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ANNUAL NAPTS MEETING

The annual meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society will take place on Friday, November 18, 2005, in Philadelphia, in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion Meeting from November 19–22. Sessions of the Group "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion and Culture" will take place at the AAR meeting on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. The complete schedule will appear in the Fall Bulletin.

Members of the AAR/SBL have already received their meeting and housing information in the *Religious Studies News—AAR Edition* in May. For anyone not a member and wishing to secure registration and housing for the meeting, please do so online by reaching the AAR website and clicking on

"meeting." You may also download the registration forms and fax them to 330.963.0319. The AAR Executive Office telephone number is 404.727.3049.

The mailing address is:

AAR and SBL Registration and Housing
c/o Conferon registration and Housing Bureau
2450 Edison Blvd., Suite 2
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087-2387.

Reminder: The summer Issue is the annual dues issue. Please remit your dues with the enclosed form at your earliest convenience. Thank you!

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Scharlemann, Robert P. *Religion and Reflection: Essays on Paul Tillich's Theology*. Edited by Erdmann Sturm. Tillich-Studien, vol. 16. Mün-

ster: Lit Verlag, 2004. This volume is a collection of Prof. Scharlemann's various essays on Tillich.

Holton, Gerald. "Paul Tillich, Albert Einstein, and the Quest for the Ultimate," in *Victory and Vexation in Science: Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg and Others*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. The Paul Tillich Lecture at Harvard University in April 2004. This volume contains the photograph of Einstein and Tillich taken in Davos, Switzerland in 1928.

If you have presented a paper at the NAPTTS Meeting or the AAR Group, "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion and Culture," at the 2004 meeting in San Anto-

TILlich's RESPONSE TO NIETZSCHE

DONALD F. DREISBACH

It is hard to imagine any knowledgeable student of Tillich denying that Nietzsche had a strong influence on him. We can ask, however, when this influence began and how deep it went. To this question, a recent book by Steven Ascheim gives an answer, to me a surprising answer. Even before Nietzsche's death in 1900, indeed, even by the time of Tillich's birth in 1886, there was an explosion of Nietzscheanism in Germany. As Ascheim writes,

The initial appeal of Nietzscheanism was clearly international. It spoke to a number of fin-de-siècle concerns and fulfilled functions that cut across international boundaries. Yet in Germany the legacy was most fully elaborated; there the myriad faces of the Nietzschean heritage were most systematically and continuously played out. Whether positively or negatively conceived, Nietzsche occupied a strategic place in individual and collective German self-definition and national debate. Both as hero and heretic he became a central national preoccupation, at times even an obsession.¹

This "obsession" was by no means limited to philosophers and theologians. Nietzsche permeated all of culture. Architects proposed buildings with Nietzschean themes. Richard Straus's tone poem, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, had its premier in Frankfurt in 1896. From the mid-1890s, there was a sort of Nietzsche cult, with a minor industry in what we might call Nietzsche kitsch: pictures, statues, post cards, and what have you.² The post card business, by the way, is still not dead. I have found postcards with the pictures of Nietzsche, with his big moustache, not only in Weimar, but also in tourist shops all over Germany.

nio, and it has not been published in the *Bulletin*, please send it to the editor no later than September 15, 2005. Many thanks.

Please send notices of new publications on Tillich or by members of the NAPTTS as well as items for "On the Calendar" to the editor. Thank you.

If you are interested in writing a review of any book or article published about Tillich or by a member of the Tillich Societies, or if you want to comment on any of the papers published in this or previous issues of the *Bulletin*, please contact the editor.

There was, of course, a Christian response to Nietzsche, generally negative, of course, but as early as the turn of the century some people saw Nietzsche as a powerful and affirmative religious force.

Nietzscheanism was part creator and part beneficiary of a general erosion of traditional belief and dissatisfaction with the established church. For many, this dissatisfaction, far from quenching the thirst for religion, gave it renewed impetus. In fin-de-siècle Germany, there were diverse attempts to either rejuvenate or graft a self-consciously secular form upon religious consciousness. The growing discredibility of dogma and the resultant spiritual loss—exacerbated by the process of rapid and intense industrialism—spawned a multitude of reformist tendencies (both within the Church and without), naturalist religions, and occult and mystical societies.³

Even before Nietzsche's death, there were efforts to create a Nietzsche-influenced Protestantism, even a Nietzschean picture of Jesus. A theologian named Hans Gallwitz, for instance, taking off from Christ's claim in Matthew to bring not peace, but a sword (10:34), sees Christ in accord with the Nietzschean vision. Both loved truth, rejected cowardice, affirmed the self, and tried to reawaken their exhausted age.⁴

Most who tried to integrate Nietzsche into the Christian tradition did not go as far as attempting to integrate the picture of the Christ with Nietzsche's warrior. And, surely, the majority of Christian thinkers, especially the Roman Catholics, were strongly opposed to Nietzsche. But clearly Tillich's attempt to deal with Nietzsche, really to baptize Nietzsche and integrate him into Christian thought, was by no means a novelty, the first steps in this direction having been taken in the year of Tillich's birth. Further, while it might well be impossible, and not very in-

teresting, to point to a particular time when Tillich started to read Nietzsche, it is clear that throughout the period of Tillich's education, whether he was reading Nietzsche or not, Nietzsche would have been a constant and significant part of the background chatter in his culture.

Yes, I know there are stories of Tillich reading Nietzsche in the trenches of the Western Front during the First World War. So did thousands of other educated Germans, and even some soldiers on the other side of the wire. But neither for Tillich nor for these other Germans could this have been a new discovery, unless one or two of them had been living in a cave for the past decade or so. The war might have been the occasion for a much different, much deeper, appropriation of Nietzsche, but certainly, it was not Tillich's first encounter with him.

Please allow me to make one more observation in relation to this historical background. During the period of Tillich's heyday in America, the situation of Nietzsche in American culture was analogous to the situation of Nietzsche in German culture in the time of Tillich's youth. There are, of course, differences. We did not have Nietzsche kitsch or Nietzsche postcards. But we did have Nietzsche moving from the position of being the crazy man who had twice talked the Germans into *Weltkrieg* to a secure position in the philosophical canon and onto the reading list in many undergraduate courses. And these undergraduates, the rebellious sons and daughters of the post-war pious generation, responded to Nietzsche. Not all of them, of course, did so but many saw him as their ally in a revolt against restrictive religion and restrictive morality. Whether Nietzsche would have been quite happy with the way he was appropriated in this country is, of course, another question. But it is largely these young people, estranged from their religious traditions and confronted in college with skepticism and with Nietzsche and other European philosophers, to whom Tillich spoke, and one might even say, to whom he ministered.⁵

It seems that what Tillich was doing, whether he was altogether aware of it or not, is offering a mediation between the Christian tradition that these kids were in the process of leaving and the skeptical education they were receiving in college, so that these young students could think of themselves as smart and educated but not feel alienated from the Christian tradition, that they could take Nietzsche seriously and still feel in some sense Christian. So how did Tillich handle Nietzsche? Let me try to

give some structure to my investigation by concentrating on one particular passage in Nietzsche, the famous passage in *The Gay Science* where the madman announces the death of God.⁶ I am not going to cite this passage to you; I am sure it is familiar to everyone. *The Gay Science* is an expression of Nietzsche's central concerns with religion, values, and the fate of Western culture, and the madman is rather a distillation of the problems of that book.

In this fascinating and puzzling passage, Nietzsche's madman, carrying a lamp at midday, enters the crowd, looking for God and eventually proclaiming God's death. The madman rather resembles the Cynic, Diogenes of Sinope, searching for an honest man. But it seems that Nietzsche's madman gives up in despair, since he cannot find anyone who will honestly own up, not to the death of God, which all seem to be of one mind about, but to the consequences to this death, the removal of any horizon, any orientation in the realm of meaning and value.⁷

These people are the product of Hume, Kant, and the Enlightenment; they are religion's cultured despisers. Hence, they are utterly blind to the consequences of God's passing as a cultural force, the abyss that opens in the realms of meaning and value. What Nietzsche is here doing, to use a word now in vogue, is re-problematizing the whole issue of God and religion.

Let us finally turn to Tillich. How does he handle this religious problem that Nietzsche leaves him, especially, how does Tillich maintain the vitality of the Christian tradition if he takes seriously the death of God, and how does he deal with the absence of a ground of meaning and value. Here I will for the most part confine my attention to the shorter books, rather than to the *Systematic Theology*. These shorter works were generally reworkings of lectures delivered on college campuses. Hence his audience would have been largely those young men and women whom I mentioned earlier, young people fascinated with Nietzsche and probably highly suspicious of their Christian heritage, and thus the spirit of Nietzsche hovers over these books in a way in which it does not hover over the *Systematic Theology*. Certainly in that work, there is concern with Nietzsche, but Tillich's aim there seems different, as is the work itself, at least after the middle of the second volume. The doctrine of symbols is abandoned⁸ and entirely new ideas, such as being eternally remembered, are introduced. Tillich's aim seems to be to win a place in the pantheon of Christian thinkers,

along with Augustine, Thomas, Luther, and Barth, rather than to respond to young people's Nietzsche-induced conflicts.

Let us first take a quick look at *Dynamics of Faith* of 1957. If Nietzsche's aim in *The Gay Science* is to re-problematicize religion, we might say that Tillich's project here is to re-problematicize faith, to offer an alternative way to think about faith. The Christian tradition offers a variety of notions of faith—love, obedience, and so forth—but at least since the 13th century when St. Thomas characterized faith as assent, as believing something, either the propositions offered by the Church or, after the Reformation, Scripture, it has been difficult to think of faith in God as anything other than believing that God exists, and, of course, if this is what faith is, it is subject to, and deserves, all the difficulties that the Enlightenment gives it. But if faith is something quite different from intellectual belief, then the skepticism of the Enlightenment looks like a lethal weapon with no target. And, of course, Tillich not only wants to re-problematicize faith, he wants to re-problematicize our notion of God. If we can be pried loose from our notion of God as some kind of entity, if our metaphors of old man, father, and so forth, collapse, so also does any meaning to the notion of the death of this entity.

Let us now move on, or move back, to *The Courage to Be* of 1952. Many consider this Tillich's best book; certainly, it is his best selling book, having been consistently in print since 1952. More important for our purposes, it is also his most obviously Nietzschean book. The book originated as the Terry Lectures, public lectures at Yale where the audience would have been largely undergraduates

Tillich's strategy in dealing with the Enlightenment's skepticism is not to fight it off, but to embrace it. In *The Courage to Be* he goes beyond this; he wants to firmly place himself among the murderers of God. In the final chapter of that book, he writes about the necessity of transcending theism. (CB, 182) He distinguishes three forms of theism. The first is the use of the word "God" in a vague, usually rhetorical, sense, by people who want to make a good impression. It is also the position of people who cannot tolerate a world without God, although they have little notion of what God's significance might really be. The atheistic response is equally vague and uninteresting.

The second sense of theism is a name for the divine-human encounter. This is more respectable. It "points to those elements in the Jewish-Christian

tradition which emphasize the person-to-person relationship with God" and represents "the non-mystical side of biblical religion and historical Christianity" (CB, 183). The inadequacy of this sort of theism is that it misses the mystical side of the religious relation. This issue, Tillich's ambiguous treatment of mysticism, is one I will not here pursue.⁹ Tillich says, rather cryptically, that the atheistic response to this form of theism "is the human attempt to escape the divine-human encounter. It is an existential—not a theological—problem" (CB, 183-84). It would be interesting to unpack this cryptic statement, but that is not our present problem.

There is still a third meaning to "theism," and this is what Tillich really wants to get his dagger into. This is the theism associated with proofs for the "existence" [Tillich's quotation marks] of God. It "tries to establish a doctrine of God which transforms the person-to-person encounter with God into a doctrine about two persons who may or may not meet but who have a reality independent of each other" (CB, 184). This God exists in space and time, subject to, rather than being the ground of, the structures of existence. He is also God the peeping Tom or God the busybody, turning us all into objects for his infinite and absolute subjectivity. Certainly, this is a God who is a "pain in the neck" and most of us are glad to see Him dead and gone.

Here Tillich mentions Nietzsche by name: "This is the God Nietzsche said had to be killed because nobody can tolerate being made into a mere object of absolute knowledge and absolute control" (CB, 185). Tillich, as usual, does not give us a footnote telling us just where Nietzsche says this, and I do not remember Nietzsche ever saying quite this, although he might have. But Tillich clearly has Nietzsche and his madman on his mind, since he says about this theistic God:

This is the deepest root of atheism. It is an atheism that is justified as the reaction against theological theism and its disturbing implications. It is also the deepest root of the Existentialist despair and the widespread anxiety of meaninglessness in our period (CB, 185).

Tillich immediately goes on to talk about absolute faith and, eventually, the God above God, so he does not lard out the implications of this atheism. What he seems to be implying is that, along with appropriate rejoicing at the death of this tyrannical God is a sense of anxiety, because the foundation for meaning is also gone, just as Nietzsche's madman said.

Before moving on to Tillich's response to the problem of values, let me talk a bit about this God above God. Here Tillich's project is similar to what it is in *Dynamics of Faith*, re-problematizing God and faith, yet he does it in quite a different way. Here God is not the object of our ultimate concern. Rather, this God who appears when the old god disappears in doubt is the power of being, and faith is not a matter of believing things, it is a matter of being grasped by the power of being. In Tillich's writings, one finds several of different notions of faith, and it is sometimes a bit bewildering figuring out just which notion he has in mind at any particular point. By the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*, he seems to be sliding back to faith as assent. But this is another matter. In *The Courage to Be*, Tillich rather welcomes Nietzsche's proclamation of the Enlightenment's destruction of the old God and the old notion of faith, as it is really the occasion for theological progress, leading to a god who is not an entity, a busybody subject to the categories and to space and time, and to a faith that is not a matter of a knowing subject separated from a God who is known only as an object.

There are a couple of interesting questions here. Is Tillich moving forward to a brand new sense of God and of Faith, or is he really moving backward, recovering ways of thinking that once were important in the Christian tradition but became neglected and overlooked? Is calling God the power of being or being itself a new idea, or is it something that can be found in St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and Hegel, at least in Hegel's *Logic*? Yes, Tillich does say a lot about the vitality of being; he says some things that seem to me highly metaphorical and which I cannot say I clearly understand, but he does press on the notion of how being takes non-being into itself. However, is this notion of being as vital and progressive really absent from the people I mentioned above?¹⁰

Another issue: Does not a notion of being as dynamic, as vital, as overcoming those negativities that oppose it, sound rather like the Will to Power? Certainly, Tillich has adopted, if not "Will," then "Power" when he refers to the Power of Being. Has Tillich responded to Nietzsche by taking one of his central ideas and baptizing it, even divinizing it? The notions of Will to Power and Power of Being are, of course, not identical, but I think the differences might be relatively small, although they are large enough to justify Tillich's claim that his notion of

Christianity can offer forgiveness, while Nietzsche's neo-Stoicism cannot.¹¹

Of course, I do not want to imply that Tillich's notion of God as dynamic being is something brand new in *The Courage to Be*. For his entire career, Tillich has talked about God as the Unconditioned, *das Unbedingte*, as the Power of Being, or as the Ground of Being, rather than as a particular being, no matter how supreme. Tillich seemed to believe, quite rightly I would think, that this kind of God is not subject to the skepticism that comes out of the Enlightenment. It is not a God who can wear out or die. This does not mean that Tillich's god is home free. Tillich spends a lot of time worrying, not about skepticism, but about nominalism. If one believes that only particular entities are real, only particular entities are what we can meaningfully speak or think about, then a God as Being Itself becomes quite empty. Hence, this is an issue that he is constantly concerned about, and he worries that Americans are by nature nominalists. (One might argue that Nietzsche is too.) Tillich seems never to have figured out how to get us over this. But that is another problem. Let us move on to the problem of meaning and value.

If God is dead, what about a foundation for meaning and value? Tillich does not dwell on the Nietzschean image of a universe devoid of fixed structures of morality and meaningfulness, but it is present as an underlying assumption. What Tillich gives us is in *The Courage to Be* is a phenomenology of the ontological structure of a human being. There we see that the pursuit of meaning and value is not an acquired trait, something we learn, but a part of our most fundamental reality, our ontological structure, as fundamental as our drive to continue to exist and have a secure position in the world. We do not *discover* meaning and value, we *create* them; they are extensions of our own creative being. But these structures of meaning and value are fragile; they are threatened by nonbeing.

Let us step back and examine this. Nietzsche said that the creation of new values was the great task for that rare soul, the *Übermensch*. Tillich, writing only about seventy-five years later, claims that pretty much everybody does it, at least to some extent. All values are, if not created by an individual person, at least a venture and a risk for that person. How could this be? What has happened to make Nietzsche's great demand become a commonplace? The answer, in a word, is Heidegger. Heidegger claims in *Being and Time* is that the world makes

sense to each one of us because each one of us projects himself or herself into it, carrying out mundane projects that are necessary to our lives, and in so doing endowing the world with sense. That is, the creation of meaning is something we do willy-nilly, without much thinking about it. So we might say that Tillich, following Heidegger, who was following Nietzsche, makes meaning and value something that is not given or even discovered, but created. But this means that we must confront the question of just what values one ought to create, and if we look to a book like *The Courage to Be*, although it claims that we do create values, it gives us no overt guidance as to what values we ought to create.

Let us look at Nietzsche's ethics. Many people of my generation learned to read Nietzsche from Walter Kaufmann, who tried to show us a kinder, gentler Nietzsche. Certainly Nietzsche does not say that in the creation of values, anything goes, that if it feels good, do it. Likewise, Nietzsche would not want to see us express our will to power by beating up little old ladies. However, the criteria for correct moral value creation are pretty vague: the values we create, really the demands we place upon ourselves, must be life affirming, genuinely demanding, and result in a self that is aesthetically pleasing.¹² All well and good, but can this square with the Christian tradition? Certainly Nietzsche sometimes says things that directly contradict any notion of Christian morality. Eventually one becomes exhausted from insisting that all of Nietzsche's claims about the glories of war, cruelty, and the warrior virtues are merely metaphorical. We can comfortably deal with Nietzsche's denunciation of pity (*Mitleid*) if it means nothing beyond a useless and unnecessary suffering with another (*leiden mit*), but praise of cruelty and rejection of Christian care of the sick is much harder to deal with.

So how does Tillich deal with all of this? Does Tillich import any principles that might moderate some of the nastiness that one sometimes finds in Nietzsche? One might characterize Nietzsche's ethic as one of self-realization. This is just how John Carey describes Tillich's ethic.¹³ Carey supports this claim by reference to the text, namely, Tillich's description of life as the process of actualization of the potential as self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence.¹⁴ I find this rather weak textual support, and Tillich really does not give us a very clear ethical system. Quite close to the passage that Carey quotes, we find Tillich saying that the moral act is one performed in accord with "the moral norms, that

is, the essential structures of encountered reality in man himself and in his world."¹⁵ Here the moral order is grounded in the order of nature and seems to be something the Stoics, or perhaps Aristotle, would be quite comfortable with. Close by, Tillich says that the encounter with another person "implies the unconditional command to acknowledge him as a person,"¹⁶ which sounds like Kant and to which one can hear Nietzsche replying, "*Ach, wie Königsburgian.*"

In spite of these quibbles, my sense of what is fundamental in Tillich tells me that Carey is correct. The picture that Tillich gives us in *The Courage to Be* of the best kind of life is of a life of massive projection into the world, even risky projection into the world, in the face of the threat of non-being. One who cannot overcome his anxiety about the potential loss of his being and so who restrains the projection of his being to areas that are risk free, that is, areas in which his moral being is not in danger of being sucked into non-being, Tillich dismisses not a wicked, but as neurotic. Further, from the biographical material about him and, even more, from the rich oral tradition about him, we get a picture of someone massively involved in life, not just in his professional life, but in art, culture, good wine, and even sex. He seemed to know just about everyone worth knowing; he had time and energy for his students, and the number of topics he wrote about is staggering: art, architecture, politics, health, history, international relations, and on and on. Certainly, he did not withhold his being from much of anything.

Still, this is not enough. What limits are there to my expression of my being? Is it okay to fulfill myself at your expense? More significantly, can we find some sort of moral guidance that Nietzsche will not dismiss as *Königsburgian*? This is a project that Tillich took up in another series of lectures for students, published as *Love, Power, and Justice* in 1954.

Clearly, Nietzsche has a beef with Christianity, but it is not easy to figure out exactly what it is. At least some of the time, he gives us a very positive view of the Jesus of Nazareth presented in the Gospels. He seems impressed by the life Jesus constructed for himself, although, of course he would not make it normative for others, and he seems impressed by the fact that Jesus could die without resentment. He seems to view Paul as the guy who perverted the loving religion of Jesus into something repressive, but few serious scholars today would view Paul as quite such a grump.¹⁷ Tillich sees the issue as primarily one of a conflict with Nietzsche's Will to Power with Christian love. This makes a lot

of sense and, if we consider those young people to whom Tillich was ministering, this might well have been an issue for them, even if they might not have been able to clearly articulate it. But in context the issue is fuzzier.

Many of us teach Nietzsche, so we have to make sense of him; we have to *impose* sense on him, and for us Will to Power is a very important concept. It is a concept that helps make sense of many other things that Nietzsche is doing. However, if we go back and read Nietzsche as if for the first time, the Will to Power is something that turns up quite late and really does not get all that much attention. Of course, there is the final book, *Will to Power*, but this work was put out by Nietzsche's sister, not by Nietzsche himself. One could, of course, argue that if sister could find enough notes in Nietzsche's desk to make up a rather large book, Will to Power must have been very much on Nietzsche's mind and so deserves to be considered a central concept in his thought. But one could also argue that if Nietzsche was thinking that much about Will to Power just before his madness, and since he was publishing books right up to his madness, if he really thought it important, we would see something more of it in the books that he published. Further, one might think that, in her own way, Nietzsche's sister was as "nuts" as he was, and anything she produced, even if attributed to him, should be viewed with a great deal of suspicion.

Then again, these concerns might amount to little more than a quibble. No matter how much Nietzsche actually wrote about Will to Power, he was *perceived* to hold this as a central tenet of his philosophical position, and Will to Power was *perceived* to be the cornerstone of his attack on the Christian tradition, so it makes sense for Tillich to center on that issue. In *Love, Power, and Justice*, Tillich says that the whole conflict between Christian love and Will to Power is a misunderstanding, an unnecessary estrangement between Christian thinkers and Nietzscheans, who really ought to be friends. The whole unnecessary conflict arises from poorly done or incomplete ontology, which Tillich proposes to fix. Nietzsche and his followers reject Love as a value because it is powerless; Christians reject Will to Power because it is loveless. However, in the activity of dynamic being, power and love depend upon one another (LPJ, 11).

There is no time here for a detailed investigation of the ontology Tillich undertakes in *Love, Power, and Justice*. Let me just summarize what he has to

say about the ontological nature of Love and Power, neglecting the entire issue of Justice. "Life is being in actuality and love is the moving power of life. In these two sentences, the ontological nature of love is expressed... Love is the drive towards the unity of the separated" (LPJ, 25).

Power is, in its very nature, expansive; it reaches out and it takes in. The power of being is not dead identity but the dynamic process in which it separates itself from itself and returns to itself. The more conquered separation there is the more power there is. The process in which the separated is reunited is love. The more reuniting love there is, the more power of being there is. Love is the foundation, not the negation, of power (LPJ, 48-49).

Clearly, with just a bit of ill will, one could use this bit of Tillich to justify the most awful sort of behavior, activity that surely would make Nietzsche wince. But Tillich does spend the rest of the book trying to erect some fences to limit the application of these principles.

Our purpose here is not to evaluate Tillich's ontology of love and power, but to see how he is dealing with Nietzsche. What we see, here overtly, but in his other works covertly, is an attempt to show that Nietzsche has not quite done Nietzsche correctly, and that when Nietzsche's fundamental principles, especially the Will to Power as dynamic power of being, are thought through properly, and when our own ontological nature is properly understood, we can take Nietzsche's critique quite seriously and still not feel compelled to abandon the Christian tradition of our ancestors.

¹ Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 18-19.

² Aschheim, pp. 32-33.

³ Aschheim, pp. 201-02

⁴ Aschheim, p. 204, citing Hans Gallwitz, "Friedrich Nietzsche als Erzieher zum Christentum," *Preussische Jahrbücher* 83/84 (1886).

⁵ Autobiographical note: I was born in 1941.

⁶ The word Nietzsche uses for "Madman" is a bit unusual, *Der tolle Mensch*. "Toll" is related to *Tollwut*, rabies, and even in Nietzsche's time would have seemed old-fashioned, rather like today calling a mental hospital a lunatic asylum. Further, given Nietzsche's end, it is interesting that he puts the pronouncement of God's death and its consequences into the mouth of a madman. Nietzsche, given his ending, had an odd interest in people on the border of sanity. For an interesting discussion of

Nietzsche, madness, and syphilis, see Richard Schain, *The Legend of Nietzsche's Syphilis* (Westport, CT: The Greenwood Press, 2001), esp. 33-35. Richard, a distant relative, is my source for the old-fashioned nature of "toll" (personal communication).

⁷ Is the madman exaggerating? Were Aristotle to come back, would he find the death of God to open an abyss and withdraw the Nichomachean Ethics, or would he just go on seeking the mean? But then, is Aristotle a viable ethical guide, a foundation for value, for anyone but a few specialists. It would be reasonable to claim that nearly two thousand years of Christian history have addicted us to God as source of value.

⁸ Tillich of course continues to use the term "symbol," but it no longer means a concrete part of our experience, as it was in earlier works where he was working out his doctrine of symbols. It is therefore not clear what he means by the term, and it is not surprising that he sometimes replaces it with the word "metaphore."

⁹ This was the topic of a recent meeting of the German International Tillich Symposium. The papers are published in *Mystisches Erbe in Tillichs philosophischer Theologie*, ed. Hummel and Lax (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000)

¹⁰ Let us consider St. Thomas. Certainly he does not talk about his God as Being in the same way that Tillich does; especially he does not stress being's ability to take in and overcome non-being. But what could be more dynamic than pure act? Further, Thomas is often read as "proving" that God is a being who exists. Is this a fair reading? Is a "being" whose essence just is to exist a substance, *ousia*, a "this?" Can we call this god an entity in anything other than a very analogical way?

¹¹ I cannot offer chapter and verse on this, since what is involved is interpretation of metaphors, but it appears that the Will to Power is something that is, so to speak, in me, so that if I am in despair about myself, I am in despair about my own Will to Power, while Tillich's Power of Being transcends my individual self, it is something not in me but I which I participate, so it can still offer me acceptance, even when I am in despair about myself. Yes, I know that there are times when Nietzsche seems to say that Will to Power animates all of nature, implying that it does transcend the individual self. However, Nietzsche speaks more often as psychologist than as metaphysician.

¹² Note here that the death of God does not leave Nietzsche utterly without values, as he makes the affirmation of life an absolute good, and he turns aesthetic values into moral values. But we might call these *metavalues*. Values are really the demands we place upon ourselves. These metavalues are criteria for acceptable demands that

shape the self. We will find Tillich doing much the same thing, introducing love as the criterion for judging the values we create or adopt.

¹³ John J. Carey, *Paulus then & Now* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), p. 110.

¹⁴ ST III: 31-32.

¹⁵ ST III, 40. This statement in Tillich comes as a surprise. He gives us no argument to prepare us for it.

¹⁶ ST III, 45,

¹⁷ I have no idea of what the status of New Testament studies was in Germany in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, but surely something was going on. Nietzsche shows no sign of knowledge of this branch of scholarship, not that far removed from his own classical area.



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**POLITICS OF SOUL IN CHANGING
SOCIETY: TILlich'S POLITICAL PATHOS
OF THE 1920'S IN LIGHT OF NIETZSCHE
MORAL PHILOSOPHY**

JARI RISTINIEMI

Coming to Dresden from the North, we drove through Berlin and through Brandenburg. Near the city we realized that this is an age-old area. The city in itself is a mixture of ages and activities. It shows signs of outstanding cultural activities, but it has also been a vital industrial centre. The castles and villas are from the time when, following Christine Boyer, the city was modelled after theatre. Today's cities are construed according to a pattern of spectacle according to her, which is also true of Dresden today.¹

My family had an opportunity to live for two weeks in one of the villas near Tiergarten, the central park in Dresden. The villas around the park are beautiful, mostly well restored. The one we lived in was not restored, yet and it was painted inside with thick grey latex. Underneath the paint, there were details of outstanding handicraft in wood and copper. We lived in a house loaded with history, but the grey and the plastic hid the history. Something beyond the individual, you could find this paint all over Eastern Europe it was said, was present in this house; on its own this house was a symbol of European and German history.

"Ethics is aesthetics," claimed Nietzsche, and thus he linked himself with the constructive trend in thinking. The way we are, the inner structure of our mentality has an immediate effect on how we act, for example in constructing and making buildings. Buildings are symbolic. Cities, buildings, houses and furniture reflect what we are and how we think and they also fall back on us making us into what we are. During Nietzsche's lifetime, this bond between the inner and the outer is explicated in Dostoevsky's books as well; Dostoevsky gave a symbolic expression to it.² The outer things are symbolic of the inner. Nietzsche's politics of the soul, I think, is to be seen in this perspective of holistic bond. Theory and praxis, reflection and action, and other related dichotomies do not acquire a central position in his thought. It is not a dualistic pattern that determines his way of seeing the world. On the contrary, Nietzsche fought a fight against dichotomies: instead of a dualistic pattern, his thought is characterized by a holistic trend. His philosophy was about what abides in humans, above the individual, determining us and making us into what we are. Few things are

so misunderstood as Nietzsche's doctrine of the superman; it considers the over-reaching individual. For Paul Tillich, living in Dresden during the 1920's, what is above the individual is the gestalt. Gestalts shape the will. Gestalts are not wholly congruent with the will; they are above the will, and in Tillich's interpretation, they seem to determine the will, giving it the shape it has.

I will distinguish between two levels: the flow or the tide of libido and the dimension of structural possibilities. In the dimension of structural possibilities, there are the patterns, structures, and constellations, which channel the flow. The flow is shaped by the constellations and patterns. It is the individuals who are the bearers of the dimension of structural possibilities, but the structures and patterns might be trans-individual. Why such differences? This helps us to discuss the patterns or the gestalts that determine and shape the will. The flow or the tide is the primary element: it is there that the movement starts. I think that both Tillich and Nietzsche criticized the capitalist bourgeois society because the pattern it offers does not satisfy the will, it does not give free reign to the flow.³ Both said "no" to that society. What was their alternative to the capitalist society? Which pattern of the will did they say "no" to and which pattern did they say "yes" to? In order to seek answers to these questions, I will first say something about the political situation in Europe and in Germany during the 1920's. After that I will try to highlight the pattern both Tillich and Nietzsche seemed to say "no" to, in this order, and finally, try to say something of their respective alternatives to capitalist society.

The Political Situation of the 1920's

We could say that Dresden is a product not only of the politics of the soul, but also a product of the European and German political situation. East and west has been and are present in the town, including what led to the division of Europe: the breakdown of the European dynasties and monarchies. The October Revolution in Russia sent its signals to the whole of Europe. The revolution came in 1917 and 1918 to Finland, to Sweden, to Germany and to other European countries. Nietzsche and Dostoevsky have a lot to say about the kind of people who were caught by the revolutionary movement. In one connection, Nietzsche talks about the swamp blotting itself when the waters of religion draw themselves back.⁴ When the waters of living religion and spirituality draw them back, the marshland is blotted and what is below becomes visible. This is Nietzsche's way of

speaking about what had happened to people, on the trans-individual plane in Germany and the rest of Europe. To say this in another way, we could say that otherness shows itself. When the waters draw themselves back, the flow receives another direction and the will leaves the shape it once had. A new shape of will is searched for. Such a situation is loaded with danger but also with possibilities. Flow, will, and libido can be used synonymously and I stick to that use. Libido, the energy of total personality, has been set off from the previous pattern and it now searches for another pattern, shape, or constellation. What kind of people are the terrorists of today, are they swamp people, taking revenge for a lost shape? Are they reactive people? I'll say a few more words about the situation in Germany before we go over to what Nietzsche said about the possible shapes of the will.

In the beginning of the 20th century, capitalists were not getting fewer and fewer. Instead, the world was about to see one of the largest waves of stock market speculations culminating in the collapse in New York in 1929. The situation of today, with regard to the both market and the terrorists is not very different from the situation in 1920's; there are many parallels. The capitalist bourgeois society, the German Republic during the 1920's, was not only attacked from the left, but it was also attacked from the right, by the fascist movement. In the beginning of the decade, there were several right-wing attempts to seize power, the first one in the March of 1920. Walter Rathenau, the former prime minister of Germany, later the minister of foreign affairs, was killed the 24th of June in 1922. This was the 376th political murder during the time of the Weimar republic. In the same year, Mussolini received dictatorial power from the hands of the king of Italy. On the 24th of February in 1920, the National Socialist Party with Hitler had sketched its 25-paragraph program. The program attracted workers, shop owners, lower middleclass, and middleclass people. The fascists promoted the strong state. Already at this time, the state was getting a firm grip on its citizens, infiltrating several aspects of life, even the most private corners of the self, as Stephen Haffner witnessed.⁵

Movements of the Flow

In 1918, Paul Tillich had come home from his four years of military service in the First World War. During the war, at the age of 29, he had found

Nietzsche and Nietzsche became an important philosopher for him during the rest of his life.⁶ Nietzsche's moral philosophy, among other things, is about the revaluation of all values. It was not a "no" to values, not even a "no" to democratic values. He could claim that institutions like marriage, taking care of the poor, and so on are good in themselves.⁷ They are good if the flow or the tide that carries them is ascending, life affirming, and life supporting; if the flow behind them is expansive, then those values are good in themselves. What did Nietzsche say "no" to if it wasn't this? People consider Nietzsche an anti-democratic, nihilistic social Darwinist. As a matter of fact, he was the opposite of a nihilist. He said "no" to nihilism, a "no" to "no." In nihilism the tide is in decay, the impulse of will, the instinct that carried life, was descending. His was not a "no" to democracy either: democracy is good if the tide behind it is expansive.⁸ Nietzsche said "no" to life without color, life without feeling for life. He read the flow in terms of either-or: either the tide is ascending, the feeling for life is manifold and vital, or the tide is descending, going down, vanishing, drawing itself back. This, I think, is a part of entry to Nietzsche's philosophy: that life is to be read in the light of the movement of the flow. It is the movement of the flow that determines the revaluation of values.

That the tide is descending, drawing itself back, creates a cleft between the outer and the inner. Humans draw themselves inward. In a situation like this, when will turns inward, or is turned inward, the will tends to control itself. But the will cannot be controlled, as it is infinite in itself. Instead, it becomes split. The will is split in two: there is now the controlling, dominant side of the will and the other side of the will; there is activity and passivity but these two are set apart from each other. Today the pattern of domination is analyzed: man is activity, woman is passivity; man is spirit, woman is nature. To overcome the dualistic pattern of domination is the work of many today.⁹

The pattern of domination could equally be called the reactive pattern. When the pattern of domination characterizes society, when there are enough people who share this structure, difference, plurality, multiplicity, diversity or movement, the characteristics of the multi-dimensional universe are accepted. These elements are not accepted, as the presence of them would touch the hidden and repressed layers of the self. And more: they are not accepted, as they would challenge the structures and

institutions based on the dominant pattern, if there now is the holistic bond between the inner and the outer, between individual and society. In the pattern of domination, only one side is preferred while the other side is hidden. We, however, do not get rid of the influence of the hidden and the repressed, as the events in Germany during the 1930's and 1940's bear witness. It could be said that the hidden and the repressed direct the pattern. In the mind of the Nazis, the other of the will was targeted as "the Jew," "the disabled," "the outcasts." The Nazis and the fascists were reactive people with reactive politics. A human being is a whole, a *complexio oppositorum* as renaissance philosophers and Carl Gustav Jung also claim, and if only one side is preferred, legitimized, affirmed, the other side lives a life of its own. That which individuals do not recognize as part of their selves, as elements of the self, arises somewhere else.¹⁰ There is something differential in our lives and to have sight of that and to get in touch with it is not only alarming but a promise, a possibility; it is essential for the politics of the soul. The differential is to be turned into nourishment for the self. There is the differential of the soul and the different outside of us. The politics of the soul is that one works with the differential of the soul, makes something in and through it. It is this work that establishes change.

Nietzsche's philosophy, seen as a whole, is about how to move from the reactive pattern with its dualism and contradiction between activity and passivity, control and sensuality, master and slave, to wholeness. It is about what it is to traverse the spheres of activity and passivity; it is about the will to power when the activity is on; it is about what it is to recognize one's passivity; it is about the spontaneity of the will when the pattern of domination is passed by; it is about the recognition of the self as the unity of opposites. In the reactive pattern, opposites are placed apart from each other. "It is so pleasant, so distinguishing, to possess one's own antipodes," he wrote.¹¹

Society with Short-term Values

Nietzsche read life with the flow in sight; he was a holistic philosopher. With this as a starting point, he said "no" to society in decay. The capitalist bourgeois society is such a society. It is a society filled with short-term values like utility and commerce.¹² There is the cleft between the inner and the outer and now this cleft is filled with short-term values. The utilitarian values are those Nietzsche called English values, with focus on Jeremy Bentham and others. To be beyond good and evil is to be beyond the utili-

tarian commercialism of the capitalist society as a way of life. He called the utilitarian values "foreground modes of thought and naiveties."¹³ Pleasure and pain, as they are interpreted in the books of utilitarian philosophers, are secondary effects, not primary events or primal affects; they depend on physiological conditions and stimuli. The over-individual works through events, affects, conditions, and stimuli. Will is a matter of emotions.

It was this capitalist bourgeois society with short-term utility values that even Tillich said "no" to. He called it the self-sufficient society, self-sufficient finitude, society with exclusive this-worldly goals. It is a society with absolute faith in science, rationality, and technology, in progress and materialistic values.¹⁴ Tillich agreed with Nietzsche in his criticism of the capitalist bourgeois society. Like Nietzsche, Tillich searched the point of departure for new politics and he found this point in the proletarian situation. This at first glance seems to be the very opposite of Nietzsche's aristocratic views. The proletarian situation was that masses of people were cut off from the meaning of their lives mentally, physically, economically and politically.¹⁵ Whereas Nietzsche was criticizing the bourgeois, its value orientation, and its way of thinking, Tillich was searching for a point of departure for new action. It would be unfair to Nietzsche to claim that he did not do this, as the motor of this thought was just where this point of departure for new thinking and new philosophy, for a new politics of the Earth, could be found. The point of departure comes with the individuals who have the courage for a new shape, the courage for wholeness.

I think that it is here that a parallel between Nietzsche and Tillich is to be found. The parallel lies in their respective recognition of the human situation. Nietzsche's message was that we should accept the other of the will, the below in the human being. We should work with otherness, catch hold of the differential of the soul and do something with and through it. With an inner change, an outer change will follow. We find this in Tillich as well. We have eyes for otherness, self-seeing eyes, and we should use those eyes; we should acquire more eyes. The more manifold the human being, the more eyes he or she has and if he or she has eyes for the human predicament, the wider his or her sphere of responsibility.¹⁶ Responsibility is to see one's share in what has happened, is happening, and will happen. It is to change oneself into an agent for things to come. Responsibility is a long-term value; it rings a bell in

eternity. This, I think, is Nietzsche. Responsibility is the guiding star of the politics of the soul; it is what coordinates the individual with the whole and directs him or her.

Tillich's message is that the proletarian situation is the human situation under the conditions of capitalist society. Consciousness is—and in this he follows Karl Marx—consciousness in and of the proletarian situation. The proletarian situation is the swamp of the capitalist society. What the capitalist society does is that it puts the outcasts into the swamp, cutting a group of people off from the common good. The proletarian situation affects all the individuals of the society, and its conditions lie on the societal plane. Responsibility is for Tillich, as it also was for Nietzsche, to see one's share in the events of time, to analyze the prevailing society and to work for an alternative, now in relation to the unconditional. Tillich claimed that there was a relation to the transcendental unconditional in Nietzsche as well.¹⁷ Like Nietzsche, he could claim that the present is pregnant with the future and that with a changing of the shape or the gestalt of the will, the change of the outer shall follow.¹⁸

To be beyond good and evil is, in Nietzsche's interpretation, to be beyond the rank and order of the values that the capitalist society with its short-term values offers. We are not beyond good and evil if we interpret ourselves as being thoroughly good in the light of some prevailing view of goodness, and if we interpret other people as bad. To be beyond good and evil is to be against the dichotomy between them; it is to be against a one-sided interpretation of our moral stance. In the dominant and reactive pattern, good and bad are placed apart from each other: we are good, the others are bad—away with the bad people! Nietzsche's target is those who do not recognize their share in the evil—whether that evil concern individuals or the society at large. Responsibility is a long-term value and a lifetime project. It is not man who is the measure of all things, but the measure of human beings is how far they stretch their responsibility. What did Nietzsche say about wholeness and what did Tillich say about wholeness in the 1920's?

To Be a Part of the Whole

Considering wholeness, Nietzsche wrote the following: "In man, creature and creator are united: in man there is matter, fragment, excess, clay, mud, madness, chaos; but in man there is also creator, sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divine spectator and the seventh day—do you understand

this antithesis?"¹⁹ All the ingredients needed for the work are already in a human being. Mud and clay is the swamp, the passivity of matter. The creator, the activity in us, is to work on passivity in this work internal to the self. The swamp is turned into nourishment for the self. These metaphorical expressions perhaps say something about human wholeness. Nietzsche's goal seems to be an open existence in self-transcendence, or to use his own expression, life fit for self-overcoming. In such a life, variation is on the scene, giving a new table of values.²⁰ Values are in the individual, but they are effective on the trans-individual plane.

Self-transcendence in the sense of an opened existence is what we find in Tillich as well, not only in his later thought but also as early as in the 1920's. Self-transcendence is the act in and through which the New is produced.²¹ If it is so that the inner affects the outer, giving valor to the situation, then people who live a holistic pattern, are political agents through their very way of life. Tillich wrote, with reference to Nietzsche: "To be sure, 'thoughts that come on dove's feet can rule the world'; to be sure, the thinker and the spiritual person, excluded from all social positions of power, can have immeasurable social effects. But he or she can do so only because a psychical or social trend of life finds expression in his or her thought and thereby attains form and power."²² As far as the role of the individual in society is under consideration, Tillich and Nietzsche seem to have similar views. When it comes to understanding society in terms of socialism, they differ from each other. Nietzsche said "no" to socialism, as he thought it was an expression for a "herd" mentality. Tillich said both "yes" and "no" to it.

Tillich did not uncritically accept the socialist-Marxist description of the proletarian situation, but instead tried to understand it in the light of Protestantism. It is not the classless society that is the ultimate goal of history, but instead what in symbolic language is called the kingdom of God. The classless society belongs to a transition. It is not the goal. Tillich did not say "no" to immanence, but he saw the development and the process of human societies as steps toward a righteous and meaningful society. Socialism with its message of the classless society is a step towards that society.²³ The wholly righteous society is beyond history, but it is a goal of history and as such it exercises its influence on societies. We should say "yes" to any society that works in the direction of meaningfulness and the fulfillment of meaning. Something of the righteous society can

take place in immanence, just as the relation to God or to the ground and depth of existence is something that takes place in immanence.²⁴ Tillich said “yes” to the fight for the righteous society and he said “yes” to the approximation of that society in history. The Religious Socialist Movement was to promote the kind of societies in which righteousness and meaningfulness in the political, social, and economical sphere was striven after and fought for. The Religious Socialist Movement is both a “yes” and a “no” to socialism.²⁵ It is trans-socialism; it aims to show that human history and the history of human society has a goal that is beyond history, but this goal is active in history as its direction, promise, and demand. Later, Tillich writes a book on the trans-moral conscience. If Nietzsche had lived during that time, he would say that that is exactly what my moral philosophy is about.

The meaningful society, which could at least be partly realized in history, is not only a society in which humans find and come to their meaning. In a dynamic, meaning-fulfilling society, even things are included in the sphere of meaning and becoming whole. In the capitalist bourgeois society, things are subordinated to utility; they are made into the means for human prosperity and wellbeing. There is a technical-rational domination over things in this society, so the technical gestalt rules in it.²⁶ In the technical gestalt, a realm of abstraction, and with it consciousness, is loosened from life and this realm, with its ideas, representations, and mechanical laws, is used as the base for the construction of the realm of things.²⁷ The ultimate triumph of this technical construction, we could say, is the world turning into a modern airport, that the world is characterized by uniformity, not by diversity, by uni-dimensionality, not by multi-dimensionality, by mechanical speed, not by the soft movement of the human soul, and by technical warfare, no matter what the advertisers say about uniting people. We can fly all over, phone to whomever we like, never getting into the depth of life. No matter where in the world we are, the airport is always the same. The technical gestalt gives us more of the same. Tillich’s message in the 1920’s was, and it was at this time that the technical construction was triumphant already, that life fit for humans, animals, and things, is a life led not under the domination of the technical gestalt, but life in cooperation and coordination with things and animals. This coordination knows about the differential of our souls and it knows about the Different outside of us. It is life in which the Eternal not only disturbs and

shakes us up when it cuts into life, but also promotes and directs everything particular to its meaning in “the gestalt of grace” or love. “In the unity of knowledge and love is the meaning of science brought to its highest expression. But love is not a negation but affirmation of the particularity of the other. True love has justice in it; and justice in the sphere of knowledge is the recognition of the particularity of things and affinity with the unconditional form, upon which every act of knowledge is dependent.”²⁸ Things and humans, particulars, are not infinite, but parts of the infinite, not unconditional, but conditioned in many ways, and as such symbolic for that what is beyond them, expressing itself through them. In a holistic constellation, all particulars evolve in coordination with all others and they do so with uttermost spontaneity.

¹ C. M. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory. Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998).

² Considering the symbolic in Dostoevsky see J. Ristiniemi, *Wholeness and the Integral Mind. Towards Self-Transcending Humanity* (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab., 2003), 120ff.

³ “Things which have lost their meaning do not satisfy; they drive men on from one thing to another and there is no possibility of satisfaction. Impoverished personality is left without a definitely directed love. It is open to every allurements brought to it from without. That is the reason why the possibility of arousing wants through salesmanship and advertising is unlimited.... This is one of the weightiest characteristics of the capitalist time.” Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), 74f.

⁴ Schubart, W. (1946), *Dostojewski und Nietzsche. Symbolik ihres lebens* (Luzern: Vita Nova Verlag), 10f.

⁵ Haffner, S. (2002), *En tysk mans historia. Minnen 1914-1933*. Stockholm: Nordstedts Förlag. *Geschichte eines Deutschen. Die Erinnerungen 1914-1933*.

⁶ See, for example, Ronald H. Stone (1986), *Paul Tillich’s Radical Social Thought* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America), 35f.

⁷ “For one must grasp this: every natural custom, every natural institution [state, administration of justice, marriage, tending of the sick and poor] every requirement presented by the instinct for life, in short everything valuable *in itself*, becomes utterly valueless, *inimical* to value through the parasitism of the priest [or the ‘moral world-order’].” Nietzsche, F. (1990), *Twilight of the Idol/The Anti-Christ* (London: Penguin Books Ltd.), 148

⁸ “*My conception of freedom.* – The value of a thing sometimes lies not in what one attains with it, but in what one pays for it—what it *costs* us. I give an example. Liberal institutions immediately cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained: subsequently there is nothing more harmful to freedom than liberal institutions... As long as they are still being fought for, these same institutions produce quite different effects; they then in fact promote freedom mightily... Our institutions are no longer fit for anything: everyone is unanimous about that. But the fault lies not in them but in *us*. Having lost all the instincts out of which institutions grow, we are losing the institutions themselves, because *we* are no longer fit for them.” Nietzsche, F. (1990), *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ* (London: Penguin Books), 102f.

⁹ See for example Daly, M. (1979), *Beyond God the Father. Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation.* (Boston: Beacon Press). Radford Ruether, R. (1983), *Sexism and God-talk. Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press.)

¹⁰ “Then, in the soul of the oppressed, the powerless. Here all *other* human beings are considered hostile, ruthless, exploiting, cruel, cunning, whether they be noble or low.” Nietzsche, F. (1969), *On the Genealogy of Morals/Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage Books), 167.

¹¹ Nietzsche, F (1988), *Beyond Good and Evil* (London: Penguin Books), 60. “Thirdly, will is not only a complex of feeling and thinking, but above all an *emotion*: and in fact the emotion of command. ... A man who *wills* – commands something in himself which obeys or which he believes obeys.” *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹² “So long as the utility which dominates moral value-judgements is solely that which is useful to the herd, so long as the object is solely the preservation of the community and the immoral is sought precisely and exclusively in that which seems to imperil the existence of the community: so long as that is the case there can be no ‘morality of love of one’s neighbour.’” Nietzsche, F. (1988) p. 104

¹³ “Whether it be hedonism or pessimism or utilitarianism or eudaemonism: all these modes of thought which assess the value of things according to pleasure and pain, that is to say according to attendant and secondary phenomena, are foreground modes of thought and naiveties which anyone conscious of creative powers and artist’s conscience will look down on with derision, though not without pity.” Nietzsche, F. (1988) pp. 135f.

¹⁴ “How hopeless all opposition was at the end of the nineteenth century is shown with terrible clarity by the fate of three great warriors against the prevailing spirit and prophets of coming things: Nietzsche, Stringberg and

van Gogh. The philosopher, the poet and the painter, all three, were broken mentally and spiritually in their desperate struggle with the spirit of the capitalist society. Thus even the movements of opposition at the beginning and the end of the last century bear witness in defeat to the victory of the trinity of natural science, technique and capitalist economy, to the triumph of the spirit of capitalist society... In all this there is no trace of self-transcendence, of the hallowing of existence. The forms of the life-process have become completely independent of the source of life and its meaning. They are self-sufficient and produce a self-sufficient present. And all phases of life which are subject to the spirit of rationalistic science, technique and economy bear witness to the time as one which is self-sufficient, which affirms itself and its finitude.” Tillich P. (1932), *The Religious Situation* (New York: Henry Holt and Company), 18ff. Tillich P. (1926), *Die Religiöse Lage der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Verlag Ullstein), pp. 21f.

¹⁵ To realize meaning “is not possible upon the soil of the capitalistic division of classes. As one of the classes, the proletarian is cut off from the meaning of life, and the whole is distorted and emptied of meaning.” Tillich, P. (1962), *Gesammelte Werke.* Band 2, 148. Tillich, P. (1930), *Sozialismus.* ‘Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus.’ Jg. 1, 1930, 1-12.

¹⁶ “In face of a world of ‘modern ideas’ which would like to banish everyone into a corner and ‘speciality’, a philosopher, assuming there could be philosophers today, would be compelled to see the greatness of man, the concept ‘greatness,’ precisely in his spaciousness and multiplicity, in his wholeness in diversity: he would even determine value and rank according to how much and how many things one could endure and take upon oneself, how *far* one could extend one’s responsibility.” Nietzsche F. (1988), 124.

¹⁷ “The criticism offered by Nietzsche was more penetrating; it set the ideal of an aristocratic and meaningful personality in contrast to the bourgeois personality. Race-theories, conceptions of national excellence and romantic ideas of nobility and leadership were frequently combined with it as in the case of Spengler, for it is this ethics which forms the background of his philosophy of history. But while there was in Nietzsche’s symbol of the super-man a reference to the transcendently Unconditioned, these modern movements remain almost completely this-worldly.” Tillich, P. (1932) pp. 118f.

¹⁸ “To understand the present means ultimately to understand the future with which the womb of the present is great.” Tillich, P. (1932) p. 6; (1926) p. 11. “Our consideration of the practical sphere has revealed that the relig-

ious situation in it is even more completely dominated by the spirit of the capitalist society that is the case in the theoretic sphere. This lies in the nature of the case. When the spirit is moved in those depths which lie beneath the antithesis of theory and practice it achieves a definite form of consciousness [*Bewusstseinsgestaltung*] first of all in seeing and foreseeing contemplation. The shaping of concrete reality [*Die reale Gestaltung*] follows and follows necessarily; for it is the same spirit which is effective in pre-vision and in transformation." Tillich, P. (1932), 120; (1926), 102

¹⁹ Nietzsche F. (1988), 136.

²⁰ "The dangerous and uncanny point is reached where the grander, more manifold life lives *beyond* the old morality; the 'individual' stands there, reduced to his own law-giving, to his own arts and stratagems for self-preservation, self-enhancement, self-redemption. ... Danger is again present, the mother of morality, great danger, only this time it comes from the individual, from neighbour and friend, from the street, from one's own child, from one's own heart, from the most personal and secret recesses of wish and will." Nietzsche, F. (1988), 182.

²¹ "For our purpose it suffices to describe freedom as the faculty of producing the new and realizing meaning. The new which breaks through the circle of pure being is new only if it is the result of a productive act, in which reality has risen beyond itself, transcending itself. ... The new that is produced by freedom is meaningful reality. The new, of which we are speaking, is not a natural thing or event; it is meaning. ... This definition does not point to a special group of beings in which history occurs. It leaves open the question whether man only or angels or animals are bearers of history." Tillich, P. (1936), *The Interpretation of History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 252f. Tillich, P. (1930), *Religiöse Verwirklichung* (Berlin: Furche-Verlag G. m. b. H.), 118f.

²² Tillich, P. (1936), 191. Translation of *Das Problem der Macht, Versuch einer Philosophischen Grundlegung. Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus*, 2 Jahr, 4 Heft (Potsdam 1931, Alfred Protte Verlag).

²³ "But Kairos is not perfect completion in time. To act and wait in the sense of Kairos means to wait upon the invasion of the eternal and to act accordingly, not to wait and to act as though the eternal were a fixed quantity which could be introduced into time, as a social structure which represents the end and goal of history, for instance. ... But there are no societies which possess the eternal. According to religious socialism, therefore, the only goal which our eschatological hope can look forward to is this, that the judgement proceeding from the eternal may result in an organization of life and society (*Gestaltung des*

Daseins und der Gesellschaft) in which the orientation toward eternal is recognizable." Tillich, P. (1932), 139, (1926), 117f.

²⁴ "It does not see the realization of the holy in the soul, nor in the church, but in the world – that is its immanence." Tillich, P. (1962), 90. Tillich, P. (1922), *Masse und Geist. Studien zur Philosophie der Masse*. Berlin, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft (Volk und Geist Nr. 1).

²⁵ "The socialist theory is dependent on the presupposition that the changing of society will change the humans also, at the same time it passes the question by how it is possible to change the society without changing humans." Tillich, P. (1962), 288. Tillich, P. (1933), *Die Sozialistische Entscheidung*. Potsdam.

²⁶ "The technical conception of reality ... is all over victorious because the prevailing shape of things and the shape of soul and the shape of society are determined by it." Tillich, P. (1930), 72

²⁷ "Profanization is always rationalization, *i.e.*, comprehension of things through resolution into their elements and combination under the law. This attitude, which is in accord with the nature of things and suited to the relationship of subject and object, is demonically distorted through the will to control, which masters it and robs the things of their essential character and independent power. It is the attitude to reality meant by the concept of intellectualism, which is not to be thought of as too much of intellect or rationality, but as a violation on the part of the rational subject.... The demonic quality of intellectualism is that it contains the rational comprehension of things and essentially must contain the consequence of infinite progress, but that, on the other hand, with every step forward it destroys the living, independently powerful quality in the things and therewith the inner community between the knowing and the known." Tillich (1936), 117. Tillich, P. (1926), *Das Dämonische, ein Betrag zur Sinndeutung der Geschichte* (Tübingen: Verlag S. C. B. Mohr).

²⁸ Tillich, P. (1959), 293; (1923).

**GLOBAL FLOWS, HEAD SCARVES, AND
FINITE FREEDOM: TILlich ON
GLOBALIZATION**

JONATHAN ROTHCHILD

This paper probes Paul Tillich's conceptions of freedom and nationalism and their significance for current expressions in globalized contexts. There are three central sections of the paper: (1) an analysis of various features of globalization through the works of Arjun Appadurai, Saskia Sassen, Amy Chua, and Amartya Sen; (2) an examination of Tillich's writings on freedom and nationalism in his 1933 *The Socialist Decision* and his later works; and (3) an investigation of a case study, the recent legislation banning conspicuous religious symbols in French public schools, and possible Tillichian rejoinders. My thesis holds that Tillich's reflections remain instructive for the present globalized contexts because they protect an irreducible selfhood and freedom (tantamount to a transcendent imperative over concrete circumstances), yet they also affirm this selfhood and freedom as shaped by others (manifested as participation within relationships and communities). Tillich encapsulates these claims in a participation-transcendence dynamic that bears the seriousness of a moral imperative without relinquishing attention to the concrete situation.

Section One: Themes in Globalization

The understandings of globalization vary markedly,¹ but a frequently identified feature is the interpenetration between the global and the local. Sociologist Roland Robertson, for example, has stated that "globalization—in the broadest sense, the compression of the world—has involved and increasingly involves the creation and the incorporation of locality, processes which themselves largely shape, in turn, the compression of the world as a whole."² This compression of local and global expresses the fluidity of freedom and selfhood within a post-national world; more dramatically, this fluidity becomes manifested as conflict. As Saskia Sassen puts it, "[g]lobalization is a process that generates contradictory spaces, characterized by contestation, internal differentiation, continuous border crossings."³ The balkanization of these contradictory spaces appears prominently in the global city, and Sassen analyzes the concrete implications of spaces of powerlessness. The juxtaposition of power and powerlessness can erode social justice when manual laborers, principally women and immigrants, "are never represented as part of the global economy, [even if]

they are in fact part of the infrastructure of jobs involved in running and implementing the global economic system."⁴ Though they serve an irreplaceable function in the global economy, service workers in the global city are rendered invisible by economic structures that instrumentalize labor and destabilize and vitiate individual identities and freedoms.

In addressing such phenomena, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai describes our decolonized worlds in terms of social imagination and constellations of global flows. Global flows express the disjunctures and de-territorialization that increasingly compel individuals to re-imagine their own identities and freedoms. Appadurai insists that the Weberian presuppositions about ethnicity as grounded principally in biological and genealogical kinship must be abandoned in favor of a view of ethnicity that "takes the conscious and imaginative construction and mobilization of difference as its core."⁵ Whether manifested as ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples, or ideoscaples, disjunctive, but ubiquitous global flows impact these imaginative constructions by blurring and exploding traditional boundaries and preconceptions. Appadurai denominates transnational cultural movements—funded by international migration—as "diasporic public spheres."⁶ Within these diasporic spheres lies "the nationalist genie, never perfectly contained in the bottle of the territorial state, [which] is now itself diasporic."⁷ Weberian conceptions of nationalism and ethnicity as aggregate natural facts are superseded by nationalism and ethnicity as freedom and identities produced by the collective imagination. The blunting of such imagination has reductive ramifications, for it obviates collective identity and individual self-formation (*Bildung*). Tillich had anticipated such deleterious ramifications in contemplating *die Judenfrage* in 1953: "The individual human being who belongs to a nation or to a race is no longer regarded as an individual. One sees the individual only through the image of the type...Such stereotyping...was disastrous for the relationship between the German and the Jew."⁸ If nationalism, we must probe the relationship between freedom and nationalism, particularly freedom as construed in utilitarian terms of rational choice theory and wealth maximization by neo-classical economics. Here the biases of Western sensibilities confront a global world of marginalized, displaced, and heterogeneous persons. Amy Chua disabuses views that promote free-market democracy as *the* definitive strategy for

creating a secure and productive society in a globalized context: “Because markets and democracy benefit different ethnic groups in societies [with market-dominant minorities], the pursuit of free market democracy produces highly unstable and combustible conditions.”⁹ Chua points, for example, to Filipino Chinese who, though just 1 to 2 percent of the population, hold controlling interest in the principal commercial banks, department store chains, and major supermarkets of the Philippines.¹⁰ She examines similar phenomena in the case studies of Brazil, Cameroon, and Russia as well as, on a broader context, anti-American sentiment. Chua does not espouse anti-democratic principles, but she cautions that democracy as presently conceived and implemented—that is, driven by a proposed synthesis between market-driven economics and democratically-achieved consensus—cannot sustain freedom and flourishing because majorities do not adequately participate in these processes. This disenfranchisement of majorities has induced ethnic hatred and violence, but it has also attenuated the links between material, market goods and national identity: “A principal focus of nationalist and ethnonationalist anti-market reactions in the non-Western world has been the humiliating domination by ‘outsiders’ of a nation’s economic symbols: oil wells in Latin America, gold mines in South Africa, forests in Burma and Indonesia, Lomonosov porcelain in Russia, or other sectors that have come symbolically to be associated with national identity.”¹¹ Chua recommends that democracies and markets that expand participation, particularly ways that expand ownership among the poor,¹² can reconnect nationalism and freedom in ways that promote justice. We will see below the extent to which Tillich promotes democracy as a critical corrective to purely nationalistic impulses, but a corrective that itself be restrained by the imperatives of justice.

Economist and philosopher Amartya Sen also argues that our globalized context necessitates the rethinking the nature of freedom. Rather than construe freedom in neoclassical or utilitarian terms as achievement, Sen holds that conceptions of freedom should attend to “the *processes* that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and the actual *opportunities* that people have, given their personal and social circumstances.”¹³ Similar to Chua,¹⁴ Sen envisages freedom as a capacious set of social and political individual opportunities broadly conceived as capabilities. Sen’s capabilities approach acutely recognizes the significance of moral values and nonmoral

goods, and, consequently, the importance of transforming social perceptions about market and non-market freedoms. Sen posits that a sense of justice—a sense discarded by the separation of fact and value by neo-classical and utilitarian models of economics—can be a decisively motivating factor for economic action: “Social values can play—and have played—an important part in the success of various forms of social organization, including the market mechanism, democratic politics, elementary civil and political rights, provision of basic public goods, and institutions for public action and protest.”¹⁵ Sen points to the Grameen Bank and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh, which not only afford women more substantial financial opportunities but also enable them to participate more fully in social and economic affairs, thereby effectuating social change and redressing imbalanced power dynamics.¹⁶

Section Two: Tillich’s Participation-Transcendence Dynamic

In his 1933 text, *The Socialist Decision*, suppressed by the newly entrenched Nazis, Tillich fleshes out the disparate roots of nationalism. Gregory Baum remarks that, “Tillich was one of the few anti-fascist writers of the thirties on who did not oppose nationalism on principle.”¹⁷ Tillich’s perspective, as Jean Richard notes, must be qualified and nuanced. In *The Socialist Decision*, Tillich develops a trenchant critique of the bourgeois and romantic elements of nationalism, but he also censures present forms of socialism. Tillich develops a social theory that distinguishes two types of consciousness, consciousness of origin and consciousness of demand. In my reading, the former pertains to participation, or freedom shaped in and through relationships and communities, and the latter pertains to transcendence, or a transcendent imperative over external circumstances. This dynamic helps illuminate our earlier discussion of freedom as participation in a global context, but it also contributes the unique dimension of transcendence.

The Socialist Decision touches upon one aspect of the participation-transcendence dynamic, namely, the historical and universal character of the socialist principle. The socialist principle instantiates this dynamic because it “is a particular principle”¹⁸ yet “is rooted in the primordial human element.”¹⁹ Put differently, bearing the influence of Heidegger, Tillich submits that “[t]he universal and the particular element—human being [*Sein*] and the proletarian existence [*Dasein*—therefore do stand alongside each

other in an unrelated way.”²⁰ This relationship creates tension, but, unlike political romanticism that is fettered by contradiction or “the subjective, accidental, arbitrary elements in that which contradicts itself,”²¹ the socialist principle experiences conflict—and here Tillich appropriates Schelling’s abyss and Kant’s antinomy that locate conflict in freedom itself—conflict that “is not rooted in the knowing subject, in the accidental and arbitrary, but in the thing itself.”²² The conflict of socialism lies in the fact that it seeks to “break through national limitations”²³ but in a way that “is dependent for its own realization on national powers of origin.”²⁴ Socialism converts itself when it does not fully repudiate the consciousness of origin, maintains its “rational form”²⁵ and therefore avoids the tendency to relapse into “utopianism,”²⁶ but challenges critically in and through its prophetic character. Socialism’s prophetic character, instantiated in the Hebrew prophets’ impassioned pleas for righteousness and justice or Marx’s resistance to objectification, preserves freedom because it marshals “the counter-movement against this process of dehumanization, against the tendency of capitalism to turn people into psychological mechanisms calculable pleasure-pain reactions.”²⁷

The prophetic character of socialism becomes critical in its demand for justice that expands participation.²⁸ The powers of origin are interrogated, restrained, and transformed by the critical corrective of democracy, which itself is radicalized and restrained. As Tillich writes, “[t]he construction of the socialist state must be carried out within the tension between the powers of origin that support the structure of society and the democratic corrective that subjects it to the demand of justice.”²⁹ In unifying power and justice, particular and universal converge in a necessarily perduring tension that one transcends, but from which one does not fully separate.³⁰ Jean Richard, who, like Gregory Baum, applies the insights of *The Social Decision* to contemporary discussions of the Province of Quebec and Canadian nationalism, envisages an analogy between the nation and the family. Jesus’ prophetic critique reconfigures the family into a more inclusive model of neighbor love, where the family “is broken but it is not abolished nor eliminated. It is broken in so far as it is opened to a wider, more universal dimension.”³¹ To be sure, upon coming to the United States, Tillich evacuates his earlier language of central planning and the utopian ideals of socialism; nevertheless, he retains socialism’s vision of the prophetically critical universal dimension. The smaller community of the nation

remains present, but it is transmuted into a more inclusive notion of the reunion of the whole.

In later writings, Tillich continues to expatiate on the dynamic of participation and transcendence with respect to freedom and nationalism. In undertaking an extended historical excursus of courage vis-à-vis participation and individualization, Tillich in the *Courage To Be* juxtaposes, on the one hand, the mythologization of participation, including the “relapse to tribal collectivism [that] was readily visible in Nazism,”³² and, on the other hand, the denial of participation, including the “romantic irony [that] elevated the individual beyond all content and made him empty: he was no longer obliged to participate in anything seriously.”³³ Tillich later identifies the individuation-participation dynamic as one of the ontological polarities in his *Systematic Theology*. Transcendence also remains central to his analysis of nationalism because nationalism can assume the form of ultimacy.³⁴ This ultimacy frequently becomes demonic when nationalism “claims infinity without having it.”³⁵ Tillich conflates nationalism and the demonic when writing in 1938 during the zenith of Nazi power: “At the present time nationalism is the most evident and the most dangerous incarnation of the demonic principle in general, especially where, as in various places, it has assumed an explicitly religious form.”³⁶ Nationalism signifies the collective consciousness of origin, but the critical consciousness of the prophetic voices necessitates transformation and transcendence. Tillich preserves the tension of the participation-transcendence dynamic when he defends the irreducible value of German nationalism in the postwar context. Writing in 1944, he upholds the prerogatives of German sovereignty and integrity: “But if Germany is divided into three sovereign nations...then the greatest irredeemable in world history will be created.”³⁷ These two passages, one condemning the demonic character of nationalism and the other affirming the self-determination of Germany, illustrate the complexity of the participation-transcendence dynamic.

Section Three: Headscarves, Secularity, and Religious Freedom

In 1905, France ratified the Law of Separation, where Article One of the Constitution affirmed France as a republic, indivisible, secular, democratic, and social, and resolved the issue of church and

state. The pursuit of secularity, *laïcité*, enabled France to disentangle itself from perceived Catholic coercion. Nearly one hundred years later, the government imposed a ban on conspicuous religious symbols in public schools, or neutral spaces, which was, according to a Chirac spokesperson, “a decision that respects our history, our customs, and our values...To do nothing would be irresponsible. It would be wrong.”³⁸ Critics point to the ambiguity of the term “conspicuous” as politically motivated, given that it allows smaller Christian crosses but disallows the larger Islamic headscarves and Sikh turbans. The five million Muslims in France, roughly eight percent of the population and expanding, have demonstrated, but largely complied with the ban since its enactment into law this past September.

The meaning of the veil, particularly its re-emergence in the last few decades, has generated polemical debates: is it repressive to Muslim women, a tool of patriarchy, or is it a symbolic vehicle for Muslim women to reclaim their Islamic identity and retain respectability in an increasingly secularized world? The confounding problem of otherness, eloquently articulated by Edward Said and others, continues to exacerbate understandings between Western and Arab views of freedom. Frequent misunderstandings regarding *hijab* (religious modesty) through veiling such as reductionism problematize these debates and obfuscate the tremendous diversity of cultures of the Arab Middle East, including different forms of veils. I cannot adequately address such debates here, but our earlier discussion of contradictory spaces again becomes relevant. Through interviews with Muslim women of varying ages, nationalities, and life-situations, Helen Watson argues that such narratives illustrate the ways “[e]ach woman is ‘caught between worlds’ in the sense of facing conflicting pressures and managing competing cultural values, tradition and persons aspirations.”³⁹ The interstitial space between worlds, what Tillich identified as the boundary, reflects the intersection of traditional values and globalized contexts.

Given his interest in participation and transcendence as well as remarks about the perils and necessity of nationalism, how might Tillich respond to the banning of religious symbols in public schools? Tillich’s writings on religion and nationalism attract the attention of many thinkers, including the United States Supreme Court which consulted Tillich’s writings to adjudicate the claims of conscientious objectors in *United States v. Seeger*, 380 U.S. 163 (1965).⁴⁰ Tillich would be attentive to the implica-

tions of the ban as part of his theology of culture: “A theology which does not deal seriously with the criticism of religion by secular thought and some particular forms of secular faith, such as liberal humanism, nationalism, and socialism, would be ‘*a-kairos*’—missing the demand of the historical moment.”⁴¹ Does the *kairos* compel us to consider the ban as disclosive of the meaning of participation in a polycentric and deliberately secular society? Tillich’s concerns regarding the ban would pertain to the blunting of depth-content and self-formation and the envisioned separations between culture, morality, and religion. Self-transcendence occurs in and through participation, but, in light of our earlier analysis of globalization and Tillich’s own reflections, this participation cannot be limited to the nation: “There is no self-transcendence under the dimension of the spirit without the constitution of the moral self by the unconditional imperative, and this self-transcendence cannot take form except within the universe of meaning created in the cultural act.”⁴² The ban not only fractures culture and religion, but it also seeks to eliminate the interpenetration of participation and transcendence.

Tillich calls the denial of the symbols that express ultimate concern—symbols that reconfigure freedom and self-formation as transcendent but mediated by participation—a sacramental social attitude. In his 1923 “Basic Principles of Religious Socialism,” he writes: “The personality is completely dominated by sacramental relations to the soil, possessions, the family, the tribe, the class, the nation, and the politico-cultic hierarchy.”⁴³ The demand for justice, heard in the prophetic critique of justice and expressed as the moral imperative, enjoins neutrality, but this neutrality cannot, according to Tillich, remove risk, courage, or doubt. In *Dynamics of Faith*, Tillich discusses two cases, one where society and the community of faith are nearly identical and one where they are distinct. In the rare case of the former, Tillich explains that if “[civil authorities] try to enforce spiritual conformity and are successful they have removed the risk and courage which belong to the act of faith.”⁴⁴ In the case of latter, which resembles the situation in France, Tillich points to a common denominator that holds different religious groups together in a democratic society; he cautions that this denominator may be constitutionally upheld but that it cannot usurp ultimate concern:

This denominator may be more secular or more religious. In any case it is an outgrowth of faith, and its expression—as in the American Consti-

tion—is affirmed in an attitude which sometimes has the unconditional character of an ultimate concern, but more often the conditional character of a preliminary concern of the highest degree. Just for this reason the civil authorities should not try to prohibit the expression of doubt about such a basic law, although they must enforce the legal consequences of it.⁴⁵

The ban on religious symbols prohibits expressions of doubt and courage and, with them, the possibility of self-criticism. Tillich's development of the participation-transcendence dynamic upholds freedom as uniquely experienced but determined in and through relationality, community, and the experience of ultimate concern. Freedom becomes actualized as an imperative that, though transcendent, calls us to be who we are as we self-critically transform ourselves in our globalized contexts.⁴⁶

¹ For a good overview of contemporary literature on globalization, please see Mauro Guillén, "Is Globalization Civilizing, Destructive or Feeble? A Critique of Five Key Debates in the Social Science Literature," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 235-260.

² Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in *Global Modernities*, edited by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, London: SAGE Publications, 1995, p. 40.

³ Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*, New York: The New Press, 1998, p. XXXIV.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵ Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

⁸ Tillich, "The Jewish Question: A Christian and a German Problem," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* XXX:3 (2004): p. 22, Translated by Marion Pauck and Wilhelm Pauck, Introduction by Marion Pauck, Lecture 4.

⁹ Chua, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*, New York: Doubleday, 2003, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 268.

¹³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, New York: Anchor Books, 1999, p. 17 original emphasis.

¹⁴ It is important to note that Sen advocates more adamantly than Chua the import of democracy as sustaining bulwarks for these opportunities. For example, Sen argues that democracy provides India's stability and security because its working democracy holds together India's "ungainly, unlikely, inelegant combination of differences" (*Development as Freedom*, p. 157) and, through more equitable distribution of income for destitute people, helps prevent famine (*Ibid.*, pp. 178-184). In developing the latter point, Sen asserts that "[s]ince independence and the installation of a multiparty democratic system [in India], there has been no substantial famine" (p. 180).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116 and p. 201.

¹⁷ Baum, *Nationalism, Religion, and Ethics*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001, p. 63.

¹⁸ Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, Translated by Franklin Sherman, New York: Harper and Row, 1977, p. 64.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²² *Ibid.*, 64.

²³ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 133. Influenced by critical theory and Heidegger, Fred Dallmayr perceives culture as a form of resistance against globalization: Culture is important as an antidote to the ongoing process of global standardization and Westernization, a source of resistance for non-Western societies in the grip of Western hegemony" (*Alternative Visions: Paths in the Global Village*, New York: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 1998).

²⁸ In terms of the expansion of participation, Tillich declares: "*The exercise of power appears to be just when all members of a society can acknowledge that their own will is contained in the will of the whole*" (*Ibid.*, p. 139 original emphasis).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142 original emphasis.

³⁰ This resembles Tillich's account of ecstasy that transcends reason and ontological structure without severing the connections with them.

³¹ Jean Richard, "The Question of Nationalism," *Religion in the New Millennium: Theology in the Spirit of Paul Tillich*, edited by Raymond Bulman and Frederick Parrella, Macon: Mercer University Press, 2001, p. 42.

³² Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, Second Edition, Introduction by Peter Gomes, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 97.

³³ Ibid., p. 117.

³⁴ In *Dynamics of Faith*, Tillich describes the character of nationalism as an ultimate concern, which “demands that all other concerns, economic well-being, health and life, family, aesthetic and cognitive truth, justice and humanity, be sacrificed” (*Dynamics of Faith*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957, p. 2).

³⁵ *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 11. Tillich concludes: “The reaction of despair in people who have experienced the breakdown of their national claims is an irrefutable proof of the idolatrous character of their national concern” (pp. 17-18).

³⁶ “The Kingdom of God and History,” *Theology of Peace*, edited and introduced by Ronald Stone, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990, p. 49. The Nazis failed to appreciate the destructive and finite character of their envisioned thousand year reign: “Whether a group comes into existence in the natural way or in the way of common interest, it is a transitory group. It must come to an end when the technical or biological conditions of its existence vanish” (*Dynamics of Faith*, p. 119).

³⁷ “Power and Justice in the Postwar World” in Ibid., p. 100. Tillich reckons that economic and administrative work can mitigate excessive nationalism: “If the masses realize that they can live and that there is hope for their future—something they had entirely lost under the system of social insecurity of disintegrating capitalism, no nationalistic propaganda” (p. 101).

³⁸ As quoted in Noelle Knox, “Effort To Ban Head Scarves In France Sets Off Culture Clash,” *USA Today*, from www.usatoday.com (consulted June 28, 2004).

³⁹ Watson, “Women and the Veil: Personal Responses to Global Process,” in *Islam, Globalization, and Postmodernity*, edited by Akbar Ahmed and Hastings Donnan, London: Routledge, 1994, 151. Other scholars point to the positive dimensions of the veil. Soroya Duval describes the freedom of mobility enjoyed by women where “they are able to move freely, attend lessons and weddings with the other sisters, without requiring the consent of their husbands, fathers, or brothers” (“New Veils and New Voices: Islamist Women’s Groups in Egypt,” in *Women and Islamization*, p. 62). Additionally, Anouar Majid describes the veil as a means to retrieve one’s identity: “In countries where the veil is not mandated, many women choose it both as a reaction to the failed bourgeois nationalist program of the postindependence era (although there is still a great deal of male coercion) and as part of the mainstream, middle-class rejection of the secular ideologies that have dominated public life” (*Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World*, p. 117).

⁴⁰ *United States v. Seeger* involved the rights of three conscientious objectors to claim exemption from military service under section 6(j) of Congress’s Universal Military Training and Service Act. One of the objectors did not appeal to a traditional belief in God, but rather belief in intellectual and moral integrity espoused by Plato, Aristotle, and Spinoza. The Court determined that the beliefs of the objectors met the criteria that qualified them for an exemption. In arriving at its decision written by Justice Clark, the Court consulted various theologians, including Tillich, “whose views the Government concedes would come within the statute, [and who] identifies God not as a projection ‘out there’ or beyond the skies but as the ground of our very being.” (website: <http://caselaw.com>; consulted October 24, 2004). To justify its granting the requests for exemption, the Court quotes *The Shaking of the Foundations* where Tillich describes ultimate concern and the dissolution of traditional conceptions of God.

⁴¹ *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963, p. 6.

⁴² Ibid., p. 95.

⁴³ Tillich, “Basic Principles of Religious Socialism,” translated by James Luther Adams and Victor Nuovo, in *Political Expectation*, introduction by James Luther Adams, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971, p. 73.

⁴⁴ *Dynamics of Faith*, 27.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁴⁶ Among myriad examples in Tillich’s writings, we can point to a passage affirming that the unconditional character of the moral imperative cannot be imposed upon us from without: “We cannot be obedient to the commands of a stranger even if he is God. Nor can we take unconditionally the content of the moral imperative from human authorities like traditions, conventions, political or religious authorities. There is no ultimate authority from them. One is largely dependent on them, but none of them is unconditionally valid” (*Theology of Culture*, 136).

BRINGING TILlich INTO AN INTERPRETATION OF THE PAINTINGS OF KANDINSKY

STEVEN FINK

“It was really a liberation for me to be freed from the individual things and to be in a realm which at that time was very near to my own religious thinking.”¹

Thus says Paul Tillich in “Art and Ultimate Reality,” as he reflects on sitting in a house in Berlin in the 1920s and seeing an *Improvisation* by Wassily Kandinsky. Tillich and Kandinsky both lived in Berlin at the same time, and as this quotation indicates, Tillich believed that Kandinsky’s painting was consonant with his own religious thought during the time when the two might have interacted. Surprisingly, however, Tillich’s interest in Kandinsky appears to have been minimal. Tillich often expresses appreciation for the work of certain painters, including Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, and members of the German Expressionist group *Die Brücke*. Kandinsky, on the other hand, receives almost no mention in Tillich’s writings and speeches. In lists of those he believed to be the great religious artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Tillich did not include Kandinsky. The quotation above shows that Tillich had some sort of appreciation for Kandinsky’s art but, curiously, it is muted in comparison to his appreciation for the work of others.

In light of their geographical proximity to each other in the 1920s and perhaps especially in light of the fact that Kandinsky wrote a great deal on the spiritual in art, Tillich’s minimal interest in Kandinsky is an historical curiosity. One question that might be asked is why Tillich did not show more interest in his artistic contemporary. This historical question might give rise to another type of question, one that is interpretive in nature and is the underlying question of this paper: what can Tillich’s approach to visual art contribute to an interpretation of Kandinsky’s paintings? Kandinsky wrote much about what he sought to accomplish with his paintings, connecting his paintings with the “spiritual.” Kandinsky’s writings, as well as his paintings themselves, make a strong case that his paintings are rife with religious meaning, and Tillich’s hermeneutical framework that he brings to visual art can contribute greatly to an interpretation of this meaning.

In bringing Tillich into an interpretation of Kandinsky’s paintings, it is especially interesting to note a comment that Kandinsky made to his biographer Will Grohmann. Kandinsky declared, “As a matter of fact, I should like people to see what is

behind my painting (for this is really the only thing I care about).”² Kandinsky’s intention to manifest something behind the surface of his paintings is a matter that Tillich’s approach to visual art is particularly well equipped to address. This paper will attempt to answer the general question “What can Tillich’s approach to visual art contribute to an interpretation of Kandinsky’s paintings?” by focusing upon a more specific question, namely, “What can Tillich’s approach to visual art say about what lies behind Kandinsky’s paintings?” The argument will be made that, based on Tillich’s interpretive framework, what lies behind Kandinsky’s paintings is an active dimension of depth that both attracts and repels the viewer. After discussing some important themes from Tillich’s thoughts on art and from Kandinsky’s writings, this claim will be considered by a two-step process. First, affinities between what Tillich says about the expressionistic style of art and what appears in Kandinsky’s paintings and writings will be highlighted in order to show that what Tillich says about this style is particularly well suited to deal with the issue of what lies behind Kandinsky’s art. Second, Tillich’s statements about this style and about other relevant issues will be considered to contribute towards interpreting what it is that stands behind Kandinsky’s surfaces.

Tillich on Visual Art

According to Tillich’s theory of aesthetics, first laid out in 1913 in “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” there are three important elements in every work of art—content, form, and depth-content. Form and depth-content are the particularly important elements for Tillich in regard to artistic style, since for Tillich style is the immediate influence of the depth-content on the form. According to Tillich, the style of a work of art is essentially a commentary on the artist’s interpretation of reality. Tillich states that the style of an artist’s work points to the answer the artist consciously or unconsciously gives to the question of the meaning of life. To an extent this is a reflection of the artist’s own interpretation of reality, but it is by no means a strictly individualistic matter, for the contemporary situation surrounding an artist largely determines the style of a work of art.

A question that should be asked at this point is whether some artistic styles promote religious expression more effectively than others. Tillich would answer this question with a resounding “Yes,” pointing to one style in particular that he believes to be the truly religious style, more qualified than any other to serve as a vehicle of religious expression.

For Tillich this is the expressionistic style, characterized by the depth-content breaking through the form.

Tillich states that the expressionistic style “disrupts the naturally given appearance of things.”³ This disruption of ordinarily encountered reality allows for a vital characteristic of expressionistic painting, namely the manifestation of a dimension of reality that otherwise does not appear. Facilitated by the disruption of the ordinary appearance of the object, the expressionistic style moves beyond the object itself to a hidden dimension of depth that is the ground and meaning of that object. Expressionistic art disrupts the subject-object relation and in doing so, it clears the way for the manifestation of that which transcends this relation.

Another important point in dealing with Tillich’s understanding of the expressionistic style is that Tillich steadfastly maintains that a painting is not a religious painting mostly because of its content. For Tillich traditional religious images are not what ultimately make a painting a religious work of art. He declares, “It is not an exaggeration to ascribe more of the quality of sacredness to a still-life by Cézanne or a tree by Van Gogh than to a picture of Jesus by Uhde.”⁴ In fact, Tillich believes that traditional religious images may actually hinder the ability of expressionistic art to manifest ultimate reality since often this content involves dead symbols that no longer have meaning in the contemporary world.

In addition to its status as the truly religious style of art in general, the expressionistic style according to Tillich is especially qualified to serve as a religious style of art for contemporary times. The key issue once again is that this style features disruption. It is a style that asks the religious question in a radical manner and has the courage to face the answer, which is the contemporary human predicament characterized by anxiety and meaninglessness. The disruption featured in expressionistic paintings mirrors the disruption in contemporary life, a fact that these paintings, unlike paintings of beautifying naturalism, are not afraid to confront. The expressionistic style does not back down from despair, and, importantly, this fact is a significant step toward overcoming despair. Tillich declares that “the acceptance of despair is in itself faith and on the boundary line of the courage to be.”⁵ In this way, expressionistic art is not just a style that is honest in its portrayal of reality but it can also be a vehicle leading towards hope.

Tillich encapsulates many of his ideas about a religious style of art when he identifies artists who employ this style. While he acknowledges that

Rembrandt and some others before him used an expressionistic style, Tillich believes that the period from Rembrandt until the late 19th century was a dark period for religious art. Cézanne and Van Gogh brought religious art out of the throes of darkness, and members of the German Expressionistic movement such as Kirchner and Nolde further developed the expressionistic, i.e., truly religious, style. The German Expressionistic movement, insofar as it can be called a unified group, is described by Herbert Read as having a “restless energy to depict a spectrally heightened and distorted actuality.”⁶ Bernard Denvir, like Tillich, also identifies distortion as a key element in Expressionism, as he says that it involves “ecstatic use of colour and emotive distortion of form, reducing the dependence on objective reality.”⁷ This distortion enables works of German Expressionism to be truly religious art according to Tillich’s criteria.

It is not, however, a painting by a German Expressionist that captures Tillich’s greatest attention in his writings. Instead, he gives tremendous attention to Picasso’s *Guernica*, mentioning it in many contexts and calling it the greatest contemporary Protestant religious picture. Tillich says that he holds this view of *Guernica* “because it shows the human situation without any cover. It shows what very soon followed in most European countries in terms of the Second World War, and it shows what is now in the souls of many Americans as disruptiveness, existential doubt, emptiness and meaninglessness.”⁸ Because of *Guernica*’s ability and willingness to manifest the human situation in unadulterated form, “although it has no religious content, it does have religious style in a very deep and profound sense.”⁹ It differs tremendously from works of beautifying naturalism as well as from paintings that present traditional religious content in an idealistic style. Unlike such works, Tillich sees *Guernica* as a profoundly religious painting, not because of an answer it provides but rather because of the radical nature of its question. Michael Palmer notes that for Tillich, *Guernica* “is a powerful expression of modern man’s question concerning ultimate reality phrased in terms of his own existential situation.”¹⁰ Tillich believes that by functioning in this manner *Guernica* can play an very important role in helping people overcome the human predicament.

Major Themes in Kandinsky’s Writings about His Paintings

This discussion of Tillich’s thoughts on art should set the stage for a consideration of how Til-

lich's approach to art can contribute towards interpreting what lies behind Kandinsky's paintings, and in order to enter this next stage of the paper, it is necessary to consider three key themes in Kandinsky's writings about his own art. First, Kandinsky gives prominence to form and color. For Kandinsky, form and color are the two major elements in a work of art, largely because they express a deep inner meaning. As for form, Kandinsky writes, "The more abstract is form, the more clear and direct is its appeal."¹¹ Color also expresses an inner meaning, due to its ability to exert a psychic effect upon the soul. Kandinsky states that this psychic effect may be due to some sort of association, but he ultimately favors the notion that "colour is a power that directly influences the soul."¹² Thus, for example, yellow can create an unsettling effect upon the soul whereas green can convey a feeling of peacefulness and rest. As Kandinsky sees it, his elevation of color and form to a position of prominence in his paintings makes his paintings eminently qualified to convey deep inner meaning. Tillich expresses a similar mindset when he declares that modern works of art "move to the *Urelemente*, the original elements of reality which in the physical realm are cubes, planes, colors, lines and shadows. From this point of view, such a picture can have a tremendous religious power."¹³

Kandinsky's second key theme to consider is his discussion of "inner necessity," which stands as a very important phrase in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. For Kandinsky the decisive factor in the origination of a painting should be the inner necessity of the artist. This phrase, inner necessity, can be linked with what Kandinsky has to say about the spiritual, which is a force that opposes modern materialism. This spiritual war against materialism is exemplified in Kandinsky's blue rider motif, which found expression both as a figure in many paintings by Kandinsky and as the name of an artistic group. The blue rider represents the spirit's battle against materialism as well as the victory of the avant-garde over tradition. Kandinsky was deeply influenced by Theosophical writers, who believed that there was a religious or spiritual crisis in their day due to materialism and that this crisis could be overcome by way of inner knowledge that is synonymous with eternal truth. According to Madame Blavatsky, "The new torchbearer of truth will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficul-

ties from his path."¹⁴ Kandinsky believed that he, as an artist, could be such a new torchbearer of truth. For Kandinsky an artist could be a spiritual leader of mankind, curbing the force of materialism, provided that the artist follows inner necessity in his or her works of art. In "Whither the 'New' Art?" Kandinsky declares, "Art is the seer of the future and is a leader."¹⁵ Kandinsky maintains that the war against materialism is one that the spiritual will win, especially with art guided by inner necessity on its side.

Kandinsky's third key theme to consider is his discussion of contrast. For Kandinsky contrast could involve two colors, two forms, or the way in which one form interacts with another color. Notably, Kandinsky believes that disharmonious contrast is required for the art of his contemporary world. Like Tillich, Kandinsky calls for art that acknowledges the unstable human condition of modern times. Kandinsky believes that harmonization is "no longer suitable in an age such as ours full of questions and contradictions."¹⁶ For Kandinsky, artistic contrasts are not to be avoided; rather they are a necessary feature of modern art and may show the way to new possibilities of harmony. They may provide the key for leading art into the direction that he believes it needs to move, i.e., towards a future that features a reversal of materialism's dominance over the spiritual.

Affinities between Kandinsky's Paintings and Tillich's Description of the Expressionistic Style

Having discussed important themes in Tillich's thought about art and in Kandinsky's writings about his paintings, it is possible to make the case that there are significant affinities between Kandinsky's paintings and what Tillich has to say about the expressionistic style of art. In particular, the most significant common bonds between the two are a disruption of the ordinary appearance of reality and an attempt to address the contemporary situation of humankind.

Kandinsky's elevation of color and form to a position of prominence serve to disrupt the ordinary appearance of reality. Color and form are elemental ingredients of experience that are usually relativized in importance in the ordinary appearance of reality. In Kandinsky's paintings, however, this gets reversed. Color and form are most important, thereby transforming how one encounters reality. One way of conceiving of how Kandinsky effects this new encounter of reality involves noting that Kandinsky's paintings resist measure and quantification. Donald Kuspit considers a major dynamic in Kand-

insky's work to be its ability to defy scientific and materialistic quantification, which promotes a new way of seeing. According to Kuspit, Kandinsky's paintings involve a vision of reality in which "one has an inner relationship rather than a measurable materialistic and thus contrived relationship."¹⁷ This resistance to measure and quantification may also be conceived of as a resistance to a static presentation of reality. Here it is particularly helpful to recall the importance of contrast for Kandinsky. His paintings might be said to be in motion, with contrasting colors and forms obviating the possibility of a work of art that is at rest. This motion of the painting can be understood as another way in which there is opportunity to look beyond the surface of the work and see something deeper.

Before considering how to interpret this deeper level of reality, it should be stated again that another affinity between the expressionistic style, as Tillich presents it, and Kandinsky's paintings is that both attempt to address the contemporary situation of humankind. Kandinsky attempts to help his contemporaries get past their entrenchment in materialism by seeking in his paintings to hearken to the inner necessity, or to the spiritual. Moreover, he addresses the contemporary situation by moving away from traditional harmonies, which he believes cannot speak to an age full of questions and contradictions.

Bringing Tillich into an Interpretation of What Lies behind Kandinsky's Paintings

Because there is a great deal of compatibility between Kandinsky's paintings and Tillich's presentation of an expressionistic style, the latter can be used to comment upon the former. It is important to recall that for Tillich, in expressionistic paintings the depth-content disrupts, or breaks through, the form. Based on Tillich's thoughts on art, this then is one comment that can be made about Kandinsky's paintings: what lies behind these paintings is a depth-content that breaks through the form. Having made this point, attention should then be given to the issue of how this depth-content might be considered. Tillich provides a theological framework to contribute towards an interpretation of the depth-content in Kandinsky's paintings, and this will now be addressed.

A key point for Tillich is that in expressionistic art, the depth-content breaking through the form expresses the breakthrough of the holy. Tillich writes, "In religious experience the holy—or ultimate—breaks into our ordinary world. It shapes this world, shakes its foundations, or it elevates it beyond itself

in ecstasy and transforms it after having disrupted its natural form."¹⁸ For Tillich, the concept of the breakthrough is so important, as Uwe Scharf notes, largely because "finite reality cannot come to an understanding of ultimate reality by itself; we cannot educate ourselves about the 'ground and abyss of our being' if this ground does not reveal itself, if it does not, in other words, *break through*."¹⁹ For Tillich, the holy that breaks through may be called God, and it can also be thought of as the ground and abyss of being. In other words, according to Tillich the holy "produces an ambiguity in man's ways of experiencing it. The holy can appear as creative and as destructive."²⁰ James Luther Adams writes that for Tillich the holy "blesses man, for in it the consciousness finds an earnest of unconditional fulfillment; but the holy is also inviolable and not to be approached by the secular consciousness."²¹ This presentation of the holy as the ground and abyss of being hearkens back to Rudolph Otto's presentation of the numinous. As presented by Otto in *The Idea of the Holy*, the content of religious experience is *tremendum et fascinans*, experienced before the holy, or wholly other *mysterium*. The *tremendum* side of this dual experience involves repulsion before the wholly other, which is absolutely powerful and awesome; the *fascinans* side, on the other hand, involves attraction towards the same wholly other, which is also absolutely gracious and beautiful. David Kelsey points out that, "Tillich simply appropriates Rudolph Otto's phenomenology of the holy.... In the experience, one is so intensely attracted and repelled, fascinated and shaken by something 'mysterious,' that one finds oneself ultimately concerned."²² The holy for Tillich is that which both creates and destroys, and it elicits both attraction and repulsion.

This idea of the breakthrough of the holy can be used to maintain that what stands behind Kandinsky's paintings is a powerful, active force that both attracts and repels viewers of the painting. Examining this statement more closely, first it should be noted that what is manifested by surface features in Kandinsky's paintings is an active force. Kandinsky's treatment of color and form plays an extremely important role in enabling one to see the depth dimension in his art, and this depth dimension stands before the viewer as an active force. Next, it should be noted that Tillich's thought also suggests that this active force behind Kandinsky's paintings is one that both creates and destroys. Tillich's notion that the holy is the ground and abyss of being suggests that what is revealed in these paintings is not only an

active force but also one that both attracts and repels those who look upon it.

It may be helpful to consider how these general ideas relate to a particular work by Kandinsky. Kandinsky painted *Composition VII* in 1913, and it is considered the masterpiece of his Munich period. It is an enormous work, measuring approximately 6 ft. 6 in. x 10 ft., and it was painted very quickly following over thirty preparatory works in various media. This painting manifests important characteristics of Kandinsky paintings mentioned earlier in this paper, including contrast, resistance to quantification, and movement. One significant contrast has to do with the painting as a whole as it may be seen as divided into two by a dominant diagonal. Ulrike Becks-Malorny writes that “the painting is divided into a nervous upper half and a calmer lower half.”²³ Will Grohmann says that in this work, as well as others from 1913, “the constellations of colors and lines has resulted in ‘a finite, but unlimited’ space, in which everything is in motion, and there are no fixed points.”²⁴ *Composition VII* conveys mysteriousness in large part because of the non-measurable quality of color and form within the work. The effect of this contrast, resistance to quantification, and motion is to promote vision that differs from that of ordinarily encountered reality.

Through this vision, what the viewer sees expressed in this painting is an active force that both attracts and repels. Grohmann writes that this painting’s “over-all character suggests a blazing fire, an approaching disaster, an exaggerated tempo. The red above the diagonal, the blue under it, the yellow, all are disquieting and threatening; the black opens up like a dangerous precipice, and there is no reassuring green.”²⁵ When stated in these terms, the case can be made that *Composition VII* is a painting that repels the viewer, a point that finds further corroboration from John Golding when he says that *Composition VII* “embodies strife and chaos.”²⁶ In addition to repelling the viewer, however, this painting can attract the viewer as well. According to Golding, *Composition VII* not only embodies strife and chaos but also “transcends them and the message it conveys is one of optimistic radiance.”²⁷ Here then is an example of a painting that evokes both repulsion and attraction. While this ambiguous elicitation of viewer response may be partially accounted for by surface features (such as color contrasts and rampant overlapping of indistinct forms) in and of themselves, Tillich’s thoughts on art suggest that this ambiguity of response is also very much due to these surface fea-

tures manifesting behind the surface an active force that attracts and repels.

One question that needs to be addressed is whether this interpretation of Kandinsky’s art is felicitous only for a limited portion of his career, specifically his years in Munich in the mid-1910s. Indeed this interpretation may be ill-suited for the large amount of less abstract works painted earlier in Kandinsky’s career, but it does seem to be appropriate for many of Kandinsky’s later works, including those of his Bauhaus period (1922-1933) that feature geometrical forms. One example is *Yellow-Red-Blue*, painted in 1925. Like *Composition VII* painted twelve years earlier, *Yellow-Red-Blue* manifests an active force that attracts and repels. Because of its geometric forms, this painting does not resist quantification in the manner of *Composition VII*, yet it is similar to the 1913 work in that it too promotes vision that differs from that of ordinarily encountered reality through its motion and especially through its contrast. Becks-Malorny writes that the “left-hand side of the picture is bright, light and open; its dominant yellow is accompanied by delicate black lines and framed by a cloud-like violet-blue border. By contrast, the right half of the composition, with its large blue circle set against a pale yellow ground, appears dark, heavy and dramatic.”²⁸ Similarly, Grohmann declares that the “two centers of the painting are linked by their frank contrast.”²⁹ This sharp contrast may initially repel the viewer, but the painting can attract the viewer as well, with a transcending sense of harmonization accompanying the work due to features such as the red color planes and the gray quadrilateral, with its black-and-white checkered form, at the painting’s center. Grohmann states that this work features “an ‘Either-Or’ that becomes an ‘And,’”³⁰ with the viewer not focusing on the painting’s contrast but rather “experiencing the order of the whole with its contrasts and congruences.”³¹

Admittedly, some viewers of *Yellow-Red-Blue* will not progress beyond an initial experience of repulsion in observing this painting, but for many, the active force behind the painting that repels will also be one that attracts. Furthermore, it may not always be the case that viewers who experience both repulsion and attraction while looking at *Yellow-Red-Blue* will do so in temporal succession in which initial repulsion is followed temporally by attraction. For some viewers, attraction may possibly come first, followed by repulsion; another possibility is that of simultaneous repulsion and attraction, or what might

be better described as an almost undetectable oscillation between the two.

On the Relationship between Religious Thought and Visual Art

In light of the tremendous degree of affinity between Kandinsky's paintings and the style that Tillich holds to be the truly religious style of the twentieth century, the historical question of why Tillich did not express greater appreciation for Kandinsky's paintings is an especially interesting one to ask. This historical curiosity points to another surprising point—I am unaware of any scholars who have given attention to what Tillich's thoughts on art might contribute to an interpretation of the paintings of Kandinsky. This topic is one that should be explored further not only to gain a deeper appreciation for Kandinsky's art but also for the sake of investigating broader issues, including consideration of the interaction between religious thought and works of visual art.

This topic, for example, can serve as a reminder that religious thought is capable of addressing any work of art, regardless of whether it contains a traditional religious image. Furthermore, this topic can highlight the ability of religious thought and visual art to inform each other in at least two very important ways. First, either party of this mutual conversation can provoke the other towards contemporary relevance. Following the precedent set by Tillich, scholars of religious studies can extol works of art that have the courage to address the contemporary human situation. Moving in the opposite conversational direction, works of art that have such courage at least have the potential to unsettle religious thought that does not share this bravery.

Second, either party of this mutual conversation can enable the other to welcome ambiguity. Possessing a hermeneutical and theological framework such as Tillich's, which recognizes that a work of art can manifest a force that both attracts and repels, religious thought can encourage artists to strive to produce works of art that generate complex reactions. Moving in the opposite direction, visual art, prompting responses that vary not only among different people but also within a particular individual, can remind scholars of religious studies that ambiguity characterizes life in this world. Visual art can challenge an approach to religious studies that fails to acknowledge the multifarious nature of religious experience. Informing each other in these ways, religious studies and visual art have much to offer one another. To alter slightly the words of Schleier-

macher, bringing Tillich into an interpretation of the paintings of Kandinsky demonstrates that religious thought and visual art can "stand beside each other like two friendly souls."³²

¹ Paul Tillich, "Art and Ultimate Reality," in *On Art and Architecture*, eds. John Dillenberger and Jane Dillenberger (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 147.

² Quoted in Will Grohmann, *Wassily Kandinsky: Life and Work*, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 1958), 179.

³ Tillich, "Protestantism and Artistic Style," in *On Art and Architecture*, 123.

⁴ Tillich, "The Religious Situation," in *On Art and Architecture*, 69.

⁵ Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 175.

⁶ Herbert Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 3rd ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 56.

⁷ Bernard Denvir, "Fauvism and Expressionism," in *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-Modernism*, ed. David Britt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 109.

⁸ Tillich, "Existential Aspects of Modern Art," in *On Art and Architecture*, 95.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁰ Michael F. Palmer, *Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Art* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 68.

¹¹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 32.

¹² *Ibid.*, 25.

¹³ Tillich, "Existential Aspects of Modern Art," 96.

¹⁴ Quoted in Mike King, "Concerning the Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art and Science," *Leonardo* 31, 25.

¹⁵ Kandinsky, "Whither the 'New' Art?," in *Complete Writings on Art*, vol. 1, eds. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vervo (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982), 100.

¹⁶ Ulrike Becks-Malorny, *Wassily Kandinsky: The Journey to Abstraction* (Köln: Taschen, 2003), 67.

¹⁷ Donald Kuspit, "Reconsidering the Spiritual in Art," text from speech delivered at the University of Iowa (March 2003), 6.

¹⁸ Tillich, "Religious Dimensions of Contemporary Art," in *On Art and Architecture*, 177.

¹⁹ Uwe C. Scharf, "Concept of the Breakthrough of Revelation in Tillich's *Dogmatik* of 1925," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 36, 104.

²⁰ Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2001), 16.

²¹ James Luther Adams, *Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 228.

²² David Kelsey, *The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 31.

²³ Becks-Malorny, 109.

²⁴ Grohmann, 150.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ John Golding, *Paths to the Absolute: Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko, and Still* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 106.

**THE END OF MODERNITY AND OUTWITTING
NIHILISM: PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON
THE APPROPRIATENESS AND IMPORTANCE
OF A TILlichIAN ENGAGEMENT WITH
RADICAL ORTHODOXY**
HENRY W. SPAULDING II

The reflections that follow represent the beginning of a conversation, one characterized by hope and tentativeness, but mostly it is guided by the conviction that room exists for a meaningful "dialogue" between the theology of Paul Tillich and radical orthodoxy. These reflections can only point in the direction of conversation with the hope that it will open the door to an extension of Tillich's theology toward the "strange" land of radical orthodoxy. The philosophical sophistication, robust ontology, and careful cultural analysis of Tillich and radical orthodoxy suggest the appropriateness and importance of a proposed conversation. Time limitations will only allow one trajectory for the conversation to be engaged: the end of modernity and outwitting its nihilism. A twofold conviction underlies the following reflections: first, a place exists for a sustained conversation and second, radical orthodoxy would profit from a more serious conversation with Tillich's theology. The first conviction will consume much of the energy for these reflections, but it is the latter

conviction that makes these reflections a worthwhile endeavor.

The End of Modernity and the Problem of Nihilism

The end of modernity is a monumental intellectual event reflected in every aspect of culture. If Tillich begins to hear the first sounds of the dissolution of modernity, it is radical orthodoxy that stands in the midst of its crashing thunder. For Tillich, the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Becks-Malorny, 142.

²⁹ Grohmann, 196.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 69.

social and intellectual events of the twentieth century such as the World Wars, the rise of Hitler, the collapse of Berlin, the general failure of traditional theology along with its moral structures required a new kind of theology. The young Tillich who walked in the shadow of the cathedral witnessed the vitalization of the demonic at the end of modernity. He observes, "It is understandable that the breakdown of the idea of progress amid the historical catastrophes of the present and the recent past has given a new significance to this category."¹ Certainly, the category of the demonic did not originate at the end of modernity, but the events at the end of modernity attenuate and deepen its meaning for Tillich.

Tillich connects the end of modernity with heteronomy. When talking about overcoming the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy, he refers to the latter as "the vicious circle...."² The emergence of modernity is associated with autonomous reason, while its dissolution is associated with heteronomy. This cycle can be traced in the movement from Hellenic to Hellenistic culture and between the Renaissance and Mannerism. Likewise, Tillich notes this cycle in the transition from modernity to the end of modernity.³

The elements of modernity for Tillich were the Christian tradition, classical Greece, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism. He argues that Hegel unites these in a great synthesis. This complex system "created an epoch in the history of philosophy, in the history of religion, and in politics."⁴ Tillich further notes that, "the breakdown of this great synthesis was a historical event."⁵ This effect reached beyond theological and philosophical conflict according to Tillich. In fact, "The reason that Hegel was attacked from all sides and removed from the throne of providence on which he had placed himself was that the finished system cut off all openness to the fu-

ture.”⁶ The collapse of the “great synthesis” along with such concepts as heteronomy, ambiguity, technical reason, and nonbeing define, at least in part, how Tillich understands the end of modernity. To be sure, Tillich understands all of these concepts as themes that rise and fall in the history of Western culture, but the social and intellectual forces at the end of modernity have vitalized them.

Radical orthodoxy connects the end of modernity with the erosion of metanarrative. According to John Milbank, “The end of modernity, which is not accomplished, yet continues to arrive, means the end of a single system of truth based on universal reason, which tells us what reality is like.”⁷ This presents a predicament for theology in that it no longer needs to measure itself against some objective standard, but it creates the companion problem of subjective aspiration which “can only affirm objective values and divine transcendence” precariously.⁸ Radical orthodoxy may not have observed the cathedrals of modern life crumble under the weight of the World Wars, but the cathedrals have vanished as well in the wake of secular reason. The grandeur of living in the shadow of the Gothic cathedral is no longer possible at the end of modernity, just as is the case for Tillich. But radical orthodoxy longs not for the intellectual ferment of pre-war Berlin, but the imagination of Augustinianism and Thomism. Milbank locates modernity in absolute historicism, ontology of difference, and ethical nihilism. Each of these contributes to the end of modernity.⁹ Pickstock refers to modernity as an “unliturgical world...”¹⁰ Milbank sees modernity, especially political theory, in three denials: (a) the denial of Baroque *poesis*, which severs the immanent and the transcendent resulting in the merely arbitrary, (b) the denial of creation *ex nihilo*, which places the imposition of order on a pre-existing chaos above the Christian understanding of reality out of nothing, and (c) the denial of virtue as praxis, which places ahistorical virtue above the historically informed practices of Christian virtue. Therefore, the ahistorical historicism of modernity, the necessity of violence and coercion, and ethical normlessness adequately define the end of modernity for radical orthodoxy.

While more could be said about the particulars of the end of modernity in Tillich and radical orthodoxy, it is clear that both see it as a problem. And among the many problems that arise at the end of modernity, nihilism emerges as the most significant. But nihilism remains a disputed concept, understood either as incredulity regarding rationally defensible

moral norms or depicted as a general malaise regarding meaningfulness. Coming to terms with nihilism becomes an important part of comprehending the end of modernity. One way of getting at nihilism is to define it as an intellectual and spiritual exhaustion characterized in *The Parable of the Madman*. Here nihilism is described as the unbearable weight of emptiness brought on by the inability or lack of will in light of the energy necessary to think the world after the Enlightenment. The fact that the people in “Nietzsche’s Square” do not want to deal with this monumental failure or do not even seem to know about it, offers further evidence of its nihilistic implications. Michael Gillespie in, *Nihilism before Nietzsche*, argues that Nietzsche misunderstood nihilism and that this has led to significant intellectual confusion. Gillespie prefers to understand nihilism as emerging out of a “new concept of divine omnipotence and a corresponding concept of human power that arises in the late Middle Ages and comes increasingly to characterize modern thought.”¹¹ For Gillespie, nihilism results from the increasing demands placed on the human will by modern philosophy. Therefore, nihilism is a significant symptom of the end of modernity when meaning becomes the sole task of subjective aspiration.

Tillich sees the problem of nihilism in nonbeing, heteronomy, ambiguity, and technical reason. Clearly, each of these is present in the entire history of Western civilization, but it is the added responsibility of the naked human will and animated by subjective aspiration alone that creates the particular problem at the end of modernity. Radical Orthodoxy understands nihilism in much the same way. If there is a significant difference between Tillich and radical orthodoxy regarding nihilism, it is that Tillich is generally more comfortable with nonbeing than Milbank appears to be. Indeed, in *The Courage to Be*, Tillich says, “Man as man in every civilization is anxiously aware of the threat of nonbeing and needs the courage to affirm himself in spite of it.”¹² If nihilism is simply nonbeing, Tillich is not particularly concerned about it. If a human being exists in a heteronomous situation (like that at the end of modernity) and is overtaken by ontic anxiety (death), spiritual anxiety (meaninglessness), and moral anxiety (condemnation), then nihilism is highly problematic. While the threat of nonbeing cannot and should not be overcome, the threat of nonbeing as nihilism can be overcome by the courage to be under the conditions of theonomous reason.

Radical orthodoxy comprehends nihilism in much the same way. Therefore, the emergence of the secular in the wake of Duns Scotus and William of Ockham has thrust too much upon the human will. It has necessitated the construal of arbitrary human action. It has made coercive violence a matter of rationalized justification. It has led to a ponderous severity and accommodation for theology. Nihilism has defined an ahistorical and thus theoretical Christian faith, one that never actually touches the immanent. Here Tillich and radical orthodoxy seem especially near to one another.

Outwitting Nihilism

The proposed conversation between Tillich and radical orthodoxy appears to be both appropriate and important. But it is the attempt to outwit nihilism that makes the conversation most interesting. Tillich attempts to outwit nihilism by the courage to be, theonomous reason, and the quest for an unambiguous life. While it is not possible to fully argue the depth of this project for Tillich, it is possible to point out some aspects of his attempt to outwit nihilism. As already indicated Tillich understands and appreciates nonbeing along with its anxiety for human life, but he does not accept a nihilistic nonbeing as necessary. Tillich's strategy for outwitting nihilism finds its most important move in theonomous reason as an affirmation of transcendence. Tillich notes, "Theonomous periods are periods in which rational autonomy is preserved in law and knowledge, in community and art. Where there is theonomy nothing that is considered true and just is sacrificed. Theonomous periods do not feel split, but whole and centered."¹³ Earlier he indicates that theonomy becomes actual in "the church as the community of the New Being."¹⁴ He also says, "it pours into the whole of man's cultural life and gives a Spiritual center to man's spiritual life."¹⁵ Regarding the courage to be, Tillich suggests, "that every courage to be has an open or hidden religious root. For religion is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself."¹⁶ He indicates that religion "asks for God."¹⁷ The courage to be both recognizes nonbeing and refuses to allow it to become nihilistic nonbeing. In this way, Tillich outwits nihilism as the courage to be. The quest for the unambiguous life is present in all periods of history including the end of modernity. The factors already discussed argue that the crisis presented by the end of modernity leans toward nihilism. Yet, for Tillich nihilism is not the final movement because he wants to argue for the "unity and the relation of the dimensions and realms of

life"¹⁸ in order to "express the quest for unambiguous or eternal life adequately."¹⁹ Once again, Tillich comprehends the ambiguity of life and understands that life will always be characterized by tension and challenge, but this does not rise to the level of nihilism because of the presence of symbols like Spiritual Presence, Eternal Life, and Kingdom of God.

The chief strategy for outwitting nihilism for radical orthodoxy is metanarrative realism.²⁰ This metanarrative is a practice framed by doxology and wrapped up in history. Metanarrative realism makes truth claims, expresses the intensity of a living faith, and is constituted as the parameters of a culture and language. One implication of this is suggested by Laurence Hemming: "[o]rthodoxy is orthodox because it is the vanguard of the working out of questions concerning faith and salvation, and never bringing up an angry or reluctant rear. The marks of orthodoxy might be well described as openness, generosity and risk, or what in a different age would easily have been described as self-abandonment."²¹ This means that orthodoxy "ceases to be 'assertion' and is better understood as prayer and, most formally, as sacrament—as relationship to God brought about in the communal speech of the assembly as a mode of being of Christ."²² This description begins to open the door to a nuanced understanding of nihilism. Conor Cunningham advances an understanding of nihilism "as sundering of the something, rendering it nothing, and then having the nothing be after all *as* something."²³ This means that nihilism "provides something out of nowhere."²⁴ Therefore, the logic of nihilism is sundering and production²⁵ or in the words of Hemming "self-abandonment" not as assertion, but as prayer.²⁶ If this can be coherently entertained, then radical orthodoxy allows for, indeed argues for, nihilism that is not meaningless nor is it violence. In fact, it is nihilism that avoids the presence of the tragic with which Michael Toole charges Milbank.²⁷ The presence of this tragedy finally requires Milbank to re-think nihilism in a more Tillichian manner. Cunningham appears to think that this re-thinking of nihilism has already begun in Milbank.²⁸ Whether this is the case or not, there appears to be a space for such a move within radical orthodoxy.

Beyond the metanarrative realism of radical orthodoxy, Milbank presents three more strategies for outwitting nihilism. They can only be mentioned at this point, but each in its own way represents an important gesture: counter-history (the church and the retelling of history), counter-ethic (told from the

perspective of charity, forgiveness, and conversion), and counter-ontology (which confirms the practice of charity and forgiveness, reconciliation with difference, and the primacy of peace).²⁹ Whether as theonomous reason or as metanarrative realism, outwitting nihilism is crucial for Paul Tillich and radical orthodoxy. The passing of modernity into its end or into a "post-age" requires the courage to be and doxology. While Tillich talks about symbols and radical orthodoxy talks about participation, they appear to have much to talk about in the face of the end of modernity.

The task of these reflections has been to suggest that a place exists for a sustained conversation between Tillich and radical orthodoxy. The argument has been that this conversation is appropriate because in some sense both theological perspectives understand the intellectual and cultural significance of the end of modernity. It is also appropriate because resonance exists both in the manner in which nihilism is understood and in the importance of outwitting it. The proposed conversation is not without difficulties, but the risk appears to be justified. Such risk seems justified in light of the positive role that Tillich's theology might have for radical orthodoxy.³⁰ First, the proposed conversation might lead to a more nuanced understanding of nihilism, one that will allow nonbeing (*meontic*) to emerge within radical orthodoxy. This can already be noted in the theology of Conor Cunningham. Second, the proposed conversation might allow an exploration into the interrelationship between dialectic (Tillich) and rhetoric (Milbank) for the purpose of a more charitable reading of Hegel. Third, the proposed conversation might allow for participation to emerge. Here is the one place where Tillich and radical orthodoxy appear to be very close. Finally, the proposed conversation might make genuine dialogue possible, without the thought of surrendering essential convictions. If this were to happen, then the tribal idiom often ascribed to radical orthodoxy might be replaced by a charity of mutuality as both movements seek to authentically give witness to the Christian message.

The differences between Tillich and radical orthodoxy are real, but they do not necessarily preclude conversation. Such a conversation would be a risk, but one well worth taking. After all, in the wake of the end of modernity, the courage to live on the boundary is a sign of hopeful imagination and as such, it might be a way to redeem estrangement.

¹ Paul Tillich, "The Kingdom of God and History," in *Theology of Peace*. ed. Ronald H. Stone (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 34.

² Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *Reason and Revelation; Being and God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 148.

³ Tillich addresses this more fully in the following: "The secular form of profanization of the ultimately sublime, which is now spreading all over the world, is a further great riddle of church history especially in the last centuries. It is probably the most puzzling and urgent problem of the present-day church history. In any case, the question is: How can this development in the midst of Christian civilization be reconciled with the claim that Christianity has the message of that event which is the center of history? Early theology was able to absorb the secular creation of Hellenistic-Roman culture. Through the Stoic Logos-doctrine, it used the ancient civilization as material for building up the universal church, which in principle includes all positive elements in man's cultural creativity. The question then arises as to why a secular world broke away from this union in modern Western civilization. Was not and is not the power of the New Being in the Christ strong enough to subject the creations of modern autonomous culture to the Logos, who became personal presence in the center of history? This question, of course, should be a decisive motive in all contemporary theology, as it is in the present system." Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*. vol. 3, *Life and the Spirit; History and the Kingdom of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3:38.

⁴ Paul Tillich, *A Complete History of Christianity*, vol. 2 *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), 117.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 118.

⁷ John Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism: A Short *Summa* in Forty-two Responses to Unasked Questions," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 265.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990, 1993), 278.

¹⁰ Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 3.

¹¹Michael Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), vii.

¹²Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 43.

¹³Tillich, *ST*, 1:148.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 156.

¹⁷Ibid., 166.

¹⁸Tillich, *ST*, 3:12.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰According to Milbank, "The metanarrative, therefore, is the genesis of the Church, outside which context one can only have an ahistorical, gnostic Christ. But once one has said this, one then has to face up to the real implication of a narrative that is at one and the same time a recounting of a 'real history.' And yet has also an interpretative, regulative function with respect to all other history." Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 387.

²¹Laurence Paul Hemming, "Heidegger and the Grounds of Redemption," in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 91-92.

²²Ibid., 93.

²³Conor Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism: Philosophies of Nothing and the Difference of Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), xiii.

²⁴Ibid., xiv.

²⁵Ibid., 273.

²⁶Cunningham adds here: "If we are to speak seriously of nihilism we must, it seems, understand nihilism precisely to be an absence of nihilism: nihilism is not nihilistic. Indeed, it may well be best to characterize nihilism in plenitudinal, rather than negative terms. If we realize that nihilism can be understood as a negative plentitude—what has been referred to throughout as the nothing as something—then we can realize that nihilism will not fail to provide what it is usually supposed to preclude. Nihilism will provide values, gods, and most of all, it seems intelligibility. Indeed, as we shall see, nihilism generates an excessive intelligibility." Cunningham, 170.

²⁷Toole suggest, "For Milbank's project is thrown into question not only, because of its inability to offer a persuasive account of nonviolence but also a less than convincing portrayal of nihilism as somehow fixated upon and bound to violence. The possibility that nihilism is not simply about violence throws Milbank's narrative further off balance." Michael Toole, *Waiting for Godot in Sara-*

jevo: Theological Reflections on Nihilism, Tragedy, and Apocalypse (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 77.

²⁸According to Cunningham, "John Milbank explicitly argues that nihilism is an intellectual possibility having successfully exposed the nihilism of a great deal of modern thought." Cunningham, 170.

²⁹Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 382-432.

³⁰There is little doubt that the benefit would be mutual, but space will not allow for that argument at this time.

Coming in the Fall Bulletin

- The complete schedule of the Annual Meeting of the NAPT and the AAR Group "Tillich: Issues in theology, Religion and Culture."
- Banquet Information for Friday evening, November 18th: restaurant, directions, and registration information.
- Information on the Board of Directors Meeting and the General Business Meeting of the Society
- More papers and information.

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
IN PAUL TILlich'S SYSTEMATIC
THEOLOGY: A CONSTRUCTIVE
FRAMEWORK IN DIALOGUE WITH
FEMINIST PROCESS THEOLOGIES**

TABEA ROESLER

Context and Thesis

In recent theological approaches,¹ modern anthropologies that focus on the “self-centered-self” are accused of being highly reductionistic.² In his *Church Dogmatics*, Karl Barth uses the term of “indirect Cartesianism” to describe this modern type of personhood.³ As theological and philosophical scholars working on Paul Tillich’s anthropology today, we have to take this criticism seriously. There are *three particular reasons*: (1) Tillich himself considers his anthropology as the attempt to *overcome* Cartesian dualism (as well as its counterpart, the Spinozistic monism). Nevertheless, Tillich’s understanding of personhood is based on a strong notion of “self-centeredness.” (2) Tillich’s anthropology has a *systemic* function within his philosophical theology. A reproach of reductionism would question, in a certain way, the totality of his thinking.⁴ (3) In an age of global destruction of our ecological systems, it is almost trivial to mention that the self-understanding of being “*maîtres et possesseurs de la nature*”⁵ becomes crucial for our issue. The wellbeing of humanity strongly depends on the ecological balance of nature. As we know, Tillich was sensitive to ecological questions even if he did not develop a full-fledged theology of nature, since such themes were not generally being addressed during his lifetime.⁶

In this paper I want to develop Tillich’s anthropology in the *Systematic Theology*, specifically, in Volume III (1963/1966).⁷ My thesis is that Tillich’s anthropology is internally differentiated, because it contains a notion of life close to Alfred North Whitehead and the “school” of process theology, but also a strong Hegelian ingredient. Whitehead and G. W. F. Hegel can be considered as congenial,⁸ *inter alia* as they are both directly or indirectly rooted in F. W. J. Schelling’s mature philosophy.⁹ The Schellingian heritage in Tillich is more than evident.¹⁰ Tillich can therefore correlate “being” with “becoming” or “process” in his concept of life.¹¹

Consequently, the frame of his anthropology is fundamentally *larger and richer than the modern reductionistic understanding of personhood as “self-centeredness,”* as I will attempt to demonstrate in this paper. Nevertheless, I argue that Tillich does not

sufficiently use the critical and constructive potentials of the Schellingian—and in this sense Whiteheadian—theory of “nature” and “becoming.” There is still an “indirect Hegelianism” *co-present* in Tillich and in this sense the tendency to reduce the multidimensionality of life to “self-centeredness” or absolute rational self-control.

In dialogue with feminist (process) theologies such as those of Mary Ann Stenger, Catherine Keller, and Marjorie H. Suchocki, I want to make explicit these reductionisms and to offer constructive alternatives. As already implied in the preceding remarks, my own underlying concept of “anthropology” and, more precisely, of the human “self” is *multidimensional*. In this paper, I intend to re-read Tillich’s anthropology in terms of *nature* and *spirit*, in the perspective of their relative commonalities and relative differences within *life* as multidimensional. In the first and second sections, I will provide the *ontological* framework for this multidimensional understanding of life. The third section discusses the concept of nature with regard to the *inorganic* dimension and first condition for the actualization of every dimension of life. Section four relates nature with spirit, the last and all-embracing dimension of life. In this context the problem of “indirect Hegelianism” becomes most virulent. Therefore, I attempt to demonstrate in this paper that Tillich’s anthropological thought system, re-read in the perspective of feminist (process) theologies, can provide a less reductionistic and more relational and dynamic understanding of human self-centeredness. This understanding culminates in the notion of *embodied spirit*. This embodied spirit is a “metaphysical force field” (C. Keller) in which personhood is reconstructed in terms of *coincidentia oppositorum*.

(1) Ontological Frame and the Case against

“Levels”

According to Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, Paul Tillich was not overtly interested in getting a deeper insight into the modern and post-modern north-American theology and philosophy.¹² The statement is certainly true in so far as Tillich did not understand process theology and philosophy in a deductive manner. A quasi-mathematical approach was not consistent with his way of thinking.¹³ He rather perceived his own method in the sense of a systematic, a *creative and constructive process of reflection*. “Understanding” means for him “creative transformation.” Turned in this way, Pauck’s statement appears in a different light. As Erdmann Sturm also makes clear, Tillich was quite aware of the theologi-

cal and philosophical implications of process thinking.¹⁴ My paper can be therefore understood as the attempt to follow the course Tillich has reopened for us.

Let us start with a small but important observation. In the introduction of his *Systematic Theology* III, Tillich expresses his skepticism towards the notion of “process,” the core of pragmatism and the Whiteheadian “school”: “The term ‘process’ is much less equivocal than the term ‘life’ but also much less expressive” [ST III: 11/21]. A purely quantitative understanding of “process” seems to be reductionistic and therefore too weak for being used in a theological system as Tillich intends to construct. Life, according to Tillich, is better described in terms of “relation,” and the notion of “process” should be reinterpreted within the context of “existentialism.” It is appropriately used in the meaning of “life process” and “creative process” [ST III, 12/22; 50/64]. As an existentialist term, *being* must therefore not be misunderstood as an empty, static, and monistic tautology [A=A]. It is a creative process including both the continuity and the discontinuity of life, being and becoming [A=A correlated with A => A].¹⁵

A fascinating and complex ontological *shift* is taking place. Tillich describes this shift and its different degrees by using *spatial* metaphors. His critical starting point is the hierarchical order.¹⁶ The characteristics of the hierarchical ontology are manifold: (a) The encountered diversity of reality, described in exclusively quantitative terms, is perceived as the “absolute chaos” [ST III, 50/65; 34/47]. (b) In order to bring the chaos under control, a mono-hierarchical order of being is needed. Corresponding to the specific context, the monarch can be “a priest, an emperor, a god, or the God of monotheism” [ST III, 13/23; cf. 290/332]. The “relation” between the monarch and the subjected universe is defined in terms of “totality/omnipotence” and “deductive dependence.” (c) Reality is spatially reconstructed as a pyramid of levels following each other in vertical direction: the higher the level, the smaller the diversity of beings. (d) In this sense, the metaphor “level” becomes predominant for constituting the intrinsic independence of each stage from the others. (e) Spatiality is reduced to a twofold order of being: to dualism (cf. b), going hand in hand with monism (cf. d). The spatial is combined with a *sociological* metaphor, for ontology is correlated with power.¹⁷ (f) Diversity and plurality can be deeply related to mono-hierarchical (or even totalitarian) systems. As the analysis of the hierarchical order

makes clear, dualism and monism can be defined as “pluralistic” systems. Diversity is not *per se* good or bad; decisive is *how* it is structured.¹⁸

Thus, it is important to *make explicit* the structures of the ontologies we are using. This process of explicitness is deeply related to the *existential notion of relation*, the core of the Tillichian theology and philosophy of being. In this perspective Tillich’s judgment of the hierarchical order is not surprising: “The metaphor ‘level’ betrays its inadequacy when the *relation* of different levels is under consideration” [ST III, 14/24; emphasis mine]. But making explicit our investment in our own generalizations is the only way to reopen our reflection to reconsideration, revision, or rejection.¹⁹ Theologically and politically, systemic distortions can be more dangerous when their mechanisms are disguised than when they are explicit. Ontology should therefore establish a “relatively,” but not an “absolutely static” *a priori*.²⁰

(2) “Emergence” as Multidimensional Process of Life

In order to understand life as a creative process and therefore in terms of “relation,” a new vision of reality is needed:

The result of these considerations is that the metaphor ‘level’ (and such similar metaphors as ‘stratum’ or ‘layer’) must be excluded from any description of life processes. It is my suggestion that it be replaced by the metaphor ‘dimension,’ together with correlative concepts such as ‘realm’ and ‘grade.’ The significant thing, however, is not the replacement of one metaphor by another but the changed vision of reality that such replacement expresses.²¹

The ontological shift from the hierarchy to a multidimensional order of being, which Tillich describes in his *Systematic Theology* III, is crucial for his understanding of anthropology in its different perspectives. The reopening to a new vision of reality requires a fundamental and *systemic* change. Following the analysis of Michael Welker (referring to Whitehead and Niklas Luhmann), this systemic change is taking place as a process of “emergence” [*Emergenz*].²² According to Tillich, a multidimensional emergent process of life, should be best described in a threefold perspective, namely in terms of “dimensions,” “realms,” and “degrees.” In an emergent life process, these three metaphors constitute unity and diversity, *the relative commonalities and the relative differences* of life as multidimen-

sional. Tillich's anthropology is situated within this integral (cosmological) vision of being.

(a) Dimensions

As the metaphor "level," the notion of "dimension" is also taken from the *spatial* sphere. But different from the hierarchical order, dimensions can be *related* without disturbing each other [ST III, 15ff./25ff]. Moreover, whereas a "relation" between two levels—for example the so-called distinction between "body and mind"²³—happens by pure chance, as each level is standing for itself (*aseitas*), the relation between different dimensions becomes a *conditio sine qua non*. This is so because the reality that the different dimensions share and constitute respectively by which they are constituted, limited or strengthened, is not, using Catherine Keller's expressions, a meta-physical [*meta* = "beyond"], but a metaphysical [*meta* = "with"] reality. Life, therefore, forms a "metaphysical force field."²⁴ In contrast to the notion of "realm," dimensions can establish a creative *mutual* interaction between their different elements, degrees, and forces.²⁵ They become *available* for each other. There is an interactive movement from one dimension (and its elements, degrees, and forces) to the other. The higher dimension is implicit in the lower, and the lower is implicit in the higher.

(b) Realms and Degrees

This leads us to the second metaphor, the notion of "realm," also a constitutive part of life as a metaphysical force field. The realm differs from the dimension in that it is a *sociological*, not a spatial, metaphor. It introduces a political connotation into the process of life, a notion of power in the sense of *determination*:

One speaks of the ruler of a realm, and just this connotation makes the metaphor adequate, because in the metaphorical sense a realm is a section of reality in which a special dimension determines the character of every individual belonging to it, whether it is an atom or a man.²⁶

In life processes, mutual relations and determination, dimensions and realms, are deeply correlated. The phenomenon of determination makes it possible to *differentiate* between different dimensions, realms and degrees of life. By doing so, they become identifiable and describable. Emergent processes testify from the *non-reductive* and *non-reducible* character of life: its different elements, concepts, and forces cannot be reduced to those of the former; former dimensions, realms, and degrees can be conditions for the actualization of the deter-

mining, but not the outcome of actualization itself.²⁷ It is important to note that the realm, therefore, introduces an element of radical—fundamental and concrete, and in this sense *relative*, a term that should not to be confused with "abstract"—*discontinuity* into the process of mutual interaction, a "leap," as Tillich says by following Søren Kierkegaard. Leap, power, and dominance are deeply related; they qualify, according to Tillich, life processes as "creative."²⁸

This leads us to the notion of "degree," the third metaphor. Tillich affirms the existence of gradations of values among the different dimensions, "[t]hat which presupposes something else and adds to it is by so much the richer" [ST III, 17/27]. This assumption is based on the Aristotelian doctrine of potency and its distinctions between *dynamis* and *energeia*, a concept that Tillich uses in an "existential" way and not—as it is improperly the case in the hierarchical order—in the sense of "perfection."²⁹ The anthropological implications of this issue are enormous (see especially the notion of "embodied spirit").

© "Unpacking Cusanus"

According to Tillich, the ontological *shift* from a hierarchical order to a multidimensional and in this sense emergent life process is insolubly related with the principle of *coincidentia oppositorum* of Nicolaus Cusanus (cf. Martin Luther's notion of *simul*). As clarified in our discussion, the interaction of dimensions, realms, and degrees called *coincidentia oppositorum* constitutes the continuity and discontinuity, the relative commonalities and the relative differences of life as a creative process. By doing so, the mutually independent and hierarchically organized levels of the power of being are negated and subjected to a process of "de-tautologisation" [*Ent-tautologisierung*], referring again to Luhmann.³⁰ In this sense, Cusanus can be called an existentialist thinker.

As evident as this conclusion might be, it is surprising at the same time. Indeed, we are sometimes used to interpreting Tillich's ontology by the help of a "basic structure," in terms of *one-to-one* relationships ("self and world").³¹ These interpretations are, of course, adequate and legitimate (Tillich loves basic dual structures!), and, more than this, helpful for understanding what the Tillichian theological and philosophical universe is basically like. Nevertheless, my own *method* of reading Tillich differs in some aspects from this "basic" understanding. Indeed, what I try to realize in this paper is to re-read Tillich's thought system in reverse.³² By

starting with the “multidimensional unity of life” (ST III) as a creative process, I intend to reopen the Tillichian anthropology for a creative understanding of life, nature, and spirit (“unpacking Cusanus”). Instead of referring to the basic *one-to-one*-relationships (ST I), I try to show in which respect life, nature, and spirit can be understood as multidimensional, in terms of *many-to-many*-relationships (as dimensions), correlated with *many-to-one*-relationships (as realms and degrees).³³ In this sense, the basic *one-to-one*-relationships represent a kind of “place-keeper” within the Tillichian ontology; we have to “spell them out” in order to make their resources available for us.

(3) Towards a Theology of the Inorganic

Different from the hierarchical system, Tillich wants his own understanding of the dimensions in the inorganic realm to be seen as an integrative part of the life process. This universal perspective has direct implications on anthropological questions, for human beings themselves constitute a multidimensional unity of being. Consequently, any abstract separation between “inorganic–nature–humanity” is misleading and reductionistic.³⁴ This is the context of the following statement:

One reason for using the metaphor ‘level’ is the fact that there are wide areas of reality in which *some characteristics of life are not manifest at all*, for instance, the large amount of inorganic materials in which *no trace of the organic dimension can be found....* Can the metaphor ‘dimension’ cover these conditions? I believe it can. It can point to the fact that, even if certain dimensions of life *do not appear*, nonetheless they are *potentially real*. The distinction of the potential from the actual implies that all dimensions are always real, if not actually, at least potentially. A dimension’s actualization is *dependent on conditions that are not always present*.³⁵

The very “beginning”³⁶ of life as an emergent process (*secunda creatio*) is not an absolute and purely quantitative *nihil*, as it is conceived within the hierarchic system. The ontological shift from the hierarchy to a multidimensional order of being reopens to a new perspective on the *quality* of the inorganic life as multiplicity of the *no-thing*³⁷, *invisible* ground of being, *potentially* life-bearing deep. The inorganic dimension, in this sense, has its specific quality *because* of its *fragmentary* (partial) character. Its metaphorical (spatial, sociological, theological) richness is enormous: (a) whereas in a

hierarchy the response to the chaos is domination, Tillich conceives the inorganic as the first, the fundamental [*grund-legend*] dimension of a life process. The German language provides at least a four-fold sense for the term “Grund”: basis [*Grundlage*], reason [*Begründung*], the unconceivable [*das Unergründliche/Unvordenkliche*], abyss [*Abgrund*]. All these meanings are co-present in our issue, as the inorganic is the ground of life. They can be directly related with the idea of “fragment.” (b) The liaison between creation, power, and domination (see the discussion above) is expanded by the idea of a *relative withdrawal* and *retention* of the creative forces (concept of *kenosis*).³⁸ The fullness of life is present *in nuce*, potentially, not yet actualized. “To a theology of becoming, this radical genesis *divines* the potentiality of the tehom,” as Catherine Keller writes. “In this sense at least a tehom theology can inhabit the *ex nihilo* formula. But it stresses not the empty abysm...but the multiplicity of the *no-thing*....”³⁹ (c) Tillich does not start his pneumatology with the glorious manifestation of Pentecost, but with the delicateness (beauty) and fragility (mortality) of life at the very beginning of its process. There is, indeed, no guarantee for its “fruitful” and “successful” unfolding and development. For Tillich understands the concept of *dynamis* and *energeia* in an existential way, as life itself is always ambiguous. Thus, every living being is finite, mortal [Gen 3:19].⁴⁰ (d) The fragmental character of life is correlated with its *fractal* dimension (this is a further implication of the interdependence of essence/existence and *dynamis/energeia* that Tillich provides). The notion of the “fractal,” taken from the chaos-theory, means that the fractal is a limited frame providing an unlimited number of variations. Finitude, therefore, is not the opposite of the infinite, but a constitutive part of the infinite. This makes the transcendent character of the finitude. This is a reformulation of the principle of *coincidentia oppositorum* in relational terms.⁴¹ It is a strong point for understanding the notion of *human self-consciousness* (see below). (e) The presented concept of the inorganic (the fundamental dimension of the totality of life) as fragmental and fractal goes hand in hand with a specific way of human *perception*. It seems to me that Tillich has this question in mind when he criticizes that the inorganic is disparaged within the hierarchical system by arguing that some characteristics of life are not manifest [*sichtbar*, visible] within the inorganic realm (see quotation above). Tillich seems to allude to a certain kind of limited and therefore reductionis-

tic way of “seeing” the “invisible.” The eyes (our *ratio*?) are only *one* way to perceive and to value our own being and the world around us, even if they have, according to Tillich, an outstanding position in this process.⁴² Or, to reformulate it differently: we never see by the “eyes” only. In order to perceive and to value the complexity of the unconceivable [*das Unergründliche/ Unvordenkliche*], a multidimensional process of “seeing” has to come into effect. And this is exactly the creative work of the *spirit* (see below). (f) The problems raised in (e) can also lead to false abstractions regarding our perception of the ecological systems. Once again the crucial question is: what is “real”? I think that a lot of ecological distortions result *inter alia* from a vision of reality principally based on what we can perceive by the “eyes” only, by rational and totally self-referential *one-to-one*-perspectives. Issues like the exploitation of natural resources, radioactivity, and global warming are so difficult to get under control because the micro cosmos and the macro cosmos are too “small” or rather too “big” to be “seen.” The “ecological memory” is more complex (non-reductive and non-reducible) than the simple idea of “reality” equated with what can affect us *hic et nunc*.

(4) The Pluri-Singularity of the Spirit and the Concept of Personhood

(a) Self-Referentiality and Indirect Hegelianism

The question...is, [s]hould and can the word ‘spirit,’ designating the particularly human dimension of life, be reinstated? There are strong arguments for trying so; and I shall attempt it throughout the discussion of the present part of the theological system.⁴³

In order to continue the discussion above, I would like to come to the notion of spirit in its “last and all-embracing” dimensions. Tillich argues that historical humanity is the highest degree from the point of view of valuation, for all dimensions of life are actual in human beings in which the special character is “determined” by the spiritual and historical dimensions. The dominance of the spiritual dimension is brought about by a “leap” within the emergence of the universe. This leap is a non-reductive and non-reducible shift from inner awareness to self-consciousness and self-centeredness, from the psychological [*seelisch*] to the spiritual realm. “In doing so it [the personal center] actualizes its own potentialities, but in actualizing its own potentialities, it *transcends itself*. This phenomenon can be experienced in every *cognitive act*.”⁴⁴

It is important to recognize that in recent feminist anthropologies the Tillichian issue is very influential. In these discourses the *multidimensional vision of personhood* is a dominant aspect, as Mary Ann Stenger points out.⁴⁵

Although not giving a centrality to ‘body’ that some feminist theologies have, Tillich does reject an anti-materialist or anti-body approach to theology. He argues that ‘the religious significance of the inorganic is immense, but it is rarely considered by theology’.... He even argues that ‘the inorganic has a preferred position among the dimensions in so far as it is the first condition for the actualization of every dimension.... In relation to the impact of the Spiritual Presence, however, Tillich gives the spirit the preferred status over the rest of the universe.’⁴⁶

These analyses are based on strong theological and philosophical presuppositions. They show that Tillich’s anthropology is internally differentiated, because it contains a notion of life process close to Whitehead, but also a strong Hegelian (idealist) ingredient.

This leads me to introduce my own *critical remarks*. I wonder if Tillich’s anthropological framework is really strong enough to avoid what I would like to call an “indirect Hegelianism.”⁴⁷ To say it differently, I am not sure if Tillich is sufficiently aware of the creative and constructive resources the Schellingian—and in this sense Whiteheadian—philosophy of “nature” and “becoming” contains. Even if, in contrast to his “precursor” Aristotle, Hegel’s understanding of personhood as totally self-referential is based on a “universal” instead of a purely rational notion of life,⁴⁸ the problem of rational power and domination is still more than virulent in his approach. Back to Tillich, it seems to me that there is also a strong tendency to identify the *center* of human personhood with rationality and self-referentiality: “[I]t is the centered self which actualizes itself as a personal self by distinguishing, separating, rejecting, preferring, connecting, and in doing so, transcending its elements” [ST III, 27f./39]. This might raise the question of whether Tillich has really left the hierarchical thinking behind him. In fact it seems to me that, once the “spiritual level” is reached, his reflections on “nature” become less conceptual and more sweeping and vague, followed by the classical *one-to-one*-distinctions.⁴⁹ It is, therefore, important to notice that there are richer and more complex resources *co-*

present in Tillich's thought system.⁵⁰ The "embodiment of the spirit" is a particular example for this.

(b) Embodiment of the Spirit

In "Schelling und die Anfänge des existenzialistischen Protestes" (1955), Tillich writes that perceiving nature taught Schelling to understand the principle of *coincidentia oppositorum* and to make it fruitful for his own anthropological concept of *spirit*. One of his most important insights was the embodiment of the spirit.⁵¹ In this perspective, nature (the inorganic as a "metaphysical force field") and spirit (the human *logos*-structure) constitute a multidimensional emergent process of life. Their relative commonalities and their relative differences create the dynamic and richness of human existence. More precisely we can define the embodied spirit as "pluri-singular."⁵² For it includes *both*, mutual and plural relations between nature and spirit (the multiplicity of *dimensions*) as well as spiritual determination and singularity within the life process (*realms* and *degrees* correlated with dimensions).

With regard to our *physical* dimensions, on the one hand, this means that our existence is more than the eternal cycle of life and death, an "ontology of death" [ST III, 19/31]. For the dynamic of life is always orientated towards the creation of the new, the multidimensionality of the spirit. Nevertheless the spirit never emerges from an absolute, abstract *nihil*, from the empty abyss (Keller). It is embodied, deeply related to the limits and hopes of our existence as finite. With regard to our *logos*-structure, on the other hand, embodiment therefore qualifies all mental and cognitive acts as conditioned by their context, by our *eros*, passion, and imagination as well as by our social and personal histories, and the hopes and prejudices attendant upon them. We "think" "with our bodies" (Whitehead) and "see" "from the midst of experience."⁵³ Consequently our capacities for and forces of self-referentiality and self-transcendence are always *fragmental* as well as *fractal*. Referring to our "visual" capacities, Suchocki compares the working of our self-consciousness, its interactivity between relative discontinuities and continuities, with a flow of pictures mediating a relative continuity by the rapid succession of pictures. Therefore, our mental and cognitive capacities and forces are important, as they make this interactivity identifiable and describable.⁵⁴

Returning to the problem of human self-centeredness within the Tillichian system (see above), our discussion makes clear that a sensitive and balanced weighing of the arguments is helpful in

order to perceive the different anthropological perspectives in Tillich's *Systematic Theology* III, including its strong and more problematic implications. Apart from the Hegelian and idealist references,⁵⁵ there is a less reductionistic and more relational and dynamic concept of personhood *co-present* in Tillich. Indeed, the principle of *coincidentia oppositorum*, which is conceptually close to Schelling and Whitehead, can provide constructive potentials of development in order to overcome the Hegelian dualism and monism. Hence, the concept of human "self" can be reconstructed in dynamic terms by correlating *nature* and *spirit*.

This correlation invokes the challenging idea of "self-centeredness" "in the making" (Whitehead).⁵⁶ In my perspective, it is possible to push Tillich's anthropology in this direction and to understand human personhood as a "metaphysical force field," as I have tried to show in this paper. "Self-centeredness," in this sense, has a quite paradoxical meaning, as the two metaphors *power* and *space* can illustrate again. Indeed, a person is and becomes "self-centered" by getting into the process of relative *withdrawal* and *retention* of his or her rational and self-controlling power (concept of *kenosis*).⁵⁷ By doing so, a new creative space can be allowed and reopened for the further unfolding of life, for the relative *reconstruction* and *transformation* of the *spirit* empowered by the "unconceivable,"⁵⁹ the fragmental (partial) and fractal structures and forces of *nature* [ST III, 24/35]. In this sense, the relationship between spirit and nature is *mutual* and has to be defined in terms of "dimensions" (*pluri-singularity* of the spirit).

Nevertheless, the *logos*-structure and rational capacities of human beings are not denied or eliminated within this process (as attempted by the NS-movement, the so called "political romanticism"), but, on the contrary, *intensified* (in the sense of the *pluri-singularity* of the spirit). This new intensity is different from the hierarchical striving for absolute rational self-control (Hegel). Indeed, the spirit can *empower* and *center* a person, but in a more existentialist way—for life is not an empty, static, and monistic tautology, but multidimensional. In this sense, the relationship between spirit to nature is determinative. *Logos* and rationality *determine* as realms the dimensions of nature.

The different anthropological perspectives (Hegel, Schelling, and Whitehead) Tillich provides and relates in his ST III constitute a fascinating theological framework. As I have tried to show in this paper, feminist (process) theologies can give us con-

structive keys of interpretation in order to be more suspicious of theological reductionisms. They can teach us to see more deeply, what it means for Tillich to understand personhood in terms of nature and spirit, and therefore in the perspective of the multidimensionality and relativity of Life.

¹ The expanded and reworked version of this article will be published in: Tabea Roesler, "Re-Reading Paul Tillich's Anthropology: Multidimensional Personhood and Life in Dialogue with Feminist Process Theologies," in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* (2005).

² Michael Welker, "Is the Autonomous Person of European Modernity a Sustainable Model of Human Personhood?," in *The Human Person in Science and Theology*, ed. Niels H. Gregersen, Willem B. Drees, and Ulf Görman (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 95-114.

³ Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik: Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes: Prolegomena zur Kirchlichen Dogmatik: Erster Halbband I,1* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1932), 223 [indirekter Cartesianismus]. Barth uses the geometrical figure of an ellipse in order to illustrate the "indirect Cartesianism" (223), cf. footnote 30 ('de-*tautologisation*').

⁴ Hans Anzenberger, *Der Mensch im Horizont von Sein und Sinn: Die Anthropologie Paul Tillichs im Dialog mit Humanwissenschaften* (Rupert Riedl, Erich Fromm und Viktor E. Frankl) (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1998), 81. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 22/Ibid., *Systematische Theologie: Band III: Das Leben und der Geist. Die Geschichte und das Reich Gottes*, trans. R. Albrecht and I. Henel (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1966), 33: "It is quite probable that the fading of the symbol 'Holy Spirit' from the living consciousness of Christianity is at least partly caused by the disappearance of the word 'spirit' from the doctrine of man."

When I quote Tillich's *Systematic Theology* (ST), I will give the page number of the American edition followed by the page number of the German edition.

⁵ René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, intro. and notes E. Gilson (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1979), 128.

⁶ Cf. Michael F. Drummy, "Examining Gordon Kaufman's Reconception of God," in *Religion in the New Millennium: Theology in the Spirit of Paul Tillich*, ed. Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Mercer: University Press, 2001), 251-259; and, *Being and Earth: Paul Tillich's Theology of Nature* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000). Langdon Gilkey, *Gilkey on Tillich* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 184.

⁷ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 11-32/21-44.

⁸ Cf. Michael Welker, "Warum entwickeln Hegel und Whitehead eine universale Theorie?," in *Whitehead und der deutsche Idealismus/Whitehead and German Idealism*, ed. George R. Lucas, Jr., Antoon Braeckman (Bern i.a.: Peter Lang, 1990), 57-66.

⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1997). Arran Gare, "The Roots of Postmodernism: Schelling, Process Philosophy, and Poststructuralism," in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, ed. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 31-53.

¹⁰ Paul Tillich, "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes" (1955), in *Philosophie und Schicksal: Schriften zur Erkenntnislehre und Existenzphilosophie: Gesammelte Werke Band IV*, ed. Renate Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1961), 133.

¹¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 50ff./64ff. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, 31ff.

¹² Erdmann Sturm, "Sein oder Werden: Paul Tillich und die Prozeßphilosophie," in *Natural Theology versus Theology of Nature?: Tillich's Thinking as Impetus for a Discourse among Theology, Philosophy and Natural Sciences/ Natürliche Theologie versus Theologie der Natur?: Tillichs Denken als Anstoß zum Gespräch zwischen Theologie, Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft*, ed. Gert Hummel (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 184. Wilhelm Pauck, Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life & Thought: Volume I: Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 189.

¹³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 3/13. Ibid., "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes," 134.

¹⁴ Erdmann Sturm, "Sein oder Werden: Paul Tillich und die Prozeßphilosophie," 184-211.

¹⁵ Cf. the discussion between Hartshorne and Tillich taking place in 1952, i.e. before the publication of ST III: Charles Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. Charles W. Kegley (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982), 198-232. Paul Tillich, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," in *Ibid.*, 374-394.

¹⁶ Ibid., *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 13/23. Cf. 15/25 (spatial metaphors). Ibid., "Dimensionen, Schichten und die Einheit des Seins" (1959), in *Philosophie und Schicksal: Schriften zur Erkenntnislehre und Existenzphilosophie: Gesammelte Werke Band IV*, ed. Renate Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1961), 119

(metaphors *versus* signs). Cf. *ibid.*, “Dimensions, Levels, and the Unity of Life” (MW/HW 6: 401ff.).

¹⁷ Paul Tillich, “Die sozialistische Entscheidung,” in *Christentum und soziale Gestaltung: Frühe Schriften zum Religiösen Sozialismus: Gesammelte Werke: Band II* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1962), 224ff.

¹⁸ Tabea Roesler, “Le concept tillichien d’éthique sociale: Une lecture comparatrice de Tillich (1929-1933) et du jeune Hegel (1793-1800)” (draft title), in *Le socialisme religieux de Paul Tillich: une éthique sociale en devenir?* ed. Marc Boss, Jean Richard (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2005).

¹⁹ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 50 [‘perspectival ontologies’].

²⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume I* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 167. *Ibid.*, *Systematische Theologie: Band I*, trans. R. Albrecht i.a. (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1956), 198.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 15/25.

²² Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. J. F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 28, footnote 58: “In the realm of theology, P. Tillich tried in an admittedly metaphysical pneumatology to bring to bear the substance of the phenomenon of emergence. See his talk of ‘the appearance of a new dimension of life’ [...]” George Herbert Mead, *The Philosophy of the Present*, ed. A. M. Murphy (La Salle: Open Court, 1959), 69. Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 43f., 157, 650, 658.

²³ Even the terminology mirrors the basic structure of anthropological dualism, cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 14/24.

²⁴ Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sex and Self* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 216ff. Cf. Paul Tillich, “Schelling und die Anfänge des existenzialistischen Protestes,” 122.

²⁵ Robert J. Russell, “The Relevance of Tillich for the ‘Theology and Science’ Dialogue,” in *Religion in the New Millennium: Theology in the Spirit of Paul Tillich*, ed. Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Mercer: University Press, 2001), 263.

²⁶ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 16/27. Cf. *ibid.*, “Dimensionen, Schichten und die Einheit des Seins,” 122f.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 17/27: “The inorganic can be actual without actuality of the organic but not vice versa.” Cf. Robert J. Russell, “The

Relevance of Tillich for the ‘Theology and Science’ Dialogue,” 262.

²⁸ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 26/37; 22/33. Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, *Der Begriff Angst* (Jena: E. Diederich, 1923).

²⁹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 12/22. Cf. Otfried Höffe, *Aristoteles* (München: C. H. Beck, 1996), 106; 138; 146; 205; 275. The term “actualization” includes a notion of “process” (Lat. *agere*).

³⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 13/23f. Niklas Luhmann, *Ökologische Kommunikation: Kann die moderne Gesellschaft sich auf ökologische Gefährdungen einstellen?* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990³), 269. “Reine Selbstreferenz, die nicht den Umweg über anderes geht, liefe auf eine Tautologie hinaus. Reale Operationen bzw. reale Systeme sind auf eine ‘Entfaltung’ bzw. ‘Enttautologisierung’ dieser Tautologie angewiesen [...]” (269). Geometrically the tautology forms an *ellipse*, cf. footnote 2 (‘indirect Cartesianism’).

³¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume I, 168ff/199ff. One-to-one-relationships often lead to abstract notions such as “I-Thou”, “community” or “world.”

³² Cf. H. Frederick Reisz, Jr., “Ambiguities in the Use of the Theological Symbol ‘Spirit’ in Paul Tillich’s Theology,” in *Tillich Studies: 1975*, ed. John J. Carey (Chicago: The North American Paul Tillich Society, 1975), 89; *emph. mine*. Reisz refers to a posthumously published reply to an article by Robert Scharlemann, in which Tillich hinted at his disappointment that other scholars had not sufficiently attended to the breadth of his doctrine of God: “And I am especially grateful that Scharlemann has done what the majority of critics have not done, namely to read beyond the section on ‘God as Being’ in the doctrine of Being and God and to *include a discussion of God as Life, as Spirit, as related.*” [Paul Tillich, “Rejoinder,” in *The Journal of Religion XLVI* (No 1, Part II, January, 1966), 186].

³³ Cf. Michael Welker, “Prozeßtheologie,” in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Internationale theologische Enzyklopädie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992³), 1363.

³⁴ Paul Tillich, “Dimensionen, Schichten und die Einheit des Seins,” 118; 128. ST III, 18f./29f.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15f./26; *emph. mine*.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, *Systematic Theology*, Volume I, 188/220; 253/291; 254/292f. (‘*creatio ex nihilo*’) as well as *ibid.*, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 50f./64f. (self-creativity of life; *secunda creatio*; chaos). Cf. also Jan Bauke-Ruegg, *Die Allmacht Gottes: Systematisch-theologische Erwägungen zwischen Metaphysik, Postmoderne und Poesie* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 37-

98 (see esp. the discussion about the divine *power* and *creativity*).

³⁷ Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003), 180f.

³⁸ *Kenosis* ("self-emptying") refers to God's voluntary limitation of his divine infinity in order to allow room for finite creatures who are truly free to themselves. Cf. John Polkinghorne (ed.), *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001).

³⁹ Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming*, 180. Keller integrates a theology of the different divine names.

⁴⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 11f./21f.; 19/31. Cf. Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 1.

⁴¹ Cf. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Sünde: Rebellion gegen die Schöpfung," in *Sünde: Ein unverstündlich gewordenes Thema*, ed. Sigrid Brandt i.a. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997), 48.

⁴² Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 24/35 (*logos*-structure).

⁴³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 21 (passage does not appear in the German translation); corr. mine.

⁴⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 27/38; emph. mine. Cf. 25/36; 17/27; 16/27.

⁴⁵ Cf. Mary Ann Stenger, "Being and Word in Tillich's Doctrine of Spiritual Presence: Issues of Subjectivity and Relationality," in *Being Versus Word in Paul Tillich's Theology?/Sein versus Wort in Paul Tillichs Theologie?*, ed. Gert Hummel, Doris Lax (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 296. Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 18f./31f.

⁴⁶ Mary Ann Stenger, "Being and Word in Tillich's Doctrine of Spiritual Presence: Issues of Subjectivity and Relationality," in *Being Versus Word in Paul Tillich's Theology?/Sein versus Wort in Paul Tillichs Theologie?*, ed. Gert Hummel, Doris Lax (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 296. Cf. ST III: 18f./31f.

⁴⁷ Tabea Roesler, "Introduction and Translation: Paul Tillich, Le jeune Hegel et le Destin de l'Allemagne (1932)" in *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, ed. Jean Richard (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005). Cf. Robison B. James, "Mystical Identity and Acceptance 'In spite of': Paul Tillich as a Synthesis of Cusanus and Luther," in *Mystisches Erbe in Tillichs philosophischer Theologie/Mystical Heritage in Tillich's Philosophical Theology*, ed. Gert Hummel, Doris Lax (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2000), 164-176.

⁴⁸ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, 283-302.

⁴⁹ Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume I, 243/281 (the existential relationship between God and man as the source of all symbolization).

⁵⁰ Dieter Sturma, "Präreflexive Freiheit und menschliche Selbstbestimmung," in *F. W. J. Schelling: Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, ed. Otfried Höffe, Annemarie Pieper (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995), 149-172.

⁵¹ Paul Tillich, "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes," 138.

⁵² Cf. Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming*, 172ff.

⁵³ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*, 49. Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 19/31; 11/21; 26/36; 24/35.

⁵⁴ Cf. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Sünde: Rebellion gegen die Schöpfung," in *Sünde: Ein unverstündlich gewordenes Thema*, 50. Cf. ST III, 11f./21f.

⁵⁵ Cf. Gunter Wenz, *Subjekt und Sein: Die Entwicklung der Theologie Paul Tillichs* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1979).

⁵⁶ Cf. Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1926).

⁵⁷ Cf. again John Polkinghorne (ed.), *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Michigan/Cambridge UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company/Grand Rapids, 2001).

⁵⁸ Cf. Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, 303ff. Re-reading Tillich from behind: cf. Annemarie Pieper, "Zum Problem der Herkunft des Bösen I: Die Wurzel des Bösen im Selbst," in *F. W. J. Schelling: Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, ed. Otfried Höffe, Annemarie Pieper (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995), 91-110.

⁵⁹ Cf. Paul Tillich, "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes," 142. *Ibid.*, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, 18f./29f. (concept of "nature").

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