



# BULLETIN

*The North American Paul Tillich Society*

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**MUTIE FARRIS**  
**FEBRUARY 17, 1926–MARCH 26,**  
**2016**

TED FARRIS

My mother was born in 1926 in Dresden two years after Paul and Hannah Tillich’s 1924 marriage. The family moved to Frankfurt in 1929 when Tillich accepted a professorship of philosophy at Frankfurt University. Her childhood, like those of so many European immigrants, was interrupted by the need to leave Germany upon the rise of Hitler and her father. This followed Tillich’s dismissal from Frankfurt University. In April 1933, the family arrived in New York by ship in November 1933 by the invitation of Union Theological Seminary, a little over half a year after Hitler took power. She arrived in New York as a scared, little blonde girl of seven.

Like Hannah and Paul, Mutie spoke no English and struggled in her first years at the Horace Mann School just across 121<sup>st</sup> Street from Union Theological Seminary. After Horace Mann, Mutie was sent to boarding school at the Masters School (known as Dobbs) in Dobbs Ferry and upon graduation attended Barnard College. After graduating from Barnard, she fell in love with and married my father in the early 1950s. She had her first child, me, in 1953, and my sister, Madeline, in 1956. Mutie spent many years studying for her Ph.D. in comparative literature under Professor Maurice Valencey at Columbia University. Dr. Valencey was later hired by The Juilliard School to revamp the academic program. Juilliard was just across the street from Mutie’s apartment on 122<sup>nd</sup> Street and Broadway. That building now houses the Manhattan School of Music. Mutie loved the environment of Juilliard and taught comparative literature to several generations of Juilliard students, including, among others, Robin Williams, Wynton Marsalis, and Elizabeth Montgomery. She retired in the 1980s and after that time continued to live at 540 West 122<sup>nd</sup> Street, where she had a view from her living and dining

rooms of Union Theological Seminary where she had originally lived when she came to New York as a child.

Mutie lived a relatively quiet life, somewhat in the shadow of Hannah and Paul. She kept in close touch with Hannah and they spoke every morning by phone. After Hannah’s death in 1988, she strove to continue to be generous with her time to Tillich scholars and writers and to encourage and grant permission of Tillich materials for publication in a generous way with a desire to spread the influence of Tillich’s writings. She was always pleased with the work of the NAPTS and deeply grateful for the continuing scholarly and public interest in Tillich.

**MUTIE FARRIS**  
**FEBRUARY 17, 1926–MARCH 26,**  
**2016**

RENE TILLICH

Mutie Farris was my older sister, nine years older most of the time but ten years older from the time of her birthday in February until I caught up with her on my birthday in June. I loved her very much and announced I planned to marry her. I was four years old at the time of that announcement.

She and I provided each other with safe companionship and the opportunity to be children in a household saturated with great thought, and also anxiety about the immigration and the Nazis.

Since she was older and so much wiser, I looked up to her and felt safe around her. We did not fight as so many siblings do. Our parents explained this as caused by the large age difference, nine or ten years, between us.

We grew up and life happened; college, graduate school, marriage, career, children. One of her children, Ted Farris, my nephew, her son, shared her love of literature. I remember being invited to dinner and Ted and Mutie passionately discussing the latest important novel on the New York Best Seller list. Her husband and Ted’s father, Ted Sr.,

would participate with gentle humor and less intensity.

I moved to live in Hawaii and so we saw less of each other. We remained in touch with visits and during the more recent years with weekly phone calls. During these phone calls, we explored our past together. We discovered that we had experienced more feelings of sibling rivalry than our parents had given us credit for. We explored Mutie's thought processes, logical and abstract, like her father, Paul. Little brother thought more emotionally like his mother, Hannah. We remembered; we argued; we came to resolutions.

Now she's gone. I miss her. Idly I wonder, when will I join her perhaps in nine or maybe ten years.

**REMEMBERING DR. ERDMUTHE  
(MUTIE) TILLICH FARRIS**

MARY ANN STENGER

My contacts with Mutie Tillich Farris were sporadic—seeing her with her mother at a NAPTS meeting, connecting briefly at several of Gert Hummel's Tillich Symposia in Frankfurt, Germany, seeing her and her children at the Tillich Conference in New Harmony, Indiana in 1999—until I became involved with the Tillich Collected Works Project in 2004. While that project required addressing Mutie's role as literary executor for her father's works, our many meetings and telephone conversations included much more than professional issues of "rights." Even after I passed on the project, whenever my husband and I went to New York City, we tried to set up lunch and drinks with Mutie at Le Monde, close to her home and to Union Seminary. Our last visit with her was in December 2015 at the nursing home where she went after breaking her foot. She thought we should celebrate our being together with a drink, but we weren't able to get permission. Mutie and I shared a love of chocolate, often sharing 'sinful' desserts. So this time I took chocolate as a treat for her, even if we could not share a drink. We had a good talk, with her sharing a few memories, and as always, showing her wit and sense of humor.

One of the memories shared during that last visit was about how hurt her father was in his early days at Union, when the students would

laugh at his accent, a mispronunciation, or a wrong choice of an English word. She said he was very sensitive to student and audience response although he apparently did not let on to them.

Another story, from a previous visit, was about Theodor Adorno who used to come to visit when she and René were young. She said that she and her brother would run to greet him with "Teddy, Teddy," in anticipation of the candy he would bring for them (a different picture than most of us have of Adorno from reading his work). She especially enjoyed the German visitors in those early years, perhaps because they connected her to her previous home.

As many of you remember, Mutie attended many NAPTS and AAR meetings in her later years (although not for the last few). She enjoyed hearing the many broad connections that scholars made to Paulus's writings, especially when they made connections to issues that he did not see or address fully but where his ideas could be applied fruitfully. She held a deep pride in her father's work and wanted it widely disseminated. She thought his ideas had much to say to current political and religious issues, and she wanted more people to know his writings. She was touched by the many popular references to his work, such as Hillary Clinton's mentioning that she was influenced by him and turned to one of his sermons when she learned of Bill's unfaithfulness in the White House. She applauded Tillich scholarship but she hoped for a broader recognition of his thought by the general public.

Mutie, we were honored by your presence in our meetings and in our personal contacts, and we will miss you.

**ON THE LATE DEPARTED  
MUTIE TILLICH FARRIS**

TOM F. DRIVER

[*Editor's Note:* Tom Faw Driver is The Paul J. Tillich Professor of Theology and Culture Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary]

Although I was never truly a close friend of Mutie Tillich, she was what I like to call a close acquaintance. She was certainly a close neighbor, living as she did for ever so many years across the street from Union Theological Seminary in New

York, where I lived, and two blocks from where I moved in retirement.

Mutie and I were born within a year of each other. More than that, we both held doctorates from the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where we had both concentrated on the study of theater and drama. I managed to blend that with teaching theology at Union, while she used it to teach literature at the Julliard School of Music. We had good conversations about those things.

Most of our times together occurred not on Morningside Heights, where we both lived, but in restaurants, hallways, and hotel lobbies at meetings of the Paul Tillich Society and the AAR. I also remember with much pleasure her presence at a meeting in New Harmony, Indiana. She was accompanied there by her beautiful daughter, whose tragic death came thereafter.

When we talked together, Mutie and I would swap stories about teaching, writers we admired, people we knew in common, and the foibles of the academic world. She was a demure person but also a lot of fun when she got onto subjects she knew.

One subject on which we did not agree, to my embarrassment, was her mother's book, *From Time to Time*. I had reviewed it for *The New Republic* magazine, and I found much in it to approve. I saw it as the *cri de coeur* of a woman who felt wronged by her husband. I had not stopped to ask myself what Mutie would think. When I saw her she let me know. She did not attack me, nor the review itself. She was too kind a person to do that. But she let me know how deeply the book had pained her and how much she regretted her mother's letting it be published.

To me Mutie's death brings a sadness hard to express. It has something to do with her being, in my imagination, the ideal daughter of a famous man and a voluble mother. She was endowed not only with filial piety but with brains, study, and teaching all her own.

Hightstown, NJ  
April 10, 2016

**MEMORIES OF ERDMUTHE  
TILlich FARRIS**

MARION HAUSNER PAUCK

[Editor's Note: Marion Hausner Pauck, with her husband Wilhelm Pauck, published the definitive biography of Paul Tillich, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought*. Vol. I, Life. New York: Harper and Row, 1976. Reissued, with a new Preface by Marion Hausner Pauck, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015.]

I first heard Paul Tillich speak in 1948 at a conference at Columbia University. A few years later I was privileged to take his course on systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary and to fall under his spell as so many hundreds of students before me had done. I first met his daughter, Erdmuthe or "Mutie" as she was called, at one of the parties given at Wilhelm and Olga Pauck's apartment following a Tillich sermon. Mutie was quite shy especially where Tillich's women students or friends were concerned but she was always warm and friendly to me. We always found something to laugh about either in the behavior of the *crème de la crème* scholars surrounding us or even in that morning's sermon. We were only two years apart, she being the older, and we both knew what it was like to live in New York City with German born parents.

In the years that followed our initial encounter and after Wilhelm and I were married, we became closer to one another. Pauck was one of her father's friends whom Mutie liked especially well. After our biography of Tillich was published, Mutie and her beloved daughter, Madeleine visited us in Palo Alto. She thanked us for "giving her father back to her" through our biography, a father whose image she temporarily lost after her mother's book, *From Time to Time*, was published. The tragedies that came into Mutie's life, especially the early death of her gifted and lovely daughter, Madeleine, did not make her bitter or resentful. She bore the pain of that great loss with dignity and with understanding. Many memories have returned since I heard of Mutie's death and I will share some of them in a memoir I am writing at this time. Mutie herself, one of many friends whom I have lost in the last decade, will remain in my memory and in my heart. May she rest in peace. 14 April 2016

**ERDMUTHE CHRISTIANE TILlich FARRIS  
(1926-2016)**

RONALD STONE

Dr. Mutie Tillich Farris was a frequent participant in the North American Tillich Society. She came first with Hannah and then she came by herself. For the Centenary Conference in New Harmony she was accompanied by her adult children, Theodore and Madeline. She added spice to the meetings in the plenary sessions and in private conversations. Friendships were formed in the Society, and for a few of us they continued in meetings in New York City in her apartment across Broadway during dinners and lunches.

Two projects evolved with me from the Society meetings. First we published Tillich's *Theology of Peace*. Her literary standards excluded one essay I had chosen because it was not up to her father's standards for published work. In a second discussion, I persuaded her to accept the reconstructed essays her Father delivered to the John Foster Dulles Commission on a Just and Durable Peace. She needed to be convinced that they were critical enough of Dulles's legalism to be included. She took both her politics and her English seriously.

The second involved Matthew Lon Weaver as translator. The three of us walked in a brilliant sun across Union Square in San Francisco facing John's Grill. The monument to the Spanish American War marked the beginning of the U.S.A. as an imperial-world power, which would have such fateful consequences for Paul Tillich's German Empire. Richard Brown, the editor of Westminster Press, met us in the restaurant in which Humphrey Bogart was filmed in the Maltese Falcon. There with the statue of the Falcon overshadowing us, we negotiated the terms for Tillich's wartime speeches to be published as *Against the third Reich*. Over lamb chops and a lime gimlet, she agreed to provide insights and memories for the project. She also found photos of Paul Tillich. The one chosen for the book was taken at the beach and was labeled "Last Photo" by Hannah. She provided other photos for *Politics and Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich at Union Seminary in New York*. Sometimes she would consult considering literary release for future publications like the correspondence between Paul and Hannah Arendt, but generally she just resolved literary permissions by being generous.

Our final great time together was attending a reception and a Jazz Mass at Union Theological Seminary a few years ago. She, of course, knew more about jazz than I'll ever learn. She was delighted to meet the President and Professors from Union, and I hoped the adventure would lead to more communication across Broadway for her. She was a great friend, a good mentor in things regarding Paul Tillich, and a generous, critical colleague. May she rest in peace and in the Society's memory.

**MY MEMORIES OF MUTIE TILlich FARRIS**

FREDERICK J. PARRELLA

I find it hard to believe that Mutie Tillich Farris is no longer with us. To me, she had not changed her appearance, her energy, or her passion for life in the decades that I have known her. She possessed a remarkably strong and youthful voice, both in person and on the phone. After her mother, Hannah, who came to many Tillich Society meetings, passed away in 1988, Mutie took her place, if not with enthusiasm then with a firm sense of duty and commitment. Mutie was present at the next decade or more of meetings, with something of the same un-expressive face that Hannah possessed, yet with a gentleness and humanity that belonged to Mutie alone. One of my earliest memories of meeting Mutie socially was a dinner party at the home of Ray and Carol Bulman in New Jersey on the Hudson River overlooking the skyline of Midtown Manhattan. On that evening, Mutie was the hit of the party and all of us enjoyed the Bulman's beautiful apartment and their exquisite cuisine.

Then there followed the meeting in New Harmony, Indiana in 1999. Ray Bulman and I, along with Sharon Birch and Mary Ann Stenger, helped to organize this conference under the watchful guidance and financial—as well as metaphysical support—of Jane Owen. While theological luminaries from many continents presented their papers, my mind's eye goes back to Mutie herself and her daughter Madeleine. Madeleine, who, still in her late 30s, was seriously ill. She struggled to find the energy to be present through the conference and passed away about six months later much to the sadness of many in the Tillich Society. This was also the first time I met Mutie's

son and Tillich's grandson, Ted Farris. Ted and I have grown to be friends through both online contacts and our meeting at the Berlin Deutsche-Paul-Tillichs-Gesellschaft Symposium on Tillich in the fall of 2015.

I have many other happy memories of Mutie during my visits to her sixth floor apartment on W. 122<sup>nd</sup> St. across the street from both Union Theological Seminary and Jewish Theological Seminary and a few blocks from Columbia University. We met there whenever I was home in New York both on business and for pleasure. The business involved helping Mutie to sort through her many papers to ascertain publishing rights for her father's works. Among the stack of paid bills and unimportant other documents, I recall a hand written letter dated 1953 from T.S. Eliot to Tillich, praising him for his first volume of the systematic theology that Eliot had just read.

After the business was over and long after there was any business to do, we had lunch. While upper Broadway is a Mecca of cosmopolitan restaurants, Mutie's favorite was Henry's at the corner of 105<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway. There she would always start lunch with a sweet gimlet. Regardless of what we ate or drank, the conversations we had always had the power to lift me out of time and my schedule for a couple of hours. Her vibrant voice, her subtle sense of humor, and her compassion during these conversations are my fondest memories of Mutie. I am certain she is enjoying a gimlet now in eternity while waiting for us to join her.

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**REMINISCES OF DR. ERDMUTHE  
(MUTIE) TILlich FARRIS**

[*Editor's Note:* This is a reminiscence from David W. Odell-Scott, Professor of Philosophy, Kent State University, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, Center for Comparative & Integrative Programs]

Over the years I was pleased that during a couple of sessions of the Tillich Society I would sit close to or have Dr. Erdmuthe (Mutie) Tillich Farris come in and sit next to me. We would exchange hellos. We really never carried on a conversation. On one occasion there was a paper being presented that declared an interpretation of Paul Til-

lich which was—how should I put this—sounded more “orthodox” or rather like something more akin to a paper on Barth than Tillich. I apparently expressed my displeasure in some manner of movement or a grimace. I really wasn't aware that I was being so expressive. Because Dr. Erdmuthe (Mutie) Tillich Farris quietly leaned in on her frail frame towards me from my left side and without moving her gaze from the presenter she whispered, “Papa never thought that!” It was then that we turned face-to-face and simply nodded to one another in concert.

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[*Editor's Note:* Robert Giannini is the former Dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, and Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, Indiana.]

Ages ago when I spoke about Tillich and Thomas Merton when we met at New Harmony, Indiana, Mutie told me that I had helped her better understand her father. I had spoken about Thomas Merton's understanding of mystical prayer and how a theology of this understanding is straightforwardly Tillichian. It was one of the greatest compliments of my life. Years later I had dinner with her in New York with mutual friends but I doubted then whether or not she remembered the New Harmony incident.

Robert Giannini  
Indianapolis, Indiana

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**IN MEMORIAM  
GUYTON B. HAMMOND  
NOV. 7, 1930 - MAY 1, 2016**

Guyton Bowers Hammond, professor emeritus of Religious Studies at Virginia Tech, died peacefully at home on May 1. He was 85 years old. He attended the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky and was ordained to the ministry in the Southern Baptist Church. He transferred to Yale Divinity School and he concluded his academic studies at Vanderbilt University, receiving his Ph.D. in theology in 1955. Hammond spent his career of 38 years in the Religious Studies Department at Virginia Tech teaching undergraduates and writing on the theol-

ogy of Paul Tillich. While at Tech he received many honors and contributed to the life of the university. He is survived by Jean Love Hammond, his wife of fifty-seven years; two sons, Bruce G. and Mitchell L. Hammond; a daughter-in-law, Susan Lewis Hammond; two grandchildren; a brother and sister-in-law, Joe and Edith Hammond; three nieces, four great nieces and two great nephews. In lieu of flowers, contributions for the Hammond Lectures may be sent to the Virginia Tech Foundation, 902 Price's Fork Road, Blacksburg, Virginia, 24061 or to the Music Ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 Rugby Road, Charlottesville, Virginia. A memorial service will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church on Friday, July 22, 2016 at 11 AM.

Guy Hammond was a founding member of the North American Paul Tillich Society and served a term as its president. He was also a founding member of Clergy and Laity United for Peace and Justice. Tillich scholarship has lost a brilliant mind and an extraordinarily accomplished thinker and writer. We will miss his wise and witty questions at our meetings. The North American Paul Tillich Society has lost an enduring friend and colleague. Guy will be missed at all of our future sessions, banquets, and dinners.

Among Guy's many publications, one should note these:

- "Unconditionality without Sovereignty: Tillich, Caputo, and the Minimalist Theology of Post-modernity" *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* 35, 1 (Winter 2009)
- "Debates About Intersubjectivity." In Frederick J. Parrella and Raymond F. Bulman, eds. *Religion for the New Millennium: Theology in the Spirit of Paul Tillich*, 97–108. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001.
- "Examination of Tillich's Method of Correlation." *Journal of Bible and Religion* 32, 3 (21964): 248–251.
- "Tillich and the Frankfurt Debates About Patriarchy and the Family." In John J. Carey, ed., *Theonomy and Autonomy. Studies in Paul Tillich's Engagement with Modern Culture*, 89–112. Macon, Georgia: Mercer Press, 1984.
- "Tillich on the Personal God." *Journal of Religion* 44 (1964): 289–293.

*The Power of Self-Transcendence. An Introduction to the Philosophical Theology of Paul Tillich.* St. Louis: Bethany, 1966.

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**NEW PUBLICATIONS ON TILlich**

Paul Tillich, *Advanced Problems in Systematic Theology.* Courses at Union Theological Seminary, New York 1936-1938. Herausgegeben und mit einer Historischen Einleitung versehen von Erdmann Sturm (Edited and with an Historical Introduction by Erdmann Sturm) (= Ergänzung- und Nachlassbände zu den Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich, Band XIX), Verlag Walter de Gruyter GmbH Berlin/ Boston 2016, LVII + 360 pages.

Holmes, Jr., Nathaniel C. "Sumario Artigos Paul Tillich e a Teologia da Prosperidade." *Azusa: Revista de Estudos Pentecostais*, vol. 7, 1 (2016). [A translation of a recently published article.]

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**CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE 2017 TILlich JAHRBUCH**

The 2017 Tillich Jahrbuch will have the theme of Tillich's method of correlation. In the first volume of his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich describes his method of correlation as "a way of uniting message and situation." He expresses a hope that both theologians and non-theological thinkers after him will find that this method helped them "understand the Christian message as the answer to the questions implied in their own and in every human situation" (p. 8). Scholarly focus on this method in the next *Tillich Jahrbuch* can include (1) discussion of to what extent earlier Tillich writings incorporated this method; (2) to what extent he truly follows it in his own writings; (3) assessing the influence and incorporation of this method by contemporary thinkers; and (4) evaluating its effectiveness for addressing religious issues today.

Proposals (1 - 2 pages double-spaced) should be sent to Mary Ann Stenger at:  
[masten01@louisville.edu](mailto:masten01@louisville.edu)  
 OR [masten01@gmail.com](mailto:masten01@gmail.com) by July 31st.

There will be 4 English articles included in the 2017 Jahrbuch. The four accepted will be notified in early August. Final copies of the articles will be due December 1, 2016.

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**PAUL TILlich 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN  
NEW HARMONY**

TED FARRIS

The Robert Lee Blaffer Foundation (<http://robertleeblafferfoundation.org>) hosted a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the interment Paul Tillich at Tillich Park in New Harmony Indiana on May 14, 2016. Tillich's ashes were interred in New Harmony at Pentecost in May 1966 in Tillich Park. In preparation for the event, Tillich Park was replanted with a new generation of Pine trees by the Wabash River. The event itself was held in architect Richard Meier's stunning architectural masterpiece, the Athenaeum, which was Meier's first important non-residential building and which helped launch his reputation as a builder of public buildings. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, the President of the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit and a past NAPTS president, delivered the keynote

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**THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GOD IN  
PAUL TILlich'S *THE COURAGE TO BE***

TED FARRIS

[Editor's Note: *The following article, written by Paul Tillich's grandson, was published in an earlier edition of the Bulletin. It is reprinted here with the necessary correction and additions made by the author. The editor apologizes for printing an incorrect edition earlier.*]

*"The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt."*

*The Courage to Be* by Paul Tillich

Paul Tillich's best-selling book "*The Courage to Be*" is a work of self-affirmation and personal empowerment. The title itself quite clearly states its subject matter; the nature of individual cour-

age, a tribute to Paul Johannes Tillich. His words covered Tillich's life from his early career in Germany, his dismissal by Hitler, and his launching of a new career in America beginning at Union Theological Seminary in New York. A moment of silence was observed for Mutie Tillich, Tillich's recently deceased daughter. A concert by Mazz Swift, a New York improvisational pianist, in homage to Tillich was also on the program.

New Harmony has been a life-long project of the late Jane Blaffer Owen and her family and of the Blaffer Foundation. Jane befriended Tillich through sculptor Jacques Lipchitz and is the site of the Owenite Utopian community founded by Robert Owen in the early 1800s. Tillich's presence is everywhere felt in New Harmony with a Tillich Dining room at the Red Geranium Inn, a Tillich suite, a Tillich Archive including materials from Tillich's secretary Grace Cali and of course Tillich Park itself a serene enclosure which includes Tillich quotes carved into large granite stones and a bust of Tillich by sculptor James Rosati. It stands next to Philip Johnson's Roofless Church with a Jacques Lipchitz altar sculptor. The Roofless Church was the scene of Tillich's memorial service 50 years ago.

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age. Yet this carefully constructed book has a curiously ambiguous conclusion. The last sentence of *The Courage to Be* defines the courage to be as "*rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.*"<sup>1</sup> This ambiguous sentence which plays with a double meaning for God seems a strange conclusion to a powerful exposition on the courage of individual self-affirmation. The meaning of the concluding sentence of one of Tillich's important works is perhaps worth reconsidering on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. To understand this sentence requires familiarity with several of Tillich's key ideas. The first is that Tillich rejected the idea that God is a being or an entity of any kind that is separate and apart from "being itself." There is no subject/object relationship between man and God because God is "being itself" or the "power of being."<sup>2</sup> Tillich even states that "God does not exist." He means in part that God does not exist as a being in the universe (because if God was a being in the universe

he could not have created the universe). Although, for Tillich, God is not a being, he does not say that God is a non-being. Instead he calls God the “ground of being” or the “power of being.” We can think about the “ground of being” as the soil in which “being itself” exists. There is no question that being exists as life is an incontrovertible fact, and “being” can be most easily understood in terms of life even though it can also refer to the inanimate. The ground of being is in any case the source of life.

Tillich states that “the power of being” acts through the power of individual selves.<sup>3</sup> The power of being is thus carried by each individual self which can be seen as the essence of being organized into a discrete and separate individual entity.<sup>4</sup> The self is the only entity which can affirm itself. To affirm itself, the individual must have faith, vitality, and intentionality. Tillich defines faith as an expression of ultimate concern which is an intentional “act of the total personality.”<sup>5</sup> Ultimate concern includes whatever a person believes to be the primary focus and purpose of their existence, which therefore can even be the individual’s own self-interest. For Tillich, faith, which is very closely related to and encompasses self-confidence, has ecstatic elements and is not an entirely rational quality. Faith or self-confidence includes instead powerful emotional content and is by its nature a passionate, driving, and intentional force for action toward an ultimate concern.

In the last sentence of Tillich’s important work, God has disappeared because of the individual’s doubt and all that is left behind is being itself, which can only mean the self. When God has disappeared, what appears is the self and its power of being. The individual self which must be affirmed by acts of faith (self-confidence), intentionality and vital action. This is Tillich’s “courage to be as oneself.” And faith thus becomes the courage of belief and confidence in oneself and is the ultimate form of self-affirmation. This power of self can only be Tillich’s God beyond God which is being itself and the source of all the power that man can create as an individual. This is so because once God has dissolved in the anxiety of doubt there is nothing left but the pure being of the individual who is left with the possibilities of self-affirmation and self-confident action or despair.

When reliance on God disappears “in the anxiety of doubt,” it is only then that the individual can take up the courage to be as himself and become fully responsible, vital, actualized and active with intentionality, courage and self-confidence.

I believe that today this is the most relevant and meaningful interpretation of the concluding idea of Tillich’s “courage to be.” An individual does not need courage if there is a God who cares for and looks after the individual and determines the course of his life. The courage to survive and the self-confidence to do so is most needed where God is not present and the alternative is meaninglessness and despair. As a result, the acceptance of oneself in *The Courage to Be* exists and is affirmed even though there is no God to accept that affirmation or the individual’s own self-acceptance. Each individual can only accept himself to be as he is and to accept that nothing exists beyond himself to accept him as an individual.<sup>6</sup> There is no God to accept your acceptance or anything concrete “other than yourself” to receive your faith. Faith is thus transmuted into self-confidence, which is faith in being itself and one’s own power as an individual.<sup>7</sup> The person with the courage to be as himself is and remains being itself that is beyond the existence of God.

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Tillich tried to correlate and unify many divergent philosophical, theological, scientific and cultural approaches to religion. His work can thus be accepted by people of any religion or belief system whether Pantheist, atheist, scientific or Christian and that is why it remains so relevant today. Tillich calls God the “ground of being,” a concept which can be used to unify such diverse approaches as Pantheism (God is everything), Atheism (there is no God, there is simply being) and everything else in between or beyond.

For Tillich, God is not a being and has no tangible qualities or characteristics. God can only be referenced symbolically. Instead, God is called the ground of being. But in that case, God cannot be meaningfully discussed or described and becomes a concept that one cannot engage with, and that one does not even need to engage with. The ground of being and the power of being undeniably exist, but they exist anyway regardless of any conception of God. God thereby dissolves in the last sentence of *The Courage to Be* when self-actualization is achieved. If God is (or is in) every-

thing, then God is also nothing. Everything is already there and present with or without God. Being itself receives no benefit from the addition to it of the concept of God. Stated another way, *being plus God equals being* and God does not add anything to the equation. So instead of being concerned with the nature of God, in *The Courage to Be*, Tillich studies the nature of being and refrains from all specific comment on the nature of God.

For Tillich, any talk of the nature of God or specific characteristics of God is purely symbolic. The rituals of the Church are symbolic of the power of being. They do not relate to any particular being. Viewing the nature of God as purely symbolic, of course, effectively makes God disappear from the calculus and simultaneously validates and discredits all religious symbols. God dissolves in doubt and becomes neither more nor less than a symbol for the power of being that is in each of us. He no longer need exist and as Tillich says “God does not exist.”<sup>8</sup> In conclusion, God becomes, for me, at the end of *The Courage to Be*, a symbol of, and surrogate for, the actualized self which is itself the power of being and “the God beyond God.”<sup>9</sup>

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**TILlich’s “RELIGION OF THE CONCRETE SPIRIT” AS A BASE FOR FEMINIST THEOLOGY**

MARY ANN STENGER

Many postmodern critiques, including feminist theology, have challenged ‘grand narratives,’ universal claims, and ontology/metaphysics for failing to take account of particular people and concrete experiences. The very assumption of the possibility of universal truths has been under attack...and with good reason. In Christian theology, male-grounded thought, especially that of white European males, dominated the content of most colleges and seminaries. Yet, some early

feminist theologians found ideas in Tillich’s thought that they could appropriate critically even while rejecting others. (I think here of the early writings of Mary Daly and Sallie McFague.) But as feminist theology developed, it worked more and more outside the traditional theological canon, constructing theologies centered in particular aspects of women’s experiences. And feminist theologians quickly recognized how diverse women’s experiences really are, with the focus of specific theologies addressing aspects ranging from ethnicity to race to sexual orientation but also to abuse, hierarchy, injustice and more. Religion scholar Morny Joy asks: “How can there be a method which allows for the diversity and complexity involved in the interaction of two autonomous human beings, where the interpreter can no longer take for granted that her specific interpretation of the world, reinforced by her culture and the particular discipline she employs, is all-inclusive and universalizable?”<sup>10</sup> Even in discussion of particular experiences, feminist theologians offer understandings that aim toward more universal claims.

The question at the center of this paper is whether there is a theological grounding for feminist theology that can hold together both the particular and the universal elements. In a much earlier essay, I argued that feminist and pluralist critiques of Christian theology share several issues and approaches: relativizing theological concepts and symbols, challenging universal claims of religious truth, criticizing dominant, exclusive structures, and constructing new metaphors and concepts for God and Christ.<sup>11</sup> So here, I explore whether Tillich’s idea of the Religion of the Concrete Spirit can be applicable to feminist concerns about universality and particularity.

Tillich offered the idea of the “religion of the concrete spirit” in his last lecture in an effort to hold together the particularity of religious traditions and the direction toward the universal of all religions. As his writings suggest, he came to this understanding as a theological response to his encounters with Buddhists and other non-Christians. But the issues that he raises in that last lecture are issues that theologians face in response to many postmodern critiques of universal claims and grand narratives, including feminist critiques. In what follows, I interpret this last lecture through a feminist lens, exploring to what extent Tillich’s comments about the history of religions

can be applicable to and helpful for grounding feminist theological reflection, with focus on the issue of universality and particularity.

### 1. Universality and Particularity in the “Religion of the Concrete Spirit”

Tillich begins with five presuppositions: (1) “Revelatory experiences are universally human.” (2) Humans receive revelation in their finite human situations. (3) “There are not only particular revelatory experiences throughout human history, but...there is a revelatory process in which the limits of adaptation and the failures of distortion are subjected to criticism.” He notes three types of criticism: mystical, prophetic, and secular. (4) There *may* be (emphasis on *may*) a central event in the history of religions that “makes possible a concrete theology that has universalistic significance.” (5) The sacred is the “depths” of the secular. “The sacred is the creative ground and at the same time a critical judgment of the secular. But the religious can be this only if it is at the same time a judgment on itself, a judgment which must use the secular as a tool of one’s own religious self-criticism.”<sup>12</sup> In relation to feminist theology, the first two presuppositions offer grounding for female revelatory experience, received in concrete human situations. The third recognizes adaptation and distortion and argues for critique; clearly, among feminist theologians one can find use of mystical, prophetic, and secular criticism of distortions in the history of Christian theology. With respect to the possibility of one central event that enables a concrete theology with universalistic significance, the event for Tillich is the Cross. While I will work with the double negation Tillich extracts from the event of the Cross, I will also look at the event of the Incarnation. (This can also be explored outside Christian theology, but my focus here is within Christianity.) Finally, the fifth presupposition that posits the sacred both within the secular but also as the creative ground and critical judgment of the secular works well with the inter-relations of secular and theological feminism.

Tillich calls his approach “dynamic-typological” and incorporates both affirmation of “experience of the Holy within the finite” as the sacramental basis of all religions and the three forms of criticism, mystical, prophetic, and secular mentioned earlier. The mystical critique attempts

to go beyond the many concrete embodiments of the Holy to affirm the Holy as Ultimate. “The particular is denied for the Ultimate One. The concrete is devaluated.”<sup>13</sup> The prophetic also affirms the ultimacy of the Holy but warns against demonic consequences of elevating the finite to ultimacy, often resulting in denial of justice. The prophetic concern with justice brings in the moral dimension, but Tillich emphasizes that this must be integrated with the sacramental and mystical elements or else it becomes “moralistic and finally secular.”<sup>14</sup> The secular critique counters religious domination of life that leads to repression of goodness, justice, truth, and beauty.<sup>15</sup>

“The Religion of the Concrete Spirit” unites basic “elements in the experience of the Holy which are always there, if the Holy is experienced.” For Tillich, these elements reflect his starting presuppositions, holding together the universal basis of religion in the revelation of the Holy and the particular, concrete expressions of that. The Religion of the Concrete Spirit both incorporates the whole history of religions and expresses a *telos* toward which all religion aims. Because it is both affirmative of religion and negating in its critical element, its positive expression is always fragmentary. He further characterizes it as “a fight of God against religion within religion.”<sup>16</sup>

I note a parallel between Tillich’s discussion of the Religion of the Concrete Spirit in this last lecture and his discussion of absolute faith in *The Courage to Be*. Both concepts point to an underlying dynamic depth that grounds all forms of faith and religion but in itself is not tied to any one form of faith or religion. Absolute faith “is always a movement in, with, and under other states of the mind...It is not a place where one can live, it is without the safety of words and concepts, it is without a name, a church, a cult, a theology. But it is moving in the depth of all of them.”<sup>17</sup> In a parallel way, he states that the inner *telos* of every religion is “to become a Religion of the Concrete Spirit” although that cannot be identified “with any actual religion, not even Christianity as a religion.”<sup>18</sup> One might say that both are grounded in the God above the God of theism, in the God who is the Unconditioned, beyond and yet underlying all specific expressions of ultimacy. The Unconditioned not only grounds all religions but also posits the demand for expression of ultimacy as well as the critique against absolutizing any particular expressions. The Unconditioned is the dy-

namic universal ground of all particular religious experiences and expressions.

Yet, in the Religion of the Concrete Spirit, in contrast to absolute faith, Tillich adds dimensions of ethics and knowledge to the activity of the Unconditioned. He invokes *agape* and *gnosis*, connecting them to the ecstatic experience of the Spirit that unites with the rational element. He does not fully develop this interconnection except to say that, “the rational structure of which I am speaking implies the moral, the legal, the cognitive and the aesthetic.”<sup>19</sup> Of course, this takes us to his much more developed discussion in volume III of his *Systematic Theology*, especially to his discussion of theonomy. In the last lecture, Tillich states that theonomy “appears” fragmentarily in the Religion of the Concrete Spirit but also has a future-directed eschatological dimension, with fulfillment beyond time.<sup>20</sup> But the very term “concrete” shifts the focus to the here and now and also to particular manifestations. Yet the theonomous element carries a universal quality.

## 2. Exploring Implications for Feminist Theology

First, Tillich’s understanding of God as the Unconditioned, the Holy, or the Ultimate as the source and ground of revelation is not tied to any particular content of ultimacy but opens up the possibility of multiple contents. Recognizing revelation and saving powers in all religions means that contents will vary but share a common root. This does not mean that all contents are equally valid, a point I will discuss later, but it does offer a universal basis for diverse contents. Although Tillich was talking about the many world religions, this point can apply to a universal basis for multiple feminist theologies.

Second, Tillich’s proposal of the Religion of the Concrete Spirit suggests particularity by invoking the adjective “concrete.” But note that “concrete” here has a very specific meaning for Tillich. The Spirit manifests in concrete ways in various religions, albeit fragmentarily, in struggles against demonic and secularist distortions of the Holy.<sup>21</sup> The Concrete Spirit is the “fight of God” against religious distortions of God and demonic uses of God and religion. The activity of God is “over against” that which negates God, or as Tillich states it in *The Courage to Be*, the power of be-

ing affirming itself against the threat of nonbeing.<sup>22</sup>

Many feminists have and continue to “fight” for an understanding of God that transcends the patriarchal Father-God and counters the oppression connected with it. Tillich did not engage as directly as many feminists might have wished in the struggle against patriarchy. But he did recognize the absence of female symbolism in Protestant theology and briefly discussed how his proposed symbols for expressing God counter that absence. In his discussion of the Trinity in volume III of his *Systematic Theology*, he notes the Protestant purging of the symbolic power of the Virgin Mary and states that “exclusively male symbolism prevailed in the Reformation.” He then raises the question of whether there are elements in Protestant symbolism that could be developed over against this “one-sided male-determined symbolism.”<sup>23</sup> He suggests that the “ground of being,” which he sees as part conceptual and part symbolic, could point to “the mother-quality of giving birth, carrying, and embracing, and, at the same time, of calling back, resisting independence of the created, and swallowing it.”<sup>24</sup> He also sees his emphasis on God as the power of being as a way to reduce “the predominance of the male element in the symbolization of the divine.” He then argues that the self-sacrifice of Jesus as the Christ “breaks” the contrast of male and female. With respect to the divine Spirit, he argues that “the ecstatic character of the Spiritual Presence” transcends “the alternative of male or female symbolism in the experience of the Spirit.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, Tillich recognized the importance of the “fight” against male-dominated theology, but feminist theologians take that fight much further, critiquing not only language but also assumptions of the universality of male experience and the pervasive patriarchal structures in society.

Third, the Religion of the Concrete Spirit includes the ethical and the goal of justice. Tillich recognizes that this element can occur both within religion and from the secular against religion. If religion in the name of the Holy represses goodness, justice, truth, and beauty, then secularization can help liberate people from those oppressions.<sup>26</sup> While the element of the ethical may be universal in religion and in the secular world, the critiques themselves take on particular repressions and oppressions. Justice is a demand and a goal, with particular efforts always ambiguous and

limited. Feminists, both religious and secular, have often critiqued oppressions supported by religions and engaged in political efforts to change them or eliminate them.

As I have pointed out numerous times before, Tillich sees the interconnection of guarding ultimacy as ultimate and working for justice, expressed quite clearly in the prophets. He states: "Justice is the criterion which judges idolatrous holiness."<sup>27</sup> Absolutizing some finite aspect of life generally results not only in idolatry of that element but also in unjust treatment of some group of people. So we might say that the fight of God against religion within religion must also be a fight for justice. Tillich's ontological analysis of justice includes the principle of equality, the demand to treat every person as a person, and the principle of freedom (both internal and external),<sup>28</sup> all of which resonate with feminist social and political efforts, both in the secular arena as well as in religious communities. These principles can easily be looked at as universal principles, but as soon as one applies them in a specific social matrix, the adequacy of particular forms or laws and the interactions within specific communities come into play<sup>29</sup> and are open to challenge.

Fourth, the Religion of the Concrete Spirit works with religious symbols that bring together the universal and the particular. Symbols bring together the Holy as the universal ground of religious experiences and the particular through the "social matrix" in which the symbols have grown. Tillich states: "Religious symbols are not stones falling from heaven. They have their roots in the totality of human experience including local surroundings, in all their ramifications, both political and economic."<sup>30</sup> He then suggests that the symbols may express a revolt against the specific social situation as well as a reflection of it. This allows for symbols that arise from critical moments and events in history, moments of "*kairos* in which the Religion of the Concrete Spirit is actualized fragmentarily."<sup>31</sup>

As we connect these ideas to feminist theology, we can certainly see examples of feminists who experienced the turn from patriarchy as a *kairos* for them, with religious experiences that broke through the patriarchy and opened up symbols that revolted against the traditional expressions, offering new directions for expressing ultimacy. I think of Mary Daly who spoke of God as Verb, the Goddess spinning; Sallie McFague who

expressed the symbol of God as Mother, Lover, and Friend; Elizabeth Johnson who explored God as She Who Is; and Judith Christ who reflected on She Who Changes... and the list goes on. The universal element in all of these is the underlying ultimacy that grounds religious experience and religious expression. The particular, of course, comes from the particular social matrix in which each was or is living and the particular symbol that grasped each one as true.

Elizabeth Johnson builds on Tillich's theory of symbols, both in recognizing the deep religious experience that grounds symbols as well as the way symbols function. In *She Who Is* she argues: "Women's religious experience is a generating force for these symbols, a clear instance of how great symbols of the divine always come into being not simply as a projection of the imagination, but as an awakening from the deep abyss of human existence in real encounter with divine being."<sup>32</sup> For her, as for Tillich, symbols cannot be produced intentionally but stem from the depths of experience. But that universal ground is expressed in what Tillich calls the social matrix that includes political and economic ramifications. Johnson argues that we must recognize and respond to how a symbol functions psychologically, socially, politically, and religiously.<sup>33</sup> Both Johnson and Tillich point out the importance of people's response to symbols as an element of their truth. The symbol must be alive for people and connect to their living situations; this inner response is central to the viability of a symbol.<sup>34</sup>

Fifth, for Tillich, the ideal symbol and the criterion for a Christian effort to engage in the Religion of the Concrete Spirit is the event of the Cross. For him, "the appearance of Jesus as the Christ" was the "decisive victory" in the struggle of God against religion within religion.<sup>35</sup> Tillich understands "the victory on the cross as a negation of any demonic claim," making it the criterion for Christians. But he also argues that the criterion of negation of the demonic "also happens fragmentarily in other places, in other moments, has happened and will happen even though they are not historically or empirically connected with the cross."<sup>36</sup> This criterion of negation that he states in this last lecture had been stated earlier in *Dynamics of Faith* in this way: "The criterion of the truth of faith, therefore, is that it implies an element of self-negation. That symbol is most adequate which expresses not only the

ultimate but also its own lack of ultimacy.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, for Tillich, the sacrifice of Jesus or Jesus crucified is central to Jesus as the Christ. Stated in another way, the particularity of Jesus’ humanity is sacrificed to Jesus as the Christ or the New Being. On the Cross, Jesus is the Christ. To see Jesus as the Christ without accepting the crucified Jesus is idolatry, in Tillich’s view.<sup>38</sup>

If one connects this with feminist concerns about God or the Christ as male-identified, this “sacrifice” opens up symbolism not tied to sex and gender. And in some ways this seems very liberating, as Tillich himself suggested in his discussion of “one-sided male-determined symbolism” that dominated Protestant thought, especially with the rejection of the symbolic power of the Virgin Mary.<sup>39</sup> He states that his understanding of the self-sacrifice of Jesus as the Christ “breaks” the contrast of male and female.<sup>40</sup>

Tillich’s approach here, however, misses a key aspect of Jesus as the Christ, namely the Incarnation, the embodiment of God in Jesus. As feminist theology has evolved over the last few decades, embodiment has become a key issue—not only in relation to one’s living in a particular social-cultural context but also in connection with race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and violence. Clearly, this was not an issue discussed theologically in Tillich’s time, but I think we cannot ignore it today.

The particularity of the embodied Jesus—Jewish, male, Middle-Eastern—does not match most of the European depictions of him. The fact that many artists depict Jesus as looking like their own race and ethnicity shows a connection to the universal meaning and attraction he holds. Today there are artistic depictions that include the female Christa as well as Asian or African or South American embodiments of Jesus, in addition to the white-European images. Perhaps we can say, using Tillich’s terms, that people respond to the New Being in Jesus as the Christ but also make that New Being concrete in symbols and images directly connected to their own lives.

Another aspect of Jesus’ embodiment that can be significant for feminist work is Jesus’ suffering on the Cross, an aspect barely dealt with by Tillich. Artistic depictions of Jesus on the Cross vary greatly in terms of how vivid the imagery of suffering is, with some of the most violent depictions in Spanish and South American art. But the image of Jesus’ bodily suffering connects with many

people, especially those who have experienced bodily harm or who have watched others endure great bodily pain. Some find hope in identifying with Jesus’ suffering while others have been victimized by being asked to endure suffering as a form of connection to Jesus. I will never forget the sermonettes of several Black women reflecting on the Cross on Good Friday several years ago. Each expressed identification with the suffering of Jesus in their stories of their own or family members’ recent suffering. And through that connection, each also elicited hope and the ability to go forward. The concrete aspects of that bodily suffering were key to their experience of the New Being of Jesus. For them, it is not the sacrifice of Jesus’ particularity that brings forth the Christ but rather the New Being held *in* the suffering Jesus. The Cross is central but not as an abstracted Cross or an abstracted sacrifice; rather, it is the embodied Jesus who is the Christ, the New Being.

By focusing on Jesus as embodied and living in a concrete social matrix, we can open up new or renewed theological possibilities. A former student, who has worked with refugees for the State Department, wrote a wonderful piece on Facebook, arguing against the kind of Christians who want to reject refugees who are not Christian. He points to Mary and Joseph as non-Christian refugees in the same general area as Syria and how those refusing refugees parallel the rejection of Mary and Joseph at the inn. One might say that Jesus was born as a refugee, a helpless baby in the arms of a refugee mother. The Incarnation or the embodied Jesus is important in his particularity as well as in the more universal meanings of the Christ or the New Being.

Both the image of Jesus on the Cross and the image of Jesus as the helpless baby refugee raise the issue of power. Political power permeates the biblical stories of Jesus, from his birth through the Cross. And power as empowerment is central to the understanding of Jesus as the Christ, the New Being. Tillich’s ontology of power in *Love, Power and Justice* provides one of the best analyses of power I have read, as he discusses the power relation inherent in every encounter of one human with another, as well as the power relations in families, in other groups, in nations, and among nations. I will not repeat those discussions here but rather point to the underlying issue of particularity and universality.

The universal aspect of power, for Tillich, is the power of being, the active ultimate always affirming power of being over against the threat of nonbeing. For him, nothing is without participation in being itself, in the power of being. There is no courage without such participation. But, of course, everything is in its particularity, in its own concrete form and particular social matrix, in its specific embodiment with particular spiritual, intellectual, and psychological abilities in the case of persons. Tillich posits an “intrinsic claim for justice for everything that has being.”<sup>41</sup> He does note that the intrinsic claim is different for a tree than for a person. (It might be interesting to develop an ecological argument based on his understanding of justice. But, here, I will focus on humans.) Each person in his or her power of being has an intrinsic claim to justice, but how justice is meted out depends on the social-cultural-political structures and specific situation. Once again, we move from the universal claim of justice for everything to the particular circumstances of power struggles, distribution of justice, power structures, etc.

One critique feminists sometimes leveled at Tillich’s theology, as well as at many other Christian theologies, was its failure to see the particular circumstances of women that did not fit the male-identified approaches. Critiques particularly focused on his understanding of sin, guilt, and sacrifice as too abstract or too connected with male experience to be adequate to women’s experiences.<sup>42</sup> And for these, it is more involved than simply seeing women’s experiences as examples of estrangement. They are that, but the bodily and psychological dimensions of their experiences often differ from the existential description of estrangement Tillich offers. Unbelief, hubris, concupiscence, and guilt, elements upheld and critiqued by Tillich, contrast to the “sin” of internalizing blame or accepting a low status or failing to resist oppression, etc. I point to these as further examples of the importance of particular embodiment and specific experiences.

One could expand this critique to include issues of race, sexual orientation, and other forms of oppression, but I will not do so here. These are areas already dealt with in many contemporary theologies and still call for more analysis and discussion.

Tillich is clear that the Religion of the Concrete Spirit cannot be identified with any one religion, not even Christianity. Even though he uses

the event of the Cross as an example of the negation of demonic claims of power, he argues that it can liberate christological dogma and be a criterion for Christians. Still, he does see the symbolic meaning of the Cross as providing a criterion more universal than Christianity. The fight of God against religion within religion involves the negation of absolutizing or demonic claims; that criterion then allows for events in other places and times not connected to the cross.<sup>43</sup> This not only opens up fragmentary manifestations in other religions but also in new liberating expressions within Christianity. Feminist theology, like another religion, cannot be identified with the Religion of the Concrete Spirit, but it may, and I would argue sometimes does, offer fragmentary manifestation of it. Feminist theology in its multiple manifestations argues for grounding in revelation and applicability of religious affirmation and critique in very particular cultures and situations.

Tillich’s concluding statements to his last lecture bring together the universal grounding of theological expression and the critical element that opens up new possibilities. He states: “The universality of a religious statement does not lie in an all-embracing abstraction which would destroy religion as such, but it lies in the depths of every concrete religion. Above all it lies in the openness to spiritual freedom both from one’s own foundation and for one’s own foundation.”<sup>44</sup> Tillich still asserts the importance of developing universally valid statements but argues that the universality comes from the living depths of religious experience, not from abstractions. And, for him, religious experiences in their depth ground spiritual freedom, a point most feminists would support. Moreover, the freedom is both from the restrictions of one’s religious foundation or tradition and also the freedom for serving that foundation. The openness to the new and the experience of the power of new, or sometimes renewed but forgotten, living symbols keeps a religious tradition connected to people in their current social situations. And we recognize that spiritual freedom can open up ethical action and political action, especially in relation to the prophetic or ethical critique that Tillich discusses.

The power of the universal is effective and actual only in particular embodiments, actions, and expressions. And justice is the criterion that judges those actions and expressions, limiting un-

just power and affirming empowerment of persons in all aspects of their being.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952), 190.

<sup>2</sup> “[Prayer] is speaking to somebody to whom you cannot speak because he is not ‘somebody’ [and yet]...is nearer to the I than the I is to itself.” Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 187

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 118

<sup>4</sup> “Power is the possibility a being has to actualize itself against...other beings.” Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, 5

<sup>6</sup> Tillich calls this “the accepting of the acceptance without somebody or something that accepts.” Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, P. 177

<sup>7</sup> “The power of self-affirmation is the power of being which is effective in every act of courage. Faith is the experience of this power.” Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*

<sup>8</sup> “[T]o argue that God exists is to deny him.” Also “[i]t is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it. God is being itself, not a being.” Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1*, pp. 205 and 237

<sup>9</sup> Tillich would be unlikely to have agreed with this statement, which is my own interpretation.

<sup>10</sup> Morny Joy, “Postcolonial and Gender Reflections: Challenges for Religious Studies,” *Gender, Religion and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Ursula King and Tina Beattie (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 31.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Ann Stenger, “Feminism and Pluralism in Contemporary Theology,” *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 46:3 (Octobre 1990), 291-305.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,” *The Future of Religions*, edited by Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper & Row, Publ., 1966), 81-82.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 188-189.

<sup>18</sup> Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,” 88.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>22</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 179.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 293.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,” 90.

<sup>27</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 216.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 58-62.

<sup>29</sup> Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,” 57-58, 62.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 89 & 93.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 46-47.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 96-97; Johnson, *She Who Is*, 46-47.

<sup>35</sup> Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,” 88.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>37</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 97.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 293.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>41</sup> Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*, 63.

<sup>42</sup> Examples can be found in Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), chapter 2 and Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980).

<sup>43</sup> Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,” 89.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

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**ON GIANT SHOULDERS: TEACHING  
THROUGH PAUL TILlich'S LEGACY  
OF BEING A THEOLOGIAN  
DOING SOCIAL WORK**

WILLIAM G. RESSL

It is a great honor to have been invited by the North American Paul Tillich Society on this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Paul Tillich's death to present this paper on how Tillich's thought informs my teaching. However, it must first be noted that this narrative is only my view, one perspective, of what has been a collaborative journey of discovery with my wife the Rev. Penny L. Taylor, M.Div., MSW, Ph.D., LCSW who likely would have her own perceptions and interpretations.

On a daily basis Tillich's thought and his doing of social work as a theologian informs my work that spans as Tillich's did across the pulpit, providing social work services, and in the classroom. I serve a local church as an Ordained Minister in the United Church of Christ (UCC), practice as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and teach advanced Master of Social Work (MSW) and Doctor of Social Work (DSW) clinical courses as an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Aurora University in Aurora, Illinois. Like Tillich, I recognize my teaching is a learning moment for all involved, as those I teach become my teacher.<sup>1</sup>

This paper consists of three sections. First, an autobiographical sketch defines my journey of learning Tillich through the examination of his thought, legacy strains, and his doing of social work as a theologian. Second, an overview defines how Tillich's thought and legacies inform my teaching of social work. Last, rising out of Tillich's legacy of doing social work as a theologian, a diagnostic frame for care-filled relationships is introduced that is grounded in his concept of "listening love"<sup>2</sup> and the social ontological polarities.<sup>3</sup>

***My Search for Absolutes: The Legacy of an Autobiographical Sketch***

The legacy of an autobiographical sketch is supported by the autobiographical accounts Tillich offered in *On the Boundary*, *My Search for Absolutes*, and posthumously in *My Travel Diary: 1936*. Similar to Tillich's autobiographical sketches, this

section of the paper provides "an account of the way my ideas have developed from my life."<sup>4</sup> While many theologians, as well as social workers, do not subscribe to the legacy of self-disclosure by providing an autobiographical sketch, Womanist theologian Delores Williams noted "that theologians...ought to give readers some sense of their autobiographies"<sup>5</sup> to help their audience discern the type of theology that is being presented. The following is my effort to address the limits of my personal context while defining the type of theology for the doing of social work that is being presented.

*On the Boundary: Between Concrete Realities*

The reality that I was born in May 1963 means that part of my life belongs to both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. From my youngest years I felt that I was on a boundary, caught between various concrete realities from both centuries. My grandparents, grounded within the twentieth century, were from Eastern Europe; one set primarily from today's Czech Republic and the other from Slovakia. In them I saw distinct cultural differences as well as their concrete immigrant situation as they attempted to assimilate within the Eastern European enclave of the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois. From a young age I was well aware I was Czech and Slovak, as well as this identity defined as American, but not fully any one of them. I was also aware of religious boundaries. Although I was raised Roman Catholic, supporting a six-hundred-plus-year history in my mother's father's family, my other grandparents were a historic mosaic that included Free Thinking Czechs and Evangelical Lutheran Slovaks. Educational boundaries also existed. Only one grandmother, my father's mother, had a high school degree. The rest due to the immigration experience had less than an eighth grade education. My mother who had desired to go to college was refused by her father. However, she strongly encouraged education for her children. My siblings and I are the first generation to go to college and all have advanced degrees. These various boundaries within my concrete situation as well as the resultant disposition and tensions not only informs my destiny and work but has also seemingly determined it.

### *Shaking the Foundations: My Journey of Learning*

Many foundations were shaken as I differentiated from my family's six-hundred-plus-year Roman Catholic tradition. However, as I enrolled at the Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) and entered into an "intimate" relationship with Paul Tillich, the foundations began to settle calmly. I was assigned Robert L. Moore as my Advisor as I began the journey towards my Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. Unbeknownst to me at the time, Moore taught advanced seminars on Tillich. He would serve as my Advisor throughout my studies, a dual M.Div. and M.S.W., a post-graduate certificate in Bowen Family Systems Theory, and a significant portion of my Ph.D. until an emergency leave ended his contact with students.

Moore advised me to enroll in an advanced seminar on Tillich. As I began to explore Tillich's systematic for the first time I did not have any awareness of Tillich or his thought. But as I read the systematic I felt like a fish in water and Tillich's thoughts resonated deep within. The Systematic provided a theological foundation through which I could better understand the boundary locations of my own existence. For better or worse, in time I learned I was exploring Tillich through Moore's influence, an interpretative lens through his background as a Jungian Analyst and interest in psychology, psychoanalysis, and spirituality.<sup>6</sup> Through the journey, Moore continued to encourage the exploration of Tillich not only through the legacy of psychology but also through Tillich's other legacies. As Moore stepped down from serving as my Advisor, Lee H. Butler, Jr., Professor of Theology and Psychology and an Africana pastoral theologian stepped up. Butler encouraged me to re-examine Tillich's legacy in social work. His encouragement provided the foundation for my continuing research expanding the legacy of Tillich doing social work as a theologian.

### ***The Meaning of Health: The Legacy with Psychology***

As I read Tillich's *Systematic Theology* for the first time in Fall 2001, world events turned towards terror. During that same semester I was encouraged to integrate Tillich's thought in my other courses, *Practice of Christian Ministry* taught by Butler and *Advanced Pastoral Care: Dynamics of Grief,*

taught by Moore.<sup>7</sup> Through those three courses I began to apply Tillich's thought to religious and psychological understandings as well as to the social events of 9/11. Subsequent coursework continued to unpack Tillich's legacy with psychology and his dialogue with prominent psychologists at the New York Psychological Group.<sup>8</sup> It was a dialogue that continued in various ways across almost all the schools of psychological thought in the United States and Europe.<sup>9</sup> With Moore's encouragement, I continued to integrate Tillich's thought with psychology: the disorders of the personality as defined by psychologist Theodore Milton; the neo-Jungian approach of Moore; understandings of the psychological implications of ritual process through cultural anthropologist Victor Turner.

In 2005, I began to serve as a Teaching Assistant for Moore. Now I would facilitate the discussion of Tillich's systematic with advanced master and doctoral level students. Moore encouraged me to develop a *Tillich for Beginners* study guide based on a voluntary student submission of quotes from their study of the *Systematic*. I organized the quotes by page number to create a student informed study guide of the systematic. In 2006, as a student in *Advanced Seminar B on Paul Tillich*, the study guide was expanded by adding quotes from Tillich's other texts including: *The Dynamics of Faith*; *The Courage to Be*; *Theology of Culture*; *Love, Power, and Justice*; *Morality and Beyond*; *The Interpretation of History*; *The Socialist Decision*; *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society*; *The Meaning of Health*; *The Future of Religions*; and, *Christianity and the Encounter with the World Religions*. *Tillich for Beginner's* continued to be edited and used as a teaching resource in subsequent classes.

My examination of Tillich's legacy with psychology continued as I served as a Teaching Assistant in *Psychopathology in Theological Perspective* and *Integrative Psychotherapy and Spirituality*. Both courses utilized Tillich's thought as the theological foundation for understanding psychological and spiritual interactions. This legacy brought forth the realization that to fully comprehend health, an examination of the spiritual nature of an individual and social group must be explored in relation to biological, psychological, and social realities. The legacy also provided awareness that theology must open paths across disciplines through the use of language. Theological language must be expanded to encourage conversations towards the

Ultimate Concern across disciplines.

### ***In Catholic Thought: The Legacy of Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue***

My Roman Catholic roots and early memories of the impact that Vatican II had on the local Roman Catholic parish, which my family participated in, piqued my interest in exploring Tillich's dialogue with Roman Catholic theologians. I discovered that with the completion of Tillich's System and the advent of Vatican II, a continuing dialogue began in the late 1950s as Roman Catholic Jesuit theologian Gustave Weigel singled Tillich out among other Protestant theologians.<sup>10</sup> This became the foundation for the 1964 text *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought* that featured a number of articles from Roman Catholic scholars. Tillich provided a response to each in the chapter entitled "Appreciation and Reply."<sup>11</sup> Dialogue with Tillich's thought in the Roman Catholic world continued even as Tillich passed.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the Roman Catholic dialogue, I also learned of Tillich's rich inter-faith dialogue with a Zen Buddhist scholar<sup>13</sup> and his lectures at Columbia University later published in the text *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*. This legacy gave language to integrate my historic Roman Catholic roots with my current situation as a Protestant and an Ordained Minister in the U.C.C., the same denomination that held Tillich's call in the United States.

### ***Human Nature Can Change: The Legacy of Liberation Theological Interpretations***

In "Paul Tillich and the History of Religion," Mircea Eliade noted that Tillich "died at the beginning of another renewal of his thought."<sup>14</sup> While it is impossible to determine what this renewal might have included, I believe the liberation theological legacy may offer a glimpse into various possible paths. A number of voices in this legacy have expanded upon Tillich's thoughts in various ways, including James Cone the founder of Black liberation theology; Mary Daly, an American radical feminist philosopher; Judith Plaskow, Jewish feminist theologian; Rosemary Radford Ruether, American feminist scholar and Catholic theologian; Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza Roman Catholic feminist theologian; Cornel West, the democratic intellectual; and, Delores Williams developer

of Womanist Theology.

The voices of Daly and Williams have been most significant in my journey, studies, and teaching. I was encouraged by Laurel C. Schneider, scholar of modern and postmodern Christian thought and a member of my Ph.D. Advisory Committee, to learn Tillich and continue to search deeper. She encouraged me to explore Daly's examination of Tillich's thought that served as "springboards"<sup>15</sup> for trajectories yet to be fully realized. Although Daly held Tillich's theological system to be patriarchal and a philosophical theological pornographic work filled with subliminal images, she used it to springboard towards a "gynocentric" theology emphasizing the abuse and use of power as well as the need for new theological language that emphasized empowerment and mutuality rather than dominating power and hierarchy. This spring boarding from Tillich's thought encouraged Daly to ask the provocative questions of contemporary life.

I was encouraged by Womanist theologian JoAnne Marie Terrell at C.T.S. to explore Williams's rich contribution to the Womanist theological movement that expanded beyond Tillich's theology. Williams found Tillich's white male theology informed by his experiences of alienation and exile sympathetic to the struggles of African American women's experience.<sup>16</sup> As I studied her work, I felt a deep resonance with her imagery of the "wilderness experience."<sup>17</sup> I found it sympathetic to my own wilderness journey through various boundary experiences that have informed my current concrete situation. Williams' emphasis on the importance of Tillich's lived reality for the interpretation and expansion of her own Womanist thought formed the foundation for the legacy of the autobiographical sketch noted earlier. Autobiographical self-disclosure of the theologian, and I would add social worker, can provide potential pathways of participation and communion that might not otherwise be visible.

### ***My Travel Diary: The Legacy Resting in New Harmony***

A small town in south-western Indiana seemed an unlikely place for a legacy of Tillich's thought; however, a critical reflection brought to light how Tillich's dialogue on Ultimate Concern had a direct bearing on the transformed reality of New Harmony, Indiana. For years, Moore en-

couraged a trip down to New Harmony, the resting place of Tillich. In May 2007, my wife and I made our first pilgrimage to Tillich Park in New Harmony. Upon arrival, Tillich's legacy began to emerge as I noticed the town's marketing brochures resonated with Tillich's thought. The brochures stated: "Where the past and the future are present." I remembered Tillich's words: "the only analogy to eternity found in human experience, that is, the unity of remembered past and anticipated future in an experienced present."<sup>18</sup>

The legacy continued to unfold. There was the Tillich Room in the Red Geranium Restaurant with pictures of Tillich's visit in the entranceway. As I walked the paths of Tillich Park lined with Norwegian spruce and stones engraved with various quotes by Tillich, first at night and then during a beautiful May afternoon, I continued to think about Tillich's four step Process of New Being: increasing awareness, increasing freedom, increasing relatedness, and increasing transcendence.<sup>19</sup> I walked the park and imagined it as a labyrinth with one path in towards transcendence re-united with New Being and the same path back out to the estranged. Tracing this path in my mind, I designed the Tillich Park Finger Labyrinth offering the opportunity to 'walk' through the process of New Being.<sup>20</sup>

During that first visit, a nagging question kept invading my thoughts: "Why is New Harmony Paul Tillich's final resting place? Of all the places he lived, why New Harmony?" I asked the question to a volunteer at the visitor center but they were unable to provide an answer. They recommended I talk to another volunteer whom I later tracked down in town. I was informed that while it was a simple question, "One must speak with Jane"—although she was not in town. The creation of the labyrinth led to an all too brief but significant three year friendship with Jane Blaffer Owen.<sup>21</sup> She opened my eyes to the power of Tillich's thought when practiced as a daily reflective meditative reality. Over conversations at dinner at her table in the Red Geranium, in her golf cart as we toured the town with her, and in her 'boat' (as she called the back room of her house with Miss Lilly her cat), she unpacked the importance that Tillich's thought had been in her life and how she read daily from the text *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue* as a life guide. She also made it possible to stay in the Mother Superior House and have access to the Paul Tillich archive which Penny and

I digitalized into a three volume set now available at CTS. The text highlights the life of Tillich, his experience in New Harmony, and an exploration of his thought. In June 2010, Jane passed away, ending an all but too short friendship.

Jane Blaffer Owen and her New Harmony experience is itself a legacy that needs further research to better comprehend how a daily reflection on Tillich's thought can inform social realities. It is the legacy of dynamic faith striving to insure tradition of a social past; it did not achieve absolute validity but rather the affirmation of a sense of humanity adaptively striving to manifest itself as a Spiritual community. Jane's oversight on the little village brought forth a roofless church, outdoor labyrinths, and other locations not only for the individual quest for centeredness but also the social function of expansion striving towards Spiritual community in a centered way through a multidimensional communion with scholars, artists, and town people alike.

### ***The Philosophy of Social Work: The Legacy of Doing Social Work as a Theologian***

I first read Tillich's *The Philosophy of Social Work* in Fall of 2006. At the time, I did not realize the significance that rather short text would have in my life. In time, I would discover it provided the foundation for Tillich's continuing legacy in social work while illuminating his relationship with social work and his doing of social work as a theologian. The text also provided a bridge between his theological thought and the practice of social work. To grasp the significance of the text in the discipline of social work, it is important to examine the historic relationship between religion and social work. For centuries prior to the professionalization of the discipline of social work, social needs were taken care of by traditional means, often through the extended family and the wider community network including the Christian church and other private and charitable organizations. In the late 1800s and early 1900s individuals flooded cities overwhelming traditional methods of care. In response, the discipline of social work as a professional practice was defined. The birth of the profession is traced to the first social work class held in 1898 at the Charity Organization Society in New York City, today's Columbia University School of Social Work. Although many early founders of the discipline grounded their work in

their religious convictions, the religious heritage that was part of social work was suppressed as professionalization was defined through secularized foundations.

Reinhold Niebuhr's theological treatise, *The Contribution of Religion to Social Work* (1932), criticized social work for abandoning its early religious orientation. For the most part his text was dismissed by social work and resulted in even greater distance between the two disciplines. Social work continued its secularized professionalization defining itself apart from its early religious roots. The separation between disciplines was supported by Herbert Bisno's social work text *The Philosophy of Social Work* (1952),<sup>22</sup> "which had a strong bearing on the development of social work as a profession."<sup>23</sup> His text made clear that social work, philosophy, and religion, specifically Roman Catholicism, could not be reconciled and separation was required. Grounded in an extension of his analysis, social work needed to separate from all religious and faith traditions due to his analysis that Catholic social workers opposed "on moral grounds clients' requests for abortion, contraception, divorce, and gay and lesbian relationships."<sup>24</sup>

At the twenty-fifth anniversary dinner of Self-help, Inc. in 1961, Tillich presented his paper *The Philosophy of Social Work*. It was a critical reflection on his past experiences of the doing of social work as a theologian and of the agency's social work service history. Tillich noted it was "a philosophical interpretation of the actual work of Selfhelp and the basic convictions underlying this work—convictions which we have developed, discussed, and transformed during the twenty-five years of our existence."<sup>25</sup> Tillich offered a theological answer to the issues that social work was addressing within society, in particular the need to support the dignity of the individual while reforming legal deficiencies that exist in every social structure and organization.

The social worker inside of me wondered: "Why is Tillich talking about social work and presenting this paper at the twenty-fifth anniversary of Selfhelp, Inc....and what is Selfhelp, Inc.?" I asked my professors as well as Jane Owen who had known Tillich in New York and all had the same response: "I don't know, I never knew of him doing social work or Selfhelp." The answer led me into the legacy of Tillich's doing social work as a theologian. Tillich's immigration to the

United States at age forty-seven opened to him the world of social work that resulted in his doing of social work as a theologian. Unfamiliar with local customs and unable to speak the language, Tillich and his family required the support of others to adapt in the new world.<sup>26</sup> From his situation, he recognized the need for a social support system for immigrants arriving from Nazi Germany. In collaboration with like-minded immigrants, he co-founded "Self-Help for Emigrés from Central Europe" in New York City on November 25, 1936.

Self-Help provided job referrals and helped to unite individuals with communities. Tillich served as its first chairman for fifteen years. His office at Union was an open door to many travelers as they got off the boats from Europe. "Tillich's generosity was soon made apparent to his colleagues at Union, who witnessed a steady procession of visitors to his office."<sup>27</sup> In Tillich, immigrants found a pastor who listened, a counselor who made visible that they belonged, and an administrator who could link them with a needed contact, job, or another referral. Tillich noted: "This activity brought me into contact with many people from the Old World whom I never would have met otherwise, and it opened to view depths of human anxiety and misery and heights of human courage and devotion which are ordinarily hidden from us. At the same time it revealed to me aspects of the average existence in this country."<sup>28</sup> Selfhelp Community Services, Inc. continues as the "oldest and largest provider of Nazi Victim Services in North America"<sup>29</sup> with an affiliate in Chicago.<sup>30</sup> A number of social work scholars have and continue to expand upon Tillich's concepts and ideas.<sup>31</sup>

### **Tillich's Legacies as a Foundation in the Teaching of Social Work**

Each of Tillich's legacies informs my teaching in distinct ways at the graduate (M.S.W.) and doctoral (D.S.W.) levels. Tillich's legacy of the autobiographical sketch underlies my student's experience within the class I designed *Advanced Therapeutic Relationship and Integrative Psychodynamics*. It is the required course for advanced M.S.W. students in the Advanced Clinical Social Work Specialization, which I also coordinate. Students critically reflect on their personal contextual situation through an individual and multigenerational analysis of culture, ethics/beliefs, and theoretical foundations.

Through this autobiographical reflection, students examine the limits of their personal contexts and the embodiment they bring to the care-filled relationship. In addition, various course activities such as role-plays and a clinical case study paper offer students the opportunity to critically reflect on how the care-filled relationship is informed by their own and their client's contextual situation. Each activity strives to deepen awareness of the various concrete situations that inform their practice of social work in order to increase their capacity to listen in love while minimizing the objectification of the other. In the doctoral course, "The History of Clinical Social Work Theory and Practice," I have added a historical roots presentation. This presentation requires students to clearly and succinctly name and describe their personal contextual situation while identifying their historical locations within the practice of social work and doctoral research. This autobiographical sketch invites students to address the limits of their personal context while clarifying the specific type of social work that they present through the embodiment of their concrete situation.

Tillich's legacy with psychology brings forth the awareness and importance that language has the power to open or close pathways towards Ultimate Concern. While I am required to teach clinical language, I do so as Moore did through an appropriation of Tillich's theological language. This integration of clinical/psychological and spiritual/theological language encourages conversations towards Ultimate Concern. My teaching of clinical theory at both the graduate and doctoral level includes conversations on the utilization of clinical theories towards holistic understandings spanning psychological, spiritual, biological, and social aspects for the individual and the systems they exist within. Students are encouraged to use clinical theory to address specific symptoms as well as consider the use of theoretical understandings towards the expectation of a new reality, the healing that occurs as the care-filled relationship becomes a multidimensional participation for both the care-agent and care-recipient.

Through Tillich's legacy of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, I encourage my students to reflect on balancing their own individual ethics and beliefs while valuing their client's self-determination and spiritual beliefs, as supported by the North American Social Workers (N.A.S.W.) Code of Ethics.<sup>32</sup> The legacy offers an

example of holding these tensions together through an appreciation of the other while being able to formulate a reply towards a continued participation for all within the care-filled relationship. The multidimensional communion this legacy strives towards informed my development of the Faith-Based Specialization for M.S.W. students which I also coordinate. The specialization supports Aurora University's contemporary non-sectarian commitments while being grounded in the historic roots of the university founded as a seminary in 1893 and with the School of Social Work rising from George Williams' heritage with the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.). The non-sectarian approach to faith-based social work prepares students to work effectively as faith-based agents of change within a variety of faith-based social work settings while recognizing the importance that the role of faith serves within the care-filled relationship for both the social worker and client.

Tillich's legacy of liberation theological interpretations, specifically the thought of Daly and Williams, informs all the courses I teach. From Daly I bring forth the concept of "spring-boarding."<sup>33</sup> I encourage students to look beyond the concrete situation of the here and now towards the expectation of a transformed reality, towards the new being rising out of their existential situation that includes the concrete transformation they experience through their academic journey of becoming. Additionally, students are encouraged to recognize the concrete situation of the care-filled relationship and to be aware of the spring-boarding opportunities towards transformed new realities that may yet need to be realized for both their client and themselves. William's "wilderness experience"<sup>34</sup> continuously reminds me of my own wilderness journey through the various boundaries of my life which has resulted in my current situation. Now as the teacher, I assist my students through their wilderness journey, so that one-day they may similarly help others.

Glimpsing Tillich's legacy resting in New Harmony, Indiana and witnessing the power that the courage to be has when existential anxiety is answered by the New Being within the individual and larger social realities continues to inform my teaching. Through this legacy I challenge my students to address the individual needs of their clients as well as actively look for ways to reform the

larger societal issues that create symptoms within individuals. Conversations analyze the historical socially focused anticipations of social work pioneers<sup>35</sup> in relation to contemporary social work practice and the ethical responsibilities related to helping the individual while reforming social structures.

As a pastoral theologian doing social work, Tillich's legacy of doing social work as a theologian grounds my teaching and practice. The legacy offers a systematic theological foundation for my continuing research at the boundary of theology and social work.<sup>36</sup> *The Philosophy of Social Work* is a required read in *Advanced Therapeutic Relationship and Integrative Psychodynamics* with advanced M.S.W. students and *The History of Clinical Social Work Theory and Practice* with D.S.W. students. Class discussions bear witness to the importance of the concept of "listening love"<sup>37</sup> and the aims of social work,<sup>38</sup> both of which provide answers to the existential realities that social workers continue to face.

### **Towards a Diagnostic Frame for the Care-Filled Relationship**

Rising out of the legacy of Tillich's doing social work as a theologian, his concept of "listening love"<sup>39</sup> from *The Philosophy of Social Work* and descriptions of the social ontological polarities from *Systematic Volume III*<sup>40</sup> serve as a theologically grounded reflective diagnostic frame for examining the human condition within the care-filled relationship. The frame provides a language to explore how the professional care agent functions within the care-filled relationship as well as how verbal and non-verbal actions inform the care-filled encounter. The social ontological polarities bring to light how the care agent is utilizing "listening love"<sup>41</sup> within the care-filled relationship as well as if the care agent is "in danger of imposing instead of listening, and acting mechanically instead of reacting spontaneously."<sup>42</sup>

### **To Listen in Love**

A relational quandary rises in every care-filled relationship: "How do I relate with the other?" The answer is found in the concept Tillich named for social work: "listening love"<sup>43</sup> with its decisive character that "listens sensitively and reacts spontaneously."<sup>44</sup> To listen in love supports the dignity

of the care-receiver while striving to minimize the deficiencies "of every legal organization of society."<sup>45</sup> For the care-agent, love that listens is more than gathering assessment information or diagnosing individuals through empirical knowledge with predefined psychological constructs. Listening in love strives to insure that the care agent knows the person they serve; to know the other not just as an object but also as a person cognizant of the internal and external realities of that person's situation. Such love accepts the other for who they are, where they are, and what they are. It can be understood that even the best clinical theory, or even the best class, is in danger of missing its full potentiality based on whether it is done in listening love or not.<sup>46</sup>

### **A Theologically Grounded Ontological Diagnostic Frame**

Three pairs of social ontological polarities and related social functions from Tillich's *Systematic III* make visible the challenges of estranged non-being and manifestations of essential new being within social groups, including the social group known as the care-filled relationship. Verity and adaptation correspond with the social functions of expansion and constriction. Ecstatic form transcendence and form affirmation correspond with the social functions of construction and deconstruction. Tradition and reformation correspond with the social functions of constitution and profanization. Each defines how meaning is actualized spanning the existential realities of being estranged in non-being to essence filled new being.<sup>47</sup>

The social functions of expansion and constriction defined through the polarities of verity and adaptation diagnostically make visible how the care-filled relationship expands or constricts, how open or closed it is to change. When anxiety overwhelms the individuals within the care-filled relationship, verity becomes a demonic absolutism. Adaptation constricts resulting in the loss of relationships. Increased loneliness and self-seclusion for both the care-receiver and care-agent can result in an ever-deepening anxiety of finitude. As the anxiety of death is sensed, including the death of the care-filled relationship, there is a desire to close the ranks fueling even greater demonic absolutism. This can be experienced in the care-filled relationship when diagnostic definitions become the demonic absolutism informing

the relationship rather than listening love. As this occurs the care recipient becomes an object of care resulting in increased loneliness and self-seclusion within all the processes of care. A separation results between the one receiving care and the caregiver. However if listening love is manifest, new expectations can be accepted. Courage can lead towards a re-formation of the care-filled relationship as well as across all the groups one participates within, including families and larger social systems. Verity becomes focused in a centered way towards new realities, new being. Adaptation manifests itself as the care-filled relationship becomes a Spiritual community, a multidimensional communion of participation. Ecstatic experiences of personhood are manifest for both the care recipient and care agent. However this essence-filled moment is always transient and fragmentary, as finitude known through fate and death seeps in beginning the cycle of anxiety once again.<sup>48</sup>

The social functions of construction and deconstruction are visible through the social ontological polarities of ecstatic form transcendence and form affirmation. As the anxieties of doubt and meaninglessness are heightened deconstruction occurs. The care-filled relationship is experienced as a demonic repression, suppressing any form of creativity resulting in formalistic emptiness. For instance, deconstruction of the care-filled relationship occurs when the uniqueness of the care receiver is not celebrated. Moving towards a plan of action or the use of a theoretical stance that does not resonate with the uniqueness of the care-receiver can result in a formalistic emptiness within that person resulting in repressed creative growth. Listening love as a moral decision helps to minimize this possibility by insuring the uniqueness of the individual is celebrated and that the therapeutic tools resonate with the lived reality of the care recipient.

Through listening love, the function of construction responds with the hope of a new expectation known as saintliness that manifests as a dynamic vitality of creative growth, transforming both parties in the care-filled relationship. Similarly form affirmation transforms itself from formalistic emptiness and moves towards the creation of humanity where objectification is minimized by intentionally focusing on forms that manifest as a multidimensional communion. In listening love, the individual is celebrated and jus-

tice of his or her uniqueness can be heard and understood in its full creative potential expressing mutuality. For instance, the care-agent recognizes that individuals may “seem to be aggressive, but what they express may be love, inhibited by shyness. They seem to be sweet and submissive and they are actually symptoms of hostility. Words, well meant, but uttered improperly, may produce in reaction complete injustice.”<sup>49</sup> Listening love makes visible the reality of saintliness and humanity within the care-filled relationship although they are always short lived due to their transient and fragmentary nature.<sup>50</sup>

Last, the social functions of constitution and profanization are made visible through the social ontological polarities of tradition and reformation. Either the care-filled relationship constitutes itself as a Spiritual Community or falls short in a secularized profanization. There can be a recognition of the importance spirituality has on the relationship or clinical theory can form an absolute validity. As ontological anxiety increases, tradition manifests itself as an absolute validity. Specific doctrines, rules, laws, and/or theories must be maintained or guilt and condemnation result. A specific individual may be appointed holding absolute validity. The professional care agent may be deemed by the care recipient to be omnipotent, all knowing. On the other hand the care agent may impose his or her own sense of absolute validity onto the care-filled relationship by not recognizing the empowering resiliency individuals have in their own capacity to define well being, let alone awareness of the healing power of an Ultimate relationship. When absolute validity occurs, heteronomous oppressive repression results for all the parties in the care-filled relationship. Mutuality known as the “point of communion with the central person of the other one”<sup>51</sup> is lost. Similarly, in anxious moments the polarity of reformation can actualize as an emptying criticism that oppresses creativity within the care-filled relationship. Anxiety can increase the emptying criticism in either or both parties resulting in the loss of a transformative creativity.

Courage grounded within the New Being can reform such traditions into a receptive and mediating manifestation of the Spirit. Doctrine, rules, laws, and theories deemed as an absolute validity can be transcended as receptiveness to the Spirit mediates as an essential belongingness within the care-filled relationship. Through courage to be,

the social polarity of reformation can actualize as a Spirit-filled affirmative relationship. The care-filled relationship becomes a form of affirmation and worship as a Spiritual Community is manifest, albeit always in a transitory way.<sup>52</sup> Reflection on the social functions and ontological polarities raise awareness on how to best strive towards reformation and the hope of a new reality.

### The Future: Appreciation and Reply

While Tillich's thought informs and unfolds through my teaching, I continue to ask: "What might Tillich's legacies and the diagnostic frame for the care-filled relationship rising out of Tillich's systematic thought mean for social work as a profession?" Together the legacies and diagnostic frame provide a faith-based methodology, a reply for the doing of faith-based social work by the theologian doing social work as well as the faith-based social worker. It is a methodology that is theologically grounded and capable of being clinically integrated across social work practice areas. A new generation of social workers is learning to appreciate the concept of listening love as the foundation for their care-filled relationships spanning across social work practice areas such as addictions, child welfare, individual and family therapy, gerontology, health care, leadership, and schools. While the future is unknown, it is known that the future practice of social work by today's students will be different for having been influenced by Tillich's legacies and the diagnostic frame for the doing of social work that lies in the depths of one's being and caring. "Above all it lies in the openness to spiritual freedom both from one's own foundation and for one's own foundation,"<sup>53</sup> a reply that is applicable for both the care agent as well as those they serve.

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<sup>1</sup> As Wilhelm Pauck noted of Tillich: "Throughout his life, he learned more from conversations, discussions, and debates than from books, and everyone who talked with him openly and thoughtfully in order to come to a better understanding of some problem or issue then became his 'teacher.'" Wilhelm Pauck, "To Be or Not to Be: Paul Tillich on the Meaning of

Life" in *The Thought of Paul Tillich* edited by James Luther Adams, Wilhelm Pauck, and Roger Lincoln Shinn, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Tillich, "The Philosophy of Social Work" in *The Meaning of Health: Essays in Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, and Religion*, edited by Perry LeFevre, (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1984), 180.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III, Life and the Spirit History and the Kingdom of God*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 182-220.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch*, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), ix.

<sup>6</sup> More so which I would only learn years later, Robert Moore's thought had been informed by the trajectory of scholars at the University of Chicago. He had been advised by Don Browning the father of practical theology, who had been a student of Seward Hiltner the father of pastoral theology, who had been a student of Paul Tillich and Anton Boisen the father of Clinical Pastoral Education.

<sup>7</sup> In the Grief course Moore defined an integration of Tillich's system with psychological understandings of grief defined by Geraldine M. Humphrey and David G. Zimpfer, *Counseling for Grief and Bereavement*, (London, SAGE Publications, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Such as Erich Fromm, Seward Hiltner, Karen Horney, Rollo May, and Carl Rogers. See: Terry Cooper, *Paul Tillich and Psychology: Historic and Contemporary Explorations in Theology, Psychotherapy, and Ethics*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006) and Paul Tillich, *The Meaning of Health: Essays in Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, and Religion* edited by Perry LeFevre, (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> Tillich's definitions of anxiety and search for being in non-being has influenced Hannah Arendt, Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and Rollo May. It has been noted that the work by object-relation theorists, such as John Bowlby, W.R.D. Fairbairn, and D.W. Winnicott, on psychological developments on the subject-object dimension are similar concerns that Tillich addressed on the deep contexts of relationships. Tillich's ontological work and ideas of symbolic forms, seemingly drawn from Jung, have influenced a number of Jungian scholars including James Hillman, Robert Moore, and June Singer. Others have explored the work of Jung, Freud, and Tillich such as Ernest Becker, Peter Homans, and Ira Progoff as well as European scholars such as Victor Frankl.

Others have worked on Tillich's method of correlation, most notably Paul Pruyser from the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, and pastoral theologian Seward Hiltner. Tillich's influence from both sides of the boundary of psychology and theology continued through the works of Don Browning, Donald Capps, Peter Homans, and Ann Ulanov. William Rogers, "Tillich and Depth Psychology," in *The Thought of Paul Tillich* edited by James Luther Adams, Wilhelm Pauck, and Roger Lincoln Shinn, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 102-118.

<sup>10</sup> Tillich had been singled out by Weigel due to his "use of Augustine, his openness to Aquinas, his rare appreciation of the legitimate usage of Plato and Aristotle in theology." Thomas O'Meara, "Tillich and the Catholic Substance" in *The Thought of Paul Tillich* edited by James Luther Adams, Wilhelm Pauck, and Roger Lincoln Shinn, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 293.

<sup>11</sup> Roman Catholic theologians across religious orders including the Jesuits, Dominicans (I had attended a Dominican University for my MSW), and Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Paul Tillich, "Appreciation and Reply" in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, edited by Thomas O'Meara and Celestin Weisser, (Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1964).

<sup>12</sup> In the last half of the 1960s, interest built along metaphysical interests. In the mid-1970s conversations shifted towards ecclesiology and analysis of religion, see O'Meara, "Tillich and the Catholic Substance" in *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, ed. James Adams, Wilhelm Pauck, and Roger Shinn, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco, 1985), 290-295. In 1994 a successor volume to the 1964 text *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought* was released. Raymond Bulman and Frederick Parrella, editors, *Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994). A continuing conversation appropriates and expands Tillich's theology in particular his method of correlation with the consensus that theology is informed by two poles that must be correlated. A number of Roman Catholic voices have joined the dialogue and/or can be understood to have expanded upon or been sympathetic to Tillich's thought including: Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza; Hans Kung; Rosemary Karl Rahner; Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger; Radford Ruether; Edward Schillebeeckx; and, David Tracy. Francis Schussler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theology: Task and Methods" in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Second edition, edited by Francis Schussler

Fiorenza and John Galvin (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 42.

<sup>13</sup> Tillich's dialogue with Dr. Hisamatsu Shin'ichi a philosopher and Zen Buddhist scholar from Kyoto University was published in *The Eastern Buddhist*, an unsectarian journal published by the Eastern Buddhist Society in Kyoto, Japan. Available in: William Ressel and Penny Taylor, editors, *Part Three of Three: Exploring the Thought of Paul Tillich, Excerpts from The Paul Tillich Archive of New Harmony, Indiana, from the Collection of Mrs. Jane Blaffer Owen*, (Brookfield, IL: Ressel and Taylor, 2007), 51-90.

<sup>14</sup> Mircea Eliade, "Paul Tillich and the History of Religions" in *The Future of Religions*, edited Jerald C. Brauer, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 36.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Daly, *Pure Lust*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press Books, 1984), 29.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Murray, "Exile, Symbols, and the Courage to Be: The Influence of Paul Tillich on the Womanist Theology of Delores S. Williams" in *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, (Santa Clara, CA: The North American Paul Tillich Society, Summer 2011), Vol. 37, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Williams, 158.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume II, Reason and Revelation Being and God*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 275.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 231.

<sup>20</sup> Online:

<http://www.billressl.us/tillichparklabyrinth.pdf> Accessed: December 29, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Jane was the daughter of Robert Lee Blaffer a founder of the Humble Oil Co. (now ExxonMobil) and granddaughter of William T. Campbell a founder of Texaco. More importantly however she had attended classes led by Paul Tillich at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

<sup>22</sup> Herbert Bisno, *The Philosophy of Social Work*, (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1952).

<sup>23</sup> Ram Canaan, *The Newer Deal: Social Work and Religion in Partnership*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 64.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Philosophy of Social Work*, 179.

<sup>26</sup> As noted in William Pauck and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989): With Reinhold Niebuhr's support Tillich joined the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in New York City and began a quest to un-

derstand his new country. Within seven years “he had seen the entire country . . . Chicago and the Midwest, the Southeast, New England, and finally the west coast, traveling as far northwest as Lake Louise in Canada . . . he traveled by bus, train, and car . . . he came in contact with people in almost every walk of life; he asked questions, and he listened” (180). From his students at Union “he learned about the American mind and its uniqueness . . . that it joined action to thought, tested theory by means of assessing its practical consequences, and regarded the Christian church as a social agent” (177).

<sup>27</sup> Tillich, *The Philosophy of Social Work*, 157.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Tillich, *My Search for Absolutes*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 50.

<sup>29</sup> See: Selfhelp Community Services, Inc. About Us, (New York, NY: Selfhelp Community Services, Inc., 2013), online: <http://www.selfhelp.net/about-us> Accessed: January 26, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> See: The Selfhelp Home, (Chicago, IL: The Selfhelp Home, 2011), online: <http://www.selfhelphome.org/index.asp> Accessed: November 12, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Max Siporin, *Introduction to Social Work Practice*, (London, UK: Collier Macmillan, Ltd., 1975) was a widely used social work textbook in its day and noted Tillich’s *The Philosophy of Social Work* and the concept of listening love. Others followed noting Tillich’s understandings of love, including: Edward Canda and Leola Dyrud Furman, *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Heart of Helping*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010); Allen Ivey, Mary Bradford Ivey, and Carlos Zalaquett, *Intentional Interviewing & Counseling: Facilitating Client Development in a Multicultural Society*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2007); and, Karla Krogsrud Miley, Michael O’Melia, and Brenda DuBois, *Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (New York, NY: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2007). Donald Krill, *Existential Social Work*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1978) attempted to clarify systemic and spiritual ideas for social work utilizing a number of texts from existential theologians including Tillich’s *Love, Power and Justice* and *The Courage to Be*. Walter Dean, Jr., “Back to Activism” in *Social Work*, (Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers, Vol. 22, No. 5, September 1977) built upon definitions of legal deficiencies and ontology from Tillich’s *The Philosophy of Social Work*. Estella Norwood Evans, “Liberation Theology, Empowerment Theory and Social Work Practice with the Oppressed” in *International Social*

*Work*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Vol. 35, No. 2, April 1992) and Olive Stevenson, “Taken from Home” in *The Values of Change in Social Work*, ed. Steven Shardlow, (London, UK: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005) expanded on understandings of justice from *Love, Power and Justice*. William Brueggemann, *The Practice of Macro Social Work*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Stamford, CT: Brooks/Cole, 2002) noted Tillich’s understanding of objectification from *The Person in a Technical Society*.

<sup>32</sup> NASW Code of Ethics online:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp> Accessed October 26, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Attributed to Mary Daly, *Pure Lust*, 29.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, 158.

<sup>35</sup> In particular the community work of Jane Addams at the Hull-House and the Rev. Graham Taylor at the Chicago Commons. Addams is known as one of the founding mothers of social work together with Mary Richmond. Taylor, who taught at the Chicago Theological Seminary, is known as the father of social work education.

<sup>36</sup> William Ressler, *Doing Liberative Pastoral Social Work: Towards an Integrative Paradigm Grounded in Tillichian Theology and Bowen Systems Theory*, Dissertation, (Chicago, IL: Chicago Theological Seminary, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Tillich, *The Philosophy of Social Work*, 180.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>40</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 182-220.

<sup>41</sup> Tillich, *The Philosophy of Social Work*, 180.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-182.

<sup>47</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 182-220.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-196.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications*, (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1954), 85.

<sup>50</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume III*, 188-212.

<sup>51</sup> Tillich, *Philosophy of Social Work*, 182.

<sup>52</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, 196-212.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Tillich, “The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian,” in *The Future of Religions*, ed. Jerald Brauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 94.

**PAUL TILlich'S LEGACY IN  
PSYCHOLOGY AND PASTORAL  
PSYCHOTHERAPY<sup>1</sup>**

**PAMELA COOPER-WHITE**

At a meeting of the AAR Psychology, Culture and Religion Group some years back, we watched a video of Paul Tillich in conversation with Carl Rogers in 1965 at San Diego State College.<sup>2</sup> It struck us at the time—and in re-reading the transcript this still comes across—that these two men (known as “great men” and as representatives of the respective traditions of psychology and theology) in the process of their conversation replicated each one’s method quite exactly. That is to say that Rogers, while offering his own point of view at times, spent much of his “air time” artfully mirroring Tillich’s statements and posing questions, and Tillich in every instance gave a lengthy and somewhat lecture-like answer. So Tillich’s correlational method was enacted in vivo, with psychology/the concerns of the world raising up issues and questions, and theology/the Christian message giving authoritative answers!

### **The Influence of Psychology on Tillich**

We know that Tillich’s correlational method was groundbreaking during his lifetime, and that in fact he saw it as a much more mutual dialogical process than it has sometimes been characterized to be (although in his essay “Existentialism and Psychoanalysis” he was still insisting that “The interpretation of man’s predicament by psychoanalysis raises the question that is implied in man’s very existence. Systematic theology has to show that the religious symbols are answers to this question.”<sup>3</sup>) Nevertheless, we know that Tillich was profoundly influenced by psychology, particularly in his earlier life by Freud,<sup>4</sup> later by Jung,<sup>5</sup> and still later, especially after coming to the United States, by a variety of humanist and existential approaches to psychotherapy and psychology, including a deep friendship with the analyst Karen Horney,<sup>6</sup> and ongoing, rich interaction from 1941 to 1945 as a member of the New York Psychology Group (which included Erich Fromm,<sup>7</sup> Rollo May, Carl Rogers, the anthropologist Ruth Benedict, several Jungian analysts, several Union Seminary professors, and the pastoral

theologian Seward Hiltner, among others.<sup>8</sup>) Earlier, in the years after WWI and on into the 1930s, much of this influence was through personal relationships—in psychiatrist Earl Loomis’s words “His recovery of the idea of the ‘demonic’ doubtless served him as one major bridge between religio-philosophical and analytical thinking. His circle of ‘bohemian’ socio-political friends put him constantly in touch with analytically informed intellectuals.”<sup>9</sup>

The influence of psychoanalysis and psychology on Tillich has been examined in detail by Terry Cooper in his book *Paul Tillich and Psychology*.<sup>10</sup> Cooper carefully analyzes in particular the discussions of the New York group, which in his words “dealt with issues that are very much with us today, such as whether faith can be psychologically explained, the meaning of transcendence, the relationship between psychotherapy and ethics, the appropriateness of self-love, and whether human love is parallel with Divine love.”<sup>11</sup> In his interactions with the New York group, Cooper writes,

In my view, Tillich’s involvement in the New York Psychology Group reinforces the notion that he practiced a method closer to the revised correlational approach [e.g., of David Tracy<sup>12</sup>]. Tillich engaged answers as well as questions. He did not assume a privileged position in which other people simply brought up their secular questions. He was quite aware, for instance, that Fromm held a competing worldview with its own answers and resolutions to the problems of human existence. [Fromm was an adamant and articulate atheist existentialist—PC-W]. Tillich did not simply “answer” Fromm’s questions; instead, he disagreed with Fromm’s solutions.<sup>13</sup>

The influence *on* Tillich of psychology in general, and psychoanalysis in particular, is woven throughout his works. Many of the deep existential themes he revisited in his work over and over have both psychological and theological resonances, particularly perhaps in the realm of theological anthropology: in Tillich’s words, “Man [sic] must be considered under three aspects: first, under the aspect of his created goodness or original innocence; second, under the aspect of the distorted existential situation in which he finds himself actually; third, under the aspect of his rehabilitation through healing or saving powers which he experiences in life and history.”<sup>14</sup> The human

experiences of fear of death, fear of the unknown, loneliness, and guilt were primary thematic issues during Tillich's lifetime for both psychoanalysts and theologians, and both were deeply interested in healing and change: again, in Tillich's words, the "Old Being" of estrangement from oneself, others, and life in general, with its attendant risks of cynicism and despair, toward actualization of the "New Being" of "reconciliation and transformation."<sup>15</sup> Tillich reframed the category of "sin" from Augustinian concupiscence to the inescapable human condition of separation and alienation—from self, from others, from life, and from God.<sup>16</sup> Tillich embraced the mid-century language of "human potential,"<sup>17</sup> and saw the aim of pastoral care in particular to assist persons in coming to self-acceptance<sup>18</sup>—not as resignation, but as existential courage in the face of the human condition, the "courage to be."<sup>19</sup>

### Tillich's Legacy in Psychology

While it is therefore relatively easy to discern the influence of psychology on Tillich, it is somewhat harder to pin down *Tillich's* direct legacy in psychology. In one sense, much of Tillich's influence can be said to be indirect—through years of ongoing intellectual ferment and exchange with such figures as Fromm, May, Loomis, Rogers, and others, Tillich held his colleagues' feet to the fire, keeping the philosophical (if not traditionally theological) foundations of existential therapy and psychological theory at the forefront of these psychologists' thinking about both theory and practice. In *Tillich and Psychology*, Cooper only gives 23 pages out of 218 pages overall to the topic of "Tillich's Ongoing Relevance."<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, Tillich's influence is directly discernible in three particular arenas: first, the theory and practice of a branch of psychology called "existential psychotherapy"; second, the theory and practice of *pastoral* counseling and psychotherapy; and third, methodology in pastoral and practical theology through Tillich's method of correlation.

### *Existential Psychotherapy*

A search through *current* existential therapy websites does not typically name Tillich as a source—more commonly found are Kierkegaard, Camus, Sartre, Nietzsche, and Viktor Frankl,<sup>21</sup>

although the Wikipedia article does mention him as having influence through translations from his German works, along with Otto Rank, Swiss analyst Ludwig Binswanger, Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, among others.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, one of the most influential existential psychotherapists in the 1970s and 80s, James Bugental, whose books *Psychotherapy and Process* and *The Art of Psychotherapy* were required reading in many humanistic and pastoral counseling programs, was directly influenced by Tillich's *The Courage to Be*. Bugental saw in Tillich's language of "ground of being," and the courage to "overcome" the inherent anxiety of being human, a congenial spiritual (though not explicitly religious) way of thinking about the goals of therapy—therapy as opening a door to greater human freedom and exercise of ethical responsibility.<sup>23</sup> Tillich is also cited by Irvin Yalom throughout his major textbook *Existential Psychotherapy*, particularly in reference to ontological anxiety and the failure to live one's own allotted life. Yalom quotes Tillich saying "neurosis is the way of avoiding non-being by avoiding being."<sup>24</sup> For Yalom, such insights did not replace the dynamic insights of Freud and Jung, but reoriented therapy toward the root anxiety of human beings "twisting between two fears—the fear of life (and its intrinsic isolation) and the fear of death"<sup>25</sup>—with the goal of therapy to help individuals inhabit their full potential.

### *Pastoral Counseling and Psychotherapy*

In addition to his intellectual influence on existential psychology, Tillich was closely involved during his years in America with the emerging field of clinical pastoral education and pastoral counseling—on the one hand promoting the importance of pastoral theology among systematic theologians with whom he had great influence, and on the other hand, participating in conferences of pastoral theologians, therapists, and chaplains, and serving on the board of the journal *Pastoral Psychology*. While a professor at Union Theological Seminary, he was a strong supporter of the founding of the curricular concentration in "Psychiatry and Religion," and his works have been taught to generations of pastoral theologians and practitioners for decades. Tillich stated that "care, including pastoral care, is something uni-

versally human” and “care is essentially mutual: he who gives care also receives care.”<sup>26</sup>

Tillich’s definition of pastoral care in his address to a very early meeting of the National Conference of Clinical Pastoral Education in 1958 is still relevant today: “a *helping encounter in the dimension of ultimate concern*.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, it may be even more relevant and more widely accepted today, as the whole field of pastoral care—with its long-standing embeddedness in Protestant Christian theology and helping paradigms—is now being challenged by the need for a much wider inter-religious and intercultural approach. In the shift in nomenclature from “pastoral care” to “spiritual care” in medical and nursing departments, hospitals, prisons, and military chaplaincy, we see both Tillich’s definition and method—grounded in his own Pauline and Lutheran tradition and in “the Christian message,” but even more deeply grounded in the ineffable, the Unconditional, the Ground of Being from which all religious and spiritual traditions mysteriously arise.

These insights of Tillich resonate with much more recent developments in pastoral theology, care and counseling, in which postcolonial notions of hybridity and more postmodern, constructivist, and narrative influences are being adopted in pastoral counseling training,<sup>28</sup> with particular attention in my own work to the relational psychoanalytic concepts of intersubjectivity and multiplicity of self—and God.<sup>29</sup> A dialectical, hermeneutical, and intercultural sensibility is in the air in pastoral theological theory and practice!

To test out what actual influence Tillich had on contemporary psychotherapy, I did a bit of “crowd sourcing” among three groups of the practice of contemporary therapists: the International Association of Relational Psychoanalysts and Psychotherapists or “IARPP” (a secular organization of contemporary analysts doing cutting-edge theory and practice), the Society for the Exploration of Psychoanalytic Therapies and Theology or “SEPTI” (an organization that grew out of CAPS, the Christian Association for Psychological Studies), and the American Association of Pastoral Counselors or “AAPC,” in which liberal mainline clergy predominate. By email I posed the question: (*How, if at all*) *has Paul Tillich had an influence on your theory and practice of psychotherapy?* And I added, “Even if your answer is “Not at all!” or “Paul who?” I’d like to hear that from you!”

I received no responses at all from the analysts. A few members of SEPTI responded as follows: Janet Stauffer, Professor of Marriage and Family and Dean of Students at Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown, Pennsylvania, wrote:

A mentor once said to the “No is also a yes to life” attributing it to Paul Tillich. I have used that repeatedly in helping persons who are over obligated to others to find permission, indeed the demand that true giving requires both yes and no.

Another Christian psychologist and Marriage and Family therapist, Gary Ventimiglia, stated at first that he was more influenced by Buber than by Tillich, but then revised his response, saying:

[Y]our question stimulated thoughts about Buber and Tillich and also the latter’s relationship to Rollo May whose writings have influenced my life very much. In starting to think about all this I remembered my particular beefs with Tillich’s most famous work, *The Courage to Be*. This is a really useful book on the development of atheistic existentialist thought and its impact on 20<sup>th</sup> century theology. My beefs with Tillich are more on the theological side concerning his “God above God,” an “absolute faith” concepts. Yet the latter introduces Tillich’s love of the importance of an existential response to the real in life. So I remember that he wrote a particularly helpful section in *The Theology of Culture* entitled, “The Theological Significance of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis.” So I looked at that again and saw my notes in it and lo and behold, I really like what he says, and actually do practice according to some of his assertions. I knew this when I first read this book 10 + years ago. I just forgot about it. So you could say that unconsciously, I have been influenced by his thought for many years now!”

In the other (only two) responses from SEPTI, one said “not at all” and the other said he was sure Tillich was there in his background, but he couldn’t specifically identify a direct influence.

The happy surprise came from the Pastoral Counselors. I had 24 responses. Seven of those took the time to say “not much” or “not at all.” One indicated that he had shifted in mid-career from Tillich to Barth as his primary theological resource. The remaining 17 had very positive responses. Many cited having been profoundly

shaped by Tillich's "Ground of Being," and the concepts of existential anxiety, "person-in-environment," and "ultimate concern." *The Courage to Be, Love, Power and Justice*, and "You Are Accepted" were the most often cited texts. One had paired Tillich's theology with Kohut's Self Psychology theory. Several acknowledged Tillich's influence, but considered it indirect, from their early training. Brian Hooper, a pastoral counselor in Nashville wrote,

We had to read Tillich as part of my training to become an AAPC Fellow. My mentor had done his Ph.D. in Tillich and so even if not widely read in Tillich, I know I was influenced in a "second generation" way. Additionally, the idea of being and non-being together with conceiving of God as the "ground of being" has indeed influenced my ability to address my clients' spiritual concerns quite apart from religious agreement or disagreement. And long ago, I was touched by the idea that faith is accepting that we have been accepted; this has assisted me through my own crises of faith. Listening for the existential anxiety and assisting my clients to find hope in accepting self as accepted by God/Ground of Being has been immensely valuable, and I think it has especially assisted me to accept them even as they are undifferentiated from some crisis through which they are journeying.

Scott Sullender, a professor at San Francisco Theological Seminary wrote more of Tillich's influence on his personal spiritual formation:

In effect, Tillich and Tillich's thought saved me for the Christian faith. It made sense of the Christian faith, and of the human predicament, in ways that provided me with a map guided me in my subsequent spiritual and psychological development. His *Courage to Be*, marked up and ragged, still sits on my shelf.

Pastoral counselor Sheryl Marshall stated, "I still find his work centering."

Some of the most elaborated responses came from several senior practitioners in the field. John Patton, now retired from Columbia Seminary, and past president of AAPC, ACPE and the Society for Pastoral Theology, wrote:

My Chicago dissertation was entitled "A Theory of Interpersonal Ministry Based on the Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich and the Psychological Theory of Harry Stack Sullivan." Those two writers have clearly influ-

enced my theory and practice of pastoral counseling, which is inclusive of pastoral psychotherapy. The generic way of expressing the thesis is that the practice of care and counseling requires both a conscious expression of what the therapists represents (in Tillich "transparency to the divine") and an explicit theory of the way to practice (sensitivity, the ability of provide security, and an honest and genuine expression of the therapist's self.) In my last little book on pastoral counseling I described this as "relational wisdom," the pastor's specialty in an interdisciplinary context.

Harville Hendrix, a pastoral counselor and founder of Imago Couples Therapy (made popular by Oprah), reflected:

I wrote my doctoral dissertation on Tillich and Freud's view of anxiety. Tillich was my theological mentor in divinity school and saved me from exiting religion and theology all together with his ontology. While I have modified his views from the singularity of being to being as connecting, his Ground of Being as the Source and his theory of anxiety as the imagination of non-being, a terror behind all human suffering, has been a deep guide and source for all my work in psychology and couples therapy. He moved theology from Christian provincialism to inclusiveness, and his view of anxiety included the psychological ground of all suffering. He is beyond contemporary in his depth.

Two respondents also highlighted Tillich's relevance in interreligious and cultural terms: David Augsburg, who wrote *Pastoral Counseling across Cultures* in the 1980s, stated:

(1) "Communication as participation" initiated exploration of theology of communication, and opened a rich vein for exploration of systems theory and theology. (2) His concept of "Correlation" facilitated dialogue between disciplines—theology, ethics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology offered a model that respected both while compromising neither. (3) A theology that was grounded in a dialectic between the essentialism of classic German philosophy and French existentialism brought Essence and existence into dialogue and synthesis in constructive new ways. (4) Obviously, his equating grace and acceptance became a centering point that allowed dialogue between the Rogerian unconditional

positive regard tsunami and a theological understanding of grace as acceptance on multiple levels on a long spectrum that stretches from ultimate concerned depths to the undivided attention/accurate empathy offered in an isolated therapeutic hour; (5) “Love, power and justice” brought together two poles of union and separation in a just synthesis that applied Hegelian dynamics to the center of psychological theory, conflict studies theory, social theory. I could go on for another five topics, and I would especially note how African American Doctoral Students found a home in Tillich’s thought that had been suggested by the many uses by Martin Luther King, Jr.

And one of the younger respondents, Siroj Sorajjakool, a professor of religion, psychology and counseling at Loma Linda University, wrote as follows:

When I got married my professor gave me a gift; it was Paul Tillich *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 – 3. Took me three years to complete reading. When I did my qual, he was one of the theologians I picked. Being from a Buddhist country [Thailand], Tillich makes so much sense particularly his concept of non-being and the courage to be in the midst of non-being. I think in many different ways, it takes Buddhism to a different level. In Tillich, it is not just the ability to embrace non-being but the courage to live meaningfully in the midst of non-being. So for me Tillich helps me learn to embrace finiteness, vulnerability, brokenness, mental illness, and even death with courage to maintain goodness and compassion even when confronted with non-being.

It may be worth noting that most of my respondents were pastoral counselors in their 50s or older. Tillich’s direct influence was certainly strong among my generation and older colleagues who read Tillich in our divinity and doctoral programs, and existentialism was the exciting intellectual paradigm. With feminism/Womanism, post-colonialism and the increase of published writings from women and communities of color and the global south, there has been a concomitant increase in the influence of feminist and liberation theologies and indigenous, experiential-based paradigms for pastoral theology and care. Pioneering voices in this move to authorize experience as a source for theology included James

Cone’s *Black Theology of Liberation* (in which he cited Tillich extensively),<sup>30</sup> and Ada María Isasi-Díaz’ *Mujerista Theology*,<sup>31</sup> among a growing number of others. In the postmodern era following the Holocaust, the atom bomb, and the Vietnam war, suspicion of authorities also led to the erosion of influence of heroic “great men” including the great European and American male thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Tillich’s influence is probably waning among younger scholars and practitioners in the pastoral field—and yet, Tillich’s own path-breaking intuitions about the importance of human experience as a source for truth, and the correlation between theology and life in the world may have also paved the way, with or without direct attribution, for a more experience-grounded systematic and practical theological method in the past two decades or so.

#### *Tillich’s Influence on Pastoral and Practical Theological Methodology*

This leads to the final arena of Tillich’s influence, his influence on pastoral and practical theological methodology. Tillich, like all existentialist thinkers, emphasized the importance of context in theology at a time when “systematic” theology was very often so abstract as to be unintelligible to all but an elite few scholars in the ivory tower (or steeple). At roughly the same time, psychology—at first through field theory and family systems theories—was breaking down the one-on-one medical model of psychotherapy established during the heyday of a particular type of classical psychoanalysis in the U.S. in the 1940s through the 70s. The notion that the most symptomatic member of a family, or the “identified patient” (the “IP”) might be carrying the dysfunction and distress of the whole family contradicted notions of mental or emotional illness as something purely intrapsychic, a result of internal unconscious conflicts within isolated individuals. Pastoral counseling, with a few exceptions, pretty much left psychoanalysis cold after the 1960s—regrettably, from my point of view, but that’s a matter for another day!—because a theological method of correlation between theology and the world, or between the human person and the divine, seemed to be better “correlated” with either a Rogerian human potential approach, or with the then more contextual family systems approach.

In pastoral theology, and in practical theology more generally (as that umbrella term has come more recently to take on a life of its own as an academic discipline), Tillich's method of correlation has been probably the most significant framework for all our work. The method has been used most in recent times through the further critique and elaboration by David Tracy,<sup>32</sup> as a "mutual critical correlation" in which both theology and the world pose questions, and both give answers—and the methods of social science and hermeneutical analysis can be applied to both. Mark Kline Taylor's liberation-oriented work in *Remembering Esperanza*<sup>33</sup> has given further impetus in pastoral theology to viewing experience and theory or theology as a false dichotomy, and there is now a growing number of methodological texts in practical theology in which some form of generative spiral is used to theorize the interplay of both, as in Don Browning's "practice-theory-practice" model,<sup>34</sup> and Emmanuel Lartey's "Learning Cycle for Liberative Pastoral Praxis."<sup>35</sup> Even as systematic theology as a discipline has moved increasingly to embrace human experience and the relevance of theology for practice,<sup>36</sup> as of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, concern with extremes of human suffering, evil, and the question of theodicy have perhaps eclipsed the theme of existential anxiety per se, although they are related. But theologians, both systematic and pastoral, continue to walk through the door Tillich threw open, correlating human experience with theological insight—in the words of Jürgen Moltmann, theology now must address "the open wound of life in this world."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This article was first presented to the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Nov. 21, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> A transcript of this conversation is published as "Dialogue: Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers," *The Meaning of Health: Essays in Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, and Religion by Paul Tillich*, ed. Perry LeFevre (Chicago: Exploration Press/Chicago Theological Seminary, 1984), 194-202.

<sup>3</sup> Tillich, "Existentialism and Psychoanalysis," in *The Meaning of Health*, 94.

<sup>4</sup> Tillich's early mention of Freud appears in *The Religious Situation*, trans. H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), in which he acknowledges Freud's discovery of "the purely psychological" method [as opposed to prior approaches

to psychology as physical degeneracy – PC-W]: "This discovery was important ethically and religiously particularly because it recognized—with questionable over-emphasis, to be sure—the fundamental importance of the erotic sphere for all aspects of psychical life...Speaking in the language of religion, psychoanalysis and the literature allied with it cast light upon the demonic background of life. But wherever the demonic appears there the question as to its correlate, the divine, will also be raised. Speaking psychoanalytically, this is the question as to the power which can sublimate the erotic drive present in all things psychical." (p. 32 - thanks to Eric Crump, PhD, for this reference). Much later, while at Harvard, Tillich wrote appreciatively about "the depths of Freud" in "Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, and Theology," in *The Meaning of Health*, 151-9. Tillich draws four lines of intersection and even influence from "depth psychology" on theology in "The Theological Significance of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis," in *The Meaning of Health*, 81-95. For a discussion of this relationship between Tillich's theology and psychoanalysis, see also William R. Rogers, "Tillich and Depth Psychology," in *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, ed. James Luther Adams, Wilhelm Pauck, and Roger Lincoln Shinn (New York: Harper's, 1985), 102-118.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ann Belford Ulanov, "The Anxiety of Being: Paul Tillich and Depth Psychology" in *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, ed. James Luther Adams, Wilhelm Pauck, and Roger Lincoln Shinn (New York: Harper's, 1985), 119-136.

<sup>6</sup> Tillich describes Horney as his "great and wonderful friend" and describes their serious debate about the question "Is man essentially healthy?" "Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, and Theology," in *The Meaning of Health*, 157.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., Guyton Hammon, *Man in Estrangement: A Comparison of the Thought of Paul Tillich and Erich Fromm* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1965).

<sup>8</sup> The group's discussions are detailed in Terry D. Cooper, *Paul Tillich and Psychology: Historic and Contemporary Explorations in Theology, Psychology, and Ethics*. Mercer Tillich Studies. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 99-145.

<sup>9</sup> Earl A. Loomis, Jr., "The Psychiatric Legacy of Paul Tillich," in *The Intellectual Legacy of Paul Tillich*, ed. James R. Lyons (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), 82.

<sup>10</sup> Cooper, *Paul Tillich and Psychology*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, back cover.

<sup>12</sup> David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); see also Tracy, "Tillich and Contemporary Theology," in Adams et al., eds., *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, 260-277, also cited in Cooper, *Paul Tillich and Psychology*, 199.

<sup>13</sup> Cooper, *Paul Tillich and Psychology*, 199.

<sup>14</sup> Tillich, "Psychotherapy and a Christian Interpretation of Human Nature," in Tillich, *The Meaning of Health*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> Tillich, "Theology and Counseling," in Tillich, *The Meaning of Health*, 117.

<sup>16</sup> "You Are Accepted," in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), e.g., p. 155.

<sup>17</sup> Tillich, "The Theology of Pastoral Care: The Spiritual and Theological Foundations of Pastoral Care," in Tillich, *The Meaning of Health*, 126.

<sup>18</sup> Tillich, "You Are Accepted," 153-163.

<sup>19</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952).

<sup>20</sup> Cooper, *Tillich and Psychology*, 195-218.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., "Existential Psychology – History of the Movement," online at <http://psychology.jrank.org/pages/229/Existential-Psychology.html>. (Retrieved Nov. 14, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> See below:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existential\\_therapy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existential_therapy). (Retrieved Nov. 14, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> James F.T. Bugental, *Psychotherapy and Process: The Fundamentals of an Existential-Humanistic Approach* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978), and Bugental, *The Art of the Psychotherapist* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987).

<sup>24</sup> Irvin Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy*, 42, 74, 111, 147, 282.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 74, citing Otto Rank.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Tillich, "The Theology of Pastoral Care," *Pastoral Psychology* 10/7 (1959), 22.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., Emmanuel Yarketkwei Lartey, *In Living Colour: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003), Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2006), and Melinda McGarrah-Sharp, *Misunderstanding Stories: Toward a Postcolonial Pastoral Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013); Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress

Press, 2001); and Pamela Cooper-White, *Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), and Cooper-White, *Many Voices: Pastoral Psychotherapy in Relational and Theological Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Cooper-White, *Shared Wisdom; Many Voices; and Braided Selves: Collected Essays on Multiplicity, God and Persons* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation, Fortieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010), orig. publ. 1970.

<sup>31</sup> Ada-María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*. See also Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

<sup>33</sup> Mark Lewis Taylor, *Remembering Esperanza: A Cultural-Political Theology for North American Praxis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990).

<sup>34</sup> Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991)

<sup>35</sup> Lartey, *In Living Colour*, 132. See also Dorothy C. Bass and Craig R. Dykstra, *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Pamela and Michael Cooper-White, *Exploring Practices of Ministry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015); Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990); and Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

<sup>36</sup>E.g., Edward Farley *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); and Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975); see also Pamela Cooper-White, "Suffering," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 23-31.

<sup>37</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 49.

<b>RESPONSE</b>
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Response to Panel on the Legacy of  
Tillich's Theology  
Mary Ann Stenger  
November 21, 2015

Other panelists have highlighted several central aspects of Tillich's theological legacy: the method of correlation, the role of experience in theology, and the possible applicability of his broad analyses to culture, Black liberation theology, natural science, and psychology. I applaud their insights but want to discuss some areas that have not been talked about—both to note aspects that have not had as much impact but also to point to elements that have or could have significance for present theological work.

It is striking that no one discussed Tillich's understanding of revelation, the reality of God, Christology, the doctrine of Spiritual Presence, or the Kingdom of God, all major parts of his *Systematic Theology*. I am not surprised, but I want to emphasize that much of what many of us find of lasting significance or of helpful applicability is Tillich's theological methodology and his many analyses of religion and culture. Much less do people carry on his specifically theological doctrines.

Some scholars have suggested in the past that Tillich played a role in the founding of the American Academy of Religion—not a direct role but an influence in looking at religion through the lenses of a variety of disciplines and approaches—not only psychology and science represented here but also philosophy, sociology, inter-religious work, and more. His phenomenological analysis of faith or religion as ultimate concern and his assertion of the interconnection of religion and culture have been picked up by many scholars, as Harvey Cox did today. Even the Supreme Court made use of Tillich's idea of religion as ultimate concern in a decision on conscientious objection in 1965.<sup>1</sup>

One could also turn to the radical Tillich that pushed doubt, relativized religious claims, and disrupted traditional theological and philosophical approaches. Among those who moved on from that side of Tillich are the Death of God theologians Thomas Altizer and Gabriel Vahanian, Black theologian James Cone (mentioned by Willie

Jennings and Pamela Cooper-White) and feminist theologian Mary Daly. Russell Re Manning has recently produced an edited volume entitled *Retrieving the Radical Tillich* that includes essays that relate Tillich to Adorno, Zizek, philosophical atheism, critique of imperialism, and more. In several autobiographical statements, Tillich indicates that he saw himself “parting from accepted lines of belief and thought” both in Germany and in America.

His ontological analyses of all reality, including the concepts of courage, love, power, and justice, offered a depth of understanding our world that brought together philosophy, psychology, and politics as well as religious ideas. Bob Russell opened up new applications of Tillich's ontological ideas, such as essential being and existence and connecting negations of being not only to humans but also to the whole universe. Pamela Cooper-White also indicated the impact of ideas in *The Courage to Be* for several psychologists and counselors.

I would add that some early feminist theologians saw Tillich's ontological theology as an alternative to traditional male-dominated Christian theology. It is interesting to note that Tillich recognized this dimension of his thought in a brief discussion of female symbolism in relationship to the Trinity (in the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*). He suggests that his symbol of the “ground of being” could point to several mother-qualities and that his emphases on the power of being, the self-sacrifice of Jesus as the Christ, and his use of Spiritual Presence reduce “the predominance of the male element in the symbolization of the divine” and transcend the male-female alternative in religious symbolism.<sup>2</sup>

Another area of Tillich's thought that I think deserves more attention is his theological ethics, especially as expressed in his ontological analysis in *Love, Power and Justice*.<sup>3</sup> Even more than his analysis of love, his insights about power, equality, and justice can be helpful in addressing current politics. His affirmation of equality, freedom, and community as essential aspects of justice works well with United Nations statements about women's rights or political critiques of economic inequality. But especially striking is his understanding of the complex nature of power, both for personal relations and for group relations. He recognizes that every encounter of one human with another involves relations of power, noting

that such power can be expressed in gestures as well as language; moreover, he sees every encounter as a struggle of power with power.<sup>4</sup> The ideals of justice become mired in political struggles.

As Willie James Jennings noted, Tillich offered an understanding of faith that opened up possibilities for liberation, both in the secular arena as well as in religious communities. For some, his ideas opened up the possibility of resistance, a direction taken by James Cone or by feminist Mary Daly. I agree that his understanding of religious depth in culture and his approach to the symbolic were key aspects in this. But I also suggest another aspect that holds promise: Tillich's critique of idolatry, his argument that no finite being is ultimate in itself. In a discussion of ultimacy and holiness in the first volume of his 1951 *Systematic Theology*, he states: "Justice is the criterion which judges idolatrous holiness." He connects this to the prophets attacking "demonic forms of holiness in the name of justice."<sup>5</sup> I know that Stephen Ray has made a very incisive cultural analysis incorporating Tillich's discussion of the demonic in relation to critical race theory. We need more such analysis of how peoples or even ideas such as capitalism are absolutized in ways that lead to injustice for another group of people.

As Harvey Cox noted in his presentation, religious cultural exegesis today may require a greater degree of specificity than what Tillich provided. Perhaps this reflects our living in a post-modern era of plurality where universal claims and grand narratives are suspect. But what is also interesting is that it is precisely the more universal aspects of Tillich's thought that allow for and perhaps even invite us to apply them to specific aspects of our culture and politics. Sometimes, I think we overuse Tillich's idea of ultimate concern as we see dimensions of it not only in our consumer culture but also in sports or in other forms of popular culture. Do these activities really reflect ultimate concern with deep meaning coming through them? And, if for some they do, then perhaps we need cultural critiques that question whether such ultimates are really ultimate. We can even ask whether people hold anything as really ultimate or whether many simply engage in various intermediate concerns, moving from one activity to another—living in the moment—more superficially than deeply.

Cooper-White suggests that in her field perhaps those most influenced by Tillich are people

in their 50s and older, with much more culturally specific thinkers having greater influence today. Yet she also notes that it may be Tillich's emphasis on experience as a source of truth that opened up the many expressions put before us today.

Will future theologians of culture, science, psychology, race, gender, and ethnicity connect to Tillich, or will they continue to move well beyond him, just as he moved beyond many aspects of the traditions of his own time? I suggest that Tillich's legacy lies not only in his universalizing approach that can be applied in multiple specific ways but also in his openness to new ideas and his willingness to push beyond the expected. In his autobiographical essay, "On the Boundary," Tillich identified three aspects involved in his emigration to America, understood spiritually as well as physically: "parting from accepted lines of belief and thought; pushing beyond the limits of the obvious; radical questioning that opens up the new and uncharted."<sup>6</sup> Tillich's legacy calls us to critical questioning in every area. We can learn from his insights but we also need to push beyond them. In his last lecture, his last sentence calls theologians to be open to "spiritual freedom both from one's own foundation and for one's own foundation."<sup>7</sup>

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**DESIROUS TRANSFORMATIONS:  
WRITING THEOLOGICALLY/ THEOLOGICAL  
WRITING WITH PAUL TILlich**

HANNAH L. HOFHEINZ

Our writing of knowledge (that is, the ways in which we write down our processes of knowing) is located. Knowledge is positional; writing is positional. And all texts betray the importance of where they were written, just as they betray the importance of who wrote them. The characteristics of a place—characteristics such as its languages and epistemological economies—shape the writing.

But it should also be said that writing transcends the particularity of any location. Once written, texts open toward diverse interpretive possibilities of reading communities—communities who will read the same text to find a range of meanings in different times and different

places. Indeed, for many, this openness for interpretation is what underwrites the liberative potential of writing.

I am immensely grateful to have been welcomed into this panel with an explicit invitation to offer even an unrecognizable Tillich. And in many ways, what I offer here today takes advantage of hermeneutical openness. Rather than talk *about* Tillich, his ideas, or his theology—I want to share a moment of my thinking *with* him. Though it often goes unnamed, Tillich’s theology moves beside mine and mine moves beside his. I have made him my dance partner. He is my teacher and my theological conversation partner.

But, to be sure, I do not intend this dance as an explanation or analysis of his thinking. Nor do I seek to extend *or* to reread it. Something else happens when we make our intimacies manifest: there can be a liberating creativity of meaning. This, I will suggest, is very much needed in our theological writing today.

Now geographic, spatial metaphors saturate language for approaching and transmitting knowledge. “The *boundary* is the best place for acquiring knowledge,” Tillich tells us.<sup>8</sup> Donna Haraway “situates” and “embodies” knowledge. Enrique Dussel teaches us to think from the *underside* of history, while liberationists of all stripes proclaim the importance of theological knowledge located *within* communities of suffering and struggle. Queer theorists invite knowledge *out of the closets* and *into our boudoirs*.

Surveying the contexts of and for theologies, tracing social locations, and drawing epistemological maps exposes biases that render some groups—groups such as poor women from “peripheral” parts of the globe—invisible, silent or disposable and disproportionately affected by the suffering, violence, and harm of the world. We have located (and relocated) knowledge to embrace those who have been excluded. The political and theological importance of this continuing work is clear.

Yet for a moment here (though, honestly, probably only for a moment here), I want to do something different and turn away from these metaphors—even from the languages of borders, boundaries, and margins.

My work troubles the sufficiency of geographical metaphors, because we need to broaden our imaginations. I want us to consider writing knowledge positioned by *intimacy*. If I were my

other teacher, Marcella Althaus-Reid, I would say it this way: We need to think about the intimate positions of knowledge—sexual, erotic, loving, indecent, relational positions of knowledge. We need to think about how we write the intimate closeness of the world, ourselves, and God. We especially need to think about how we write intimate embraces of those who are excluded and suffering.

There is epistemological significance to the ever-shifting positions that our bodies find in the intimacies of being a human grasped by God. As Jennifer Cooke writes in *Scenes of Intimacy: Reading, Writing, and Theorizing Contemporary Culture*: “The ways we write and the forms in which we choose to write about our most intimate states...are capable of altering our conceptions of them.”<sup>9</sup> Intimacy reveals the fundamental instability of identities because it accompanies us even to where our identities fail us and each other. Intimacy troubles our constructed organizations of space. In Kathlyn Breazeale’s words: “intimacy [is] a process of knowing and being known through the practice of relational power.”<sup>10</sup> Intimacy, I suggest, allows us to share in God’s eternal Word without losing the particularity of individualized and contextual knowledge.

Using Tillichian language more directly: Writing intimacies manifests one approach to writing “our cognitive participation in that which is essentially human.”<sup>11</sup> Here I turn (admittedly somewhat arbitrarily) to Tillich’s short essay “Participation and Knowledge.” I could take us many other places in his texts, but this offers clear parallels and so I use it.

Knowledge, Tillich reminds, occurs in the meeting or encounter of subject and object. Like everything finite, knowledge navigates the polarities of existence. It is manifest in the openness of the knower and the known to receive one another—to participate in a common situation—while remaining distinctly separate and detached from one another.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise, Tillich continues, the knower would “invade and destroy” that which the knower seeks to know. The polarity of individualization and participation, which accords to all aspects of being, pertains to knowledge. It, likewise, (I add) pertains to writing.

“Controlling knowledge” occurs when the pole of separation has the upper hand; “existential knowledge” when the pole of participation rises to the fore. As Tillich notes, we need the unifica-

tion of the polarity, a unification that *love* makes potential.

Yet a majority of our theological writing moves on one side or the other of this polarity. Academic genres of writing tend to privilege, prioritize, and reward persuasive articulations of controlling knowledge. The object of the author's and therewith the text's concern is held at a distance so that it can be rendered and communicated as "something" worth knowing and "something" known. In essence, so much of our academic writing tends to uncritically exercise the "methodological imperialism" that Tillich warns of and by which "cognitive commitment and existential knowledge [become] meaningless concepts."<sup>13</sup>

This is particularly dire for theology. I will let Tillich's quintessential words from *Systematic Theology* speak for themselves: Theologians are "not detached from [our] object but [are] involved in it. [We] look at [our] object (which transcends the character of being an object) with passion, fear, and love....[We are] involved – with the whole of [our] existence, with [our] finitude and [our] anxiety, with [our] self-contradictions and [our] despair, with the healing forces in [us] and in [our] social situation...[We] theologians, in short, [are] determined by [our] faith."<sup>14</sup>

Our writing—our practices of writing, the techniques of writing, our "writerly" *praxis*—cannot be held apart from our involvement with ultimate concern, *if* we want our writings to participate in or to contribute to theological knowledge.

We need ways to write "the truth which possesses us, but which we do not possess."<sup>15</sup> We need ways to write—and not just write about—the intimacy at the foundation of our reality, our relationships, and our activities.

Marcella Althaus-Reid teaches that "theology is...an art and a sexual art in the sense that it is mainly preoccupied with the location, the quantity, and the qualitative degrees of *intimacy* between God and humanity."<sup>16</sup> But theology has become too accustomed to speaking *about* our intimacy with God instead of speaking the intimacy.

Rather than writing *about* theology, we need to write our theology. Our words touch the world; our words are touched *by* the world. Moreover, words themselves touch and are touched by God.

We need to write the intimacy of divine caresses that shake, shatter, and bring to ruin the foundations of our broken world.

We need to write the intimacy we share with the ground of our Being.

Althaus-Reid steals Roland Barthes's distinction in *Mythologies* to demarcate writing *about* intimacy from the task of *writing our intimacy* with God. I'll take just a few sentences to quickly review his metaphor. Take the figure of a woodcutter. When he cuts a tree, it may be that he finds himself naming the tree. In this instance, when he speaks the tree, he speaks what he acts. In Barthes's words: the "language is operational, transitively linked to its object; between the tree and [the woodcutter] there is nothing but [his] labor, that is to say, an action." This is political language: "It represents nature for...only inasmuch as [the speaker is] going to transform it."<sup>17</sup> When we no longer want to preserve reality as an image, but instead speak to transform it, our language becomes 'functionally absorbed' by 'the revolution.' Political language, as part of the revolution, makes the world; it does not tell stories about it.

Althaus-Reid grasps firmly onto the transformative effects of Barthes's political speech. We need theology that makes the world, she teaches, not that tells stories about it.

When I write of Tillich, I write the continuing intimacy of my relationship with his theology. I do *not* write *about* Tillich. To write about him would empty my words of significant potential for a range of theological or political import. Similarly, theological writing should not seek to preserve or to freeze textual images of being grasped by ultimate concern. It is the grasping that matters—it is our confrontation and encounter with the abyss and ground of our being that matters—not any finite language about this encounter. Indeed, when we confuse these priorities, when we mistakenly center writing *about* theology, we mistake the finite for the infinite, with all the consequences that mistake entails.

Tillich understood the importance of genre for the communication of theological meaning. For instance, he accepted that the texts of his sermons might provide an easier entry to the existential import of his theological thinking than his systematic theology. Thus he published them. He also understood that for those who come from outside of the Christian circle, we need language

to express human experience other than biblical and ecclesiastical languages.

To write our intimacies, then—not to write *about* our intimacies, *but to write our intimacies*—is to engage a sort of political language that participates in Divine activity. Regardless of whether the substance of the writing can be traced back to our dance partner or whether it can be analytically justified, the activity of writing intimately—and the written texts that result from this activity—matter. In a world that hurts as much as ours currently hurts, it matters a great deal.

We desperately need to find alternatives for writing transformative theologies in our current milieu where the tentacles of economic neoliberal ideology teaches us over and over again that there are no viable alternatives for either the structure or substance of our thinking. Yet, we continue know differently while holding our child's hand or when walking the long road around the island of Lesbos with the refugees who had the fortune to make it safely to shore. The desire that I have to transform the writing of theology by positioning it in intimate encounters with the world grows in the midst of my sustained relationship with Tillich to extend in far reaching directions.

I do not have time here to expand the political edges of intimate writing in today's world and the accompanying liberative possibilities of knowledge, but let me gesture quickly with the hope that we can expand these thoughts together at another time: God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. God walks with the refugees. God lies with the young girl shot and killed by police snipers in Cizre, Turkey just as God lies strangled on the street of New York wheezing, "I can't breathe." God tingles with the tangled limbs of young gay love—*forbidden love*—in Alabama *and* in Nigeria. We do not need to write about the ground of being in these contexts. What we need is theological writing of their intimacy with God; writing that participates in the God's transformative grasping of our painful, violent world.

<sup>1</sup> *United States v. Seeger*, 380, U.S. 163, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 293-294.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 216.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Tillich, "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian," *The Future of Religions*, edited by Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Jennifer Cooke (ed.), *Scenes of Intimacy, Reading, Writing, and Theorizing Contemporary Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Kathlyn A. Breazeales, *Mutual Empowerment: A Theology of Marriage, Intimacy, and Redemption* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Tillich, "Participation and Knowledge: Problems of an Ontology of Cognition" in *Philosophical Writings* ed. by Gunther Wenz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), 387.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 388.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 22-23.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 125.

<sup>16</sup> Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Feetishism: The Scent of Latin American Body Theology" in *Toward a Theology of Eros: Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of Discipline* ed. by Virginia Burrus and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 135-136.

<sup>17</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972), 146.

*In the Summer Bulletin:*

*—More articles from the meeting in Atlanta in November, 2015.*

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**GOD IS IN THE DETAILS: READING  
MIES VAN DER ROHE'S MODERN  
ARCHITECTURE THROUGH TILLICH'S  
THEOLOGY OF CULTURE  
AND TECHNOLOGY**

MIKE GRIMSHAW

In 1933, Paul Tillich (born August 20 1886), dismissed from his position at the university of Frankfurt because of his opposition to the Nazis, went into exile in America to teach at Union Theological Seminary. In that same year, in the face of continued Nazi opposition, Mies van der Rohe (born March 27 1886) and his colleagues closed the Bauhaus art school. Mies' situation was different from that of Tillich, for he was able to stay in Germany for a few more years, being forced to move only when the Nazi's anti-modernist aesthetic took on expressively political forms. As John Berger observes, "...to emigrate is always to dismantle the centre of the world, and so to move into a lost, disoriented world of fragments."<sup>1</sup> In America, in what was a different modernity, Tillich and Mies found themselves as the embodiments of what Caplan terms the Euro-American modernist tropes of "exile, solitude, distance, emptiness, nostalgia and loss."<sup>2</sup>

There are, of course, obvious and significant differences between Tillich and Mies. Perhaps most importantly, Tillich was Lutheran and Mies was from a Catholic background; Tillich was strongly influenced by both socialism and existentialism, Mies was politically disengaged. Yet both wished to express the issues of living in technological modernity, both wished to communicate via their exilic imagination and constructions the spiritual tension of the age. In response they both engaged in the creative hermeneutics of the exilic task whereby "exile provokes new forms of interpretation by defamiliarizing the familiar and familiarizing the unfamiliar...[because of] an experience of marginality that places self-conscious individuals both inside and outside two cultures at the same time."<sup>3</sup>

Their exilic task was a response to the issue identified in Tillich's *Theology of Culture*: "The European danger is a lack of horizontal actualization; the American danger is a lack of vertical depth."<sup>4</sup> From the vantage point of the exilic imagination, both Mies and Tillich, albeit inde-

pendently, attempted a similar synthesis to overcome these dangers. Their mutual perception was that the rise of modern secular, technological society could only be properly understood and engaged with if it is seen in relation to that labeled the religious and the spiritual.

Mies is well known for his oft-quoted statements "less is more" and "god is in the details." Together these two architectural aphorisms drove a modernist aesthetic that took Nietzsche's *Death of God*, secularized it and then re-spiritualized it within the architect's brief. The architect became the prophet and priest of a new modernist aesthetic, the high priest of modernist technology. We can read this though Mark C. Taylor's statement in *about religion* that, "...with the death of God, the high priest of salvation becomes the architect of New Jerusalem which will finally be built."<sup>5</sup> This symbolizes what was to become the driving force of modernist architecture: to build temples of humanism that signified the absence of God. The details are therefore those of the absence of god, of god neither transcendent nor immanent. All we have are the constructions, the human creations—in culture and technology—where only those who can read the details can read the trace of god.

At the heart of Mies's vision was what he termed *Baukunst*; this has been translated as variously the "art of building, the art of construction or building art."<sup>6</sup> Mies himself in 1923 described his underlying theory of *Baukunst* as:

*Baukunst* is the will of an epoch translated into space; living, changing, new. Not yesterday, not tomorrow, only today can be given form. Only this kind of building is creative. Create form out of the nature of the tasks with the methods of our times. This is our task.<sup>7</sup>

Mies, influenced in his task by Aquinas, stated in 1964:

I was interested in the philosophy of values and problems of the spirit...I allowed myself the question "what is the truth? What is the truth?" until I stopped at Thomas Aquinas, you know. I found the answer for that.<sup>8</sup>

For Mies, the answer was in his translation of Aquinas' definition of truth: *Adequatio intellectus et rei*. The Latin meaning is "truth is the correspondence of thing and intellect"; for Mies, it became "truth is the significance of fact."<sup>9</sup> To this must be added his statement from 1938, prefaced by "the goal of creating order out of the godforsaken con-

fusion of our time” whereby “[n]othing can express the aim and meaning of our work better than the profound words of St Augustine: “Beauty is the splendour of Truth.”<sup>10</sup> Note the use of “godforsaken,” a word I argue that is not used lightly. In response, the task of the secular, the task of construction, of human creation, is that of the construction of beauty as the expression of truth. It is from within this frame that we can understand Neumeier’s description of Mies’ use of Aquinas’ statement as “This *summa theologica* of Mies’s building art.”<sup>11</sup>

Mies’ reduction of Aquinas replicates the reductionism of his building. The discipline and order he read into Aquinas was read against the impact of Spengler’s cultural pessimism, a spiritual crisis that Mies perceived as requiring the discipline and order that modern architecture could exhibit and inspire. It is also in this context of that Tillich wrote his essay “The technical city as symbol” (1928) and from this developed his theology of technology. I wish to argue that both Mies and Tillich constructed theologies of technology, Tillich on the page and Mies in his buildings, both seeking to express ultimate concern in and for secular modernity in its encounter with technology and culture.

In his theology of culture, Tillich included architecture amongst the creative expressions that “show in their style both the encounter with non-being, and the strength which can stand this encounter and shape it creatively...it can be understood as the revelation of man’s predicament... this makes the protesting element in contemporary culture theologically significant.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, “ultimate concern is manifest in all creative functions of the human spirit.”<sup>13</sup> This paper argues that Tillich offers a unique, contemporary, co-exilic perspective to understand Mies’ modernist architecture, arising from his perception that “he who can read the style of a culture can discover its ultimate concern, its religious substance”<sup>14</sup>—or in Miesian terms, *Baukunst* as “the will of an epoch translated into space.”

While Tillich was certainly aware and appreciative of Mies, even having Mies van der Rohe chairs in his Frankfort apartment,<sup>15</sup> there is very little correlation of their work and thought. One of the very few contemporary texts to reference both Tillich and Mies was Adolf Behne’s *The Modern Functional Building* (written in 1923 but not published until 1926). Tillich is quoted in two places,

both times drawing on his 1923 text, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*. First, Behne applies Tillich’s terminology of heterogeneous and autogenous to the distinction between the functionalists and Le Corbusier;<sup>16</sup> that is functionalist methods are heterogeneous because “they are adequate to only one element of the object, not to the object as a whole”<sup>17</sup> whereas Le Corbusier’s method is autogenous, that is “adequate to their objects.”<sup>18</sup> Secondly he uses Tillich’s terminology of “consequence,” “law,” “form” to explain how a “thinking person” can “create something general, comprehensive,” which is therefore not just for the individual being. To do so locates the individual as “part of a (temporal) context whereby form is the actual, concrete real being,”<sup>19</sup> This interpenetration of function and temporality—that is function and form—“makes the building a living, concrete form (Gestalt).”<sup>20</sup> Tillich in turn, in the source text, describes architecture as “[t]he most important area of the technology of transformation” because it “combines science and art,”<sup>21</sup> Architecture is part of what Tillich defines as the second group of the technology of transformation, the first being the creation of technical tools, the second, of which architecture is notably “the most important,” is whereby “the surface of the earth is permanently transformed.”<sup>22</sup>

If we think of Mies’ modernist architecture as the attempt to express a universal form then we can also correlate it to Tillich’s discussion of “*the conflict between thought and being*” [*italics in original*] which “sustains the entire system” of “the sciences of being.”<sup>23</sup> The tension occurs because, as Tillich identifies, “thought desires unity; it creates the universal, the comprehensive, the systematic framework. But being confronts thought as the particular, the incomprehensible, the individual, that which cannot be dissolved in the infinity of thought.”<sup>24</sup>

What Hitchcock and Johnson famously labeled in 1932 as “the international style” is really Mies’ architecture as the thought of the universal and the comprehensive as systematic framework. The structure, the order, and the system of Mies did become a type of universal modernist language, his thought constructed globally. Yet, via Tillich’s insight, what we can call the universal of Mies’ thought was expressed through the particular being of Mies: this is why a Miesian building looks, feels, and is different from all other build-

ings constructed as modernist thought. For the universal modernist thought that does not express the conflict of the being of Mies is not a Miesian building for, to return via Behnes, the building of Mies is in fact a living, concrete form (*gestalt*) of Mies. Further, for Mies to be able to do this, for a Miesian building to be recognizably Miesian, even if it is universal, comprehensive, and systematic, occurs because as Tillich explains, “for being to resist thought, in order for an individual to distinguish itself from others, being must be filled with thought determinations”<sup>25</sup> whereby “the individual gives all thought determination its own individual coloration.”<sup>26</sup> In order for Mies to do so, he must be, in Tillichian terms, “the most highly formed being, the *spiritual individual*, that offers the greatest resistance to thought.”<sup>27</sup> In this Mies is the expression of a Tillichian *gestalt*—whereby a universal law is opposed from within by the individual who represents it; this means “every *gestalt* is distinguished from every other *gestalt* by its individual character and is at the same time the standard for all similar *gestalts* by virtue of its *gestalt* laws.”<sup>28</sup> It is the concrete nature of the Miesian *gestalt*, its concrete nature in architecture, that signifies the importance of Mies and his buildings. I argue that the Miesian building, as the expression of the universal law of international modernism, made immanent via the spiritual individual of Mies, expresses what Tillich describes as “the absolutely concrete *gestalt*,” which is “a unique individual within an infinitesimal moment of time.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, via Tillich and his discussion of what he terms the organic-technical group of reality, we can posit that the Miesian building is technical reality that in his creation, that is the technical Miesian building, takes on the expression of what is termed organic technology which transcended the organic where “the formative idea is inherent in the material” and also transcended that of technology where “the idea is imposed upon the material.”<sup>30</sup> The *gestalt* moment, the *gestalt* expression of the Miesian building, is where there is the realization of what can be termed organic technology where the purpose is both immanent and transcendent and where the posited goal is only to realize the inner tendencies and possibilities of the organism itself.”<sup>31</sup> Of course, a building is not an organism, but then I am arguing that a Miesian building is never just a building in itself, but rather the *gestalt* of Mies, that is a *Miesian building*. Therefore the inner ten-

dencies and possibilities are those of form follows function, those of “god is in the details,” those of Baukunst.

We can see this by concentrating on what is arguably the greatest *Miesian building*, the Seagram building at 375 Park Avenue, New York. Deliberately set back from the street, approached across a wide forecourt, the Seagram building is a temple to, and of, secular modernity, the building wherein the ultimate concern of modernity is expressed. In this building are visible the contradictions and tensions of modernity: order and transparency, structure and space, classicism and the shock of the new, Europe and America, the singular work of art that is constantly copied and replicated as commercial idea and form. It is the culmination of classical modernism, the physical expression of the ontology of construction as Hartoonian describes it,<sup>32</sup> that represents the culmination what I term Mies’ secular spirituality as expressed in this quote from 1924:

...the entire striving of our epoch is directed toward the secular. The efforts of the mystics will remain episodes. Although our understanding of life has become more profound, we will not build cathedrals...We do not value the great gesture but rationality and reality.<sup>33</sup>

Central to the Seagram building are the details, wherein its central emphasis on order, space, purpose, function, and choice of materials express both Mies’ ontology of construction and baukunst. The details are where construction as communication of the spirit of the age, as ultimate concern, results in this building wherein capitalism, modernity, technology, ontology, secularism and spirit all meet. Central to this is the use of space, to literally create a space of being within the modern capitalist city, a building set back upon an open plaza of ninety feet, entered by walking up 3 steps from Park Avenue. This is a building for which entry is an act of intentional action and coupled with a hermeneutical expectation. We walk towards it increasingly aware of its details. The space of approach makes manifest its details. There is space to look, to think, to meditate. To enter is to have to decide to do so, every step across the plaza designed to make you think and question the why of this unfamiliar urban space, every step of approach makes you increasingly aware of this building being a statement of the universal yet singular, the secular cathedral of modern technology and capitalism. As Phyllis

Lambert proclaims, the Seagram building “is unsurpassed in its immanence,”<sup>34</sup> an immanence that Thomas Beeby, in his essay on the influence on Mies of Rudolf Schwarz’s *The Church Incarnate*, labels the “spiritual ascension created by material negation.”<sup>35</sup>

In Tillich’s conception, “technology is the shaping of reality according to a goal.”<sup>36</sup> Architecture can therefore be understood as the coming together of technology and culture which is therefore the intensification of the two elements Tillich identifies within both: “a spiritual, normative element and a technical, existential one, or creation and invention.”<sup>37</sup> This can be investigated, in Tillich’s schema, though the history of culture, which is “not concerned with spirit-bearing *gestalts*, but with spiritual contexts”<sup>38</sup> wherein architecture can be stated as a fulfillment of Tillich’s observation that “the history of culture is immediately related to the *history of technology*.”<sup>39</sup> If we consider Mies’ architecture as the personal expression of a universal, international style within modernism, we can read it anew via Tillich’s discussion of spirit and creation. There are two claims Tillich makes: first, that “Creation is the *individual realization of the universal*” and its corollary “the more individual and the same time the more universal a reality, the clearer its creative character.” We can use these to then state that what makes a Miesian building a such work of creativity is that, via Tillich, “the highest form of creativity is thus the spirit-bearing *gestalt*,” whereby “on the one-hand, the spirit-bearing *gestalt* is completely separated from the universal; it is something absolutely unique and individual. On the other hand, it contains the universal; it can absorb everything real.”<sup>40</sup> Mies, at the same time that Tillich was developing his theology of technology, was developing his theory of the communicative value of architecture, stating in a lecture in 1928 on “The Prerequisites for Creating Artistic Construction,” that there exists the possibility “of unfolding consciously artistic and spiritual values in the hard and clear light of technology.”<sup>41</sup> What this meant was, as noted by Mies in 1927, that “the leaders of the modern movement attempt to recognize the spiritual and material forces of our own period, investigate them and draw, without prejudice, the consequences. For only where the building art leans on the material forces of a period can it bring about the spatial execution of its spiritual decisions.”<sup>42</sup>

For Mies architecture *was* a spiritual decision, raising the question in a manuscript for a lecture “Is the world as it presents itself bearable for man?...Can it be shaped so as to be worthwhile to live in?”<sup>43</sup> This should be read alongside another fragment, whereby Mies, influenced here as Neumeyer notes, by the Catholic thinker, Romano Guardini, who writes “this world and no other is offered to us. Here we must take our stand.”<sup>44</sup> This stand involved the use of modern technology to create new symbols of meaning for a modern technological world, to draw on the lessons and rules of the past, on *baukunst*, the builder’s art, to construct temples of rational order and meaning in a language of steel and glass within the order, the rational system of the grid. The Miesian buildings are temples of secular modernity, temples of the modern, secular imagination that draw on the spiritual teachings and resources of the past in an attempt to express what it means to be modern. They are modernist temples that open up new possibilities via transparent architecture that enables, as Schulze comments, the possibility “to enclose space while transfiguring it, to make space a mystical entity, the immaterial manifestation of the higher truth.”<sup>45</sup> Tillich briefly wrote of “the problem of sacred emptiness,” noting “probably the way modern religious art will be reborn is through architecture,” an architecture wherein technology and art are united, wherein there is “the truth to express something,” an art “dedicated to express our ultimate concern.”<sup>46</sup>

How therefore might we conduct a reading of Mies through Tillich? Perhaps our starting place—and our conclusion—is that the secular search for rationality, order, beauty, and truth in Mies’ modernist architecture, in Tillichian terms, acts as judge, for “the secular is the rational and the rational must judge the irrationality of the Holy. It must judge its demonization.”<sup>47</sup> It is the Miesian temple of the Seagram building that is our entry point to judging the irrationality, the demonization of the Holy in technological, secular modernity. Is this building, as in the title of Tillich’s brief note, “The Ideal of Holy Emptiness,” for the twentieth century? Yet, that the symbol of the age, the expression of ultimate concern made manifest is the curtain wall of space, order, tinted reflective glass and emptiness on a recessional plaza in the centre of capitalism requires a Tillichian critique. For as he states in his forward to

his *Theology of Culture*, “the religious dimension ...is never absent in cultural creations, even if they show no relation to religion in the narrower sense of the word.”<sup>48</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p.57.

<sup>2</sup> C. Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p.69.

<sup>3</sup> L.S. Kramer, *Threshold of a New World. Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris 1830-1848* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University press, 1988), p 2, p7.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959)p.168.

<sup>5</sup> Mark C. Taylor, *about religion: economies of faith in virtual culture* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), p.117.

<sup>6</sup> Fritz Neumeyer, “Mies as self-educator” in R. Achilles, K. Harrington & C. Myhrum ed.; *Mies van der Rohe: Architect as Educator*, (Chicago: Illinois Institute of Technology, 1986) p.36 fn.8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p30. [orig. Mies, “bauen” G. Nv.2 Sept 1923 p.1]

<sup>8</sup> John Peter, *The Oral History of Modern Architecture. Interviews with the Greatest Architects of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorp., 1994) p.158.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Pandovan “machine A Mediter” in R. Achilles, K. Harrington & C. Myhrum ed. *Mies van der Rohe: Architect as Educator*, p.17. [Pandovan sources Mies’ mistranslation to Peter Carter in *Architectural Design* March 1961, p.97.]

<sup>10</sup> Fritz Neumeyer, *The Artless World: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991) p222.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p223.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* pp.46-47.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.8-9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.42-43.

<sup>15</sup> Wilhelm & Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich. His Life & Thought. Volume 1: Life* (New York: Harper & Row, publishers, 1976), p.121

<sup>16</sup> Adolf Behne, *The Modern Functional Building* (Santa Monica, Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1996), p.131

<sup>17</sup> Paul Tillich *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, c1981), p64.

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

<sup>19</sup> Adolf Behne, *The Modern Functional Building*, pp141-142.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*,p141

<sup>21</sup> Paul Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, p.107.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.57.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Paul Tillich *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Method*, p58.

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

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.60.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods* p62)

<sup>32</sup> G. Hartoonian, *The Ontology of Construction: on nihilism of technology in theories of modern architecture* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>33</sup> Mies, “Baukunst und Zeitwille!” (Building Art and the Will of the Epoch) 1924, *Der Querschnitt*, 4, no.1.1924, pp.31-32. in F. Neumeyer, *The Artless World. Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* trans. M. Jarzombek (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991) p.8.

<sup>34</sup> Phyllis Lambert, “Mies in America” in Mies van der Rohe, Phyllis Lambert, Werner Oechslin, *Mies in America* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2001), p.406.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas H Beeby, “When the sacred journey ends. Protestant thought and the meaning of Puritanical Modern Architecture”, p 13-29, p26 in *The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture. A Reader*, ed. Renata Hejduk and Jim Williamson (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Paul Tillich *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, p101.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Tillich *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, p106.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.130.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.131.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.138.

<sup>41</sup> Mies in Fritz Neumeyer, “Mies as self-educator” in R. Achilles, K. Harrington & C. Myhrum ed.; *Mies van der Rohe: Architect as Educator*, (Chicago: Illinois Institute of Technology, 1986),p33.

<sup>42</sup> Mies (1927) in F. Neumeyer, *The Artless World. Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* trans. M. Jarzombek (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991), p.262.

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<sup>43</sup> Mies in F. Neumeyer, *The Artless World. Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* trans. M. Jarzombek (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991) p.xii

<sup>44</sup> Mies in F. Neumeyer, *The Artless World. Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* trans. M. Jarzombek (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991), p236.

<sup>45</sup> F. Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe. A Critical Biography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), p324.

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<sup>46</sup> Paul Tillich “The Ideal of Holy Emptiness” in *The Religious Imagination in Modern and Contemporary Architecture. A Reader*, ed. Renata Hejduk and Jim Williamson (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p.337.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Future of Religions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966),p. 89.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, p.v.

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