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Huston Smith's Princely Path

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I

Paul Tillich's last word to theology summoned pursuers of our discipline to "freedom both from one's own foundation and for one's own foundation.." [Tillich, *Main Works*, 6, 441] For Tillich this double freedom was iconically exemplified in Martin Buber. [Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 320f.] Thus if Jonathan Z. Smith was right to credit Tillich with inspiring the American Academy of Religion, Buber too may plausibly be seen as a patron saint of that venerable guild, as I recently proposed in the *Tillich Bulletin*. [XXX, 3, Summer, 2011]. Now, offered the honor of appreciating Huston Smith, I am moved to add further to the hagiography. Revisiting Huston convinces me he is a third shining example—along with Buber and Tillich, in no special order—of freedom from and freedom for one's own foundation. Certainly we think of others as well—Wilfred Cantwell Smith, for example, Raimundo Panikkar, Masao Abe... We would all have favorites. But in any case we are talking about a hallowed hall in which our Huston is indubitably one of the best known presences.

I am warmly grateful to our symposium for prompting a reread of Huston to justify this paper. I fear many suffer from the syndrome of assuming too blithely we know our friend quite well, because he often gave us copies of his books and we interact frequently with his charm. But I have been ever and again caught short pondering afresh what he actually wrote. I read *The Religions of Man* fifty years ago and began assigning it in comparative work, updating of course when the new edition came but without thoroughly absorbing the latter. What a boner! This forum should have taught us, since the Smiths happily moved to Berkeley, that Huston's take on our human and theological situation is always as current as it gets.

As for inspiring the AAR, I remember Huston being there over the decades, pleading his case, as one doubts Tillich and Buber were. They may have been more free for Christianity (in the one case) and Judaism (in the other) than Huston was for his Methodism. But Huston was patently more free from his home base than were they, with his espousal of the Primordial Tradition and participatory embrace of elements of Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim praxis. Expand this to freedom for other foundations in their practical concretions, even their unique chanting, and the dossier of Huston's distinction begins to swell almost disconcertingly. It shows notably in his

intervention for the Peyote Native Americans and his unintimidated readiness to deal with Moonies, or with biologists critical of Darwin, so long as faith and science were categorically respected. It's an unspeakably bigger list of accomplishments than I'm qualified to render justice to, especially isolated up in Oregon without a library. Our genial friend is still publishing like mad. And was anyone ever less swayed by political correctness? It would be a wonder, would it not, should this not have cost him honorifics otherwise plainly due? In the genre of "theology of culture," for example, which rightly earned Michael Polanyi and Tillich Gifford Lectureships, has anyone even come close over the last generation to stating a critique as fundamentally important as Huston's of scientism?

II

To scientism return shall follow, but there is a prior agenda stemming from Tillich's climactic theological summons. That testament to the way forward in theology and religious studies was the endline of Tillich's final public address, given at the University of Chicago in October, 1965, on "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian." [Op. cit., pp. 432f.] The title in no way conveys the drama. For the address was the very upshot of Tillich's "last hurrah," his joint teaching with Mircea Eliade, what he returned from Harvard to Chicago for, a dramatic denouement of the scintillating and exhausting 50 year career. Now concluded (for Tillich collapsed and died after the reception) the team teaching had been an awesome interface of master theologian and master religious historian. But, as was hardly then realized, the Tillich standing at the Chicago podium that night was critically other than the mainline Christian systematician who fourteen years earlier began his magnum opus averring Christian theology is "*the* theology" since it has "received a foundation transcending" that "of any other theology, ... which itself cannot be transcended." [Tillich, Systematic Theology I, 16] Such language loosely expressed the stance of Barthian Neo-orthodoxy, to which Tillich partially, ambiguously and sometimes rebelliously adhered during his decades at Union Seminary. In any case, I hope every reader of this paper is aware such language and its underlying mood were totally contrary to Huston Smith, whose spiritual molars were ground in religiously plural China, anticipating the enthusiastic Perennialism to which Gerald Heard would convert him in the late forties. [Huston Smith, via Google, tribute to Gerald Heard] The Tillich of Union, mainly known through Systematic Theology Volume One, was sharply at Barthian loggerheads with the Huston Smith of The World's Religions. The main point of my paper presupposes that.

For my point is that the "post-Union" Tillich, passionately thinking beyond his Systematic Theology even as he strained to finish it, in his consummate vision drastically recast his earlier Neo-orthodoxy and categorically endorsed as our way forward in theology the indispensability of Huston Smith's approach to the world's

religions. Thereby I mean the rigorous sustained effort to see and, as far as practicable, experience them at their best in their own experiential roots, prior to all invidious evaluation. Tillich at the end insists the universality of religion does not lie in an all-embracing abstraction—as his focus on such concepts as “ultimate concern” and “being-itself” once suggested—but “in the depths of every concrete religion.” [Idem] Theological responsibility also implies critical detachment, but it cannot evade open and honest encounter with the experiential roots thus given.

Let me pause here to ask rhetorically how well our current theological education, at the GTU and elsewhere, is fulfilling this responsibility-- remembering how Walter Kaufman of Princeton once accused us of being pedagogy's preeminent ghetto. I am out of the loop, but my impression is we are still doing abominably poorly, in spite of the astonishing opportunity, compared with decades ago, to interact with Jews, Buddhists, Muslims and others. Ah, Huston, if only we could have you back again as a thirty year old! Name me your true follower, if you know one, and I shall do my utmost to endow a GTU chair.

Returning for a moment to “Barthian loggerheads,” I recalled how Huston from the outset refused to presume only the Christian foundation can be the unsurpassable basis for true theology. Tillich, for decades at least somewhat in Barth's camp, wound up, I said, enfranchising Huston's instinct—though many Tillichians will still not have their hero changing his mind.⁹ My immediate concern, though, is Karl Barth, for I somewhat misleadingly use him to anchor a salient recent way of thinking about Divine Revelation that opposes the Huston Smith way. Huston and Barth do differ greatly on the extent of revelation, in that Huston spreads widely while Barth compacts tightly. But it seems to have been little noticed how remarkably they agree on the fact and mode of revelation. Aside from refusing to confine it to the Hebrew-Christian Bible, Huston's attitude toward Divine Self-disclosure is quite notably Barthian in construing it is a matter of Sovereign Grace, altogether prior to the human control which establishes the domain of science. Moreover, the extensional compaction dividing Barth from Huston does not prevent their agreeing on such weighty issues as the scope of saving grace. Notably, among other things, they both affirm universal salvation.

Since Huston accepts Judaeo-Christian revelation along with that of other religions, one might suppose—or wonder if-- Barth and he would agree about much if not all the truth gleaned from the Bible by the Swiss master. That of course does not follow! They doubtless share a good deal, in tone if not tittle. But Huston needs less than a twelfth the space for all religions that Barth needs for one twelfth of his single one. Time Magazine rightly dubbed Meister Karl “the gabbiest theologian ever to hit Christendom.” Who would ever know if anyone agreed with all his lucubrations? Barth himself admitted he could not read what he had written. The “esoteric transcendentalism” of the Primordialist orientation saves from an overstuffing of revelatory content, or simply expresses the selectivity of the one

selecting. Waiving or assuming grace, one must be and is (a la Harnack) free to define “das Wesen”—not only Christentum’s but across the board. Huston here, without following any group or model I’m aware of—other than disciplined scholarship in general—sticks out his own neck historically and theologically. It is part and parcel of this escape hatch to gain distance from the “institutional” mayhem that besets all actual religions. But would-be pure theology too varies vastly in bulk. I used to show my systematics class the Kirkliche Dogmatik’s twelve hefty tomes alongside Wilhelm Herrman’s 3/8th inch version of the same alleged doctrinal substance. More than one way to skin a cat! To be sure, Huston’s summing up of his Methodist heritage takes the cake for succinctness in that connection (loyally maintained within his basal Christianity). [Huston Smith, Google, under Methodism] “The assurance we are in good hands and therefore should help the needy” may not be everything Wesley believed, but as one who taught the required Methodist units at PSR, I would have deemed it a very good start with current ordinands. For all his piquant brevity, you get the feeling Huston knows to the point of savoring. The Hindu sage’s “omniscience,” he explains, is not meant literally; it “refers to an insight that lays bare the point of everything. Given that summarizing insight, to ask for details would be as irrelevant as asking the number of atoms in a great painting.” [Smith, WR, 24] One of the uncanny achievements of *The World’s Religions*—and Huston’s style *ueberhaupt*-- is this kind of interpretive condensation. He writes as he speaks—perkily, precisely, with scholarly rectitude and disarming humor, withal as one long there who is showing you through a prized building.

The magisterial Wilfred Smith pronounced Huston’s crown jewel “the first adequate textbook in world religions,” and praise generally has been enthusiastic. One even heard that along with the Bible and St. Augustine, it was an all time religious best seller. But the issue has been raised, recently by the rising star at Boston, Stephen Prothero, as to whether we must not renounce Huston’s assertion of the unity of global faiths. [Stephen Prothero, GNO, passim] “God is Not One,” vociferates Prothero’s overview of— what he actually means is the mingled aggregate of human doctrines of God. Incontestably he is correct about the doctrines, but was this ever denied? Throughout the earth’s religious history there obviously has been and is humongous disunity, preponderantly within the major traditions, but between them too. I do not find Huston maintaining the contrary. In his expositions a lively and sharp sense of differentiation is continuously at work. “Harmony” is doubtless a better term than “unity” for his overarching conviction and concern. It is patently his actual experience, given a richly sensitive ear. Does he nevertheless overemphasize agreements and ignore too much the discords of world religions? I once argued he did before this very PCTS (as it was some twenty years ago). I was highly motivated by issues under direct discussion with Buddhist, Hindu, Confucian, Jewish and Muslim thinkers. It was a rarefied context, and for general purposes I was then probably putting the cart too much before the horse. In my current reading of it, I find myself ever and again exclaiming admiration for Huston’s pedagogical smarts in

the remake of his celebrated text. For basic interreligious education, for which need screams loud in our turbulent world, premature plunge into sophisticated hang-ups is often obfuscating. I continue to side with Tillich that critical facing off will also be unavoidable in finalizing stances, but we must be careful not to assume such stances prematurely. Partly under Huston's influence, I am increasingly inclined to postpone finalizations of stance. Still, in our post-Holocaust world a beginning imperative that seems to me categorical is clear denunciation of religiously triumphalist oppression (as graphically symbolized in the 2004 murder by a Muslim fanatic of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, or anything comparable on any alleged religious ground). As Hans Kueng summarized his searching interfaith survey, no existing religion can be proud in this respect. Certainly, I would specify, not Christianity or Islam. I hopefully sense Huston deeply agrees here, and rejoice in his numerous inputs for tolerance on all sides while also respecting his felt need to offset our cultural tide in America of anti-Islamicism.

The first time I saw Huston in action was at the AAR where he was ardently promoting the teachings of Frithjof Schuon, who had emerged midcentury as the leading Primordialist. I never traced how, after our friend's love affair with Gerald Heard, begun already in grad school, he may have connected with such pioneering Traditionalist gurus as Ananda Coomaraswamy and Rene Guenon and in philosophy Aldous Huxley. And how was mediated to Huston the salient impact of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who as early as the 1860s experientially tested various paths and fervently declared "all religions ... true," evoking in his disciple Vivekananda that wider ecumenical consciousness that bore such global fruit as the Chicago Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893? Frankly, when I agreed to this assignment, I was hoping to explore all that in some depth. But it has had to be postponed on account of cardiac problems besetting me since Christmas. Fortunately my new pacemaker has stabilized energies just enough to complete a paper almost approaching the right size. But meanwhile I was appetized well beyond the menu of a single meeting—appetized by the agenda Huston arouses. For I have come to see our friend as a prime living embodiment of that whole remarkable phenomenon I call the wider ecumenism. In spite of his admiration for Schuon, It would surprise me if Huston ever found congenial the "secret society" air of some versions of Primordialism. There was always in him an attitude of commitment to the public accessibility of knowledge. On the objective data, building upon or wrangling about it, he was always likely to be a step or two ahead, scrounging as he does through *The New York Review of Books* or having been at dinner with a ranking physicist. However strenuous and singular his individual exertions, or daring his ventures of discovery (e.g. with Timothy Leary) his public métier was clearly the academy while his personal pew was unshakenly once-born evangelicalism.

Tillich recalled in his 1925 *Dogmatics* that theology is intrinsically supposed to march forth “with drum and fife” (“mit klingendem Spiel”). [Tillich, *Dogmatik*, 25] Its very idea is “good news” of utmost importance or it has no *raison d’être*. Normally of course it occurs as individual or communal espousal of a single tradition’s conviction and commitment. But with utter spontaneity Huston’s exposition of the world’s religions, for all its ostensible phenomenality, proceeds throughout with the same engaging theological fervor. Huston is Billy Graham across the interfaith board, and one can—if not already religiously satiated—feel oneself in every chapter under brisk conversational tug. Graham’s evangelism, to be sure, and the typical model, is twice-born, stressing deliverance from the condemned sinner’s acute misery. For all his empathy that is an archetypal Christian pang, along with its almost inevitable exclusivism, Huston’s nature has seemingly spared him. As the wise William James counsels in his classic *Varieties*, we do well to accept the “once” and “twice” born as irreducible types, and go on from there, as Huston indeed does. Let there be a “balm in Gilead to cure the sin-sick soul” and more power to it. Otherwise too, and far more universally, the world’s fields are ripe with harvest of mutual and sharable blessing. Chapter by concrete chapter, and even with the revision’s addendum on Primal Religion, *The World’s Religions* succinctly inventories this inestimable spiritual inheritance of humankind.

For his wider ecumenical proclivities Huston gives unstinting thanks to his Chinese heritage, wherein a profound complementarity existed from early on between the San Chiao (“Three Religions”) of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. They were the sun, the moon and the stars, according to one’s particular patrimony. Without any compulsion to amalgamate, they were there as assets, dramatically different but potentially reinforcing, to enrich life as one inclined. Nor would the Christian tone of the Smiths’ missionary home likely have been in any way exclusivistic. Regrettably I don’t know any details of the young Huston’s spiritual provenance, but it seems for sure the openness of First Corinthians 3:21f. must somehow have been operative. “All things are yours, whether of Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” Christians accordingly “cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth” (2 Cor. 13:8). Moreover Christians are not to ignore but are rather to attend and address whatever is of good report. “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4: 8.) Huston’s textbook in the world’s religions, as does none other I know, tries sedulously to follow this admonition.

Before distancing from First Corinthians 3:21f. it seems incumbent to acknowledge how well it can serve either as I have suggested or arguably as a flat out imprimatur for Christian triumphalism, justifying such things as the pope's division (about 1700) of South America between the exploitative entrepreneurs of Spain and Portugal. (Recall here Hollywood's "The Mission.") " All things are yours, as you are Christ's and Christ is God's." Does this endorse the Grand Inquisitor or the Way of the Cross, humbly claimed by global need wherever met? Both options are in the running and sundry mixtures thereof. One of the things we like about Huston is his utter lack of pretentious pioucity. It would falsify him completely to be claiming traits of sacrificial Christlikeness. Nevertheless, his wider ecumenical humility does in effect invert or mutualize the "belonging" between "all things" and us, would we follow Pauline Christianity. We belong to them because they are Christ's and Christ is God's. This is the God, remember. "who desires all persons to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4}.

A preferred name for the world's major religions for Huston is the "wisdom traditions." This resonates with me and particularly well as I with him traverse Hinduism. After a daily stab at yoga, (nowadays with most everybody). nostalgically and poignantly I review my life as "student," as "householder," for two decades now as aranyaka or "forest dweller" (for I have indeed lived a lot alone in my "woods"), and I aspire—foolishly if you will—to reach the final earthly consciousness of sannyasin. I will do so or not, of course, via the "way of knowledge" (jnana marga), having long since learned, though I do keep trying hard, that I am not especially well graced for the way of works (karma marga) or the way of love (bhakti marga). On viewing some years ago Huston's videotape on Hinduism, I was convinced this must be his favorite of all the traditions, as it is mine in some inalienable respects. Has any religion so choreographed earthly life everywhere? Nine visits to the sub-continent have only whetted my appetite for more Mozartian codas like this Hustonism: "On the whole India has been content to encourage the devotee to conceive of Brahman as either personal or transpersonal, depending on which carries the most exalted meaning for the mind in question." [WR, 62] In a million years would you find anything that sagely adequate in the standard comparative texts? Huston's Hinduism is incomparably mature, manifoldly iridescent, magnificently integral, multifariously providing for infinite needs. Still Toynbee's word stands: "There is no one alive today who knows enough to say with confidence whether one religion has been greater than all others. " [WR, 6] Our genial dozent, sometimes with the manner of a deft defense lawyer, keeps his successive clients each looking awfully good.

In spite of Siddartha Gautama becoming an avatar of Vishnu, many thoughtful Hindus and Buddhists I know have tacitly disliked and implicitly disparaged the other religion. I detect no such animus in our author. After interfaith hero Ramakrishna's stellar conclusion for the parent faith –Huston simply lets him give a climactic wider ecumenical sermon—one could actually fear the Buddha will seem heavy handed. Instead "the one who woke up" (what the title "Buddha" means) fully

shows in this treatment why he has to be at the very least one of the two most significant individuals in human religious history. I keep wanting to notate the extraordinary depiction in our text of personal singularity—Sankara, Nanak, Confucius, Chuang-tzu, Moses are a few of the more memorable renditions. But none, with the possible exception of Jesus, tops Sakyamuni Buddha in freshness and rounded wallop. Remember these are figures we mostly assume are almost lost in legendary mist. Not so for Huston, and yet they never unbalance the context of social and metaphysical impact. Buddhism, though, is certainly as inwardly differentiated as any tradition. I recall how in our 1987 conclave in Berkeley (the most inclusive Buddhist-Christian encounter yet held), there were times when Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana each seemed closer to Christianity than to each other. Huston, however, in his relatively slender chapter, comprehends the Buddhist spread with amazing persuasiveness. His sketch of Zen, wherein satori could be Paul Tillich around 1930 overcoming the split of essence and existence, is doubtless the ripe fruit of his own participation.

Yet naturally it would be China, where Huston is most of all at home, that lets us grasp how his ecumenical mentality may best synthetically energize the fundamentals of human vitality, finitude and culture. Confucian secular propriety and “Go with the Flow” Taoism (partially at least echoed in the nature aesthetic of Shinto) are temperamental antipodes, with Buddhism (as in Japan too) providing a distinct more vertical dimension. Yet every society if not every individual in the shifting phases of existence has need for such options—indeed (I think) need as well for the further breakdown into denominations, as we Christians call them. It would be stifling not to be able to switch to Catholicism or the Baptists if one desires, or to the Buddhists or Jews, as have some of my friends. Judaism, in fact, with its linchpin of moral meaning, may well be the most winsome portrayal Huston gives us. One wishes mightily we could know the evaluation of these insights by the likes of say Martin Buber. In any event, notwithstanding the separate and cumulative appeal throughout the lineup, one cannot gainsay in the slightest as one imbibes the final (major religions) chapter, freshened through the just out (1988) presentation of Jesus by Marcus Borg, that Huston is as he avers himself a Methodist Christian. A Christian, he finely says, “is someone who has found no tincture equal to Christ” [WR, 339] “tincture” meaning that mediinally sought solvent that turns all to gold]. In addition to “wider ecumenist” I would call him, as I call myself, a “Christian pluralist.” You fear ressentiment is bound to show somewhere as Catholicism, Protestantism and Orthodoxy are patiently expounded. Instead it is the noble Schleiermacher who comes to mind reading such compounded historical-theological illuminations as the following. “To have said that Christ was man but not God would have been to deny that his life was fully normative and to concede that other ways might be as good. To have said that he was God but not man would have been to deny that his example was fully relevant; it might be a realistic standard for God but not for human beings.” [Ibid,

343]. I find it hard to think of another book on religion where such conceptual edification is so seamlessly welded with firsthand phenomenology.

Actually the very last chapter is the addendum already mentioned on Primal Religions, which Huston insightfully reckons sui generis in distinction from the wisdom traditions. Exemplified by the Australian Aborigines, he sees in the religious “dreaming” and exclusive orality of these folk an earlier epoch of human consciousness. Would that our GTU colleague Hilary Martin, whom we remember making all those research visits down under, could comment here. In any event Huston’s protective concern for Primal Religionists is reminiscent of his intervention for the Peyote Native Americans. A transitional period is underway in which Aboriginal humanity, in all probability, will slowly disappear, while meanwhile deserving our awed and caring respect. In general, even among major religions, Huston does not appear to expect, or desire, imminent structural change promoting world religious unity, as heralded by such movements as the Baha’i’s, John R. Mott or India’s Brahma- Somaj. His kind of ecumenism hardly needs institutional revamping, and besides there is being fought out today with mounting intensity (I think) the Armageddon with scientism—an exigent melee in which Huston contributes unique practical and theoretic leadership, and to which we now turn back all too briefly.

IV

Please be reminded this encomium is not supposed to be an exhaustive assessment, but only a brief celebration of Huston’s stature. A full scale commentary would require extended research, also attention, as he always gratefully reminds his readership, to the wonderful helpmeet Kendra. The Auseinandersetzung years ago with David Griffin, which sort of put “process theology” in its place, the book *Forgotten Truth*, etc., etc. would need resuming. I have perforce chosen to focus on his two exceeding high pillars of accomplishment: the wider ecumenical theological phenomenology of world religions, and the sustained broadscale critical exposure of “scientism” as the cultural-epistemic pathology most impairing wholesome function of religion as modernity, or is it post-modernity?, fulminates forward. The two enterprises are, as it were, at least as these have so far appeared, Huston’s “systematic theology” and his “theology of culture.” Over the last years, along with rounding out his remarkable life’s portfolio, it seems he has mainly concentrated on the latter, and his 2001 *Why Religion Matters*--especially its first half delineating the four surfaces of our scientistically induced “tunnel” of consciousness-- remains a potently eloquent arsenal thereof. The rest of the book is also vintage Huston, showing the potential for

top-drawer pure-theological speculation (as when he parses the issue of endless bliss) that doubtless in an alternative universe could have produced a highly creative dogmatics of its own.

Tillich and Polanyi are two of the significant religious thinkers (not to speak of Heidegger, Jaspers, et alii) who already prior to Huston had produced analyses and indictments of Western and world culture's increasing capitulation to the exclusive hegemony of natural science as arbiter of knowledge. In Tillich's 1926 analysis of the *Religiose Lage der Gegenwart* it was his hope that Barth's sense for a new inbreaking of revelatory transcendence might check, at least in theology, the massive presumption of "self-sufficient finitude" generated by natural science and technology. Fatefully this occasioned Tillich's long lasting partial alliance with Barth that was alluded to beginning this paper. Small world, in that Gerald Heard and the Traditionists who not very much later were there for Huston, were responding to the same overarching situation. A good diatribe in which to savor their perception of scientism is Rene Guenon's *The Reign of Quantity*. Polanyi, himself a natural scientist converting from Judaism to Christianity, prophetically critiqued modern obliviousness to the pistic presuppositions of all knowledge. His Gifford Lectures, published as *Personal Knowledge* in 1958, stand as what many (one cannot but think here of our PCTS colleague Charles McCoy) have acclaimed the most substantive Christian theology of culture yet written. It is a formidable work but not nearly as readable as Huston's.

While agreeing broadly that scientism has resulted from the scientific bracketing or total elimination of the "final" (= purposive) causality classically envisaged by Aristotle, Huston is not notably dependent on any of the aforementioned as he mobilizes his own highly accessible critique, suffused with rare literacy but never lacking the common touch. He strongly eschews fundamentalism, insisting on the acceptance of everything legitimate science can validate. Scientism, for him, can be simply understood as adding two corollaries to science: the assumption that the latter—understood as experimental natural science—is the best if not only way to knowledge, and that its subject matter (the material universe) is the most fundamental reality. The alignment for warfare with religion is also simple to understand in that for Huston the assumption of these two corollaries is rationally indefensible. They are "unsupported by facts. ...at best (are) philosophical assumptions and at worst merely opinions" [WRM. 60]. Huston thus agrees in principle with the GTU's Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences that religious thought may have an empirical bone to pick with what are reported at any given time to be the findings of science—in addition to the ontological and epistemological issues preoccupying Tillich and Polanyi. Huston has, in fact, as a friendly supporter, pressed for the CTNS to challenge more resolutely than it has the entrenched standing of Darwinism on the origin of species. [Cf., *ibid.*, 75f., 201f.]

There could erupt here quite a discussion, but to keep my own paper within proper limits I hasten to conclude by pointing up a profound chord of agreement I believe I rightly intuit between Huston and Buber, if not also Tillich. Huston limits legitimate natural science to what is below our selves, whereas the wisdom traditions address us from above, from the sphere of the Divine. Compare here Buber's demarcation of the domain of "I-it" from the "I-Thou." For Tillich the religious is "that which concerns us ultimately," discernible only to ontological and never adjudicable through technical reason; he and Buber were never closer on the Ineinander of these two dimensions than in their final rapprochement a few months before their respective deaths in 1965. We shall never do justice to Huston Smith until we fully smoke out such connections. It is my fondest hope we shall continue to do that in our PCTS and the wider world of theology and religious studies. Thank you all, and abundant thanks always to Huston for being himself, for blazing the trail he has, and over these last several years for being so loyally and cordially one of us.

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Please communicate any responses to <durwoodfoster@gmail.com>