "ultimate concern" og deres personlige og økonomiske værdier. Nærmere undersøgelser førte til udviklingen af en model (image/framework) for forretningsmodel innovation set i et teologisk perspektiv, hvor mainstream værdiforståelse brydes op og erstattes af en grundlæggende forståelse af innovation af værdi, som bygger på Tillich's forståelse af åbenbaring i kunst og antropologi. Det andet bidrag vedrører selve innovationsprocessen i form af et fokus på øjeblikket som et gennembrud - en fragmentarisk åbenbaring som forener fortid, nutid og fremtid. For nogle virksomhedsejere synes der at være en stærk sammenhæng mellem tidligere oplevelser af passion som lidelse og nuværende innovation af værdi med baggrund i passion som kærlighed. Denne sammenhæng fanger mainstream innovationsteori ikke.



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When you approach another area and you actually do not have a clue what they are talking about, you need to have a person within that area that have a very open mind. I met such a person, Peter Lindgren, who became my supervisor and convinced me that this field was interesting.

But this also raises the question when a PhD project starts. My started before it formally begun, so I was busy planning my PhD while I actually was making it. My supervisor who persuaded me to just write my first paper, which I thought was impossible, but I was not. We have had long and inspiring conversations – where time just flew and we both were a bit high afterwards. We have been travelling together and planning workshops in the Nordic countries in relations to the Women in Business project. (And we have even been editing journal paper before breakfast!). And thank you for being a treasured supporter all the way through this journey. Even though you had to leave for a professorship at Aarhus University in March 2014, I always knew that you somewhat would be there if I needed to talk to you.

Through the years, since my studies at Aarhus University, I have had the privilege of knowing George Pattison. After he left to be professor of Divinity at Oxford, and presently so at Glasgow University he has continued to be a tremendous inspiration in his way of doing philosophical theology. Throughout the years I have enjoyed our dialogue. So that I have had the possibility to exchange and discuss thoughts and during my PhD to write together with you that has truly been a gift. You have taught me to be both academically as well as existentially courageous (Paul Tillich would approve!). I hope I have become just a tiny bit better at writing English. (Because one of the recurring end-comments from George has been “so all in all it is ok, but the English...”). Thank you for your ability to make time for me and give response to my text almost immediately. It has been such a rock of trust.

My last supervisor, and I have not ‘numbered’ you, because you all have such unique personal characteristics each one of you, is Jeppe Gustafsson. He came in as local supervisor in April 2014 and he is completely to ‘blame’ for the format of the thesis. He suggested changing the dissemination of my project into a research journey. And this was really helping me to see my work in a new way. As a work in its becoming. As a road I have been walking. Thank you so much for stepping up and being this experienced supervisor as well as a true discussant partner, even if I tend to talk too much

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Thank you to the management at CiP that found means for me to finalize my study even though the conditions were changed. As a side remark I always have called the management at CiP for the Holy Trinity. We have the Father Poul, we have the Son, Charles and the Holy Ghost Harry. In cooperation that made sense to me as a theologian!

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I dedicate this thesis to all the small business owners who innovate value.



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

For full publication details se Bibliography

CB	Courage to be
MW (vol. nr.)	Main Works
OAA	On Art and Architecture
ST (vol.nr.)	Systematic Theology
TC	Theology of Culture
SF	The Shaking of the Foundations

# CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND

By way of an introduction to this study I will describe my experience in entering the field of business innovation as I came more or less directly from text studies of theology, philosophy and aesthetics. This encounter became important as it turned out to have an impact on the way I conducted my studies.

## 1.1. COMING FROM THE IVORY TOWER TO THE TOWER OF BABEL

I came from what some might call a dusty study and others a divine one – but the fact is that I somehow stumbled into the area of participative-oriented research projects within business model innovation. Basically, I did not have a clue about innovation. Accidentally, I was presented to a researcher at the University with whom I later came to work closely. He was the project leader of several research projects. In course of our pleasant conversation I also became puzzled. Firstly, because this man was talking about marine biology, or at least that was what I thought he was doing. ‘Blue Ocean’... the only time I had heard that before was related to herrings... However, when I discovered that it was the name of a blockbuster book on business strategy about the creation of so-called value innovation I realized that this was far away from my theological considerations and the context of Adorno’s and Tillich’s writings on art and its relation to truth. I was full of wonder. What does this concept called ‘innovation’ mean? So, as a hermeneutically trained researcher I addressed the sources – *ad fontes* as Martin Luther would say – and went home after the first meeting and looked up innovation in my Latin dictionary. The dictionary’s definition of innovation was the making of something new, though, it made me feel that art could be somehow connected to it, and theology too. At least the biblical quote “Behold I make everything anew” sounded rather relevant.

Subsequently, I read the definition of the concept of innovation given by its so-called “father”, Schumpeter: “Development in our sense is then defined by the carrying out of new combinations” p 66 (Schumpeter 1934). This made me more optimistic. This idea of new combinations, I realized, could give meaning to my research interest. I began to see that a way into this was a project in which I could investigate these combinations, and the tension of something new created in between. Reading *The Medici Effect* by Johansson also confirmed my insight (Johansson 2004). In Johansson’s book the Renaissance is analyzed against the background of an understanding of its vital importance within history at a time when different people and competences met and through these encounters new developments evolved at these intersections. This sounded almost theological – like an open cross. Entering the area of engineering, business economics and management with theology as contributor – why not? It could be a mission!

As I was coming from another area (The Ivory Tower), my experience must have been like entering the Tower of Babel after God had carried out punishment on the people due to the hubris of their efforts to try to reach the sky; therefore, they were all given different languages to speak, and consequently could not understand each other. Some of the difficulties I encountered had to do with my experiences from studying literature, where it was quite normal to spend an hour on a couple of verses from the Bible in order to reach different interpretations, or to read difficult theological and philosophical writings where you are content if you manage to read several pages in an hour. I was therefore surprised by what I read when I started to examine some of the literature related to mainstream business management. Because I did not understand it! In the beginning I used up a great deal of time searching for an inner meaning of the text, but then I discovered that these texts did not have any hidden layers. The text said what it said, and the hiddenness in the text was of a different kind; namely, it was in the implicit assumptions about ontology and epistemology that began to reveal themselves as I read. I started to ask into where the people were in this business innovation literature and made searches on the databases in relation to “human” and “people”. This provoked me. The human



beings were literally invisible. There was HR, SHR, IC and so on – people are either resources, assets or capital...I looked for a different kind of value – imaginations, dreams, meaningfulness, life.

There were so many new words, which were not new in the sense that I had not heard them before, but new in the sense of being strange to me because within this context of business management they meant something different. For instance, the aim expressed in the previously mentioned blockbuster business book *Blue Ocean Strategy* (Chan Kim and Mauborgne 2005) is to create value innovation. At first I thought “Yes!” this is something for a theologian – values and ethics, and new ways of thinking about value. But after looking a little more into it and engaging in the workshop I realized that value in this context was not as such innovated – the value innovation could just as well be the creation of so called bigger value but done for less cost by playing with people’s perception of value. There were no ethics in it as I expected when value was innovated. For instance if people want to pay overprice for a designer item because it is of value to them, why not let them? One of the people present at the Blue Ocean workshop came from a concrete factory. He said: “...but is that not just to cheat people?” As he elaborated further, he said that he would never do that to any of his customers because they trusted him and knew that the price he gave was fair. So this could also be how a business innovation strategy meets local SME logic...

I began to wonder about how intimately some of the owners were connected to their business. The experience I had during the first years came to influence my studies, and my theoretical approach was that it was not a matter of “business as usual”. For at least a majority of those I met, their business was their life and more than an extension of their personality. They approached it as if it was almost the meaning of their life. One owner, a handicrafts man, declared that he needed to know when he put his shoes beside his bed for the last time that he had done something worthwhile in his life. Another talked about the need to put her heart into it. Having your heart in your business was not unusual. It could even be a problem; people were so bound

up with their business that they were not able to see clearly that the business model they were following could eventually ruin them. But it was also this passionate and artistic way of living their business that made some of them put all their waking hours into it. Metaphorically speaking, their business was almost their artwork, their way of giving form to what they believed in.

## CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION

After the little story above one question also needs to be answered; What is the relevance of theology for business management? During the last 20 years there has been an increasing focus on the intersection between theology and economics, and between theology and business (Harper and Gregg 2008)<sup>1</sup>. Within this area, we find a number of perspectives. For instance, the purpose of business has been discussed among Roman Catholic theologians with the main focus on the responsibilities connected to this mission (Melchin 2005). A provocative work by Meeks named *God the Economist* conceptualized God in economic terms and seemed to move away from primarily linking theology and economics in the 1970s and 1980s to linking god to social ethics (Meeks 1989). To perceive the economic system as a form of religion promising a secular salvation is one thing, and a newer interpretation of capitalism as a religion in Tillich's work is another (Yip 2010). There is theological thinking that addresses economics from different perspectives looking for religious or theological concepts intertwined with other areas (Rieger 2013).

There has also been an increasing focus on how a fruitful discussion between disciplines such as theology, ethics, economics and business could develop, as demonstrated in a collection of essays entitled *Christian Theology and Market economics* (Harper & Gregg 2008). Another investigates if Adam Smith was in principle a theologian or at least, as Waterman shows, economics may be perceived as natural theology in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (Alvey 2004; Hill 2001). Waterman states that this is not strange when considered in a historical context, because as Harper and Gregg also noticed these areas have earlier been integrated. Newton was mandatory reading for theologians in the 18th century (Waterman

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<sup>1</sup> These different perspectives on theology and economics that are unfolded on the following 2,5 pages are primarily taken from the paper *The Death of God and its Relevance to Business* (Saghaug et.al. 2013)

2002). As far as Smith's natural theology is concerned, its theology is apparent though its perception of reality that stresses that knowledge about God is not dependent on revelations. Therefore, Waterman can state about relations between economics and theology: "The more 'scientific' economics is, the more valuable it become as theology" (Waterman 2002, p. 920). One study by Poole has raised the question of whether this quasi-religious thinking, where "the invisible hand" makes itself apparent as an untouchable entity, is actually saving capitalism and the individual from taking any responsibility, as though this is offering to relieve the conscience of greedy capitalists. Further, Poole set out to investigate if it possible to address theology and relate it to the situation of capitalism in a more constructive way (Poole 2004; Poole 2010).

Sallie McFague is a theologian who has taken up a more critical position in relation to capitalism. She uses theology in an active manner to see how theology and Christianity need to address so-called secularized areas and consequently the economy in order to become relevant (McFague 2001). A more recent tribute to her thinking pays attention to the problem of the privatization of theology, which is implicitly transformed into new liberal economics and explicitly expressed as, for instance, "spirituality" (Ray 2006). Examples of this include the self-made religiosity whereby the primary understanding of life is that everyone is responsible for their own happiness. This can also be addressed as an instrumentalist, non-contemplative focus on spirituality, which is far from resembling any "authentic" idea about spirit (Case et al. 2012). There are even fundamentalist sci-fi versions connecting theology and economics, prompting ideas about how theology should rule the economy as "theoeconomics" (Brailean et al. 2012)

As we can see from the previously mentioned literature, efforts have been made to consider how theology should be actualized and made relevant in relation to addressing economics at both the micro and macro levels, although the majority of these contributions end up in questions about ethical behaviour. A starting point is arguing that there are traces of hidden theology within somewhat unexpected areas

have also been taken up lately from different angles. Some of the examples of this are, for instance, found within certain political philosophies (Critchley 2007; Vattimo 2011), within the organization of the economy (Agamben 2011) and also within some areas of organization and management research (Case et al. 2012; Murtola 2012; Schwarzkopf 2012; Sløk 2009; Sørensen et al. 2012)<sup>2</sup>. Examples of *using* theology are also found in the coupling of doing good in business with reflection on “acts of meaning” in everyday life inspired by Bernard Lonergan’s thought – the focus is on how we become ourselves through acting and what are called the operations of meaning in the ordinary events of working lives: “(...) what we do as persons makes us into what we are” (Melchin 2005, p. 48). This is close to if not the same as Meeks’ interpretation of Hegel’s perception of work, where people create their world and therefore themselves through their work (Meeks 1989). Melchin found that the gap between human needs and the demand to be economically effective should in itself be an object for business innovation – which is also interesting in relation to the businesses involved in our research<sup>3</sup>.

Business innovation in this study is intimately connected to value creation, but again understood from a perspective beyond profit. And when we are addressing value creation, this can be divided into two separate constructs directing us towards value and creativity, and the reflection upon culture that this stems from can also be said to incorporate value(s) as they are realized and manifested through its creations (Tillich in TC)

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<sup>2</sup> They take an outset in Carl Schmitt’s dictum that concepts used in relation to the state are highly influenced by theology or secularized theological concepts. Though it should not be any surprise as Weber unfolded ideas on how the structures of worship independent of a belief in God, have become integrated into the capitalist notion of work (Weber 1995(1920))

<sup>3</sup> Other examples of addressing economics using theology that gives a different perspective and suggests another economic direction is Kathryn Tanner, who unfolds an economy of grace, suggesting a transformation of the current system (Tanner 2005). Daniel Bell is another example of a theologian approaching economy in contrast to Christianity, the first with a distorted desire the other with a human relational oriented mercy (Bell 2012)

Before I further address business innovation in our context as well as theology let me consider the overall context in which we all live and act.

Concerning the character of contemporary culture, the depiction of people within society can be represented as follows. Firstly, society is in a dynamic process of continuous change. Secondly, people's activities are focused on the technical transformation of both themselves as well as the(ir) world which they are investigating, and the idea of something like the eternal appears to resemble a fantasy and does not describe any experience we could have encountered in our reality. Our interrelations are foreseeable, calculable and possible to manage. God is superfluous in this (apart from a ritualized idolatrous figure at Christmas and other events). Therefore, thirdly, humans have replaced the images previously used to represent God and have themselves become creators with godlike traits. The creativity that was formerly limited to God has become a human quality. Science and Technology is what will save mankind (despite human activity that is at risk of self-destruction). This is in fact a summary of what Paul Tillich (1886-1965) wrote about the industrial society in the 1950s. There is also a Marxist element to this text, about how with this new self-representation as free and independent and the ruler of the world, on the contrary, the human being has become: "...a part of the reality he has created, an object amongst objects, a thing among things, a cog within a universal machine in which he must adapt himself in order not to be smashed by it". And, in a further extension of this, Tillich writes that "man has ceased to encounter reality as meaningful" (Tillich and Kimball 1964, p. 46). However, he saw the protest in the existentialist movement in its broadest sense as a revolt against this, and he found the expression of it in art and artists who had the courage to live creatively and take on the meaninglessness and emptiness of the present situation and unfold it. Within this culture, he found that art was the key to interaction, and to encounter and deal with a superfluous period that made finite goals into infinite demands. Do any of the assumptions that Tillich had about industrial society count as reasonable reflections upon our so called technological knowledge society?

In a preliminary way, it does seem as if our present culture assumes that business and art belong to different worlds or aspects of life that are not connected. Business, on the one hand, is related to practical life and its focus is on creating results that satisfy the bottom line. Business is then perceived as follows: anything that does not add to the goal of profit making is considered uninteresting. Friedman's famous sentence that "there is one and only one social responsibility for businesses – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits..." still seems to be dominant<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, art is perceived as something not related to practical life, but as occupying an area of life that relates it to dreams and ideals. Art may then be perceived as being a little provocative, anarchistic, but it is not addressing the reality and the facts or creating the basis of wealth in society in the way businesses are.

Sometimes, though art and business do interact, and during the last decade the perception has emerged of art playing a role in business contexts beyond sponsorship or wall decorations. Some research literature has pointed out how art may be considered valuable by its very presence – its so-called "existence value", and in a more distantly placed region it may potentially become a driver for business development (Nivin and Plettner 2009; Stam et al. 2008), and through its support and by the strengthening of cultural life and art regional development might also be positively affected, with increased economic development (Strom 2003).

On the organizational level art may be a "driver for innovation", if we learn to address the way art operates and "thinks" (Nissley 2010) or use art to ensure a

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<sup>4</sup> Even though corporate social responsibility (CSR) seems to be increasingly integrated into almost every business strategy, the credo is still above all in mainstream neo-liberal economy to create profit for shareholders (Scherer & Palazzo 2011). The Friedman quote cont. "...so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud" (The New York Times Magazine, September 13, 1970). The ending of the quote often seems to be neglected when it Friedman is quoted. (His notion of the idea of a free market (where does that exist and free for whom?) and his use of deception and fraud could be interesting to test on a majority of the offers that banks and financial institutions offered that initiated the Financial Crisis in 2008, and even on a strategy such as Blue Ocean, because when is something a fraud?)

transformative learning process in the business (Darsø 2004;Darsø 2013). Art can be used as to inspire management processes by, for instance, learning from the *practice* of the director of an orchestra or the way a play at a theatre is rehearsed, and translating these within an organizational setting (Austin and Devin 2004). It has also been proposed that art increases organizational value through a different management praxis, and contributes to finding new answers to business problems (Schiuma 2011).

But we are also used to thinking that the contemporary art world also defines itself by its rejection of a “theological” world and its embrace of values such as the autonomy of individuals and spheres of practice, as in free-market theories versus, for instance, restrictions inspired by religion on business hours, practices, and so on.

Innovation following Schumpeter’s definition was as mentioned earlier “ the carrying out of new combinations”. This study is a new combination.



# CHAPTER 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The aim of this research is to explore whether theology, understood as a discipline in which the metaphysical and ontological presuppositions of the previous era's religiosity are formally articulated, *can* contribute to contemporary life and experience.

The outset of this study was within business management and in the context of business model innovation.

If the hypothesis that theology can indeed make such a contribution is vindicated, this will not only show the “relevance” of theology, but may also prove to benefit contemporary business practice.

Theology is, of course, a broad field, and the thesis therefore selects a particular theological topic and a particular theological thinker: “revelation” and Paul Tillich, both of which are central to theology in the 20th century. The question then is: Can – or how can Tillich's theory of revelation contribute to productive reflection on contemporary business management understandings?

## 3.1. BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

Reflecting upon the gap between human needs and the economic demands mentioned by Melchin (2005), the current study finds a linkage between theology and organization<sup>5</sup> made in the context of business and business model innovation. In relation to the above mentioned diverse areas, this may also be related to organizing insofar as far as a business owners' practices may also be reflected in new ways of organizing their businesses through new ways of creating value and new ways of combining different areas. Again, this points to how the term

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<sup>5</sup> In which organization is understood from its provenience as the ordering of the house (*oikumenia*) thereby also the economic root of the word is considered (Agamben 2011).

*innovation* is somewhat infected with itself; that is to say, it seems as if the concept of innovation is in itself a part of the very phenomenon it is describing. For instance, the very way of making innovation is also addressed in terms of the new; for example, *open innovation* as a “new imperative” or “new paradigm” (Chesbrough et al. 2008; Chesbrough 2003), “*strategy innovation* a new way of...” (Johnston and Bate 2013) and *management innovation* as new management practice (Mol and Birkinshaw 2009), and we will of course point out that a more recent area or way of doing innovation is *business model innovation* (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart 2011). And in the philosophical and theological context where I have my background the very notion of reality that is implicit in the concept of the Latin verb *innovare* (making new) also has a certain religious connotation (Spoelstra 2007). This we also shall see in more detail when we come to consider revelation in this study.

The definition that “opened” up the understanding in this study was the very short encounter with Schumpeter’s conception of development used for defining innovation, but here is the longer version of it:

*“To produce means to combine materials and forces within our reach. To produce other things, or the same things by a different method, means to combine these materials and forces differently. In so far as the “new combination” may in time grow out of the old by continuous adjustment in small steps, there is certainly change, possibly growth, but neither a new phenomenon nor development in our sense. In so far as this is not the case, and the new combinations appear discontinuously, then the phenomenon characterizing development emerges. For reasons of expository convenience, henceforth, we shall only mean the latter case when we speak of new combinations of productive means. Development in our sense is then defined by the carrying out of new combinations”.* (Schumpeter 1983 [1934] p. 65-66)

Development (i.e. innovation) concerns the “new” in a relational way, as we can see in Schumpeter’s definition: “by the carrying out of new combinations” (1934).

Besides stating both the difference between invention and innovation, as well as distinguishing incremental and radical innovation<sup>6</sup>, this short definition focuses on the new combinations, and it stresses the *relational* aspect that also focuses on my interest in Johansson's perception of innovation as intersectional. It happens through combinations that have not been made before, in the making of *new relations*. Relations as well as participation are fundamental issues that will be followed throughout the research journey.

This project is involved in following workshops on business model *innovation*. Chesbrough has some reflection on barriers for business model innovation that should be tackled in order to experiment. One of the barriers is the success of the established business models. Because this has a huge importance on how informations is ignored in decision making if it does not fit the existing logic (Chesbrough 2010). Amit and Zott have a different perception of the challenge that Chesbrough also addresses because they assume the managers know what might be the right business model, but they resist it because of conflicts with the dominant logic of the current business model<sup>7</sup> or, as they write, it conflicts with their own interests (Amit and Zott 2001). This we could also name a conflict of interest in relations to a management innovation, a transformation of the whole logic of how a business is run. As Hamel argues the dominating logic is stemming from management practices invented nearly 100 year ago, which becomes a barrier for implementing innovations at all. The managerial way of thinking in relations to a Taylor inspired efficient production facility with a control focus is not productive in relations to nurture innovative and creative behavior within an organization (Birkinshaw et. al. 2008; Hamel 2007). Chesbrough addresses what he find is a

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<sup>6</sup> For a further elaboration of incremental vs. radical cf. e.g. (Leifer 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Their definition of a business model is : “We define a company’s business model as a system of interconnected and interdependent activities that determines the way the company “does business” with its customers, partners and vendors” in Amit, R., & Zott, C. (2012). Creating value through business model innovation. MIT Sloan Management Review, 53. in <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/creating-value-through-business-model-innovation/>

cognitive barrier to experiment with business model innovation and central for adopting a new business model. He suggests that the real problem might be the CEO who is the owner as well as the one who grew up with the current business model. Chesbrough find that they may harm an experimentation process, where it is of utmost importance to bring high fidelity data needed through trying out elements of the business model together with the old one and collect information before finding alternative new business models (Chesbrough 2010).

Some of challenges that Chesbrough focuses on as cognitive barriers because one is too involved also seem to be connected to a question related to how we achieve knowledge of fact and value and whether these are or should be separated. Maybe the owner do not want to change the business model because a new business model does not align with his/her value? As core of this, this study has turned out to question the logic of value as it came to fore in the meetings with a mainstream business economic setting.

If the definition of development from Schumpeter is taken further into the area of business model innovation we find that there in Schumpeter's theories are five types of innovations: new products, new methods of production, new sources of supply, exploitation of new markets, and new ways to organize business. With reference to Schumpeter Casadesus-Manasell et. Al. (2010) argue that much of the literature so far has treated the first two types of innovation, but their study focuses on the last type of innovation, which they claim often is referred to as business model innovation. Meaning that they find that business model innovation is primarily a matter of how the business organizes its business. They further state that business model innovation has become increasingly important both in academic literature<sup>8</sup> and in practice given the increasing number of opportunities for business

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<sup>8</sup> Teece in 2010 found that there was not really any economic theory related to *Business models*. In mainstream economics there is, as Teece says, a world that is depicted on the basis of equilibrium models ' with (one sided) markets and perfect competition are a caricature of the real world' p175. But what is of interest for this research is that he points to

model configurations enabled by technological progress, new customer preferences, and deregulation. Business model innovation also refers to the search for new logics of the business, new ways to create and capture value for its stakeholders, and focuses primarily on finding new ways to generate revenues and define value propositions for customers, suppliers, and partners (Magretta 2002; Zott and Amit 2012; Casadesus-Masanell et.al. 2010; Teece 2010). Further business model innovation affects the whole enterprise (Amit and Zott 2001, Casadesus-Masanell et. Al. 2010). This study continues in line with the mentioned Casadeus Masanell but find that his focus on organizing is too narrow in its definition of business model. If we relate business model innovation to organizing as he claims we would like to understand this also as stemming from the notion of *Oikonomia* (gr: the ordering of the house) meaning that organization and economics are intertwined (Agamben 2011). It is though again important to stress that it is not the aim of this study to unfold Business model innovation theory, but simply to give this brief background to the problem formulation.

Decisive for this study, was that I experienced the idea of value innovation (Chan Kim & Mauborgne 2005). I thought as shortly described in the background story that that it meant an innovation *of* value, of our very understanding of value and the very substance of (something) valuable. One could say that the background of my problem statement is that something was not what it seemed to be. So a further reflection on this value dilemma was also a wonder in relations to; What if it had meant innovation of value, what if innovation of value was actually what some business owners were doing? Then the “barriers” for business model innovation is on quite another level than mainstream business management thinks, or more correctly the perception of value at the business owners is just too narrow

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business models being an interdisciplinary topic of huge importance which needs to be addressed in social sciences and business studies (Teece 2010).

I hope that to work with the theological intention, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter , will not only show the “relevance” of theology, but may also prove to benefit contemporary business management that goes beyond the mainstream.

The problem statement then is:

**Can – or how can philosophical theology, namely, Paul Tillich’s theory of revelation, contribute to productive reflection on the innovation of value among small business owners in a business model innovation context?**

A subsidiary question of reflection of this study is that since Tillich’s theory of revelation is intimately connected with his theory of artistic creativity and expression, it seems that art might be a way in which the dissimilar worlds of theology and business can be connected, both theoretically and practically. These questions and intentions are in different ways present in the papers included in the later presentation

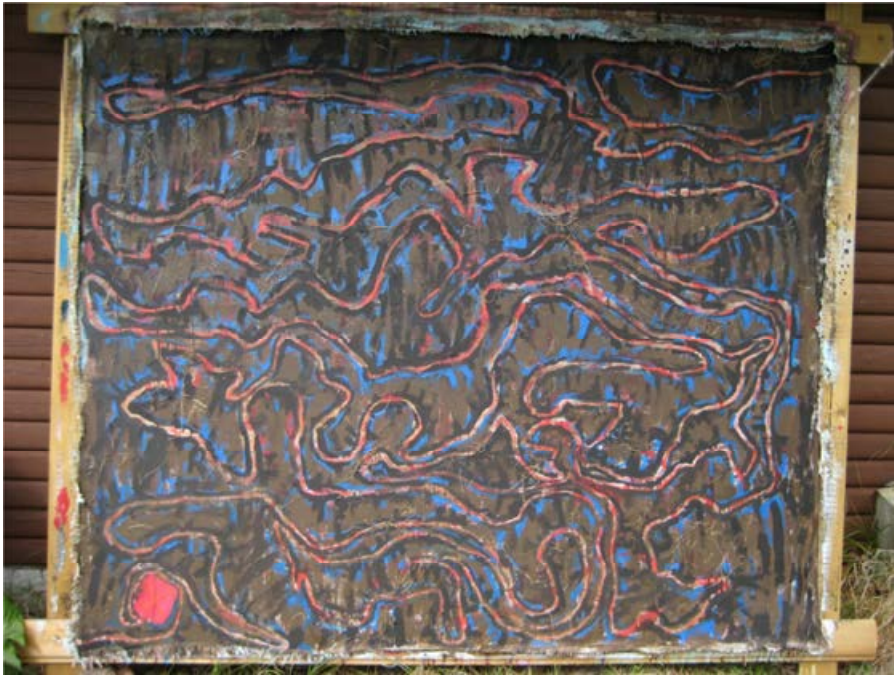
The study took form as a journey. The chapter on methodology will unfold the route forward.

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## **CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN RELATIONS TO THE JOURNEY**

But how to approach an area like this in relation to theology?

If there is a single clear overall method for how I have conducted this study, it would in all likelihood be similar to how I would paint a picture. From the first line, chaos is accepted and even nourished in vivid strokes, then another period commences where the painting in many ways breaks through the surface of chaos and asks for its dynamics to be given structure and form. There is a balance to be struck here – the form might get so fixed that every kind of dynamic is killed. This goes for every kind of art form, whether it is sculpture, paintings, film, installation, social action, performance and so on. There is in art an ordering of chaos going on that might end up in the most minimal form, but substance can even in this minimal form come to expression. Insofar as art is a cultural expression, according to Tillich, writings that express the human quest for meaning are revelatory. They might strike into the surface and create an ontological shock, pointing towards non-being and the abyss that is linked to a moment of fear, but it might also on the other hand relate to an experience of fascination. The following image is one of my own paintings “All Humans are like Grass” (2009) and serves as my illustration of when I begun this study



*Figure 1 Saghaug (2009) 'All Humans are like Grass', acrylics, grass 170 x140,*

Tillich's language and my own work's allusion to a biblical verse mean that I have dragged theology into the area of business management models and innovation. This experience led me, as I will describe in my presentation of Paper 1, to use Tillich's philosophical theology to challenge mainstream understanding of value. This also implied that I elaborated on certain tools, models, and moments that occurred during this research project that involved introduction to business model innovation. The thesis has indirectly raised a lot of questions. This could first and foremost be the worth of theology that has been my lens and whether Paul Tillich's theology of revelation was a focused way of using theology? Tillich's (almost) essentialist notion of being itself - how can he even be used in this post - postmodern time when social constructivism seem to be almost in its extreme relativism be another Feuerabend's dictum "anything goes"? Further it could be asked whether Tillich can be used or not if we do not subscribe to his idea of 'essential manhood' in our postmodern times? And is it at all relevant for academia, for Business , for people



from other religions, from other parts of the world , for atheists, - or is this a mission trying to sell Christianity? These are not questions that can be conclusive. Some of them hopefully are answered through the reading of my thesis, others are possible perspectives that need to be taken into account.

I find, based on the previous examples, that there are some quite different ways of approaching this area, as exemplified by the following: one might (a) search for traces of theology within the business model innovation process itself and criticize it as a hidden religion (Sørensen, Spoelstra, Höpfl, & Critchley 2012) (b) one might also address it differently by searching for a revival of the original meaning of these traces of theology to strengthen the understanding and explore the potential knowledge hidden within the original meaning of the concept that the present use has forgotten (e.g. (Agamben 2011; Case, French, & Simpson 2012) and (c) one can analyze what is happening within these different domains using concepts from theology, both unveiling some of the domains' own concepts but looking at the area from the perspective of a theologian. This can be done both critically and constructively. I choose the last approach.

As a theologian, I was trained in a hermeneutic methodology, although I did not really reflect upon it as such because, as the years of study went by, it simply became my way of coming to terms with the world; thus, it became my way of understanding. One of most renowned philosophers within hermeneutics, Hans Georg Gadamer, argued in his main work, *Truth and Method*, that *understanding* is what hermeneutics is all about. Understanding is not a method, but a transcendence of being, which ends in an understanding of oneself (Gadamer 2004).

In Morgan and Smircich's article reality is perceived as a process – and understanding this process may give knowledge of reality: “the whole aim of inquiry is to understand the methods relevant to the production of common sense knowledge in different (ethno)areas of everyday life (Morgan and Smircich 1980, p. 497). As this project is addressing business owners attached to an innovation project on business models the theological methodology per se, namely hermeneutics, is

highly relevant. Two of the last century's great philosophers, Heidegger and Gadamer, criticized the methodology based on rationality in the tradition of Descartes for its neglect of the human situation and historicity; the hermeneutical methodology by contrast has its origin in the dialogue from Socrates. It focuses on the relation between the interpreter and the interpreted, and realization is achieved not in isolation but through collective pursuit and endeavour. Hermeneutics focuses on the importance of dialogue in the background of the human finitude as central for its way of perceiving and understanding reality, and thereby its lack of ability to go outside its circle of understanding (Marquard, Gadamer and Heidegger in Guldahl (ed.) 1999). Wo(man) is not a passive registering subject as prevailed in Descartes, but an active participant. This makes action research or more correctly participative observation and hermeneutics fit dynamically together in this PhD project, because of its participative character.

The autobiographic story above entitled "Coming from The Ivory Tower to the Tower of Babel" explicates (in a preliminary way) three aspects of Gadamer's thoughts on some of the central aspects of a hermeneutical methodology in relation to becoming aware of:

1. The situation one is participating in.
2. The prejudices everyone carries into the situation.
3. The shift of horizon.

In becoming aware of the very context that one is trying to understand, I also came to experience perspectives that begged new questions and gave new insights into my own prejudices.

For instance, and importantly, because it had a huge influence for the direction of my study, I discovered that, coming from my background, I had an idea that business owners are primarily interested in economic value. But my encounter with the field in my research showed that for the majority of the business owners involved in these projects personal values (or values related to an ultimate concern)

are just as important. I also realized that my own strangeness or situatedness in this area could be used to illuminate aspects of business innovation differently and maybe illustrate how the fusion of horizons can potentially create new knowledge (Gadamer 2004).

But could this also be done as a kind of ethnographic research? I cannot say that I am an auto-ethnographic researcher in the “real” sense of the word according to, for instance, Van Maanen and Ellis. This would have meant both having a rigorous theoretical knowledge as well as, even more importantly, having years of training and practising the method (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011; Van Maanen 2011). Further, it would have meant, with respect to the research at hand, a far more intense participation. Nevertheless, I found that in retrospect I intended to do research that included, if I follow Denzins who again followed Pelias (2004), writing from the heart. My involvement within the business area and its values, beliefs and theories is not to pretend a kind of objectivity, as if in a detached way I was scrutinizing an entity. I find myself being more and more committed to a critical standpoint and by accepting my position I am committed to influence the area (Denzin 2006). I invested myself for some years in this study, not in order to be an innovation leader for business modelling or anything similar, but to understand the people involved within this area (mainly the business owners) and their understanding of how and why they offer/create the value that they do in their businesses from a philosophical theological perspective. Artistic creativity was used to bridge the gap between the area of business management (i.e. business model innovation) and theology.

Of course, I myself am not as such of interest in this context, but since it is I who have addressed this area and have a background as a theologian and an artist, I am not an “innocent” researcher or “ethnographer”; we are all tainted by our backgrounds. Ethnographers approach the field they are investigating to understand the culture they are researching and its cultural practices, and the members of that culture’s values, beliefs and experiences. And this is done to assist both insiders and outsiders to understand the culture (Denzin 2006; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011; Van Maanen 2011).

This means there are some events and experiences during the mentioned workshops which have been elaborated so that the way business owners address value when they work with business model innovation in their businesses can be better understood, as exemplified by their activities, interactions, questions and opinions expressed during and between workshops. This was followed by some quantitative as well as qualitative interviews, which again triggered further exploration and interpretation as some further qualitative interviews have been conducted in December 2013 with four of the participants.

#### **4.1. THE EMPIRICAL FIELD – THE BUSINESS OWNERS, WORKSHOPS AND INTERVIEWS**

The empirical material for this study is primarily based on two projects:

1. The Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) project (2006–2008).
2. The Women in Business (WiB) project (2009–2012).

The group of business owners were derived from different SMEs, and they had been participating in projects that, in one case, was a research project that had business model innovation as the main theme and, in another, was concerned with how the Blue Ocean Strategy could be made understandable and doable in practice<sup>9</sup>. It might be stated that while the Women in Business project has to do with gender, our approach does not include the gender aspect as we simply addressed these participants as small business owners<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> The Blue Ocean project is more unfolded in the presentation of the paper Different thinking as well as in the paper itself. But since it is only a minor part of my study since I became involved in of this project in the end of it, I will not unfold this project further here

<sup>10</sup> Many of the female business owners, even though they were participating in this project, were tired of a gender focus; they simply wanted to be recognized as business owners or entrepreneurs. This does not mean that we are not aware of research into the area of gender or that gender may have an impact on “values”, especially in the mainstream understanding of a value; however, the aim of this research is not to investigate female business owners per se, but to consider value creation from a philosophic and theological perspective.

#### 4.1.1. SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS OR ENTREPRENEURS

All the businesses I was concerned with in this study were small businesses at the time it was conducted; some participants were also entrepreneurs in the sense of creating new connections between different areas of their businesses, as reflected in Schumpeter's definition, and the fact that they were participating in projects related to innovation, especially on the level of business model innovation, also suggest a motivation to create something new.

A much quoted article by (Carland et al. 1984) concerns the differentiation between entrepreneurs and small business owners. Of course, many distinctions have surely been introduced later, but in many ways this short article is enlightening because the authors address some of the classic sources like Schumpeter, Cantillon and Mill, who created the foundation for the later definitions, either by supporting them or opposing them. Schumpeter is mentioned as defining the entrepreneur as a person who creates a new combination of means of production (the small business is, of course, not always owned by an entrepreneur). Cantillon in 1700 provided one of the early definitions of the entrepreneur as a rational decision maker who "assumed risk and provided management for the firm". Schumpeter, according to Carland et al., credited Mill (1848) with using the term among economists. Mill also assumed that the main factor was risk taking.

But Schumpeter, again according to Carland, found that since entrepreneurs more were combiners or connectors they were not necessarily taking the risk that owners were. Martin (1982) found that risk is a matter for the investor. Further, what becomes interesting is the focus on the traits or the personal characteristics of entrepreneurship. Martin distinguishes between artistic creativity and entrepreneurial creativity, because he finds that the entrepreneur is not innovating "by creating ideas but by exploiting the value of ideas". Glueck's distinction between the family business and entrepreneurial ventures as a matter of different strategic practices is a way of perceiving how the start of the family business was decided according to what might be the needs and interests of the family, but the entrepreneurial strategist

was solely thinking about what was best for the firm's possible growth. Carland et al. stressed that the critical factor that distinguishes small business owners and entrepreneurs is innovation and the fact that to entrepreneurs this creates profitable activity.

Small business owners have a business for its own sake, and time and resources go into the business. Further, it is said that "the owner perceives the business as an extension of his or her personality, intricately bound with family need and desires". The entrepreneur on the other hand establishes the business with the principal purpose of profit and growth. The entrepreneur is acting innovatively and manages the business strategically (Carland et al. 1984).

The notion of defining the entrepreneur as a person who, whilst being creative, is purely interested in the financial output is a rather simplistic one, and it even prompts a rather negative perception of the entrepreneur as a kind of in dispassionate person who is indifferent to other peoples' needs and exclusively interested in the firm. These criteria are also challenged by newer research that addresses motivation in entrepreneurship as being not just profit based, as Schumpeter suggested and Carsrud reflected using the examples of artists and their motivation (Carsrud and Brännback 2011). This newer research also points to the growing focus on social entrepreneurship, where some recently have been addressing compassion as a driver for social entrepreneurs and at the same time questioning the focus solely on self-interest, and within this research these authors have also reflected on the narrowness of the previous interpretation and stressed the need to understand the intrinsic factors that motivate entrepreneurs, for instance, their personal values (Grimes et al. 2013; Miller et al. 2012).

This project, though, defines the participants as small business owners, because it covers the overall group and because some have been entrepreneurs at a certain point and some were on the edge of becoming one, but all of them were at the time the study took place small business owners.

My approach has been to enter the field of small business owners by participating in projects concerned with business model innovation in order to explore how and why my educational background as a theologian and a practicing artist can illuminate this area. Over time it turned out to be a project with an increased focus on small business owners and how value is expressed as well as how they innovate value.

In further presenting my empiric field, I will start by presenting a very short summary of the workshop, events and processes that I participated in and observed.

#### **4.1.2. THE WORKSHOPS**

The empirical part of the Phd is primarily based on the Women In Business project, an EU-funded study of 37<sup>11</sup> Nordic companies (2009–2012) from Norway, Denmark and Sweden. The overall project was a thematic study of “Innovation and Growth” in the Nordic countries, addressing especially female-owned businesses. The majority of the owners were within the service industries including consultancies, treatment, leisure and so on. The number of employees in the businesses varied from none at all up to 35, but the majority had few employees. The majority were experienced business owners who had owned a business for more than four years. Further, the majority of participants were over 30 years old. The population of business owners is not representative of the whole group of small business owners, but this is not perceived to be a problem as long as the aim of this PhD project is not to establish generalized results covering the entire group of small business owners.

I participated and contributed to five so-called growth-gatherings, consisting of meetings of business owners where we asked the participants on day one to work on defining their values, using a modified Strategy Canvas from the Blue Ocean Strategy. Next time, we asked them to define their business model via a framework

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<sup>11</sup> The number of companies shifts in the papers between 36 and 37. The reason for this is that the numbers changed during the course of the project, as some business owners left and others came in.

and questionnaire about their current business model– here value is also central as it is related to *all* the elements of a business model (value proposition, target customer, value chain, competences, networks, relations, value formula). The third time we met, we asked them to use a big Business Model Canvas to mark up their strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities (SWOT) as well as their ideas. At the fourth meeting, we wanted to move the group a step further in order to open up an even bigger space for the future. Here, we encouraged them to work on their business model in an open nature. Every building block had its own workshop or open discussion, and they had to move around from one business model-building block to another – on bicycles. At the final gathering, they worked on strategy in relation to business management innovation . After the workshops were completed, the overall project was finalized in 2012 with a survey. Furthermore, in late 2013 four in-depth interviews were conducted with individual participants.

Following is an overview of the different workshop that I attended and contributed to as a researcher.

<b>First Growth Gathering</b>
<p>The first workshop (16–17 September 2009 Frederikshavn, Denmark) was run by the Danish research leader and meant to kick-start the working process with business models. This process was initiated by an introduction to the business owners of the Blue Ocean Strategy tool called the Strategy Canvas. Due to unexpected circumstances (the Danish research leader was due to be in Stanford); I was thrown into presenting this tool to the businesses. According to Blue Ocean this tool can create a sort of visual overview of the business' own values versus those of the competitor(s), on the basis of which it is possible to obtain an idea of whether one's business and business model(s) is differentiated from those of its competitors or not. As with the rest of the workshops, homework was initiated. They were encouraged to go home and interview their customers.</p>
<b>Second Growth Gathering</b>



At this second workshop (18-19 November 2009, Lysekil, Sweden) we continued to focus on the participants' perception of value. This was done by asking them to consider their value proposition (i.e. what they offer in their business model) and asking them to connect these values from the Strategy Canvas with what we at that time called the first building block in the business model – the value proposition.

For this we used a revised version of Osterwalder's business model (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010). The different building blocks were translated into a questionnaire – a business model framework<sup>12</sup>. By working with these questions in groups of two, the business owners were introduced to the building blocks or elements of a generic business model. The idea was to address this in such a way that they were challenged to think about their value proposition as a part of a larger whole. As with the Strategy Canvas, we only asked them to address their existing business model, the AS IS business model.

### **Third Growth Gathering**

At the third workshop (10-11 February 2010, Kristiansand, Norway) the participants did further work on the other dimensions of the business model. We had ordered large copies of Business Model Canvasses (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010) (photos from workshop of canvas in the research journey under the headline *Revelatory Aspects*) The aim was to work more concretely on the “image” of the business model and give the participants opportunities to discuss their different business models and gain a new perspective on their potential. It also gave us the opportunity to test whether this big canvas would bring up something new in connection with the business owners sensing their potential and space for innovation within their existing business model.

### **Fourth Growth Gathering**

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<sup>12</sup> The framework is in appendixes

On this occasion (31 Aug -2 September 2010, Skagen, Denmark) the participants went from working on their as-is business model (how it is) within a closed space inside walls to again, metaphorically speaking, going outside working on their to-be business model (how it could be). For us, as researchers, this was also a kind of an experiment to address the question: Would working on business model innovation in an open space/place lead to something extraordinary?

The workshops were placed outside in different places in Skagen. Further, our experience was that the processes of working with the “canvas” in relation to both the Strategy Canvas and the Business Model Canvas could present material that had certain structural similarities with artistic creativity. So, we wanted to make this artistic creativity in the innovation process even more visual. Our idea was that by bringing the business model innovation workshop outside we could achieve a different type of innovation, and encourage them to use more of their senses and hopefully thereby obtain inspiration in relation to their work with business model innovation.

### **The Fifth Growth Gathering<sup>13</sup>**

At this point (17 and 18 November 2010, Lyngør, Norway), strategy was introduced to the business model innovation process. The theme of this gathering/workshop was the strategic leadership of business model innovation. Here a tool created by the project leader was introduced. This done to assist the business owners in realizing and getting an overview of both their AS IS business model as well as their TO BE business model by asking the questions: Which business models did they already have on the market? Which was maybe on its way out? Which business models were planned or on their way into the market? Which should be created or prioritized and which should be maintained as the status quo and which should possibly be removed? These could be the initial steps towards what they strategically would like to do in the future in relation to their business model innovation

More detailed descriptions from workshops will be unfolded where it is relevant for the dissemination of the individual papers.

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<sup>13</sup> As the journey will unfold itself I will not elaborate much on the last and Fifth Growth Gathering as the models and the tools has not been reflected upon from a theological perspective in any of my PhD papers.

Being together over six weekends (five workshops) with the businesses attending an EU project and taking part in workshops together with the business owners can hardly be called ethnographical, even though it was over a period of about two years, and even though there was a lot of communication by mail in between related to their workshop tasks. While I should state that I have been a “participant observer” in the sense of Aull Davies’ understanding (Davies 2008), I have been in conversations and interactions with a number of the participants in the projects and I still have contact with some of the businesses; probably, there are even some that I will continue to follow in the future.

#### 4.1.3. A COMMENT ON ACCESS TO EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

At this last point in the workshop process we had an expectation that all the focus group interviews from the whole project conducted by the rest of the Nordic researchers would be available for us as well. But obviously there had been some misunderstanding about the oral agreements, so this did not happen; therefore, it was not possible to have this material included as empirical material in my study. As things turned out, it probably would have been unnecessary as the focus group interviews of most relevance were those where I was present, which reflects also this PhD’s method of being participative while observing. However I conducted 17<sup>th</sup> of Nov 2010 two of the overall project’s focus group interviews (with eight business owners) on the theme of the “network”, and some findings from this encounter with the business owners are presented in *Revealing Hearts* as well as in *The Death of God* paper.

A survey from 2012 was made in relations to the WIB project<sup>14</sup>. The respondents to some of the questions were a maximum of only 23 out of 37 business owners.

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<sup>14</sup> The survey (questionnaire in appendix) was made in relations to the overall WIB project when I was on maternity leave and the survey was not especially aimed towards my phd project. Nevertheless I contributed to themes and questions that relate to their personal values vs economic values and questions concerning experiences during the workshop and its processes. Further I have used the background information that this study generated.

Nevertheless, with these reservations in mind I have used some of the results in the PhD as indicative in relations to this particular group of business owners.

#### **4.1.4. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Between October and December 2013, four semi-structured interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed. These interviews were a follow up to the survey from 2012 and to the participative observation. I was mainly interested in what the business owners remembered from their workshops in order to discover if there had been some especially meaningful moments during the workshops that remained in their consciousness.

The four business owners were chosen because three of them had high scores in the survey for the experience of “eureka” moments during a workshop, The one who did not have this experience was not attending this workshop, but was nevertheless chosen because this respondent, like the other three, had answers scoring at the high end in terms of the importance of personal as well as economic values, and for the importance of making society better through their business. All four of them demonstrated during the project that they were passionately interested in their businesses, and all of them had been business owners over a long period (minimum 5 years).

Extra written material on some of the topics discussed were provided/sent to the researcher from one of the respondents, since the respondent intended through this material to give answers to some of the questions discussed; consequently, this material was also included as a contribution to the interview(s). Besides this material, interviews conducted during personal encounters as well as self-presentations from the business owners during workshops were also sources that came from the participative observation in the workshops.

This ends the presentation of the empirical field. Additional materials are provided in the Appendix, including an interview guide for both the survey and the semi-

structured interviews. But one thing is very important and that is further to stress how I have used this data.

#### **4.1.5. THE APPLICATION AND USE OF MY DATA**

At this point it is decisive to emphasize, once more that I am a hermeneutic researcher inspired by Tillich, studying phenomena emerging within a certain context. For instance when you read about my research and what I have disseminated in my papers in the coming journey you will see that I start to address a buzz word. This is a small part of a larger whole. And then I interpret this fragment into a bigger context, the human existence. All the way through the papers you will see excerpts from meetings, quotes, occurrences and events that are derived from my encounters with the business owners. These fragments have been addressed and interpreted into a larger part. It is a movement in this study that goes from tiny parts to a greater whole and back again in cyclic movements. And as the study evolves it accumulates new knowledge and I combine experiences across all the workshops. So I encourage the reader to perceive the (previously) mentioned empiric material as an entrance to the field where I have been, not to perceive it as fixed data.

Next, I present a short overview over the papers that constitute the body of research in this PhD, before I proceed on the research journey and a more comprehensive presentation of the papers and the research I have conducted.

## 4.2. THE PAPERS - THE DOCUMENTATION OF MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

The story of my research journey is an extensive analytical and theoretical synthesis disseminating and reflecting on my papers. But it also goes beyond the papers and frames the thesis as a reflexive auto-ethnographical story reporting from the research journey that I have been on. It is most correct to call the thesis a hybrid of these forms. The overall intention is literarily to give the reader a picture of my journey. For some, this will seem a bit untraditional. Where has she put the chapter on methodology? Where is the research design? It is all here, but told in a different way – as a story.

I have already stated that thesis is a hybrid, though a hybrid does not exist as a submission possibility in the PhD program. Anyhow this resembles a paper based Phd and initially it also was. But the number of papers grew along with the synopsis and suddenly it was more of a monograph than ‘only’ a short synopsis. This thesis can ‘function’ without reading the papers that are the raw material for the thesis but it gets even richer if some of the central papers are taken into account as well.

Along the way, the majority of papers were produced on the basis of the simultaneous participation in the workshops, meaning that some of the papers still reflect the form of the research done until the given point that it was necessary to submit the paper, for instance, for a conference or a submission; consequently, some of them are rather raw. Thus, I find that while this could be perceived as a positive quality as it shows the research process, it also means that some of them lack the final polish necessary for dissemination. I will write about all of them in order to communicate the research that has been done and provide some further reflections on the “high points” of them.

The following (Figure 2) is my own painting combined with the papers I have produced within this study, illustrating the road and the parts of this study and the importance maybe of every single paper – although fragmentary it is still a whole.

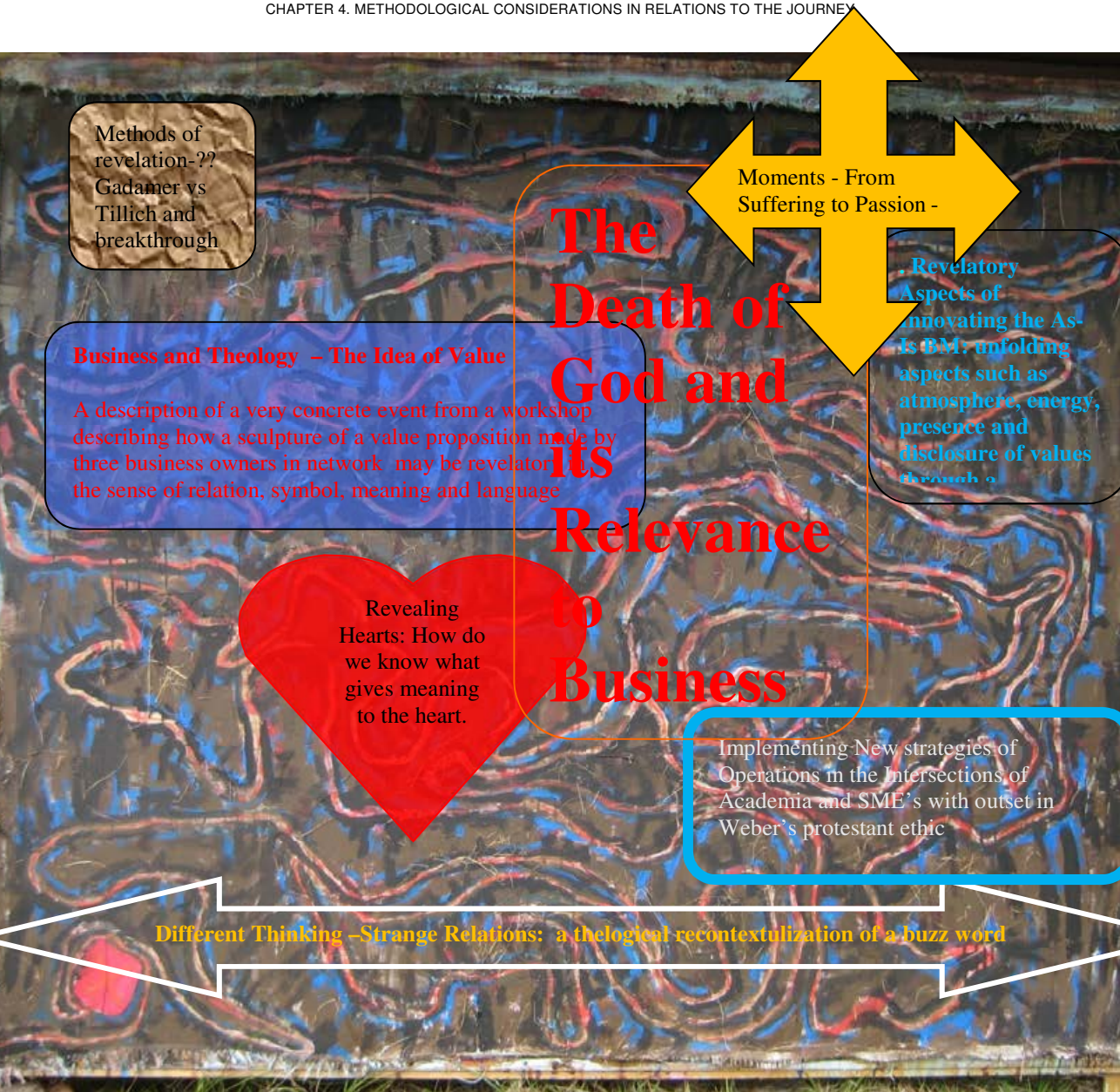


Figure 2. My painting, covered with titles of project papers.

#### 4.2.1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PAPERS

For the sake of an introduction to the research I have conducted follows an overview of my papers in the table below. I have chosen to present only papers where I am corresponding author In the Appendix there is a further overview of all the papers, co- authors and where the papers have been presented or submitted.

1. Different Thinking – Strange Relations	“Different thinking” as essential to innovation and innovative strategy is explored by using the ontology of the German American philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich as a framework, and applying the empirical material from the workshops on Business Model Innovation. Companies that were the most proficient at thinking differently were strong on participation – establishing unique and peculiar relations, both internally and externally.
2. Implementing New Strategies of Operations at the Intersections of Academia and SMEs – With a Special Focus on Human Beings as “Differences” Acting on Relations Towards Meaningfulness	Weber’s understanding of work in the light of the protestant ethic etc. serves as background for work as an identifier of meaning. The empirical experiences put forward in this paper show that for some small business owners the meaningfulness of a new market and <b>customer</b> group seems to be supported if it reflects the already <b>inherent values</b> in the company. Revealing these <b>hidden values</b> through a mutual non-hierarchical process is shown to be vital, as <b>researchers</b> in the role of participative observers may, through interpretation and questioning, assist the business owner in a way that <b>mediates new relations</b> that might prove meaningful for the small business owner (help discover/solve a problem in society in a new way, through using the current competences in the company in another way and addressing new customer groups). The images of the polarities from Tillich are used in the paper to



	illustrate this search for meaningfulness through a short analysis of how some of the companies in the workshop seemed to balance ontological pairs of polarities and having a focus on “both-and” seemed to be most able to work on making a difference through their business..
3.Revelatory Aspects of Innovating the As-Is Business Model – Actualizing Hidden Knowledge	This paper addresses revelation and business model innovation in a temporary small business network(WIB) generated via a project. The revelatory aspects such as atmosphere, energy, presence and disclosure of values are addressed through a theoretical comparison of Paul Tillich’s and Otto C. Scharmer’s work. The “existential <i>nunc</i> ” of Tillich is also compared with “presencing” in Scharmer’s model.
4. Business and Theology Business – The Idea of Value	An analysis of an art workshop event in relations to business model innovation addressing the question of value. This is a description of a very concrete event unfolding how a ‘sculpture’ of a value proposition made by three business owners together may be revelatory in the sense of its relations, symbolism, meaning and language. Further the paper focuses on a move from value to meaning inspired by Tillich.
5. The Death of God and its Relevance to Business	A theoretical and conceptual paper Through showing how “idolatry” exists in the business economy as undisputed truths, it attempts to give room for a “revelation” from another perspective, that is, the focus on people, the small business owner and the importance of addressing them as unique creating human beings at the core of innovating a BM, and their need to “make a difference”. It combines the polarities with a cube, breaking through it

	from the inside and transforming the cube.
6. Methods of Revelation?	<p>This paper is a methodological paper exploring some theoretical considerations in relation to the study of empirical evidence from a field consisting of small business owners who participated in workshops with a philosophical/theological lens. Tillich's correlation method and his concept of revelation is primarily relevant in this business context. This paper also addresses Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics due to the congruence I find is present between his notion of art as a truth event and Tillich's concept of art experience as revelation (breakthrough). This paper is therefore "methodological" in the sense that it identifies some "methods" as potentially revelatory that concern knowledge creation related to the human quest for value and meaning in a workshop context of business model innovation. On the other hand, it is a reflection upon method that cannot be turned into a "method" in the sense of a manageable technique (i.e. involving revelation).</p>
7. Revealing Hearts – Paul Tillich's Concept of Revelation: An Application to Business Innovation	<p>Some of the small business owners want to balance personal values and economic values. "I have to follow my heart" or "it must be meaningful", some of them say. But how might they be able to know what gives meaning to the heart? The philosophical theologian Paul Tillich finds that the problem is that "controlling knowledge" (e.g. technical testing) might be safe but unimportant, whilst "receiving knowledge", which can only be verified by direct participation (e.g. intuition) might be important but insecure. This paper shows how this tension can be made fruitful in relation to business innovation with reference to Tillich's account of the meaning of</p>

	revelation through culture and art.
8. Moments - From Suffering to Passion	The notion of “moment” is developed by addressing Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Tillich as a “fragment” of participation in understanding and as a combinations of passion as suffering and passion as pain. Which again is the foundation upon which innovation from a personal perspective may be grounded. It also suggest that we may understand value as something albeit fragmentarily, it is not just created but also discovered.



## CHAPTER 5. THE RESEARCH JOURNEY – VALUE, MEANING AND REVELATION

This heading encapsulates three concepts: value, meaning and revelation. The reason why precisely these three concepts recur through this study will become evident during the following presentation. Nevertheless, it is clear that, firstly, *value* is a core concept within business and economics describing in the utmost sense primarily profit. The concept of value is also linked to the foundations of the judgments people make; therefore, it also seems vital to consider it in relation to the way people create value in their businesses. Secondly *meaning* may merely be connected to the opinions people have about all areas of reality, but on a more existential level it may also be connected to the area of art that addresses and/or questions the contemporary understanding of meaningfulness versus meaninglessness. Thirdly, the concept of *revelation* may be understood simply as *eureka* experiences in relation to innovation, but here it primarily serves as a theological approach towards both value and meaning, pointing to how revelation involves presence and how that presence can be merely fragmentary. The three concepts are represented during the whole of the study, and are given a variety of weights.

As previously stated the focused question is: **Can – or how can philosophical theology, namely, Paul Tillich’s theory of revelation, contribute to productive reflection on the innovation of value among small business owners in a business model innovation context?**

In the current chapter I will focus on the three concepts: (1) value, (2) meaning (to some extent meaningfulness) and (3) revelation, and I will address these in the papers in order to analyse and tell the research story based on the three constructs. These constructs represent three different headlines, which will recur under each

paper relating the terms to what is central to the present paper. The chart in Figure 1 is based on a count made on 5 June 2014 of the use of the three concepts in the text of each paper. In order to have an idea of where some of the concepts have been most frequently mentioned, the chart shows the percentage use of them within the different papers. One might question, and this would certainly be relevant, whether the use of these concepts within the different papers actually tells us about their *importance* in the different papers. However it indicates their presence and interplay in the journey.

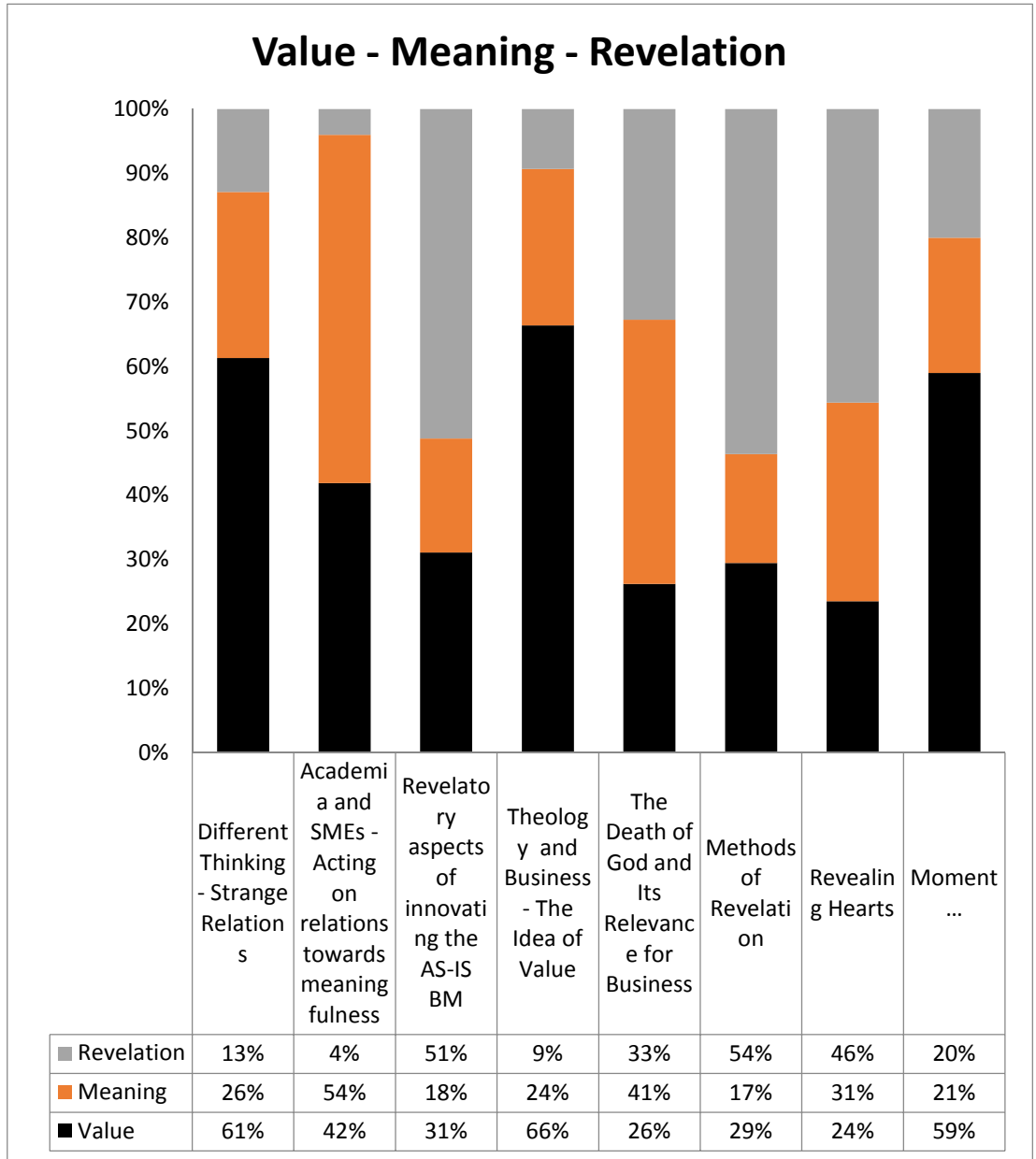


Figure 1. Value, meaning and revelation frequency.

In 14th and 15th century Italy, in what was later named the Renaissance, something extraordinary happened in Florence where the Medici family gathered artists, scientists, scholars and architects together. People from different places in Italy with different competences met and exchanged ideas and developed them into actuality. Johansson wrote a book on this phenomenon and linked it at the beginning to the experience he had of entering into Peter's Café, a cafe in the Azores where travelers from all over the world bump into each other and exchange ideas before they move on. He claims that we have a similar room or point in our mind where established concepts clash and combine themselves in new ways. He calls this place "where different fields meet" for Intersection and a locus for innovation, and he focuses on what happens when you step into the intersection of different disciplines and cultures, and bring the ideas you find here to life (Johansson 2004, p.2ff) The concept of intersection I interpret as opening a crack. It is a kind of participation that carries through or underlies this study<sup>15</sup>.

The Renaissance was also of vital importance for Christianity. It was a blooming period for the arts and the building of churches, where of course Michelangelo's and Da Vinci's works were some of those at the forefront, and Dante was one of the early authors. The subsequent period, named the Baroque, took another approach which was away from the idealized image of human beings at the same time as the Protestant reform movement was creating a kind of, in business terms (!), disruptive innovation from within the Roman Catholic Church.

Thus, the internal reformation failed; one could suggest that in the understanding of priesthood there was at its inception a contrast between the transcendent understanding of Church and the priesthood as sacramental, departing from the liturgy presented in Latin and introducing a non-hierarchical and in principle flat organization – or at least ideally. But in Protestantism, though, there was a major

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<sup>15</sup> There is a similar concept in sociological studies, but immediately with a very different meaning – intersectionality (Phoenix & Pattynama 2006) – that over the last decade has developed into a whole methodology within Gender research. But these studies are not research that the current study engages in.



difference from the Catholic Church because the Protestant movement was more focused on, to use a business phrase, “empowering” the individuals’ in their right to read and interpret the biblical texts according to their *language*. Indeed, this could also be said to be a breakthrough in the shattering of hierarchies. By creating new relations between people, their understanding was enabled, due to the interpretation of both the Bible and sermons in churches in their native languages. Although we must not be naïve about it, the oppression of people was massive. But maybe the Baroque movement with its cracks, wild forms and dynamic masses are an image better suited to innovation in the in-between area and that it is really about exploring the cracks on the surface. Tillich found this period to be not so much focused on the individual, “but the flooding life which goes through all of them” (OAA, p. 61, and in *Mass and Personality* in MW2), which is a dynamic movement that changes, unites and revitalizes (Pattison 1991; Tillich 1990)

I was changed by my own research experience in this field, which happened due to the interactions I had with the field and the businesses, and due to my encounters with some of the mainstream ideas about business, the business model and innovation<sup>16</sup>. The reflection about this meeting, which I have been occupied with, and what I have tried to understand and to investigate will unfold as a research journey. I will successively try to incorporate the background to the papers, and what I found as a “stranger” participating in business model innovation (BMI) workshops with the business owners during their process.

Sometimes, though, travelling is imbued with reluctance. The main character in Anne Tyler’s *Accidental Tourist*, Macon Leary, is working at writing tourist guides for people who must travel due to work but actually want to be at home. This was also my own position at the outset, coming from the Ivory Tower. I felt a certain

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<sup>16</sup> Thus Tillich claimed that processes may indeed not really create anything new because there is the idea of continuation, as he observes about Nietzsche – the spirit cannot break through this (p. 27-28 i ST3).

reluctance about being in such strange places for me academically, and I sometimes tried to make myself believe that I was really at “home”.

As when I was attending a course in systematic innovation that my project leader had suggested and where he said before I was leaving for it: “Find out what they are up to”. Attending this course was really tricky for me; one of the reasons apart from the business language was because I was continuously puzzled about the use of all the models. I came from an academic background where the words and images used primarily originated from art. So, this also affected my own perception of what I now came to encounter. It was especially my experience of what I thought were the kinds of creative form expressing some sort of emotion, because I thought they were so beautiful, and I even recall myself saying during the lecture something like, “Wow, they look nice”. Though I was speculating a bit about why some of the forms were so badly composed and lacked balance. I asked about how we were to understand these forms and the teacher became a bit stressed out, sighing a bit and looking at others in the room. Later that day that I realized that what was presented were called radar charts – and they were another way of measuring. I continued to think about them as beautiful, though not so magical.

As this little excerpt shows, my experience was mainly an entrance to a new area of values; following the making of these papers I will try to shed light on both them and my own research experiences.

## 5.1. PAPER 1. DIFFERENT THINKING STRANGE RELATIONS (2008, 2011)\*

### *Abstract*

*“Different thinking” as an essential facet of innovation and innovative strategy is explored by using the ontology of the German American philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich as a framework, which is applied to the empirical material gathered from workshops on business model innovation.*

*Companies that were the most proficient at thinking differently were strong on participation, establishing unique and peculiar relations, both internally and externally.*

### 5.1.1. VALUE AND VALUE INNOVATION

Metaphorically speaking, I experienced entering a landscape that consisted of metaphors. The water (i.e. the market) was either red or blue; that is, it was either occupied by competitors, depicted as sharks, or it could be open and free with the image of a lonely traveler sailing towards the horizon, free from competitors. Some of the first things that may occur to the business owner who is reading the mainstream business blockbuster's innovation strategies like the Blue Ocean Strategy are that being alone is good. When you are alone you have everything to yourself: being crowded and together with others is bad because then you have to fight them. The others must consequently, according to this perception, be bad. But you are good and you have to work with any means at your disposal to get

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\* Saghaug, K.F. & Lindgren, P. 2011, 'Different thinking - Strange Relations' at 27th EGOS Colloquium, Reassembling Organizations, Gothenburg, 6–9 July, 2011.

A previous version was presented at MOPAN Conference 2008, Boston

customers who think the same about you, your product or your service (your “value proposition” as it is called in this context), convinced that this is the best situation. The value you are offering should be such that you, for instance, produce goods cheaply but sell it at a high price, and the customer thinks that he or she gets value for the money, so to speak. Then, you are not just good but you are also smart and you are participating in making value innovation, the core concept within the Blue Ocean theory (Chan Kim & Mauborgne 2005). This was how I saw it at that time, and maybe it is possible to grasp the core of the thinking behind this perception, even though it lacks a business strategy vocabulary. But Chan Kim and Mauborgne’s own definition presented in 2014 was that it is “the simultaneous pursuit of differentiation and low cost, creating a leap in value for both buyers and the company”<sup>17</sup>, and this is created only when “the whole system of utility, price, and cost is aligned”. Figure 1 illustrates this.



Figure 1 Value innovation from [www.blueoceanstrategy.com](http://www.blueoceanstrategy.com).

In relation to the building of a Blue Ocean strategy, there are many other steps in the process of creating a Blue Ocean that need to be completed, and these different tools

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/concepts/bos-tools/value-innovation/>

are shortly described, for example, in the *Different Thinking – Strange Relations* paper (Saghaug; Lindgren 2011). Basically, Blue Ocean theory promotes the pursuit of an ideal that concerns making temporary monopolies in the market (Abraham 2006). One of the arguments in the Blue Ocean theory and its rhetoric concerning being different is, however, not so different from what Michael Porter called a “differentiated strategy” (Porter 1996). Or is it?

Reflecting upon the paper, the notion of metaphors in Lakoff and Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* shows how the metaphors we use pervade the way we think and they become embedded in the way we perceive reality (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Mainstream business “philosophy” is built upon the evolutionary idea of survival of the fittest, which literally means that someone else has to die so I may live. Schumpeter’s theories on economic development build upon the ideas that someone, the other(s), have to be shattered in order for oneself to prosper. Almost a bit prosaically it is called “creative destruction”, but where is the “creation” in it? How can such acts of business ever be called creative? The combination of creative and destruction sounds like an oxymoron. It is clear that no intellectually sound person would ever salute the innovative skills or cost-saving skills the Nazi engineers used in building gas chambers. This is so obvious that even writing it seems wrong. But still within the economic mainstream being creative in a destructive manner is saluted. Or is it something quite different that is going on here – could creative destruction merely be an inspiration from a distorted understanding of Christianity? Is this also another concept that has its roots in theology? Carl Schmitt considered that many concepts used within the state originated from theology. Is it then maybe a barbaric notion of the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of human life? Was the death of God an image of an obsolete business model that needed to be killed so we could innovate another business model? Reflected as it may be, but *oikonomia* means the ordering of the house; it is the organization of the household, but this household is also an image of the organization of the Trinity of God, and the organization of the salvation of mankind (Agamben 2011). *Oikonomia*

and theology have a lot in common, for better or for worse. And I will certainly dwell in more detail on this later, but for now I will concentrate on the beginning.

I encountered a lot of new figures, models and concepts. Actually, some of them were not “new” but were being used in a different setting, thus being transformed into something else. And just this very use of words was an education for me as a theologian, because of the words I knew in a theological context. For instance, “transformation” in a theological sense really means a completely “new being”, as Paul writes to the Corinthians about how we all are supposed in an eschatological sense to retrieve a new being and not just “change”; but within, for instance, Kotter’s change management steps transformation seems not to be distinctive from change, and things are more or less moved within the existing mainstream understanding of how value is created (Kotter 1996).

Within Blue Ocean strategy there were a focus on doing things differently and thus distancing your competitors by creating a new market; moreover, as Porter emphasizes there is the need for difference. Apple used their commercial campaign stating “think different” to sell a lifestyle of originality to the members of their ever growing congregation of users (customers). I became a bit overwhelmed by this use of “different”, because if people hear that small business owners are told to do something different, what does that actually mean? And we could also ask what is potentially “hidden” within this concept? What does it mean to differentiate yourself or in this context your business model? Or what could it mean from another angle and could it shed another light on small business owners and their practices?

The concept of difference versus identity has a long and vast history within philosophy and I did not want to enter that area; it is simply too big. But during the work on difference and different thinking I created a table to put over just some of

the perspectives about difference that might be found as a way of identifying my overall research question<sup>18</sup>.

<b>Difference – A short historical view across some disciplines<sup>19</sup></b>	
Biblical myths of the Creation	Difference is regarded as a matter of the uniqueness of the created entities, the separation happening when God divided the elements into heaven and earth. They were created, but there was also a loss of attachment with its offspring. “The fall” is human beings ultimately being different from God.
Plato	Difference is that which is poured over the whole of creation, a signifier of a person’s individuality
Aristotle	A is not not-A – difference is related to identity. Aristotle starts the discussion within philosophy between difference and identity. Whereas identity may be seen as something fixed, difference is the expression of this. This discussion continues up until the 18th century.
Descartes	In creating a subject/object distinction in the legacy of Descartes, the power to dominate the different or “the other” person has been a part of Western culture in particular.
Kierkegaard	The difference as existential; man is ultimately not able to relate to others and act ethically.
Nietzsche	Life is a festival of difference that it is not possible to reduce to a matter of identity. (This ignited a new discussion removing difference from its relation to identity as fixed.)

<sup>18</sup> A version of this table was also a part of a paper; Saghaug, KM & Lindgren, P 2008, 'Change and Difference - Innovation as a matter of relating and leading a polarity of human resource'. i Proceedings of 9th International CINet conference - Radical Challenges in Innovation Management

<sup>19</sup> Sources: (Birkinshaw et al. 2008; Chan Kim & Mauborgne 2005; Currie 2004; Deleuze and Guattari 1994; Donkel and Deleuze 2001; Eikhof and Haunschild 2007; Francis and Bessant 2005; Hammer 2007; Johansson 2004; Heidegger 1962; Kierkegaard 2002; Porter 1996; Russel 2006; Tillich 1951; Vattimo 1993)

Heidegger	The meaning of being as understood through the difference between Being and beings, and especially difference understood as the “unthought-of” related to metaphysics and the root of identity of the presence of presence.
Tillich	“Man is different”, explained through the ontological polarities of life relating the human difference to participation, creation and freedom. Difference is both used cautiously, because of risk of oppression, and defended as a gift of creation. Difference and identity are united in <i>esse ipsum</i> , the Augustinian name for Being Itself.
Deleuze	Difference is internal and indefinite and it is not defined in opposition to something, but it is a matter of relatedness and creation. Difference lies as a movement of creativity beneath the idea of identity, which is not a fixed state. Difference is actualization, and the very source of creation, underlying everything being actualized. Based also on Henri Bergson’s perception of <i>élan vital</i> .
Anthropology	Research beginning in the seventies focuses on relations between people instead of difference. Difference is combined with diversity of age, ethnicity, culture, language etc. Difference as a social and economic problem.
Management/innovation theory in general	Thinking and acting differently/differentiating – no definitions of difference found yet, but a focus on tools.
Porter	No definitions of difference found yet, but states the importance of intersections regarding shared values, and thereby creating a space for innovation.
Bessant et al.	Difference is related to the perception of novelty, but is not defined as such.
Mauborgne et.al.	No definition, but difference on the basis of methodology might be perceived as creating an “otherness”, though a synthesis of something known and something external seems to be the concrete consequence of their approach. Blue Ocean, though, seems to act on difference as if creating a new dynamic form with a synthesis of uniqueness in the relations, but this is just implicit and not formulated explicitly.



Johansson	No definition as such, but the intersections , the meeting points, the in-between differences are breakthroughs for innovation.
DeFilippi, Perretti, Eikhof et.al.	Looking at difference as paradox regarding a craft or a standardized organization – where the “solution” seems to be accepting both/and positions.

I started out by addressing Deleuze on this topic, because the concept of difference and thinking is understood in relational terms in his works (Deleuze & Guattari 1994; Due 2007). In particular, I became especially interested in Deleuze’s philosophizing on rhizomes, and I also found management research addressing his ideas (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Jeanes 2006; Styhre 2005; Styhre 2006). But after some time I realized that to address his world on this, which in itself is so vast and extremely difficult to comprehend, if it can be done at all, I would need a community around me consisting of *deleuzians*. More importantly, I realized that if I could contribute to this field I had to use my own philosophical *and* theological background to see whether I could contribute in some way, and since I had combined these theoretical fields all along with artistic creativity, that also gave me an entrance. I did not know how I could contribute, or whether I could contribute at all, but I continued to think about this term “different thinking”, which is of course a phrase used daily, as well continuing to look at things from a plurality of aspects.. The examples I found were built upon the idea of different thinking as a strategic tool (Foerster and Kreuz 2007), but simply to address creativity as if creativity is value neutral is a contradiction in terms if it is epitomized in the concept of creative destruction. So this separation of creativity from any ethics actually sheds indirect light on the old discussion of Kant on the role of aesthetics as an ethical “reminder”. That art as aesthetics has lost its (original Kantian) link to ethics is another story, and we will later enter more into the issue of artistic creativity.

As I was using the previous table on difference as part of the process of clarifying my research approach, I became more convinced that my original idea for

addressing Tillich could be fruitful due to his use of theology within any cultural domain. My first basic question in the beginning of the study was: What does different thinking really mean? And since no one questioned the term “different thinking” itself but seemed to look upon it as something done through tools, I begun to think about how the concept, being separated from ethics, could just be addressed as two separate words: one part concerns *different*, another concerns *thinking*. I addressed Paul Tillich. And why? First of all because he is one of the dominant figures of modern theology, but most importantly, he finds that there are no areas that theology should not deal with when it concerns people. He finds that any expression within our culture is a possible question about meaning. Theology is obliged to interpret these implicit questions and give sensible answers. He calls this the method of correlation.

That Tillich would turn out to be my main theological source was also due to my previous knowledge of his work, where he states that theology (and consequently where a theologian is the acting subject) should go out into the open and prove its worth by correlating contemporary issues and challenges, and he investigates how theology at any contemporary time may respond to these. So, I thought this fitted well with taking him into the innovation of business models amongst small business owners. It might, though, be important to say that it is not his critique of capitalism that I have used, but his anthropology and, as we shall see later, his theology of revelation in relation to art, which came up as an alternative horizon for addressing the question of artistic creativity and preventing the mechanistic thinking and instrumentalization of human values. Just as I have been inspired by ethnographic research, which primarily deals with understanding a culture, so Tillich’s understanding of culture is also vital for understanding how his theology may still be interesting today in helping us understand the culture expressed by the small business owners and their practices. Therefore, it is timely to give a short theoretical introduction to his concept of culture and how he found that this is related to religion.

### 5.1.1.1 Tillich's concept of religion and its connectedness with culture and art

Culture is a manifestation of the concrete expression of people's ultimate concern, as he observes in *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture* (Tillich 1969)<sup>20</sup>. Without partialities or the uniquely *concrete*, any kind of universality becomes shallow and even a threat. Why? I think it is possible to say that within Tillich's theology there is (also) a politically strong engagement against any oppression, and by contextualizing theology into the situation in which we live and into our culture, we are addressed as subjects and not as objects in a dogmatic one-size fits all belief or a market logic that generates value without substance. This is because religion is not in Tillich's sense limited to a narrow sphere of human life or enclosed in a dogmatic belief system. (The idea of a theology of ethics comes closer to a theology of culture, thus emphasizing what is so central in Tillich's theology). On the contrary, it is a matter of how the spirit unites practical, theoretical and emotional elements. So, there cannot be a theological ethics or a religious principle that is limited to a certain cultural realm. On the contrary, theology penetrates all cultural spheres. Tillich's concept of religion is "directedness towards the Unconditional" (p.162). This expresses itself within human existence through values and personal life, but on the other hand it represents not a reality but it "is" at the same time something or nothing as it is not out of existence but is "a reality of meaning" (p.163). The vital element of Tillich's argument is to stand up against a common way of dealing with religion when it is narrowed down to an element or a part of human life. Tillich thus simply breaks through the very concept of culture and gives it a significant new meaning as he combines the cultural functions of autonomy of form with theonomy (a balance or synthesis beyond autonomy and heteronomy) of substance/import. Both of these are dependent on each other. The compartmentalization of our life within our culture is going against this (Tillich 1969).

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<sup>20</sup> Origin. "Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur" (1919) Verlag von Reuther & Reichard

Religion is not just rituals, belief systems and traditions expressed in a cultic room (e.g., a church, a mosque, a synagogue). No, it expresses itself and permeates all spheres of life because it is present as the basic question people have in relation to their being. This is exactly what makes it into an ultimate concern. The fundamental question of being is actualized through the shock of non-being, the experience of being finite. This experience actualizes human life as a meaningless tragedy. This is visible in Tillich's affiliation with existentialism and its art. His own experiences during the First World War as a chaplain in the military changed him through his experience of human life and existence as threatened by this meaningless suffering and death. Human existence is though in everyday life surrounded by meaninglessness, where any kind of "God" offers himself as the object and true meaning of life. Within art, Tillich finds encounters with reality as the courage to be oneself (in CB); thus, it is a matter of addressing the meaninglessness, and making it visible so the surface of reality might be broken and through this both the *Abgrund* (abyss) and the ground of our being becomes visible – not as the glamorous image that commercials offer but as the *edios* where we become struck by essential being, showing us that this is how it is, but also how it *could be*.

The endeavour for Tillich seems to be a struggle to address this meaningless from different parts. His *Systematic Theology* (ST) in three volumes consists of five major parts, revealing the human quest for meaningfulness in relation to different realms of life and interpreting the answers theology can give where there is primarily one central question that all the other parts try to answer from different perspectives. Tillich touches on this himself in the introduction to his second volume. The question is mainly hidden in the part on "Reason and Revelation" and expresses the inability of people to fully know and be known, as he also reflects on the background of the Pauline notion of seeing as if through a glass in *Shaking the Foundations* (Tillich 1948). The question is related to reason and the theological answer is unfolded as a revelation. The problem raised by Tillich in unfolding the concept of reason means that experience as theological source is highly questionable as a medium in itself. There is a problem related to human participation that makes

experience as such only a reception and not a production as revelations comes *to* someone and not from someone (ST1, p. 46). This is strictly connected to Tillich's understanding of human existence as being estranged. Therefore, in order to show the quest for and the central understanding of revelation in Tillich's work we need to address the anthropology of Paul Tillich.

### 5.1.2. MEANING – TILlich'S ANTHROPOLOGY – LACK OF PARTICIPATION

*Meaning* in this study is defined in relation to Tillich's use of it in connection with the human quest for meaning; what Tillich calls the *ultimate concern*. Tillich writes that the ultimate concern is reflected in the first commandment: "you shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul..." etc. This is the *object of* theology there; that which concerns us ultimately and this means "that which determines our being or not-being" (ST1, p 14). This is basically the question people would ask themselves when all other questions have been identified as superficial. It is the question that concerns the very existence of the human being. Metaphorically speaking it is a question coming from the *heart* of human existence. This should not be understood in a sentimental sense, but as indicating a concrete center in which affective, intellectual and emotional elements are combined<sup>21</sup>.

There are different relations within this approach, and there are risks of, for instance, making partial concerns become as important as the ultimate concern itself, or of making preliminary concerns become elevated into absolutes and making them idolatrous; but preliminary concerns may also become media for the actualization of the ultimate concern. In this last relation, Tillich finds the possibility of art pointing beyond itself when it expresses matters of ultimate concern to us. Palmer (1984) also reflected on this in Tillich's work, as ultimate concern is a strange concept because it seems to be both a question but at the same time it is also the very relation

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<sup>21</sup> This also separates the meaning to be considered in relation to a primarily semantic approach, which is, what does a concept or a word mean for someone (Speaks 2014 in Stanford Philosophical Encyclopedia) or as sense making (Weick et al. 2005)

with the answer. Since Tillich opposes any kind of objectified images of God it makes even the ultimate concern problematic if it is not perceived as twofold, that is, both as a quest and a creation of relations. When asking about it we are grasped by it because the very search for this relation in our existence is in itself creating the relation. Again this does not mean that the existence incorporates the answer but that the ground of our being is the power that makes the answer possible. This will be further unfolded later because it is intimately connected with Tillich's notion of religion and revelation, as well as with its symbolic and relational character, as it is perceived as a fragment.

People are in a predicament. Inspired by Hegel's and Marx's perspectives on human alienation, Tillich makes a (daring) connection between the myth of the fall and estrangement in ST2 (Tillich 1957). The fall (cf. the myth concerning Adam and Eve and their fall from grace and Paradise after breaking God's Law) is not a previous event but is, as Dreisbach puts it, "an ongoing process, a tension between the essential and the existential" (1980, p. 521). Essence is a state of potentiality, and all living is in a situation of standing out (*ex-isto*) from this realm, which means the actualization of some of the potentialities, albeit in a distorted manner because essence is the kind of ideal state that is unapprehendable from the point of view of existence. But it is not removed from existence. Firstly, it takes the form of either an empirical judgment about whether something operates as it potentially could, an evaluation. Secondly, it is a judgment of something in relation to an essential image of it. Finally and, thirdly when we have an encounter with another human being and the evaluation we have made of this person lives up to the standard of behaviour we know is potentially possible for a person (e.g. being honest; which is what it means when we say that we know something essentially, we know how it *ought to be* (Dreisbach 1980;Tillich 1963).

Being a creature, I am both coming out of something and also standing within it at the same time, meaning that there is no absolute split, but there is definitely a tension. There is a double position here where we are both actualized with all our potentialities, but thus being alive we have also lost the connection to what we

essentially could have become, as Tillich argues. This is our existential predicament; that we stem from the source “Being Itself” but in existence the whole of creation is parted. Being in this state, we cannot by our own effort find the answer to the quest for meaning that our very existence raises; we need something to mediate it and make a connection above this void of ignorance. This is where the Tillich point towards revelation as bridging this gap. What this implies will be unfolded successively during this presentation.

This tension can then bring something to the notion of “different” and “thinking”, which I have placed on either side of Tillich’s Aristotelian inspired ontological pairs of polarity. By doing this it shows that different thinking concerns human life per se, that different thinking is more than a strategy for business – it constitutes the way we interact as individuals who are being different on the one hand, but in order to live at all we have to participate and thus we may see that thinking is relational and it is a participative act (see Figure 2). Even when we, so to speak, balance the polarities that the paper speaks of, it happens in a distorted manner; although there is always a movement between these poles and a kind of a tension, we need to go beyond this either/or and both/and.

"Different thinking"  
 - a both/and position aimed at creating strange and  
 odd relations into the unknown

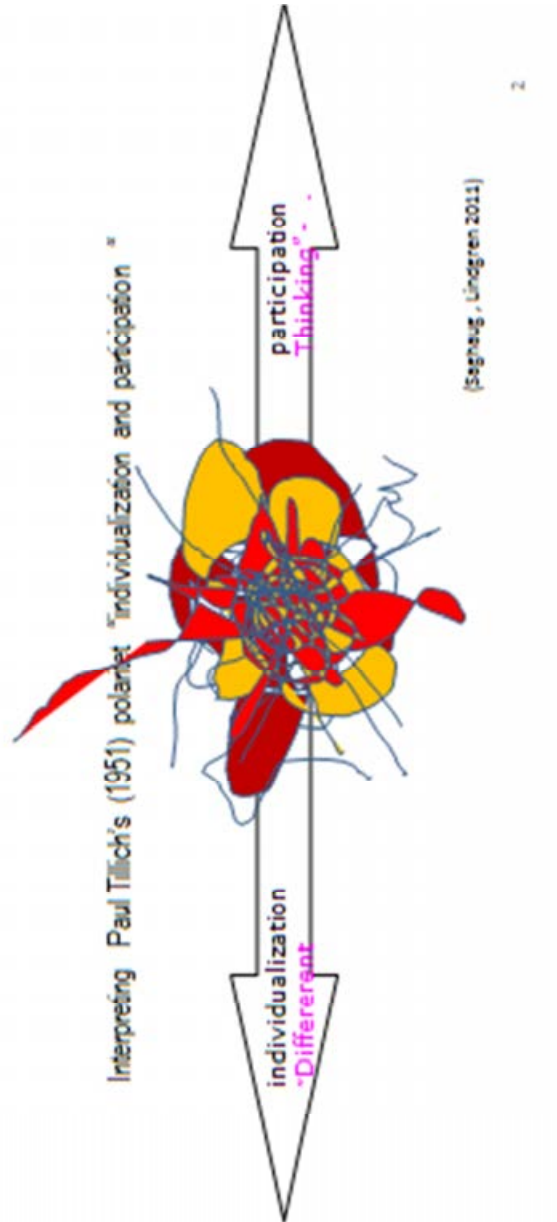


Figure 2 Tillich's ontological polarity interpreted as "different thinking"



By addressing Tillich, it turns out that “different thinking”, understood as the synthesis of “individualization–participation”, is a matter of the creation of strange and odd relations into the unknown. What does this mean? It shows that there is in the term “different thinking” a participative element that implies an ethical foundation.

But what does this really tell us about different thinking in a business context, or what can it tell us? It is paradoxical that all the business strategies concern how you can be alone, while different thinking is participation in the sense of interaction with your surroundings. And during the writing I found that I could analyse the question: How is different thinking, as unfolded in the thoughts of Tillich, expressed by the companies attending the business model innovation workshops?

This question addressed the four areas which the theoretical study of Tillich had pointed to as being important for *different thinking* from the perspective of Tillich’s anthropology, these being as follows:

1. The search for meaning and purpose (the ultimate concern).
2. The creation of strange relations.
3. The courage to enter the unknown.
4. People as the goal – not goal oriented.

Then, I compared these four areas with the experiences and data from the workshops and interviews in both of the projects.

This paper shows that when addressing some of the companies that I met in the business model innovation workshops, the business owners who were good at actually creating these differentiated strategies by acting as the Blue Ocean strategy told were also strong in relation to participation and in establishing these rare, unique and even peculiar relations between areas, and between people who were internal or external to the company. The small business owners’ “creativity” was

artistic in the sense of their courage to go out into new areas and new relations.<sup>22</sup> These people were unfolding themselves as they were literarily standing and acting out questions about this life; they were asking through their actions and raising questions about this life as a way of relating to strange areas in new ways.

### 5.1.3. REVELATION AND METHOD – A KIND OF RECONTEXTUALIZATION

This first<sup>23</sup> intellectual work I approached that was part of my PhD project turned out to become a “recontextualization” of “different thinking,” as it was interpreted from a theological perspective using Tillich’s anthropology. I had been studying Gadamer after writing the later version of the current paper in 2011. Gadamer stated that when a word is transferred to another area than the area to which it originally belonged then its original meaning occurs – it becomes reversed<sup>24</sup>.

If we look upon the above mentioned as processes of creation we might find that within some of the literature on innovation *processes* there seem to be (at least) two main positions that in some way give form to the polarity presented in the paper.<sup>25</sup> One of these positions has the focus on breakthrough innovations, and this might be modelled around the idea of one (or a few) individual geniuses who seek innovation (e.g. Steve Jobs, but not meaning here that this is the way it actually happens). However, another approach has a more emergent focus on innovation and is related

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<sup>22</sup> This was not an endeavor taking them into a new trait or personality discussion in a Myers Briggs type of dichotomy of dualities, because everybody was more or less able to do this after some time in the workshops.

<sup>23</sup> It was both the first version of this paper produced in 2008 and presented at MOPAN 2008, Boston, and later a revised version with the inclusion of data from the WIB project that was presented at EGOS 2011, Gothenburg. The theory was though mainly the same.

<sup>24</sup> Methodologically, I did not know at that time that I was making a recontextualisation. But later on, attending a PhD summer school in August 2012 and presenting another paper that was a reflection on my methodology, I realized that some refers this to Goffman

<sup>25</sup> As Stout unfolds in relations to administration, I also find support in stating that the way innovation is addressed tells us a lot about the ontological understanding behind it (Stout 2012).

to the collective or is found in or between networks where innovation grows out of embedded knowledge (Akrich et al. 2002; Garud and Karnoe 2003, Hargadon 2002). As Stout unfolds in relations to administration, I also find support in stating that the way innovation is addressed tells us a lot about the ontological understanding behind it (Stout 2012). In the first example, we have the idea of the glorious individual who posits the truth – it is usually a “he”. This is connected to a vertical and transcendental understanding of reality – a metaphysical entity who miraculously creates (e.g. the telephone, the light bulb or the first computer)<sup>26</sup>. To link it to religion it is almost the idea of another law creating “God”, and the paradigmatic understanding of reality is that everything is measurable; it is just a matter of finding the right tool to enable the objective truth to reveal itself.

On the other hand we have the mass, the collective, which lifts up the new from within itself, from out of the group – it is an immanent understanding. The individual is not *so* important but the relations are, because they are creating the new. This is connected to a horizontal and immanent understanding of reality stemming from Spinoza but emphasizing the process of becoming (Tillich 1951). To link it to religion, this is similar to the understanding of *kenosis* in the Pauline theology: “God” has emptied himself into his creation and is powerless Vattimo 2011)<sup>27</sup>.

Tillich explains that to be in the area of pure transcendence, on the one hand, is unbearable because the overcoming of the *object–subject* cleavage is not sought; on the contrary, there is an immense difference and a gap one cannot overcome. On the other hand, to be in pure immanence seems to render another kind of problem. A

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<sup>26</sup> The Christ metaphor in relation to Apple and Steve Jobs is clear: first he leaves the company, then he comes back and saves it and then he dies, but lives on further in the devotion of the Apple congregation who use his products, for some more of the divinity and technology see for instance (Campbell and La Pastina 2010) for a front page of Jobs as savior see (Gallo 2010)

<sup>27</sup> We are then, if we follow Vattimo, also in a socially constructed paradigm and the truth is something we have to negotiate.

total participation also inflicts a loss of self. But a synthesis of the two – an *immanent transcendence* – leaves room for people to create together; it is a both/and position that goes beyond this in which there are also experiences of *revelation*, that is, moments of fragmentary connectedness that create a synthesis of the two poles.

My more recent paper *Methods of Revelation* asks rhetorically if there are methods for achieving revelation. As revelation is beyond any control it is by no means a method. But this firstly serves to show that the fusion of different horizons (here theology and business innovation) that Gadamer speaks about can hopefully open a space for understanding. Secondly, it is in my first paper where Tillich's concept of revelation begins to be unfolded.

The following is for the sake of making some conclusive remarks on what the *Different Thinking* paper did reveal through its method. By taking a concept into another context its original meaning should occur, as Gadamer says. Here, it would be a kind of retrieving of it. The experience from business innovation is that words become shallow that originally had substance. So, to take a word or phrase such as “different thinking” back into the sphere of theology or theological anthropology like Tillich's could reverse this move. Gadamer does not mean that we may say something that is *better* by doing this, but it means that we might say something *different* (2004). So, almost ironically, the research said something different about different thinking.

Let me sum this paper up as follows: The approach to what “different thinking” means is based upon an interpretation of Paul Tillich's ontological pairs of polarity and points towards the ontological question being the “real” question that unfolds itself in the idea of making innovations. What is somewhat implicit in this paper, but not explicitly unfolded, is that “*different thinking*” is not the “*answer*” to anything – it is the human question unfolded in meaning-seeking creativity. This could turn the idea of “different thinking” into a *question* of what it means to create value.

Reflecting on the condensed presentation, this buzzword of “recontextualization” might be perceived as raising “different thinking” as an existential question, thus ending up with an idea of different thinking as empty and futile unless it is thought into a theonomous understanding, which is a synthesis *beyond* autonomy and heteronomy. This could for instance be beyond complete self-occupation and the demands of market fundamentalism.

## 5.2. PAPER 2. IMPLEMENTING NEW STRATEGIES OF OPERATIONS IN THE INTERSECTIONS OF ACADEMIA AND SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES – WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON HUMAN BEINGS AS “DIFFERENCES” ACTING ON RELATIONS TOWARDS MEANINGFULNESS (2009)\*

### *Abstract*

*Max Weber’s understanding of work in light of the protestant ethic serves as the background for addressing work as the identifier of meaning. The empirical experiences put forward in this paper show that for some small business owners the meaningfulness of a new market and customer group is linked to already inherent values in the company. Revealing those hidden values through a mutual non-hierarchical process is shown to be vital as researchers in the role of participative observers. They may through interpretation and questioning assist the business owner in a way that mediates new relations that might prove meaningful for the small business owner. The images of the polarities from Tillich are used in the paper to illustrate this search for meaningfulness through a short analysis of how some of the companies in the workshop seemed to balance ontological pairs of polarities and had a focus on “both/and”, and how the business owners who sought for meaning in/through their business seemed to be most able to work on making a difference.*

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\* Saghaug, K.F & Lindgren, P 2009, Implementing new strategies of operations in the intersections of academia and SMEs - with special focus on human beings as "differences" acting on relations towards meaningfulness, In proceedings: 16th International Annual EurOMA Conference, Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden 14-17 June 2009.

### 5.2.1. HIDDEN VALUES

The “different thinking” paper recontextualized what different thinking would mean from the perspective of theological anthropology. It gave another perspective on human values that showed *the lack of focus on human values within the mainstream business innovation literature, and importantly the lack of focus on this as the basis of innovation*. Taking as a perspective, the theological approach of Tillich points to people and their values as a meaning-seeking quest as the end or the goal of innovation. This stresses the need to turn towards people and embrace their differences and paradoxes, and investigate how different thinking, when it is realized, can be a matter of *acting* differently. And this is what this paper focuses upon. It asks the questions: How was different thinking as different acting visualized in the process of working with the Blue Ocean strategy? What does this mean in relation to leading the process?

This paper addresses what are termed “hidden values”, a concept that remains somewhat undefined in the paper and with good reason, because it is both referring to values as potential profit, based upon the creation of values that serve a rational, that is, market driven, as well as value in another sense, the more personal sense of what we find is valuable for us, which is not necessarily, in fact it is often not (!), market oriented. Or might it be? The three business owners in this paper all seemed to demonstrate a good alignment between their own values and their customers’ values. Though, being innovative in a Blue Ocean sense or a market-driven sense could for instance mean that you leave some expensive customer and focus on those who are most valuable for the business, the superior customers whom you build trust with and treat with special attention (Day 1994; Day 1999). But it seemed as though these business owners were not interested in new customer groups unless they shared their values, and when living in a small society the idea of leaving some customers because they could be expensive might be like leaving a long known friend. This showed that if any kind of value innovation could happen it certainly needed a contextual interpretation of what kind of values the business currently had,

and then it would be necessary to work on connecting to potential customer groups. This also meant looking at it the other way around, for example, what sorts of problems they found in society that they wanted to solve. For instance, one of the ideas from the handicraft company originated from the problem of worn out handicrafts and asking how could they still use their skills and experience.

In this paper I address Max Weber's reflections from 1920 on the Protestant spirit of capitalism in relation to how the values are unfolded in the way people perceive business, work and wealth. Capitalism is "dressed" ethically through a focus on rationality and the implicit ordering or specialization of work, combined with an understanding of work as a vocation. It also serves as a way of controlling people's desires (Weber 1995).

In relation to pietism, Weber's analysis is that a rationalist (positivist) perception of reality also promotes control, and discipline has its background in the discomfort related to much speculation or philosophizing. These activities are dangerous because they may diminish the importance of the belief and become sinful. Empirical and detailed knowledge is on the other hand safe and useful. The purpose (of knowledge) is, according to Zinzendorf, vital (p. 90). According to Weber, the values of pietism become interwoven with the Western world and accordingly capitalism. This means that the belief in God might be lost, or is not a part of it, but the worship of "God" remains a structure we can act upon (Weber 1995)<sup>28</sup>. This can perhaps be perceived as a conflict between the orderly and strict ascetic notions (e.g. working hours), as the following example from a Blue Ocean workshop may illustrate:

"One day, we were having a workshop with someone representing one of the traditional workplaces where their products were made in situ based on special orders. The owner as well as employees had handicraft

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<sup>28</sup> For a contribution from Tillich to the sociology debate on spiritual capitalism and the thoughts from Weber, see (Tester 2000)



backgrounds. When we were introduced to the factory the owner talked about how much they wanted to have some academics come to work in their business and hopefully assist in helping them with some of the development of the business and its business model. The problem was though that the closest university was placed in a city over two hours away and as the owner said, “We cannot make them move out here”. I asked about how working hours were, and the reply was that they started out at 7 o’clock and they had been doing that throughout all the years of the business, he said with a kind of proud smiling face. I thought that maybe the business could have the benefit of some academics but not be dependent on them moving, so I asked if he could imagine having some academics working there that begun their work at 9 or even 10 and had working days at home? He looked at me a bit insecurely as if he did not know how to respond to this question, as if it was improper. One of the others looked down at his feet, the project leader looked away and the silence grew, until someone said, “Well, let us go and get some coffee.” And we all went on further talking about something else”.

This little autobiographic story from the field is not mentioned in any of the papers but is one of the moments that have stuck to my memory. The story is illustrative of how intimately our perceptions of features such as working hours may be collectively inflicted by pietism as a hidden morality: the moral person goes to sleep early and wakes up with the sun.

Weber’s understanding of work can just as well be applied under the next headline “meaning”, because the notion of values is central to this paper, but even more so, meaningfulness emerges as the central theme. This is both as it is connected to the business owners themselves and their urge for meaning within their jobs, but it is also as important when it is necessary to create value in new ways in relation to customers

### 5.2.2. MEANING AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONS (ALSO WITH THE CUSTOMER)

Let us now address some later reflections on this paper on meaningful relations in management. In *Artful thinking* we meet the combination of addressing the practices in art and seeking to let this practice inspire managers to address a different kind of understanding, for instance, finalizing a project versus how a theatre finalizes a play before the premiere. It presents the combination of art practices and management, as it has a focus on transferring learning from one area to another. To learn from art in this way is also addressed in the work of Lotte Darsø (Austin and Devin 2004; Darsø 2013).

In *The Three Faces of Leadership - Manager, Artist, Priest*, Hatch et al. expressed the view that anthropologists and religious researchers find that at the foundation of culture you have art and religion. So, based on this notion, they proposed the hypothesis that there must also be artistic and spiritual foundations for managerial behavior (Hatch et al. 2005). The researchers analysed interviews with CEOs from 1989 until 1998, and based on these they found that the CEOs showed that their business leadership had an aesthetic basis. This is unfolded as an argument that stresses chaotic artistic creativity as a way of challenging the order and the potential risk of stagnation if this does not happen (Hatch, Kostera & Kosminski 2005). Moreover, the manager in a situation that demands courage needs to act as a priest to inspire the employees to face their fears and ensure the survival of cherished beliefs. This assumption, of spiritual foundation, is also found in Pattison's work, though the religious connotations hidden in the managerial thinking here addressed as an ethical problem due to the power of oppression when the belief of the manager is, for example, an undisputed dogma that may even be unspoken and simply embedded in practices which the employees have to accept and act upon (Pattison 1997).

To lead in chaos might be the everyday reality for a small business owner in relation to addressing in our context a need to innovate a business model. Wheatley questions the traditional rationale that stems from the 17th century, and she points to

the processes in nature and how they move from one situation or condition through phases of chaos towards a new state of order. Nature works in organized systems more by participation and relationships than does individuality acting alone. Everything participates in creation. So how may control and authority be a way of leading people, when the processes of creation within nature are so different? We need to learn how to tackle chaos and understand what drives and motivates people. In the real world, Wheatley writes, the “basic building blocks” of life are relationships, not individuals. This lesson is just as important when participating as researchers and interacting with small business owners (Wheatley 2006).

For both Hatch and Wheatley, the element of creation that is implicit in the ability to participate and understand each other is vital for developing relationships<sup>29</sup>.

To reflect this back to the aforementioned hidden values, we found that there is a need for a kind of visualization, a kind of relation-creation between what the business actually is doing in its current value creation and, for instance, enquiring into business leaders own understanding of what they are doing together and searching for new interpretations of it. This kind of visualization points to art, and the notion of art as the enabler of relations being something meaningful, as Tillich understands it. This goes beyond the understanding of art as only image or sculpture, but serves more as an understanding of art as a way of searching for meaning and expressing this search (Tillich 1952).

These perspectives are though more unfolded in the next papers.

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<sup>29</sup> A focus on relational practice between leaders is not new, as Buriner showed and Marcketti and Kozar is reflecting upon how Buriner pointed at the writings of Mary Parker Follet and her emphasis on values such as attentiveness and responsiveness, and on the importance of relationships and emotional connections (p 535); maybe most important in this is leaders' understanding related to “their situations” p 144 (Marcketti and Kozar 2007).

### 5.2.3. REVELATION AND THE RESEARCHER AS A CHRIST FIGURE – A MEDIATOR

In this paper, the word “revelation” is still barely used. But it is there just beneath the surface as visualization, interaction and relation-creation. And here is also the image of the researcher assisting the business in their search for meaningful relations to their customer. Is this a “translator”, as Clegg addresses it? And even more from my theological perspective, with a kind of a “Christ figure” as an inspiration (Clegg et al. 2002)? If used this way the Christ figure can be seen as a mediator between two worlds, linking things that can seem to be opposites together through a new synthesis and another understanding, and by this making room for the discovery of meaningful relation. But is this secular understanding of Christ possible or at all productive?

Let me take this a bit further metaphorically speaking as I take the opportunity to address the role of the researcher in the process of research, as a combiner of knowledge from different worlds as I have done in the *Methods of Revelation* paper, since the role of academia is also at stake in the current paper.

Some find that innovation is crossing boundaries and this makes the very notion of it as a stable process questionable (Carlile 2002; Clausen and Yoshinaka 2007; Hoholm 2009). It is also inherent in the very notion of innovation, stemming from Schumpeter, that it involves the combination of knowledge in new ways. I will consider this notion as an argument for perceiving a research project as an innovation process in itself. Fully aware that for instance Van de Ven defined an innovation process as the whole phase of invention, development and implementation (Van de Ven et al. 1999). I shall nevertheless argue that if one puts 36 companies together in a room working with their business models for several days, some dynamic and chaotic inceptions will develop at certain points in the intersections, and some new thoughts will be implemented. Some meetings between people will be created, and some inspiration will be taken from them and used later. The question is not how we *evaluate* that, but how we *value* it. The overall understanding of the business model innovation as creating *value* is still bound

within an understanding provided by mainstream economics that defines value as profit (Meeks 1989; Saghaug et al. 2013). In the meeting between business owners from SMEs and researchers, another kind of “knowledge brokering”, as Hargadon calls it, takes place (Hargadon 2002). Mediation and translation of knowledge from one area to another is vital. But it does not mean that this is not negotiable, as it is a constant dialogue. This puts the notion of the researcher as an interpreter in focus, because, as Gadamer says, understanding is not possible without interpretation (Gadamer 2004). In the learning process a relationship is created between participants including the researchers and business owners who meet around artefacts (e.g. Business Model Canvases, Strategy Canvases) that serve as boundary objects (Carlile 2002; Star and Griesemer 1989). Even if the product is intangible, it serves as a symbol of understanding, creating a fusion of horizons (Robinson 2009).

A number of theoretical models of the innovation processes have simplified the complexity of the innovation process (Garud and Giuliani 2013), but often the linear model in its simplicity is combined with Cooper’s (1984) stage gate model based on the notion that it reduces uncertainty – it might but it can also just ruin the innovation process. Therefore, Garud concluded that we should not steer the dynamic forces when the acceptance of this complexity is, on the contrary, a trigger for innovation. Development processes are unstable and unpredictable. Further, the innovation process is most likely to be a nonlinear cycle of divergent and convergent behaviours that may repeat themselves over time and reflect themselves at different organizational levels, as Van de Ven argued (Hoholm 2009; Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, & Venkataraman 1999). These non-controllable reflections upon the innovation process adds to my argument for adding another aspect as I do, namely , revelation.

But first let me draw attention to Hoholm who perceives innovation as something that happens in between different sectors, networks, organizations and knowledge areas (Hoholm 2009). I experienced this and reflect this as a kind of “in-betweenness”, namely, at the intersection of academia and businesses in one of the EU-projects involving SMEs, the public and private business support, academia and

three different countries' political interests – all with the aim of creating growth and innovation. We were doing participative research<sup>30</sup> and trying to create a space with and for the participants so they should have the opportunity to work on innovating their business models. The process was somewhat steered in that we had elements that we wanted to discuss with them and some Blue Ocean tools we wanted to test for their utility. But often the process moved in its own way. Fundamentally, I see now that the way we had discussions with the participants and with each other in the process was hermeneutics going on (!). There was basically a continuous process happening relating minor elements of business model(s) to the bigger picture, and the bigger picture to the minor elements. And as for my own research a further accumulation of knowledge was happening based upon the increasing understanding and encounters with the business owners, the empirical field.

And as we also realized in relations to the business owners; if the business model was, for example, not considered both economic profitable and meaningful to the business owner, the process started all over again, but in cycles of new understanding. Participation and understanding is closely related in the view of both Gadamer and Tillich (Robinson 2009), as well as the idea of the part as a fragment of the whole. As I interpret Gadamer, it is possible to perceive this process as a hermeneutical circle. Even if Gadamer does not use this as a “method”, the fundamental idea of the interpretative movement from the part to the whole and from the whole to the part is present in *Truth and Method*. The hermeneutical circle may be used as a method for the participative researcher or the leader of a business model innovation process, as it has a focus on the open-endedness and the dynamics of the present and constantly goes beyond the understanding of the temporal and linear process of innovation .

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<sup>30</sup> See Charlotte Aull Davies for more on this method (Davies 2008). And there are also research environments in Denmark which specifically calls their method participatory innovation (Buur and Matthews 2008) and engages with new ways of developing meaning amongst different interests (Buur and Larsen 2010)

### 5.3. PAPER 3. REVELATORY ASPECTS OF INNOVATING THE AS-IS BUSINESS MODEL (2010)\*

#### *Abstract*

*It can be difficult for many business owners to understand or perceive their AS IS business model. This paper combines the area of the innovation of business models (BM) in workshops and revelation. It addresses the importance of discovering one's current (AS IS) business model in relation to the actualization of the business's hidden knowledge and potential.*

*The revelatory aspects such as atmosphere, energy, presence and disclosure of values are revealed through a theoretical comparison of Paul Tillich's and Otto C. Scharmer's work. The "existential nunc" of Tillich is also compared with "presencing" in Scharmer's model.*

#### 5.3.1. VALUES – THE HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

"There is a bad concept of actuality, or real life, when actuality is confused with technical and economic usefulness. The actuality of a real object is, rather, its own meaning, the meaning which sustains it. With everything such a meaning lies deeper than its technical use and its economic usefulness". From *Cult and Form* p 79 (1930) in OAA

I encountered research environments related to intellectual capital and knowledge management, and this working paper has tried to fit into this area; but, at the same

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\* Saghaug K.F. & Lindgren P. 2010, Revelatory Aspects when Innovating the "As – Is" Business Model – Actualizing Hidden Knowledge' In proceedings: 5th International Forum on Knowledge Asset Dynamics (IFKAD), Intellectual Capital in a Complex Business Landscape, Matera, Italy 24-26 June, 2010.

time it is a kind of continuation of the previous paper about how different acting based upon Tillich's ontological polarities can be interpreted within this business model innovation context. The 'hidden knowledge' metaphor is an attempt to interpret intellectual capital differently, and in hindsight I can see that it might have been useful to engage with Heidegger's *Bestand* (standing reserve) and his essay *The Question Concerning Technology* in which Heidegger engages with the question of the essence of technology. And especially useful in this context of revelatory aspects could have been his notion of how "Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment" (Heidegger 1977, p. 103) because by way of his argument Heidegger finds that technology is a way of revealing.

In the mainstream business management "people" are hidden within the notion of intellectual capital – I find hidden knowledge to be a way of linking to people and the business owners whom we met. The "hidden knowledge" in the SME or the small business may include things you can do but you did not know it, things you think you can do but you lack the time, things you think you know but you may need a different perspective to unfold them and things you know are important but you cannot see, and so on.

This led me further to the current paper. In order to present the empirical background for this paper I will present what we did at the first and third workshop with WIB where we used the Strategy Canvas and the Business Model Canvas. Also some exemplary results from the workshop is included<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Some of this text is rewritten by myself but it is also stems from our contribution *Women in Business – Meningsfulde værdier - Relationer i vækst* in the research report to the WIB project in 2011 p 48-66 (with Peter Lindgren). "Netværk, Vækst og innovation". Not all this is present in my paper, but it serves as the background and context of the empiric field.



## **The WIB workshops – The Strategy Canvas and The Business Model Canvas**

The Strategy Canvases made at the first workshop expressed both what sorts of values they meant to offer to customers as well as what values the business owners were personally aligned to. Another aspect that seemed to be common to the participants was that almost everyone placed themselves at the high end of the values in the strategy canvas. This could signify that they estimated that all their values were high and important values to their customers. If so, this could, following the Blue Ocean terms for defining value innovation, be a problem, because value innovation could, for instance, be a lowering of costs with the possibility at the same time of the value for the customer increasing. At this point, several of the participants begun to have a new understanding of what they offered in their current business.

Figure 1 is an image of one of the results from the exercise, which was produced after the business owner had gone home and presented it to her customer. In a creative manner this owner had given each customer she interviewed their own colour and curve. She reported that she through this tool discovered that some of the expensive products she had purchased because she thought they were important to her customers simply turned out to be of no value to them.

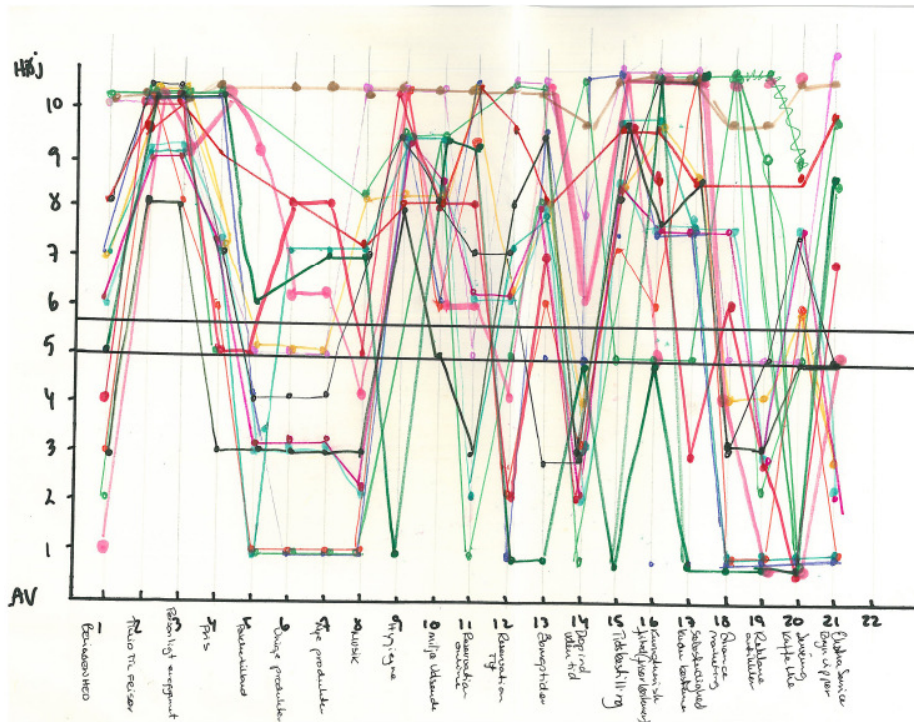


Figure 1 Strategy Canvas with all the customers answers.

Another example was a business owner who discovered that even though her employees believed that the so-called “soft” values had to be the most important for their customers, the response was otherwise. Security in relation to delivery and supply was one of their main interests. A third business owner came back after discovering that this tool itself could be a product in her own business.

The Strategy Canvases disclosed that the majority of the businesses participating in this project delivered value within the service sector. A number of the values were intangibles and attached to the owner’s personality and competences. During the process we also found a number of core competences that made these businesses

unique<sup>32</sup>. One was selling different tomatoes of a different type from those which were in demand over most of Norway. Another was producing TV and radio programs with a different agenda from the more mainstream TV productions. A third business owner offered original and even technically new solutions to architectural restorations. A fourth really found her niche with health treatments. A Fifth combined horses with social work. A sixth had some exceptional design competences. Overall, many of the companies had something different to offer, something that could be of unique value.

There were some further results we found relevant in relation to values from the first Strategy Canvas – (both tangible and intangible) when we asked: “Which values are you offering?” In response to which 32 businesses sent in Strategy Canvases and a total of 283 values were mentioned in them and approximately 153 intangible values. Eighteen of those answering had half or more than half of their values identified as intangible, and of these 18 business owners, 8 had only 1 value that was not intangible. Some of the values often mentioned were quality, trust, engagement, and security – one or more of these values were present in almost all of the 32 cases. These intangible values were also further illuminated as a majority of the companies (25 out of 32) were within services including consulting, coaching and so on, or were companies where services formed part of their business area. The remaining 7 had intangible values represented, except in one case.

From the start it was perceived to be vital to address the current image or idea the business owners had of the values they were offering to their customers. By doing this one starts to look into the current so-called as-is business model, and by doing this one begins to challenge their perceptions of it. This can be an opening towards the possible development of their value offerings.

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<sup>32</sup> A lot of them did not consider possible competitors in their Strategy Canvas

As another way of testing the hypothesis concretely, I tried to use some of Tillich's thoughts about revelation in relation to the AS IS business model. My intention was to see if the use of a mainstream tool can be interpreted as revelatory, and if so, what this could mean. I understood a business model canvas at that time as a matter of making a present image of how the business organizes its activities<sup>33</sup>. And this image would show how the business owners perceived this organization of activities..

At the third workshop in WIB it concerned the other canvas - a Business Model Canvas. This time we had at least three business owners together in each group, preferably from each of the Nordic countries, so as to support plurality and networking. They had the task of discussing each other's business model's strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). As part of the process, we asked the two others in each group to try to point out and find further values and ideas, and afterwards shift roles; if ideas emerged they were written on blue post-it notes and put up on the canvas.



*Figure 2 Photographs from Business owners group work*

We continued to address the expansion of existing business models by giving the participants a tool extracted from The Blue Ocean Strategy – the Six Path. This

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<sup>33</sup> This is not far from how, for instance, Casadeus-Masanell (2010) interpreted a business model

was meant to stimulate thinking in relation to alternative industries, strategic groups, customer groups, complementary products and services, focuses and special trends which differentiated them from the traditional industry focus (i.e. the industry or ecosystem within which the business is already is operating).

At this point we urged them to work together in groups of their own choice, but not with people from the same industry or country as it did not make sense to have people together who were possible competitors, because they might not talk as freely. And we wanted to prompt diversity. While it was necessary to make sense with the person(s) they were interacting with, it was also fruitful and necessary in the business model innovation process to be presented with someone or something different to challenge the present “worldview”. We also noticed that many participants sought out each other during the gatherings because they identified mutual interests and wanted to talk further, and for some maybe even to develop their business model together.

One could say that this paper takes into consideration the importance of both history and presence before involvement in innovation activities. We had discussions on the background of our experiences and the business owners were very eager to innovate as soon as possible, while an innovation book such as Scharmer’s *Theory U* addresses history a little negatively (2009). Though it is aware of the importance of presence, this is turned towards the so-called emerging future, as Scharmer calls it<sup>34</sup>. The focus of this paper is very much on the “now” situation of the workshop, and this is done through a comparison between Scharmer and Tillich and the experience of art as possible revelations. The boundary objects (Star & Griesemer 1989) such as a Strategy Canvas or a Business Model Canvas is interpreted as being in the role of a work of art. This paper is opening up more directly my focus on art and art’s ability to create space for reception of meaningful

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<sup>34</sup> Scharmer forgets to dwell more on the pain connected to seeing and learning, even though his inspiration seems to come from Ancient Greek thinking (cf. Gadamer and *pathei mathos* [learning through suffering]).

knowledge. It asks: Why/how is the AS IS business model a potential medium for revelation on knowledge?

### **5.3.2. MEANING AND ART**

I would suggest that the most central finding here is that learning happened through the relationships and the participation that the workshops generated.

This also supports a focus we would like to address in art, namely, the creation of meaningful relations. Sawyer, in his book on human creativity, has a relevant point in this connection. As we started this journey by addressing the Renaissance, we may see that the idealized focus on humans was mainly on the individual, and the perception of the artist was focused on the genius (Michelangelo, Leonardo etc.), thus forgetting that they had a lot of assistants. Though, Sawyer also noticed a development or a change of the perception of creativity during the last century; it seems that there was a shift from the focus and praise of the individual genius to a focus on the individual as a part of the group (Sawyer 2006). This perception of art has had different spokespersons, and one of the most important one is found in relation to the radical interpretations of who an artist is (everybody is) and what art is (a way of life) of Joseph Beuys (1921–1986). I find it relevant to elaborate a bit further on Beuys' art here since he is vital for how art is understood in this project. Beuys' art and his idea of the social sculpture is used as a perspective on organizations by (Meisiek and Hatch 2008) in relation to the study of artful interventions. In their context they argue that art represents the playfulness added to the seriousness of everyday life. The understanding of art being opposed to seriousness or representing playfulness is, though, not the perspective this study has of art and how we use the social sculpture as a metaphor for a workshop.

For Beuys, it was not the items themselves that were important, but the symbolic representation of material participating in both a concrete and spiritual realm served as a kind of symbol participating in what it symbolizes (as we will also see later, this resembles Tillich's understanding of symbols). Addressing certain workshops

as *social sculpture*, and thereby interpreting these situations as art, means that the workshop does not need to be “artistic” in a traditional sense of being art (e.g. “Today we have invited an artist to engage you in a creative process” etc.). Why address it as art then? Because it might be considered to be a social sculpture when questions are being addressed, as Beuys did, that in some sort of way excavates into the human situation of *Geworfenheit* (thrownness) Pattison perceives that Beuys was a prophetic romantic who saw art as a way of reuniting people with the lost wholeness, through participating in a shaping our world anew (Pattison 2009). Though a signifier of *when* something would rise up to be a social sculpture against this background could be that it was necessary to deal with question of meaning that personally affected the people participating in the workshop. But this again would certainly be a personal estimation, because who is to judge when something is really at stake? Matters of value and matters of meaning are more or less integrated in artistic forms (art is then always “serious”, though not necessarily dull). If we understand Beuys vision of art as a participatory process that transforms people into themselves through social creative action (Meisiek & Hatch 2008; Pattison 2009), could art then be the atmosphere in the room, the intervention happening between business owners, the frustrations and the joy, and the questioning between people and also by the participating researchers and so on? The understanding of “play” in Gadamer’s work is not of the idea of “play” as “funny”, but the idea of *participation* through the event of art, as we shall see in more detail in the paper on *Business and Theology – The Idea of Value*. And when Tillich addressed art as participation, it is the substantial overflowing of form, the breakthrough of *Gehalt* (substance) that grabs people into a connectedness with meaning. So it could be argued that it may be extremely meaningful for a business owner in a workshop to address competences, value, revenue and so on, because as long as the business owner identifies him/herself with the business the innovation of business model(s) in these areas can be a matter of almost existential importance.

### 5.3.3. REVELATION IN ART AND FRAGMENTARY CONNECTION TO THE GROUND OF BEING

Both Paul Tillich and Otto C. Scharmer address art experiences as a channel for either revelation (Tillich 1951) or so-called “presencing” (Scharmer 2009). Tillich’s point of departure is that “there is no reality, thing, or event which cannot become a bearer of the mystery of being and enter into a revelatory correlation” (in ST1, p. 120). Revelation is defined as an experience of *Durchbruch* or “breakthrough”, which metaphorically depicts the character of revelation as transcending an ordinary experience as it is a fragmentary experience of wholeness (Tillich 1951).

In *Courage to Be* Tillich addresses the courage to be oneself and finds a connection between the existentialist thinking and art as revelatory. Art, when it takes up the struggle to address the meaninglessness and the despair hidden and/or visible in the surface of the society is exploring this emptiness and creating on the edge of this despair, despite the uncanny feelings it might arouse and the critique that might be raised by the mainstream as it is fleeing this position in order to be entertained and be able to continue to possess the illusion of finite symbols as the overall purpose of life. The experience of existential pain and fear of nothingness contributes to raising and formulating questions concerning human existence (Tillich 1952).

This *modus operandi* for art as articulating meaninglessness and displaying the human predicament, happens as it breaks through the form of everydayness. Manning underlines, concerning Tillich and his interest in arts, that art in Tillich’s understanding is not a focus on something beautiful; instead, the most important task for art is defined as expressing meaning or acts meaning as Palmer calls it (Manning 2005; Manning 2009; Palmer 1984).

When creating within a fixed frame or canvas, the limit of freedom might create the necessary form containing the dynamics – and here moments with a revelatory character might occur. Further the canvas, either the AS IS Strategy Canvas or an



AS IS Business Model Canvas signifies when it is blank that everything is potentially open and one may address the source of creation, as Scharmer calls it.

Some of the findings from the workshops indicate that dialogue is of revelatory importance. We also obtained indications from our later survey in 2012 as well as from some of the interviews in 2013 that simply meeting other business owners and having the time and opportunity to share experiences was of major importance in receiving knowledge. This is because through dialogue (understood as a mutual participative interaction), people transcend themselves.

Following Tillich as well as Gadamer, we might look upon the given subject of the conversation as a symbol in Tillich's terms and as a shift of horizon in Gadamer's terms (Robinson 2009). The former creates a relationship with both the current situation, but it also points beyond itself towards something profoundly meaningful and even eternal; the latter (shift of horizon) is also this kind of merger between different realms as it connects and makes understanding possible. This is also visible in some of the findings. The very occurrence of the meeting with the other business owners and the sharing of experiences was for several participants one of the most valuable and meaningful aspects of the project. The moments that occurred seem to have this *kairoi* character: "fulfilled time, the moment of time invaded by eternity" (*The Religious Situation*, Tillich 1956, p 176). This could be understood as something that defines the dialogue; it is something that happens as people have the individual personality to be at a time and a place, and with an open attitude – open hands and open heart may bring moments of knowledge that go beyond the given situation and permeate it. This will be unfolded further in the later papers, for instance, *Revealing Hearts* and *Moments*.

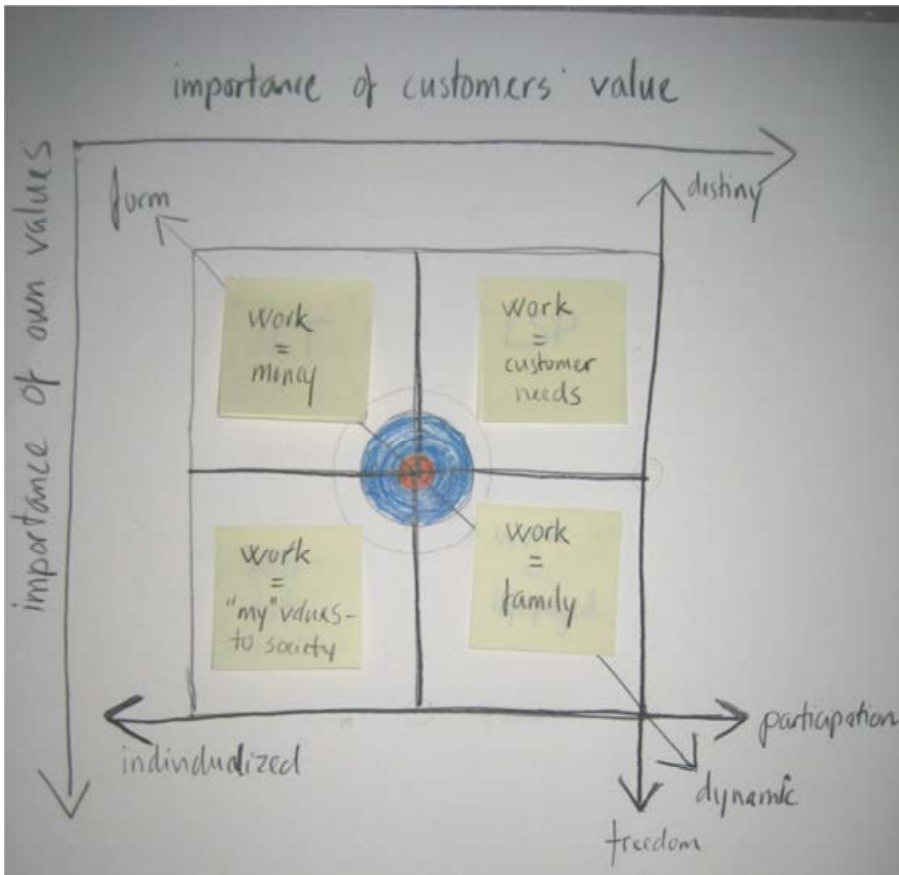
But the importance of *dialogue* between small business owners is also interesting due to the fact that, for instance, much consultancy and developmental work in businesses is not done in this way at all; it is on the contrary a focus on one business and not on several business owners at the same time and in dialogue.

In line with this, we also found that it is of huge importance to give small business owners the opportunity to tell their businesses' stories, and give others the opportunity to listen to them. Further, we found that the revelatory experience may simply be to perceive their business from a different perspective, and this should not be underestimated. One of the respondents in the 2012 survey wrote that "it was a rather big eye-opener to get the customer's values placed in front of my own, and it was cool to get a helicopter view and an overview of my business".

In relations to the *Blue Ocean Strategy* there is a possible misconception about the Strategy Canvas tool that also should be mentioned. This is that values as offerings and values as something personal were often mixed together, which could give some indications or even an explanation of why *personal* values as well as *economic values* were equally important for the majority of respondents to the survey. This double sidedness of values is implicitly also presented in the previous paper *Implementing New Strategies of Operations at the Intersection of Academia and SMEs*. And as one of the owners said: "I want to make money, but I only want to work with something that is meaningful for me". Others had similar views.

And this will become clearer; that all the papers in the PhD to varying degrees draw upon this dichotomy between personal and economic values as a background for further investigation. It is indicative that 20 out of 22 respondents answered at the high end of the 1 to 10 scale (7–10) on the importance of their own values as a strategic element in the business innovation process in the later survey in 2012.

The sketchy model I made in 2010 in this paper tried to capture the combination of balancing the ontological pairs of polarity and customer values vs own values. The core of it, the bulls eye is similar to the place for "strange relations" as depicted in the paper *Different thinking – Strange Relations*.



*Figure 3 Customer values vs business owner's values and polarities*

I have not really criticized Scharmer in this paper because the focus at that time was to find similarities between him and Tillich, and I got caught up in that. Scharmer's overall "problem" is, I find, that there is this kind of hidden spiritual feeling around a lot of his Theory U. He positively reflects upon, for instance, Buddhism, but his methods remain quasi-religious. The main problem could be that even if we can find occurrences of revelatory moments, Scharmer's idea is literally planning for them, and the "emerging future" makes him paradoxically end up in the rationalistic perception of reality that he so opposes: the spirit of capitalism is hidden as a kind of organized revelation. And everything is not potentially open if we approach

Tillich. Humanity is entrapped in a world of rationalistic calculation built upon nothing else than its own idiosyncrasy. In Tillich's sense, revelatory moments (*kairoi*) happen, but we cannot plan them. They arrive when the time is ready. This means that we may make models, as we have, inspired by this kind of existential now or presencing, but it is merely something we may *hope* for, and something that might or might not be evaluated afterwards.. We cannot plan for presencing, but *kairoi* is this spark that can ignite a revolt towards a mainstream business management understanding, and give the individual an idea of the difference between something temporal and something finite.

## 5.4. PAPER 4. BUSINESS AND THEOLOGY – THE IDEA OF VALUE (2011)\*

### *Abstract*

*The idea of “value” is increasingly depicted in a number of areas. A common feature of the examples from the business dimension is that they do not engage the idea of value and its connectedness to ontology, but they address value in such a way that it contributes to a further compartmentalization of life. This paper presents research at the intersection of business, art and theology, and how this may influence the idea of value and go beyond the compartmentalization of business values and personal values. During one of the WIB workshops the participants were asked to sculpture their future business model’s value propositions. In this paper we focus mainly on a network within this group. It shows how a business models value proposition that is developed as art-object turns into a symbol, which creates a new understanding and meaning, and a wholeness that visualizes and reveals the link between personal values and business values. Taking the phenomenon of what happened here in a small group of business owners developing a new business model together as they sculptured their new value proposition, we analyse these findings from a theological and ethical perspective, addressing Paul Tillich, Simon Critchley and K.E. Løgstrup..*

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\* Saghaug, K.F. & Lindgren, P. 2011, Business and Theology – the Idea of Value, In proceedings: 6th IFKAD, The Knowledge-Based Foundations of the Service Economy Tampere Finland ,15-17 June, 2011.

### 5.4.1. BEYOND VALUE

“What is your value?” When I was presenting this paper in 2011 I put that question out to the audience and sat down for a minute. This mini performance, that shocked someone as they thought I had turned slightly crazy was an artistic way to put a radical focus on the question of value itself. Because given this question you might on the one hand consider what you are worth or what your life would sum up to if you wanted, for instance, to take out insurance. On the other hand, you might consider what is essentially important for you. Either of the notions of value and the answer to this question almost always demands a context to clarify it. This context could be a business<sup>35</sup>. If you are a business owner the question could be even trickier because suddenly it might be a question of relevance in relation to both economic value as well as personal value.

Another question in connection with this could be related to the research itself: How do you know that you have experienced something valuable in your research journey? The actualization of this paper is based upon a supervisor meeting I had with George Pattison in Løgum kloster in February 2011. As we were discussing my project I remember that I, from my point of view, digressed and moved myself from our main discussion on my project to tell about this little incident from a workshop that had made an impression on me. But luckily, George said: “Write a paper about it?” And this is it.

The background to this paper is also what I have emphasized in the previous sections in relation to the business owners this study has been engaged with, and there seems to be a connection between the personal values of the business held by the owner/management and the potential value creation. Values create value, as a

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<sup>35</sup> *Within the business domain the accounting area has had a huge influence (Lindgreen and Wynstra 2005) as has the strategic approach of “value” in a business model (Hamel 2002), the perception of value/cost (Chan Kim & Mauborgne 2005) and the customer as co-creating value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004), and understanding value in the network is increasing (Chesbrough 2007).*

German article on small business practice states in relations to management (Hammann et al. 2009)

But the problem of these two notions of economic value versus personal value seems somehow to be trapped in a notion that economic values are secure and personal values as I relate here to our *ultimate concern* are insecure. Even if economics as a science is by no means exact, as for instance Simon's Nobel Prize-rewarded work shows, it is profoundly a critique of the idea of the rational man through a focus on humans' bounded rationality (Simon 1991; Simon 1997). This ground breaking work does though not seem to seriously inflict mainstream management literature. It continues to produce models based upon the idea that all aspects of reality are covered, and even adds a notion of it being a kind of "scientific" since it acts upon the idea of a measurable reality, even when there is nothing to measure. Because it is beyond measurement. Simon addressed the distinction between fact and value in *Administrative Behavior*. And value then represents the overall goal of the organization, but as Spender stresses, only if they are "beyond explanation" (p4), facts then on the other hand are the constraints the managers are bound to in order to pursue these goals. Value versus facts is in Simons work the organization's "ought to" versus its "is" (Simon 1997; Spender 2008).

The mentioned difference between economic value and personal value could somewhat reflect the problem of all kinds of knowledge – when do we know something to be a "fact" and when do we have to make a judgment based upon "values". This conflict then stems back to Kant and his thoughts related to judgment and reasoning<sup>36</sup>. And now we are beginning to look into the background of these three constructs: value, meaning and revelation. In order to follow Tillich we will address the context that might have determined his horizon.

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<sup>36</sup> Within economics there has recently been, in the aftermath of the financial meltdown, a focus on economics and moral science; for instance, see Tomas Sedlacek (Sedlacek 2011).

Neo-Kantianism appeared as a movement in the 1860s and two different schools depict the thinking that in diverse ways wanted to reestablish Kant's ideas beyond an idealistic–materialistic debate. One school, Marburg, was represented by Herman Cohen in Marburg who sought to go beyond a Kantian duality between intuition and discursive thinking, claiming that our experiences are dependent on and formed by a priori laws in our mind, which consequently one may say became connected to mathematical laws and an understanding of thinking strongly connected to natural sciences and their methodologies. Beside this, Cohen was engaged in both Kant's ethics and in his critique of practical reason and his focus on a "transcendentally necessary ought". He was also an important Jewish theological thinker addressing religion as interwoven with human culture. On the other hand, one of the Baden neo-Kantians' most prominent figures was Heinrich Rickert (followed by doctoral student Martin Heidegger). The Baden focus of Rickert was in opposition to the Marburg focus in promoting thinking as based on methodologies from the natural sciences. Rickert found differences between *Geistes* and *Naturwissenschaften*, especially as "the latter is deficient insofar as it was incapable of addressing values" (Staiti 2013, p 5). He places a strong emphasis on history, culture and human interest in questions of meaning and value and even thought reality was a product of a subject's experience: some values he found were valid beyond what they ought to be and were transcendent (to be immanent is having a form of being conscious and transcendent to be without that form). In their relations to intuition, the difference between the two schools is distinctive, as well as in their relations to the understanding of intuition (*Anschauung*) and concepts (*Begriff*). The Marburg School put less emphasis on intuition as a given experience, for such an event is a matter of thinking governed by a priori rules and laws. But the Baden Group, represented here by Rickert, found that since not everything in life can be addressed by concepts, it may not be completely grasped by concepts (Staiti 2013).

*Value in Tillich's sense, meaning fact versus value, is a matter of understanding the relationship between the essential versus the existential. In his article Is a Science*



*of Human Values Possible?*” from 1959, he argues that the hierarchies of values need to be overcome, because they are a false understanding of what values in their essence are. The idea that values are subjective and something you construct ends up in valuation. But in Tillich’s terms *value* is essentially connected to Being itself, and thereby its roots are placed within ontology. Due to his understanding of ontology, *the notion of essence unites fact and value because they originate from the same reality* – the problem for us is that we cannot extract values from existence, due to the ambiguity that follows our existential estrangement we experience a distorted essence.

So how do we acquire knowledge in relation to value according to Tillich? The ethical demand, which is also reflected upon in this paper serves as a moral imperative. “They are determined by what man essentially is”, which brings Tillich to say that: “knowledge of value is identical with the knowledge of one’s essential being” (Tillich 1959, p. 195) Tillich writes that this is known through a tension between the intuitive and the experiential. And if we take this back to Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 we find that this tension may be solved neither through any rationalistic measuring nor by controlled knowledge.

#### 5.4.2. MEANING INSTEAD OF VALUE – THROUGH ART

This paper also reflects upon a shift in Tillich’s use of value that is vital for this project as well. He replaces value with *meaning*<sup>37</sup>. This is a logical consequence of

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<sup>37</sup> Some research has found that Tillich later replaces meaning with being (Brant 2012). It is possible to find a movement in Tillich’s writing from breakthrough as a collective and ongoing movement within the culture, related to certain moment within history that has the character of *kairos* (e.g. in *Mass and Personality*) and where the use of breakthrough is more significant in the 20s, but this changes and the use of the concept of breakthrough decreases and is not used as much in relation to revelation (Scharf 1999), though one finds the verbal use e.g. to break through when Tillich describes revelation, spiritual presence. There seems to be another focus as well because Tillich seems to go from the collective to the private after the Second World War (Scharf 1999), and even the more individualized perception of revelation Brant suggests, which again is also noticeable in Tillich’s focus changing from meaning to focus on being. Tillich though increasingly had a focus on culture and especially art as potential media for experiencing a breakthrough of an ultimate reality (Manning 2005).

his thinking because he has connected value to our essential being, and by doing this value become integrated in the human quest for ultimate meaning. But this again raises another question. Given that we have something we value more or less, or that value is something that we offer in a business or at work, how might we (together) comprehend what gives us meaning or is meaningful?

Tillich turns to art and so will we, and here art becomes integrated into the next paragraph – a kind of method that is not method, though it might be revelatory when it becomes an event.

#### **5.4.3. REVELATORY METHODS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF ART AS EVENT – OR DID TRUTH HAPPEN?**

Tillich's notion of value is turned into a question of meaning, and the quest for revelation can be raised again because we are interested in how knowledge that creates relations to our essential being may become actualized. As this paper shows, I made a contribution to a business model innovation workshop through a kind of a performative play, where I used my own artistic background as a way of investigating if another approach to their primarily service-oriented companies might visualize in a different way what they essentially wanted to offer in their business model. Now, I was both acting as an artist and as the participating and interpreting researcher. This is a description of a part of the fourth workshop in WIB, (the description is mainly edited from the *Business and Theology* paper<sup>38</sup>):

*“The workshop was aimed at exploring the future value proposition by visualizing it and making it into a physical form – a sort of art workshop. The whole group was gathered outside in a place with a lot of materials, including access to old building materials. I gave a short introduction explaining that the idea was that they should try to visualize in a form their value offerings or services by, for example, asking, “What does your service look like?” There was among this group an enthusiastic*

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<sup>38</sup> On that, it is addressed in two papers, both this one and as method. This part reflects both.

*atmosphere and everybody in the first group of 14 people started to build. They had approximately an hour and a half for this, including a short evaluation afterwards.*

*The first group of business owners included a group of three women who aimed to create a business model together, and they sculptured their common value proposition. We will focus on this group in this paper. None of these persons were closely acquainted previously – two of them lived in the same small city and a third one in another Nordic country. But during this project they met and decided to develop a new business model together. At the inception of the growth gathering they had already made a folder of their future offerings and seemed to be very enthusiastic about it.*

*Watching these business owners from alongside – being sure that I did not interfere in the process of their making – I noticed that there was a strong concentration, intensity when they were working on their new value proposition. They gathered old building material for their value proposition-sculpture. The form consists of a wooden, half broken and destroyed circle – with a triangle binding the circle together (Figure 1). They write; mind, body and soul is on the three wooden pillars. Everything happens in a coordinated way and democratic way.*

*After they built this sculpture of their value proposition they reported to the rest of the group in the workshop and presented their value proposition. they found the broken wooden circle and were trying to mend and build it into another form – they said that they realized that this was also what their value proposition was – mending the broken and creating wholeness.”*



*Figure 1 Value proposition sculpture from workshop*

After this session was finished something strange happened which I later found noteworthy. When I was talking with them alone afterwards they excitedly reflected upon the experience. One of them formulated it as if there was another new *language* and understanding that had developed between the three of them as they were sculpting. They had come closer to developing both the value proposition and the overall business concept, but also to developing their own common language of what they essentially wanted to realize in a business model .

I was moved by their joy as I was speaking with them, and I wondered if I could have “captured” this reflection from some of them through a questionnaire, an interview or a survey? I think this was a matter of being in play; that is, of being present and grasped by the situation. Nevertheless, distance is also needed to see anything, and I did not forget my role as researcher as I hurried to write down the conversation afterwards. The example above could serve as illustration of the

cognitive function of reason and the quest for revelation that Paul Tillich unfolds. This participation seemed in the situation to make a synthesis beyond differences. And further, it is an example of knowledge (or a different kind of data collection) that illustrates the idea of knowing as union, where the subject and object gap is overcome<sup>39</sup>. One could argue against this example from the workshop and stress that in his *Truth and Method* Gadamer is specifically concerned with *art*. Tillich, the main theologian, is also addressing *art* as revelatory. How can you defend using the *situation*<sup>40</sup> of a *workshop*, even a business model workshop, as a context for revelation related to art?

“Being itself” is Tillich’s concept of God, and in order to visualize the revelatory event that may happen, Tillich’s use of breakthrough is a parameter for this understanding of how human beings living an estranged and alienated existence may experience meaningfulness fragmentarily as events of relatedness to being itself. Art can be a medium for this. A workshop in itself is not art, just as the experience *per se* is not art (McFague 2001; Tillich 1951) – it is what the experience channels that is relevant. But is this not also the function of an art work – to channel something? And if people have gathered to learn and express themselves in relation to something that is highly valuable to them – in this situation, namely, their own business – could not what is happening here between them be art? I also referred to Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics at this point and found that he also points to art as the creation of a community of meaning, or that the act in itself is more important than an object of admiration (Bourriaud et al. 2002). I have been quoting Joseph

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<sup>39</sup> In an innovation process as well as a research process it can be understood that if one is too focused on the goal important information might be lost and the innovation might fail.

<sup>40</sup> There can be a kind of misunderstanding here related to the concept of “situation”, because this term is central to both Tillich and Gadamer. In Tillich’s writings it is the human situation and context that expresses the questions human beings ask in their existence – a situation defined by the human predicament of being estranged from Wholeness. The situation in Gadamer’s context is an emphasis on the difficulties of interpretation because one stands in the situation and cannot depart from this or step out of it. But the situation of a workshop just frames this as a situation.

Beuys, whom I have mentioned in the same paper: *Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler* (every human being is an artist). This means that everyone can be an artist within their profession, including a business owner (Reckhenrich et al. 2009). Beuys' idea of the *social sculpture* used in an organizationally temporary context like a workshop is not completely strange, and makes sense in this situation as well (Meisiek & Hatch 2008). If the new concept of art that Beuys tried to develop was linked to an understanding or a search for the lost "whole person", he also might be said to reflect the idealist philosophy of Schelling, which Tillich builds upon. This awareness of being lost comes close to Tillich's concept of estrangement and the need to heal the split between subject and object that also depicts the lost connection to the ground of being. This idea of creating wholeness through art is reflected in Beuys' art as a social sculpture. Beuys saw material as both being concrete but also with a *Gehalt*<sup>41</sup>. And he was using fragments of material from different spheres of our lives (fat, felt, copper), and he translated the tensions of life through these materials representing warmth, energy, isolation and capacity to lead. These fragments, for instance understood as broken parts of a bigger system, will be more unfolded later in relations to Tillich's theology. The idea of the value, the *eidos* (image) of value, that became visualized during the process might be more revelatory in the sense that it could "tell" about or show the involved persons some of their own values that they might have forgotten. Their own sculpture and the process around making it might then even be a potential corrective to the concrete service and value proposition.

Indeed, I have tried to understand and interpret the workshops on business model innovation as social sculptures especially, against a background of understanding these business owners as people that did not just (only) wish to follow economic value in their business model innovation. They had just as much had a focus on

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<sup>41</sup> (I do not know if he uses the same word here as Tillich, but Beuys certainly saw material having spirit)

their personal values, and the urge to create something new that is valuable for someone else.

I am very aware that I have used Tillich's concept of revelation in relation to art in a radical way to illuminate some elements of the workshops, but the concept of art needs to be transformed itself so that the work of art itself becomes *act* (Bourriaud, Pleasance, Woods, & Copeland 2002; Jalving 2011). And we may use Gadamer as interpretation. He writes that art opens towards another language such as poetry that is not reproduction but something new – a language event that expresses a certain kind of relationship to being (Gadamer 2004). I think that was what happened in the value proposition art workshop example. What I experienced and what happened between some of the participants was “revelatory” – it was both meaningful and had the elements of truth within itself as the participants experienced the creation of a new language together, and they thereby came to a greater understanding of each other and what their own aims in life and work were. Gadamer says that *ekstasis* is a matter of going out of oneself, but in going out one becomes closer to being. This perception of *ekstasis* is then similar to the one Tillich has as one of the criteria for what a revelation does with a person. Again this is close to Gadamer's interpretation of *theoria* as a matter of self-forgetfulness, devotion and union. Gadamer looks back to the ancient use of the word as associated with a part of contemplation in a sacred community – it is a matter of presence, that through relating theoretically one forgets one's own purposes or intentions; *theoria* is something that happens to you<sup>42</sup>. That “something” happened to both the researcher and some of the participants at this workshop.

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<sup>42</sup> A recent study on the origin of *theoria* also tries to open up this understanding of *theoria* with its focus on contemplation (Case et al. 2012).

## 5.5. PAPER 5. THE DEATH OF GOD AND ITS RELEVANCE TO BUSINESS (2013)\*

### *Abstract*

*This is a theoretical and conceptual paper on the “Death of God” as “revelatory” for business management. Firstly it shows how idolatry exists in economy, business and innovation as undisputed truths and the attempts show another perspective, where the focus is on people, such as the small business owner, and the importance of addressing them as unique creating human beings at the core of innovating a business model. Secondly it combines Paul Tillich’s ontological polarities with the definition of a business model as a Cube. It breaks through it from the inside in order to transform the mainstream notion of a business model*

### 5.5.1. VALUE – AND THE PROBLEM OF THEISM

This paper was developed as I was reflecting upon the conference theme, “Smart Growth: Organizations, Cities and Communities”, and the term smart triggered my connection to the empirical material I had obtained from the WIB project (as well as the constant focus on growth in our societies).

The background was the experience of having all these engaged business owners who at the same time were subject to (a perception of) an economic reality at several political levels where a lot of their values were really not being met. Or they would not themselves be aware that there could be other ways of achieving a business model innovation that aligned with their own personal ones. To make

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\* Saghaug, K.F., Rasmussen, O.H. & Lindgren, P. 2013, The Death of God and its Relevance to Business, In proceedings: 8th IFKAD, Smart Growth: Organizations, Cities and Communities Zagreb 12-14 June, 2013.



coherence here seemed to be intimately connected to what the individual business owners found to be *meaningful*. This is what our empirical material indicated

I began to consider how Tillich could contribute to this situation. And I came to reflect upon his critique of theism, simply the idea of God as the highest being, an object and a metaphysical entity, and it occurred to me that this was a possible way to approach the area. This may very well be connected to the notion of “The Death of God”, as Nietzsche is known to have proclaimed. One of the radical so-called Death of God theologies in modern times was launched by Altizer and Hamilton, who claimed that God is really dead of necessity through the crucifixion, which was a *kenosis* (emptying) of Godself into the world (Altizer & Hamilton 1966)<sup>43</sup>. But of course, simply proclaiming the death of a law imposing God does not mean that these images of God do not exist anymore. Weber analyzed, as mentioned the capitalist spirit as being interwoven with the structures of religious worship in our working activities (Weber 1920). Metaphors illustrate how this influence our daily activities, and the perception we have of our surroundings (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Meeks did thoroughly analyse the deformed concepts of God hidden in the political economy. It seems as if the deformed concept of God as unchanging is found in support for unchanging “laws” within economics; God as dominator supporting oppression and subordination, and God as the monarch supporting possessive individualism and, further, the emptiness of this character supports greed (Meeks 1989).

After probably his last lecture on art called *Religious Dimensions of Contemporary Art* in 1965 Tillich gave an answer to a question concerning Nietzsche and the idea of the death of God. Tillich answered that Nietzsche in a prophetic way saw “the destruction of the past world and its structure of values”. This means that just as the old prophet wandered from one place to another telling people about their

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<sup>43</sup>Other theologies that can be said to draw upon Nietzsche’s perception of the death of God as liberating theologians from law-inspired and objectified images of God as condemning, tyrannical and authoritarian (Bultmann 1972; Taubes 1949; Tillich 1952)

misdeeds, in the same way, Nietzsche shouted out loud because he saw that something was wrong with society despite its material well-being (and this notion gave an essential inspiration to the existentialistic movement as well as to expressionistic art (OAA))

So, what is the problem we are approaching here? It is not “God” we pity or the idea of protecting any so-called sacred beliefs. The problem is not that God is misused in market capitalism; the problem is that people become invisible in this hidden theology. Or even worse, as Meeks shows, which still seems to be true (e.g. in Spoelstra 2010), is that the tyrannical, inhuman, objectified and unchangeable traits given to God from a theistic perception of God have been transferred to people as ideals within business and management (Meeks 1989).

The “God” objectified as a theistic image actually continues to live and grow hidden in the ontology of the neo-liberal and social liberal economy based upon classical and neoclassical economic theory.<sup>44</sup> But without investigating in detail the objectified images of God hidden within economics, we have asked in this paper: *Why is the death of God at all relevant for economics and especially for business model innovation?*

### **5.5.2. MEANING – AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF SYMBOL**

When Nietzsche proclaimed that “God is dead” this might have led to a revival of theology because it forced theologians to rethink Christianity. Could the death of God also be a gift for economics or business management?

The hypothesis in this paper reflects the main research question and the project’s hypothesis by saying that the death of God may be considered to be a form of “breakthrough”, or a revelation in Tillich’s sense. The Christ or the understanding of incarnation is a human being expressing what Tillich calls essential manhood.

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<sup>44</sup> As (Smith 1776, 1981; Hvelplund 2005)

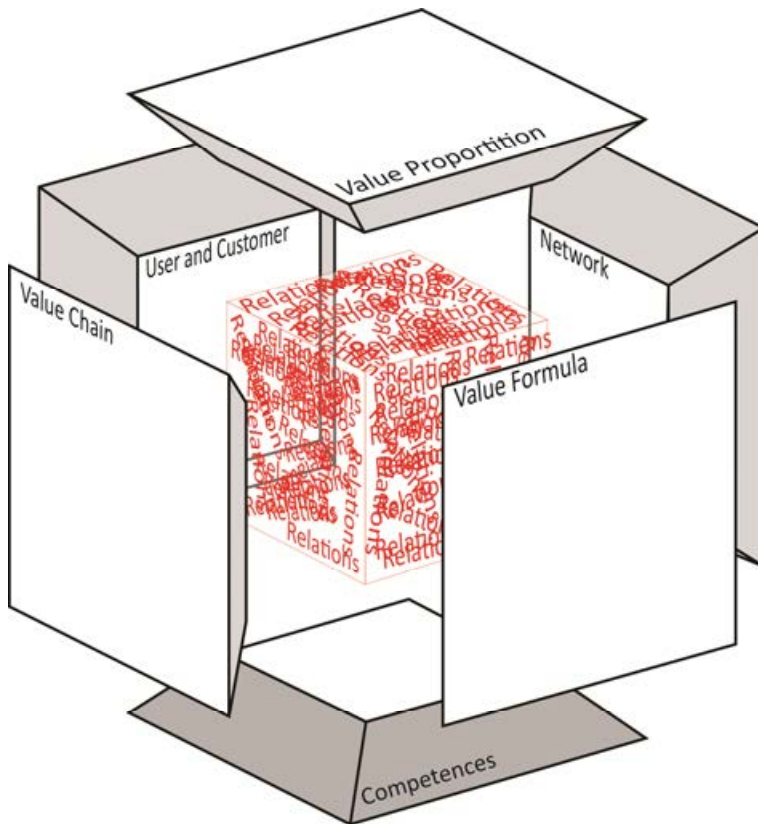
The death of God breaks through the law-inspired and objectified image of God, like the idea of black boxes with reference to mainstream economics, technology and , innovation (Rosenberg 1994; Sirmon et al. 2007; Zott & Amit 2010). In the Old Testament the law strictly forbid people to make any images of God. God was not supposed to be any entity beside others. This came to have a significant impact on art since struggles about this has led to the destruction of images (iconoclasm). One could though from an artistic perspective say that these images of god *needed* to be destroyed, at least metaphorically, in order to free people from a distorted understanding of God as a being.

If economy has black boxes that are elevated to the status of gods, they would similarly need to be “destroyed” for the sake of human freedom and meaningfulness. In breaking through a black box, God is, symbolically speaking, perceived fragmentarily through art as overflowing the form, a form that through this brokenness comes into being because it engages in a relationship; in other words, it makes participation possible (Palmer 1984; Tillich 1990). So this is not really a destruction, it is a becoming - a creation. This metaphor is turned into an image or a model, which then might be a radical corrective reinstating human beings and their relations within the models of business management. This, we will see, is demonstrated more concretely in the next section.

Anyhow, reflecting concretely on a model, here comes one that was developed in the research group<sup>45</sup> when I was absent.

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<sup>45</sup> From December 2011 to December 2012 I was on maternity leave.



*Figure 1 The Business Model Cube*

The Business Model Cube as a form of definition operates at different levels of abstraction. Technically, it can be disaggregated into six specific elements, and a seventh element of the relations or the core of relations, which knits the blocks together. In the current project, all of these “dimensions” can be addressed in relation to value here, as all of them relate to value and have to do with value creation:

1. The *values* we deliver in form of products, services and/or processes.
2. The *user* and *customers* who we serve through and with our values.

3. The *value chain* which produces our values for the users and customers.
4. The *competences* such as technologies, employees and organization systems. All representing also a kind of embedded or “hidden value”.
5. The value created though the *network* by network partners’ competences and business models, which the business model interacts with.
6. The *value formula* or the output and how the business model makes a profit.
7. *The core of relations* that binds all the elements together metaphorically speaking; this is the center of the model and is what gives life to the business model as such.

The last dimension, which strictly speaking is not a dimension but an image of the core of relations, is a further development from my first paper (in the Different thinking paper<sup>46</sup>). This core of relations is my contribution to the definition.

The current paper challenges the definition of the cube because in this definition any relation is *a relation*, but the current study would say that relations at the core are only significant relations insofar as they really relate to something meaningfully. In order to relate and talk about relations from a theological perspective, we are talking about *participation* that has an existential significance<sup>47</sup>. The use of participation is central to Tillich’s theology, as it both depicts the

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<sup>46</sup> In IFKAD paper Lindgren, Saghaug (2009) 'The Implications Related to Different IC, Different Projects and Different Thinking Addressing the Common Core of IC'. also used here to challenge mainstream understanding of intellectual capital

<sup>47</sup> To this, someone might ask why the actor-network theory (ANT) is not a part of this. This is because ANT defines heterogeneous networks that are further also value free, strictly immanent understood and completely anti-essential (inspired by Deleuze). According to Tillich’s anthropology, people would, by following this, be subject to an understanding that completely swallows the individual on behalf of participation, but it would not be participation in Tillich’s understanding of it, as Latour and Law have also called it heterogeneous (Latour 1996).

problem for human beings as the lack of participation, and describes our urge and need to participate and be related to a larger whole.

This means that in this context the core of relations is an image of relations as a core from which everything begins and everything ends. It is inspired by an understanding of our existence that is profoundly connected to an understanding of being related to life itself, as we find in Tillich's work. My painting below (Figure 2) could be an illustration of this tension, something coming into being or dissolving.



Figure 2 *"Under Tilblivelse"* ("In becoming" (2009) Acrylics on canvas

When we are talking about relating we are still talking about another image of God that actually is rather similar to Augustine's original notion of *esse ipsum* (Being Itself). Even if the image of God has been shattered from simply a vertically transcendent highest being and restored into an immanent transcendent understanding, we may still need words for Being Itself that reflect something else than this pure abstraction if we want to address our ultimate concerns in meaningful words. And this is what the recurring concept of "symbol" is all about, and it is vital for our understanding of languages in a religious sense, and especially how to understand participation.

That a lot of our current understanding of words and concepts within economy stems from theology has already been mentioned (e.g. Schmitt, Weber, Agamben). This also means that Tillich's reflection upon *religious* language in the *Theology of Culture* is relevant given that the culture is expressing a religious substance. But how does this happen? Symbols are central here. Tillich has a distinct notion of symbols versus signs. Both of them points beyond themselves, but symbols also *participate* in the "meaning and power" of what they symbolize (Tillich & Kimball 1964, p 54). And this little word of participation is again fundamental here in comprehending both the meaning of symbols and their relation with revelation. In short, a symbol has two main functions:

1. It has the representative function, which means that the symbol points beyond itself towards something else. It is not equal with it.
2. But its main function is to "open up levels of reality" (in TC, p. 57). This means that the symbol has access to levels of reality that otherwise are hidden from us.

The only ways we may take hold of these dimensions of reality are through symbols<sup>48</sup>. This is also why art seems to have this symbolic function as well, in

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<sup>48</sup> Even though "level" is used here in this section Tillich prefers to use "dimension" as a metaphor related to reality since "level" has hierarchical connotations. This is unfolded more in the ST3 p11 ff also mentioned in (Manning 2013)

Tillich's understanding of art. Symbols also reveal and create openings into our own inner reality or the "soul", as Tillich would say. A word we hardly use anymore. But if we engage with the religious symbol, as we will because we are dealing with an area of this in this study, a culture is found where we can tentatively suggest that models have replaced the religious symbol, then there are further considerations as well.

There is the nature of *religious* symbols that participate in the holiness, but they are not themselves holy. And everything may, as Tillich says, "impress itself as a symbol of the human mind to its own ultimate ground and being" ( in TC, p. 59). Though it becomes idolatry when the symbol is made identical with what it symbolizes, if a certain model were to be so strong that people forgot that it was only a depiction of reality, but they instead pointed to it as reality, then we are engaging in idolatry. That some economic models are unfolded as if they are reality could be an example of this. A business model unfolded as if it literally was the reality will have precisely the same problem.

Further, there are levels of religious symbols: the transcendent level that goes beyond our current experiences and the immanent level that is embedded within the reality we encounter. God cannot be a symbol, but the only way to speak meaningfully about God is through symbols. We cannot relate to God as an abstract Being Itself, but through the symbolic character of saying that God is father (mother), love, powerful etc., but they need to be kept as symbolic characters. This is connected to the transcendent level, but it is taking place at or within the immanent level. Tillich used "the level of the divine appearance", which is, for instance, what we meet in concepts like incarnation. In order to further close the gulf between humans and the divine there are also sacraments that serve as symbols of fragmentary participation in the divine.

Finally, Tillich addressed the truth of religious symbols. They have nothing to do with empirical testing, but symbols occur, they live and they die when they do not serve any purpose or make sense in the context or situation they address. The cross



of Christ became a symbol. At some point this symbol of divine presence has to die in order not to become an idol. The death of God in Tillich's understanding of symbols is a symbol that has to die in order for idolatry to be avoided.

So, in short, participation as relation(s) created through symbols serves as Tillich's way of offering a way by which we can understand levels of reality mediated for instance through art. And why not through business models as well...

### 5.5.3. METHODS THAT REVEALS

Before writing this paper I was unaware that it would turn out to be one of the most central papers of my PhD. At this point, I began to recognize how the concept of “breakthrough” in Tillich's revelatory theology may be an inspiration for addressing some of the dogmas of mainstream economics' market fundamentalism. Further, by addressing Tillich's critique of theism, I found a possible way to compare these two areas from a different perspective and on different levels of abstraction.

Acknowledging that revelation may never be a “method” (as the *Methods of Revelation* paper states it), it nevertheless rather provokes by asking if, for example, the combination of two seemingly unlikely areas can be a revealing method? And if it can, is it a discrepancy that this combination sets forth? This is what this paper also does and it answers the subquestion: How may a modern theology such as Paul Tillich's contribute to killing off the undisputed objectified “truths” that hinder the establishment of meaningful relations when creating a business model? The response is as follows.

I have conducted a critical and theoretical approach to economics politically, empirically and theoretically using Tillich's three theistic positions combined with what I choose to call three positions of “economic theism”. Finally, we also made Veblen's make-believe institutions into this 12-field matrix in combination with exemplary empirical material in order to construct and visualize what I have chosen

to call “economic theistic positions” on a political, personal and theoretical level (see Table 1).

The three areas of theistic positions	Theistic economic positions	Theistic economic positions	Theological perspective on the theistic economic position	Veblenian perspectives
(Tillich 1952)	Political level	Personal level	Theoretical level	Make-believe
<b>1. The political and rhetorical level</b>	‘That is just the way it is.’ (Danish Minister for Economy explaining economic reforms that reduce the period of unemployment assistance.)	‘We need more innovation and growth from female-owned businesses – they are lacking behind men’ (Project leaders in EU project addressing businesses.)	The financial crisis is a result of sinful living that now must be redeemed through sacrifice. (Weber-inspired protestant ethics performed by, e.g., Merkel. [Ulrik Beck. www.Information.dk. 30.3.2013]).	Identifying perceptions of reality, e.g., the idea that the principle of business is unchangeable.
<b>2. The personal – existential level</b>	‘This innovation tool is the right one for your business’ (Experience from business owners in relation to assistance from public authorities.)	It is as if many of the public consultants were unable to enter into dialogue because of their (hidden) beliefs about how economy and business innovation should be perceived. Instead, businesses were met with predefined tools.	This position, in which a person is treated as an object by a subject, is repeated in a lot of literature, with leaders as the image for all others to follow as inspiration, e.g., Steve Jobs (Gallo 2010). The object is the one-sided genius who knows best whom the rest should surrender to (Kirkeby 2000; Meeks 1989).	Recognizing habits, even if they are imponderable and hidden.
<b>3. The theoretical – theological level</b>	‘All economists agree that given the circumstances, the market will . . .’ (Mainstream quotes from media.)	There is an understanding of innovation in the public sector as merely technological, neglecting the intangible values of innovation created within the service industry.	‘The more “scientific” economics is, the more valuable it becomes as theology’ (Waterman 2002, p. 920).	The law and customs of economics are old images from the past and must die in order to be transformed and contextualized into new forms oriented towards meaningful relationships.

*Table 1 Theistic positions vs. theistic economic positions*

I would like to briefly define the three theistic positions here:

### 1. Theism: The Political Level

*This deals with an abstract confirmation of a God. It is often, as Tillich states, used by politicians or others who intend to make an impression on an audience. Both theism and atheism becomes vague in this manner. Tillich finds that this position needs to be destroyed because of its irrelevance.*

### 2. Theism: The Personal Level

*Theism understood as an I–thou relationship – a personal encounter between the human and God. This has its source in the personal passages in the Bible, but also operates with an infinite distance between God and people. A theism which also needs to be destroyed because it is one-sided.*

### 3. Theism: The Theological Level

*Theism understood as theological, which in different ways tries to prove or conceptualize the existence of the subject matter called God. In this, God becomes a being and not “Being Itself”, and God is bound into the subject/object structure of reality. Further, God makes me into an object in this and removes the subjectivity from me, which I in some sort of way will rebel against, and then God becomes a tyrant in order to keep his power. This must be destroyed because it is simply wrong.*

By giving these economic statements and positions a so-called religious definition, I simply want to show the hidden theistic theology expressed in the daily economic discourse. This table has been used as a framework to show how political quotes, sentiments, attitudes and theory are in fact “fundamentalistic” (theistic). One may for instance put any kind of statement from business management into this and

evaluate if it may be judged as theistic or not. In such a way one may even say that this framework is a kind of revelatory “method” in its iconoclastic attempts to destroy images of “gods”, here economic gods.

I also approached the business model theologically. It might be rather unconventional to use a model as an empirical field, but nevertheless this is what has been done in this paper. In order to go directly toward the model itself, we have up till now operated with the cube as a fundamental recipe for what a business model is. We have six walls: value proposition, user and customer, competences, networks, value chain and value formula; and we have relations that “kit” the walls together. However, where are the people in this model? This paper wants to qualify the question where the point of departure is the assumption: people ( i.e. people and their ultimate concern) are absent in the Business Model Cube (BM Cube).

Anyhow, in a *theological* sense innovation “ought to” be value creation and vice versa, because if it is not making something new that is directed towards the ground of our being it is not creating anything that asks for ultimate meaning, and thus it is of no value. The core of relations as presented in *The Death of God* is the heart and ground of the business model. This is also what makes it so tricky, because if this is simply just a bundle of relations going on, knotting things and people together as an organizational metaphor of a giant brain, as in *Images of Organization* (Morgan 1986), it maybe could be depicted as an actor-network model where “literally there is nothing but networks, there is nothing in between them” (Latour 1996). Latour inspired by Deleuze’s rhizomes, is strictly an anti-essentialist, so combining him with Tillich could be problematic since he is operating with the idea of truth as essentially being present, though in a distorted manner. But following Tillich’s theology there is a ground, there is a core, and we search for the connectedness and presence that the core enables us to experience. Even though it is only fragmentary.

As I introduce polarities and revelation into this, so I raise the following issues:

If the image of God is the black box, the big cube, we can now ask how this model could become non-objectified and human-centered?

From a theological perspective we need to focus on “revelation” in order to change the rules of the game (= transformation), so innovations may become breakthroughs that are truly meaningful and create new knowledge, instead of confirming bad habits, as the table has shown.

Revelation in this context means that when revelation happens it opens, it creates a space and it makes a fragmentary relationship with what metaphorically might be called the core of meaningful relations.

This is depicted as a model of breakthrough. By going back to the first paper where the first ontological pairs of polarity were introduced, I made a movement back into the existing cube of a business model. The ontological pairs of polarity are the same three pairs that Tillich addresses as the *both/and* structures of human existence (Tillich 1951, 1963).

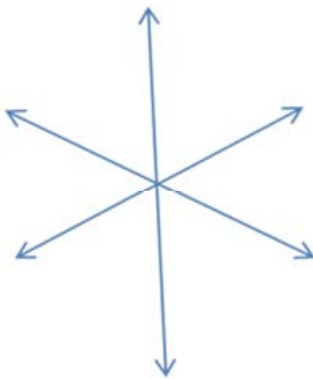


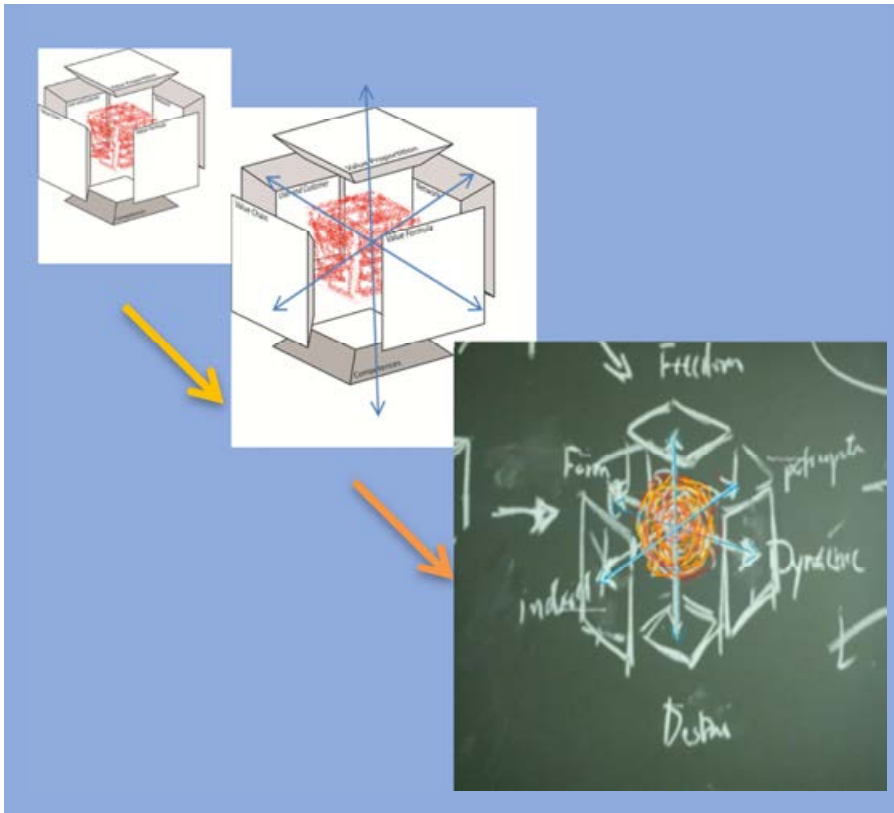
Figure 3. The three pair of polarities

In brief:

1. Individualization versus participation: People are both *closed* selves and *transcending* selves in order to actualize themselves. (self – integration: It

mainly depicts the aspect of self-integration connected to a ‘principle of centeredness’ in which self is a point of awareness).

2. Freedom versus destiny: People are free insofar as they are always bound within the history and the context in which they make choices. (self-transcendence: freedom in an interpolar dependence with destiny is a process of life).
3. Dynamic versus form: People create through form in order to “grow”. (self-creativity: The dynamic side of self-creation as growth may never take place without a form, but on the other hand nothing lives just as form without dynamics).



*Figure 4. Model of polarities and breakthrough in the Business Model Cube*

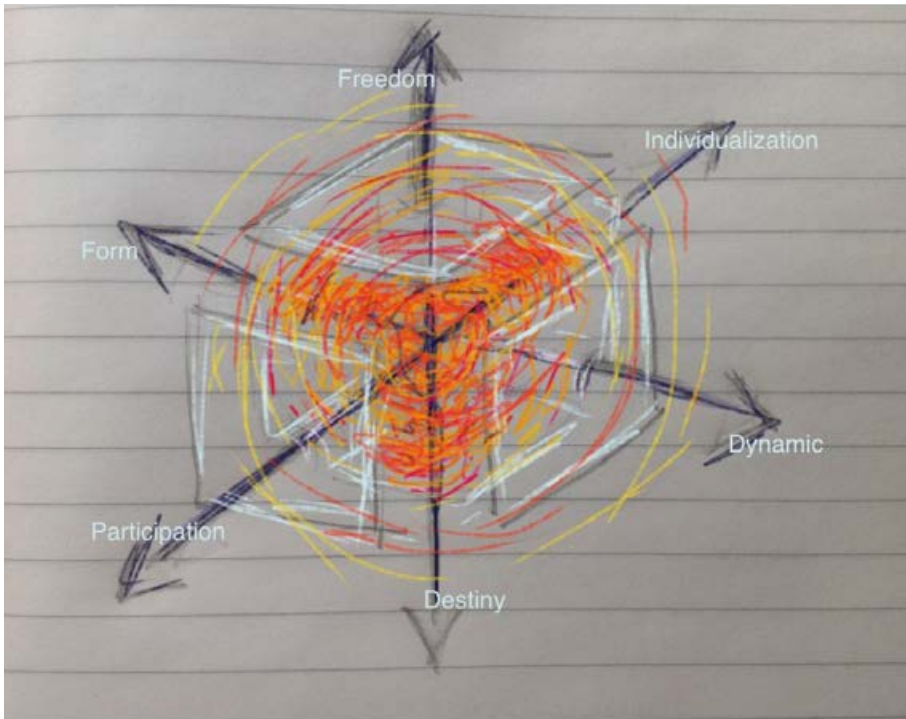
Imagine these polarities covering at the center of the cube, touching and even possibly breaking through the walls of the cube (see Figure 2). It is these polarities that crisscross and construct an image of a person moving around in the cube as it now becomes further opened and is broken through.

The understanding of self-integration points towards a circular movement inwards, self-creativity points towards a movement forward and self-transcendence transcends both of them and moves upwards. But there is still a form, the form has just come into existence, and it has become actual. This is what revelation is about. It is a breakthrough that connects fragmentary people to the ground (foundation) of their being, and it shows them/us how things ought to be or how things essentially



are. The breakthrough creates an opening for a fragmentary participation that becomes the source of creation of form, where all kinds of value have their origins and new values are created. It is also the connections that enable the business model to operate; but from my perspective, it is also more profound.

The core of the cube and the core of relations is from a theological perspective an analogy to *esse ipsum* (Being itself), or the symbol of life itself that permeates and surrounds everything. This is an image of breaking through a black box, and the model combines the area of revelatory theology in art as known from Tillich with the human condition in its search for meaning. This meaning is the very creation of values that goes beyond narrow economic understandings of value as profit. This is also shown in this model as there is no differentiation between values – as if some were economic and some others were personal and human. If the model is broken through, the very understanding of value is transformed into meaning by this participation in the ground of being.



*Figure 5. The breakthrough of the walls of the cube.*

Some concluding remarks here are that if we do not question the “God” and “truths” of mainstream economics, we may conduct a lot of business model innovation and other sorts of actions aimed at developing small businesses without really changing anything. We are merely adjusting to the current situation. But both practitioners and researchers who conduct business model innovation with business owners should be aware of the existing images of “God” that has impressed themselves as symbols turned into idolatry. If Life Itself perceived as Spiritual Presence occurs fragmentarily in innovation, it might very well be that this is when people experience the desire to make a business model that “makes a difference” and make a “smart” business model from a more “enlightened” background.

This was an attempt to place human beings as the real agents in the cube. What has actually happened here in relation to the overall PhD project? In the

recontextualization of the different thinking in the first paper *I stated that different thinking interpreted in Tillich's theology could be perceived as a question. It is this question about ultimate meaning that this model with the polarities tries to visualize.* The tree pairs of polarities are the embodiment of the question of “Why?” The human being is in itself a standing question about its own existence.

The final words from the paper follow:

The image of the cube along with ontological polarities ends this paper. And it might be understood as an end – as in death – but it is also resurrection. The image is broken through, the form is overflowed and something new might grow from this.

## 5.6. PAPER 6. METHODS OF REVELATION? (2013)\*

### Abstract

*This paper is a methodological paper exploring some philosophical theological considerations in relation to study the empirical evidence from a field consisting of small business owners in business model innovation workshops. Tillich's correlation method and his concept of revelation in relation to art are relevant in this context. This paper also addresses Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics due to the congruence I find is present between his notion of art as a truth event and Tillich's concept of art experience as revelation (breakthrough). This paper is therefore "methodological" in the sense that it identifies some "methods" as potentially revelatory that concern knowledge creation related to the human quest for value and meaning in a workshop context of business model innovation. On the other hand, it is a reflection upon method that cannot be turned into a "method" in the sense of a manageable technique (i.e. involving revelation).*

### 5.6.1. VALUE – LOOKING AT METHODOLOGY FROM A DISTANCE IN ORDER TO GET CLOSE TO AN UNDERSTANDING

I consider myself to be a hermeneutic researcher due to my theological training. Though Paul Tillich does not use the term hermeneutics about his method<sup>49</sup>, but his

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\* Saghaug, K. F. 2013, Methods of Revelation? Paper presented at The 32nd International Human Science Research Conference, August 13-16, Aalborg University, Denmark.

work is hermeneutical insofar as his whole theology is focused on the interpretation of the religious symbols in our present situation (Dreisbach 1975). Some research has been conducted comparing Tillich's idea of participation in relation to religious symbols with Gadamer's idea of the fusion of the horizon in relation to understanding as participation (Robinson 2009). I primarily address Tillich's and Gadamer's respective understandings of "truth" in relations to art. I find that revelation as breakthrough in Tillich's understanding of art is relevant also to the depiction of Gadamer's notion of truth in the art experience.

For Tillich, truth is a fragmentary experience of participation – a revelation of the ultimate ground, an experience that art might initiate. For Gadamer truth is an *event* that might happen as you enter into a play or come into a dialogue with an artwork, with a text or with another human being.

After writing the *Death of God* paper, I read Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900-2002) *Truth and Method* (2004)<sup>50</sup>. I used his work as a way of coming to terms with what I had actually had been doing methodologically in the project until that time. It was maybe a "strange" issue to raise at such a late time, but I was somewhat convinced that Gadamer's notion of art as an event of truth could be associated with Tillich's revelation of the ground of our being in art, and also that it could both support this and help in its further development<sup>51</sup>. It could. A lot of these thoughts have been incorporated into the previous presentation since the work with this also represents

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<sup>49</sup> Tillich combines intuitive-descriptive elements with existentially critical elements in what he calls a "critical phenomenology" (in ST, p. 107).

<sup>50</sup> To be more precise I read the Danish translation (2007, *Sandhed og metode. Grundtræk af en filosofisk hermeneutik* trans. and with introduction by Arne Jørgensen. Academica, Viborg) and had the German *Wahrheit und Methode* (Gesammelte Werke Bd 1 (1987) Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen) at hand for scrutiny of concepts as well as the English translation to quote from.

<sup>51</sup> I had earlier in the study used a bit of time on Poul Ricoeur's writings (Ricoeur 1973; Ricoeur 1977) I discovered that he was rather critical towards Paul Tillich's kind of methodology and I found there could be more of a dialogue with Gadamer and therefore I considered that more productive in this context.

my research journey, so I will primarily aim to address some of the theory of the methodology from Tillich and Gadamer to further illuminate the methodological considerations of this project.

### **5.6.2. MEANING – REVELATION AND UNDERSTANDING**

Firstly, there is a theoretical presentation of Tillich's thoughts about a theological method and how it is connected to a normative interpretation of culture.

Secondly, there is a presentation of Gadamer's thoughts about understanding as interpretation: to move the language from one world to another is what the hermeneutic philosopher does – and so this might be meant in the abstract way of understanding an ancient text in current times; it might also be more concrete, moving from one world to another, from theology into business or business into theology (classic philosophy and hermeneutics).

Thirdly, there is a short examination of the finding that there are a number of similarities between Tillich's and Gadamer's approaches. The finding that I have chosen to put forward here, where Gadamer might support some central points of Tillich's approach, is how we learn through the experience of suffering. This adds a further perspective to Tillich's perspectives on the experience of art as revealing both the abyss of our existence as well as the ground of being.

Tillich's writings on revelation are most systematically presented in his *Systematic Theology*, a three volume work published between 1951 and 1963 inspired by the older theological systems, for instance, the *Summa* of Aquinas, but which distinguishes itself with regard to *the method*. Tillich names his theological method "a method of correlation" (in ST, p. 30). His aim with theology is inspired by the apologetics and it is a defense of Christian theology concerned with defining and interpreting its relevance to modernity ST1 (Bayer 2009; Manning 2009, Schussler 2009). Tillich's defense of theology concerns a radical contextualization that implies an attempt to make theology relevant within every realm of human

existence and which urges theologians to act courageously in order to interpret both the questions people ask in relation to their so-called ultimate concern – Tillich’s concept of belief – and to interpret the answers that theology claims it has in such a way that it does not destroy or suppress reason. Apologetics was historically an attempt to defend the Christian message, whereby Athanasius tried by argument to prove the existence of God. Tillich would never even use the word “existing” in relation to “God” because this word would contradict the images or symbols of God from which Tillich unfolded his theology (namely, inspired by Augustin’s *esse ipsum* – being itself) where God is not depicted as an idolatrous “something” or an object of our belief.

Tillich puts forward an alternative defense of Christianity that is closer to a challenge. He is urging theology to become up to date with the current situation. The Christian message is worthless unless it responds based upon a contextualized and a contemporary understanding of people’s quest for answers. Theology needs to become dirty so to speak, not a word that Tillich uses though, but it may be an appropriate metaphor for marking the obligation to become an “answering theology” (ST1, p. 6) as by making itself relevant it must address phenomena that are of importance, as well as questions that are raised about the existential predicament of people in their everyday lives and unfolded in their cultural activities, such as within the areas of art, ethics, science and politics (Bayer 2009), and to which we may add work<sup>52</sup>. Tillich is addressing these areas as sources of contemporary knowledge that visualize the style and character of these questions (for instance in art) about how human beings and their ultimate concern may presently be understood.

There can be no knowledge created without the presence of both union and detachment. In order to experience anything we separate things that are bound together Tillich argues in ST1 and in *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*. The

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<sup>52</sup> Tillich mentions this in *The Religious Situation*.

element of detachment is dominant within *controlling knowledge*, where the object of investigation is transformed into a completely calculable thing. The objectifications here are logical, ontological and ethical. No union is possible. Humans resist this objectification to such an extent that Tillich states in ST1 that a person is broken if his or her resistance towards this objectification is broken<sup>53</sup>. In its extreme way it becomes violence. In contrast to this and dominated by union is *receiving knowledge*, which takes the object into itself and unites with it – including the emotional elements that this demands. In relation to the quest for truth, controlling knowledge is sought so that it can be verified by controlled actions and repeatedly tested through experiments. Receiving knowledge on the other hand is tested through life-processes, but it might have a unique character as it is experiential. In ST1 Tillich combines knowledge and revelation through his analysis of this conflict that he finds within cognitive reason. Related to this conflict, Tillich points to the quest for *revelation*, namely, that “revelation is the manifestation of the ground of being for human knowledge” and he also defines it as “revelation is the manifestation of the depth of reason and the ground of being (Tillich 1956, p. 94, 117; see also *Revealing Hearts*).

In the following I will address some methodological considerations based on Tillich’s thoughts about a theological method as well as the theology of culture, which paves the way for the central concept of “revelation” in Tillich’s work<sup>54</sup>, and I make a comparison with Gadamer’s events of truth in art.

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<sup>53</sup> Examples of this in our context could be the management practices that measure and control the employees, and if there are no ways the employee may act in order to oppose them, that person may lose his/her initial joy with the work.

<sup>54</sup> A more complete and systematic unfolding of the revelation concept in Tillich’s work is found later in *Revealing Hearts* and *Moment*.



### 5.6.3. TILlich – RELIGION AS CULTURE, THEOLOGY AS NORMATIVE SCIENCE

And again we may ask: Why should theology be at all relevant to business and innovation? Should theology not concentrate on the Church and its practices, and the religion that is unfolded there? Tillich does not think so. This is partly due to how he defines religion. To clarify this we will address the issues in *The problem of a theological method* (Tillich 1947) and a lecture first given in Germany in 1919<sup>55</sup> and later translated into *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture*. His definition of theology is given at the end: “(...) theology is defined as a normative branch of knowledge concerned with religion and put on the same level as normative ethics, aesthetics etc.” (Tillich 1969, p. 180). I will unfold the arguments relevant to this definition in this paragraph.

We initially meet Tillich’s distinction between natural sciences and cultural sciences, where natural science has one measurable reality whilst the cultural sciences can have numerous perspectives on reality<sup>56</sup>. Therefore, the aim is not to make universals out of them. He states that a universal concept within this context of cultural science is either a “useless or a normative concept in disguise” (p. 156).

But a personal standpoint is, as Tillich refers to it, also “embedded in the ground of the objective spirit”, meaning that a concrete personal standpoint might go through a process of creative self-expression ending up in a new “synthesis of universal form and concrete content” (p. 156). Tillich considers three forms of non-empirical cultural sciences are connected to this: philosophy of culture, philosophy of history and the normative science of culture. Theology, then, belongs to the concrete and normative science of religion; but theology should never intend to be scientific. For theology to be empirical, for instance, is a kind of “methodological imperialism”

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<sup>55</sup> *Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur*, MW 2, p.70-85

<sup>56</sup> The distinction is similar to controlling knowledge vs receiving knowledge as we just met in ST1

from natural science, as he wrote later (Tillich 1947). But theology is neither a science related to a being called “God” or a “scientific presentation of a special complex of revelation” that would set as a condition the requirement for the “concept of supernaturally authoritative revelation”. (Tillich 1969, p. 157) According to Tillich, all of this has been subjected to critical religious and logical insights. On the other hand, theology builds upon the concrete religious standpoint, although without hidden supernaturalism. It is critical and breaks down “authoritarian limitations” (p. 158)<sup>57</sup>.

So, a universal philosophical concept is useless and worthless unless it is understood normatively based on something concrete. The concrete then serves as the validation of the universal concept, but on the other hand the normative system demands an objective scientific significance<sup>58</sup>.

But how is all this related to small business owners in a business model innovation context? I perceive the distinction between radical and incremental innovation as a transformative breakthrough of the frame vs. a change within the frame, metaphorically speaking.<sup>59</sup>

So now I arrive at the point of addressing how something “new” links to revelation. What happens that creates something new? And what is revelation? The concept of revelation and breakthrough are interconnected in Tillich’s theology of culture. When revelation happens, reality breaks through the form, but as this happens the overflowing of substance is also “itself still form”. To express this is the task of the

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<sup>57</sup> From this, Tillich’s points to Nietzsche’s notion of “the creative”, based upon concept of the objective historical spirit in Hegel’s work (p. 158).

<sup>58</sup> The focus on the concrete form as a validation of a universal concept is also relevant in relation to his understanding of revelation in art.

<sup>59</sup> This is not a definition I will dwell further with in relations to business management but Leifer et al in *Radical Innovation* p.4-5 couples their definition of Radical vs Incremental innovation with James March distinction between exploitation and exploration (Leifer 2000; March 1991)

theology of culture. It is within culture that the religious experience is expressed and as such it is intertwined with it. Therefore, the theology of culture needs to unfold both of these. He set up three tasks:

1. The general religious analysis of culture.
2. A religious typology and the philosophy of cultural history.
3. The concrete religious systematization of culture.

With regard to the first task, Tillich has a very alternative notion of form and content in a cultural creation: substance is the very meaning or the significance of a cultural creation, content is simply the container; “Content is accidental, substance essential, and form is the mediating element” (Tillich 1969, p. 165). What we notice here is that the usual “form–content” discussion is turned around. Form and content are at one side of the pole, substance is at the other. Form is actually becoming form by ways of being shattered. For instance, the experience of a Rothko painting to address a non-objective type of art would be uninteresting if the experience of it was only layers of paint usually split at a horizon. The form shattering, using the experience of a Rothko painting to provide an idea, would first happen when the paint and the forms ceased to exist as only strokes and paint and instead became an experience of say a room, a meditative space or an opening<sup>60</sup>. The prophetic voice of a “yes” or a “no” to the human situation might then appear, and the relation between the “yes” and the “no” and how this is expressed become the matter of analysis<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> Addressing Tillich further on this it would in his categorization represent a mystical type a dissolvent of particularities where reality presents itself as full (in Art and Ultimate reality).

<sup>61</sup> For instance an art work might depict a current situation in society, for instance the much discussed work by C. Lemmerz, a display at Esbjerg Museum of Art named “Scene” (1994) where the corpses and blood of dead pigs came to have a number of symbolic meanings that literarily incorporated a critique, a “no”.

Turning to the second task, we find here the image of the poles. A focus on form is a profane cultural creation; a focus on substance is on the religious-cultural creation, which seems to be the most relevant to the theology of culture, while a third is the balanced expression which is simply the harmonious classic cultural creation. Of course, there are a lot of in-between typologies present within these three positions.

Thirdly, the theologian of culture is not productive in producing the system, but is not restricted to a special sphere either. She can point to the relations between different phenomena, and to the unity or the synthesis of cultural functions, all from the standpoint of substance as the philosopher does from the viewpoint of form and categories. The synthesis bridges the gap between culture and religion: a religious system of culture embracing science and dogma that goes beyond this and becomes “a science religious in itself; the distinction between art and forms of cultus is replaced by an art religious in itself” (Tillich 1969, p. 168)

This method must be *intuitive* Tillich writes, but it cannot compete with autonomous scientific methods. There can be an opening, but this implies that substance itself shatters the form of these methods. Revelation has to make these forms obsolete, so to speak, and he points to the paradoxical impossibility of fitting something into a form that is beyond any form. He finds that Hegel in his metaphysics lacks the experience of horror. In Tillich’s work this could be the need to enter into the corners of pain and suffering within human existence as for instance expressionistic painters in Germany in the 30ies. They, Tillich meant, expressed religious substance. What he fears is art that in its idealistic striving conceals the situation of human estrangement and through this it is at risk of becoming dishonest as it becomes more superfluous<sup>62</sup>. In relations to the tasks of a

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<sup>62</sup> To understand the shattering of forms there is another perception of “growth”, and we may understand that this shattering of form is vital for becoming a person – also as *Umwertung aller Werte* - a revaluation of all values (beyond good or evil) who Tillich reflects, at least indirectly, as he addresses Nietzsche.

theology of culture it is relevant with some further remarks on Tillich's notions of art and its revelatory character as connected to style. It is though discussed as problematic by some interpreters of Tillich that, he distinguishes between "styles" that are more or less revelatory or more or less religious (Dillenberger 1987;Palmer 1984). Tillich means that not all styles of art are equally revelatory and of existential relevance. Tillich mentions especially four styles which have religious elements, but in different ways. These are naturalism, idealism, impressionism, and expressionism, where the last one by far is the most religious style per se due to its (representation) of the ultimate - its "disrupts the naturally given appearance of things" (in *Protestantism and Artistic style* in TC, p. 74), For instance naturalism only covers the surface of reality and legitimizes status quo.<sup>63</sup> But it could be possible to say that his notion of art as religious does not concern an art philosophy as such. It is primarily directed to art and its ability to break through in relations to knowledge beyond the controlled and the intuitively received, and this quality demands a certain kind of art, a certain style. We find that unfolded especially in *Courage to Be* where the existentialist art (as he perceives is covered in expressionism) has a certain task of so to speak grabbing the heart of people through its prophetic substance. The prophetic in art is here the critical voice that calls upon people and says something like "Wake up! Look at this disaster! Do something about it!" Tillich understanding of art as religious is not because it depicts Christ or any other religious motifs, but it is religious because it tries to express knowledge that goes beyond the subject-object split, and presents a level of reality wherein there is no separation of these two but a so called theonomous union. This is the union created when the ultimate concern is being addressed both as question and an out reached hand, metaphorically speaking, from the work to the spectator (or the co-player). There is both abyss and ground at the same time. Palmer stresses one thing that also is of relevance for this study, namely that both

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<sup>63</sup> One may wonder why Tillich not simply, as for instance Adorno did in his writings on art simply neglect the majority of art as pure aestheticism(Adorno 1970), but he does not. On may also wonder because one of his own revelatory experiences with art came through watching an idealized Botticelli image of the Madonna (in OAA)

what the artist is portraying as well as the portrait he creates is revelation in Tillich's understanding (Palmer 1984, p. 127).

To understand this notion of revelation Tillich speaks of two kinds of revelations in ST 1, that will be mentioned a couple of times during this journey. The first is the original one, for instance the revelation of Christ, the other is the secondary ones or the dependent ones, that somehow reflects the original one. The artist serves as a witness to a revelatory event. The artist is the one who has the courage to go out in the corners of existence and report back to the rest of us, what he or she has seen (in CB). The artist with an immediate intuition, for instance as in the article *Mass and Personality* becomes both the documentarist and the one making an expression of the original event that he participates in and that become a secondary revelation for the rest of us (in MW 2).

Tillich argues that a theology of culture comprises the whole of nature and technology. And of course the events where business owners participated in this study in seeking to develop their business are also a part of this culture.. But significantly, Tillich also points to what he calls a tragedy in cultural life due to the distinction made between form and content “we are forced to live in the sphere of reflection and not in the sphere of intuition” (Tillich 1969, p. 176).

#### **5.6.4. GADAMER ON UNDERSTANDING WHEN INTERPRETING**

Gadamer also questions the scientific reduction of understanding to an instrumental process in *Truth and Method*. He addresses the need within the human sciences (i.e. *Geisteswissenschaft*) to address the understanding of truth beyond a positivist methodological understanding of measurement. Gadamer does not neglect rigorous methods as such; rather, he is mainly moving the focus towards an emphasis on the importance of choosing the relevant method for what one is investigating.

“Experience” comes into this as an important term. Gadamer uses the two different German words for this: *Erlebnisse* (lived experience) and *Erfahrung* (experience).

Experience is central, as Grondin points out: “The primary role of Gadamer’s hermeneutics is to value experiences of truth, of ‘knowledge’, which go beyond the infinitely restricting limits of what allows itself to be objectified in a method of knowledge” (Grondin and Plant 2003, p. 22).

It is of interest in this context to look at the iconoclastic elements that are operating here. Iconoclasm stems from the idea of breaking images apart and comes from the *Bildverbot* in the Bible. When used by Gadamer it reflects that iconoclasm has a function in relations to destroy aesthetic consciousness (Grondin & Plant 2003). Because the aesthetic consciousness is related to defining art as belonging to a realm of its own, and by confirming this notion all kinds of knowledge or understanding that art could show are irrelevant. This problem stems, according to Gadamer, from Kant’s attempt to save metaphysics, but through the process of doing it he ended up making aesthetics into an autonomous area by distinguishing between free beauty, which has no impact on the intellect but is a matter of “taste”, and bound beauty, which is more conceptual and related to a function. This has, according to Gadamer, an indirect influence on how art also developed later on. Modernism expresses this notion of art with its *art pour l’art*. Now, if art did not have any reference outside itself, it is also (I would add) at risk of becoming mere entertainment. When art turns into these aesthetic objects, the possibility of participating in it as a lived experience, as an (surprisingly) event of truth is neglected, beyond the understanding of, for instance, putting the artwork into an historical context and referring it to the room in the gallery neatly placed beside the other artefacts. Nothing is really at stake that goes beyond a kind of cultural interest. Gadamer indirectly mentions art forms that with good will could be performative as Beuys’:

“Along with the arts we have just named there are arts in which one cannot speak of the self-presentation of the work of art in the same way, because their works are classified according to the purposes they serve in the praxis of life. These forms of art can at best claim a kind of co-

presence for their artistic dimension, which remains in the background.

In this category of arts, above all, are oratory, architecture and all decorative art” (Gadamer 2006, p 58)

The focus on “practice” is central to this late essay *Artworks in Word and Image*, (where Gadamer also reflects upon his writings on art in *Truth and Method*). By drawing on Hegel and art’s timeless presence he also couples this to the Christian eschatology and the understanding of the message and its contemporaneity. In relation to this Gadamer mentions the German word for the present, because *Gegenwart* (*warten* = waiting) depicts and becomes a metaphor for the moment as an eschatological concept. It is, like Tillich does in his sermon *Waiting*, also connecting the present to the anticipation of the future. In Tillich’s text it concerns “having” God through “not having” God, but instead, through anticipation, having God but not *possessing* God (in SF p. 149-152).

In relation to the concept of *poeisis*, Gadamer went around the difference between the work of poetry as it is being made, where nothing comes into being, and the secondary moment that occurs, as Gadamer calls it, when the poetry is literature. He calls the last shape of the literature an “echo of the religious concept of the Creation” – the *verbum creans* (the creating word) (p. 63)<sup>64</sup>. Here he is pointing at creation distanced from making an object with the use of hands

When Gadamer addresses the word *techné* he shows how in similar ways it also does not point to the end product as the work, but how *techné* is “the knowledge that guides the making” (p 63). The concept of arts represents a thing that has gone through production (*poeisis*) to be a thing made (poesie) out of this process. But Gadamer finds that the understanding of art as an end in itself is the same as

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<sup>64</sup> As a comment on this Agamben’s notion of *poeisis* is also relevant to address as he put a focus on the certain phase before the first word is made, or rather how the pause are constituting the poetry. In (Ringgaard, D., Iversen, S., & Nielsen, H. S. 2003). *Ophold: Giorgio Agambens litteraturfilosofi*. Akademisk Forlag.



referring to something that is not for any use.<sup>65</sup> The concept of *energia* used by Aristotle is defined analogously to *dynamis* – the process of being carried out is in focus and not the *ergon*, the realized work. Becoming and being that has become is not the same, Gadamer writes (p 70) and makes an analogy to life, because when we are alive we are both united to past and future. When he applies this to art and how art “is merging and showing itself”, we may see that there is literally a focus here that is also reflected in any process of going from making something to the final work.

The concept of *energia* is to be understood in relation to *aletheia* (un-concealment) and presentness (presence), which is the presence of spirit, as he is referring to Hegel, not to an *it*, but aware of a seeing that is *theoria*”, that is, to participate and to be with it; activity AND reality are needed to understand *energia*. When we are , standing before and artwork – it comes forth, it conceals itself and makes itself real at the same time. One sees the work from a certain standpoint, or from a horizon as Gadamer calls it in *Truth and Method*. The work of art is not a finished product that can be grasped and measured – I guess that Gadamer means that the work is *a* becoming in relation to it being, for instance, a play that through every new presentation emerges and requires participation, as well as distance in order to address it. So, addressing art through the scientific study of art is not studying art but the “function as art” (p. 74). Artistic creation is neither the creation nor the reception but it is with Gadamer’s own words:

Artistic creating itself is not something that one does [but something that comes through] –and the process of creating will also not be the thing that is repeated again later in one’s experiencing of the work. As I have repeatedly said: ‘It comes forth’ and ‘It is something in the work.’ But

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<sup>65</sup> In *Truth and Method* he points to a contrast between *kalon* (fine) and *chresimon* (useful) and also in the current essay he further analyses the ancient understanding of art, though I do not find that as pivotal to developing the current context.

what came forth and how it came forth cannot be said in words (2006, p. 75).

This is very close to the revelatory understanding of art in Tillich's work. Tillich does also address the artistic process itself. In *Courage to Be* the artist is the courageous person moving towards the corners of human existence, serving as a witness when looking into the abyss of being.

Could we maybe understand a workshop as a social sculpture that through the various people participating has the task of evoking the revelations that people have had? Well as Gadamer writes:

"The Vollzug (eng: reception as an event) is the interpretation" (s 77). So the very understanding is something that happens through a participation it is interpretation as participation in the artwork<sup>66</sup>.

#### 5.6.5. GADAMER VERSUS TILlich - ON ART

In both Gadamer's and Tillich's ontology, people are defined in relation to *Bruch* (break) and alienation as human conditions. Both are inspired by Hegel in the sense that the task is to recognize oneself in the situation of estrangement. Art in Tillich's understanding opens into an experience of ultimate reality. This experience is twofold: a recognition of one's own alienated situation, but also a possible experience of oneself as accepted. Hegel's experience of truth is speaking of how one is taken out of one's context, but when this happens one is also becoming whole. Whole used by Tillich is a matter of being healed – saved. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer unfolds that the real being of an artwork is its capability, through being experienced, of transforming the person experiencing it. Even though

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<sup>66</sup> When something is good it has come forth, says Gadamer, something is really there (p 72). In Gadamer's thoughts on architecture we further find some notion of how a building with a purpose may emerge upon you as an artwork comes forth.

Gadamer would probably resist it<sup>67</sup>, this notion of art is very close to Tillich's notion of art as breakthrough and revelation. Art in Tillich's understanding is revealing in the sense that, when one is captured or grasped by it, it opens up another perception into reality where an essential notion of being whole might be experienced, and through this experience one may be/is transformed (e.g.in CB). There is therefore a kind of wholeness represented in this momentous experience – an experience of infinite wholeness<sup>68</sup>.

When we remember Tillich's understanding of the overflowing of *Gehalt* (substance) in art, we find a similar process because the encounter with the work makes this breakthrough possible as a way of making a fragmentary experience of presence. It is ungraspable, Gadamer says, but Tillich on the other hand would have said that it is also a matter of being grasped by the artwork insofar as its form is broken through and a revelatory experience might occur, as one is grasped by an ultimate concern.

The iconoclastic fight Gadamer is taking on resembles also Tillich's defence of a theology freed from objectivist and theistic images of God: we may combine the two of them and carefully interpret them as both supporting a notion of positivism at risk of becoming a religion praising the entity of a neat truth – where science also becomes a “god” that obstructs participation in truth and a potential participation in a reality that unites fact and value. A reality where art is understood as being beyond aesthetic consciousness is able to come forth. But how can we avoid psychologizing and reducing the experience to just feelings? Using the term

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<sup>67</sup> Because of his lack of respect for the combination of theological and philosophical project that Tillich worked on. See e.g. Manning (2009).

<sup>68</sup> Tillich in ST addresses indirectly Hegel and his, “das Wahre ist das Ganze” (the truth is the whole); it could be worth a reflection that in his foreword Hegel continues after “The Truth is the Whole. The whole is though nothing other than the creature who completes itself during its development.” (my trans).(2010) *Åndens Fænomenologi* p 15, Danish trans. C. B. Østergaard, of *Phänomenologie des Geistes* 1807, Gyldendal).

*Bildung*, Gadamer addresses the idea of a *Bilded* (cultivated) person as one who is able to acknowledge his own ignorance – knowing the limitation of knowledge.

Knowledge in human sciences is a matter of being, which again relates Gadamer and Tillich in terms of how ontology and knowledge are intertwined – a common sense. Both see truth as possible through experience, although Tillich does have some reservations about the use of “experience” within theology and prefers to use the word “encounter” to describe how we encounter reality, or how it imposes itself upon us. The main thing for Tillich is, however, that the method does not hinder this encounter. Theology is focused on a certain encounter with reality – a religious one, which means to be ultimately concerned with reality – and this is a concrete concern. This also makes the interpretation of art and the symbols and ideas which it embody to be a theological task.

In relation to this, both might also agree with Hegel’s notion, which Gadamer reflects on, that the being of art is to present the human being to itself. On the other hand, Tillich was also inspired by Bergson’s theory of the *élan vital* and he would possibly have subscribed to Gadamer’s use of Bergson and the idea that the whole is represented in a momentous experience. In Tillich’s sense this is though only fragmentarily experienced. In a sermon entitled *Knowledge through Love* he is addressing the words of Paul: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face now I know in part but then I shall know even as I also am known” (SF, p 108). Knowledge as a full union is not fully possible under the terms of existence.

So how do we understand? Understanding is experience, as Gadamer teaches us. But Tillich’s understanding of revelation as an *experience* of truth might also get further inspiration from the understanding of “experience” in Gadamer’s work, as he mentions the tragedies of Aeschylus where *pathei mathos* is our mode of learning through suffering (Grondin & Plant 2003). This might very well be coupled with and shed more light of Tillich’s understanding of revelation, especially as it is related to art that incorporates the existential revelation of human

suffering. Some types of art that are revelatory are determined by the "dynamic character of both disruption and creation" in *Art and Ultimate reality* ( in OAA, p. 150). This, Tillich means, is art with expressionistic elements that both criticize through destroying ("breaks to pieces") the surface of our world at the same time as it infuses hope since it also anticipates. Tillich also says all expression has this double character that is also experienced with any kind of interpretation where "there is a gap between that which expresses and that which is expressed" (p. 139). The paramount indicator of religious art in Tillich's perspective is that it mediates "ultimate reality, which is *not* another word for God but the idea of God is expressed in it". It is in contrast to our encounter with reality where things of unimportance become our "gods", when so-called vain values that are destroying us become the goal for our efforts. When Tillich writes about an ultimate reality that "underlies every reality" (p. 140) showing the world as we see it as "not-ultimate, preliminary, transitory and finite", it is not based upon the idea that we should value more an essential never changing reality. No, the reality that is ultimate is there all the time, but we cannot experience it fully except, for instance, as fragmentary experiences of full presence (Tillich 1987).

So far, all kinds of revelation seem to be far away from any workshop experiences and to be solely art-related. So why address it in this context? About its relation with innovation, is it not just a myth about innovation as the inspired genius at the eureka moment, when studies prove that events triggering innovation comes from "multiple and seemingly coincidental sources", according to *The Innovation Journey* (Van de Ven et al. 1999, p. 26). The notion of revelation as breakthrough within the theology of Tillich is connected to the experience of the "new" as a new being focused on a symbol of another essential humanity where human alienation and an ambiguous split between the individual considered as different and secluded versus the participating individual considered as receiving and open is healed through a synthesis of them both.

I find it fitting here in relations to the idea of learning through suffering as well as the revelatory art experience to cite from *On the idea of a Theology of Culture*.<sup>69</sup> Here Tillich's concept of religion is folded out in such a way that we also may see how intertwined religion is with the art experience also when it reveals suffering as but though transformed into a simultaneous experience of nothing and something in its ultimate sense:

Religion is the experience of [or directedness towards] the unconditioned and this means the experience of absolute reality founded on the experience of absolute nothingness. One experiences the nothingness of entities, of values, the nothingness of the personal life. Wherever this experience has brought one to the nothingness of an absolute radical No, there it is transformed into an experience, no less absolute, of reality, into a radical Yes. This Yes has nothing to do with a new reality that stands beside or above things; such a reality would only be a thing of a higher order, which in its turn would become subject to the power of the No. Rather, throughout everything, the reality forces itself upon us that is simultaneously a No and a Yes to all things. It is not a being, it is not substance, it is not the totality of beings. It is, to use a mystical formulation, what is beyond being, what is simultaneously and absolutely nothing and something. Nevertheless, even the predicate 'is' conceals what is at issue here, because it is not a question of some actual being that concerns us, but of an actuality of meaning that convulses everything and builds everything anew." (trans. Nuevo 1987 p. 24-25)

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<sup>69</sup> This is a later translation of the original lecture *Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur* from 1919 than I have used previously and I found it in (Manning 2015). But as I have used the version in Luther Adams book originally, I did not change the previous quotes, but this last one is far more radical and (possibly) also more close to the original text.

### 5.6.6. METHODS OF REVELATION?

I have tried in the previous part to incorporate my methodological concerns into the presentation of the papers under each headline related to revelation. Now I will now just give a short example here of my way of combining of Tillich's and Gadamer's revelatory methods.

In the *Death of God* paper I also try to understand the whole from the part(s) and the part(s) from the whole. And one might say that the model is simply its core and the moving circles of relations depicting it. But it further stresses the importance of understanding as a fusion of horizons or/and an active movement of different horizons in order to perceive the situation from different perspectives. The shattering of images, the iconoclastic elements are also present. The shattering of a "form" in order for it to come into existence is found in both Gadamer's and Tillich's art experience. It is the notion of *alethes*, as we also know from Heidegger, where the "unhiddenness" is emerging as the artwork becomes present. This resembles how the image of the cube imitates this by being broken through.

## 5.7. PAPER 7. REVEALING HEARTS - PAUL TILlich'S CONCEPT OF REVELATION: AN APPLICATION TO BUSINESS INNOVATION (2014)\*

### *Abstract*

*Some small business owners want to balance personal values as well as economic values. "I have to follow my heart" or "it must be meaningful", some of them say. But how might they be able to know what gives meaning to the heart? The philosophical theologian Paul Tillich finds that the problem is that "controlling knowledge" (e.g. technical testing) might be safe but unimportant, while "receiving knowledge", which can only be verified by direct participation (e.g. intuition), might be important but uncertain. This paper shows how this tension can be made fruitful in relation to business innovation with reference to Tillich's account of the meaning of revelation through culture and art, summed up in the statement that "revelation is the manifestation of the ground of being for human knowledge" (Tillich, 1951, p. 94), which, we argue, can be extended to everyday experiences, for example, in business life. In Tillich's own terms, even preliminary concerns may point to an ultimate concern (Tillich, 1964), which can also be understood as "knowledge of the heart". Our account is also connected to wider discussions concerning the nature of intuition.*

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\* Saghaug, K.F, Pattison, G & Lindgren, P 2014, Revealing Hearts: Paul Tillich's Concept of Revelation: an Application to Business Innovation, Academic Quarter, vol 9, s. 126-138.



### 5.7.1. VALUES OF THE HEART

In the last workshops in which I participated, I briefly “met” some of Steve Jobs’ “commandments”. One was: Do what you love! This could be such a cliché, but when I address the heart and love, here it is certainly not a Disney version of it. It is a serious reflection upon the values that came to the surface both during the interviews as well as from the results of the survey from 2012.

It is significant that 20 of 22 respondents’ scores were at the high end of the scale when asked about personal values. I am though only addressing this indicative in relation to this group of business owners because there were 22 respondents but 37 businesses participated. In fact, if all the others had an opposite view the result would have been very different. Nevertheless, values of the heart were also something I experienced throughout the project as vital to the owners, so these numbers were in line with my experience from the participative observation.

So, now that we have found in these papers that several of the business owners seem to have this need for equilibrium between business values and personal values, and for the ones who have answered, the majority also say that in the case of conflict personal values rule. Their businesses were connected to their personality, to their values, and they aimed to do something that was meaningful for them in the sense of having their heart in it.

But just making the paper *Revealing Hearts* came up as if by accident, or I could refer to Gadamer and imply that it might have been a kind of “truth” happening through the dialogue (Gadamer 2004). I had presented my *Methods of Revelation?* paper at the IHRSC conference, and in the aftermath participants were invited to submit an abstract for a special issue. I had a conversation with one of the editors and as I was speaking about my project I talked about one of my “field” experiences, which is also mentioned as the first example in the current paper. In the aftermath of this meeting I realized that I could make a new paper that addressed the core of my PhD project. It concerns *why* Tillich’s theology of

revelation may shed light upon vital aspects related to understanding some of the business owners, and consequently the need for mainstream business innovation to reflect these value judgments. And the heart seemed to be a metaphor that captured the essence of this.

But first the paper introduces some research conducted on intuition before it enters the philosophical theological approach offered by Tillich, inspired by Augustine. By way of approaching Tillich on revelation as connected to knowledge of the heart, I chose to address some “scientific” research as well as “humanistic” research. This was done in order to reflect the two different modes of knowledge that Tillich refers to the technical (controlling) knowledge and the experiential (receiving) knowledge.

The common understanding of intuition is that it is a kind of gut feeling – a sensuous emotion that gives us an idea of what we should do or decide on (Gigerenzer 2007). The slightly funny aspect related to intuition then is also whether it is “placed” in the stomach or the brain and for our context it is fitting that some new scientific intuition research of the technical kind find that the heart is the vital organ involved when it comes to intuition (Bradley 2011; McCraty et al. 2004; Tomasino 2011; Tressoldi et al. 2009). However, this paper shows that knowledge of the heart might be of a different kind. “Heart” in the sense of a theological understanding is connected to a more receptive mode of knowing. But it is also something more, as Tillich also reflects on in ST1 in order to address knowledge that is of another kind: we have to go beyond fact versus value without losing either of them – but beyond them the heart also becomes the source of revelation. As the *Revealing Hearts* article<sup>70</sup> puts it: “Tillich sees the desire for knowledge as a kind of *Eros* (the Greek word for love) since *Eros* is the power that strives for the reunion of elements that have become estranged (e.g.,

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<sup>70</sup> Since this paper recently has been turned into a published article, it is thoroughly edited and also a central part in my thesis. I choose to take parts of the text directly in to this journey in order to ensure that it is fully represented as a part of this thesis

individualization and participation). As for Augustine, it is therefore love that provides Tillich with the key to overcoming the tension of fact and value and bringing us closer to the knowledge we need but lack. And again as for Augustine this is not just a matter of love in the modern sense of a certain kind of ‘feeling’ but love as revealing our very being. In Tillich’s terminology, love has ontological force. In fact, Tillich believes that the question about the kind of being that human beings are (what he calls the ontological question) is “present to everybody at every moment” (Tillich 1954, p. 25). Love therefore manifests life as it truly is, in its ‘being’, to use Tillich’s terminology. And because love reveals the truth of human being and because everyone who exists has ‘being’, to participate in being is also to participate in love, even if in a fragmentary and estranged manner – not every love is a perfect love but, despite its imperfections, even an imperfect love can tell us something about who we really are.” (Saghaug et.al. 2014, p. 131)

### **5.7.2. MEANING – KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEART**

At the center of our personality, as Augustine depicts it, the heart expresses what our whole personality is directed towards. As written in the paper *Revealing Hearts*: “Tillich’s characteristic expression for what Augustine talks about as the restless heart is ultimate concern, which he finds reflected in the first commandment: “You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul...” (Deut.6.5, Luke10.27). It is, metaphorically speaking, a question coming from the heart of human existence and, as Tillich defines it, this is the ‘object’ of theology and therefore theology should courageously (Cf. Lat. “cor” =‘heart’) engage with areas where this ultimate concern is expressed” (p. 130 ). An illustration of this expression is the field experience that initiated the reflection on the heart in the first place and is depicted in the paper. It concerns a short story of a business owner from a focus group interview I made:

“When they were asked about what the ideal network for their businesses would be like, one of them, the owner of a larger handicraft

company, replied:” The network must give meaning here...” she knocked at her chest above her heart.”(Saghaug et.al. 2014, p. 129f.)

I analyze the gesture of the knocking hand above the heart related also to our premises of the study, explicated in the paper *Different Thinking*, the question that also concerns our existence: What gives meaning?

The headline “meaning” has dealt with aspects of artistic creativity. In this paper, the artistic creativity at the side of the business owners describes how the heart is expressed as acts of meaning. And in Tillich’s view, as we have seen, art crosses the fact value distinction. The article unfolds:

“A work of art is a fact, a reality, but it is not ‘just’ a fact, it is also meaningful, expressive of deep value – of the heart. Art is therefore able to connect people to the ground of their being. It fragmentarily reveals the human situation of estrangement but also shows how the essential human being could be. In fragmentary ways it both opens the abyss (the ‘groundlessness’ of the human condition) and also discloses a potential ground. Art represents the fragments that, negatively understood, are only bits and pieces of what we may see – as St Paul wrote “ (...)now I know in part (...) “ 1 Cor.13:12. However, fragments are also gifts from God; in *Knowledge though Love* Tillich expresses how they are the openings that make it possible for us to see anything at all or to know that there is something and not just nothing. Even what he calls the shock of non-being, that is, the awareness of death and finitude that comes when we wake from a dreaming child-like innocence to the realities of life and becoming a fully actualized adult human being who is aware of their finitude may also reveal another side. Art gives us a privileged access to this other side, because art is the medium that, according to Tillich, points at the creative ground of our being and reminds us that knowing is a matter of reuniting what has been separated in existence or in life (Tillich 1948;1952; 1954; 1963) ” (Saghaug et al. 2014, p. 132)

The business owner as the artist (when they express an urge to make business model innovation on the basis of a higher purpose), as we have reflected in the paper lies at the bottom of this understanding.

### **5.7.3. REVELATION – SMALL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE EVERYDAY**

But *how* does the heart know? This paper is a theoretical meditation on what it means to know what the heart wants and it is illustrated by empirical examples from interviews, which are interpreted in the light of the unfolding of Tillich's thoughts on revelation.

The paper uses these extracts from interviews as ways of illustrating how some of the business owners have directed their personalities towards an ultimate concern, which expresses itself in a plurality of ways. It expresses what their business is based upon. Their own personalities seem for some of them to be able to incorporate the tensions between economic and personal values, and they use this tension as the basis for their judgments, as the main factor which their business is built upon and as a way of working

The lengthy example in the article displays how a business owner an architect works collecting bits and pieces (fragments!) (p. 132). And she shares a short story of how she saw a solution that seems to underpin her focus as she is determined to work in a way where problems may be turned around and become a part of the final solution. She offers more than a product or a service - as she has her heart in the business there is a focus on the "whole" as imperative for her business model.

Is this what gives meaning to the heart?' In the paper: "We argue that revelation offers more than 'meaning'; it also offers a spiritual presence that is beyond our control and that opens a room for contemplating the situation beyond the intuitive experience or the event. It takes both the suffering (passion) and the passion (love) and unites them - at least fragmentarily." (p. 134)

A final empirical excerpt from the paper may serve to illustrate this. Another business owner had a traumatic experience involving her family. The woman makes a vow in a situation of extreme distress of pain, where she promises to share this with others if her child gets well. The outcome of which was, via alternative medicine, turned into a business. And this example as the paper unfolds more is closer to the notion we have of these “decisive revelatory moments in life marked by the confluence of the abyss-like uncertainty of the situation and the love that creates a kind of double sided knowledge that transcends pain and even transforms it into passion. It shows that, when they become grasped by their ultimate concern, people may be able to create a product or a service that is for the benefit of others, as she has done. This fragmentarily revealed presence is a presence that is both linked to the history, the background and values of the business owner as well as embracing their present and the future that they anticipate for themselves, their work, and those their business will relate to.” (p. 134). This perspective will though be further developed in the presentation of the next paper.

The *Revealing Hearts* paper ends : “The ‘heart’ thus reveals an intuitive knowledge that goes beyond self-interest and toward foresight and participation, revealing a presence that allows us to be creative in meaningful if fragmentary ways. It is a kind of intuition that may be seen as a lens through which to address and synthesize fact and value – and, via love, reveals how we might move beyond both in concrete action. This is one of the central contributions in this article which we hope have demonstrated one aspect of the relevance of a revelatory theology for our secularized times.” (Saghaug et. al. 2014, p. 135).

A later reflection also tells me that “ value- judgments” must, according To Tillich, be rooted in the qualities of the object we evaluate (in ST1, p 21). This means that we cannot really get to know anything substantial unless we participate with the object of our investigation, and nor may the business owners obtain knowledge unless they have their heart in their business. And on revelation itself, it is important to notice that even everyday experience might be the locus of revelation.

For researchers in business studies, it seems vital to obtain a richer understanding of business owners as people who are (or at least some of them are!) not only economically focused (or to put it bluntly selfishly-oriented). This could mean that individual values need to be more sophisticatedly addressed, and we should not be blinded by the mainstream economic ideas that focus on a rationality that perceives value from a very limited economic perspective. If the common understanding of value at any level in the business (or the business model) is simply related to an economic understanding of it, it follows that an essential understanding of how value itself may be innovated in extraordinary ways is in risk of being eradicated. Furthermore I think this deserves attention in relations to what innovation of value could mean. Now I can reflect more on a distance to the initial meetings I had with the field. And then I met the Blue Ocean Strategy as a way to create value innovation through a business model. But really, for the majority of the business owners I met through these projects, value innovation through a new business model would not catch their attention and passionate energy unless it had the dimension of the revealing heart as the locus for innovation of value.

## 5.8. PAPER 8. MOMENTS - FROM SUFFERING TO PASSION (2015)\*

### *Abstract*

*The notion of “moment” is developed by addressing Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Tillich as a “fragment” of participation in understanding and as a combinations of passion as suffering and passion as pain. It is an “opening” upon which innovation from a personal perspective may be grounded. It also suggests that we may understand value as something albeit fragmentarily, it is not just created but also discovered.*

### 5.8.1. INNOVATION OF VALUE - A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

The previous paper has briefly dealt with passion as pain and passion as love – this is unfolded further in the *Moment* paper. In *Revealing Hearts* we found that revelation is possibly a synthesis of what “is” and what “ought to be”.

The aim of the current paper is to further consider whether value is simply something we put in or whether it is something we discover, and that, albeit fragmentarily, what we discover in discovering meaning is a realm of value that goes beyond the individual and beyond the immediate occasion.

It is worth noticing here that within the context of business and innovation processes, the models which fit these smaller businesses’ needs often stem from a linear and technical science perspective with a stage gate approach (Cooper 2013; Tidd, Bessant, & Pavitt 2001). While this is the mainstream approach, other research also following innovation processes has shown that the processes are far more complex and dynamic (Garud & Karnøe 2003; Van de Ven et al. 1999). The

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\* Saghaug, K., Pattison G. (2015) *Moments - From Suffering to Passion*. A working paper planned for submission - at this point it contributes to the research journey.



present study had the notion (and also some relevant experience) that there could be certain revelatory moments during such a business innovation process that could decisively influence the character of the choice of business opportunities, and we wanted to explore this further.

This paper is a reflection on the results of four semi-structured interviews performed as the background to the aforementioned survey of the business owners participating in the WIB project. The four business owners were chosen because three of them had given high scores for the experience of some eureka moments during the fourth WIB workshop. The one who did not have this experience had not attended this workshop, but was nevertheless chosen because this respondent, like the other three, had answers scoring at the high end in connection with the importance of personal values as well as economic values. Further, my experience of all four of them during the project was that they were passionately interested in their businesses, and all of them had been business owners over a longer period (minimum of five years).

The main question in the semi-structured interviews was: “What do you remember from the project?” The purpose behind asking this question was to further clarify, after the project was finalized, whether there had been any exceptional experiences or moments in their work with business model innovation and, if so, had this experience had a lasting significance for the participant. If there had been any moments that were revealing for them, it was still likely to form a part of their memories.

During the course of the interviews it became clear that, in relation to business model innovation, the vital moments for these business owners had occurred years ago. The basis of their current engagement or even love for their businesses seemed to be founded upon certain events that had something in common. This turned out to be a finding we would like to share in order to point out how the notion of *moment* may serve to address aspects of business model innovation process and the involved value creation that otherwise might be ignored.

In this paper we have Corporate Social Responsibility as a point of departure. But I will leave this out here and take it in as a possible perspective later beyond this journey. Because as I reflect upon this paper now, it seems as if it can take its departure from how an innovation process in a mainstream understanding looks. And that is more relevant for the current context. For instance we could take the business model innovation process as Chesbrough visualizes it, which is depicted as a funnel with holes in it, or a stage- gate model inspired by Cooper. Both of them are joined in the idea that we start at a certain point. The importance is not here to address the entire process and its elements. The important to notice in relations to this paper is how an innovation process in all the models has an enclosed beginning and an end. The beginning is defined in room and time as the starting point, where we begin the innovation process. Whatever kind of mainstream model you choose this is present. We start at a certain point.

But this approach might miss something, because the participants also came from “something”, from a history, from another place before they came into the project and were placed either outside their businesses, in a room within their businesses, or even outside under the sky. And this came even more to the surface as I interviewed four of them winter 2013.

For the people attending this project they also started together in a room. Even if we are only together in a workshop, a context where business owners are working on building or sculpting a new business model, these people were present in that exact same room, working with that challenge. And this is also an outcome of this investigation, that the room in itself has a concrete impact<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> For further on the impact of the room see for instance Scharmer’s Theory U p. 147 and to learn from the stories of the past in relations to places and the future p. 187, 453

There could firstly be a focus on *the building and the presence*. If we address the physical movement or experience of working with an abstract model in a more practical way, we might even say that this could be connected with the metaphor of “building” a business model. “Building blocks” were the metaphor used in relation to the elements of a business model. This leads us to borrow some inspiration from Heidegger (whose notion of art Tillich was also inspired by). “Dwelling” is the basic character of being human, says Heidegger, as he displays the original meaning of the word “dwelling” as comprising both *to be* and *to build* (Heidegger 1971).

Turning building and dwelling into an ontological understanding of people, the very essence of being is also building. And as building is semantically connected to dwelling, it is preserving and also creating a space “from which something begins its presencing” (p 154) by turning around the understanding of boundary from being something that ends to being something that begins. The situation of dwelling is a situation of waiting and anticipation, as Tillich also says in *Das Wohnen, der Raum und die Zeit* (1933), the room is neither infinite nor finite, but a polarity. *Die raumschaffende Kraft* (the spacemaking forces) are present where people express themselves and are given their existence (I MW Vol. 2, p 153). This happens as time breaks through the border of the old space and *Gestalt* (form) and enters into the new. This is also a kind of revelation as the newness also needs history and *Gegenwart* (presence) unites time and space. This is a search that people undertake but seldom fulfil (Tillich 1990).

Could building something concrete and occupying space when doing it resemble the people attending a workshop about business model innovation? Could the understanding of a so-called AS IS business model represent history as a necessity for the new to break through into a TO BE business model and innovate value?

This could be turned around and reflected in the way they also came from a room and entered another place. As we all have done, as we all do, we are in the same room and it is wrapped round our bodies and it is within us as well. The cube or a box could be the very image of how this room is the polarity in which we create

form and content. If the room is polarity in itself, then the ontological pairs of polarity permeate it in the very minute we build, think and dwell.

But the presence of history also raises another question. Could it be possible that the process of building also starts *long before* they enter the room, and/or the possibility of the moment occurs as a repetition against a background of an historic event in their lives? This potential unconscious reflection upon the past, the present and the future moves us to the second aspect, which could be looking at value as something to be discovered by a fragmentary presence of it.

The paper addresses Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Tillich in relations to the moment and I will take some smaller extracts in here, first from Kierkegaard and then some from Tillich.

“Kierkegaard’s idea of the *Øjeblik*, the moment of vision that gives us the basis for any kind of deciding or acting that is more than merely impulsive or random *and*, for Kierkegaard, the moment of vision is itself specifically described as a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal. In fact, as we go deeper into Kierkegaard’s analysis we see that this synthesis of the temporal and the eternal is, in his view, necessary for human beings to be selves at all, that is, selves having a conscious sense of identity extended over time.” In the twentieth century, Kierkegaard’s account of the moment of vision became one of the key elements in existential philosophy, both in secular and in religious forms. An example of the former is Martin Heidegger, whose work *Being and Time* was one of the defining philosophical works of the first half of the century. An example of the latter is Paul Tillich, who emphasized precisely the element of the eternal in the moment of vision, as indicated by the title of one of his collections of sermons: *The Eternal Now*. However, there is also an interesting difference between them in that for Heidegger (in this respect quite close to Kierkegaard) the moment of vision and the possibility of acting upon it is always and essentially individual. For Tillich, however, it could also be social—the most important example in his career being the German election of 1933 and the choice it

offered between democracy and National Socialism." (Kierkegaard 1980, Heidegger 1962, Tillich 1963(2002))<sup>72</sup>

This combination of the individual and the social seems to be reflected in some of our findings if we define social as something that occurs in, for instance, the social sculpture, limited to a certain context where people interact through work and dialogue

“Kierkegaard perceives the world of time as the proper sphere in which human beings are to work out the meaning of their lives, Kierkegaard wanted to bring time and eternity into relationship to each other, and this is what he did with his interpretation of the moment of vision in which we see the passage of time illuminated and sustained by the presence of the eternal” But since this project basically focuses on Tillich who also was highly inspired by Kierkegaard the next paragraph will deal more extensively with him .

### **5.8.2. “IF ANY PRESENT HAS MEANING IT HAS ETERNITY”**

This quote from *The Religious Situation*, (Tillich 1956, p. 35) leads directly to my next headline that concerns fragmentary presence.

### **5.8.3. METHODS OF REVELATION – A FRAGMENTARY PRESENCE BOTH FOR OWNERS AND RESEARCHER**

When I was asking about the business owners’ revelatory experiences during the workshops, something else also came up that seemed inherent to another future perspective. Some of the interviews unfolded moments that seemed to be far more important for some of the small business owners and their creation of value than any innovation process or project could ever be.

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<sup>72</sup> Since I am “quoting” from our working paper there will be no page numbers here because the paper will at submission of the PhD thesis appear in the end as appendix and the pages will (probably) be altered.

### **The Interviews - the Notion of Moments among the Business Owners**

One of the experienced business owners told when she was asked what she remembered from the workshops said: “It was definitely to meet up with the other business owners”, it was the pauses in between that made the participation valuable for her. So maybe it was the meetings between them that could create the moments? The question is though if these are the moments that are decisive or if it is truly moments of vision? The moment could be decisive as some new connections between people were established. Even though they did not seem to be paramount as another aspect also emerged. More importantly I had not considered that the innovation process actually started long before and on another level and based on a personal experience that triggered the development of the idea for a business. And during the course of interviewing some quite different notions occurred which gave a new perspective on decisive moments.

By asking a bit in to the background of the business there were for some of the prosperous small business owners histories with moments filled with the experience of suffering. These stories presented below combined then with some of the other stories that occurred during the project seemed to connect pain and passion, a word play on the English word “passion” and its double meaning.

One would never be a business owner because she had this vivid image in her mind from her teenage years of seeing her broken father coming home after he had to fire a lot of the employees due to economic crisis in the building industry. This responsibility for her employees is a heavy burden: but on the other hand it seems to make her work even more passionate as she said she want to make a business that leaves the world a bit better for later generations. Here the moment that made her decide not to make a business seem to have also a great impact and the social responsibility has many directions. This seemed to be both a way of thinking about the employees as well as it is not a strategy but more a premise for how the business owner wants to conduct her work.

Another business owner who started her business' offerings initiated by the recovery of a sick child that got well through alternative treatment, inspiring the mother to educate herself within this and making a business out of it "in order to help others with the same problems " as she often said as motivation. Here it is a mission to share the knowledge with others. Others need to know what she has experienced and seen and at the same time being helped.

Thirdly an active entrepreneur lost both her parents as teenager, an experience that she openly tells about in media, have made her want to create new ways for people to see and connect via technology. She did not find anything useful in the workshops, but that was also a kind learning, she said giggling a bit.

Fourthly one formerly very active entrepreneur became ill, but that seemed to change her business only more towards creating value that could help children with physical and psychological problems. When asked into some of the workshop experiences it was words as "great to work on my dream" that described her concentrated dwelling in an art workshop as she was creating an image of the service she wanted to offer. She had even saved it and carried it all the way home afterwards.

There seemed to be a connection between suffering and passion, "opening" the English concept of passion as both depicting suffering as well as love, thus showing that the link to the passion of Christ – the suffering of Christ – may be metaphorically deeply connected to the creation of the new, where suffering and pain seem to have been conquered through creation. This, in a theological understanding, is not creative destruction, even though both words may be found in this personal experience of ruin, but within the experience of suffering something new might occur.

This creation of "the new being", which is Tillich's metaphor for Christ as a human being that is "related" to his essential being, also proves a point in our context. We are not able to think, create or be free unless we somehow "participate", even

fragmentarily. In Tillich's sense, the moment is an act of participation and in this participation we experience in a fragmentary way that we belong to something more lasting than, for instance, a business model.

As I have reflected upon in several of the previous papers, knowledge is an act of participation that cannot be abstracted from the living situation. This is what "presence" means. Knowledge is a participation that happens in a context and even though how fragmented the experience of participation is, it is the eternal that offers the occurrence, the very possibility of presence to be experienced. But as it is eternal it is not something we can master by ourselves, on the contrary we must forget ourselves.

"This is in many ways reflected in a conversation between people engaged in something that they both find meaningful. The dialogue - the subject matter we speak about - may transform us because through turning our attention away from ourselves to the subject-matter at issue we become present and "caught by the moment". This can be a revelatory moment - where truth happens because eternity reveals itself as presence. But the moment we start to reflect upon the dialogue as such - we are no longer present in the now and step out of our exposedness and out of the relation, and back into the temporal *chronos*. But being present we *do* know something, even if it is only fragmentarily and , if it is experienced as decisive, we may experience the moment as filled with Presence and realize that we are touched by what Tillich refers to as the existential now (*existentiale nunc* in, ST 3 p. 420) . This is metaphorically speaking a curve that comes from the eternal into the moment of a revelatory experience, and returns again going both forward and upwards as Tillich depicts it. And leaving room for the experience of fragmentary participation, a moment of presence. Apprehending 'the eternal now'<sup>73</sup> in the moment of vision does not mean grasping a thoroughly reflected concept in the manner of philosophy. Rather, it means apprehending that there is something at

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<sup>73</sup> The title of one of Tillich's collections of sermons (1963) SCM Press: London.



play that is greater than we ourselves are. We only grasp it—or are grasped by it—in part, in a fragmentary way.”

In the course of this journey I have used the word “fragmentary” a number of times. I have been going into details analyzing a small buzzword, then trying to see a bigger picture on how people interact, then again looking at smaller incidents, then taking the bits and pieces together and see how the pieces of glass makes a new image, a possible new insight. But what are these fragments if we approach Tillich?

Tillich’s use of *fragment* or *fragmentarily* in relations to revelatory experiences of ultimate reality might at first seem insignificant, turns out to be central to the understanding of participation and of the character that this gives to the moment – and it is. Maybe we could dwell a bit with the fragment as the very symbol of the moment. Because there is a profoundness in Tillich’s use of “fragment” that signifies how the tiniest and smallest, maybe the most insignificant particularity may be the participative link towards the bigger. The fragment might point at the “little” story as the one of “great” importance<sup>74</sup>.

When Tillich explains the fragment he illustrates it with the image of a part stemming from a sculpture of God, even if it is just a bit torn apart from the whole, it is still represents it and points to it (ST3 p. 140). So the fragment then is in a paradoxical way both a shattered little thing but this represents and even participates in eternity. But there is also more to it than this possible simplicity. A

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<sup>74</sup> In some narrative research one finds that there is a so-called postmodern movement from the big narratives to the small stories as mediating meaning, which could be an example of this (Andrew, M .et.al. 2013. *Doing Narrative Research*, Sage)

fragment is not just “pieces of a totality”<sup>75</sup> which would bring fragment into a kind of “a being” which would contradict Tillich’s use of symbols. The use of it is symbolic because it as a symbol points beyond itself, but it differentiates itself from a sign because it also participates at the same time in the “what” it symbolizes (*Dynamics of Faith* and ST1 and 3).

Let me shortly unfold three different aspects that I find important in relations to how we may understand the fragment based upon Tillich’s thoughts:

Firstly, since revelations only can be fragmentarily experiences of the ground of our being, it is the very “fragmentary” character that is vital for the revelatory moment. The fragment has thus as the participatory symbol another characteristics - it has left a wound or an opening into/ towards the whole. In itself fragment is an opening as well as the momentum that makes any revelation possible. Fragment is the very symbol, opening a mode of experience for any moment of vision to happen – we might even say that fragments addressing Tillich’s use of it is the condition for any revelation. It is a fragment, unambiguously into the ambiguous existence – offering a fragmentary experience of Spiritual Presence. It is the fragment as a kind of in-between realized as in the story when Jesus died on the cross and the curtains of the temple are torn apart. God’s *shekinah* is no longer dwelling metaphorically speaking in the temple, but there is a bash created, an opening towards the rest of the world. If, as Tillich states, the symbol of Christ shows manhood in its essential being, Jesus as Christ is also symbolically epitomizing the very understanding of fragment. One individual reveals humanity as a whole.

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<sup>75</sup> The Roman Catholic theologian David Tracy seems to be inspired by Tillich. In a conversation between him and The French Philosopher Jacques Derrida, who states that fragments are pieces of a totality (because it is taken from a whole or it is a symbol, of two broken pieces), Tracy replies that this is not the eschatological use of it – here the fragment is “related to something nameable, something incomprehensible, the name that must not be spoken” (Tracy 1999, p. 184) *Fragments: The Spiritual Situation of Our Times* Caputo, in J. D., & Scanlon, M. J. (Eds.). *God, the gift, and postmodernism*. Indiana University Press.

Secondly, fragment is also a symbol of the broken or simply of brokenness. The fragment that Tillich uses as a mode of experiencing might serve as an illustration of the character of human beings in their existential predicament. In pain, torn apart and bewildered in relations to seeking meaning (as presence) - but within existence one can only experience essence fragmentarily. But since we all origin from the same power of life according to Tillich we may trough *participation with others* share both the fragmentarily experience stemming from our wounded and estranged state to continue in Tillich's terminology but through this meeting and the experience of our own finitude and fragility be healed. This understood in the sense that we both share the experience of both being parted as well as participating fragmentarily in the ground of our being even if this, again, may only be fragmentarily experienced .

Thirdly, the very essence of fragment seems to inherent the whole of Christianity and contains in itself the beginning and the end. Tillich writes “The fragment is anticipation “. Since fragment is anticipation it is thus as a “thing” connected to another thing or things *eschaton/eschata* (the last thing(s). The last things are the symbolic expressions of the relation of the temporal to the eternal and it furthers symbols the transition from temporal to eternity (p 394 ST3). That also makes “fragment” as anticipation to be an expression like *eschaton* on “ our standing in every moment in face of the eternal , though in a particular mode of time.”(p 394 ST 3)<sup>76</sup>

As the paper reflects, this fragmentary presence could have been the background for the resolute decision made by some of the business owners to turn a personal tragedy into “a work of art”. If we understand this as their unique way of creating value, this could turn out to be a kind of revolt against the dominant economic spirit. It implies that some of them really wanted to live their lives through their

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<sup>76</sup> We may think of St Paul's saying: 'For now we see in a glass [i.e. a mirror] darkly, but then we will see face to face. Now we know only in part; then I will know fully even as I am known' (1 Cor 13.12).

businesses, at least for many years. But living life this way, creating something new upon the background of a previous experience of pain could have been their way of experiencing the moment. Through this participation, gaining a new knowledge that made the innovation of value possible as they got another kind of knowledge that turned their passion as suffering into passion as love.

To innovate value in a business might then if we take this further into a workshop context or an innovation process be to address the meaning that one has fragmentarily experienced years ago, and by doing this again and again one revives this moment fragmentarily. So there are new moments that might add to the previous ones, transform them and give new substance into the present. But maybe there is also a reflection back to one of the main and revelatory moments that recurs in new ways. And if we try to interpret this with inspiration from Tillich's theology, it would be a distinction between the original revelatory event, The Christ and the secondary events that are reflections of this.

I will now depart from the paper and try to put a further perspective on it that could be relevant to seeing the connection between passion as suffering/pain and passion as love. The paper addresses passion as suffering and passion as love in relation to revelations of the moment, and Tillich might be offering us a further perspective on this in his sermon *The Depth of Existence*, which could show us why this Janus face of passion is connected to our ultimate concern and the moment.

As a point of departure, Tillich in this text addresses two biblical texts: "the spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1. Cor 2.10), and "Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, O Lord" (Psalms 130.1). The two words of relevance here are "deep" and "depth". He uses these words as symbols expressive of our spiritual life. In these examples of depth, one shows a search for truth in a spiritual way (God), while the other reflects upon suffering as being deep. "Surface" becomes the shallow and empty dimension, and "depth" the substantial one (Tillich 1948).

And we might even recall how Lakoff and Johnsen’s use of metaphors again become relevant. We know this as going into the *depth* of things, being *deeply* involved, or experiencing a *deep* sorrow, or *deep* pain. The metaphor *deep* is connected to both a seriousness and insistence, as well as a dimension of immense sorrow.

Tillich uses this in relation to the personal encounter, to experience something beyond the immediate occasion. He uses it in relation to science, how science has questioned the assumptions that people have and has scrutinized their foundation, and how questions have been asked throughout history, and new analysis and new investigations followed by discoveries have made cracks in the current paradigm. They are breakthroughs, they are also aspects of what a revelation is.

At the same time, Tillich points out how we take many of our assumptions about life for granted. Tillich criticized the Western lifestyle as superfluous: we live on the surface and not in the depths of life. Our priorities are embedded in the working life, in entertainment and in being in a constant movement.

Within the deep are also what Tillich calls the demonic forces and the evil forces. In a psychological sense this means that there is danger in approaching the depth, one might get lost; on the other hand, one has “to face the deep things of life” (p 61). But one explanation could be that we avoid the depths, and to this Tillich says: “There is no excuse which permits us to avoid the depth of truth, the only way to which lies through the depth of suffering” (p 61). It hurts to address the depth, to break away from the mainstream, to get away from a reasoning that is not grounded in a truth that goes beyond a fact – value distinction.

On the other hand, the journey does not end in suffering; suffering ends in joy. And if we address the empirical field we also see that for the interviewees their passion as suffering ended in joy or showed the other side of passion as joyful. This again might be visible when Tillich talks about eternal joy in the same sermon. He claims

it cannot be reached by living on the surface – on the contrary one needs to break through the surface – again metaphorically.

A conclusion of this paper could be: Suffering as passion and love as passion are both hidden in the depths of existence, and revelation is the only way by which passion as suffering may be turned into passion as joy and love. These seem to be some of the moments this paper has reflected upon.

During the course of investigation I also realized that I as researcher had my attention fixed on something. However, I did not immediately realize that I had found anything to do with revelation. I did find something, but in a different form or shape than expected and at a different “place”. Some of the stories from the business owners when analyzed together had similarities that I really had not seen before.

It learnt me that as a researcher you sometimes have to let the material show itself, even reveal itself, may be even like Gadamer’s events of truth or Tillich’s symbolic participation in truth – understood by Tillich as the experience of making a relation to a synthesis of how things “are” and how they “ought to be”. The moment you acknowledge this the attention shifts and a new understanding emerges. As this paper is a reflection upon *Moments* it is paradoxical that the phenomenon of the moment itself also had an impact upon how this paper emerged.

Further it exemplifies the hermeneutic movement. The fragment as a moment is also the tiny part that is reflected in the bigger parts and even in the whole. So maybe Tillich could have the last words that also depicts these bits and pieces that I have tried to disseminate during this research journey when he states “A fragment is an implicit system; a system is an explicit fragment” (in ST 1, p. 58).

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

What can I conclude from this long research journey of mine? And what can I retrieve from it and say? This is my contribution.

The overall aim of the study was to *explore if theology can contribute to contemporary life and experience*. And given the specific context the problem statement for the journey became narrowed down to a particular topic as well as a particular theological thinker and developed into the following:

*Can – or how can philosophical theology, namely, Paul Tillich's theory of revelation, contribute to productive reflection on the innovation of value among small business owners in a business model innovation context?*

Now it is time to ask if I have answered this satisfactorily.

This study has challenged and elaborated the concept of value that I encountered as I began interacting with the area of business management (i.e. business model innovation). Furthermore the study adds to the understanding of the innovation process. By doing this I have on an academic level been pioneering conversations between different parts of specialized domains at the university.

In the following I will gather some of the essential thoughts and results that have been presented in this journey through the main concepts I have addressed. Hopefully this will show that I have answered my research question and that I have done this in some original ways.

## 6.1. THE THREE MAIN CONCEPTS: VALUE, MEANING, REVELATION

The journey has focused on three concepts. At one level the three concepts used mainly represent different domains. Value is related to business, meaning is related to art, and revelation is related to theology. The buzzword *different thinking* and the experiment of a theological recontextualisation was the first interaction in this project between these areas. As the research evolved the concept of *value* was replaced with *meaning* which again was moved towards *revelation*—a transformative encounter with ‘the ground of being’—and a symbolic expression for what we direct our personality towards. The use of these three concepts is also a movement from value towards revelation, as well as revelation is actualizing meaning as presence. This means that there is both a temporal movement as well as moments that transcend the linearity of time. I have initiated a move from a narrow understanding of value to an understanding which addresses human beings’ ultimate concern and shown how this concern ends in a quest for revelation

### 6.1.1. VALUE AND DIFFERENT THINKING

Value *is* value. The tautology of this phrase is meant to pinpoint that business studies seemed from my perspective to address the value concept without defining it. As I described in the beginning of this presentation of my research journey, I became bewildered and then provoked as I understood what value innovation in a mainstream context meant. Here, as it is in many business management books, value is addressed as if it is detached from ethics or even more as if it is detached from life, from people. Consequently the value concept as presented in a mainstream business model innovation context seemed—from a theological perspective—to be rather narrow and even ‘worth less’ in every matter as long as it basically was disconnected with an orientation towards basic human interests beyond profit.

Of course we do separate the use of value in our daily talk in order to make ourselves understandable and therefore we contextualize the concept of value. But



this also seems to be a part of the problem since the compartmentalization of the value concept into different spheres (e.g. human, cultural, economic values, etc.) seems to have blurred what value is, could be, or even how it *ought to be*.

In any case, following the EU research projects the model level was the outset of my theoretical reflections where mainstream business management understanding of value was coupled with innovation. By following the tools in the *Blue Ocean Strategy* the intention of the book was to realize value innovation. In terms of working with this kind of business innovation a common term promoting creativity concerns the notion that *different thinking* is important, as if we have to do something else than we usually do. And this was also often said: ‘You have to think differently’ and these tools can help. But we also realized that even these tools do not secure business owners’ differentiation of their business’ strategies as well as to ‘think differently’ about their business models. And given that it is such a buzzword, what does it actually mean?

Because I met Heidegger’s concept ‘Geworfenheit’ (the state of being thrown into something) in some business management literature<sup>77</sup> I addressed the situation of human existence as *estranged*, as Tillich calls it. It concerns the situation in which I/we realize that there is a limit to this life of mine/ours and experience the abyss of nothingness that opens itself.<sup>78</sup>

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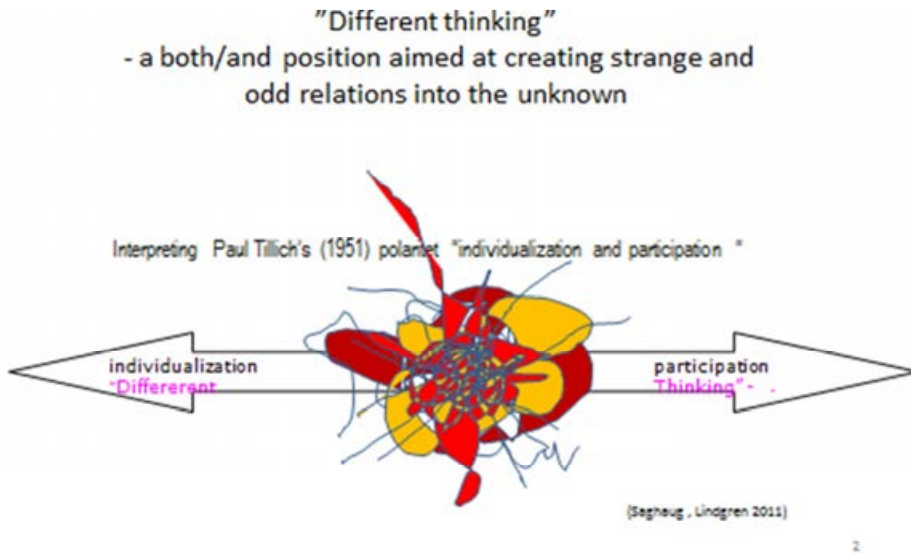
<sup>77</sup> Karl Weick uses this for instance in *Designing for Thrownness* (Weick 2004)

<sup>78</sup> According to Tillich’s perception of our existence, I will mention Adam Smith’s ‘dread of death’ as a possible similar phenomenon that might have emerged, amongst many of the small business owners. Smith was shortly reflected on in two of my papers (*The Idea of Value* and *The Death of God*) as misused in relation to a neoliberal market orientation as if he neglected ethics. His thoughts are often superficially addressed as legitimizing non-regulation as if there is a god- like force arranging a market balance/imbalance, the ‘invisible hand’. Smith found that there are some principles in human nature, amongst them compassion and sympathy. The ‘dread of death’ is, though, the most important principle: ‘the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind; which, while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society’ (Smith 1854, 2000). P 9 in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

My interpretation of Tillich's anthropology in this context ended up as my first model in my first paper—a definition of different thinking based upon Tillich's first ontological pair of polarity—individualization vs. participation.

For a business owner to think differently and accordingly to act differently, as the model depicts, might truly be a responsible position; it might be courageous and lead to the making of strange and unusual relations. Some of the small business owners who actually seemed to engage in different thinking also seemed to be most proficient. These particular small businesses, both in the *Blue Oceans Project* as well as in *The WIB Project*, can by no means be said to represent all small business owners. But they display what I find important for addressing value: that at least for some business owners value mattered (also) as an existential claim and it did not hinder a focus on innovating a business model. Some also mentioned this perspective in relation to how they made/wanted to make business model innovation.

This interpretation leads to the (surprising) understanding that *different thinking* is the *existential question* in human existence and *not* the answer. For instance we could align this with some of the experiences from the workshops and formulate it as: 'How can I create value in my business so I don't regret the way I have spent my life the day I die?' And consequently the question we could ask given this focus could be: 'How can a new business model be innovated so you have this in mind?'



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*Figure 1 Tillich's ontological polarity interpreted as "different thinking"*

I made this model in my project in order to understand and interpret how business owners were (or were not) doing *different thinking* in a business model innovation process. I discovered that as I took a buzzword like this and interpreted it from a theological perspective, it could actually shed light on aspects of business innovation that question the current understanding of value. I explored a value perspective which touches dimensions of our lives that need to be considered if we address business innovation amongst small business owners. By doing this I contribute with a model of understanding to business management that considers human beings and their ultimate concern as a basic foundation for business development. Consequently this work both addresses a narrow value perspective as well as an innovation process.

This led me to the next step.

### 6.1.2. MEANING AND MEANINGFULNESS

Following Tillich I realized that value in its core, as I interpret Tillich, is essentially connected to people's ultimate concerns.

*Different thinking* is not a matter of coming up with a lot of new ideas for business models in order to create value. It is in fact problematic if creativity in business model innovation is reduced to idea-generating tools whereas *different thinking* is a matter of questioning what one is doing on an existential level, and that can—as it showed itself amongst a number of the participating business owners—happen in a very practical way. For some it emerged as an issue when they worked with the AS IS Strategy Canvas or the AS IS Business Model Canvas (e.g. in the paper *Revelatory Aspects*). And it came to the surface if I, as a researcher, for instance asked: 'Why do you want to offer this service?' The 'why-question' is seldom asked in a profound sense within business management. But it should be!

I used *meaning* firstly as a concept related to art with regard to art's capacity to create meaning, which Tillich explains as art being a revelatory medium. Secondly the use of meaning pointed towards meaningfulness in a revelatory sense<sup>79</sup> (e.g. it might reveal both passion as pain and passion as love).

In order to reflect upon the use of these tools or models as expressions of artistic creativity, they were addressed via a radical notion of art inspired by Joseph Beuys' dictum: 'Every human is an artist'. This means that every artefact made or model used in the workshops has been treated as a work of art, not due to its aesthetical qualities, but because its potential substance can be related to the question of

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<sup>79</sup> The focus has been *meaning* as related to the center of our personality; a the quest for meaningfulness as a different way of understanding the basis of value creation. Meaning is not used here as 'sense-making' (e.g. as Karl Weick is known for). Meaning is not used in this context as a way of making sense of something. (It is, though, not totally diverse from it either!) Making sense of one's life as a small business owner is highly relevant. But I did not engage in philosophies of meaning (the relationship between, for instance, the sign and how it is cognitively comprehended) or 'theory of meaning' (semantics, etc.)

meaning (e.g. in the paper *The Idea of Value*). Furthermore, the use of *social sculpture* also served to define the empirical subject matter, the business owners as artists, when they sought to find solutions that had a higher purpose than merely one's own benefit.<sup>80</sup>

But this search for a higher purpose or a meaningful business (model) happens under difficult circumstances because the small business owners operate within a reality of mainstream economic thinking. A narrow perception of value is based upon an understanding of selfishness as a value that regulates the market for the good of the few. Inequality and imbalance serve a higher purpose in this paradigm. This is the economic fundamentalist notion that market possesses the truth and it becomes an entity much like the fundamentalist perception of God as *a* being (the problem is unfolded in the paper *The Death of God and Its Relevance to Business*).

I stated in the *Death of God* paper that market fundamentalism could learn from modern theology especially the *Death of God* theology to leave the abstract idea of truth as an entity to be captured and grasped. (That would also include leaving the idea of capturing value as 'something' out there). For when it comes to the question of *different thinking* there is not anything out there to be grasped: there is only a matter of the courage to live life by asking the question of ultimate concern continuously. And then what?

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<sup>80</sup> The business owner and meaning—what if it is only an excuse for a bad business or if he/she is successful is it a kind of legitimization? (This was a question an experienced professor in production engineering raised as we were discussing my project Dec 2014). I have chosen to avoid investigating business owners of the type 'I had a personal breakdown crisis and now I am a therapist after three months in a retreat', and/or 'I can though hardly earn any money but it is so meaningful for me...' I have encountered this caricature and this is not meant to offend anyone, but it does not seem to be relevant in relations to address innovation of value. Successful business people have not struck me as being in need of legitimizing their success as doing something meaningful, although none of those questioned were from the top level of financial returns.

By this it follows that meaning is a *relation* that is created and it fragmentarily connects the question of *different thinking* with the moment of revelation. It is therefore difficult or maybe even impossible to define in itself since it cannot be an object for scrutiny. The idea of searching for meaning is thus futile. You will not find 'it'. But we are, following Tillich's line of thinking, both driven by the question itself as well as grasped by the ultimate concern that symbolically hides beneath the question. That was unfolded in the thesis as related to the old philosophical discussion on fact vs. value, where Tillich shortly speaking tried to close the gap between controlling knowledge and receiving knowledge by way of addressing a position beyond this dichotomy.

The dilemma or predicament in relation to human reason that is described in Tillich's work opened for the concept of revelation into this context.

### 6.1.3. REVELATION AND MOMENTS OF PASSION

The 'answer' or *the ground of our being 'breaks through'* which is Tillich's description of how revelation works. You cannot plan for it. On the other hand the answer can find us but probably not in a form we expect or even are aware of.

It might be a decisive event but also an everyday experience that gives insight. It is a matter of relations, not separation<sup>81</sup> and these 'strange' relations happen against the background of an ultimate concern and a quest for knowledge that is beyond a fact/value distinction. And, importantly for this context, especially in relation to an innovation process, we cannot know if a revelation is going to happen, or if it will

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<sup>81</sup> One could say it is almost the opposite of differentiation in the understanding of competition (e.g. (Porter 1996). Another relational understanding of the processes of breakthrough as for instance combinations of knowledge is found in Hargadon's business research (e.g. Hargadon 2002).

or if it actually has happened long time ago.<sup>82</sup> And this was precisely what seemed to be the case for the last business owners I interviewed. Their innovation process started years ago. And if it had happened as a decisive event in the past, that event still seemed to be substantially present as the core of their current innovation. This could be the material from which they had made their business model innovation. At least it seemed to color the decisions and the later breakthroughs these business owners might experience. Their original value understandings had been broken through. They made new values on the background of what they had ‘seen’.

This breakthrough may also be considered as a corrective inspired by Tillich to Schumpeter’s idea of *creative destruction*, where new businesses destroy older ones as they do in his evolutionary approach. However Tillich’s ‘shattering’ in the revelatory artful sense is not a destruction but a breakthrough needed for something to come alive, for an artwork to reveal itself, for content to overflow form. So maybe it could be another conceptual understanding of small business owners’ artistic creativity—that some of them are driven by *love* that fragmentarily reveals itself in how they try and *balance* between fulfilling both personal values as well as creating a meaning in their work and earning money when doing this. In many ways this also makes them equal to artists. They have, like an artist who paints an image, ‘seen’ something that they give further by offering value or something that is both meaningful for them as well as for the customers, through a small business and its business model.

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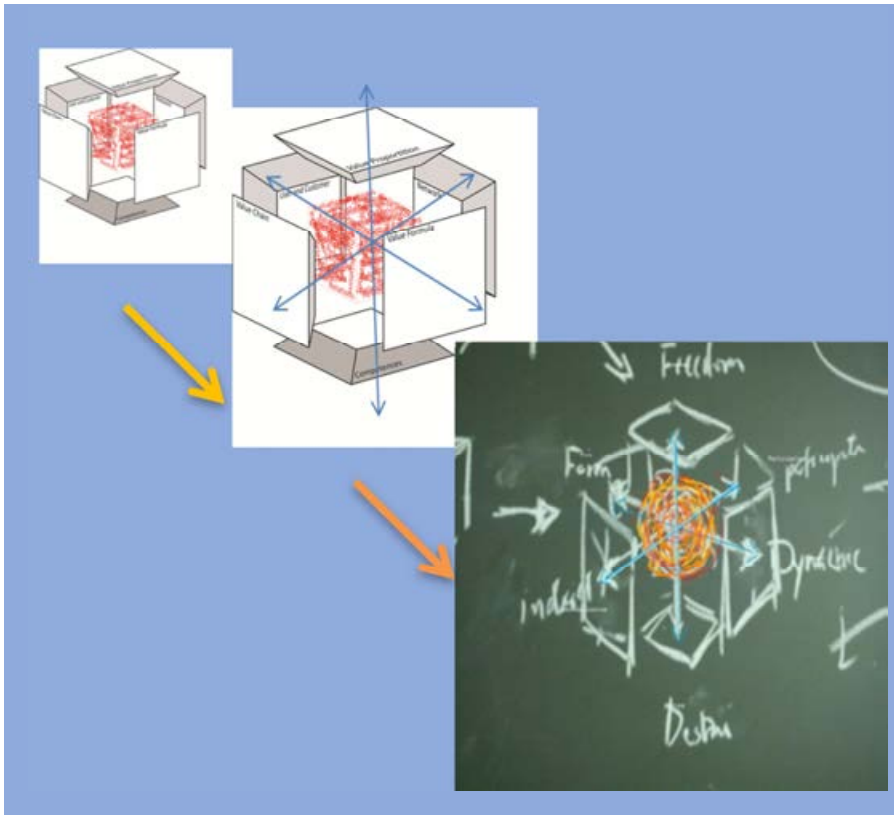
<sup>82</sup> This also refers to the Christ-event, the Christ event as original *Kairos*. That means in a biblical sense, that when the time was right or ‘full’ a new being was revealed through Jesus as Christ. Essential manhood was revealed, meaning that here the ultimate concern is met. All other revelations are secondary, but dependent upon this original revelation. And I think this is also a fitting image in relation to the business owners. For some there had been a major event that decided or colored their later breakthroughs/innovations of value. For more on *kairos* and the moment in Tillich’s writing see (Pattison 2015)

***Breaking through the cube***

On the road the cube was invented, and my contribution to this was primarily ‘the core of relations’ as depicted in my first model. However my journey revealed perspectives that elaborated on the cube. The cube can be revelatory if it is perceived as a symbol. I found that this is a way it can reach beyond the existential gap of shallow values. If we address value as related to (for instance) competences or to customers we are still ‘crawling’ around in the notion of value as disconnected from a quest for meaning. We do then not acknowledge the need to go beyond our present distinctions between economic value and ethical value, beyond fact vs. value, and address what we could direct our personality and lives towards.

If the ‘ultimate concern’ is not raised there can be no *different thinking* engaging the core of relations in order to make something new and rare. To follow this study the initial ontological polarity needs to be accompanied by the two others in order to place people at the center of the cube.





*Figure 2 Model of polarities and breakthrough in the Business Model Cube*<sup>83</sup>

The three polarities of individualization vs. participation, dynamic vs. form, and freedom vs. destiny, represented as three lines, will penetrate the cube as a cross. This shows the power of a model if it is understood as a symbol. It becomes a fragment that we might also relate to the symbol of the cross, understood not just as a symbol of suffering but as an opening. The polarities make a crack in the surface, as well as overflow the form: a relation-creation. The polarities also represent the human being opening and operating in the box. The polarities are converging at the midpoint.

<sup>83</sup> For details see figure 3

In order to understand this breakthrough from the perspective of art as revelatory it is similar to Tillich's distinction between naturalistic and expressionistic art (in *Methods of Revelation?* paper) . In one kind of business, the cube 'fits' as it is , i.e., it's stable, nothing happens, it just is what it is, everyone is content with the business model – but no development. If there is to be development, however, the energy of the intersecting lines has to be of a kind that blows the cube open.

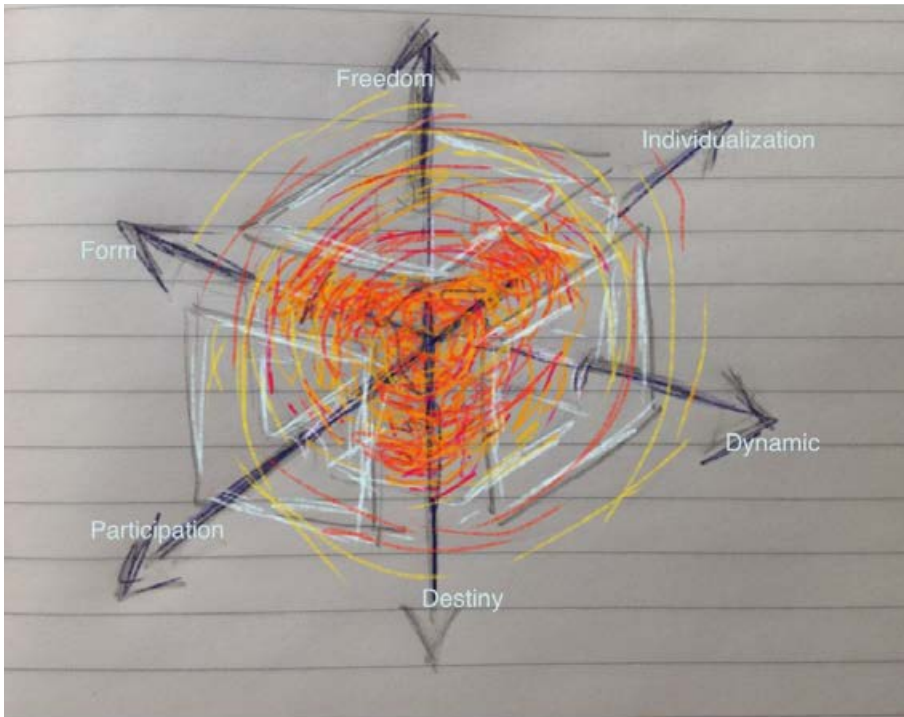


Figure 3 *The breakthrough of the walls of the cube*

This model points at the need to realize that business innovation and management models are depicted as if they were real and not a representation. They actually come to serve as religious symbols, but they do it in a hidden way so it is not recognized, but followed as the 'truth'. They have become closed entities in themselves and therefore they become idols, gods, which need to be broken through. This is what happens with the cube when the polarities are placed within it.

It could look as if the polarities destroy the cube but in fact they do not; on the contrary they complete the form by overflowing it. They participate metaphorically in the core of relations, and the human being is both the center as well as the end: the goal of the model. It is both an image of the death of God as a theistic tyrant and the celebration of a New Being for people to participate in. An ordinary business management model cannot do that.

This is also creativity in the sense of the popularized term *out of the box*, but it is out of the (black) box (the cube) of self-interest as it reaches out towards other people and into the society (e.g. the customers focus, and then it becomes a matter of what can I offer /do for others? How can I make a difference in this world?).

This is importantly a model of *innovation of value* from a theological perspective in respect to business model innovation. It is namely the very understanding and conception of values in themselves that are innovated as they are broken through. This goes beyond the personal vs. economical distinction of value, and by making a synthesis something new occurs (examples of this could be found in the paper *Revealing Hearts*).

This is a cube that, by using Tillich's anthropology and his theology of revelation in art, engages with how this can give some applicable insights into the area of business management and their models of innovation.

Further revelation also adds something to the innovation process because it moves the focus on creativity as something primarily funny and playful into a serious but not dull perspective. It is simply more focused on the connection and even *participatory relation between passion as suffering and passion as love*. And importantly for both—another perspective on creativity in a business management context and the process of innovation—passion also as suffering can for some, as this study disclosed, be the foundation upon which something new is created (e.g. in papers *Revealing Hearts* and *Moment*).

To elaborate further I suggest that integrating these values into a new business model means aligning business with personal values. For some contributors this almost became biblical because they made their business (model) innovation in the aftermath of an experience of suffering. And the values that drove their creation of something new seemed to be reflected backwards. Their innovation started maybe years ago. I have not seen any mainstream innovation process model that captures this. They have a narrow time perspective, a narrow understanding of creativity, a narrow understanding of values, and certainly a narrow understanding of people.

This leads to a closer look at the cube and a further step forward as the research journey continues. On the top of these gatherings of threads from the whole study I find that it is also possible to make a synthesis—a kind of presentation of something in its becoming.

## **6.2. A SYNTHESIS IN ITS BECOMING**

One of the central elements that really differentiates this project from being a project on the importance of ethical behavior within the business domain is its focus on the human being. We could even dwell a bit with the term ‘ecce homo’ (lat. ‘See/look at this human being’) as Pilate said in relation to Jesus as he stood there in front of him and tormented (John 19.5). Because the most important model in this project is neither the model of the cube nor the model of God, the most relevant in this project is the model of a human being that this presents in relation to the business management area. It is an image of a human being who suffers but carries the suffering and uses it as material for creating something for others.

The image is a fragment of a human being for there are no ideals in this image. But it is an opening towards something new, something that matters for all of us. This is not an image of the perfect person, the ideal leader as some (a lot of) business management books will offer. It is an image of a person who truly sees the surrounding world and unfolds value of the heart on its background. It is an image of frailty, of tenderness, of passion as pain and passion as love.

It is maybe important from a theological perspective that a person comes to find that the answer to his/hers ultimate concern is that 'I am accepted as I am'. But this also involves the belief that I can choose to think differently and to act differently. And given that the theological contribution is not an image of God in the cube but an image of a living person in flesh and blood, this also breaks through the perception of people hidden in the notion of a controlled innovation process. This leads us further to how passion in its double understanding of the term could be understood

***Understanding passion as suffering/ love as innovation of value***

All human beings have creative capacities to direct their personality—their heart—in such a way that they are open to the possibility of discovering their own values and the values that reside and might be hidden in their business. But in order to do this revelation plays its part in *moments of understanding*.

At the end of this journey I will reflect upon my provocative question asking if we can address a method of revelation. As I have stated, we cannot. On the other hand, based on the inspirations from combining Tillich's and Gadamer's thoughts on art, we can give an image or a framework of *understanding the innovation of value as a fragmentary revelatory breakthrough*.

I will therefore conclude with a framework of the *Five P's* that I think collects some of the main aspects and also offers a contribution to an innovation process that contains perspectives for the participative observer and future research. The Five P's represent a closeup image of the core of the cube with polarities.

1. ***Prejudices*** are important as these are what we all carry as our individual lens into any situation—also depending on our own history. The business owner did that, and I did.

2. In the situation we attend, an event might happen or an artefact is made that we can observe as an artwork that is in a state of becoming, because it presents itself

differently in every new encounter. It is therefore what Gadamer would call a *presentation*. It could also be the person, the business owner, and their interaction that became the work of art unfolded as a presentation.

3. And then we have the experience of a *play*, because the understanding of play in my study was related to art and its substance in Tillich's understanding as well as Gadamer's. Because if we want to understand another human being—in this context a business owner—we cannot stand aside but we must enter into the game, i.e. we must be willing to play. When we do that we also experience a kind of participation—we interact and relate (e.g. in the paper of *Business and Theology*).

4. The *pathei mathos*, meaning understanding through suffering (unfolded more in the paper *Methods of Revelation*), is the trickiest part of this framework, because how do we understand through suffering as researchers? First of all, thinking in itself might hurt. Working to address a new path of understanding might hurt. I did understand by acknowledging that my own original images (prejudices) became shattered by the encounters and by the participation. And this is also connected to the center of this image.

5. The center of the framework is the shattering of form through art, the iconoclastic elements that all these P's relates to - revelation as breakthrough and the experience of *passion*. The revelation is represented with the cross, and that is in itself also as form that is broken through. It unfolds itself on the background of a fragmentary presence: Being Itself (*esse ipsum*) symbolically depicted as a core of relations. If we address this as a method of revelation it would be a method of understanding that is an hermeneutical movement. Evolving around the center of this is the double understanding of passion as suffering vs. passion as love as I found some of the business owners unfolded as innovation of value.



Figure 4 An image of The Five P's at the core of the cube with polarities

This image of understanding thus becomes an illustration of how we may understand those business owners who try to balance ultimate concern and economic values. If we imagine one of the mainstream innovation processes as a tunnel, imagine now that we cut it open and look into it. Imagine that this image is within it and coming towards you.

This framework starts with passion as suffering and ends with passion as love; they are, though, both present and therefore illustrated by the cross as something that opens our estranged reasoning and breaks through it. Not to destroy our reasoning but to create. In this fragmentary presence, Tillich and Gadamer in combination can

be used to understand small business owners who innovate value in such a way that they turn passion as pain into passion as love.

As I have reported in my work there is a mainstream focus on AS IS and TO BE that neglects the importance of the past as occurring in the moment of the present. Thus mainstream business management operates with past, present, and future in such a way that the past is depicted as an obsolete legacy and the emergence of the new is prioritized. But we know from Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Tillich that the moment unites past, present, and future (reflected in the paper *Moments: From passion as suffering to Passion as love*). It is further in Tillich's understanding the moment of breakthrough that in a fragmentary way occurs within history and makes a decision possible. For some this could mean that their innovation of value was initiated by the seed that a revelatory moment planted. It can have many forms, and usually we do not even consider these revelations because that is not a language we have for these past moments. A breakthrough is not something that is necessarily pleasant, but it is the moment that begins a transformation of the person, towards an innovation of value beyond self-interest. The ultimate concern has turned value into a quest for meaning. If the value of the past is neglected in innovation processes, then our experience of the present will not allow a genuine innovatory breakthrough that might represent the very origin and even source of business owners' innovation of value. This we need to be aware of: revelation as breakthrough is the moment where innovation of value begins.





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# APPENDICES

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# Appendix A. The PhD Papers

## **Appendix B. Interview Guide Semi- Structured Interviews**

# **Appendix C. Interview Guide Survey – WiB**

# **Appendix D. Business Model AS IS Questionnaire**



## Appendix E. Strategy Canvas

# **Appendix F. Business Model Canvas - Osterwalders**





## SUMMARY

Kristin F. Saghaug's PhD thesis investigates the interaction of revelatory theology, artistic creativity and small business owners in a business model innovation context. This project challenges mainstream business management's concept of value and adds to the understanding of the innovation process through a pioneering conversation across different specialized domains.

How can philosophical theology, namely, Paul Tillich's theory of revelation, contribute to productive reflection on the innovation of value among small business owners in a business model innovation context?

Empirical findings show that many of the business owners in this study try to balance between their personal values and economic values. A further investigation into this results in a model of innovation of value from a theological perspective in respect to business model innovation.

It is the very understanding of values that are innovated as they are "broken through" using Tillich's notion of revelation in art and his anthropology. The project adds to the understanding of the innovation process as it focuses on the moment as a breakthrough, a fragmentary revelation that unites past, present and future.

The form of this PhD thesis is an extensive analytical and theoretical synthesis disseminating and reflecting on eight research papers, framed as a reflexive auto-ethnographical story reporting from the research journey.