



# BULLETIN

of

*The North American Paul Tillich Society*

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### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NAPTS

The annual meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society, in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion, was held in Philadelphia from Friday 18 November to Sunday, 20 November 2005. Between the NAPTS meeting on Friday and the AAR Group, "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture" on Saturday and Sunday, seven sessions took place and some twenty-two papers were presented. In addition, Ron Stone delivered the Annual Tillich Banquet Address. The Society wishes to express its gratitude to Lon Weaver who served as President at the meeting and to Terry O'Keeffe, President Elect, for preparing a fine and stimulating program.

The new Officers elected are as follows:

- Terence O'Keeffe, University of Ulster, was elected President of the Society for the coming year.
- Stephen Butler Murray, Skidmore College, was chosen to serve as President Elect and the 2006 Program Chair for the meeting in Washington, D.C.
- Ron Stone, University of Pittsburgh, will continue in the office of Vice President, and Frederick J. Parrella, Santa Clara University, was re-elected Secretary Treasurer.
- Matthew Lon Weaver, University of Pittsburgh, as Past President, will serve as chair of the nominating committee for 2006.

New Board of Directors, elected for a three-year term expiring in 2008, are:

- Doris Lax, Deutsche Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft

- David Nikkel, University of North Carolina, Pembroke
- Duane Olsen, McKendree College
- Britt-Mari Sykes, University of Ottawa

The Society wishes to thank its retiring President, Lon Weaver, for his service and for his excellent work on the Society's behalf. The Society is also grateful to board members whose term expired in 2005 for their contributions to the Society and its goals during their term. It extends as warm welcome to the newly elected officers and members of the Board of Directors.

A reminder: the NAPTS and AAR/SBL Annual Meeting for 2006 will take place November 17 – 20 in Washington, D.C.

### UPDATE ON THE TILlich COLLECTED WORKS PROJECT

January 2006

In November 2005, the Tillich Collected Works Project Committee, with incoming NAPTS President Terry O'Keefe, met with Michael West of Fortress Press to discuss contract language, the overall plan, and next steps in the project. Michael West indicated that he had full approval for the project from the executive level of Fortress Press and also stated unequivocal support for a chronological approach, indicating that such an approach received stronger approval from Fortress than a thematic approach. Mr. West has promised to send a draft contract to Mary Ann Stenger by Feb. 3, 2006; she then will forward it to the committee and appropriate officers. In December, some members of the committee discussed the project with Dr. Mutie Tillich Farris in New York, who continues to be very supportive of our work.

Mary Ann Stenger  
Chair, Tillich Collected Works Project Committee

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

- Cooper, Terry D. *Paul Tillich and Psychology. Historic and Contemporary Explorations in Theology, Psychotherapy and Ethics.* Mercer Tillich Studies Series. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2006.
- Schüssler, Werner. "Eros and Agape." *Theology Digest* 52, 1 (Spring 2005): 27-34. (*Theology Digest* offers condensations of articles previously

published.) This essay first appeared in French translation in the Festschrift for the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of André Gounelle: *Penser le Dieu vivant. Mélanges offerts à André Gounelle*, edited by Marc Boss and Raphael Picon. Paris, 2003. This article also appeared in the *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 113 (2004): 165-176.

The editor is grateful to Erdmann Sturm for the following update on the Tillich-Studien Series. Some of these works have appeared in "New Publications" in previous issues of the Bulletin.

- Tillich, Paul. *Dogmatik-Vorlesung (Dresden 1925-1927)* (Ergänzungs- und Nachlassbaende zu dem Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich, Band XIV). Herausgegeben und mit einer historischen Einleitung versehen von Werner Schuuessler und Erdmann Sturm. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005.
- Tillich, Paul. *Kunst und Gesellschaft. Drei Vorlesungen (1952)*. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt, herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort über die Bedeutung der Kunst für das Denken Paul Tillichs von Werner Schüßler. Tillich-Studien—Beihefte, Band 1. Münster: LIT-Verlag 2004.
- Schüßler, Werner and A. James Reimer, eds. *Das Gebet als Grundakt des Glaubens. Philosophisch-theologische Überlegungen zum Gebetsverständnis Paul Tillichs*. Mit Beiträgen von Young-Ho Chun, Peter Haigis, Sebastian Painadath, S.J., A. James Reimer, Werner Schüßler, und Erdmann Sturm. Tillich-Studien—Beihefte, Band 2. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004.
- A. James Reimer, *Paul Tillich: Theologian of Nature, Culture, and Politics*. Tillich-Studien, Band 6. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004.
- Boss, Marc, Doris Lax, and Jean Richard, eds. *Mutations religieuses de la modernité tardive: Actes du XIVe Colloque International Paul Tillich, Marseille, 2001*. Tillich-Studien, Band 7. Münster: LIT-Verlag 2002.
- Joachim Ringleben. *Gott denken. Studien zur Theologie Paul Tillichs*. Tillich-Studien, Band 8. Münster: LIT-Verlag 2003.
- Danz, Christian, ed. *Theologie als Religionsphilosophie. Studien zu den problemgeschichtlichen und systematischen Voraussetzungen der Theologie Paul Tillichs*. Tillich-Studien, Band 9. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004.
- Gert Hummel, Doris Lax, Hg./eds. *Trinität und/oder*

*Quaternität—Tillichs Neuerschließung der trinitarischen Problematik. Trinity and/or Quaternity—Tillich's Reopening of the Trinitarian Problem.* Tillich-Studien, Band 10. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004.

Ihuoma, Sylvester I. *Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture in Dialogue with African Theology. A Contextual Analysis.* Tillich-Studien, Band 11. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004.

Gounelle, Andre and Bernard Reymond. *En chemin avec Paul Tillich.* Tillich-Studien, Band 12. Münster: LIT-Verlag 2004.

Glöckner, Konrad. *Personsein als Telos der Schöpfung. Eine Darstellung der Theologie Paul Tillichs aus der Perspektive seines Verständnisses des Menschen als Person.* Tillich-Studien, Band 15. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004.

Scharlemann, Robert P. *Religion and Reflection. Essays on Paul Tillich's Theology.* Tillich-Studien, Band 16. Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2005.

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

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 send your manuscript to the editor.

Thank you.

#### THE SPRING BULLETIN

#### *Coming in the Spring Bulletin:*

- A tribute to Dr. Mutie Tillich Farris in honor of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 17, 2006. The North American Paul Tillich Society is grateful for Mutie's support and all her kindness through the years.

*Happy Birthday, Mutie!*

- Articles by Robison James, Lon Weaver, Jeffrey Kneuss, Guy Hammond, and others.

If you have presented a paper at the 2005 meeting and have not sent it to the editor, please do so soon.

#### TILlich AND NIEBUHR AS ALLIED PUBLIC THEOLOGIANs

RON STONE

Robert McAfee Brown introduced me to Paul Tillich in Systematic Theology 101. He and Tillich's theology put reason around my faith and started my journey in becoming more of a philosopher than a theologian. That year we balanced Tillich and Brunner's systems against each other doctrine by doctrine, and Tillich, to my mind, always got the best of it.

Five years later, Daniel Day Williams asked me to tutor systematic theology for the department, and then John Macquarrie's version of Tillich was more persuasive than Paul Lehmann's John Calvin's was. Langdon Gilkey's course in religious language led me to write my first paper on Tillich. But my quest in moral, political, and religious philosophy had evolved through study of, and then with, Reinhold Niebuhr.

A couple of years later while I was teaching at Union Theological Seminary, John Stumme took a course with me on Karl Marx, Paul Tillich, and socialism. A remark of his would bear fruit a few years later. He said, "Ron, you know, Tillich is really deeper on these issues than Niebuhr is."

That relationship between Niebuhr and Tillich is ours to probe tonight, and if you think it important, it may be the subject of my next book, depending on the will of the funding foundations.

It is an honor to address this Society; many of you are more esteemed scholars of Tillich's works than I will ever be. But the honor contains a problem. What can I share with you that you do not already know? Probably many you concur with Ursula Niebuhr's remark: "In theology there is not anything new, all we can do is rearrange the pieces." Maybe some of my sources will be new for you and will help you arrange the pieces of the Reinie-Paulus relationship. My first essay exploring the relationship was rejected by a peer reviewer who regarded my use of the nickname and the first name as inappropriate. I will use them here to try to get as close to the depths of the relationship as I can. The reviewer also thought the essay was written by a Central European Jewish refugee who knew them both intimately. This Iowa farm boy was flattered by this case of mistaken identity.

Their alliance was formed in the events leading to World War II. They were not united but they were

allies, closer to the model of Britain and America than Britain and Russia. They were public theologians in that their message was directed to policy makers in public ways and not exclusively to the church. Their words were as much to politicians with the church overhearing them, as they were to the church with politicians overhearing them.

The best-known story of Niebuhr and Tillich resides in at least three versions. Robert McAfee Brown shared his version of the gospel with me. You know the story about a student referring to Tillich in Niebuhr's class in relationship to nature, creation, or something like that. Reinhold Niebuhr responded in an offhand way, "Aw Tillich is nothing but a damned nature mystic." The word rapidly made its way to Tillich, and the next morning, after chapel, as Reinhold is bustling along Claremont Ave. there was Tillich admiring the spring crocuses. "Ah yes, Reinie," he said, "Ze damn nature mystic is vorshipping ze flowers."<sup>1</sup>

Their fight most known to the public was whether or not Picasso's *Guernica*, protesting and prophesying modern aerial warfare, was "the most Protestant painting," as Tillich asserted. Probably the depths of the debate were rooted in Tillich's inclination to find the genius of Protestantism in protest and religious substance in Catholicism. Niebuhr's more polemical criticism of Catholicism in those early years found both in Protestantism.

Someone shared the sequel to the well-known debate. Reinie conceded to Tillich, saying, "Paulus in matters and taste of art I am a moron." Paulus, still struggling learning English, did not understand moron. For three weeks he fretted wondering what school of art was moron. Just before phoning the new director of the Museum of Modern art, his daughter Mutie put him straight on the meaning of the term and saved him the call.

John Dillenberger wrote to me that the two "played out games with each other wondering if they really knew what the other was doing or thinking. Once in the hall, Reinie said to Tillich, "Paulus, that's nothing but Schleiermacher," to which Tillich, beaming, said, "Of course." So the chiding, one or the other, was received by the other as if that was not all that was being done. Deception, no. I think a deep respect, not letting or assuming that the other was saying anything negative."<sup>2</sup>

That deep respect is expressed in Niebuhr's humility in his sharpest critique of Tillich in the Kegley and Bretall volume, *The Theology of Paul Tillich*. This essay was written just before Niebuhr's

stroke, post *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, and before volume II of the *Systematic Theology*. It reflects the best of Niebuhr's analysis of the relationship of freedom and sin in understanding humanity. It finds Tillich perhaps obscuring human freedom in his ontology more than he intends. Note he is not taking Tillich on in epistemology or the doctrine of God but on Niebuhr's ground of human nature and history. He concludes:

Tillich's greatness lies in his exploration of the boundary between metaphysics and theology. The difficult task of "walking the tightrope" is not negotiated without the peril of losing one's balance and falling over on one side or the other. If Barth refuses to approach the vicinity of the fence because he doesn't trust his balance, Tillich performs upon it with the greatest virtuosity, but not without an occasional fall. The fall may be noticed by some humble pedestrians who lack every gift to perform the task themselves.<sup>3</sup>

When, in 1990, I surveyed Union students from 1932-1960 about Niebuhr, I was surprised to learn how many of them said they did not understand Niebuhr or Tillich. Harjie Likins said that in the late forties Tillich and Niebuhr were neck and neck in popularity among the students and that:

A story went around about the poor student who went to Tillich's lecture and was totally confused, so he went to Niebuhr for an explanation, but he could not understand Niebuhr on Tillich. So he had to end with John Bennett who explained Niebuhr's explanation of Tillich and then explained Tillich.<sup>4</sup>

The great respect they had for each other is affirmed in their public as well as private words. Niebuhr wrote: "There is no one in our generation who so completely masters the stuff, philosophical and theological, with which he is dealing as Tillich."<sup>5</sup>

The respect was surrounded by real friendship. Tillich confessed this deep feeling of friendship in his *Travel Diary of 1936*. But their friendship was also founded in common commitments. They were partners in the philosophy of religion field. Tillich had a great debt, perhaps his life, to Reinhold Niebuhr's telegram asking him to accept the appointment at Union and Columbia. Beneath that lay H. Richard Niebuhr's translation of *The Religious Situation*, which introduced Tillich to the American academic world. Not only real debts and affectionate feelings, but partnership in practical work at the Seminary and beyond bonded them together. Elizabeth Niebuhr Sifton puts it simply, and in her book,

*The Serenity Prayer*, she documents it: “They were friends.”

Beverly Harrison as a student reflected on her experiences of both of them. Tillich and Niebuhr’s relationship was, of course, a matter of constant speculation amongst students in the 1950’s. Many of us perceived them as “world’s apart theologically,” and we looked for every opportunity to surface the difference, but neither were easily baited on the point, and limited their criticisms to “asides” in the classroom. Tillich was more diffident in this regard than Niebuhr was, as I recall. However, Niebuhr’s own diffidence as a theologian seemed also to result in caution when discussing differences with Tillich. He usually stressed his preferences for dealing with the historical realities of religion and his doubts about ontology as the entry point into theological reflection.

My favorite Niebuhr/ Tillich story derives from my walking into room 214 just behind Niebuhr one morning, before Christian ethics. Tillich’s class was just leaving the room and he (Tillich) met Niebuhr at the door. I was caught, literally, in the midst of the exchange. Reinie said, “Paulus, I have been reading your new book. It’s wonderful, wonderful—I think it may be the best thing you have written.” Tillich literally blushed with pleasure and said something to the effect, “Reinie, Reinie, do you really think so?”

I was a bit embarrassed to stand there, but I could not move on, so I continued to stand there as Niebuhr went on about his enthusiasm. Tillich was like a little boy in a candy shop, he was so pleased. When I finally got into 214 and sat down, I found myself very confused. Niebuhr had been talking about *The Shaking of the Foundations*, and while I also love that book, I wondered if it hadn’t been some kind of a put down to insist that that was possibly Tillich’s best book! I realized, of course, that Tillich had not heard Niebuhr’s comment that way—but I wondered....<sup>6</sup>

This collection of comments from the halls of Union would not be complete without Owen Thomas’s remembrance. His sense that Niebuhr was a friend and colleague of Tillich’s, but not close, corresponds to the memory of Wilhelm Pauck. Thomas said: “They spoke German together. Tillich and Niebuhr were walking down the hall speaking in German. Tillich was speaking and Niebuhr was saying, “Ja, Ja, Ja (then) Oh Hell, yes!”<sup>7</sup>

Roger Shinn, too, puzzled about their relationship, and, while illuminating it, he found the relationship between Tillich and Niebuhr complex.

Richard Fox dug out what he could, but his treatment is not adequate. When Tillich arrived in this country, knowing no English, Reinie was one person with whom he could converse. As late as my time, I heard them occasionally exchanging comments in German as they passed each other in the halls. Each had a genuine admiration for the other. See Gilkey’s angry review of Fox for an example of Tillich’s admiration for Reinie. Many people glibly associated the two as “neo-orthodox,” a bad categorization for both. I think I once wrote in *Christianity and Crisis*, back in the days when I was one of their regulars, that I long puzzled over this categorization of Tillich until the reason dawned on me: He spoke with a German accent. There is one other possible reason: as Niebuhr once said in a friendly, jovial way, “Whatever heresies Paul Tillich goes wandering among, he always comes home to ‘justification by faith.’”

To back up, the two became strongly associated in the public mind. A sound reason is that each of them defended the other against critics of the prevailing liberal-rational type. So the critics of both tended to merge them. The phrase: “Niebuhr and Tillich,” became almost one word in some circles, even sometimes at Union. But it was foolish.

There was one more reason for the popular association. When Tillich arrived in this country, Niebuhr immediately welcomed him and many of his friends (including Eduard Heimann and others from the New School) into the Fellowship of Socialist Christians, and there they found something of an American base. Actually, as Tillich’s book on “Religious Socialism” shows, there was a considerable difference between the continental group and Niebuhr’s American group. But they shared many criticisms of the dominant American culture, and from the mainstream of American politics they looked alike.

One night (somewhere in my 1945-49 period at Union) I found myself helping Reinie and Ursula clean up their kitchen after a party. We combined intellectual conversation with dishwashing in a very Niebuhrian way. Something led Reinie to comment, “You Know, I’ve just begun to realize how really different Paul and I are.” I replied brashly—it was easy to be brash around Reinie—“Your students have known it for a long time.” He laughed in his friendly way. We students knew it because we were getting Tillich’s “system” in his lectures; Niebuhr, reading Tillich’s early publications and entering

conversation with him was slower in getting the impact of the system.”<sup>8</sup>

Well, you may discern that I think the relationship of the two of them deserves a book, more than an after-dinner speech. Let me hurry on to the partners in social thought.

Tillich joined Niebuhr's Fellowship of Socialist Christians and contributed to its work and intellectual life. The group evolved from its socialist convictions into a broader group of about 1200 members called Christian Action. It was Tillich's holding an office in this organization that attracted the F.B.I.'s renewed attention. The F.B.I. had interviewed him as early as 1942, but after Walter Winchell demanded an investigation because of the group's campaign against McCarthyism, it renewed its efforts. Tillich had signed letters against the Congressional Dies Committee, the Senate Internal Affairs Committee, and the House Un-American Activities Committee. The F.B.I. became very serious in pursuing him. Reports were entered by Immigration Service, the War College, Office of Strategic Service (OSS), the Office of Naval Intelligence, and later the CIA; in those days the distinction between foreign surveillance and domestic intelligence was not as sharp as it was prior to 9/11/2001.

Of all the obituaries and memorials written for Tillich, some of them written by you in this room, the only one in the F.B.I. file of some 98 pages is the one in the Daily Worker. Are we to suppose that was all the F.B.I. was reading? One earlier story from the Office of Naval Intelligence, I found amusing:

Paul Tillich is listed in this subject report as President of Self Help for Emigrés from Central Europe, Inc. He has been reported to be acting suspiciously in the vicinity of Bar Harbor, Maine, where he is alleged to frequent bars used by Navy personnel, and appears to be interested in overhearing their conversation. He is supposed to be anti-Nazi, but is said to be a leader of the German-speaking people in the neighborhood of Mt. Desert.<sup>9</sup>

Where, but in America, would you have said “alleged to frequent bars and on other pages describe him as a member of Communist front organizations and as a leader of the German underground?” The file I have reflects, as does the file on Reinhold Niebuhr, J. Edgar Hoover's own direct interest in the subject. It also records a California group sending to J. Edgar Hoover an essay by Tillich on the meaning of the word “God,” as the group criticized Hoover's coupling his professed piety with suppression of dissent or opinion.

Much of their partnership is in the public record with German groups having American support groups. Paul Tillich was the President of Self Help (the F.B.I. report indicates the organization tried to raise funds for a fighter plane for the U.S. Air Force), and Niebuhr chaired a support committee. Niebuhr sponsored a committee supporting Tillich in the Council for a democratic Germany that the F.B.I. report labeled the Tillich Committee. Tillich assumed the chairmanship after Thomas Mann was warned away from participating in the group by the State Department. They served together on the pro-Zionist Christian Council for Palestine, and their political support for Israel was similarly dogged. They both supported Paul Hagan who worked with the German underground. They both were prominent in the Union for Democratic Action, which preceded the Americans for Democratic Action. Niebuhr had more energy pre-stroke for political action than did Tillich who when asked a political question at the Fellowship for Socialist Christians meeting, said, “Why ask me? Reinie is the political genius.” But Reinhold had more political energy than any of us, and to say he was usually the leader is not in itself to diminish Paulus's involvement. Niebuhr led in a field of policy in which Tillich was relatively quiet, that of American civil rights. But in three areas the evidence that I'm aware of says Tillich was more outspoken. The F.B.I. research on the two men shows Tillich protesting more often against government suppression of left-wing political dissent than Niebuhr. At the same time, Niebuhr's “King's Chapel-Kings Court,”<sup>10</sup> essays comparing J. Edgar Hoover to Amaziah, the court priest trying to suppress Amos, went quite a ways and may have stirred deeper passions. Niebuhr said he received a bushel of mail protesting his critique of the White House Chapel and Hoover. I personally received my first death threat for defending the essay in my local newspaper.

Secondly, Tillich's call to resist the use of nuclear weapons goes further than Niebuhr's judgments against any possible moral use of them. Both of the theologians rejected any first use of nuclear weapons and regarded bombing of cities as immoral. It was Tillich who was attacked for saying one could not defend Berlin with nuclear weapons. While defensive war was justified, it was not justified to use weapons that destroyed the reasons for going to war. In the confrontation with the Warsaw Pact, the West or NATO was ultimately stronger and it was better to engage in a temporary retreat than to use nuclear

weapons in Germany. He used the just-war critique more forcefully here than did Niebuhr who saw no way out of deterrence. Tillich would give his name to SANE activities and its board whereas Niebuhr did not. His call for creative resistance to nuclear weapons went further than Niebuhr's moral rejection of their use. I have written elsewhere that I believe their logic should have driven them to a sharper critique of nuclear deterrence than it did. However, the logic of deterrence lasted without an ultimate tragedy until the Soviet Union changed.

Finally, Niebuhr's break with socialism was earlier and sharper than Tillich's was. They and the Fellowship of Socialist Christians had been committed to government ownership or control of the major sources of production. Niebuhr publicly backed away, keeping a socialist vision only as a critique of capitalism for the sake of a more fair, mixed economy. Tillich never went so far, and he rejoined the Socialist Democratic Party in Germany after the war. Socialism had a future in Europe. Stumme's earlier preference for Tillich over Niebuhr was grounded in the conviction that his understanding of Marx was more subtle and nuanced than Niebuhr's, and he was correct.

They both were in Washington, D.C. during the Kennedy inauguration. Niebuhr's health confined him to the Dupont Hotel where they had stayed for the Arnold Wolfer's symposium on foreign policy. You may have seen pictures of Tillich standing just behind the Bible while Kennedy was taking the oath of office from Justice Warren, without recognizing him in old age. It was later said that he moved away from political involvement after Kennedy's assassination, as he had previously said he had given up after the Potsdam Conference and the dissolution of the Council for a Democratic Germany. His denunciation of the Barry Goldwater candidacy in 1964 as a theologian was no less bold than his denunciation of Hitler in the "Ten Theses" in 1933 and its publication in Washington Post made it more public. Let me repeat what he said:

One should hesitate to reject a political candidate in the name of religion. For the political concern is preliminary and temporal, while religion is concerned with the ultimate and eternal meaning of life. Since however, the eternal expresses itself in the temporal, e.g., in political ideas and since such expression can be a distortion, religion sometimes must take a political side. Utterances of the Republican candidate and even more of forces supporting him show traits

of such distortion: a disregard for economic and racial justice, and easy use of the war threat, a production of false accusations and the suppression of free speech through them, the nourishing of hate towards foreign nations and the abuse of religion for all this. Therefore, I feel as a theologian justified in calling for the defeat of the Republican ticket for the presidency.<sup>11</sup>

Incidentally, Niebuhr's journal *Christianity and Crisis* lost its tax exemption for a while after that election for its endorsement of Johnson. He had put his reservation about political endorsement forward in 1952.

Christianity is reluctant to identify its piety with any particular political program for the very reasons that make such an identification so dangerous in communism. As politics deals with the proximate ends of life, and religion with ultimate ones, it is always a source of illusions if the one is simply invested with the sanctity of the other.<sup>12</sup>

Reinie and Paulus both lived their public lives well and critically—I would say prophetically—to the end. Thank you for letting me share my joy in some of their critiques and contributions and for reflecting on their alliance.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, Response to Ronald Stone's survey; the survey in Stone's possession.

<sup>2</sup> John Dillenberger, Response.

<sup>3</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation in Tillich's Theology," in Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds. *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), 226-27.

<sup>4</sup> Harjie Liken, Response.

<sup>5</sup> Kegley and Bretall, eds., 217.

<sup>6</sup> Beverly Harrison, Response.

<sup>7</sup> Owen Thomas, Response.

<sup>8</sup> Roger Shinn, Response.

<sup>9</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, Paul Tillich, File 100-392815 (Obtained under Freedom of Information Act), 14.

<sup>10</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "The King's Chapel and The King's Court," *Christianity and Crisis* xxix (August 4, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> Paul Tillich, "America's Leaders Speak," *The Washington Post* (October 22, 1964).

<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 120.

**SYMBOLS, CHRIST, AND TILlich'S  
LOSS OF NERVE**

DONALD F. DREISBACH

Almost a quarter of a century ago, in a paper presented to this august society, John Clayton said that from the end of the First World War until 1926, Tillich wrote on the theology of culture and nothing on doctrinal issues.<sup>1</sup> After this date, actually after he began lecturing on systematic theology at Marburg, he became a "Church theologian."<sup>2</sup> Not quite so many years ago, Richard Grigg presented a paper, also to this august body, in which he argued that Tillich lost his post-theistic nerve in the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*, when he made humans essentially artifacts of God, artifacts whose destiny was to flow out from God and eventually return to God. I mention John Clayton and Rich Grigg not to return to their arguments and issues, but only to show that I have predecessors in claiming that there are abrupt changes of course in Tillich's thought, although I do like Rich's phrase, "loss of nerve," and have stolen it for my title. The turn that I will talk about is much later than John's and a bit earlier than Rich's: the middle of the second volume of the *Systematic Theology*, that is, with Tillich's Christology.

My primary thesis is this: Tillich leads us to expect one kind of Christology, and then gives us something entirely different. That is, he leads us to expect that the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ is revelatory because it is a symbol, which would make the Christ one symbol among others, on a par with the symbols of other religions, but he gives us something quite different, a unique historical figure who really stands above all other potential carriers of revelation and who brings the New Being, whatever that is. My secondary thesis is that not only does Tillich not make the Christ a symbol, he essentially abandons his doctrine of symbols. Before you assume that I have never read the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*, having become hung up on that difficult first chapter of *The Courage to Be*, let me assure you that I know that Tillich continues to use the word "symbol" in the second half of the second volume and throughout the third volume of his major work. The issue is not, does he still use the word, but does it still mean the same thing as it did in earlier works like *Dynamics of Faith*?

Full disclosure or whatever we want to call it: Much of what I am going to say in this paper I have argued in greater detail in my book, *Symbols and*

*Salvation*.<sup>3</sup> Recycling one's own work may seem just a step above plagiarizing, but it is clear that the book has not fully persuaded everyone, especially Rob James. Rob criticized some things that I said about symbols at a Tillich gathering, in Frankfurt I think, and then suggested that, since the Society was going to have a section on symbols, I might want to try again to make my position clear in public. I am in the twilight of my career and should be contemplating retirement and a useless hobby like macramé, but Rob keeps needling me into more Tillich studies.

Because Tillich talks so much about symbols in much of what he writes before he gets into his Christology, and this includes the first volume and the first half of the second volume of the *Systematic Theology*, a reader inevitably expects that this doctrine of symbols will be the primary principle by which Tillich makes sense of the Christian tradition, and this doctrine has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention.<sup>4</sup> We expect that the function of theology, at least Tillich's theology, is to explain how Christian symbols are correlated to the various areas of existential anguish that Tillich uncovers in his existential phenomenology. Thus, when we come to the Christology, to the question of just why Jesus is the Christ, we expect to hear that Jesus, or more accurately the Biblical picture of Jesus, since that is all we have, is the Christ because he is an exceptionally powerful symbol of Being Itself. Also, Tillich's symbol doctrine seems to cohere with the Christology of the Fourth Gospel, in that a symbol is a concrete entity, in this case Flesh, while at the same time it is a manifestation of the Unconditioned, God. And with his insistence on the symbol's participation in Being Itself, it is not far from the Nicene claim of "one in being with the father."<sup>5</sup>

Further, Tillich offers arguments that really prepare us for this conclusion. He says that while anything can be a symbol, the best manifestation of the power of being is a human being. "The person represents the central qualities, and by implication all qualities, which can point to the mystery of existence" (ST I, 118).<sup>6</sup> Further, a constant temptation for any religious group is to turn their symbols of being, their particular manifestations of the holy, into something holy in and of itself. This is idolatry. Ideally, a symbol "not only expresses the ultimate but also its own lack of ultimacy" (DF 97). But the biblical picture of Jesus has built-in protection against this idolizing, in that Jesus dies on the cross, thus sacrificing all of his own claims to ultimacy. Indeed, in the entire biblical story of the Christ, we

see Jesus rejecting the demonic forces that tempted him to claim ultimacy for his finite nature (ST I, 133). All of this leads us to believe that the Biblical picture is not only a symbol; it is also an exceptionally good symbol. It does not prepare us for the claim that Jesus as a historical being brings the New Being.

Tillich sometimes seems ambivalent about whether the Christ is a symbol or something else. For instance, there is a section of the second volume of the *Systematic Theology* called "The Symbol of the Christ" (ST II, 88 ff), but this section is really not about the Christ as a symbol, but about various symbols used to refer to the Christ. The primary thrust in this volume is Christ the bringer of the New Being, the healer of estrangement. Thus what we end up with is something quite different from anything mentioned in the construction of the doctrine of symbols, a notion of Jesus as a unique historical figure, the bringer of the New Being and the only existing being in whom all estrangement is overcome.

This puts an immediate end to any possibility of a genuine pluralism, a relation to other religions as equal partners, and might even make respectful dialogue difficult, although in some of Tillich's popular books, even well before his trip to Japan, this seemed to be the direction in which he was moving. Yet, if Jesus is the unique bringer of the New Being, then other people either do not have it at all, or do not have as much of it as we do, so inevitably there is a certain amount of condescension in any attempt at dialogue with others.

This abandonment of symbols as the basis of Christology also saddles Tillich with some burdens that he would not have to bear if he remained committed to his doctrine of symbols. The New Being is one such burden. Despite the fuss Tillich makes about it, does it really signify anything? Consider what he says about it.

In some degree all men participate in the healing power of the New Being. Otherwise they would have no being. The self-destructive consequences of estrangement would have destroyed them. But no men are totally healed, not even those who have encountered the healing power as it appears in Jesus as the Christ (ST II, 167).

So everybody has the New Being to some degree; nobody has it completely. The difference between the Christian and the infidel seems only one of degree. Can we find in our experience anything that really matches up to this New Being, something

that we have a little more of than our Jewish, Muslim, or atheist friends? I doubt it. So Jesus the Christ brings what appears to be a fancy ontological term with no clear meaning.

As soon as one claims a unique historical status for Jesus, one is inevitably deep in the fiery brook of history. Tillich claims that Jesus could only have brought the New Being if he himself had overcome estrangement. But Tillich is quite aware that the Gospels are not reliable history and even admits that the bringer of the New Being might not have been named Jesus of Nazareth. However, there had to have been *somebody* who really had an un-estranged life, since if Mark and the other disciples had not had an experience of a human life that embodied New Being, they would have been too much entrapped in their "old being" to produce a picture that had transforming power (ST II, 114).

This leads to two objections.<sup>7</sup> First, is Tillich simply selling short the human imagination? All human beings are aware of the pain of estrangement. Is it such a jump to say that somebody, an Ur-Mark or Ur-Q, wrote a story about a life in which this pain was not present? Now, if the response is that since the experience of estrangement is universal, nobody would believe or even pay any attention to such a story, then it would seem that, except for those few people who experienced the living un-estranged Jesus, nobody would have believed the genuine gospels either, and the Church would never have gotten off the ground.

D. Moody Smith presents the issue in a slightly different way. In response to Tillich's claim that the fact that the biblical picture has transforming power guarantees that it is rooted in a real, historical life, even if that person were not named Jesus, Smith writes:

[I]s it not conceivable that there could be a true portrayal of the reality of the New Being in the form of an imagined picture capable of bringing the New Being into reality, historical reality, in those who allowed themselves to be transformed by it? The fact that transformations of a sort take place by faith in Jesus Christ does not in any way guarantee the historicity of faith's object. Obviously, the non-historical or fictional symbols of other religions have had transforming power, and it is not even certain that the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ would completely lose its transforming power if it could be shown to be unhistorical.<sup>8</sup>

After all this argumentation about the historicity of the biblical picture, let us turn to the second objection, which is the question of whether the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ is really a portrait of someone completely un-estranged. Tillich says:

According to the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ, there are, in spite of all tensions, no traces of estrangement between him and God and consequently between him and himself and between him and his world (in its essential nature) (ST II, 126).

The interpretation of this passage could keep a herd of lawyers employed for a long time. There is no estrangement between Jesus and “his world (in its essential nature).” Does this mean that Jesus is not estranged from the things and people in his world? If it does not, the claim is not very interesting. What does the parenthetical qualification mean? Is Jesus estranged from people and things that somehow do not live up to their essential nature?

If Jesus is not estranged from things and people in his world, there is a problem squaring this claim with the text, unless one deletes a great deal. Consider the fig tree that Jesus curses because it has no fruit, even though it is not fig season (Mk 11:12-15; Mt 21:19). And those poor pigs, all two thousand of them (Mk 5: 11-13; Mt 8:28)! Is it possible to kill things and still not be estranged from them? What about the man who owned the pigs? Did he feel himself to be in loving union with Jesus the Christ? What about Jesus’ not always comfortable relations with his family (Mk 3: 33; Lk 8: 20-21)?<sup>9</sup> When Jesus called the Pharisees whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside but full of filth inside, did Jesus and the Pharisees really feel a warm and loving relation between themselves? Or were fig tree, pigs, and Pharisees not manifesting their essential nature? I am not denying that there is something remarkable and powerful in the biblical picture of Jesus, but to claim that there is *no* estrangement either goes beyond what the text will support or so qualifies the word “estrangement” that it ceases to mean much. Tillich seems to be relying not on the *biblical* picture of Jesus, but on a *Sunday school* picture, a bowdlerized version of the biblical picture with all of the bits that might disturb little kiddies removed.

Let me turn to the issue of symbols. Here is what I take a symbol to be. It must be a concrete element of our experience. It must, therefore, be a *thing*, an existing entity. Why? Because all existing things participate in Being-itself, and it is this participation

that gives the symbolic entity the power to manifest something of the Power of Being-itself.<sup>10</sup>

No person and no thing is worthy in itself to represent our ultimate concern. On the other hand, every person and every thing participates in being itself, that is, in the ground and meaning of being. This is the reason why almost every type of reality has become a medium of revelation somewhere (ST I, 118).

Tillich tells us, in a late statement, that he uses the word “participation” to make sharp the distinction of symbol from sign, and “to express what was rightly intended in the medieval doctrine of *analogia entis*, namely, to show a positive point of identity.”<sup>11</sup> In summary, because symbolic entities participate in the power of being itself, they manifest it to us, and so mediate to us salvation, that is, encouragement and empowerment to confront the disruptive power of non-being. Without participation, there is no warrant for the claim that symbols really manifest ultimate reality, no supporting argument beyond the dogmatic claim that they do. Hence, symbols lose all epistemic clout, and the sign/symbol distinction collapses. Signs can point to a divinity “out there” but cannot manifest it, make it present in our mundane world; symbols can.

This doctrine is, of course, not without its critics, especially since Tillich is sometimes very careless in talking about it, saying at times that words are symbols, rather than the entities to which these words refer.<sup>12</sup> “Participation” is a problem. Some people, whom we might call the tender-minded or the congenial, see no problem with the word. It has been used in Plato and the Platonic tradition, in Aquinas, and is at least implied in German Idealism, so it must have a fairly clear meaning. Others, the tough-minded or the grumpy, find the word so vague that even Tillich’s distinction between sign and symbol is without meaning.<sup>13</sup> Tillich’s attempts at clarification only make matters worse. He gives so many different examples that “to participate in” appears to mean little more than “to have some sort of relation to.”<sup>14</sup> Francis Cornford, arguably the greatest Plato scholar of the mid-twentieth century and one whom we might expect to be congenial, says of Plato’s words “that no intelligible account has yet been given of the relation between Forms and things; the metaphors will not bear serious scrutiny.”<sup>15</sup> I would suggest that while the meaning of the word is not completely clear, we do have enough sense of its significance from the tradition to be able to use it.

Why did Tillich not give us a Christology of the symbol? On this, of course, we can only speculate, since Tillich seems not to have been a person who revealed his innermost fears, aims, and desires in a journal or personal letters. But we can appreciate his situation. In 1957, when volume two of the *Systematic Theology* appeared, he was at the peak of his fame. Two years later, his portrait would appear on the cover of *Time*. Any intelligent person who experiences fame cannot help but be aware of its ephemeral nature, and there are a number of reports of Tillich's insecurity regarding his place in history. He was a man of the boundary; he could write theology for Christians or secular philosophy for infidels. His existential analysis in the mode of Sartre and Heidegger was impressive and, frankly, a heck of a lot easier to understand than theirs were, maybe because it was a more accurate picture of the human situation. But the heyday of existentialism was coming to an end, and American secular philosophy journals were generally ignoring Tillich.<sup>16</sup> It must have appeared clear to Tillich that if he were to be remembered, it would be the church that remembered him. Hence, he became, much more than in 1926, what John Clayton called a "Church" theologian.

So if my speculation about Tillich's motives is anywhere near the truth, the second volume of the *Systematic Theology* is a Christology for Christians.<sup>17</sup> Its intended audience is not bright university students, perplexed about their relation to their religious traditions, as it is with books like *The Courage to Be* or *Dynamics of Faith*, but Christendom. And here is where I think he lost his nerve. He could have given us Christ the symbol, but he did not. Instead, he gave us Christ as a unique historical being, and it is this Christ and only this Christ who brings a special saving power called the New Being.

Why did Tillich do this? Well, was American Christendom in the middle of the fifties ready for a Christ who is only a symbol? Yes, I know Tillich admonishes us never to say "only a symbol," since symbols can do things that literal assertions cannot, but still, to a lot of people this seems a terrible demotion for poor Jesus. Was Tillich himself ready for a real pluralism and all that it entails, especially the relativizing of the Western culture that Tillich knew and loved so much. Once we relativize the Christian faith, the claim that our culture is somehow privileged is hard to defend. Here I am not accusing Tillich of being backward and provincial, or at least not of being inferior to me. More than a generation after Tillich's death, here am I, not at all happy with the

dilution of the Western canon in the syllabus at my university and fighting against it.

Why did Tillich abandon his doctrine of symbols?<sup>18</sup> First, why write a *Systematic Theology*? I think it clear from the structure of the *Systematic Theology* that Tillich wanted to be more in history than a man who wrote very interesting essays in the Christian context. Barth had his *Dogmatik*. In history, Calvin had his *Institutes* and St. Thomas had his *Summas*. Tillich wanted one too, so we got the *Systematic Theology*, although Tillich's real spiritual ancestors, Luther and St. Augustine, never worked out complete systems, and nobody seems to think less highly of them on that account.<sup>19</sup> And I do not think it was just egocentric issues that drove Tillich to the *Systematic Theology*. We talk about Tillich the philosopher or theologian, but he was also a pastor. His ministry was largely to people like me, skeptics who find a literalistic treatment of Christianity unbearable, but who still want to hold on to their—or our—place in the Christian tradition. This ministry required a treatment of all the primary elements of the tradition, so that we skeptics too can stand and recite the Nicene Creed, the whole thing. The doctrine of symbols does an admirable job of helping us come to terms with the first two paragraphs of the creed, but does not do so well on the third.

As I argued earlier, the doctrine of symbols requires a concrete entity, a being, something with some real ontological status. Otherwise, there is no real participation in being—itsself and so no real chance for revelation, so no saving power. But what is real and concrete about the Spirit? Indeed, I am very unclear about just what the Spirit is. Helpful people have told me that it means *Geist* or *pneuma*, as if all will come clear if you say it in German or Greek. It does not! And yes, I have read Hegel and Jaspers. It helps, but not that much.

Actually, I think the third volume of the *Systematic Theology* is pretty much of a mess overall. Symbols get confused with metaphors. Faith seems less a matter of ultimate concern or being grasped by the power of being, and more like believing things. Argument and insight are replaced by dogmatic claims, so they sound almost like magic. For instance, just about every good thing that ever has happened in history is credited to the work of the Spirit. We are surprised by the claim that we will be eternally remembered, a notion for which we are entirely unprepared by any earlier writings. Here Tillich seems to be giving back to the Church what

he had earlier denied, personal immortality (of a sort).

I do not want to end on such a grumpy note. While it is true that much of what I have written about Tillich over the past few years has been negative, my overall evaluation of his thought is quite positive. I think his doctrine of symbols, when he sticks to it, is a great contribution to religious epistemology and offers a much needed alternative to any sort of dogmatism or literalism, and in so doing, he made it possible for people like me to maintain a relationship with the Church. But I do think that, toward the end of his life, he lost his nerve and abandoned both symbols and pluralism.

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<sup>1</sup> It is true that Tillich had produced his sketch of a systematic theology in 1913, but this was not published.

<sup>2</sup> John Clayton, "Questioning, Answering and Tillich's Method of Correlation," *Kairos and Logos*, ed. John J. Carey (Cambridge, MA: The North American Paul Tillich Society, 1978), 145-46. For a somewhat different view of the relation of theology and philosophy of religion in Tillich's thought, see Jean Richard's "My Journey into the Work of Paul Tillich," his banquet address to the 2003 meeting of the NAPTS, published in *The Bulletin of the NAPTS*, XXX, 1 (Winter, 2004), 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Symbols and Salvation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Just looking at monographs, there are, besides my book, William L. Rowe, *Religious Symbols and God: A Philosophical Study of Tillich's Theology* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968); Richard Grigg, *Symbol and Empowerment: Paul Tillich's Post-Theistic System* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985); and in German, Matthias von Kriegstein, *Paul Tillich's methode der Korrelation und Symbolbegriff* (Hildesheim: Verlag Gerstenberg, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> And of course the doctrine is coherent with Lutheran *consubstantiation*.

<sup>6</sup> The following works are cited parenthetically, with page numbers following: *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952) cited as CB; *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957) cited as DF; *Systematic Theology* (3 vols. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951-63) as ST I, ST II, and ST III.

<sup>7</sup> There is a third, although perhaps here not worth pursuing. If estrangement is the universal fate of all that is, and certainly of all humankind, all flesh, if Jesus as the Christ is not estranged, is he a Docetic Christ?

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<sup>8</sup> D Moody Smith, "The Historical Jesus in Paul Tillich's Christology," *The Journal of Religion*, XLVI (January 1966): 138.

<sup>9</sup> This objection should be obvious to anyone who is a graduate of a decent Sunday School, but I must admit that it did not occur to me until Clark Williamson raised it in a paper he presented to the NAPTS a number of years ago.

<sup>10</sup> I have argued elsewhere that a character in a story, e.g., Hamlet, has an ontological status analogous to physical entities. Indeed, Hamlet might well be more real than I am. Hence the biblical *picture* of Jesus of Nazareth may well serve as a symbol, because it does participate in the power of being. See my "Being and Symbol, Symbol and Word," *Sein versus Wort in Paul Tillich's Theologie?*, ed. Gert Hummel and Doris Lax (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 150-60.

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, "Rejoinder," *The Journal of Religion*, XLVI (January 1966): 188.

<sup>12</sup> In my book I attempt to restate the doctrine, making it as strong as possible, and I think without too much effort one really can present this doctrine in a way that is quite persuasive.

<sup>13</sup> William L. Rowe, *Religious Symbols and God*, 119.

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, ST I, 177.

<sup>15</sup> Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 11.

<sup>16</sup> That Tillich became, through a fortunate visit from Perdue to Northwestern of Calvin Schrag, an assistant to Tillich at Harvard, a part of my graduate education in a quite secular philosophy department is an extremely fortunate accident, or, for the pious, clearly the work of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>17</sup> I do not want to hang too much on a precise chronology. "A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Incarnation," an early statement of a Christology pretty much like what we find in ST II, was published in *Church Quarterly Review* in 1949.

<sup>18</sup> For example, in the third volume he calls "the center of history" a *metaphor*, not a symbol (ST III, 364).

<sup>19</sup> Whatever *The City of God* is, it is surely not systematic.

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**PAUL TILlich AND THE WRATH OF GOD**

STEPHEN BUTLER MURRAY

It often has been said of Paul Tillich that he saw great value in communicating the complexities of his *Systematic Theology* to wider audiences through the medium of preaching.<sup>1</sup> As such, it is irresponsible for theologians who study Tillich to ignore his corpus of sermons, as these provide important glimpses into the occasions on which Tillich entered into theological conversation with the congregations who sat listening to him. In turn, Tillich sought to discuss the Christian faith with them, grounded in the historical, contextual situation in which the individual members of the congregation lived. In his 1963 Earl Lectures delivered at the Pacific School of Religion, Tillich calls upon preachers to be “theologians of mediation.”<sup>2</sup> The mediation that Tillich intends here is a call to be honest to the Christian message and to every particular cultural situation. At the same time, preachers must be “theologians of offense,” insisting upon the wholly otherness of the Christian message if the message is to be prophetic, not merely assimilated by society into a form of weak pious ethics. In this way, by the preacher’s taking on the activity of both mediation and offense, preaching may be both relevant *to* the situation and speaking *as* the divine to the situation.<sup>3</sup> When Tillich calls for the “relevance” of the Christian message, he challenges the Christian message to answer the existential questions of human beings today.<sup>4</sup> One of the methods that Tillich suggests for restoring the relevance of preaching is to reclaim the original power of the Christian symbols.<sup>5</sup>

Tillich’s desire to reclaim the original power of Christian symbols, combined with his intense awareness of the contemporary, existential situations in which people live, lend a noteworthy approach to his theological consideration of divine wrath. Tillich preached, “The idea of the Divine wrath has become strange to our time. We have rejected a religion that seemed to make God a furious tyrant, an individual with passions and desires who committed arbitrary acts.”<sup>6</sup> He resisted any notion of God that invested God with human attributes, as one might find in pagan stories about angry gods.<sup>7</sup> Rather than interpreting divine wrath literally, Tillich advocates that it be understood as a metaphorical symbol. He argues that, “The wrath of God is neither a divine affect alongside his love nor a motive for action alongside providence; it is the emotional symbol for the work

of love which rejects and leaves to self-destruction what resists it.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, Tillich maintains that when one experiences the wrath of God, one comes into an awareness of the self-destructive nature of evil, meaning those acts and attitudes in which the finite creature keeps itself separated from the ground of being and resists God’s reuniting love.<sup>9</sup> For Tillich, such an experience is viscerally real, and in the trials and tribulations of the human condition, the symbol “the wrath of God” is unavoidable.

In order to comprehend Tillich’s discussion of the metaphorical symbol of “the wrath of God,” it is important to understand Tillich’s articulation of “separation” and “estrangement” in the human situation. For Tillich, the relationship between human persons and God is “a free, personal reciprocity, subject to no pre-established rule. It is real life with all the unexpected, irrational, intimate qualities of a living relationship.”<sup>10</sup> Ontological questions arise when we are confronted by our encounter with nonbeing.<sup>11</sup> Such an encounter is inevitable and constitutive of what it is to be human. As Tillich states in *The Courage To Be*, “if being is interpreted in terms of life or process or becoming, nonbeing is ontologically as basic as being.”<sup>12</sup> For Tillich, the structure of the human self, having a world to which it belongs and with which it can be in a subject-object dialogue, is preliminary to all other structural concepts. Constituting Tillich’s basic ontological structure are pairs of elements: individuality and universality, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. The conditions of existence not only express the power of being to exist, but differentiate essential and existential being. Finally, the categories of being and knowing are articulated as time, space, causality, and substance.<sup>13</sup>

For Tillich, any doctrine of theological anthropology must deal with humankind as historical beings in historical memory. Without this sense of history, this integration of centered self and world in subjective relationship, there is a danger. Deprived of our subjective elements, the world and the self crumble in the wake of a totally mechanical logic, and we struggle against this loss of subjectivity. This is a struggle against nonbeing, for the first step toward the personal annihilation wrought by nonbeing is to lose one’s meaning, one’s purpose, to be reduced in consideration and then become merely a thing.

When we are confronted by this shocking encounter with nonbeing, we are thrown into anxiety, which Tillich defines as an awareness of our possi-

ble nonbeing through the experience of our finitude.<sup>14</sup> Tillich wants to make sure that we do not confuse the ontological quality of anxiety with the psychological quality of fear. Anxiety is all-pervasive, a part of being, whereas fear is impermanent and affects us through definite objects upon which we can act.<sup>15</sup> Anxiety has no object, indeed is the negation of every object, and so anxiety cannot be acted upon through participation, struggle, or love. There is a certain sense, Tillich says, in which it is best to transform our anxiety into fear, because graspable fear can be met by courage.<sup>16</sup>

One type of anxiety is the anxiety of meaninglessness, which results from emptiness and loss of meaning impinging upon our spiritual self-affirmation. Tillich affirms that we are social creatures, participating creatively in a world of meanings.<sup>17</sup> When nonbeing threatens that world of meanings, we feel irreparably separated from any ultimate concern.<sup>18</sup> Since we relate to the world through meanings and values, the threat to our spiritual being is a threat to our whole being.<sup>19</sup>

There also is the anxiety of condemnation, by which our moral self-affirmation is tried by guilt and condemnation.<sup>20</sup> We try to overcome our guilt through moral action, regardless of the imperfection and ambiguity of that action. Our attempts to do the moral good become demonically objective, turning moral action into a thing ungoverned by our subjectivity and unnuanced by faith. We try to do the good for our own alleviation from anxiety of condemnation, rather than for God or humanity. Thus, even moral action is transformed by anxiety into a deluding concupiscence. The end result of such unchecked anxieties leads to despair, whereby "a being is aware of itself as unable to affirm itself because of the power of nonbeing."

Following the Augsburg Confession, and in the tradition of Augustine and Luther, Tillich provides the three concepts of "unbelief," "*hubris*," and "concupiscence" as the marks of our estrangement, the very state of human existence.<sup>21</sup> The first concept, unbelief, is that act or state in which we, in the totality of our being, turn away from God, moving toward the human center from the divine center. This is evident in the Augustinian interpretation of sin as love turning away from God to the self. That is to say, we actualize ourselves by turning to ourselves and away from God. The second concept, *hubris*, is the self-elevation of human beings into the sphere of the divine. This is evident in Greek tragedy, in which people may make themselves the center of

their own worlds, not acknowledging their own finitude. For Tillich, a demonic structure drives human beings to confuse natural self-affirmation with destructive self-elevation. The third concept, concupiscence, is the unlimited desire to draw the whole of reality into one's self.

These understandings of unbelief, *hubris*, and concupiscence bring us to the crux of the matter in our consideration of Tillich's theological anthropology, namely his portrayal of existential self-destruction and the doctrine of evil. We are able to destroy ourselves in that we can transcend our world and ourselves through our actions and in our language. As such, we can make our world merely into an object that we behold, and we can make ourselves into mere objects upon which we look.<sup>22</sup>

For Tillich, in the broad sense, evil is the negative in everything that includes destruction and estrangement, the totality of our existential predicament of sin and estrangement. The first mark of evil is the loss of one's determining center, the disintegration of the centered self by disunifying, disruptive drives; Tillich calls this "self-loss."<sup>23</sup> When this happens, our understanding of the world crumbles and we lose our power to have a meaningful encounter with the world. We approach the brink of personal disintegration as our centered self loses its integrity. Self and world are threatened, as world regresses into mere environment. As such, we are no longer human beings possessing a world, but the mere objects of "environmental impact."<sup>24</sup>

In the state of estrangement, our ontological polarities are disrupted and begin to separate, undermining their interdependence.<sup>25</sup> Freedom and destiny are distorted into arbitrariness and mechanical necessity. Dynamics and form are bent into a formless urge for self-transcendence and an oppressive legalism. Individualization and participation are distorted into depersonalization and total abstraction.

As we are estranged from the ultimate power of being, we are determined by our own finitude. Estrangement reaches out to distort and transform our understandings of the categories of finitude. Time, deprived of the power of being itself, becomes a "mere transitoriness without actual presence."<sup>26</sup> Space, likewise, is experienced as a "spatial contingency," meaning that we have no definite place of our own. Due to these conflicts, we undergo certain consequences: suffering and loneliness.<sup>27</sup> Meaningless suffering is compounded by the "aloneness" of the person, and the hostility resulting from rejection when this desire is rejected by others. Loneliness is

the defilement of "solitude," that part of our essential finitude that allows us to have communion. In existential estrangement, we are cut off from the dimensions of the ultimate and left intolerably alone, leading us to surrender our lonely self to a larger "collective" rather than participate actively in "communion." The courage to be that Tillich espouses "is essentially always the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself, in interdependence."<sup>28</sup> Such a courage to be is impossible in such an extreme state of existential estrangement, which ravages us with a legacy of doubt and meaninglessness. These structures of evil eventually drive human beings into the state of "despair," the boundary line beyond which we cannot go.<sup>29</sup> It is in despair that we come to the end of our possibilities, leaving us without hope, caught in inescapable conflict.

For Tillich, the experience of despair is reflected in the symbol of the "wrath of God."<sup>30</sup> Arguing against those theologians, especially Albrecht Ritschl, who would reinterpret or abandon divine wrath due to an apparent split between God's love and God's wrath, Tillich develops the idea that this experience of despair justifies the use of the symbol of the "wrath of God" as a way of expressing an element in the relationship between God and human beings. When human beings feel as though God is rejecting them, "we cannot love God. He appears to us as an oppressive power, as He who gives laws according to His pleasure, who judges according to His commandments, who condemns according to His wrath."<sup>31</sup> Indeed, for those in despair, who are aware of their own estrangement from God, it appears as though God presents a threat of ultimate destruction, taking on demonic traits.<sup>32</sup> However, the important realization for the person who becomes reconciled to God is that although one's experience of divine wrath was genuine, it was not the experience of a God different or separate from the God to whom one is reconciled. Rather, the realization of the one who is reconciled is that the wrath of God was the way in which the God of love acted in relation to them. Tillich exhorted that, "we understand that what we have experienced as oppression and judgment and wrath is in reality the working of love, which tries to destroy within us everything which is against love. To love this love is to love God."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the wrath of God is the "inescapable and unavoidable reaction against every distortion of the law of life, and above all against human pride and arrogance," the reestablishment of the proper balance between God and humankind that had been dis-

turbed by the person's attempted elevation against God.<sup>34</sup>

The quality of God's love is that it stands against all that is against love.<sup>35</sup> In showing the person the self-destructive consequences of one's rejection of love, the divine love acts according to its own nature, which means that the person may experience this love as a threat to his or her own being. As such, the person perceives God as the God of wrath, although this is only in the temporal sense, not in ultimate terms. It is only by accepting the forgiveness that is offered by God that one finds the visage of God transformed from one of wrath into the ultimately valid face of the God of love. The very quality of love is that it drives toward reunion of that which is separated.<sup>36</sup>

Tillich also expresses the experience of despair in the form of the symbol of "condemnation," which means removal from the eternal, the experience of separation from one's eternity.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, despair can point beyond the limits of temporality, toward the situation whereby one is bound to the divine life without being united to the divine life through love. Yet, Tillich claims that both for time and for eternity, even in the state of separation, God works creatively in human persons, even if that creative work is experienced as destructive wrath.<sup>38</sup> This realization allows one to have faith in providence, wherein "there is a creative and saving possibility implied in every situation, which cannot be destroyed by any event. Providence means that the daemonic and destructive forces within ourselves and our world can never have an unbreakable grasp upon us, and that the bond which connects us with the fulfilling love can never be disrupted."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, providence and the forgiveness of sins are intrinsically linked together in Tillich's theology.<sup>40</sup> Even in the state of condemnation, the person never is cut off from God as the ground of being. In his articulation of eschatology, Tillich insists that in the present, which witnesses to the permanent transition of the temporal to the eternal, that which is negative is defeated in its claim to be positive.<sup>41</sup> In the face of the eternal, the appearance of evil as positive vanishes, in which the love of God as "burning fire" incinerates anything which pretends to be positive, but is not.<sup>42</sup> Yet, it is important to remember that while love destroys that which is against love, it does not destroy the one who is the bearer of that which is against love, who is a creation of love.<sup>43</sup> The love of God cannot deny itself, and so nothing positive can

be burned, either by the fire of judgment, or by the fire of wrath.

In closing the discussion of Tillich's theology of divine wrath, it is interesting that Tillich did not hesitate to pronounce the judgment and wrath of God when he spoke to the political sphere. In his sermon "Principalities and Powers," Tillich identifies the powers as those "in whose bondage we all are and with us all men in all periods of history, and the whole of creation... Each of us is involved in these conflicts and driven to a greater or lesser degree by these forces. The personal life of each of us is in some way determined by them. No security is guaranteed to anyone."<sup>44</sup> The hope that Tillich provides is that these powers which affect us universally are not mysteriously more enduring than we are, for they too are "creatures," meaning that the powers are limited as are we. The difference is that we are united with the creative ground of being, and as such our essential meaning cannot be destroyed, even if the powers should corrode and attack our lives, so long as we do not allow guilt to separate us from the love of God.<sup>45</sup>

Tillich's politicization of divine wrath was not exclusive to his sermons in the church. During his wartime radio broadcasts into Nazi Germany, Tillich declared to the German peoples that a divine judgment was being enacted upon the human built of a nation that had allowed it to be made guilty.<sup>46</sup> The salvation that Tillich offered to the German people was to separate themselves from a joint liability in the guilt, freeing themselves from National Socialism so that they might take part in the resurrection of Germany following the war. Tillich declared that, "whoever supports the guilty becomes guilty himself and perishes with him. But whoever breaks free from the one who has made him guilty can be saved, even if through the midst of fire. Divine words of wrath are now coming true in the German nation." Tillich's sermonic and polemical use of divine wrath was one that examined the historical situations in which people lived, publicly and privately, individually and collectively, and then addressed that situation according to the fractures and frailties that the situation belied.

<sup>1</sup> Tillich says in the introduction to his first book of sermons, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, that, "Many of my students and friends outside the Seminary have told me of the difficulty they have met in trying to penetrate my theological thought. They believe that through my sermons the practical or, more exactly, the existential

implications of my theology are more clearly manifest. I should like to think that the sermons... help to show that the strictly systematic character of a theology does not need to prevent it from being "practical"—that is to say: applicable to the personal and social problems of our religious life." Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), iii.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, edited by Durwood Foster (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 13. Tillich finds that in relation to the church, there are three types of individuals who the preacher may encounter. The first are the active members, those who are committed to the church but may have private doubts regarding the relevance or importance of the Christian message. The second type are the people on the edge of the church, still religiously concerned, but moving away from the church's center because of a genuine dissatisfaction with the irrelevancy of the church's activities. The third type are the "disappointed lovers of Christianity," those who stand on the outside of the church. Although Tillich says that he tries to listen to all three perspectives as he does his theology, I think he goes beyond that. I believe Tillich, unlike most Christian theologians, seeks to address all three perspectives through his sermons. *Ibid.*, 10-11. The harshest critic of Tillich's sermons comes in the postliberal homiletics of Charles L. Campbell's *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), which James F. Kay critiqued, defending Tillich's apologetics, in *Theology Today*, October 1999, 403-405. A brief summary of Campbell's discussion (as presented by Kay) follows: Campbell attacks Tillich's famous sermon, "You Are Accepted," as representing all that is deplorable in "liberal" preaching, "an apologetic aim, a correlationalist method, and an anthropological content" subordinating Christology to soteriology. Campbell instead calls for a postliberal method of preaching influenced by Hans Frei's hermeneutics, of which he finds Walter Brueggemann to be the current exemplar. Campbell argues that we ought to "preach Jesus," sticking to the "realistic narrative" of Jesus, socializing the listener into the church, understood as a community of character.

<sup>5</sup> Tillich believes that the Christian message as communicated through preaching has become irrelevant, and he proposes six methods by which we may reclaim the relevance of preaching: (1) reclaiming the original power of the Christian symbols; (2) reclaiming the "good news" as the content of preaching; (3) focusing upon the "living

meaning” of the Christian tradition rather than be caught up in “traditionalist” attitudes; (4) balancing high vitality with profound spirituality in the personalities of both ministers and congregants; (5) making the Christian message relevant to various social classes; and (6) rekindling the societal interest and passion in Christianity. Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, 4-21.

<sup>6</sup> This appears in his sermon, “On the Transitoriness of Life.” Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 71.

<sup>7</sup> Leonard F. Wheat, *Paul Tillich’s Dialectical Humanism: Unmasking the God above God* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 59-60. An early critique by Tillich of paganism can be found in one of his dissertations, as he argues that, “pagan religion is altogether subject to the principle of identity, but the identity that prevails here is not identity with the true God, the spiritual God, the One, the Lord of being, but with the potencies in a state of separation, in particular with the first potency that divides and creates contradictions. The mystery of paganism is identity through contradiction, communion through wrath.” Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling’s Philosophical Development*, Victor Nuovo, trans. and intro. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), 119.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volumes 1-3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, 1957, 1963), I: 283-284.

<sup>9</sup> Tillich maintained that, “one can distinguish two main elements in every experience of the holy. One element is the presence of the holy here and now. It consecrates the place and the reality of its appearance. It grasps the mind with terrifying and fascinating power. It breaks into ordinary reality, shakes it and drives it beyond itself in an ecstatic way. It establishes rules according to which it can be approached. The holy must be present and felt as present in order to be experienced at all... At the same time, the holy is the judgment over everything that is. It demands personal and social holiness in the sense of justice and love. Our ultimate concern represents what we essentially are and – therefore – ought to be. It stands as the law of our being, against us and for us. Holiness cannot be experienced without its power to command what we should be.” Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 56.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 30-31.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I: 163-164.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*. Second Edition. Introduction by Peter J. Gomes. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 32.

<sup>13</sup> These “categories” in the Tillichian vocabulary are reformulations of Immanuel Kant’s discussion on the forms of intuition, time and space. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Norman Kemp Smith, trans. (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1929, 1965).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 35. For a more thorough analysis of Tillich’s ideas concerning anxiety, see my article, “Estrangement and Existential Angst in Human Life: An Examination of Paul Tillich and Cornel West,” *The North American Paul Tillich Society Newsletter*. Vol. 27:1, Spring 2001. p. 4-10.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 36.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51, 53.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-55. In his sermon, “On the Transitoriness of Life,” Tillich explains that, “We rebel against our own end, against its definitive, inescapable character.” Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. This is reminiscent of Nietzsche’s understanding of the ethical as the comparative strength of a certain drive among other drives in a given moment. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. R. J. Hollingdale, trans., Michael Tanner, intro. Texts in German Philosophy, Charles Taylor, general editor (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 62.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-66.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-72.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II: 76-77.

<sup>31</sup> Tillich preached this in the sermon, “To Whom Much is Forgiven...” in Paul Tillich, *The New Being*. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955), 10-11.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II: 77-78.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Tillich, *The New Being*, 10-11.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 71.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II: 77-78. The love that Tillich describes is not sentimental, but includes erotic urges, libidinous drives, friendly reciprocity, and altruistic self-giving. See Peter Slater, “The Relevance of Tillich’s Concept of Creative Justice in the New Millen-

nium,” in Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, eds. *Religion in the New Millennium: Theology in the Spirit of Paul Tillich* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001), 45; and the first chapter of Alexander C. Irwin, *Eros Toward the World: Paul Tillich and the Theology of the Erotic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 68-69.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II: 78.

<sup>38</sup> It is important to realize that Tillich does affirm a certain chaotic element in the divine life, claiming that, “Creation and chaos belong to each other, and even the exclusive monotheism of biblical religion confirms this structure of life. It is echoed in the symbolic descriptions of the divine life, of its abysmal depth, of its character as burning fire, of its suffering over and with the creatures, of its destructive wrath. But in the divine life the element of chaos does not endanger its eternal fulfillment, whereas in the life of the creature, under the conditions of estrangement, it leads to the ambiguity of self-creativity and destructiveness. Destructiveness can then be described as the prevalence of the elements of chaos over against the pole of form in the dynamics of life.” *Ibid.*, III: 51. However, Tillich tempers this by stating that, “Love does not do more than justice demands, but love is the ultimate principle of justice. Love reunites; justice preserves what is to be united. It is the form in which and through which love performs its work. Justice in its ultimate meaning is creative justice, and creative justice is the form of reuniting love.” Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*, 71.

<sup>39</sup> Tillich preaches this in “The Meaning of Providence,” which can be found in Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 106-107. Alexander J. McKelway reminds us that this understanding of God’s love and judgment is significant for Tillich’s doctrine of predestination. Alexander J. McKelway, *The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich*. Introduction by Karl Barth. (New York: A Delta Book, 1964), 135.

<sup>40</sup> Tillich writes that, “While the tension between love and power refers basically to creation, the tension between love and justice refers basically to salvation. The analysis of transforming justice as an expression of creative love makes it unnecessary for me to reject the ordinary contrast between proportional justice and super-added love. In this sense, there can be no conflict between justice and love in God. But in another sense there could be, in a sense that is very similar to that in which love and power have been contrasted. Love destroys, as it strange work, what is against love. It does so according to the justice without which it would be chaotic surrender of the

power of being. Love, at the same time, as its own work, saves through forgiveness that which is against love. It does so according to the justifying paradox without which it would be a legal mechanism.” Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*, 113-114.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III: 398-399. Earlier, Tillich makes an important point that judgment includes condemnation and the wrath of God, has eschatological connotations, and thus the question arises whether divine love might have a possible limit. He responds to this question by arguing that, “The threat of ultimate judgment and the symbols of eternal condemnation or eternal death point to such a limit. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between eternal and everlasting. Eternity as a quality of the divine life cannot be attributed to a being which as condemned is separated from the divine life. Where the divine love ends, being ends; condemnation can only mean that the creature is left to the nonbeing it has chosen. The symbol “eternal death” is even more expressive, where interpreted as self-exclusion from eternal life and consequently from being. If, however, one speaks of everlasting or endless condemnation, one affirms a temporal duration that is not temporal. Such a concept is contradictory by nature. An individual with concrete self-consciousness is temporal by nature. Self-consciousness as the possibility of experiencing either happiness or suffering includes temporality. In the unity of the divine life, temporality is united with eternity. If temporality is completely separated from eternity, it is mere nonbeing and is unable to give the form for experience, even the experience of suffering and despair... It is true that finite freedom cannot be forced into unity with God because it is a unity of love. A finite being can be separated from God; it can indefinitely resist reunion; it can be thrown into self-destruction and utter despair; but even this is the work of the divine love, as the inscription which Dante saw written over the entrance of hell so well shows (Canto III). Hell has being only in so far as it stands in the unity of the divine love. It is not the limit of the divine love. The only preliminary limit is the resistance of the finite creature... The final expression of the unity of love and justice in God is the symbol of justification. It points to the unconditional validity of the structures of justice but at the same time to the divine act in which love conquers the immanent consequences of the violation of justice. The ontological unity of love and justice is manifest in final revelation as the justification of the sinner. The divine love in relation to the unjust creature is grace.” *Ibid.*, I: 284-285.

<sup>42</sup> A. T. Mollegen points to the Christological dimension of this theology: “The Crucifixion-Resurrection

event is the breaking through into human consciousness and existence of the New Being in Christ. The divine life maintains community with all human life, and through human life with all existence by taking upon itself the fact and the consequences of existential separation (sin and tragedy). The divine love suffers with, but not instead of, those who receive that love. It suffers for, but not instead of, those who resist it. The divine love, rejected, rejects the rejection and is seen as wrath by the rejector. The wrath of God is therefore the surgical knife of the love of God. The demand of essential being is no longer demand or judgment when it is given as the New Being." A. T. Mollegen, "Christology and Biblical Criticism in Tillich," in Charles W. Kegley, ed. *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, rev. ed. (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982), 277.

<sup>43</sup> While the person is not destroyed by this burning fire of God's love, "the unity of his will is destroyed, he is thrown into a conflict with himself, the name of which is

despair, mythologically speaking, hell. Dante was right when he called even Hell a creation of the divine love. The hell of despair is the strange work that love does within us in order to open us up for its own work, justification of him who is unjust. But even despair does not make us into a mechanism. It is a test of our freedom and personal dignity, even in relation to God. The Cross of Christ is the symbol of the divine love, participating in the destruction into which it throws him who acts against love: This is the meaning of atonement." Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*, 114-115.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Tillich, *The New Being*. 51.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>46</sup> Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver, eds., *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany*. Translated by Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 211.

**THE TILlich OF THE YEARS 1911–1913:  
THE TRINITARIAN PRINCIPLE OF THE 1913  
SYSTEMATISCHE THEOLOGIE**

DORIS LAX

When thinking about this paper, I realized that the main title was far too general and needed some refinement, because the Tillich of the years 1911-1913 was quite a productive young scholar writing on a number, as it seems, of rather different topics. Even leaving aside Tillich's second dissertation, *Mysticism and Guilt consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development of 1912*, we have the following five pieces of work:

1911: *Die christliche Gewissheit und der historische Jesus* (128 theses and paper, in parts elaborating the theses);<sup>1</sup>

1912/13: *Die Grundlage des gegenwärtigen Denkens* (introduction to one of the so-called *Vernunftabende*);<sup>2</sup>

1912/13: *Das Problem der Geschichte*;<sup>3</sup>

1913: *Kirchliche Apologetik* (memorandum reflecting the "Vernunftabende");<sup>4</sup>

1913: *Systematische Theologie*.<sup>5</sup>

Since considering all the five works is impossible here, I decided to try to only work out the structuring principle of the 1913 Systematics, which in my opinion is a real masterpiece of structure and can be regarded as the basis of all of these writings.<sup>6</sup>

True to Tillich's lifelong claim that all his theology was designed to speak to living people in concrete situations and to try to give understandable meaningful answers to their questions, the overall motivation for these early works can be seen in Tillich's attempt of giving responses to particular, individual and the general contemporary situations and questions. All these early works address basic anthropological issues from different angles, such as doubt and the quest for certainty, history and the role of religion and faith, to list just a few topics. Seen from a generalizing point of view, the 1913 Systematics is not just the most comprehensive attempt of dealing with all those topics, but it is the target in which all the other smaller works have their coherence. And as Tillich was always interested in giving answers to concrete people's questions and problems, he wants more and does more than just elaborating a traditional Dogmatics in his 1913 *Systematische Theologie*. The first part of the Systematics extensively deals with basic anthropological issues, and does so in terms of philosophy rather than theology.

In order to get an instrument for understanding the complex structure of Tillich's general anthropology, let us apply what I think is a very helpful scheme and addresses anthropology through the three basic questions: Where do we come from? Who are we? Where do we go to?<sup>7</sup>

The first anthropological question, of course, is: who or what are we? This question, however, only brings out the ambiguities of life as we realize we

are finite—and this means historical—beings. As we cannot dissolve the ambiguities, we face doubt. In order to get at least a somewhat meaningful and satisfying answer to what we are, we are driven beyond the ambiguities and doubt in two directions: to the questions of where we come from and where we go to. The most generalizing answer to “where from?” of course is that humankind and the world as a whole do not exist out of themselves. The third question is most obviously that of the meaning of life, or to what end we are here.

The question of “where from” is the quest for an unambiguous, certain origin which must be the origin in which there are no ambiguities, i.e., which ultimately is beyond our grasp, but we only have a certain “sense” for it; Tillich would say, “intuit” it. Thus the origin is intuitive, cannot be rationally deduced or induced, but so to speak always hovers in the background as that which we simply assume to be there. Tillich’s answer to what this intuited origin more precisely is “truth”—truth as the *a priori* of everything, and yet as something ungraspable, and “irrational” (meaning it withdraws from rational consideration). The second question driving us beyond the ambiguities and doubt of existence is the quest for an aim in which all doubt and ambiguity will be overcome and which allows for an ultimate meaning of life and is the fulfillment we consciously aim at. Tillich’s answer to what this fulfillment and aim is, again, is Truth. Thus both quests for origin and aim lead to Truth. And in both cases, Truth is one and the same, and yet paradoxically not the same. It is the same because if there is truth there can only be one truth—which for Tillich is always a synonym for the absolute. And naturally the identity of truth and the absolute has to be completed by the theological term God (God=the absolute=Truth). Yet the truth of the origin is only intuitive; it is not anything we can reach through thoughtful rational consideration. The truth aimed at, on the other hand, is truth becoming conscious through consciously realizing both the realm of ambiguity as well as that of intuited origin.

Now, all the three questions might seem to be asked one after another, but only rationality, i.e., reflection distinguishes the three, so to speak subsequently, when trying to re-think the whole process. Actually the three questions and the dynamic movements to and fro are one and all take place at the same time—or applying a concept of Tillich’s he also uses to denote his whole system, the three questions and answers of anthropology must be regarded

as organic, and the organism they circumscribe is the human being itself. The fact, says Tillich, that we discern the three questions or realms is “a consequence of the reflecting depiction which must deal with the moments one after another, which in reality fall together” (282). The word “moment” used here is very important for all further considerations. Thus Tillich explains why he chose it: “Moment actually is something dynamic, something qualitative, not one part alongside others, but the whole under a certain stress” (318). We could also use a later expression of Tillich’s to point out what the three anthropological “moments” are: three dimensions of the one unity human being.<sup>8</sup>

Before digging deeper into the structure of the Systematics, let us recollect a few important things: (1) All of Tillich’s five pre-War writings are interconnected by Tillich’s deep interest in the structures of anthropology, and the full range of anthropological dimensions is extensively dealt with in the 1913 Systematics, most obviously in the first part, entitled “Apologetics.” (2) As much as the smaller pieces aim at their inner ‘fulfillment’ in the apologetic part of the *Systematische Theologie*, this uncovering the anthropological structures is Tillich’s road to finding out about and constructing his theology. Thus theology and anthropology become almost synonyms. (3) The three basic questions of anthropology signify dimensions or moments rather than layers or levels, for it is the unity, the one human being that is circumscribed. (4) As the human being is a three-dimensional unity of body, soul, and mind, or closer to Tillich’s considerations, of thinking, feeling (in the broadest sense) and acting, we should keep in mind the structure of “three-in-one” and “one-in-three,” as well as realize that talking about the three basic anthropological dimensions mainly pertains to the moment or aspect of human’s ability of thinking, whereas the aspects of feeling and acting are still always there but stay in the background. (5) The structure of this three-dimensional unity should be kept in mind while approaching further for, as we will see, Tillich uses it as *the* principle of structuring his whole system—from the big parts down to almost every sentence. And (6) what is most important, the three-dimensional unity deliberately rings the idea of divine trinity, since at the end we will discover that for Tillich the deepest and all-embracing principle is nothing but the notion of trinity which gives structure and life to his whole system.

Assuming that the 1913 *Systematische Theologie*

is not available to all of you, let us take a glimpse at how Tillich structured it: The system is made up of 72 paragraphs, divided into three so-called parts: apologetics, dogmatics, and (theological) ethics (cf. 426-429). Theological language and much of what is usually associated with theology only comes to the fore in the middle part, the dogmatics, while the apologetics comprise epistemology and phenomenology in almost exclusive philosophical language. The ethics address the complete range of human existence that, according to Tillich, is structured by the so-called "*Geistesfunktionen*" (functions of spirit), namely religion, morality, and culture. The characteristics of the three-dimensional unity show in the system as well, since philosophical, dogmatic and ethical considerations are aspects of the one theological system, and—more important to point out—the whole system reflects the three-dimensional unity of God, human being, and world. Thus each and every anthropological statement is theological, as well as vice versa.

The apologetic-anthropological part of Tillich's Systematics focuses on thinking as the most obvious characteristics of being human.<sup>9</sup> (Yet, this is not to say that feeling and acting are not there at all or completely subordinate—this would mean to misunderstand the dimensional character, but it is to say that thinking is the most obvious and easiest of the three dimensions to reflect upon.) The underlying structure of anthropology according to Tillich is the principle of thinking, or as he puts it, "the principle of science" (426; heading of apologetics). But true to the dimensional character, the theological aspect must be there, too. Therefore, the dimension of feeling in the broadest sense—or rather that of believing—has to have its place within the principle of science or knowledge. For Tillich, believing is a sort of middle or mediating concept between thinking and feeling, in which both aspects are present, and this "mediating character" is exactly what defines theology—theology being the process of thinking about and reflecting upon issues of faith.

Since thinking and believing ultimately must not contradict each other theology must be situated within the general structures of thinking. And as you can see from the outline (cf. note 9), Tillich makes the general principle of thinking actually lead to the theological principle, in other words: the theological principle is the core and aim of the general principle of thinking.

But before going into detail about this, let us take a look at the other two parts of the system: not much

explanation is needed to see that whenever the theological principle is found and based in the general principle, it unfolds into a "system of religious knowledge" (427; heading of the dogmatic part).<sup>10</sup> The terms "religious" and "knowledge" again mark the character of theology: correlating faith and thought, believing and thinking. Recalling the three-dimensional unity, again the Dogmatics' structure could not be other than Trinitarian. We will, however, discover something peculiar about Tillich's Trinitarian structure and the more so about his notion of divine trinity.

The ethics, finally, are unfolded in accordance with both the theological principle and the general principle of thinking.<sup>11</sup> Here, in the closing part of the system Tillich's organic understanding of what a system has to be finally becomes most obvious: the system does not represent a step by step line, but a sometimes rather confusing complexity of concentric circles infused with one another, emerging from and submerging into one another.

The apologetic part is, as we saw, subdivided into three sections, or as Tillich puts it, "standpoints"—namely "intuition," "reflection," and "the paradox." Regardless of the fact that "the paradox" needs further explanation, the basic anthropological questions quite evidently reflect in the standpoint of intuition and reflection, the latter (reflection) representing the ambiguities and the subject-object split of thought and existence in general, while "intuition" stands for the origin. We might wonder why Tillich does not start with "reflection," for, as this is the overall structure of existence, it is only logical to deal with this aspect first. But Tillich points out that the ambiguities of existence—despite their defining our thinking—cannot be the first and ultimately dominating dimension. If they were, we wouldn't even get that far as to ask where we come from, and the less so seek for any aim overcoming the ambiguities. If everything were just relative, without ever having a notion of "something" absolute, thinking itself would be impossible because it would dissolve itself in its inner contradictions. In the most general and most embracing sense the ultimate unifying idea is that of the Absolute or Truth. Starting out from this intuitive absolute truth for Tillich is absolutely necessary, for his conviction is that if one "does not begin with the absolute, one cannot ever reach it" (314).

But demanding to begin with the Absolute entails a lot of problems for thinking. For the absolute to really be absolute means that it does not allow for

anything outside or alongside itself, i.e., if the absolute is absolute, everything must be somehow included in it—even thinking. And the absolute/truth must be one in order to not fall prey to the subject-object-split thinking comes along with. On the other hand, the absolute must be something that is not altogether alien to thinking, for that “which thinking cannot know, is not/does not exist for thinking....” The presupposition of this all is that “all thinking, even doubt, has the aim of knowing truth and the presupposition that thinking may know truth,” which is the same as the insight that “origin and basis of the knowledge of truth is nothing else but the thought of truth” (278). The expression “thought of truth” signifies that it is thinking that assumes truth to be the absolute. And it can only *assume* truth because if truth were somewhere as an object of knowledge, it would again be nothing but something relative. And at the same time “in absolute truth all the contradictions of ideal and real, abstract and concrete, form and matter are non-existent” (in German: *aufgehoben*), for in the “thought of truth in its absolute form the contradiction even between truth itself and knowledge of truth” is *not* (279). (The German word “*Aufhebung*” in this context is to be understood in the sense of “not yet.”)

Here, finally, we have to face the center of the problem. Since thinking realizes that the presupposition of thinking actually is the contradiction of abstract and concrete, yet at the same time thinking must assume as the deepest principle of itself and as the origin of all, there is something that is a priori to all contradiction, which is unity. Or in Tillich’s words: “The absolute thought of truth is the non-existence (*Aufhebung*) of all contradictions. At the same time this thought is supposed to be the principle of all contradictions contained in thinking” (281). Therefore the conclusion, true to the absoluteness of assumed truth, is: “The absolute thought of truth thus contains in itself a principle of contradicting against itself; it has an absolute contradiction with which it at the same time is in absolute identity. And this contradiction is thinking” (281). Or seen from the point of view of thinking: “In as far as thinking *thinks* truth, it stands in opposition to truth, in as far as it thinks *truth*, it is one with truth. This primordial relation is absolute identity, i.e., the absolute unity of the absolute contradiction” (281).

This principle, says Tillich, cannot be ignored as it is the principle of *thinking*—not that of truth, for in absolute truth there is no contradiction. Yet, at the same time absolute truth must implicitly or latently

include the possibility of contradiction or else it would not be absolute. Here Tillich points out an important issue: “It is of vital importance to see that this principle of thinking is brought forward by thinking, and not by truth. There is no way from truth to thinking truth, but here there is only a cut and a new beginning” (281). Although this statement first seems contradictory because thinking relates to the absolute, it still holds true that neither thinking nor the contradictions and ambiguities of existence can be deduced from the absolute, even though the absolute at the same time has the possibility for contradictions to emerge in it and ultimately embraces all contradiction.

Yet, a third moment, it seems, is missing. But knowing Tillich’s dimensional thinking, the third moment must be present from the very beginning, and it is that dimension or process in which thinking realizes its own structures, i.e., in which the assumed *a priori* presupposition of the absolute becomes conscious. The process of becoming conscious also means that that which becomes conscious is drawn into the contradictions of relativity, and yet—this is the targeting direction—as it is truth, the absolute, which is made relative by thinking, a demand has to be realized, the demand to transcend all the relativities towards a conscious something which “again” is absolute. This third dimension of thinking thus can be called the teleological dimension of aiming at reconciling original, intuited, assumed truth and the relativities, ambiguities and contradictions towards the truly and fully conscious absolute—which, of course, cannot be altogether different from the original absolute or intuited truth, but consciously has the relativities in it. From the perspective of truth, the third moment is that of reuniting truth and relativity in the sense of truth becoming conscious of itself with and through the relativities and contradictions. And since for Tillich, the absolute truth is God, the theological character of all this process is ready at hand.

Summarizing Tillich’s explanation of the “foundation of the theological principle in the general principle of thinking” and the three dimensions of anthropology that already reflect the Trinitarian structure, these three dimensions are: thinking about the origin of thought which is absolute, though intuitive Truth; thinking about thinking itself, which is reflection dissecting everything that is, represented by the subject-object split; and finally thinking, trying to overcome reflection through aiming at the absolute truth becoming conscious. In this third di-

mension religion and therefore theology are located. According to Tillich these three moments, as he calls them, or dimensions are one process that does not at all take place as a step-by-step movement but as an organic process all at once, endlessly revolving. Although theology and its principles are located within the realm of thinking aiming at consciously knowing Truth, even theology does not only underlie the general structures of thinking, and this means the subject-object split, but is the expression of “the paradox,” i.e., human being’s aiming at consciously realizing “the absolute identity of the absolute unity of the absolute contradiction” (281). Tillich’s whole system in the end is the explanation of this very strange and abstract expression, and the notion of Trinity is but the theological term for it.

The process of human thinking, realizing that the ultimate origin is God, and yet at the same time always contradicting this absolute ground in human self-assertion, brings about a tension. This tension seeks a resolution in and by the third movement, which is nothing but the dynamic re-unification of relative and absolute, the human being and God. It is quite obvious that this “drive” towards overcoming is ultimately beyond the abilities of the human being as it is relative. Thus, the third dimension can only be thought of as relativity being brought back to the absolute or God by the absolute or God Himself. The theological dimension is that, for Tillich, God himself is fully involved in this process, even that the process itself is the expression or manifestation of God’s becoming self-conscious. The divine dimensions therefore are: (1) God has the potential of contradicting himself in himself—or else he would not be God, i.e., absolute; (2) God himself actualizes this potential—although there is no necessity to do so, but it is the innermost mystery of God that he actualizes his own potentialities in freedom. (3) In the inner divine life this actualized contradiction, or as Tillich says, this concrete God, reunites with the ground of God in freedom, thus completing God’s fully becoming self-conscious, or God’s becoming God.

These considerations, of course, lead to Tillich’s notion of Trinity. Before taking a closer look at this, we need to point out something else. As the anthropological dimension is not at all identical with the divine dimension, relativity (of which human being is the expression) actually contradicts the absolute; there is an ongoing process of contradictory tensions that is history. The third moment aiming at overcoming the tension without negating or destroying his-

tory is that which Tillich calls “paradox.” It is the infinite movement of the finite in the direction of the paradoxical union or unification of the world, the human being, and God himself. It is paradoxical because, on the one hand, it is finiteness aiming at infinity without having destroyed the relative aspects, and on the other hand, seen from the infinite point of view, the relative plays an absolute role for the absolute in this unification. To quote Tillich: “The human being is human being in becoming the image of God” (336) and “God has the features and traits of Jesus of Nazareth—this is the tremendous religious paradox at the basis of the notion of Trinity” (365).

In the first paragraph of the Dogmatics, Tillich writes at some length about why and in what way the notion of Trinity is the structural principle of the whole Dogmatics:

Since the appropriate organization of the Dogmatics is given by the different moments of the concept of God [which, by the way match with the three moments of thinking] it is necessary to start the dogmatic system with Trinity; but since because of this also each main subdivision of the System is directly related to Trinity, it must also be dealt with at the centre (Christology) and at the end of the system. In each of the three, however, Trinity stands for a different perspective, and exactly this is what makes the system a living organism (330).

Thus the basic Trinitarian thought is deprived of its formalistic emptiness, from which it suffered, and lifted up to the fundamental thought of religion (332).

Regardless of the fact that with this Tillich does not seem to say anything else than what is self-evident when talking about Trinity, we should not overlook one important aspect which, apart from the fact that it is in full accordance with Tillich’s three-dimensional unities, appears as rather unusual for Dogmatics: Tillich demands that Trinity is not only dealt with at the beginning in the sense of immanent Trinity, and not even only a second time addressing the aspects of economic Trinity or Trinity of revelation. But Tillich says it is necessary to deal with Trinity three times, thus suggesting that immanent and economic Trinity are not all there has to be said about Trinity, but that immanent and economic Trinity in themselves demand and imply a third unifying Trinitarian dimension.

But let us go into some detail about the immanent Trinity. The presupposition of talking about trinity and God at all, says Tillich, on the one hand, is that

which resulted from his religious considerations within the intuitive aspect of thinking; this result is that “God is the absolute person-“hood” (in the sense that he represents the idea of person) or “the absolute for religious consciousness” (328f). On the other hand, the contradictions of the relative point of view brought in the contradiction of an abstract and a concrete concept of God or “the contradiction of concrete religion and religion of reason (*Vernunftreligion*)” (329). From this the dogmatic work has to start and show that in the theological dimension “this contradiction has been overcome by the paradox. Theological consideration has to apply the paradox to the concept of God” (329). This means: “God has to be able to become an individual, certain, completely concrete one despite His absoluteness. He has to be a living God...and unite the absolute and the concrete. In himself he has to carry [or: have] the tension of different moments which, however, are one in his liveliness [*Lebendigkeit*]; he must be different and yet one” (329). Thus the expression for immanent Trinity is “the living God,” since saying “God is living” implies that, since “absoluteness is the basis of His being [*Wesen*], He can and has to have his own difference from Himself in Himself” (331). Or: “In God there is a moment of oneness or union and a moment of difference or manifoldness; the oneness, however, is the comprehensive aspect, is the depths of divinity from which the manifoldness is born. This is the life of God, the infinite fullness, to set the *pleroma* of everything existing in Himself and to take it back into the oneness of his nature” (331).

The absolute ground of God’s own being, of course, is associated with the immanent Trinitarian aspect of the Father; and God’s difference from Himself is—as Tillich calls it—“the concrete God,” the Son. Tillich points out that, “in understanding God’s liveliness there are only two moments, the oneness and the difference, not three; speculation never succeeded to discern an independent third moment. The third moment is the unity of the other two, the principle of difference returning to oneness” (332). But still this does not mean we would have to focus binitarian thought and forget the dimension of the Spirit, but quite the opposite! It is the aspect of the Spirit that, according to Tillich, *is* the inner-divine dynamics that works the fulfillment of God’s inner life as the absolute unification of the difference or even contradiction of divine ground and divine manifoldness.

Yet, “at this stage of the considerations,” Tillich

says, “we cannot speak of a ‘developed trinity’; it is the immanent, inner divine Trinity here, which of course is the necessary presupposition of the economic Trinity, the Trinity of revelation. For if it were not possible to really discern three moments in God, he could not ever reveal Himself as the Trinitarian God. Economic Trinity without immanent Trinity is contradiction in terms” (333). Before taking a look at the immanent Trinitarian relations, for it is relations rather than “persons” according to Tillich, we should note that immanent Trinity is not yet a “developed Trinity.” This in fact is the reason why Tillich deals with Trinity three times, instead of addressing the traditional two Trinitarian aspects of immanence and revelation only. Because if the immanent trinity is not developed or unfolded yet, if it is so to speak God’s own inner, unconscious, ground of being God, and the economic Trinitarian aspect stands for God’s unfolding and actualizing all the potential of this inner divine life, then there is something of a difference or a contradictory moment within God and the divine life which God has to consciously re-unite in Himself. This is the case because if God is the absolute, having the concrete within Himself and actualizing it, there must be a Trinitarian movement of reunification—which is consummation. Or, in other words, applying the three Trinitarian aspects: Father and Son are reunified in and through the Spirit; the immanent and economic Trinity have their inner fulfillment in a third Trinity, the Trinity which the Spirit dominates. But as the Spirit is dependent on both, Father and Son, economic Trinity has to unfold first.

Here, at the middle movement of Trinity unfolding, let us quickly consider the picture with the water drops. When a drop has fallen into the water, it virtually at the same moment seems to again



spring from the water and in this movement upwards this one drop divides into three—this is what you see here. And then the three little drops reunite to one on their way back into the water. As this whole process can hardly be fully realized by the eye, because it seems to happen all at once, I think it is an excellent visualization to help us understand Tillich’s complete three-dimensional notion of Trinity. Economic

Trinity is the centre, of course, the moment when the one drop comes out again to divide into three. And yet, we must be sure to realize that the three distinguishable drops actually are only one for they originate from the one drop and reunite to the same drop!

Leaving the drop metaphor aside, the economic Trinitarian movement, of course, covers the biggest part of Tillich's Dogmatics. Although it would be interesting to show how Tillich applies his theological principle to economic Trinity, due to the limited time, let us only take a quick look at the general features which are important in order to consider Tillich's peculiar elaboration of a third Trinitarian moment.

Apart from leaving out the whole range of the world, the contradiction, thinking etc. which all according to Tillich is structured in full accordance with the Trinitarian idea, we need to see: (1) The inner divine life or liveliness which in eternal motion translates into the economic Trinity, thus also involving the whole world in the divine motion. (2) Creation, the summarizing concept that includes the notion of "intuited origin," correlates with the inner-divine relation of Father and Son. To quote Tillich: "In the Son as the moment of difference, manifoldness and singularity the world is created; He bears [*trägt*] the world, through Him and for Him God gives permanence to the world" (334). The difference between the world and the Eternal son is: "The world is the individual as individual, the Son is the difference in the oneness of divine life" (334). As the difference moves in ever more powerfully, the shift of dominance is towards the Son and his correlate, the world of contradiction and sinfulness. (3) In the aspect of revelation and its climax, the incarnation of the Eternal Son becoming an individual human being, the Concrete God, the Son, finally dominates. "God the Son becomes an individual: This is the mysterium of Christology. But this mysterium is not at all more mysterious than that of the life of God of the original Trinity: the mystery of the paradox, which is enigma and solution at once" (349). (4) And still, at the same time, the Spirit is already active, and slowly takes over the emphasis. For it is "through the Spirit that emerges from Father and Son" that "Christ remains human even as the exalted one and leads humankind back to God through the Spirit" (365). (5) It is on behalf of the relation of Son and Spirit that "God the Son does not dispose of the moment of singularity, of being human" (365). (6) And, finally, just as the Father who stands for the divine ground, is and remains active from beginning

to end, it is the Spirit's power that is active in bringing about the unification of divine life and world. "From the moment in which the individual has set itself in contradiction to God, the Spirit, the principle of returning to God has been active as the Spirit of justice in the history of the world, as the Spirit of revelation in the history of revelation, as the Spirit of Jesus in the history of Jesus; as the dominating principle it can only appear when the union of the other two moments is completed, after the exaltation of Christ; only after the world has returned to God in Christ in principle, it actually and factually can return to God" (366).

With this perspective of the Spirit working the return of the world to God through history, thus fully taking over the emphasis, the economic Trinity in principle is complete. And still, it seems that Tillich felt somewhat uneasy about these economic Trinitarian considerations. The reasons, I think, are the following: Tillich's concept of Trinity is extremely dynamic from the very beginning, be it with respect to the dynamics of inner divine life or with respect to how the inner divine life translates into the dynamics of the Trinity of revelation. And despite the sometimes extremely abstract considerations on thinking, the human being and the world in general, it is just as important that the whole range of existence, of course, has to be and is taken in and reflects these dynamics. Therefore, only elaborating the immanent Trinity and its unfolding and sort of revolving in the Trinity of revelation to and in the world and with this suggesting that this is everything, according to Tillich, sort of stops the dynamics. This stopping the dynamics is done when the one relation, which so far has not been taken into view, is forgotten. This final relation is that of Spirit and Father—the concluding motion of the immanent Trinity unfolding in and through economic Trinity. And according to Tillich, it is the decisive relation and motion completing the dynamics, thus fulfilling both immanent Trinity, or rather: divine life, and economic Trinity or God's becoming conscious in, through, and with the world. Although this conclusive, consuming motion is something that takes us to the limits of thinking and imagination, not to speak of it would mean that neither the world could ever in eternity return to God nor God would in eternity come to Himself. In other words: Without speaking of the visionary third aspect of Trinity, immanent and economic Trinity will always somehow contradict each other since they are not identical but have the moment of difference and even contradiction in them. And if economic Trinity

is immanent Trinity unfolding, it demands for its own differentiation to be fully and consciously brought to bear in God's own inner life.

This is why Tillich for God's and the world's sake feels compelled to deal with Trinity a third time—although all he can say is somewhat aphoristic, for all we can say about the eternal consummation of the world and God's being God takes us to the utmost limits of thought, imagination, and language. "Here, of course, all the categories of temporal thinking fail for there is not anything in God which is not in him eternally; and that which temporal thought dissects into beginning and end, is not to be divided in eternity; and still the difference is set in eternity and with it sin and salvation. This is the eternal truth of theology" (376).

The third, eternally dynamic motion of Trinity is "The Eternal Life" (heading of the closing paragraph of Dogmatics). "The eternal life is the eternal community of the individual with each other and with Christ in the union with God. It is the absolute state realized as the Kingdom of God, the eternal unity of manifoldness, realized in freedom and love" (375). Taking into account the dynamics of thinking, Tillich's vision is: "In the Kingdom of consummation the infinite opposition of intuition and reflection which also was at work in the theological principle as the opposition of abstract and concrete, is overcome: for here the abstract has become concrete and the concrete has become abstract" (375). And shifting the stress towards the Trinitarian thought the vision is: "In the kingdom of consummation God is identified [*erkannt*]. The tension between Father and Son is overcome. God has the yes of grace even for the individual as individual if it is in communion with the Son... because the holy love has reached its aim, the Kingdom of God" (375f).

The third dimension of Trinity is in fact the dynamics as such, the dynamics of becoming, of God's inner life and being fulfilling, of God becoming God out of himself, through Himself and the world, for the world and for Himself. And this aspect of eternal becoming is summarized in the notion of "the eternal life of God." To give Tillich the honor of concluding himself this breathtaking vision of the Trinity of eternal life, which at the same time is the fulfillment and summary of the dynamics of immanent and economic Trinity, the closing words are his:

In the eternal life of God the individual is in immediate union with God; yet, when it will be consummate as freedom and spirit it has contradicted the immediate oneness and as a punish-

ment has entered the world of singularity, dissolution and death. Through the act of God who followed into the world of sinfulness it has returned into the union with God. But this union is different from the first unity, it is conscious and free; it has the self-assertion of the individual in it, but at the same time under it; it is community. This is the meaning of the world process, of sin and death and salvation: that unity becomes community, that the life of God becomes the Kingdom of God.... But all this is not present but future; it is the moment of hope in faith, of hope that knows that the consummation is not yet present, not even in theology, that theology must carry the weight of relativity...in itself (376).

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<sup>1</sup> In: *Main Works* 6, 21-38 (theses only), and EGW VI, 31-46 (theses) and 50-61 (paper).

<sup>2</sup> In: EGW X, 75-84.

<sup>3</sup> In: EGW X, 85-100.

<sup>4</sup> In: *Main Works* 6, 39-62.

<sup>5</sup> In: EGW IX, 273-434. References to the 1913 *Systematische Theologie* will be given in brackets in the text; all translations from German are my own.

<sup>6</sup> For a full treatment of four of these writings (excluding the one on "Das Problem der Geschichte") cf. my Munich dissertation: *Rechtfertigung des Denkens. Grundzüge der Genese von Paul Tillichs Denken dargestellt und erläutert an vier frühen Schriften aus den Jahren 1911-1913*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht unipress, 2006 (to be released in March).

<sup>7</sup> This scheme, by the way, is neither Tillich's—although all his considerations perfectly match with it—nor is it my own, but is how my late teacher and friend Gert Hummel taught his students the basics of anthropology.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. e.g. Tillich, "Dimensions, Levels and the Unity of Life," in: *Main Works* 6, 401-416.

<sup>9</sup> Apologetics: Founding the theological principle in the overall scientific principle

(I) The absolute point of view: Intuition:

a) The systematic beginning of thinking;

b) The systematic unfolding of thinking;

c) The consummate system

1) The organisation of the system of sciences

2) Religious philosophy

(II) The relative point of view: Reflection

(III) The theological point of view: The Paradox

a) The abstract moment of the theological principle: Justification

b) The concrete moment of the theological principle:

Jesus Christ

c) The absolute moment of the theological principle

<sup>10</sup> Dogmatics: Unfolding the theological principle in a system of religious knowledge

(I) The offspring of the world from God to complete contradiction (God the Father)

a) God and the world (almightiness and love)

b) God and the sin (holiness and wrath)

c) God and history (justice and grace)

(II) God's entering the world of contradiction (God the Son)

a) Jesus Christ's glory (revelation)

b) Jesus Christ's humility (reconciliation)

c) Jesus Christ's exaltation (rebirth)

(III) The return of the world to God up to consummate unity (God the Spirit)

a) The return of humankind to God (soteriology)

b) The return of nature to God (eschatology)

Eternal life (Trinity)

<sup>11</sup> (Theological) Ethics: Applying the theological principle to the spiritual life of humankind

(I) Applying the theological principle to religious life

a) Objective religious life: the churches

b) Subjective religious life: piety

c) The subjective-objective form of religious life (cult/ dogma)

(II) Applying the theological principle to moral life

a) Elevation of the moral person above the immediate (abstract morality)

b) Return of the moral person into the immediate (concrete morality)

(III) Applying the theological principle to cultural life  
sance of idealism that took place around the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> The basic idea

**GOD AND HISTORY: THE INFLUENCE OF  
SCHELLING'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY ON  
TILlich'S EARLY THEOLOGY OF HISTORY**

CHRISTIAN DANZ

In his 1911 Kassel lecture entitled *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, Tillich first conceived a foundation for Christian certainty.<sup>1</sup> He grounded this certainty in a philosophy of history. As he said in that lecture, "In a system of dogmatics, it is the task of the philosophy of history to develop categories that will provide us with something that research on the historical Jesus cannot provide, namely, certainty concerning the absolute character of Christianity" (EGW VI, 43).<sup>2</sup> In the 128 theses that belong to this 1911 lecture, Tillich pits his philosophical-historical explanation of the absoluteness of Christianity against Ernst Troeltsch's philosophy of history. In Troeltsch's work of 1902, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, he tried to find a basis for currently valid norms in history.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, Tillich works out a philosophy of history that he understands as an implication of the self-relatedness of spirit. Though Tillich does in fact see history as the process of the spirit's coming to an understanding of itself, he loosens the connection between this spiritual and mental development, on the one hand, and the unfolding course of real or empirical history, on the other.<sup>4</sup> The philosophical-historical foundation that Tillich thus gives to his early theology stands in the context of a great renaiss-

of his philosophy of history is that history is to be interpreted as an inner history of self-consciousness. In this idea Tillich harks back to insights found in the philosophy of history of Schelling, to whose philosophy he devoted his two dissertations.<sup>6</sup>

The thesis that I want to explain in what follows is that Tillich, harking back to Schelling, achieves a philosophical-historical overcoming of historicism. It is an overcoming in which history is understood as that development of self-consciousness in which self-consciousness is grasped in its own inner historical nature, its own inner "historicality." This thesis is explained in the three major parts of the present paper. In part one, I set forth the connection of religion, history, and the concept of God, using some examples that Schelling himself gives in his lectures entitled *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*. Then in part two, I turn to the reconstruction of Schelling's philosophy of history, which Tillich has put before us in his two dissertations. Finally, in part three, I make some brief comments about the way Tillich provides a basis for his theology in a philosophy of history, both before and after World War One.

### 1. Schelling's Foundation of the Concept of God

The merit of Schelling is not only that (already in the mid-1790s) he pointed out the problems of the ethical-theological concept of God against the background of Kant's critical philosophy.<sup>7</sup> More impor-

tantly, Schelling also proposed a new foundation for theology as a science. He did this in the so-called Philosophy of Identity. In particular, the connection between the concept of God and the philosophy of history that Schelling made in his *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* in 1802 continued to be a guiding principle for him until the time he worked out his late philosophy in *Philosophie der Mythologie* and *Philosophie der Offenbarung*.<sup>8</sup> It would be tempting to undertake a detailed discussion of the connection Schelling made between history and the concept of God, and of the way he worked it out over time. However, we must limit ourselves to the methodological foundations of Schelling's program. I divide this first part of my paper into three sections. In each section I deal with one aspect of this methodological foundation. I begin with the program of Schelling's Philosophy of Identity. Then in section b, I deal with the methodological procedure that follows from this Philosophy of Identity. And, lastly, in section c, I make some brief references to the way this program was carried out, ending with some extremely limited references to changes that Schelling made in this program in his late philosophy.

(a) Schelling's Philosophy of Identity is concerned with the overcoming of the opposition between the finite and the infinite.<sup>9</sup> Here we encounter Schelling's notion that rupture and antagonism are signs of modern culture. He interprets the antagonism between finite and infinite not only as a result of modern culture, however. He also sees this opposition as the ground structure that lies at the very base of modernity. Further, Schelling detects this structure in something that also has a theological motive behind it, namely, in the claim on the part "of the Ego to be able to maintain itself outside the Absolute" (SW V, 109). In his Philosophy of Identity Schelling wants to overcome this opposition in a methodical, controlled way. The basic idea of his philosophical program is not only the idea of an Absolute that must not exist outside the Ego. In addition to this idea, Schelling defines this Absolute as absolute Reason. Absolute Reason, which is the result of a methodical abstraction, has the character of a "total indifference between the subjective and the objective" (SW IV, 114). Linked with this concept of Reason is an understanding of philosophy as the representation of the particular in the universal.<sup>10</sup>

(b) The second aspect of the Philosophy of Identity is methodological. Here we are concerned with the method of construction that Schelling conceived,

a method that has great importance both for understanding the Philosophy of Identity, and for understanding Schelling's philosophy of religion.<sup>11</sup> In philosophical construction, the question is not that of deriving something from the Absolute. Rather, the question is that of representing the finite and particular in the Absolute.<sup>12</sup> In this connection the Absolute is not the basis of a deduction. Rather, the Absolute is the medium in which the representation is constructed. Just as a mathematician constructs geometrical figures in space, so a philosopher constructs the particular within the Absolute. By means of philosophical construction, the particular is constructed as a relation of representation, as a *Darstellungsverhältnis*. Schelling calls such things "ideas."<sup>13</sup> In his method of construction he negates the particular in its abstract independence, and places it within a universal horizon. In this procedure the Absolute is only indirectly represented in the particular. In the method of construction, the opposition between particular and universal is overcome when the particular is constructed as a representation of the universal. Thus there emerges a connection between the Absolute and the particular. Nevertheless, because the Absolute is represented only indirectly in the particular, the two do not coincide. They remain distinct and different.

(c) On these methodological foundations Schelling carries out the construction of his philosophy of religion in the context of the Philosophy of Identity. I will discuss this now as the third aspect of the Philosophy of Identity. In his philosophy of religion, it is not Schelling's purpose to explain religion. Rather, he wants to determine the essence of religion, especially of Christianity. This he defines as a historical intuition, a historical *Anschauung*, of the universe. Here Schelling is deliberately referring to the way Schleiermacher defines the notion of religion in his 1799 speeches, *Über die Religion*.<sup>14</sup> This way of understanding the concept of God derives from Schelling's definition of Christian-religious consciousness as a consciousness of history. This is something he had already worked out in his *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*. I want now briefly to explain this.

For Schelling, Christian-religious consciousness is characterized as intuition, or as *Anschauung*, just as is the case with mythical consciousness. However, there is this difference: in mythical consciousness, the infinite is formed within the finite, according to Schelling. The mythical consciousness is ori-

ented to “presence.” By contrast, the distinctive sign of the Christian-religious consciousness is that, for it, the finite becomes the representation of the infinite. Thus Christian-religious consciousness has to do with representation: it is a representational consciousness. Such representational consciousness is distinguished by the knowledge that the contents of its awareness are representations of “another,” or of something different. Thus the contents of consciousness are provided with a negation. These contents are negated in their isolated, independent status; and, precisely thereby, they are placed within the horizon of the infinite. However, the contents of representational consciousness are able to bring this horizon of the infinite to expression only in an indirect way, that is, only by means of a negation of what they are as concrete forms. For this reason, it is not only the case that Christianity is a consciousness of history. It is also true that the contents of Christian-religious consciousness are nothing other than an expression of a consciousness that has become self-reflexive. In this manner, Christianity’s concept of God is the synthesizing expression of a rule that underlies every intuition of the Christian-religious consciousness. However, it is only on a certain condition that the concept of God can be the synthesizing expression of the form of intuition proper to Christian-religious consciousness. The concept of God must bring to expression the system of references that link the finite and the infinite. Of course, the finite and the infinite are constitutive for Christian consciousness itself. Only on this basis is the “idea of three-in-oneness” in Christianity something that is “absolutely necessary” (SW V, 294). The idea of Trinity is expression of Christian-religious consciousness, because it represents the procedure of philosophical construction itself.

The connection between the concept of God and history that we see here in the Philosophy of Identity is found also in Schelling’s late philosophy, which he gives us in his *Philosophie der Mythologie* and his *Philosophie der Offenbarung*.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to his early philosophy of religion, Schelling’s late philosophy not only makes use of religious material to a much greater extent. It is also the case that, in the way Schelling grounds his late philosophy in theoretical principles, an essentially different conception is involved. This difference leads the later Schelling to distinguish the concept of God from the concept of the Absolute. But not only that. This different conception also leads him to link the concept of God to the historical development of religion, and to do it

in such a way that the history of religion is understood as the process in which human freedom comes to self-understanding. This historical self-understanding of human freedom—which Schelling connects with the appearance of Christianity in history—corresponds to the concept of the personal God. Schelling understands the personal God as the form of expression in which a consciousness of freedom becomes transparently conscious of itself.<sup>16</sup> In this manner Schelling incorporates reason and the self-understanding of reason into history. For Schelling, the history of religion is the history of self-consciousness in which the self-reflexivity and inner historicity of self-consciousness becomes transparent.<sup>17</sup> In the next part of my paper, part two, I want to show how Tillich takes up this basic thought of Schelling and affirms it over against Troeltsch’s construction of the philosophy of history.

## 2. Tillich’s Reconstruction of Schelling’s Philosophy of History in his Two Dissertations

Tillich’s independent theology already exists in its basic character prior to the First World War. He first puts it forward in a debate with historicism in his effort to provide a basis for the certainty of Christian faith. He does this by linking up what he has to say to the connection that Schelling had already worked out between self-consciousness and history.<sup>18</sup> Systematically basic for Tillich’s early theology is a theory of the spirit that is characteristic of the Philosophy of Identity. This theory is constructed out of motifs that Tillich sets forth in his two dissertations on Schelling, motifs that Tillich identified as foundational for Schelling’s late philosophy. Tillich’s two dissertations, and also his *Systematische Theologie* of 1913,<sup>19</sup> can be rightly understood as commentary on his 128 theses of 1911.

Tillich construes Schelling’s philosophical development as a whole as the result of the critical questions raised by Immanuel Kant.<sup>20</sup> Thus the two basic phases that Tillich distinguishes in Schelling’s development are understood to take place, both of them, within the horizon of the questions that Kant posed. The difference Tillich sees between these two phases is a matter of the changed way in which the philosophy of history is understood. Concerning Schelling’s late philosophy Tillich says, “The knowledge of God is also the knowledge of history and not, as in the earlier Schelling, the knowledge of nature.”<sup>21</sup> Tillich believes that Schelling’s new as-

assessment of history—an assessment that Schelling arrived at in his work of 1809, *Of Human Freedom*<sup>22</sup>—is the consequence of Schelling's new idea of God. What is new in this concept of God is that Schelling no longer conceives the Absolute as an immediate identity, as in his early Philosophy of Identity. Rather, he takes up contradiction and difference into the Philosophy of Identity's concept of the Absolute. "When we describe the Absolute not as thesis, but as synthesis, we thereby take up *contradiction* into the Absolute. In so doing we also take up the irrational into the Absolute. Just why it is the case that the Absolute should posit itself as determined both by unity and by contradiction is something that is absolutely underivable."<sup>23</sup> This new way of defining the idea of identity since his 1809 book *On Human Freedom* would lead Schelling, and Tillich, to make a distinction between the concept of the Absolute and the concept of God. On another front, this new understanding of the notion of identity would also lead Schelling, and Tillich, to a philosophy of history connected with the concept of God. This concept of God is the expression for the way in which self-relatedness of a certain sort has "happened," or come into being, namely, self-relatedness that is transparent in both its historicity and its self-reflexivity. I now want to explain this more closely.

For Tillich the connection to the philosophy of history arises out of the construction of the concept of God that Schelling worked out. Schelling constructs God as the identity into which the irrational contradiction is taken up. The concrete and individual, whose character as "posited" cannot be derived from God, is at once both the necessary and the contradictory representation of the self-relatedness of God.<sup>24</sup> Taken up in this manner into the identity of its own self-relatedness, the concrete and individual is in unity with God. According to Tillich, Schelling's concept of history results from the irrational contradiction of the individual against essential being (against *das Wesen*), and the reaction of essential being (*der Reaktion des Wesen*) against the contradiction of the individual.<sup>25</sup> History thus understood is a history of self-consciousness in which consciousness understands itself in the reflexivity and historicity that is internal to itself. The inner structuring of this history of self-consciousness, as it takes place both in mythology and in revelation, is something that Schelling interprets as a gradual increase in reflection. Whereas the mythological consciousness does not become transparent to itself in

its own historicity, things are otherwise where revelation is concerned. In revelation, self-consciousness understands itself in the inner reflexivity of its self-relatedness. As Tillich expresses this, "In Christianity God becomes, for consciousness, personal, spiritual, and historical. In Christianity God can only be intuited in a historical personality. To be historical, however, means to surrender one's self in one's status as nature in order to find one's self in one's status as spirit. The awareness of this truth was provided in Christ. That is why it is the case that God has become personally human in him."<sup>26</sup> Thus Tillich defines Revelation as the event in which a definite concrete being brings to expression, for itself, the reflexivity that is constitutive of spirit, that is, constitutive of spirit's relation to itself. However, Tillich differs at this point with Schelling's construction. Tillich makes the criticism that it is not necessary for God to become empirically incarnate.<sup>27</sup> The content of the history of religion is the process in which spirit relates to itself, and spirit accomplishes this in concrete acts of self-positing—in acts in which it becomes conscious of its own inner reflexivity and historicity. Religion is the happening, or the coming to pass, of reflexivity in concrete, self-positing acts of spirit. Only for this reason is it the case that history is „in its most inward character the history of religion."<sup>28</sup> History for Tillich is no outwardly unfolding process. Rather, history is the history of self-consciousness in which self-consciousness understands itself in its inner historicity. I turn now to the third and last part of my paper.

### 3. Tillich's Founding of Theology in a Philosophy of History

Tillich attaches his own theology to the philosophy of history we have just discussed, a philosophy of history that, as we have seen, is based on the concept of God. He sets forth this philosophy of history both in his 1911 lecture, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, and in his 1913 draft, *Systematische Theologie*. The theology that the early Tillich conceives in this way is based in a concept of truth that belongs within the frame of the Philosophy of Identity.<sup>29</sup> This concept of truth is intended to give a foundation for Christian certainty. It is also designed, by means of a theory of consciousness, to provide a basis for the absoluteness of Christianity. According to this theory of truth, the spiritual acts of self-positing that we have just discussed *are* truth.

These acts, as Tillich understands them, are the carrying out of the “synthesizing of the manifold in the unity of consciousness.”<sup>30</sup> On this assumption (which is a Philosophy-of-Identity kind of assumption), spirit’s certainty is to be found in spirit’s relation to itself: that is, this certainty is found in the spirit’s relation to itself when the spirit says “Yes” to the idea of truth.<sup>31</sup> Spirit posits the determinate qualities that characterize individual and concrete beings. Tillich understands the individuality and concreteness that are posited in this way to be simultaneously necessary and contradictory; and he believes this necessity and this contradictoriness make up the very nature of historical truth. There can be certainty with respect to the individual only to the extent that the individual is “taken up into the synthesis of consciousness,” as Tillich puts it.<sup>32</sup> In this manner, the individual becomes a representation of the self-relatedness of the spirit.

Starting from this basis of theoretical principles, Tillich conceives a philosophy of history that is not only designed to overcome the criticism that historicism brings to bear against historical elements of religious faith. This philosophy of history is also intended to interpret religion as the knowledge of the necessarily concrete character of historical truth, and to describe religion as the place where history is constituted as history.<sup>33</sup> As Tillich works all of this out, religion is understood as a certain kind of consciousness. Religion is the consciousness for which the inner reflexivity of its own self-relatedness has become transparent. Faith is our consciousness of history becoming reflexive. Tillich has a special name for the contingent self-understanding of consciousness in its historicity. He calls it “paradox,” and he connects paradox in this sense with religion.<sup>34</sup> This means that religious certainty has the character of an antinomy. The antinomy resides in this fact about the spirit: even though the spirit *is* absolute truth on the grounds of its being constituted in a self-reflective manner, the spirit can only understand absolute truth as a determinate truth that is the content of its own awareness.<sup>35</sup> Sheer concreteness and sheer historicity are, as such, moments of absolute certainty. But the necessarily concrete character of truth that Tillich insists upon stands in tension with his definition of the spirit as “a gradually increasing reaction of essential being against ‘contradiction’, against that which contradicts it.”<sup>36</sup>

This way of basing theology in an absolute concept of truth does not remain static and unchanged. During the First World War, Tillich subjects it to a

transformation. The outcome of this transformation is that the concept of meaning becomes the frame within which theology and the philosophy of religion are to be explained.<sup>37</sup> To be sure, Tillich continues to hold firmly to a certain presupposition that belongs to his theory of the spirit. He continues to hold to the conception of a “system.” However, he holds to the idea of system in such a way that the Absolute, which he understands to be absolute *truth*, is shifted into the religious act itself. We recall the antinomy of which we spoke earlier, namely, the antinomy in which essential being and its contradiction oppose one another. This antinomy is now understood as a component part of the self-determining act. Tillich still believes strongly that religious consciousness is the true consciousness of history. Religious actualization, the carrying out of the religious act, is self-consciousness in the process of becoming clear and obvious to itself with regard to its historical character, its historicity. But as a result of the changes Tillich has made in his theory of principles, he gives a new interpretation to the consciousness of truth that he believes is a determinate content of awareness. He no longer understands this determinate consciousness of truth as something against which essential being is constantly asserting itself. Instead, he now believes that concreteness and determinateness are the appropriate form whereby the spirit is able to represent its self-relatedness. In religion, consciousness becomes transparent in the inner reflexivity of its relation to itself. As consciousness becomes transparent in this way, it grasps the determinate character it has given to itself as a content of its own awareness. That is to say, consciousness grasps its own determinate character as an historically changeable form in which the dimension of the Unconditioned expresses itself—and this unconditioned dimension is the self-relatedness of spirit. Thus Tillich’s concept of God encompasses the form in which the spirit expresses itself. His concept of God comprises the form in which the spirit has become transparent in the inner reflexivity of its relation to itself. And his concept of God comprises also the form in which the spirit has become transparent in the inner reflexivity of its historically determinate character.

In his theology after the First World War, Tillich thus connects the two things, the philosophy of history and the concept of God, and transfers both of them into the sphere in which religion actualizes itself. Schelling had already worked out a connection between the concept of God and the philosophy of

history. Tillich takes this connection and its associated ideas and transforms them into an ethical-religious philosophy of history. This takes aim at normativity of their own historical standpoint.

<sup>1</sup> P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, in: ders., *Briefwechsel und Streitschriften. Theologische, philosophische und politische Stellungnahmen und Gespräche* (= EGW VI), Frankfurt/Main 1983, S. 31-50. Zur Textgeschichte siehe ebd., S. 28-31. Heranzuziehen ist auch das Fragment von Tillichs Vortrag, a.a.O., S. 50-61, sowie die Diskussion mit Friedrich Büchsel, a.a.O., S. 62-74. Zu den Datierungsfragen des Vortrags von 1911 siehe E. Sturm, *Corrigenda zur Edition von Tillichs Vortrag „Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus“*, in: P. Tillich, *Berliner Vorlesungen I (1919-1920)* (= EGW XII), Berlin/New York 2001, S. 665-667. Zu Tillichs 128 These von 1911 siehe F. Wittekind, *„Sinndeutung der Geschichte“*. Zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung von Tillichs Geschichtsphilosophie, in: C. Danz (Hrsg.), *Theologie als Religionsphilosophie. Studien zu den problemgeschichtlichen und systematischen Voraussetzungen der Theologie Paul Tillichs*, Wien 2004, S. 135-172. I thank my wife Uta-Marina Danz and Robison B. James for help in translation of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Robison B. James. Hereafter, when a German source is cited in the footnotes, but the passage quoted from that source is given in English in the text, the English is James's translation.

<sup>3</sup> Siehe hierzu E. Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902/1912)*, mit den Thesen von 1901 und den handschriftlichen Zusätzen (= KGA Bd. 5), Berlin/New York 1998. Vgl. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 42 (Thesen 95-96).

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 42 (These 100). 46 (These 128).

<sup>5</sup> Siehe hierzu F.W. Graf/A. Christophersen, *Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance. Paul Tillich und sein philosophischer Lehrer Fritz Medicus*, in: *ZNThG 11* (2004), S. 52-78. Auch Troeltsch rezipiert um die Jahrhundertwende neuidealistisch inspirierte Autoren im Interesse einer konstruktiven Eindämmung des Historismus. Siehe nur E. Troeltsch, *Rezensionen und Kritiken (1901-1914)* (= KGA Bd. 4), Berlin/New York 2004, S. 174-179. 259-269. 446-450. Zum diesem geistesgeschichtlichen Kontext siehe F.W. Graf, *Einleitung*, in: E. Troeltsch, *Rezensionen und Kritiken*, S. 57-64.

<sup>6</sup> P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien*, in: ders., *Frühe Werke* (= Ergänzungs-

und Nachlaßbände zu den Gesammelten Werken IX), Berlin/New York 1997, S. 156-272; ders., *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*, in: ders., *Frühe Hauptwerke* (= Gesammelte Werke Bd I), Stuttgart <sup>2</sup>1959, S. 13-108. Aus dem Nachlaß Tillichs wurde inzwischen publiziert: *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling [1910]*, in: ders., *Religion, Kultur, Gesellschaft. Unveröffentlichte Texte aus der deutschen Zeit (1908-1933). Erster Teil* (= Ergänzungs- und Nachlaßbände zu den Gesammelten Werken Bd. X), Berlin/New York 1999, S. 9-54.

<sup>7</sup> In den 1795 veröffentlichten *Philosophischen Briefen über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus* kritisiert er die „Idee eines unter moralischen Gesetzen gedachten Gottes“ (SW I, 286) mit dem Argument, daß der moralphilosophische Gottesbegriff aus dem Grund nicht in der Lage sei, die ihm zugemessene Begründungslast zu tragen, weil er bereits die Idee Gottes voraussetzt. Schellings Werke werden im Folgenden zitiert nach der von K.F.A. Schelling veranstalteten Gesamtausgabe in 14 (XIV) Bänden, Stuttgart/Augsburg 1856-1861.

<sup>8</sup> Siehe hierzu auch Schellings Selbstdeutung in der Vorlesung über Philosophie der Offenbarung von 1831, F.W.J. Schelling, *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*, hrsg. v. W.E. Ehrhardt, Hamburg 1992, S. 17 (zit. UPhO).

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. SW V, 272.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. SW IV, 115.

<sup>11</sup> Sein Verständnis der philosophischen Konstruktion sowie die Differenz zum Kantischen Konstruktionsbegriff hat Schelling am ausführlichsten in seinem *Journal-Aufsatz Ueber die Konstruktion in der Philosophie*, SW V, 125-151, erläutert. Vgl. auch *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie*, SW IV, 407-411. Zu Schellings Verständnis der philosophischen Konstruktion siehe P. Ziche, *Die ‚eine Wissenschaft der Philosophie‘ und die ‚verschiedenen philosophischen Wissenschaften‘. Wissenschaftssystematik und die Darstellung des Absoluten in Ueber das Verhältnis der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie überhaupt*, in: K. Vieweg (Hrsg.), *Gegen das ‚unphilosophische Unwesen‘. Das Kritische Journal der Philosophie von Schelling und Hegel*, Würzburg 2002, S. 211-222, bes. S. 217-220; T. v. Zantwijk, *Ist Anthropologie als Wissenschaft möglich? Der ‚Mensch‘ in Schmidts ‚enzyklopädischer Topik‘ und in Schellings ‚philosophischer Konstruktion der Wissenschaften‘* in: J. Jantzen/P.L. Österreich (Hrsg.), *Schellings philosophische Anthropologie*, Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt 2002, S. 110-154, bes. S. 134-149.

<sup>12</sup> Schelling hat sich wiederholt gegen das Mißverständnis ausgesprochen, als handle es sich bei der Ident-

titätsphilosophie um ein Deduktionsprogramm. Vgl. SW IV, 396. In seiner Schrift *Philosophie und Religion* von 1804 spricht Schelling, und zwar durchaus in Übereinstimmung mit dem identitätsphilosophischen Programm, davon, daß es keinen Übergang vom Absoluten zum Endlichen geben kann, sondern nur einen Abfall. Vgl. SW VI, 38. Siehe hierzu v. Vf., Vernunft und Religion. Überlegungen zu Schellings Christentumsdeutung in seinen Journal-Aufsätzen, in: K. Vieweg (Hrsg.), *Gegen das „unphilosophische Unwesen“*, S. 197-209.

<sup>13</sup> Vgl. SW V, 135.

<sup>14</sup> Vgl. SW V, 287: „Die absolute Beziehung ist, daß in dem Christentum das Universum überhaupt als *Geschichte*, als moralisches Reich, angeschaut wird, und daß diese allgemeine Anschauung den Grundcharakter desselben ausmacht.“ Siehe hierzu bereits O. Ritschl, *Studien zur Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert*. In: ZThK 5 (1895), S. 486-529.

<sup>15</sup> Wie in den *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* von 1802, so sieht Schelling auch in der erstmals 1831 in München gehaltenen Vorlesung über *Philosophie der Offenbarung* das „Wesen des Christentums“ darin, „im Prinzip und in der Entwicklung eine geschichtliche Anschauung des Universums zu sein“ (UPhO, 5).

<sup>16</sup> Ausführlich hierzu v. Vf., *Die philosophische Christologie Schellings*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1996; ders., *Gott und die menschliche Freiheit. Studien zum Gottesbegriff in der Neuzeit*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2005, S. 28-65.

<sup>17</sup> So bereits programmatisch im *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*. Siehe hierzu v. Vf., *Geschichte als fortschreitende Offenbarung Gottes. Überlegungen zu Schellings Geschichtsphilosophie*, in: *System als Wirklichkeit. 200 Jahre Schellings „System des transzendentalen Idealismus“*, hrsg. v. C. Danz/C. Dierksmeier/C. Seysen, Würzburg 2001, S. 69-82.

<sup>18</sup> Die Schelling-Rezeption Tillichs ist in der Forschung oft untersucht worden. Aus der Fülle der Literatur sei hier nur verwiesen auf D.J. O’Hanlon, *The Influence of Schelling on the Thought of Paul Tillich*, Rom 1957; G.F. Sommer, *The Significance of the late Philosophy of Schelling for the Formation and Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Tillich*, Duke University 1960; R. Mokrosch, *Theologische Freiheitsphilosophie. Metaphysik, Freiheit und Ethik in der philosophischen Entwicklung Schellings und in den Anfängen Tillichs*, Frankfurt/Main 1976; P. Steinacker, *Die Bedeutung der Philosophie Schellings für die Theologie Paul Tillichs*, in: H. Fischer (Hrsg.), *Paul Tillich. Studien zu einer Theologie der Moderne*, Frankfurt/Main 1989, S. 37-61; Soon-Ja Goo, *Die*

*Die Gotteslehre in der Freiheitsschrift Friedrich W.J. Schellings und ihre Rezeption in der Gotteslehre Paul Tillichs*, Diss. Heidelberg 1996; C. Danz, *Religion als Freiheitsbewußtsein. Eine Studie zur Theologie als Theorie der Konstitutionsbedingungen individueller Subjektivität bei Paul Tillich*, Berlin/New York 2000, S. 124-152. 314-328. Während Tillichs Beschäftigung mit Schelling in der Forschung ausgiebig traktiert wurde, ist bislang der durch Tillichs Hallenser Lehrer Fritz Medicus vermittelte Fichte-Hintergrund und Einfluß auf die Genese seiner frühen Theologie kaum untersucht worden. Zu Tillichs Verhältnis zu Medicus siehe F.W. Graf/A. Christophersen, *Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance*, S. 52-78.

<sup>19</sup> P. Tillich, *Systematische Theologie* von 1913, in: ders., *Frühe Werke* (= EGW IX), Berlin/New York 1997, S. 278-434. Zur Textgeschichte siehe ebd., S. 273-277. Siehe hierzu v. Vf., *Gott und die menschliche Freiheit*, S. 102-128.

<sup>20</sup> Schellings Philosophie sei die ‚zweite Tochter der kritischen Philosophie‘, und sie hat ihre Mutter nie verleugnet. Die Fragestellung bleibt von Anfang bis zu Ende kritisch: *Wie muß das Objekt beschaffen sein, damit es Gegenstand des Wissens sein kann?*“ (P. Tillich, *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling*, S. 12)

<sup>21</sup> P. Tillich, *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling*, S. 20.

<sup>22</sup> F.W.J. Schelling, *Of Human Freedom*, transl. James Guttman, Chicago, Open Court Publishing Company, 1936.

<sup>23</sup> P. Tillich, *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein*, S. 78: Schelling nimmt damit die Antinomie der Kantischen Philosophie in seinen Gottesgedanken auf. Zu Tillichs Deutung der Kantischen Philosophie und ihrer Antinomie siehe P. Tillich, *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein*, S. 24-34.

<sup>24</sup> P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*, S. 175: „Nur wenn Gott als Setzender und Gott als Gesetzter reell unterscheidbar sind, wird die Aseität zu einer aktuellen, lebendigen, wird Gott Geist und Persönlichkeit. Dies ist aber nur möglich, wenn die Unterscheidung selbst von Gott gesetzt ist, wenn die Natur in Gott sein Wille ist, insofern er in Widerspruch tritt, damit ein lebender Prozeß der Selbstsetzung sei: ohne Selbstentgegensetzung keine lebendige Selbstsetzung und ohne lebendige Selbstsetzung keine vollkommene Freiheit und ohne vollkommene Freiheit keine geistige Persönlichkeit Gottes.“

<sup>25</sup> Vgl. P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*, S. 174.

<sup>26</sup> P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*, S. 271.

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*, S. 272: „Die äußere Geschichte kann hier nur die Bedeutung haben, der inneren die Anschauung zu geben. [...] Ohne das äußere Faktum hätte die Offenbarung nicht geschehen können; aber Inhalt der Offenbarung ist nicht das äußere Faktum, sondern das übergeschichtliche.“

<sup>28</sup> P. Tillich, *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*, S. 100. Tillich nimmt diesen Zusammenhang zwischen dem Bezug des Geistes auf sich und der notwendigen Konkretheit, an der sich das Selbstverhältnis in seiner Geschichtlichkeit erfaßt, in dem Begriff des Übergeschichtlichen auf. „Die übergeschichtliche Geschichte ist trinitarische Geschichte“ (P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*, S. 265). Der Begriff des ‚Übergeschichtlichen‘ bezieht sich auf das Selbstverhältnis des Geistes, während die trinitarische Geschichte für die Geschichte der Selbsterfassung des Selbstverhältnisses des Geistes an seinen konkreten Setzungen in seiner Geschichtlichkeit steht. Tillich grenzt dieses Verständnis des Begriffs des Übergeschichtlichen ab von Martin Käblers Begriff des Übergeschichtlichen „als ‚lebendigen Zusammenschluß des Bleibend-Allgemeingiltigen und des Geschichtlichen in einem Wirksam-Gegenwärtigen““ (ebd. Anm. 427). Kähler, so Tillichs Kritik, formuliere lediglich das Problem der Verbindung von Allgemeinem und Konkretem, während Schelling dieses Problem dadurch löse, daß er die Offenbarung als das Wissen um die notwendige Konkretheit und Geschichtlichkeit der Wahrheit versteht. Zu Käblers Begriff des Übergeschichtlichen und seines Einflusses auf Tillich siehe auch G. Wenz, *Die reformatorische Perspektive: Der Einfluß Martin Käblers auf Tillich*, in: H. Fischer (Hrsg.), *Paul Tillich. Studien zu einer Theologie der Moderne*, Frankfurt/Main 1989, S. 62-89, bes. 80f.

<sup>29</sup> Die „Identität des Selbstbewußtseins“ ist „Prinzip der Gewißheit“ (P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 43) und „Gewißheit über das Einzelne“ gibt es nur, „insofern es in Identität mit dem Wesen steht“ (ebd., S. 41). Siehe hierzu F. Wittekind, ‚Sinndeutung der Geschichte‘, S. 135-172.

<sup>30</sup> P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. auch P. Tillich, *Systematische Theologie von 1913*, S. 278ff. Siehe hierzu v. Vf., *Theologie als normative Religionsphilosophie. Voraussetzungen und Implikationen des Theologiebegriffs Paul Tillichs*, in: C. Danz (Hrsg.), *Theologie als Religionsphilosophie. Studien zu*

den problemgeschichtlichen und systematischen Voraussetzungen der Theologie Paul Tillichs, Wien 2004, S. 73-106, bes. S. 74-80.

<sup>32</sup> P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 41.

<sup>33</sup> Vgl. P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 42: „Gewißheit ergibt allein die historische Kategorienbildung, die Lokalisierung ist abhängig von der Unsicherheit der historischen Forschung. Historische Kategorien können ihre Wahrheit behalten, auch wenn ihre ursprüngliche Lokalisierung sich als falsch erweist.“

<sup>34</sup> P. Tillich, *Systematische Theologie von 1913*, S. 315: „Die Sphäre des Paradox ist die Religion; denn die Religion ist die Rückkehr der Freiheit zur Wahrheit, des Relativen zum Absoluten ohne Aufhebung der Freiheit und Relativität.“

<sup>35</sup> P. Tillich, *Systematische Theologie von 1913*, S. 281: „*Der absolute Wahrheitsgedanke enthält also in sich ein Prinzip des Widerspruchs gegen sich; er hat einen absoluten Gegensatz, mit dem er zugleich in absoluter Identität steht.*“

<sup>36</sup> P. Tillich, *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*, S. 41. So auch ders., *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*, S. 100.

<sup>37</sup> Siehe hierzu v. Vf., *Theologie als normative Religionsphilosophie. Voraussetzungen und Implikationen des Theologiebegriffs Paul Tillichs*, S. 73-106; F. Wittekind, *Sinndeutung der Geschichte*, S. 135-172; U. Barth, *Die sinntheoretischen Grundlagen des Religionsbegriffs. Problemgeschichtliche Hintergründe zum frühen Tillich*, in: ders., *Religion in der Moderne*, Tübingen 2003, S. 89-123.

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The list of officers of the  
North American Paul Tillich Society  
will appear in the Spring issue  
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