



# BULLETIN

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### TILlich ON LINE

The three volumes of the sermons of Paul Tillich are available on line. The second edition of *The New Being*, with an Introduction by Mary Ann Stenger, was published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2005

*The Eternal Now:*

<http://www.religiononline.org/showbook.asp?title=1630>

*The New Being:*

<http://www.religiononline.org/showbook.asp?title=375>

*The Shaking of the Foundations:*

<http://www.religiononline.org/showchapter.asp?title=378&C=84>

**ERDMUTHE (MUTIE) TILlich FARRIS  
IN HONOR OF HER 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY  
17 FEBRUARY 2006**

Editor's note: the editor has asked a few people who know Dr. Mutie Tillich Farris to write a brief tribute to her in the Bulletins of 2006, the year of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Here is the first tribute. Any one wishing to share in this tribute to Mutie, please send your words to the editor. Thank you.

The North American Paul Tillich Society has given me the opportunity to express my heartiest congratulations to Erdmuthe (Mutie) Tillich Farris on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the years since Hannah Tillich's death, Dr. Mutie Farris has supported the work of Tillich's friends and scholars with highest intellectual skill. She has demonstrated considerable generosity in the diplomatic style so characteristic of her father in the preservation and guardianship of his innumerable and important literary remains.

Mutie, who was born on 17 February 1926, was baptized Erdmuthe Christiane; she came to America with her parents in 1933. She learned the English language so quickly that she was a great help to her parents. Mutie studied at Barnard College, earned a Ph.D. in the History of Drama at Columbia University, and taught drama at the Juilliard School. She married Theodore (Ted) Farris, an academic administrator; the pair had two children, Ted, Jr., and Madeline. Mutie accepted the death of her daughter, Madeline, with great courage and dignity. Madeline was a kind, highly intelligent, and loving young woman. Ted Farris is a successful corporate lawyer. He has a lovely young son named Alex.

Although Mutie herself has written nothing about her father, her interest and gracious support in Tillich scholarship has created a solid foundation for the next generation of Tillich scholars. We cherish her true and enduring friendship and her capacity for mirth.

We wish Mutie all the best on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday—today and *ad multos annos*.

Marion Hausner Pauck

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Cobb, Kelton. *The Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 2005.

Manning, Russell. *Theology at the End of Culture: Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture and Art*. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2005.

Please send information about new publications on Tillich or by members of the Tillich societies to the editor. Thank you.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY IN TILlich'S 1920 BERLINER VORLESUNG ON PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

JEAN RICHARD

Tillich's early writings that I intend to investigate here are the writings of his first teaching in Berlin. More precisely, I will hold to the 1920 *Berliner Vorlesung* on the philosophy of religion, which has been recently edited by Erdmann Sturm.<sup>1</sup> There we find, in the third and the fourth lectures, a quite elaborated section on the system of the sciences, in which takes place an important statement on the philosophy of history.

Tillich, by that time, was very much concerned with the system of the sciences. This concern was not the purely speculative question of the classification of the sciences. More precisely, it was the distinction and the characteristics of the different sciences of religion. In August 1917, he writes to his former friends of the Wingolf Society that he is preparing for a course of "Introduction to Theology and the Science of Religion"; and so doing, he is looking especially for "the place of theology in the system of the sciences."<sup>2</sup> No surprise then to see Tillich writing, in the Winter semester of 1920 in Berlin, an "Encyclopedia of Theology and the Science of Religion (*Religionswissenschaft*)," the first section of it entitled: "The Place of the Science of Religion and Theology in the System of the Sciences."<sup>3</sup> The third and the fourth lectures of the summer semester of 1920 follow the same line. The whole endeavor will be finalized in Tillich's 1923 book, *The System of the Sciences*.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper, I limit myself to the 1920 *Vorlesung* on the philosophy of religion, where the idea of a philosophy of history is especially well and clearly stated. I leave for a further and later study the comparison with the 1923 book, which is more developed. But I would like to show here also the connection with the 1919 lecture, "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture." The first section on "Theology and Philosophy of Religion" looks very much indeed like a summary of a system of the sciences.<sup>5</sup> The continuity with the 1920 *Vorlesung* on the philosophy of religion is quite evident. I would even say that this 1920 course constitutes the best commentary on the 1919 lecture.

### Sciences of Being and Sciences of Thought

Both writings, however, differ from the outset. The 1919 lecture starts immediately with the distinction between the empirical sciences (*Erfahrungswissenschaften*) and the sciences of culture (*Kulturwissenschaften*), while the 1920 *Vorlesung*, digging deeper, begins with the relationship between thought (*Denken*) and being (*Sein*), as the archetype of knowledge and the ground of the main differences between the sciences. Thence indeed stems the fundamental distinction between the sciences of being (*Seinswissenschaften*), where thought is determined by being, and the sciences of thought (*Denkwissenschaften*), where thought is determined by itself.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the sciences of being, or experimental sciences (*Erfahrungswissenschaften*),<sup>7</sup> are themselves divided into natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and historical sciences (*Geschichtswissenschaften*). In the natural sciences, the individual is known through general laws, while in the historical sciences it is considered in its particular individuality.<sup>8</sup> Since religion exists as a particular cultural phenomenon, it is appropriate to use the historical method in this field of study. So, there will be a science called "history of religion": "Religion on the whole belongs to the cultural event. Consequently the appropriate method for its study is the historical. The experimental (*seinswissenschaftliche*) study of religion is the scientific-historical (*geschichtswissenschaftliche*) study. The being of religion, religion as an empirical existent object is history of religion (*Religionsgeschichte*)."<sup>9</sup> This is history of religion as it is commonly understood nowadays. Tillich is aware of this, and he takes it into account. It is the kind of religious study he is speaking about at the beginning of the 1919 lecture, when he says: "The progress of scientific experience...has decided...that the five Books of Moses stem from various sources and not from Moses himself.... Scientific progress has not yet decided who is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews."<sup>10</sup> Those are indeed specific questions of experimental history of religion. But they are not yet philosophical history of religion. This other kind of study is part of the sciences of thought, to which we turn now.

The sciences of thought are sciences in which "thought determines itself." Tillich adds we can say as well: they are sciences in which thought "is determined through itself...since thought determines

itself in as far as it is determined by the inherent form of thought."<sup>11</sup> Still more clearly at the end of this third lecture: "Thought directs itself toward itself as existent, and it seeks to bring out the forms of thought inherent in itself. Consciousness becomes conscious of itself; reason criticizes itself, to speak in Kant's words."<sup>12</sup> It is quite evident here that one should not understand such self-consciousness according to the Hegelian progressive self-consciousness of the Absolute; it is rather to be interpreted according to the Kantian critique of reason. It is the self-reflection of reason upon its own forms of thought, upon the categories through which it perceives everything.

Consequently, Tillich writes that, "the science of thought is philosophy in the sense of a doctrine of the categories (*Kategorienlehre*)."<sup>13</sup> So, "philosophy of religion is the doctrine of the categories of religion. The category, or function of thought, which is religion, will be shown as a necessary [function] of consciousness, and it will be considered in its expressions, the sub-categories,"<sup>14</sup> such as revelation, cult, church, etc. Note here the correlation between thought and culture: "All culture is nothing but thought in its existence (*Dasein*), its existence (*Existenz*) in space and time."<sup>15</sup> So, the categories of thought are equivalent to the functions of culture,<sup>16</sup> and the sciences of thought may be characterized as well as sciences of culture (*Kulturwissenschaften*).<sup>17</sup> Tillich here mentions more particularly the philosophy of culture (*Kulturphilosophie*), which works out "the *a priori* forms of the theoretical and the practical functions of culture."<sup>18</sup>

In the 1919 lecture also, the matter is about cultural sciences (*Kulturwissenschaften*),<sup>19</sup> not yet sciences of the spirit (*Geisteswissenschaften*) as in *The System of the Sciences*. In the 1920 *Vorlesung*, I think we find the reason why Tillich is still reluctant to use the phrase *Geisteswissenschaften*. It was used formerly to characterize one kind of sciences of being: the sciences of the spirit, that is, human sciences, such as psychology and sociology, as distinct from the sciences of nature.<sup>20</sup> In *The System of the Sciences*, the phrase *Geisteswissenschaften* is used abundantly, but Tillich then argues strongly that, properly speaking, psychology is not a science of the spirit.<sup>21</sup>

### Formal and Normative Sciences of Thought

Hitherto, we have considered the objective or universal side of the sciences of thought. So, philosophy is conceived as the doctrine of the categories, and philosophy of culture as the science of the universal forms of culture. We come now to the other aspect of the question: the active and creative character of the sciences of culture, that is, their normative character. Indeed, in as far as thought determines itself, it changes itself and culture. The science of culture confronts culture with demands and requirements. So, "thought fills a twofold task towards culture: on the one hand, it has to work out the forms of thought inherent in culture...; on the other hand, it influences culture by the knowledge of itself. *Regarding culture, the science of thought divides into formal science and normative sciences.*"<sup>22</sup>

Now, Tillich's endeavor will consist in justifying this concept of normative science. The following objection arises indeed against such a concept: "The task of science is to know what is [given], not to require something which is not."<sup>23</sup> This objection, however, fails to recognize something very important, that is, the concrete and historical character of thought, of science and of culture. The objection arises from the contrast inherent in a normative science: it is something concrete and individual, which nevertheless claims an ideal and universal validity. But such a contrast stems directly from the dialectics of thought and being. The one who raises the objection "fails to see that the thought has become a being, something existent in the psychic individual, and as such stands under the law of the individuation of everything existent. The thought as existent—or the culture—is the thought under the law of particularization, of concreteness, of contingency, of freedom."<sup>24</sup>

Here we see more clearly the meaning and consequences of the dialectics of thought and being. On the one hand, thought comprehends being, in so far as spirit transcends being. But on the other hand, thought is comprised, embedded into being; consequently it lies under the conditions of every existent, that is, under the law of concreteness and particularity. Arguing in favor of the normative science, Tillich stresses so much the second aspect of the dialectics that he is led to confess: "But it seems now that too much has been proved. It seems that, so doing, the whole moment of universal validity has been challenged, which, no doubt,

belongs to every science."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, that seems to lead to the relativistic tenet of historicism, according to which no knowledge may claim absolute validity. Tillich here does not move back. He pushes rather one step further, arguing that "historicism (*Historismus*) itself exists; thereby it stands under the law of individuation and particularization."<sup>26</sup> It forgets that "the doctrine of the categories, and consequently the concepts of religion, of morality, etc., as formally as they may be understood, are actually fully dependent on the concrete historical standpoint of the thinker. In other words, the formal concept has behind the scenes all the properties of a normative concept."<sup>27</sup>

This does not mean, however, that the normative concept is nothing else than the obscure, non scientific underside of the formal-universal concept. Rather, it means that "the normative concept should be considered as the creative synthesis of the universal formal concept and of the concrete historical situation. The universal formal concept constitutes the moment of the universal; the concrete historical situation, the moment of the particular, of the contingent, and the unity of both is precisely the creative act,"<sup>28</sup> or synthesis.

This is fully coherent with the 1919 lecture, where we read that in the cultural sciences "the standpoint of the systematic thinker belongs to the heart of the matter itself. It is a moment in the history of the development of culture; it is a concrete historical realization of an idea of culture; it not only perceives but also creates culture.... Every universal concept in cultural sciences is either useless or a normative concept in disguise; it is either an alleged description of something that does not exist or an expression of a standpoint; it is a worthless shell or it is a creative act."<sup>29</sup>

An important qualification is also to be found in both writings. The concrete situation of the thinker is not only his own personal position; it is his historical and cultural situation. He formulates his vision and concepts as a member of that concrete and particular culture to which he belongs; this is the relativistic character of his endeavor. But at the same time, he reaches beyond his particular culture through the transcendent power of the spirit; and this is the creative side of thinking, which changes culture.

So, we read in the 1920 *Vorlesung*: "to the concreteness [of the normative science] belong not only the singular thinker with his individual psychological characteristics, but also the circle where he stands, that is, the family, the church, the

nation, the state, the race, which all participate in the concrete decision. They do not have an arbitrary effect; rather, they enter with necessity into a really creative system, in unity with the universal concept."<sup>30</sup>

Here again we find the exact parallel in the 1919 lecture: "A standpoint is expressed by an individual; but if it is more than individual arbitrariness, if it is a creative act, it is also, to a greater or lesser degree, a creative act of the circle in which the individual moves. This circle, with its peculiar spiritual quality, has no existence apart from the cultural groups that surround it and the creative acts of the past on which it rests. Thus, in the same way even the most individual standpoint is firmly embedded in the ground of the objective spirit, mother soil from which every cultural creation springs. From this soil the concrete standpoint derives the universal forms of spirit. And viewed from there, it finds its own concrete limitation through the ever narrower circles and historical components of concrete spiritual quality, until, by its own creative self-expression it develops the new individual and unique synthesis of universal form and concrete content."<sup>31</sup>

### The Philosophical History of Culture

Thus we come finally to our main topic, the philosophy of history, which is actually the philosophy of history of culture, or the philosophical history of culture (*Geschichtsphilosophie der Kultur*).<sup>32</sup> In a well-fashioned formula, Tillich writes: "Between the formal concept and the normative concept stands the philosophy of history (*Zwischen Formbegriff und Normbegriff steht die Philosophie der Geschichte*)."<sup>33</sup> This becomes fully meaningful now. We have seen that the normative concept constitutes the creative synthesis of the universal concept and of the concrete situation. So, between the moment of the universal concept and the moment of the normative concept, stands the concrete multiplicity that is the object of philosophical history.

The justification of philosophical history as a significant scientific endeavor rests on the acknowledgment of the significance and importance of the concrete, particular, and finite aspect of culture. Now this is so because the particular in the culture is nothing but thought as existent: "There is no other justification for the historical method... than this one: in cultural development the unrepeatable individual is significant. The one who

recognizes an historical method, the one who holds as something significant the unrepeatable singularity of a spiritual (*geistigen*) phenomenon, has recognized the concreteness of culture and of the existent thought..."<sup>34</sup> This is indeed the specific object of the philosophical history of culture: "The characteristic particularity of an individual thinker, the definite ethics of a class, the limitation of a confessional religion, the singularity of a national law, these precisely are the existential forms of culture, of existent thought; these precisely are the object of the science of history."<sup>35</sup>

Let us consider now the multiplicity of the concrete. In the process of time, many systems of morality and of law, many kinds of science and of art have appeared. Such multiplicity is the direct object of historical studies. However, in contrast with history as a science of being, the philosophical history of culture will not be satisfied with the description and the account of that multiplicity. Its own task is to bring the multiplicity back to unity.

Now we see better how philosophy of history stands between the formal and the normative concept. The formal concept is realized concretely in a multiplicity of cultural productions (or formations). Then the multiplicity is arranged through a kind of classification and it is directed towards a goal, which is the standpoint of the normative concept: "The normative concept receives in itself the fullness of the concrete, to take root in one concrete point. That point is determined and ordered by the philosophy of history, and it is stated as the fulfillment of the universal formal concept."<sup>36</sup> This is stated again a few lines below, in order to show that the normative concept is not the arbitrary choice of an individual: "Whoever sets a normative concept has to root it in a double way. He has to show first that it is the concrete fulfillment of the universal concept of a [cultural] function: for example, that the normative ethics that is proposed constitutes the fulfillment of the essential concept of morality. But, secondly, the concrete standpoint must be coordinated with the other ones and it has to obtain its necessary place through the classification (*Reihenbildung*) of the philosophy of history. Between the formal concept and the normative concept stands the philosophy of history."<sup>37</sup>

Here we reach the critical point. The classification we spoke of is an *evaluation*. It concerns cultural values: what is right and valid in the different fields of culture, in ethics and law, in arts and sciences. This is indeed the main concern of

the philosophy of history in its task of classification: "Real-effective history...is a process of evaluation (*wertende*). The various configurations of history are brought into a series of values (*Wertreihe*), at the end of which stands the ideal configuration: the normative concept."<sup>38</sup>

But every evaluation presupposes a measure. So, the question arises: "What is the measure (*Wertmaßstab*)?" Tillich here answers at once: "Of course, [it is] the concept of essence (*Wesenbegriff*). The configurations which deserve the highest valuation are the nearest to the concept of essence. The highest morality is the one which fulfils most perfectly the essential concept of morality."<sup>39</sup>

However, this is not the final answer. Indeed the question arises again, since the formal concept of essence is not the normative concept, the norm of evaluation. Both would be identical if the normative concept were given, imprinted in the human consciousness from the beginning. But this is not the case. Human consciousness is formed and shaped through history. So, between the universal category of morality, as a general function of the human spirit, and a normative system of morality, stands the historical process of the various systems of morality. This, I think, is Tillich's mind in the following terse sentence: "The concept of essence is not yet the normative concept: between both of them stands the plurality of history, which gives to the normative concept the fullness of its content."<sup>40</sup>

This means a thoroughly immanent process of evaluation; even more, an immanent process of creation of values. Tillich warns us against an extrinsic evaluation of history: "History is evaluated. This may sound as purely external, as if a label should be given to each historical phenomenon. Or course, it is not meant that way."<sup>41</sup> Rather, the evaluation is done from inside; it proceeds from history itself. The classification of the philosophy of history is really a construction, the construction of a system of values which aims at the normative concept: "The evaluation is achieved in the philosophy of history as a construction of history, as a development of typical forms up to an ideal form... We do not evaluate from the exterior, but we let history evaluate itself."<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusions

1. My first conclusion deals with the significance of the philosophy of history as the in-between of the formal and of the normative concept.

This prevents identifying both concepts. Otherwise, without a philosophy of history, the normative concept is taken, uncritically, as a necessary and universal concept. This would mean, for example, that my conception of religion or ethics is the only valid one, which holds true for all places and all times. Tillich here firmly opposes that conception as uncritical: "Whoever is satisfied with a purely formal doctrine of the categories, and believes that he has found thereby something which is universally necessary, is aware neither of a philosophy of history in the sense indicated, nor of a normative concept, which is the result of the account of philosophy of history."<sup>43</sup> The same idea comes out even more clearly when Tillich writes in the 1919 lecture: "There is a Gothic and a Baroque style in aesthetics; a Catholic and a modern Protestant dogmatic theology; a Romantic and a Puritanical code of ethics; but in none of these pairs of alternatives is it possible to call one right and the other wrong."<sup>44</sup>

2. I would say now that Tillich, so doing, is taking upon himself the radical relativistic critique of historicism. However, he does not stop at that point. There is no contradiction between the formal-universal concept of any cultural function, and the concrete account of the philosophy of history. Both are assumed in the synthesis of the normative concept. Hence the trilogy of the sciences of thought: "The sciences of thought proceed in a threefold act (*Dreiakt*): a formal science or doctrine of the categories of culture; a philosophy of history or metaphysics of culture; and third, a normative science or systematics of culture."<sup>45</sup> The same, even more explicitly, is to be found in the 1919 lecture: "There are three forms of nonempirical cultural science which correspond to this: philosophy of culture, which is concerned with the universal forms, the a priori of all culture; the philosophy of the history of cultural values, which, through the abundance of concretizations, constitutes the transition from the universal forms to one's own individual standpoint and by so doing justifies the latter; and finally, the normative science of culture, which provides the concrete standpoint with a systematic expression."<sup>46</sup>

3. Finally, we arrive at "the place of theology in the system of the sciences," which is the goal of the whole enterprise, according to Tillich's letter of August 1917.<sup>47</sup> As applied to the field of religion, the theory of the threefold science of thought sounds as follows: "In the philosophy of religion, the

universal function of religion, with its categories, are worked out; then, one shows how that function and its categories proceed immediately in the multiplicity of the historical development of religion; finally it is to be shown how this development, in an immanent dialectics leads to an ideal or normative concept of religion.”<sup>48</sup> Here Tillich insists especially on the dialectics of philosophy of religion and theology. Such a dialectics looks like a true correlation, since our universal philosophical concept of religion is to a large amount dependant on our normative concept of Christianity. This is the last sentence of the fourth lecture of 1920: “It is not only theology which is determined by the philosophy of religion, but the converse is true as well, since we are in the sphere of the creative auto-determination of the thought.”<sup>49</sup> Once again, the same is to be found in the 1919 lecture: “One final word on the relation between a philosophy of culture and a normative systematization of culture: they belong together and each exercises an influence over the other. Not only is theology oriented to philosophy of religion, but the reverse is also true.”<sup>50</sup> Then, however, a tremendous question arises: what is the relation between that correlation of philosophy of religion and theology on the one hand, and the correlation of the human situation and the Christian message on the other, as it stands in *Systematic Theology*? Is it the same kind of theology or something totally different in both cases? This is indeed a big problem we should deal with on another occasion.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Tillich, “Religionsphilosophie (Sommersemester 1920),” in *Berliner Vorlesungen I* (EGW XII), Herausgegeben von Erdmann Sturm, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2001), 333-565.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Tillich, “Im Felde den 19. August 1917,” in EGW V, 103-104.

<sup>3</sup> EGW XII, 259.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods*, Translated by Paul Wiebe, Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 1981 (MW/HW 1, 114-263).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” in *What Is Religion?* edited by James Luther Adams (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 155-159 (MW/HW 2, 70-72).

<sup>6</sup> EGW XII, 349.

<sup>7</sup> Tillich had written here : “Daraus ergibt sich die Doppelheit der Erfahrungswissenschaften und der Denkwissenschaften.” Then he erased

*Erfahrungswissenschaften* and he wrote instead *Seinswissenschaften* (EGW XII, 349, note 2). Thus he writes, a few pages later: “The sciences of being take a thoroughly empirical character. There the thought is completely determined through being. They are experimental sciences (*Erfahrungswissenschaften*) in the strictest sense (EGW XII, 352).

<sup>8</sup> EGW XII, 349-350.

<sup>9</sup> EGW XII, 352.

<sup>10</sup> “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” in *What is Religion?*, 155 (MW/HW 2, 70).

<sup>11</sup> EGW XII, 349.

<sup>12</sup> EGW XII, 355.

<sup>13</sup> EGW XII, 354.

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

<sup>15</sup> EGW XII, 353.

<sup>16</sup> EGW XII, 354.

<sup>17</sup> EGW XII, 356.

<sup>18</sup> EGW XII, 354.

<sup>19</sup> “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” in *What is Religion?*, 155: “The situation is different in the systematic cultural sciences (*Kulturwissenschaften*)” (MW/HW 2, 70).

<sup>20</sup> EGW XII, 349.

<sup>21</sup> *The System of the Sciences*, 92-93 (MW/HW 1, 160-161).

<sup>22</sup> EGW XII, 356 (I underline).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> EGW XII, 357.

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

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

<sup>27</sup> EGW XII, 358.

<sup>28</sup> EGW XII, 360.

<sup>29</sup> “On the Idea of Theology of Culture,” in *What is Religion?*, 155-156 (MW/HW 2, 70).

<sup>30</sup> EGW XII, 360.

<sup>31</sup> “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” in *What is Religion ?*, 156 (MW/HW 2, 70-71).

<sup>32</sup> EGW XII, 360: “Terminologisch wollen wir in Unterschied von der Geschichtslogik, die ein Teil des Kulturphilosophie ist, diesen Teil ‘Geschichtsphilosophie der Kultur’ nennen [...]”

<sup>33</sup> EGW XII, 358.

<sup>34</sup> EGW XII, 357.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> EGW XII, 358.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> EGW XII, 359.

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

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>43</sup> EGW XII, 358-359.<sup>44</sup> "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture," in *What is Religion?*, p. 156 (MW/HW 2, 70).<sup>45</sup> EGW XII, 360.<sup>46</sup> "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture," in *What is Religion?*, 156-157 (MW/HW 2, 71).<sup>47</sup> See above, note 2.<sup>48</sup> EGW XII, 361.<sup>49</sup> EGW XII, 362.<sup>50</sup> "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture," in *What is Religion?*, 158 (MW/HW 2, 71).

**DOES THE "ROAD OF PROVIDENCE" LEAD  
TO FREEDOM? GEORGE W. BUSH, PAUL  
TILlich, AND THE THEOLOGY OF HISTORY**

GUY B. HAMMOND

When politicians, and especially presidents, talk religion, it is incumbent upon thoughtful religious folk, and especially theologians, to take such talk seriously, and to respond appropriately. This is so even though it is recognized that such language in presidential addresses and in official documents has a rhetorical function, and conveys meanings different from both personal professions of faith and from specific policy proposals. Sometimes such religious references are little more than pious rhetorical embroidery with little "cash value," but at other times they do have consequences in the realm of governmental policy.

Throughout George W. Bush's presidential terms, he has from time to time made statements that have theological content. Especially in his discussions of foreign policy—specifically, of course, his comments about the war on terror, on 9/11, and on the Iraq war—he has made pronouncements that can be characterized as a rudimentary, somewhat coherent theology of history.<sup>1</sup> (Parenthetically, it is well known that presidents have speechwriters, and that some, perhaps many, of the ideas that presidents use are second hand, as it were. A discussion of influences on George Bush's thinking would necessitate a second paper, beyond our scope here.) It does appear that Bush's theological ruminations do have policy consequences, and that therefore they deserve theological attention and critique.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to examine certain of President Bush's statements, with an eye toward lifting out themes that might constitute the rudiments of a theology of history. Then we will

subject these ideas to critique, employing some of the categories and themes of Paul Tillich. Tillich gave much thought to questions of meaning in history in the twenties and early thirties; then he organized and revised these ideas in the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*. We will focus on these two periods in his work, perhaps being guilty of taking an ahistorical approach to his thoughts on history, since we will assume that his later discussions are mainly clarifications of the earlier material. It is our thesis that Tillich valued, and would still value, the American sense of a national calling in history, of a vocation to spread democracy and individual rights around the world. At the same time, however, he would regard the unambiguous claim of providential support for American aims to be dangerously blind to the complicity of the U.S. in historical evils and therefore to be idolatrous. We will consider whether this two-sided, dialectical approach to American historical involvements can be useful in present circumstances.

First, let us consider George W. Bush. Some of Bush's rhetoric places him in the tradition of American "exceptionalism" frequently professed by the nation's political leaders. Since the founding of the Republic, Americans have understood their nation to be "exceptional" among the nations of the earth, to have a distinctive mission and vocation in world history. Most American presidents have voiced this mythic meaning of America, in various versions, especially on ceremonial occasions. President Bush, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center, speaking in sight of the Statue of Liberty, stated: "Ours is the cause of human dignity: freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind."<sup>2</sup> Scholars have distinguished two versions of this mission of America: the first views America as a "city set on a hill," that is, as an example to the world of democratic self-government, "with liberty

and justice for all.” The second understanding views the national vocation as a process of extending the power and influence of the U.S. so as to convert other nations to democracy and even to the “American way of life.”<sup>3</sup> In the light of policies pursued by the Bush administration, especially since 9/11, it seems fair to argue that he subscribes, whether wittingly or not, to this second version of the American mission. Especially with the doctrine of preemption, Bush is to be found in company with the most crusading of American presidents, with reluctant or avid crusaders like William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and (at least later in his tenure as president) Woodrow Wilson.<sup>4</sup>

Further scrutiny of Bush’s words reveals certain distinctive emphases. These can be grouped around two Tillichian headings (terms that will be explicated further in what follows): statements about “origins” and about “goals.” As to origins, Bush endorses the “chosen people” theme, and interprets 9/11 as an apocalyptic moment reawakening America to its divinely ordained mission, while dividing the world into the “good” and the “evil.” Regarding goals, he puts extraordinary emphasis on freedom as the goal toward which history is moving. Let me say a word about each of these themes.

The image of America as a chosen people, “God’s New Israel,” is a familiar one to students of American history.<sup>5</sup> As Stephen Chapman has argued in a recent article, Bush makes an implicit identification of America, not with Israel, but with Christ, thus suggesting a Messianic role for the nation. In his speech of September 9, 2002, cited earlier, after claiming that “this ideal of America is the hope of mankind,” he continues: “That hope drew millions to this [New York] harbor. That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it. May God bless America.”<sup>6</sup> As Chapman suggests, in this use of John 1:5: “Bush has applied unmistakably Christological language to the United States of America”; if, says Chapman, he does not intend this implication, he needs to be more careful with his use of Biblical language.<sup>7</sup> One may remember that Abraham Lincoln, after his death, was understood as a sacrificial Christ figure; the implication of the above passage, however, is not sacrifice *for* the world, but the nation as a Christlike light *to* the world

In Bush’s understanding, further, the traumatic events of 9/11 are “history’s call to action,”<sup>8</sup> implicitly suggesting a providentially given

reawakening to mission. On the six-month anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks, Bush stated: “September the 11<sup>th</sup> was not the beginning of global terror, but it was the beginning of the world’s concerted response. History will know that day not only as a day of tragedy, but as a day of decision—when the civilized world was stirred to anger and to action. And the terrorists will remember September 11<sup>th</sup> as the day their reckoning began.”<sup>9</sup> Implicitly providence is using this terrible disaster to awaken the nation to its calling: to defeat the enemies of freedom and to establish democracy around the world. Although the immediate consequences were catastrophic, the long-term effects of the attacks will be progressive. 9/11 is one of history’s turning points.

Finally regarding the American sense of mission, although in the Bushite doctrine the term “crusade” cannot be used, the world is polarized into a Manichaeian dualism of good and evil.<sup>10</sup> Certainly Bush’s predecessors in the presidential office were prone to the characterization of American intentions as innocent and benevolent, whereas the “old countries” were seen as cynical and corrupt. But Bush ratchets up the contrast: our enemies are not just misguided or wrong-headed; they are evil. And our people are unambiguously good. In a statement showing Bush at his most colloquial he states: “I see things this way: The people who did this act on America, and who may be planning further acts, are evil people. They don’t represent an ideology, they don’t represent a legitimate political group of people. They’re flat evil. That’s all they can think about, is evil. And as a nation of good folks, we’re going to hunt them down, and we’re going to find them, and we will bring them to justice.”<sup>11</sup> (To Bush’s credit, he does not describe the religion of Islam as evil, though some of his followers have done so.) With enemies who are the embodiment of evil there can be no compromise or political settlement; against them only a crusade to wipe them out is appropriate, even though the term “crusade” may not be used.

As a second major theme, President Bush enunciates “freedom” or liberty as the goal of providence. His February 2, 2005, State of the Union Address gives an example of the extraordinary emphasis he places on this concept. After sprinkling his speech with some thirty-two references to the idea, the President brought his oration to a close with these words: “The road of providence is uneven and unpredictable—yet we know where it leads. It

leads to freedom."<sup>12</sup> Earlier, in his third State of the Union Address, he stated: "Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity."<sup>13</sup> These encomiums to freedom are typical of Bush's rhetoric; nowhere does he give any detailed account of the meaning he attaches to the term, and seldom does he qualify it with that other iconic American virtue, justice (Compare Martin Luther King, Jr.'s statement: "The arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice."). Clearly Bush has in mind free elections (democracy) and free enterprise (capitalism). He betrays no sensitivity to the ambiguity of a purely individualistic, "negative" freedom that is indifferent to its social context.<sup>14</sup>

These comments may suffice to characterize two main themes in George Bush's theological rhetoric. It is insightful, I believe, to describe the Bush perspective, following Mark Lewis Taylor, as a potent combination of themes drawn from (1) the American civil religion of the nation (that Taylor calls "American romanticism"), and from (2) a form of American liberalism (that Taylor calls a limited or "contractual" liberalism).<sup>15</sup> Let us now proceed to an examination of how Tillich's categories of interpretation might be employed to provide analysis and critique of this perspective.

I begin with a discussion of two scholars of repute who reach opposed positions on the question of how Tillich might have reacted to George Bush's "war on terror," the invasion of Iraq, and Bush's interpretive theology of history. Jean Bethke Elshtain, in *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World*, draws on Tillich's wartime radio broadcasts to make the case that Tillich did not "equivocate, exculpate, or 'understand'" ("understand" in scare quotes) in his plea to his German listeners to recognize the evils of the Nazi regime.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Tillich, she says, while acknowledging that there has always been violence and injustice in history, nevertheless "argued that those who are incapable of standing up against criminal violence are politically immature and irresponsible."<sup>17</sup> Elshtain draws a direct comparison of the Nazis with Ben Laden's terrorist attacks and suggests that Tillich would have supported the war on terror; she also implicitly places him on the side of those who regard the Iraq war as, on balance, a just war (her case for the just war claim is made in the new 2004 Epilogue).

Mark Lewis Taylor, in *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right*, challenges Elshtain for engaging in "a misreading of some of the twentieth century's great theologians," especially Paul Tillich. Agreeing that Tillich did not "equivocate [about] or exculpate" the Nazis, and supported the use of violence in efforts to overthrow the Nazi regime, he insists that Tillich *did* attempt to understand the "structural conditions" that led to the rise of the National Socialists and to their success in captivating the German people.<sup>18</sup> Though Elshtain rightly stresses Tillich's resolute opposition to the evils of Nazism and his support for the Allied war effort, surely Taylor is correct in finding in Tillich an interest in explaining the root causes of the Nazi movement; a considerable portion of *The Socialist Decision* was devoted to just that enterprise. Taylor also rightly stresses the need to get beyond "simplistic talk of battles between the forces of good and those of the 'evil' ones, the 'terrorists'"—oversimplifications that he thinks Elshtain, as well as the president, are guilty of—and to arrive at "a more sophisticated understanding of the evil we face as well as the evil we do." In the process of analyzing the Bush administration's policies, Taylor makes use of Tillichian categories drawn from *The Socialist Decision*—coining the phrases "belonging being" and "expectant being"—to take account of American romanticism and American liberal projects.<sup>19</sup> We will make some use of these concepts in what follows. But Taylor does not, I think, give adequate attention to Tillich's positive assessments of "national vocational consciousness" and of empire-building, themes that also are relevant to the current world situation. We turn now to an exploration of these concepts.

Tillich early on discusses vocational historical consciousness primarily in connection with the proletariat.<sup>20</sup> More broadly, however, his attention is directed to what he terms "history-bearing groups," especially nations (the term understood to include ethnic groups), and to his assessment of these groups from the standpoint of prophetic religion. Nations, Tillich affirms, have an undeniable legitimacy, drawing as they do upon what he calls the powers of origin. He writes:

The idea of the nation has energies deriving from the origin, and therefore has a claim to fulfillment—meaning not uncritical support, but also not destruction. Soil, blood, tradition, the social group—all the powers of origin are combined in the nation. The prophetic tradition

thus relates to a people neither in such a way as to confirm it in its immediate self-awareness (as the “false prophets” do), nor to dissolve it for the sake of an immediate transition to a universal humanity (as bourgeois cosmopolitanism does). It seeks rather at once to judge and to support the nation.<sup>21</sup>

But, he insists, it is necessary for the prophetic tradition to condemn the “bourgeois perversion of the national idea”; this perversion uses “the spirit of patriotism” to “justify and defend class domination at home and economic imperialism abroad.”<sup>22</sup> Tillich struggled early and late to maintain this dialectical approach to the nation—and in so doing, he anticipates later efforts to reassert the particularities of nationality, ethnicity, language, etc., without disputing the validity of universalistic principles of equality, justice, and individual rights.<sup>23</sup>

Tillich’s early effort to hold the particular and the universal together took the form of asserting that the bond of origin was broken by prophetic moral demand, but that the goal envisioned by the prophets—justice and the full realization of individuals in community—was the *fulfillment* of the origin.<sup>24</sup> He continually fought against both those who wanted to *return* to the origin (recovering the lost parent by obedience to authoritarian figures) and those who sought totally to *dissolve* the bond of origin by fostering a community-less, conscience-less individualism, in conjunction with an exploitative capitalism. The avenue he commended to his fellow Germans in the twenties and early thirties was a German religious socialism—a path he believed could avoid both the reactionary authoritarianism of National Socialism and a soulless bourgeois autonomy. As we know, this path was not taken.

Tillich continues his reflections about national vocational consciousness and even the role of empires in *Systematic Theology*, vol. III.<sup>25</sup> In this discussion the Abrahamic sense of chosenness is the central paradigm, but Tillich finds analogous forms of vocational consciousness within many nations, including the USA—“belief in a new beginning in which the curses of the Old World are overcome and the democratic missionary task fulfilled.”<sup>26</sup> This emphasis can be combined with Tillich’s reflections about the “ambiguity of empire.”<sup>27</sup> The dynamics of history, he thinks, runs toward greater societal integration, and he was not unambiguously opposed to the wielding of power by history-bearing groups. He writes: “It would be rather superficial to derive

[the empire’s] striving for universality simply from the will to power, whether political or economic. The will to power, in all its forms, is a necessary element in the self-integration of history-bearing groups.... But there is another element in the drive toward all-inclusiveness: the vocational self-interpretation of a historical group.” Again, he lists a number of historical examples, including “the American empire’s call to represent the principle of liberty.”<sup>28</sup> Tillich clearly values the energetic drive of strong groups to carry out their sense of mission in the world, even at the risk of conflict and violence. Power, he says, “is divine in its essential nature.”<sup>29</sup> Thus far, a national sense of vocation and even empire-building seem to meet with Tillich’s approbation as primary ways of finding historical meaning.

Counteracting this assumption, however, two things need to be said. First, for Tillich the good achieved through forced unification is balanced by the evils of coercion and violence. History is ambiguous and tragic; “where the power for good increases, the power for evil increases also.” Again, “the disintegrating, destructive, and profaning side of empire-building is as obvious as the integrating, creative, and sublimating side.” Tillich is able to conclude his summation of empire-building in Western history by noting the ironic fact that just at the time when “a new stage for man’s historical integration” is possible (because of space travel, etc.), the world is divided “schizophrenically” between two imperial powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, with tragic consequences for all.<sup>30</sup> We who live in the post-Cold War era are not helped much by this stopping point; we are led to ask: is Tillich here in danger of taking a kind of detached, Hegelian standpoint, above the fray, accepting the inevitability of conflict and tragedy? Are there moral reasons for attempting to change the direction of empires from within? Is he elevating tragic necessity over morality here?

A second counteracting line of thought introduces other moral and religious considerations. A nation with a vocational sense claims a divinely ordained mission in the world. A case can be made that for Tillich a national vocational sense is an historical extension of a *kairos* experience—an experience where certain specific historical moments are filled with ultimate meaning. (Tillich, of course, applies this term preeminently to the Christ event, but then also to experiences in church history and to “secular” events.) Thus, a statement that he makes in

Volume III about the German situation after World War I reveals how he might identify false or erroneous vocational or kairic claims. He writes:

When the term *kairos* was used for the critical and creative situation after the first World War in central Europe, it was used not only by the religious socialist movement in obedience to the great *kairos*—at least in intention—but also by the nationalist movement, which, through the voice of naziism, attacked the great *kairos* and everything for which it stands. The latter was a demonically distorted experience of a *kairos* and led inescapably to self-destruction. The Spirit naziism claimed was the spirit of the false prophets, prophets who spoke for an idolatrous nationalism and racism. Against them the Cross of Christ was and is the absolute criterion.<sup>31</sup>

Here the “Cross of Christ” for Tillich is an expression of what he calls elsewhere the prophetic tradition or the Protestant Principle: the critique of idolatry. Tillich, of course, at that earlier time did speak from within the situation against idolatrous nationalism. When nationalism is termed “demonically distorted” he is referring to socio-historical structures, not individuals, as demonic, though demonic structures impact the behavior of individuals. Thus again we find a Tillichian dialectical “yes” and “no” as regards the nation and its vocational sense. Though the distinction is perhaps a subtle one, Tillich does not in fact “demonize” individuals. Though their free will is involved, they are in large part victimized by social structures, by “destiny.” Nevertheless, of course there is a danger of dualistic polarization whenever the term “demonic” is used.<sup>32</sup>

What then would be the main lines of a Tillichian critique of Bush’s claim that “the road of providence leads to freedom”? First, the claim of divine sanction, of providential guidance, Tillich maintains, has great demonic potential. He writes: “The immensity of moral and physical evil and the overwhelming manifestation of the demonic and its tragic consequences in history have always been an existential as well as a theoretical argument against the acceptance of any belief in historical providence.”<sup>33</sup> As he says, only a theology that “takes evil into account” has any right to use the concept of providence at all. That is to say, without acknowledging the nation’s own complicity in history’s monumental injustice and exploitation, civil religion becomes idolatrous, hence demonic. More positively, how can one (and how does Tillich)

affirm a collective calling, or providential vocation, without claiming divine *favor*, divine endorsement of the collective will to power? Tillich is not entirely clear on this.<sup>34</sup> We spoke earlier of history-bearing groups in Tillich’s terms as those that encompass both universal ideals and particular, common traditions, groups that somehow are both inclusivist and historically rooted. We might, following Mark Taylor, look toward a revision and renewal of the myth of America in the direction of a “more revolutionary belonging”: breaking the racial, sexual, and class limits that the Founding Fathers set to their inclusiveness.<sup>35</sup> In the international arena this revised American mythic vocation would take account of the nation’s failures to live up to its own ideals, acknowledging its own guilt, and would attempt to mitigate the will to power in its own imperial ambitions, while at the same time attempting to live up to its calling by actually being a force for justice and human rights. These steps would serve at least in part to correct the idolatry of the Bush doctrine.

A second way a Tillichian would critique the Bush theology would be on the issue of freedom. As is well known, Tillich was a persistent critic of capitalism, even after he moved to the States and backed away from overt advocacy of socialism. Following Kant and Marx, his main concern was with the dehumanizing aspect of the capitalist system, the use of persons as means to someone else’s ends. Following Marx he would judge the Bushite “freedom” to be illusory, a “false consciousness” for the masses without a concomitant emphasis on justice. Freedom in Tillich’s lexicon is always set in polar relation with “destiny,” which is “myself as given, formed by nature, history, and myself. My destiny is the basis for my freedom; my freedom participates in shaping my destiny.”<sup>36</sup> Destiny provides freedom with possibility or, becoming fate, limits possibility. Individual freedom emerges out of a freeing social context. If individuals are “fated” by an oppressive social environment, they cannot achieve the creative freedom that might abstractly be regarded as their birthright. Langdon Gilkey makes a Tillichian point when he observes that “creative politics” must be able to recognize “relevant possibilities” (these being given by destiny) in the dynamics of particular situations.<sup>37</sup> Tillich would also agree with George Packer’s observation in a recent work:

The defense secretary [Donald Rumsfeld] looked upon anarchy and saw the early stages of

democracy. In his view and that of others in the administration, but above all the president, freedom was the absence of constraint. Freedom existed in divinely endowed human nature, not in man-made institutions and laws. Remove a thirty-five-year-old tyranny and democracy will grow in its place, because people everywhere want to be free. There was no contingency for psychological demolition. What has been left out of the planning were the Iraqis themselves.<sup>38</sup>

It seems likely that Tillich would view George W. Bush's rhetorical use of freedom as an ideological cover for economic exploitation. And attempting to impose Western-style democracy on a non-Western culture—even if done with humanitarian motives, and that is questionable in this case—would as a policy be guilty of ignoring the destiny side of the freedom-destiny polarity, with the likelihood of unproductive consequences.

Finally, however, a believer in historical providence (as Tillich was, after all) does not consign any historical situation to totally fated destructiveness. In any circumstance the creative “new” is possible.<sup>39</sup> The practical implications of this commitment are debatable. It can be argued that the effort to contribute to the well-being of the Iraqis, and to their achievement of self-government—however initially misguided, or even proposed as a cover for self-interested motives—should not now be given up. George Packer, commenting on the idea of “moving the politics of [the Middle East] toward democracy, beginning in Iraq” observes: “Still, despite the cynicism of its use, the idea was a serious one, and it deserved to be taken seriously by the political opposition,” instead of now relishing the prospect of failure. “[W]hat Iraqis and democracy needed more than anything else in this country,” he suggests, “was a thoughtful opposition that could hold the Bush administration to its own promises...in a real effort to make Iraq a success.”<sup>40</sup> In any case Americans of good will and in a Tillichian spirit should work for a fuller understanding and as far as possible a purification of American motives, for the reconstruction of the American sense of calling (as described above) rather than its abandonment, and for a more responsible use of American power (rather than for its complete renunciation). In a recent editorial, Richard Cohen compares what he calls “the cold language of realism” (identified with Brent Scowcroft) with the idealistic language of some of Bush's supporters (Paul Wolfowitz is mentioned;

perhaps Condoleeza Rice is a better example), and wonders whether Bush's opponents can include moral concerns without what he calls Bush's “soggy religiosity.”<sup>41</sup> It seems to me that a Tillichian ideology critique can contribute toward this end. His “belief-full realism” is neither an idealistic moralism nor a secular Machiavellian realism.

None of the above comments mandate specific policies; pragmatic considerations must be factored in, and at times these may become all-important. But this kind of ideology critique may set some parameters within which policies may be formulated and debated. Perhaps it is time for religious liberals to reassert a chastened and non-triumphal theology of history. Such a theology will need to ponder anew how the experience of historical vocation can combine the particular and the universal in a non-idolatrous manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bruce Lincoln, “Bush's God Talk,” in *The Christian Century*, October 5, 2004, 22-29.

<sup>2</sup> *We Will Prevail: President George W. Bush on War, Terrorism, and Freedom* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 183.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Roger G. Betsworth, *Social Ethics: An Examination of American Moral Traditions* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 107-137; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 109-110.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs: Neo-conservatism and the Pax Americana* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 18-20.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, Revised Edition, ed. by Conrad Cherry (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 1998.

<sup>6</sup> *We Will Prevail*, 183.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Chapman, “Imperial Exegesis: When Caesar Interprets Scripture,” in *Anxious About Empire: Theological Essays on the New Global Realities*, ed. by Wes Avram (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004), esp. 95, 98. These essays have been helpful in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>8</sup> *We Will Prevail*, 182, 220.

<sup>9</sup> *We Will Prevail*, 131-132.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. this suggestion in Lincoln, “Bush's God Talk,” 25-26.

<sup>11</sup> *We Will Prevail*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> *The Washington Post*, Thursday, February 3, 2005, A 15. Cf. also the Post's citation of Bush's speech at Poland's Warsaw University, June 15, 2001: “In all these events [the collapse of the Soviet Union] we have seen the

character of the polish people, and the hand of God in your history" (*The Washington Post*, Thursday, April 7, 2005, A19).

<sup>13</sup> *We Will Prevail*, 221.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. also the White House document, *The National Security Strategy of the U.S.A.*, issued September 17, 2002, with Preface by George W. Bush (reprinted in Avram, *Anxious About Empire*, Appendix, 187). For the distinction between "negative" and "positive" freedom, cf. eg. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," *in Readings in Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. by Robert M. Stewart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 90-97. David Rieff, in the *New York Times Magazine*, Sunday, September 4, 2005, page 11, suggests that while many Americans share Bush's view that it is "the United States' mission to spread such freedom throughout the world," "non-Americans have become increasingly wary of this mission."

<sup>15</sup> Mark Lewis Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right: Post-9/11 Powers and American Empire* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 81-83.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003; paper ed. with new Epilogue, 2004), 103; cf. 102-106. Cf. *Against the Third Reich: Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany*, ed. by Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press), 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Elshtain, *Just War Against Terror*, 105.

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right*, 25, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right*, 14, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Brian Donnelly, *The Socialist Émigré: Marxism and the Later Tillich* (Mercer University Press, 2003), esp. 71-81.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 151.

<sup>22</sup> Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 150-151.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), esp. Preface, vii-xvii.

<sup>24</sup> Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 4-6.

<sup>25</sup> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

<sup>26</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 310; cf. 308-313; 339-342.

<sup>27</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 339-342.

<sup>28</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 340.

<sup>29</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 385.

<sup>30</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 373; 340-341.

<sup>31</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 371.

<sup>32</sup> For discussion of related matters, cf. A. James Reimer, *Paul Tillich: Theologian of Nature, Culture, and History* (Lit Verlag, 2004) esp. 159 ff; *The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology*, ed. by A. James Reimer (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), esp. 283 ff; and Jonathan Rothchild, "Global Flows, Head Scarves, and Finite Freedom: Tillich on Globalization," in *The Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, Vol. xxxi, No. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 372.

<sup>34</sup> Davis Brooks calls attention to Abraham Lincoln in this regard. Lincoln attested to his belief in divine providential activity, but his claims were always qualified by ambiguity and doubt: "The Almighty has his own purposes." Cf. David Brooks, "Stuck in Lincoln's Land," *The New York Times*, Thursday, May 5, 2005, A 27.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right*, 112-120.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 185.

<sup>37</sup> Langdon Gilkey, *Reaping the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 293, 294. Gilkey develops further the Tillichian categories of freedom and destiny.

<sup>38</sup> George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 136-137, quoted in George Will, "Standing Up a Constitution," *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, October 18, 2005, A 25.

<sup>39</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 266-270.

<sup>40</sup> Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 395-396.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Cohen, "Ceding Idealism to the GOP," *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, October 25, 2005, A 21.

### *Coming in the Summer Bulletin:*

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## THE MYSTICAL FORMATION OF PAUL TILlich

DAVID H. NIKKEL

References to mysticism abound in Paul Tillich's theology; and indeed Tillich insists on the presence of a mystical element in all religion. Yet quite unlike the situation of another thinker well-associated with mysticism, William James, biographers of Tillich have largely neglected the question of links between his life experiences and his interest in mysticism. Nor does Tillich himself explicitly draw such ties beyond brief comments on nature and on the holy in *My Search for Absolutes*. But significant and varied connections do exist. So this project takes up the biographical task of examining how Tillich's life experiences encouraged him to valorize mysticism and to construe the mystical in the manner he did. This project will also involve theological analysis and evaluation with relevant references to Tillich's theology and my own reflections on Tillich's life in relation to his thought. It draws especially upon the well-regarded biographies by Wilhelm and Marian Pauck and by David Hopper as well as Tillich's autobiographical *On the Boundary* and *My Search for Absolutes* and his pieces on art and religion.

In relation to both Tillich's life experiences and theology, the intellectual milieu of German Romantic idealism with its mystical tendencies, and more particularly the thought of Schelling and, through Schelling, Böhme (Thomas 45-46), of course, lie in the background. The mystically formative concrete events and experiences fall into three main categories: (1) nature, (2) World War I, and (3) art.

Consonant with German Romantic fascination with nature were Tillich's own encounters with the natural world. He recalls "actual communication with nature daily in my early years," including many "memorable instances of 'mystical participation'" (1967). The natural settings for this communication included sailing, hiking through the Brandenburg countryside, and activities in the family garden (Pauck & Pauck, 11). The ocean constituted for Tillich an especially powerful source for communion with nature and its source. Already at the age of eight, Tillich wrestled with the idea of infinity while gazing upon the Baltic Sea (Pauck & Pauck, 8). We might label this Tillich's "oceanic" experience! In *On the Boundary*, he reveals that, "the infinite

bordering on the finite suited my inclination toward the boundary situation." It provided an imaginative element for conceiving of "the Absolute as both ground and abyss of dynamic truth" (18; see also 30). These early mystical experiences with nature offer an interesting counterpoint to Tillich's later musings about mysticism in relation to art: Courbet's painting, *Wave*, evoked from Tillich the exclamation that he "never really saw the ocean" before! (1987:148). In *My Search* Tillich explains his disagreement with Ritschlian theology's postulate of an "infinite gap between nature" and the human personality, allowing "no mystical participation in nature, no understanding" of its "finite expression of the infinite ground, no vision of the divine-demonic conflict in nature" (25). In the same work, he casts his vote for the "infra-Lutheranism" over the "extra-Calvinistic," because the former affirms for Tillich "the presence of the infinite in everything finite," "that nature mysticism is possible and real" (26). Not surprisingly Schelling wins praise from Tillich for expressing the import of these encounters with nature: Schelling's philosophy of nature "became the direct expression of my feeling for nature" (1966:17).

We can hardly underestimate the influence of World War I on Paul Tillich. It represented both personal emotional collapse (in today's terminology Tillich suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome) and a collapse of modern German—and in some ways modern Western—society. So we should expect it would have profound influence on his theology and on his perspective on mysticism. To facilitate consideration of World War I's effect on Tillich, I will utilize William James's categories of religious personality: the healthy-minded or once-born soul versus the sick soul or divided self driven to achieve integration through a "second birth." Besides the positive experiences of nature we have discussed, Tillich's childhood also offered intellectual challenges and successes, a comfortable relationship with his father's churches, and a generally happy family life. On this latter score, by all accounts Tillich received unconditional love from his mother, whom he adored. While fear was a definite ingredient in his relationship with his father (Pauck & Pauck, 30) and he repressed his mother's death from the age of seventeen (Pauck & Pauck, 14), Tillich entered young adulthood as a fundamentally healthy-minded and untroubled self. In so doing, Tillich's life paralleled the optimistic,

once-born self-assessment of the German culture and culture Protestantism of that time. But Tillich's World War I service as a military chaplain profoundly changed matters.

Tillich eventually had bouts with depression and anxiety that left him unable to function. But long before these, Tillich wrote from the front lines, "True experience has its roots in suffering and happiness is a blossom which opens itself up only now and then" (Pauck & Pauck, 43). As the extent of the carnage grew, Tillich indicated that he no longer thought of his own death but that death's force gripped his whole being (Pauck & Pauck, 46). When a friend was killed, Tillich managed to do the funeral liturgy but found himself incapable of preaching (Pauck & Pauck, 51). Though it was not as terrible as the first, when Tillich endured his second major episode of depression and anxiety, the repetition caused him to write that he "could not stand it any more." He also penned, "Body and soul are broken and can never be entirely repaired..." (Pauck & Pauck, 54). (Note the parallel to James' depressive incidents in young adulthood, albeit the apparent causes in James had more to do with internal brain chemistry than with external events.) In relation to Schelling's thought, Tillich now saw the lack of an adequate tragic element, an element for which he had seen no need due to the once-born nature of his prior life. Hopper quotes Tillich from his *Interpretation of History*:

The World War in my own experience was the catastrophe of idealistic thinking in general. Even Schelling's philosophy was drawn into this catastrophe.... If a reunion of theology and philosophy should again become possible, it could be achieved only in such a way as would do justice to this experience of the abyss of our existence (30[35]).

The eight and one-half million dead and twenty-one million wounded of World War I exacted their toll on many. World War I changed Tillich into a "sick soul," a divided self, ready for a twice-born experience of transformation. Art would provide the context for precisely that kind of experience.

Tillich did recognize the importance of art for his theology of culture but only rarely connected it explicitly to his own valorization of the mystical. I will argue that art became his template for transformation in a mystical vein through the interplay of form and substance or import, both for his personal faith and for his theology. Growing up, Tillich already had a type of mystical experience

through art, more specifically architecture, but lacked the tools to put it into words at the time. Living between a Lutheran school and a beautiful Gothic church, Tillich experienced what he later identified as "the holy," "an indestructible good" (1967:28). Indeed, Tillich immediately understood Rudolph Otto's *Idea of the Holy* in light of those experiences. Furthermore, his reflections on the implications of the holy while reading Otto led him to a positive "reevaluation of Christian and non-Christian mysticism" (1967:28-29). Interestingly, Tillich had an early interest in becoming an architect (Scharlemann, 157).

Tillich's decisive experience relative to art and mysticism occurred on his last furlough of World War I, which overlapped with the end of that terrible war. He had turned to studying magazines and books with classic works of art to provide some sense of hope and beauty, some link to sanity, in the midst of the despair and ugliness of the Western front. One of the works he had viewed in the trenches was Botticelli's "Madonna with Singing Angels." Tillich now rushed into the Kaiser Friedrich Museum to view the original. The setting of the painting called attention to the work: it hung alone on the wall opposite the entrance (Pauck & Pauck, 76). Gazing up at it, an ultimate meaning grasped Tillich. The traditional religious content (*Inhalt*) had nothing to do with this effect. Rather the form(s) of the colors and their spatial arrangement became the vehicle for experiencing a divine depth content (*Gehalt*). Recollecting this moment for *Parade* magazine in 1955, Tillich wrote, "... Beauty itself... shone through the colors of the paint as the light of day shines through the stained-glass windows of a medieval church.... I turned away shaken." (Note the architectural reference.) Tillich concluded, "I know now that the picture is not the greatest. I have seen greater since then. But that moment of ecstasy has never been repeated." It constituted for Tillich a second birth that "brought vital joy and spiritual truth" to a sick soul. It also gave to him "the keys for the interpretation of human existence," providing the basis for his theology of culture (1987:235).

Several features of this experience became keys for Tillich's theology, especially for his theology of mystical experience. I will highlight them now as denouement to my consideration of this life-changing event and as prelude to wider treatment of Tillich's theology of mysticism and art. Tillich understood this as an ecstatic experience, where one

stands outside of oneself, indeed where one experiences a unity beyond the ordinary subject-object structure. It entails a breakdown of or a breaking through the normal perception and understanding of forms and their sense. At the same time perception of form is transformed rather than superceded—the forms remain a necessary and vital part of the experience.

Despite his many published articles and lectures on religion and art, Tillich never systematically developed his theology of mysticism and art. While still pastor at Moabit, he did speak on “The Mysticism of Art and Religious Mysticism” (Pauck & Pauck, 37). Unfortunately, the content of that speech is not extant. That he titled his presentation that way, however, does suggest the importance of art for Tillich’s understanding of mysticism. Robert Scharlemann (162-63) and John Dillenberger (xxii-xxiii) have noted the variations in Tillich’s typologies of art which all revolve around artistic styles and their respective conduciveness or non-conduciveness for revelation of the divine. Tillich varied his approach depending upon context, realizing that an absolute scheme of categorization was neither possible nor desirable. Nevertheless, despite much variety in terminology and sometimes major shifts in his assessments of individual artists and movements representative of certain styles, I contend that an underlying consistency runs through Tillich’s *oeuvre* on artistic style. Indeed, some of the tensions, polarities, or dialectics in his analysis of style themselves constitute consistent features of that analysis.

In a nutshell, artistic style determines the interplay of form and substance. To elaborate, form potentially interacts with substance on two levels: the ordinary or surface content (*Inhalt*) and the extraordinary, depth content (*Gehalt*). An important background note to keep in mind: for Tillich *any* finite reality can become the vehicle of revelation for someone. So when we theologically analyze artistic styles, we presume a certain modesty: some styles are more conducive than others for intuiting the divine, and some styles indeed put up barriers to revelation; but *no* style or individual painting automatically disqualifies itself from the possibility of becoming the vehicle for an ecstatic experience.

Certain realistic or naturalistic styles call attention to their finite content in and of itself. Some of these also have idealizing elements that exaggerate the present reality or depict the future glory of the subject matter. But the key point is that

this idealized reality does not depend upon the infinite divine but possesses its being and glory through and by itself. This is the “self-sufficient finitude” that Tillich decried. This kind of realism does not look beyond itself as does a critical or prophetic realism. For most of his career, Tillich criticized impressionism for that kind of attitude, for limiting itself to a technical approach to light and surface and/or for its idealizing of bourgeois life (for example, 1987:61-62). (Late in his life, though, he had kinder words for impression’s mystical tendencies, which probably represent a fairer assessment given the continuities between Cezanne, whom he lionized, and the impressionists [1987:146, 187].) For Tillich, the worst kind of naturalism took religious symbols as its subject matter but left them in their self-satisfied finitude. Tillich bristled at such sentimental or complacent kitsch with the outrage appropriate to witnessing blasphemy or desecration. A self-sufficient realism or naturalism, then, is the type of artistic style that erects substantial barriers to the breakthrough of the divine. Significantly, except in his early works, Tillich usually identifies the demonic with the finite that claims absoluteness for itself (for example, 1987:108).

Expressionism for Tillich is not just a modern artistic movement centered in Germany but a style that appears in many periods of history and pre-history. If the above realism is the “bad-boy” of artistic styles, expressionism is the hero. Expressionistic style uses forms in a manner that does not restrict our attention to the ordinary content (*Inhalt*) but alters forms so as to permit an in-breaking of an infinite depth content (*Gehalt*) through the forms. In Tillich’s words, “The expressive element in a style implies a radical transformation of the ordinarily encountered reality by using elements of it in a way which does not exist in the ordinarily encountered reality. Expression disrupts the naturally given appearance of things.” (1987:123). Similarly, Tillich expounds that the “expressionistic element” breaks “the surface of reality”; “it pierces into its ground; it reshapes it, reorders the elements in order more powerfully to express meaning. It exaggerates some elements over against others” (1987:177). In theonomous periods—when culture has an integrity whose expression harmonizes with its sense of ultimate reality—as in primal prehistory and in Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic, either everyday or explicitly religious subject matter can constitute the *Inhalt*, though with bending or alteration of form

that encourages the divine ground and abyss to break through for the observer. Already in "Art and Society," Tillich identified a "positive expressionistic style" "in which the spiritual substance shines through the natural forms of reality" (1987:31). In "Art and Ultimate Reality," Tillich refers to this type of expressionism as "numinous realism" in relation to primal art. Its depictions make things "strange, mysterious, laden with an ambiguous power. It uses space-relations, body stylization, uncanny expressions for this purpose" (1987: 143ff). Positive expressionistic elements also "are effective and even dominating in many styles" of Western religious art. In general, expressionism allows "(u)ltimate reality to appear 'breaking the prison of our form'.... It breaks to pieces the surface of our own being and that of our world" (1987:150). But in theonomous periods it only partially negates: it also affirms the *Inhalt*, the everyday content or traditional symbolic religious content.

In other periods, especially the modern one, a fundamental harmony between the culture and the ultimate, the ordinary, on the one hand, and divine power and purpose on the other, has vanished. Meaninglessness constitutes the primary spiritual threat in such a period. And here another form of expressionism may come forth. Here the ordinary *Inhalt* of the culture can in no wise be affirmed. Instead of merely bending the forms of ordinary reality or even breaking them to a degree that still allows reintegration, this expressionism destroys them (though, as we shall see later it is the ordinary perception and meaning of the forms that is lost, not all form). In "Art and Society," Tillich referred to a "negative" or "critical" expressionism that "shows the demonic, disruptive elements in the depths of reality, not through their content, but through the style of its creations" (1987:31). (Note that here, common in the early Tillich, "demonic" refers to the abysmal element in the infinite that resists any attempt by the finite to claim absoluteness for itself [1987:31]).

In his 1922 article, "Mass and Personality," Tillich discerned a "mystical mass" embodied in the crowds depicted in theonomous, expressive medieval religious art. Medieval society constituted a mystical body in this worldview. Given that culture's understanding of its religious symbols, this mysticism, though experienced within the finite, breaks in transcendently, from above. With the negative type by contrast, "*it is the mass of immanent mysticism that expressionism reveals*

[emphasis Tillich's].... The end is linked with the beginning. A new mystical mass is in the making, except that the mysticism is not guided supernaturally, from above, but remains immanent in the reality of this world, breaking forth from the depths of the soul" (1987:64).

Some scholars have debated whether the New Realism or "belief-ful realism" permanently superceded Expressionism for Tillich, whether in terms of a particular artistic movement or a wider style. We can find the answer in light of our above discussion. Tillich hoped that the modern West might someday regain a theonomous culture—a culture where art could affirm the symbols of ordinary reality as well as of more explicitly religious reality, bending them to allow the divine mystically to breakthrough, rather than a culture that only permitted such a breakthrough through their destruction. And initially Tillich believed that the New Realism signaled a positive breakthrough, where the forms and subject matter depicted could be affirmed in a culture or subculture becoming theonomous (for example, 1929: 65ff; 1956: 57ff). In later works, however, he doubted that the New Realism had succeeded in that difficult mission (1987: 99,124,152,169-70). To the question of whether art with both a religious style and religious content was possible, he answered, "Sometimes...I am willing to say that it is possible. Sometimes I am not willing to say so" (1987: 98-99). Regarding straightforwardly positive religious symbols, Tillich commented even more negatively: "Symbols such as the resurrection have not found any adequate artistic representation and so it is with the other traditional 'symbols of glory'" (1987:124). Tillich's last word regarding theonomous art was, "We cannot force it, as we cannot force the resurrection of the God who died...." (1987:170). The implication of that apparent failure was that the most success the New Realism could expect in mid-twentieth century Western culture was that of Expressionism: to break down or negate the forms and their ordinary content enough to allow the infinite depth to shine through. Interestingly, a comment from "Über die Idee einer Theologie er Kultur" suggests that Tillich believed the Expressionists themselves were trying to affirm content and symbol but likewise had failed.

Thus, a No and a Yes come to expression in great depth in this art. But the No, the form-destroying element, seems to me to have the upper hand throughout, even though this is not the intention of the artist, for in him there pulsates a

passionate will to a new, unconditional Yes (41-42). If we keep in mind that Tillich intended none of his typology to be absolute, that a particular piece of art usually included several stylistic elements, we realize that typing a piece or an artistic movement is a matter of degrees. Thus, whether a work with expressionistic elements exhibits a bending or even breaking of—while still affirming—form, content, symbol, and sense, versus destroying same, is not an all or nothing matter. We can probably conclude, however, that Tillich eventually came to the judgment that neither the New Realism nor any other artistic movement on the whole succeeded in both expressing the divine depth content and affirming its own forms and surface content. And in terms of the broadest typology of artistic styles, numinous realism, theonomous religious art, Expressionism, and the New Realism are all expressionistic.

Before we move to the third major type in my analysis of Tillich on art, religion, and mysticism, I will say a stylistic word about Tillich's ecstatic, mystical experience of Botticelli's *Madonna*. In terms of Tillich's general assessment of Renaissance art, in its own cultural period the painting would most likely have been received in a realistic manner, indeed, in a self-sufficient naturalistic mode. At best, enough expressive elements might have been accessible so that the Renaissance viewer could have had a theonomous experience where the ordinary religious content was affirmed while allowing the divine depth content to break through. For Tillich, however, the religious content or *Inhalt* constituted no part of his experience: that content and the ordinary sense of the forms were destroyed. So for Tillich in the twentieth-century, the artistic style that functioned in his apprehension of the *Madonna with Singing Angels* was a negative expressionism.

Given that the two broadest types of artistic style covered thus far entail, respectively, self-sufficient finite content that neglects the infinite versus expressive finite content that reveals infinite depth, exhausting the abstract logical possibilities would leave the following third type of style: infinite depth that attempts to eliminate finite content (as much as possible). I add the parenthetical remark because visual art by its nature involves an indispensable finite medium. Only once, in "Art and Ultimate Reality," does Tillich explicitly identify this arguably counter-intuitive "mystical" artistic style (1987:145ff). Such a style is analogous to "the mystical type" of religion that "tries to reach ultimate reality without the mediation of particular

things" (145). Some variants of this general mystical style merely dissolve particularities "into a visual continuum," hiding but not eliminating the potential particularity of things. One example Tillich offers is "Chinese landscapes in which air and water symbolize the cosmic unity, and individual rocks or branches hardly dare emerge to an independent existence" (145-46). We might subsume this variety of "mystical" style under expressionism broadly construed, in that air and water in this example are altered sufficiently from their natural appearance to reveal something of the ultimate divine source. Interestingly, Tillich here also talks of impressionism as entailing a continuum where things "hardly dare to become fully individual" (146).

A more radical version of mystical style must stand on its own, namely, "non-objective painting" (146). In his works that develop the types of religion, Tillich contributes a decisive negative judgment against any form of mysticism that attempts to utterly transcend or bypass the finite (for example, 1951:140, 1952:186, 1959:28). Not only is such an attempt practically impossible—even the most rarefied mystical experiences are mediated by a tradition and meditative techniques—but also theologically impossible: the infinite is never experienced apart from finite mediation or expression in the finite, for metaphysically the two partake in a dialectical relationship. In his "Introduction" to *On Art and Architecture*, John Dillenberger opines that Tillich's instincts about Abstract Expressionism "were not negative, but undeveloped" (xxi). I suspect otherwise. Tillich countenanced the destruction of form in Expressionism precisely in that it strove for new forms even as it destroyed the old. Tillich describes an immanentism in *Visual Arts and the Revelatory Character of Style*:

Not even the elements of encountered reality are any longer of interest but only the relation of colors in an unordered-ordered geometrical network. Here the point is reached in which the physical material of every painting is transformed itself into a painting. But this painting does not transcend the material and its inner relations (1987:137).

And in *Religious Dimensions of Contemporary Art*, he says,

Nevertheless, in spite of this breaking to pieces, this piercing into the underground, this distortion and reduction of dimensions, this

exaggeration—expressionism still exhibits artistic form; it discloses the unity of sense impressions, the unity which embraces a manifoldness. In this manifoldness, the whole and the broken, the totality and the parts, are united by the integral act of the artist in creating his new aesthetic form (1987:177).

Expressionist style then does not try to outstrip all form. I surmise that Tillich had theological qualms about some manifestations of Abstract Expressionism and other schools of non-objective art of the mid-twentieth century, because they did attempt to use their minimalist forms in a kind of purely abstract, instrumental manner that involved their own destruction in order to induce a supposed experience of the naked infinite, rather than creating a new aesthetic form.

While John Dourley and Daniel Peterson disagree as to whether God in Böhme's thought derives fulfillment from what happens in time, they concur that Böhme, like Eckhart before him, posits an absolute divine fulfillment belonging to a timeless, formless dimension—and which humans can also experience in a mystical state that absolutely surpasses any distinction between subject and object, an utterly unmediated experience of the God beyond God. In this case, as Dourley puts it, "the abyss which craves form for its self-completion, would cede to a deeper abyss which does not" (14). Dourley concludes that Tillich would have taken his theology in a more expansive direction if he had followed the lead of those two German mystics. Yet Tillich was aware of that option and deliberately spurned it. Instead he threw in his lot with Schelling: while God as infinite ground and abyss is not limited to any particular finite forms, neither does God achieve an absolute fulfillment apart from expression in and through some finite forms. Tillich's beatification of expressive artistic style is fully in keeping with this fundamental theological judgment. Expressive art participates in the divine fulfillment through the creation.

That an explicit mystical experience could occur in the context not only of nature—obvious in the German Romantic tradition—or of the religious *per se*, but of secular art, provided key support for Tillich's epistemology of a universal mystical connection with the divine. This carried Tillich far beyond his early intellectual interest in the German mystical tradition. While I have just highlighted the finite as necessary and substantive for realization of the depths of meaning for both humans and God, I

will now conclude that Tillich's World War I journey and his appropriation of classical Christian theology conspired to mute this crucial role for finite form. (As my theological mentor, Ronald L. Williams, often proclaimed, "theologians take away with the left hand what they've just given you with the right.") While Dourley rightly interprets Tillich's understanding of the divine life to always entail the Logos element of form, he regards Tillich's notion of essentialization in Volume 3 of the *Systematic* as a decisive change whereby Tillich finally allows that *creaturely and human* forms contribute to divine blessedness and fulfillment (15). Developed at greater length elsewhere, I would offer a different interpretation that involves a position consistent with the whole Tillichian corpus, albeit a position never fully developed in an explicit manner: whatever finite forms creatures realize or fail to realize, God overcomes and purges the negative and makes up in eternity the gap between the creature's existence and its essential goodness. In that sense God's fulfillment in and through the world is "beyond potentiality and actuality" (for example, 1951:251:52). God needs to create the world for complete blessedness, but that fulfillment does not depend on creaturely realization of certain forms over against certain other forms (Nikkel: 173ff). Parallel to this unambiguous fulfillment in eternity beyond history's ambiguities is an archetype for religious experiences especially evident in *The Courage to Be*: In the midst of an existence at best ambiguous, an absolute meaning and fulfillment breaks through the despair, depression, and doubt, and through the forms and the substance of the finite, all of which may be lost in an abyss of meaninglessness. The finite forms here at best represent a hope that sometime concrete meaning may yet (re)appear. In the mystical experience, we find "the courage to be," an absolute assurance of the meaningfulness of one's life in the absence of any concrete evidence. One may discern here a tragic element in Tillich's theology as well as a dialectical dimension that sounds a note of dualism. Yes, Tillich never denies the crucial role of the finite in the expression of an absolute divine meaning. However, this absolute fulfillment appears to lose any concrete connection to our life! Yet this is the kind of fulfillment for which a sick soul yearns. But Tillich was hardly alone. Did not Neo-Orthodox or Crisis Theology in the wake of the First World War typically evince a tragic as well as dialectical-tending-towards-dualistic tenor? It should not

surprise us that Tillich, rooted in that era, never did find a school of art that he could unambiguously endorse as furnishing a mystical expression of the divine in tandem with an affirmation of the forms of his culture. Today we might ask, if we have entered a new postmodern period, has or will a style of art arise that fulfills such a positive expressionist role? Or does the postmodern signal that we must abandon any hope or pretense of a truly immediate mystical encounter?

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**THROWN TO THE BOUNDARY:  
TILlich'S WORLD WAR I  
CHAPLAINCY SERMONS**

MATTHEW LON WEAVER

**Introduction**

Most people know Paul Tillich through his post-World War II works: the three sermon collections; shorter works from *The Courage to Be* to *Love, Power and Justice*, from *The Dynamics of Faith* to *Christianity and the Encounter of the World*

*Religions*; and, especially, the *Systematic Theology*. As a result, to read Tillich's sermons from his time as a chaplain in the German Army during World War I can be jarring. This is understandable. To move from the relatively "known" Tillich of the Cold War period to the "unknown" Tillich of the Great War is to leap over significant turning points in his life and thought. Looking at those turning points in reverse chronological order is like descending into the depths of a mine. On level one is the Cold War period: post-World War II geopolitics had dissipated Tillich's hope for a world economic revolution and a unified international political system: the international political world had traded

*kairos* for vacuum. On level two is World War II itself. At that time, Tillich regularly pondered the significance of the war. He condemned the self-righteousness that blinded Americans to their complicity in helping to create conditions that had led to the war. He encouraged and admonished the people of his birth land, advocating resistance to—and condemning support for—a murderously enslaving tyranny, particularly in the Voice of America speeches. On level three is the interwar exile/emigrant period of late 1933 to approximately 1940. It began with the shattering of Tillich's career at the University of Frankfurt and the promise of a future at Union Theological Seminary. Tragedy became opportunity. It was a time for testing the carrying power of his cultural analysis of the Weimar years: in these years he wrote the fragment on religion and world politics. On level four is the post-World War I years of revolution and Weimar democracy. Marion and Wilhelm Pauck write of the exceptional significance of the beginning of this period.<sup>1</sup> In Tillich's words, "the first world war threw me out of the ivory tower of philosophical idealism and religious isolationism."<sup>2</sup> Thrown into a democratic experiment and into a religious socialism through which to interpret it, Tillich prodigiously and prolifically examined the full range of relationships of religion to culture.

Only after penetrating through these four significant levels—covering more than four decades of Tillich's life and intellectual output—do we finally arrive at level five, the World War I years, the years of the pre-radical Tillich, the documents that concern us here. The sermons reflect the general apoliticality and political conservatism of these years, something almost impossible to believe in the face of his subsequent radicalism. Now, I will review the content of the ninety-three published sermons.<sup>3</sup> They cover a full range of issues. Here I will summarize them under five areas: (A) general Christian piety; (B) soldierly qualities; (C) the Fatherland and sacrifice; (D) war, peace, and reconciliation; and (E) power and weakness.

## I. The Sermons

### A—General Christian Piety

Much of Tillich's preaching to soldiers was traditional Christian orthodoxy. He called his military congregants to see God as the source and basis of all things, as the director and ruler of world

events and as the goal of all things.<sup>4</sup> God participated in the brokenness of war.<sup>5</sup> He preached that even amidst war's horrors, we must thank God for life as a gift.<sup>6</sup>

Tillich described God as a companion<sup>7</sup> and Christ as the one inexhaustible source of love and power that arises out of our souls' depths.<sup>8</sup> God bears our cares, worries, and concerns.<sup>9</sup> God's "nevertheless" (*dennoch*)—a powerful image of God's grace in forgiving our sin—enables us to say *dennoch* to the brokenness and sufferings of life.<sup>10</sup>

A sense of blessedness, of the nearness of eternity, of God's imminence and its fruit of inner peace were a significant focus for Tillich's war sermons: "[God] is with you as the true shepherd, and the best which you have—your power, your heroism, and your pride he has given you."<sup>11</sup>

Tillich believed that religion had wrongly placed a heavy burden on people. Instead, "Religion is joy...."<sup>12</sup> He related divine love to the love that connected soldiers with loved ones back home: "Divine love has bridged worlds; what are a few hundred leagues for it?"<sup>13</sup> Prayer meant drawing near to God versus making requests of God.<sup>14</sup> The eucharist symbolized God's desire to be one with us, just as wine and bread become one with our bodies.<sup>15</sup> Despite war, inner "peace on earth" was perpetually present by means of Christ's peace-giving presence.<sup>16</sup> Eternal goals were attainable, beyond the horrific loss of human lives and dreams.<sup>17</sup>

Care of the soul occupied attention in Tillich's preaching. He exhorted soldiers, "Remember you have wings."<sup>18</sup> The soul was the "organ" of religion, "an organ for things which are not of this world, for duty and love, truth and beauty, God and eternity."<sup>19</sup> Immortal souls are the closest and most precious thing within people.<sup>20</sup> Thus, human beings are more than dust; they possess divinity, a royal dignity.<sup>21</sup>

Tillich preached of the nearness and distance of God's kingdom in life and the fact of that kingdom beyond death. The mutual tearing apart of Christendom in world war testified to Christ's kingdom not being "of this world."<sup>22</sup> The Easter message was that "the best lies above us" in the hope of resurrection.<sup>23</sup> The kingdom was present in lives lived sacrificially and transcendentally.<sup>24</sup>

The response to God was to be gratitude,<sup>25</sup> to live our lives by Luther's teaching to be "lord of all things...subject to no one...subserving slave to all things...subject to everyone."<sup>26</sup> However, humanity's response was perpetually ingratitude. The world had entered a time in which sin and untruth

lay spread upon the earth and over the nations.<sup>27</sup> A Spirit of darkness had descended upon Christendom.<sup>28</sup> The question was whether God's love was compatible with the brutality of war. It was a period that sought to make humanity senseless to God's light.<sup>29</sup> The "hatred, misery, and injustice without equal of this war" ended optimism over bringing into being God's kingdom.<sup>30</sup> The crucifixion symbolized the myriad of ways the entire human race fought against God's will.<sup>31</sup> The cross was God's judgment on the world.<sup>32</sup> Germany bore the sword of Christ's righteous judgment on Europe.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, the story of the infant Christ—weak and helpless—taught that we must become weak to become strong, to become victors in life and death.<sup>34</sup>

### *B—Soldierly Qualities*

Tillich spent much time on personal character and behavior. God breaks willful selves, he preached.<sup>35</sup> Banality and sin rob people of their human dignity.<sup>36</sup> Bad language is demeaning.<sup>37</sup> Each person has the constant choice to pursue or flee God's light.<sup>38</sup> Tillich reminded soldiers that the future of nation and self was determined by their personal conduct.<sup>39</sup> He spoke of the potentially profound impact of the Spirit-filled person who knows that "The entire secret of the Spirit is that God is near, perceptible, perceivable, living and powerful."<sup>40</sup>

He reminded the congregants that each person was a unique, irreplaceable being, "an eternal thought of God."<sup>41</sup> Mistreatment of one another is onerous: "...when you dishonor your brother, you dishonor the one living in him... when you hurt your brother, you hurt the one who suffers with him...when you are hateful to your brother, you have hatred for the one who is his friend, the eternal God!"<sup>42</sup> Instead, soldiers were to be a light to their comrades.<sup>43</sup>

Tillich called soldiers to cultivate manly courage,<sup>44</sup> to develop the capacity to look death in the face,<sup>45</sup> and to associate joy with discipline.<sup>46</sup> He described lack of discipline as a soldier's enemy<sup>47</sup> and affirmed the call to love enemies but to hate the enemy will that drives armed conflict.<sup>48</sup>

Distinguishing heroism from cowardice, he preached, "A coward fears humanity, a hero fears God."<sup>49</sup> Just as God blessed Israel with David's line, so God blessed Germany with the heroic house of Hohenzollern.<sup>50</sup> Heroic action gave days an eternal

significance which could not be measured according to empirical time.<sup>51</sup>

### *C—The Fatherland and Sacrifice*

The relationship of soldier to Fatherland was a deep and significant one to Tillich. He spoke of love of nation and described the nation as a beloved Mother.<sup>52</sup> A year into the war, Tillich preached of service to country as service to the invisible and the eternal.<sup>53</sup> In a sermon of 1917 based on the declaration of Jesus that humanity does not live by bread alone, Tillich preached that it is "The Fatherland, for which we live and die, which lets our hearts beat more deeply, which is our home soil, which gave first imprint upon our souls... We live not by bread alone, and for that reason we are prepared to live and to die for God and Fatherland."<sup>54</sup>

Elsewhere, he declared God's self-revelation in the heroic Christ as paralleled by God's self-revelation in German history.<sup>55</sup> On the Kaiser's birthday of each of the three years of the war, Tillich made the nation's leader the core of his sermon: in 1915, he praised the Kaiser for bestowing goodness of life on the Fatherland, for prewar war preparations, and for arousing united enthusiasm for war.<sup>56</sup> In 1916, Tillich lifted up the Kaiser as the appropriate object of love for his subjects and as a vehicle of transcendence.<sup>57</sup> In 1917, Tillich thanked the Kaiser for seeking peace, both domestically and internationally.<sup>58</sup> Thus, he admonished, "Holy love demands new sacrifices from you, holy love demands life and limb! The highest love becomes the highest force."<sup>59</sup> Sacrifice for country proved that soldier and homeland belonged to each other.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, love of Fatherland meant working that Germany become an eternal part of God's kingdom.<sup>61</sup>

Parallel to the experience of ancient Israel, he pointed to the necessity of Germany's innocent suffering on behalf of guilty nations.<sup>62</sup> He equated the majesty of courageous sacrifice on the cross with the sacrifice of soldiers in war.<sup>63</sup> He saw Christ's sacrificial spirit as alive in heroism and in self-sacrifice for others.<sup>64</sup>

Tillich believed that gratitude to God was the appropriate response to the eternal goodness embodied in wounded and dead<sup>65</sup> whose actions were acts of love.<sup>66</sup> He called for a self-sacrificial enthusiasm: "Come out of yourself, so calls the Fatherland, so calls this time to everyone of you.

Sacrifice yourself for that which is greater than you, for your Fatherland, for all coming times, for your God who needs you for his work on earth."<sup>67</sup>

#### *D—War, Peace and Reconciliation*

At times, Tillich saw the war as inhuman and murderous.<sup>68</sup> He envisioned God standing beyond war in holy rest and called faithful service participation in this rest.<sup>69</sup> At other times, he called every warrior “a divine fighter, because God’s battles are fought out in the roaring wars of nations.”<sup>70</sup> Even more stridently, “There is no conflict between Christianity and war. The battle sword and the sword of justice are both of God....”<sup>71</sup>

Yet, war and suffering indicated humanity’s hostility to God.<sup>72</sup> War manifested the struggle between good and evil in the human heart.<sup>73</sup> Advent resonated with the cry and hope for peace.<sup>74</sup> One of the fruits of “this bloodiest of wars...[was] humanity’s longing for peace without end.”<sup>75</sup> He argued that only forgiveness could save humanity.<sup>76</sup> More profoundly, “Where hatred or hostility... dwells in a human heart, God cannot enter in.”<sup>77</sup>

Tillich believed that God had come to bring humanity closer by means of the destructive storms of world war.<sup>78</sup> At the fourth war Christmas, he yearned for even enemies to be “embraced by the band of eternal love in the spirit of Christmas....”<sup>79</sup> In Holy Week of 1917, he rued the possibility of the flight of forgiveness: “Woe to humanity and to future generations, if the hatred and the passion for vengeance and the lies which make this war so unchivalrous and awful are not overcome by forgiveness!”<sup>80</sup>

#### *E—Power and Weakness*

Tillich preached of Christ as the one inexhaustible source of power<sup>81</sup> and of Christ’s capacity to overcome the powers of earth and history.<sup>82</sup> He even spoke of Christ as a Lord of holy, sword-bearing rage: “Our Lord and Master was not a man with a soft, effeminate heart, easily moved by every feeling, constantly only kind and meek in dignity, but he was a man with a sword in his hand, full of holy rage and merciless seriousness.”<sup>83</sup> Tillich declared, “[T]he sword of Christ is in our hand to judge and save our hearts, our nation and all nations of the earth.”<sup>84</sup> Rejecting a peace rooted in weakness, he exhorted soldiers to envision “the entire Fatherland and your wives and the questioning

eyes of your children, whose future peace must be built upon your strength...the houses and fields of your homeland with everything in them and upon them in richness and beauty. All of these yearn for peace, for your peace, for the peace that arises out of your strength.”<sup>85</sup>

At the same time, Tillich preached of the great theological significance of the notion of weakness. At Christmas, “[God] has chosen the poorest, the weakest, the most broken ...he wants to dwell in your heart.”<sup>86</sup> In fact, Christ’s weakness “was world-overcoming force.”<sup>87</sup> The suffering and weakness of the crucified Christ was reassuring amidst the brokenness of war.<sup>88</sup> While maintaining overt strength in battle, Tillich called the soldiers to “become weak before God so that we become strong...”<sup>89</sup> and to offer prayers in times of deepest weakness, in their own Gardens of Gethsemane.<sup>90</sup>

#### **Comment and Conclusion**

Earlier, I termed these sermons “jarring.” The sermons on Christian piety and good character have few surprises. However, the deeply spiritualized relation to emperor and country directly contradicts the suspicion of ideology Tillich gleaned from Marx and the warning against idolatry that spoke to him so forcefully out of the Jewish prophetic tradition. The later Tillich would scarcely have equated the House of Hohenzollern with the Davidic line, nor waxed romantically about the ruling dynasty, nor equated the sword of Christ with the sword of his homeland, nor described God’s relation to war so unambiguously and with such bellicosity. As to content, Erdmann Sturm rightly criticizes Tillich’s sermons for their undeniable and blindly nationalistic “war theology.”<sup>91</sup> However, I disagree with Sturm’s argument that Tillich’s sermons reveal a disconnect with the situation of the soldier in the field.<sup>92</sup> Though he does so subtly and infrequently, Tillich directly speaks of the brutality and human cost of the war.<sup>93</sup>

In his 1997 paper on these sermons, Ron MacLennan uses the image of “sappers” in assessing the meaning of these speeches. “Sappers” were those soldiers who undertook the risky task of tunneling beneath enemy lines to plant explosives beneath those lines. MacLennan writes, “In similar fashion, the surface of Tillich’s thought generally remains relatively unchanged through most of the war. But beneath the surface, huge voids are being carved out, of which only occasional evidence appears on the

surface.”<sup>94</sup> Not only the strangeness of the sermons from his post-revolutionary thought, but the tension among them points to the hidden change taking place: heroism competes with war’s brutality; self-righteous condemnation of enemy over against the message of forgiveness of, and grace toward, the enemy; the dignity of all human beings versus the call to sacrifice self in a cause to destroy human beings. Something deeper seems to have been occurring.<sup>95</sup>

My particular interest is the place of the sermons in the development of Tillich’s politics. The most important fact for Tillich’s broader political thought may be that he did not maintain the World War I perspective of political provincialism. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, religiously-endorsed war is a fact of tragic regularity, attesting to the continuing vitality of provincialism. Young chaplain Tillich found this to be pathological. Therefore, he changed. On New Year’s Eve of 1917, he professed, “We have all changed: children have become youth, youth have become men, men have become old men, often in a single night of horror!”<sup>96</sup> What was the nature of his particular change?

Tillich’s emotional fragility amidst war may be the strongest testimony to his deep humanity. Near the end of the classic novel on World War I, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a soldier by the name of Leer is mortally wounded by a piece of shrapnel. His demise and its meaning is described with tragically, horrific elegance: “Leer groans as he supports himself on his arm, he bleeds quickly, no one can help him. Like an emptying tube, after a couple of minutes he collapses. What use is it to him now that he was such a good mathematician at school.”<sup>97</sup> It is testimony to the depth of Tillich’s spirit that such scenes were an attack on his psyche, that the war broke him emotionally on at least two occasions, and that the mutual brutalization of human beings was intolerable to him.

The change in Tillich was this: the cauldron of war threw him from the space-bound ideology of nationalism onto the time-centered path of the boundary. War not only threw Tillich “out of the ivory tower” but onto a lifelong boundary propitious for pursuing truth. War physically placed him on his nation’s boundary as part of a hostile force. War drove him to the limits—to another boundary—of his mental health. War threw him politically out of the provincial blindness of nationalism and onto the boundary of internationalism. From this perspective, persistent dialectical cultural and political critique—

“like screws, drilling into untouched rocks”<sup>98</sup>—became the provocative norm of Tillich’s intellectual practice.

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976), 41.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Tillich, “Tillich Challenges Protestantism,” (Speech given at a dinner in Dr. Tillich’s honor by friends of *The Protestant*, Feb. 9, 1942) *The Protestant*, IV, no. 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1942): 2-4.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the ninety-three published sermons that are the basis of this discussion, there are texts for thirteen funeral sermons and unpublished outlines and fragments of fifty others. Erdmann Sturm, “‘Holy Love Claims Life and Limb’—Paul Tillich’s War Theology (1914-1918),” *Journal for the History of Modern Theology* vol. 2, no. 1 (1995): 61.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich, „Feldpredigt #111 (1916),“ and „Feldpredigt #147 (1917),“ in „Feldpredigten 1914-1918,“ *Frühe Predigten (1909-1918), Ergänzungs- und Nachlassbände zu den Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich, Band VII*, 483, 599. The ninety-three chaplaincy sermons are found on pages 357-645 of the seventh volume of Tillich’s unpublished and/or posthumous works in the German version of his collected works: they are sermons 68 through 160 of the volume. Henceforth, they will be cited by sermon number, year, and page number (from the German volume): for example, using the very first two citations, F.P. #111 (1916), 483 and F.P. #147 (1917), 599. All translations are mine.

<sup>5</sup> F.P. #97 (1916), 441.

<sup>6</sup> F.P. #117 (1916), 500.

<sup>7</sup> F.P. #158 (1918), 637.

<sup>8</sup> F.P. #96 (1916), 437, F.P. #153 (1917), 619.

<sup>9</sup> F.P. #71 (1914), 365.

<sup>10</sup> F.P. #108 (1916), 474, 476, F.P. #88 (1915), 413.

<sup>11</sup> F.P. #146 (1917), 596.

<sup>12</sup> F.P. #131 (1917), 546.

<sup>13</sup> F.P. #155 (1917), 627.

<sup>14</sup> F.P. #79 (1915), 387.

<sup>15</sup> F.P. #119 (1916), 509.

<sup>16</sup> F.P. #124 (1916), 523.

<sup>17</sup> F.P. #104 (1916), 462.

<sup>18</sup> F.P. #94 (1916), 430.

<sup>19</sup> F.P. #129 (1917), 538.

<sup>20</sup> F.P. #93 (1916), 427.

<sup>21</sup> F.P. #102 (1916), 455.

<sup>22</sup> F.P. #81 (1915), 393.

<sup>23</sup> F.P. #101 (1916), 454.

<sup>24</sup> F.P. #130 (1917), 543.

<sup>25</sup> F.P. #68 (1914), 357-8.

<sup>26</sup> F.P. #118 (1916), 504; see also F.P. #151 (1917), 610-2.

<sup>27</sup> F.P. #106 (1916), 467.

<sup>28</sup> F.P. #72 (1914), 367.

<sup>29</sup> F.P. #106 (1916), 466.

<sup>30</sup> F.P. #130 (1917), 541.

<sup>31</sup> F.P. #99 (1916), 445-7.

<sup>32</sup> F.P. #114 (1916), 494.

<sup>33</sup> F.P. #86 (1915), 406.

<sup>34</sup> F.P.#92 (1915), 426.

<sup>35</sup> F.P.#148 (1917), 601.

<sup>36</sup> F.P.#102 (1916), 456.

<sup>37</sup> F.P.#73 (1914), 371.

<sup>38</sup> F.P.#106 (1916), 466-9.

<sup>39</sup> F.P.#157 (1918), 635.

<sup>40</sup> F.P.#160 (1918), 644.

<sup>41</sup> F.P.#120 (1916), 514.

<sup>42</sup> F.P.#119 (1916), 511.

<sup>43</sup> F.P. #144 (1917), 589.

<sup>44</sup> F.P.#83 (1915), 399.

<sup>45</sup> F.P.#102 (1916), 457.

<sup>46</sup> F.P.#68 (1914), 358.

<sup>47</sup> F.P.#69 (1914), 360.

<sup>48</sup> F.P.#77 (1915), 382.

<sup>49</sup> F.P.#69 (1914), 361.

<sup>50</sup> F.P.#89 (1915), 416.

<sup>51</sup> F.P. #126 (1916), 530.

<sup>52</sup> F.P. #77 (1915), 381.

<sup>53</sup> F.P. #87 (1915), 410.

<sup>54</sup> F.P. #145 (1917), 593.

<sup>55</sup> F.P. #89 (1915), 418.

<sup>56</sup> F.P. #78 (1915), 383-4.

<sup>57</sup> F.P. #95 (1916), 434.

<sup>58</sup> F.P. #128 (1917), 535.

<sup>59</sup> F.P. #128 (1917), 537.

<sup>60</sup> F.P. #95 (1916), 436.

<sup>61</sup> F.P. #95 (1916), 436.

<sup>62</sup> F.P. #114 (1916), 492.

<sup>63</sup> F.P. #83 (1915), 399.

<sup>64</sup> F.P. #139 (1917), 572.

<sup>65</sup> F.P. #117 (1916), 501, 503.

<sup>66</sup> F.P. #158 (1918), 636-8.

<sup>67</sup> F.P. #84 (1915), 401.

<sup>68</sup> F.P. #116 (1916), 498.

<sup>69</sup> F.P. #71 (1914), 365.

<sup>70</sup> F.P. #104 (1916), 462.

<sup>71</sup> F.P. #128 (1917), 536.

<sup>72</sup> F.P. #115 (1916), 495.

<sup>73</sup> F.P. #100 (1916), 448.

<sup>74</sup> F.P. #154 (1917), 622.

<sup>75</sup> F.P. #139 (1917), 572.

<sup>76</sup> F.P. #135 (1917), 559-60.

<sup>77</sup> F.P. #138 (1917), 569.

<sup>78</sup> F.P. #140 (1917), 576.

<sup>79</sup> F.P. #155 (1917), 627.

<sup>80</sup> F.P. #135 (1917), 560.

<sup>81</sup> F.P. #96 (1916), 437.

<sup>82</sup> F.P. #109 (1916), 478-9.

<sup>83</sup> F.P. #86 (1915), 406.

<sup>84</sup> F.P. #86 (1915), 408.

<sup>85</sup> F.P. #128 (1917), 537.

<sup>86</sup> F.P. #125 (1916), 525.

<sup>87</sup> F.P. #96 (1916), 438.

<sup>88</sup> F.P. #81 (1915), 393.

<sup>89</sup> F.P. #96 (1916), 438.

<sup>90</sup> F.P. #98 (1916), 443.

<sup>91</sup> Sturm, 84.

<sup>92</sup> Sturm, 67.

<sup>93</sup> F.P. #81 (1915), 393; F.P. #87 (1915), 408-9; F.P. #90 (1915), 419; F.P. #116 (1916), 498; F.P. #130 (1917), 541; F.P. #139 (1917), 572; F.P. #150 (1917), 607; and F.P. #156 (1917), 630.

<sup>94</sup> Ronald B. MacLennan, "World War I and Paul Tillich: The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Theology," Unpublished Paper, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Indeed, even though Tillich was silent in his chaplaincy sermons regarding political change, he wrote of a radical change in his thought in correspondence with his family. He wrote to his sister Johanna, "Yesterday as I sat under the (Christmas) tree I suddenly had the thought that is not at all a new one with overwhelming clarity that everything living, struggling, progressing, spirit-filled, profound, attractive is outside of what we call parish and church... Where are the great progressing motives of ethics? They are with the Russian Revolution and the German Social Democrats, on the one hand, with Nietzsche and the more profound artists, on the other...(Sturm, 82-3)." In a letter to his father the same week, Tillich said, "The development in the East is certainly most gratifying. The spirit of the Russian revolutionaries is the most original that the war has brought forth: Childlike, simple, profound, humane! Trotsky's telegrams and the armistice agreement are according to my perception more imbued with the original Christian spirit than the whole lot of battlefield sermons in all the lands west of the Vistula. Should it be that here on the soil of the ancient Greek mysticism a new era of church history might crawl forth from the diapers of unrecognizable beginnings through the mystical-simple character of the Russian people? The West has created the social idea; should the East enact it? These are my Christmas ideas 1917(Sturm, 82, note 44)!" Sturm

opines, "Here for the first time the connection between the war experience and the idea of religious socialism becomes visible in Tillich's thinking (Sturm, 82, note 44)."

<sup>96</sup> F.P. #156 (1917), 630.

<sup>97</sup> Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1928), 284.

<sup>98</sup> Paul Tillich, "Autobiographical Reflections," *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, eds. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 15.

**"YOU NEVER SEE WITH THE EYES ONLY":  
RECONFIGURING PAUL TILLICH'S  
CONCEPT OF PERSONHOOD**

TABEA ROESSLER

I looked at him,  
Not with the eye[s] only,  
But with the whole of my being,  
Overflowing with him as a chalice would with the sea.<sup>2</sup>

Everything that is, really or ideally, has become a medium of the divine mystery sometime in the course of the history of religion. But, in the moment in which something took on this role, it also received a personal face.<sup>3</sup>

With a [single] worldview one just sees; one does not challenge the eyes with which one sees.... To discern this "all" [the cosmos] requires a twist of metaphysics, not through regression to traditional metaphysical deductions but through an expansion of our vision.<sup>4</sup>

**Pre/Face<sup>5</sup>: Sketching the Scenery**

Anthropology, and especially the concept of personhood, has a pivotal position in Paul Tillich's three-volume *Systematic Theology*.<sup>6</sup> It enables a multi-perspectival approach to the different *topoi*, dynamics, and contexts co-present in his system. As such, it is also supremely well-situated to relocate his thinking within the broader spectrum of today's anthropological discourses between modern existentialist and personalist theology, phenomenology, and feminist process theology.

Against this background, I would like to present for discussion reflections on Tillich's epistemology and ontology, which examine his concept of personhood under the perspective of distinctive *visual and phenomenological sense traditions and dynamics*. My argument is twofold. On the one hand, I will argue that reconfiguring personhood

with the help of an epistemology and ontology of "seeing" enables one to recognize the *high level of rational and inner-personal coherence and complexity*, attained by Tillich's anthropology. On the other hand, my presentation will demonstrate how this same inner-personal rationality *systematically obscures a person's embodiment within the multidimensionality of her visual sense-perception*. The result of my investigation is a theological anthropology that offers a fuller and deeper ground and perspective, in which to reconfigure Tillich's concept of personhood: not "with the eyes only," but *with the eyes of our living bodies and spirit (Geist)*, and in the light of the power and creativity of the Living God. This enables the understanding of the person as a micro-cosmos and living, multidimensional unity.

My paper contains three interrelated sections. Following the distinction between "personal in itself" and "personal in relation," provided in *ST III* [75/93], the first and the second sections reconfigure Tillich's understanding of "mono-rationality" and "ground." Both concepts mutually interpret each other as micro- and macro-contexts. In particular, the *first* section describes distinctive facets of the pre/modern concept of the "mask." It further challenges Tillich's inner-personal rationality by the critique of two of his contemporaries: John Randall regarding Tillich's theology of nature, Charles Hartshorne regarding the doctrine of God. The *second* section reconfigures Tillich's incarnational and cosmological Spirit Christology as a bridge-concept toward his understanding of the person as a micro-cosmos and living, multidimensional unity. It further provides the ontological shift from meta (beyond) to meta (with...the physical), from the visible to different phenomenological sense traditions and dynamics, which transcend the very notion of mask (*prosopon*) itself. Finally, the *last* part applies Tillich's multi-faceted pictorial matrix to the usage of God-language.

## 1. Behind the Mask and Inside Out: Mono-Rationality as Micro-Context

Configuring “seeing” with its interrelated macro- and micro-contexts, Tillich’s concept of personhood is not homogeneous, but rather a “*sujet en procès*” (Julia Kristeva), *i.e.*, a (self-)critical and transformative process and *re-vision*.<sup>7</sup>

[T]he structure of reason is only one element in the dynamics of life and the functions of spirit (*Geist*). *It is the static element in the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit*. When we spoke about the existential conflicts of reason in “Reason and Revelation” (Part I of the System), we might better have spoken, in a less condensed manner, of the existential conflicts produced by the ambiguous application of rational structures in the dynamics of the spirit. *For reason is the structure of both mind (Geist) and world, whereas spirit is their dynamic actualization in personality and community*. Strictly speaking, ambiguities cannot occur in reason, which is structure, but only in spirit, which is life.... [Therefore], we must distinguish between the *personal in itself (Personhaften an sich)* and the *personal in relation*, although in reality they are inseparable.<sup>8</sup>

Tillich’s anthropological starting point is the “personal in itself,” which is structured as a binary one-to-one entity by reason. Choosing such inner-personal rationality as the entrance door to his epistemology and ontology, Tillich shows his commitment to the existentialist and personalist philosophies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [I, 53ff./65ff.]. Reevaluated from today’s late modern or so-called post-modern perspectives, this commitment is quite ambiguous.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, we become more and more aware of the *reductionist*, inner-personal and mono-rational, mind-sets of those modern anthropologies. Therefore, Sarah Coakley, quoted above, reworks modern Western epistemic conditions—the “minded gaze” with the eyes only—by engaging the tradition of “spiritual senses” and their ethical impacts.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, in times of public destabilization, for instance in educational and social systems in European societies, we realize the high anthropological level effectively *reached* by modern rationality, exactly *because* of its very focus on human subjectivity. Reducing the problem of rationality to “pro” or “contra” options thus deepens its dilemma rather than contributing constructive answers, as Catherine Keller emphasizes: “The unique integrity of a focussed individuality,

traditionally linked to the independence of a clearly demarcated ego, represents an irrefutable value, indeed a touchstone for any liberating theory of interrelation. But we need not be misled by pairs of false alternatives like ‘self’ versus ‘relation.’”<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, engaging the “personal in itself” as the starting point for his concept of personhood, Tillich raises the question of the paradigms as well as the concrete usage of reason and subjectivity within anthropological systems. His epistemology and ontology of “seeing” offer a complex and challenging contribution to this issue, since “[s]eeing” means to “know,” and “[f]rom seeing, all science starts, to seeing it must always return.”<sup>12</sup>

The basic anthropological paradigm provided in *ST I* is the mask (*prosopon*).<sup>13</sup> But rather than the pre-modern three-story cosmological vision of earth and the heavens, and—deduced from this—of static social roles and public orders [I, 175/207; 276/318], the “gaze” of modern personhood immerses and withdraws itself into the inner space *behind* the mask. The mask operates now as the interface dividing the interior sphere (mind) of a person from her public spectrum (world). This interior and intimate sphere behind the mask, the I-Thou-relationship of the mind *via* its inner gaze, constitutes a shelter of and nucleus for the coming to be of the modern autonomous—seeing and *en-light-ened*<sup>14</sup>—person [I, 169/200]. Michael Welker characterizes this inner space and its I-Thou-dynamics as the “subjectification of the person,”<sup>15</sup> and we can understand this binary one-to-one subjectification as the original phenomenon (*Urphänomen*) of modern existentialist and personalist personhood. All basic epistemological and ontological structures “follow” from it—however, not as a logically derived epiphenomenon [I, 173/204], but rather as a creative life-process and difference-in-relationship [III, 11/21]. This process configures the self’s emergence (*per-sonare*) from its interior shelter and nucleus *via* the mask into its public sphere in front of the mask.

The creative life-process from “inside out,” *i.e.* the “gradually” [III, 17/27] unfolding and complexification of the I-Thou-relationship, and its transformation into the more embracing subject-object-correspondences of mind and world [I, 168/199], is again visually mediated. One of its most challenging phenomena is certainly a person’s capacity for *and* confinement within “perspectival seeing” in the interplay between the center and the horizon of her gaze. To be sure, this perspectival

seeing provides for Tillich one of the most effective answers to (ancient and today's) *mono*-hierarchies, and their interrelated *diffuse* pluralities [III, 12/23]. He therefore introduces the notion "pluralistic environments." This is also a key-concept in today's ecological semiotic theories (Robert Corrington, see below).

Man *has* a world, although he is *in* it at the same time. "World" is not the sum total of all beings—an inconceivable concept. As the Greek *kosmos* and the Latin *universum* indicate, "world" is a structure or a unity of manifoldness. If we say that man has a world at which he looks, from which he is separated and to which he belongs, we think of a structured whole event though we may describe this world in pluralistic terms. The whole opposite man is *one* at least in this respect, that it is related to us perspectively, however discontinuous it may be in itself. Every pluralistic philosopher speaks of the pluralistic character of the *world*, thus implicitly rejecting an absolute pluralism. The world is the structural whole that includes and transcends all environments, not only those of beings who lack a fully developed self, but also the environments in which man partially lives.<sup>16</sup>

To be sure, Tillich's perspectival seeing certainly configures one of the great pivotal concepts "in the making" of his anthropology. But is it, however, strong enough to enable the *transfer* from the "personal in itself" to the "personal in relation," *i.e.*, from the micro- to the macro-context? As I have written elsewhere, I doubt that Tillich's abstract binary subject and self-referential self sufficiently provide system-immanent correctives against a rather instrumental and disembodied—since *mono-rational*—usage of *differences*. His anthropology contains a high level of—what I would like to call—*hyper-individuality*, *i.e.*, flickering, abstract, and instrumental individuality and differences.<sup>17</sup> Following this line of thought, one could further argue that the mask and its binary one-to-one mind-set (*i.e.*, the three-part division into interior, mask/interface, and exterior) internalizes and individualizes abstract metaphysics rather than managing to transform it. Linguistics strikingly affirms this assumption: *se parare*, the preparation of one's self, and *separare*, to separate, share the same roots in Latin.<sup>18</sup>

In *Theology of Paul Tillich*, two voices particularly point in that same direction: John Randall regarding the *emergence* of Tillich's "basic ontological structure[s]" from their "larger context

of organic and social life," and Charles Hartshorne regarding *God as Being*.<sup>19</sup> Although different one from another, both critics question Tillich about one distinctive, epistemologically and ontologically *analogous*, paradigm: the *Grund* (earth/ground) in which his "personal in itself" might be rooted (Randall); and the *Grund* (ground and abyss) in which God as Living might be rooted (Hartshorne). They encourage Tillich to revise his anthropological micro-context in the light of its macro-context, and to allow more fruitful and deeper ground/s to vibrate "between the poles" of his system.

## 2. Toward the Living *Prosopon* of a Human Being: Ground as Macro-Context

The theologian...must *look* where that which concerns him ultimately is manifest, and he must stand where its manifestation reaches and grasps him. The source of his knowledge is not the universal *logos* but the Logos "who became flesh," that is, the *logos* manifesting itself in a particular historical event.... The concrete *logos* which he *sees* is *received through believing commitment* and not, like the universal *logos* at which the philosopher looks, through rational detachment. [The theologian therefore] relates the structures of life to the creative *ground* of life and the structures of *spirit* to the divine Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

Tillich's use of the German *Grund* is not only polyvalent, but, even more, fruitfully ambiguous, as the synoptic analysis of his text corpus confirms.<sup>21</sup> However, the picture becomes more differentiated and, in this sense, clearer, once we acknowledge the distinctive Christological resources that Tillich engages. In particular, I want to refer to Robert Jenson's and Christoph Schwöbel's studies on Luther, Brenz, and the Swabian school (Ötinger). This latter inspire Tillich's incarnational understanding of God's omnipresence in Jesus, the Christ ("corporality is the end of the ways of God").<sup>22</sup> The *pointe* is twofold: First, *body* (corporality) no longer means "containment in one place," but "availability," by which we are "liberated to be persons in communion." This is so because, second, *heaven* is no longer to be understood in terms of a *locus circumscriptus* in space and, consequently, as part of a fixed, three-story cosmos, but as "God's power and creativity [which] act at every place" [I, 277/318].<sup>23</sup>

Following this long forgotten school of Lutheran incarnational and cosmological Christology, Tillich is attempting to avoid, or rather *transform*, any substance ontology and disembodied view of God's power and creativity: "The paradox of the Incarnation is not that God becomes man, but that a divine being who represents God and is able to reveal him in his fullness, manifests himself in a form of existence which is in radical contradiction to his divine, spiritual and heavenly form."<sup>24</sup> This is a Christologically radicalized *panentheism* and paradoxical application of the *coincidentia oppositorum* principle, called "Spirit Christology" [III, 144ff./171ff.].<sup>25</sup> I argue that this incarnational and cosmological Spirit Christology delivers and empowers one distinctive framework in Tillich's anthropology of "seeing," that his (rather intellectualized and mystified) *panentheism* and *coincidentia oppositorum* principle are *per se not able to provide* [I, 105/127; 174/205]. This new framework is the understanding of the person as a micro-cosmos and living, multidimensional unity [I, 67/82; 176/207; II, 120/132; III, 11ff./21ff.].<sup>26</sup> It signifies a "seeing" with the eyes of the spirit (*Geist*).

The above quotation from *ST I* configures this anthropological shift from Tillich's "personal in itself" toward his "personal in relation." The text passage correlates and transforms three—otherwise *separated*—components in his anthropology: earth/ground (embodiment), mind/spirit (*Geist*), and God as the ground of being. Tillich concretizes and actualizes their interrelation by one specific *move* and *deepening* of a person's "mono-rational way of looking." This is the turn (*meta-noia*) of the "minded gaze" (*noein*) toward the source of its knowledge which is the Logos "who became flesh."<sup>27</sup> Correspondingly, it is precisely at this "visual turning point" that Tillich *introduces* two of the main anthropological root concepts in his system: (1) *spirit*, i.e., a person's embodied, grounded and living, mind [1<sup>st</sup> reference in *ST I*], and (2) *ground* of being, the Living God [2<sup>nd</sup> reference; cf. I, 21/29].<sup>28</sup> Out of this "believing commitment" to life in its fullness and depth subtly emerges Tillich's "personal in relation," his anthropological macro-context. It carefully introduces a "seeing" that "really unites" and signifies a "seeing" with the eyes of the spirit. As Tillich describes in *The New Being*: "Our language has a word for it: Intuition. This means seeing *into*. It is an intimate seeing, a grasping and being grasped. It is a seeing shaped by

love."<sup>29</sup> To be sure, this is an impossible idea within the static and disembodied mind-set of the mask, whose *cogito* has "no face," no living *sum*, as Robert Spaemann strikingly pictures the problem of inner-personal mono-rationality.<sup>30</sup> For Tillich, this new perspective becomes imaginable *via* his incarnational and cosmological Spirit Christology, which transforms the spatial logics of "containment," *locus circumscriptus*, and "hyper-individuality."<sup>31</sup>

Most importantly for our topic, understanding the person as a micro-cosmos and living, multidimensional unity delivers fresh perspectives on rationality itself. Thus, *ST II* demonstrates the first steps toward the very reopening of inner-personal mono-rationality. Tillich starts "concretizing" his dialectical thinking, which means: *Different* "pluralistic environments" and their specific spaces, powers, and meanings ("dialectics"), are beginning to "grow together" (*con-crescere*). A good illustration of this concretization and growing together is the leaf of a *Ginkgo Biloba*. It represents the oldest tree in the history of humanity, and the very first plant growing out of the contaminated soil after the atomic bomb in Hiroshima: *One* leaf whose basic shape is *twofold*; both parts are crossed through with subtle ramifications and needles, from which the leaf originally *emerged*. Likewise, different pluralistic environments become available for each other within a person and her living body and spirit. They also become the "tangible ground and sky"<sup>32</sup> within a "structure or a unity of manifoldness" called "world," which now becomes a person's concrete *Lebenswelt* (Husserl).<sup>33</sup> The result is the embodiment of rationality within the very earth/ground and dialectics of life:

Dialectical thinking is rational, not paradoxical. Dialectic is not reflective, in so far as it does not reflect like a mirror the realities with which it deals. It does not look at them merely from the outside. It enters them, so to speak, and participates in their inner tensions. *The tensions may appear first in contrasting concepts, but they must be followed down to their roots in the deeper levels of reality.* In a dialectical description one element of a concept drives to another. Taken in this sense, dialectics determine all life processes and must be applied in biology, psychology, and sociology. The description of tensions in living organisms, neurotic conflicts, and class struggles is dialectical. Life itself is dialectical.<sup>34</sup>

The *terminus technicus* for this shaping of rationality, that Tillich introduces in *ST III*, is “multidimensionality” of life [11ff./21ff.]. This multidimensionality has its own “physiognomy” and delivers its own metaphysics,<sup>35</sup> which go beyond the disembodied *theoria* and vision (*teorein*) of the “minded gaze.” Indeed, as opposed to the mask and its logics of separation and containment (*se/parare*), dimensions are invisible, or rather, do not appear in space.<sup>36</sup> This is so, because dimensions are intrinsically *configurative* and *therefore* metaphysical. As Tillich explains: “There are notions which resist definition and whose meaning can only be shown by their configuration with other notions.... The philosophical task with respect to them is not to define them but to illuminate them by showing how they appear in different constellations.”<sup>37</sup> Therefore, dimensions cannot be grasped and defined—but rather “seen,” yet, not with the eyes only. Hence, these invisibility and non-appearance precisely characterize the *inorganic and organic earth/ground*, as Tillich further emphasizes: “One reason for using the metaphor ‘level’ is the fact that there are wide areas of reality in which some characteristics of life are not manifest [*sichtbar/visible*] at all, for instance, the large amount of inorganic materials in which no trace of the organic dimension can be found and the many forms of organic life in which neither the psychological nor the spiritual dimension is visible.”<sup>38</sup>

Tillich combines multidimensionality and the in/organic, the visible and the invisible, because he is attempting to capture in his thought the tangible ground, heaven, and sky, the “unruly deep” from which *rationality itself emerges* (Schelling).<sup>39</sup> He does this because his thought is profoundly anchored in the deep roots of reason, in its creative ground and abyss, and, therefore, in a seeing that goes beyond the visible.<sup>40</sup> The ontological shift from *meta* (beyond) to *meta* (with ... the physical), from the mask to multidimensionality that Tillich subtly introduces in his epistemology, offers an anthropology of “seeing” that transcends the very notion of *proson* itself. The result is a fuller and deeper picture of the living person, which is *wirklichkeitserschließend*,<sup>41</sup> as we say in German: This picture truly “enlightens the reality” of personhood ... not with the eyes only, but with the face of the deep, into the matrix of the ground, from the midst of rational structures ... *with* the eyes of our living bodies and spirit.

### Multi-Faceted Betweenness...<sup>42</sup> or Instead of a Conclusion...

Understanding the person as a micro-cosmos and living, multidimensional unity, and reconfiguring the very shaping of rationality itself, also provides new grounds for reopening our God-language: the—apparent—alternatives of the “God above the God” of the philosophers and the “Christocentrism” of the theologians, or “God as Being” and “God as Living.” Hartshorne’s doctrine of God and Tillich’s anthropology of seeing both point in this direction. Most importantly, *multidimensionality* itself offers a paradigm and theological dynamics able to transform static binary one-to-one options into emerging and relational *many-to-many and many-to-one* correspondences. To be sure, these correspondences can host more accurately and honestly the subtleness, fragility, and ambiguity, the “polarity of life and death,” by which natural, inner-personal, and inter-personal life-processes are “colored” [III, 11/-]. Such vision of personhood further delivers a complex pictorial matrix that can inspire theologians to go beyond existentialist and personalist shortcuts in their God-language.

For instance, if diverted from a certain biological essentialism, the above-mentioned “Ginkgo-form” configures a micro-cosmos *in nuce*.<sup>43</sup> Such micro-cosmos holds the complex and complicated *relative commonalities and relative differences* between the Living God and His and Her creation together in the midst of existence. Translated into a more anthropomorphic picture—as Goethe, poet and scientist, does in his *West-Östlicher Divan* (1819)—the Ginkgo-form further symbolizes the subtle, empowering love between human beings, as well as the growing embryo residing and struggling to birth within the female body [III, 51/65]. To be sure, such multi-faceted “betweenness,” provided by Tillich’s micro-cosmological vision of personhood and spirit, signifies a relation between God and world, whose dynamics *cannot be simply divided into twofold abstract poles*: “[T]he concept of God as creator has ... been much too dominated by a stress on the *externality* of God’s creative acts. *He* is pictured as having created something external to himself, just as the male fertilizes the ovum from outside.... We should work with the analogy of God creating the world *within herself*. God creates a world that is in principle other than himself, but creates it within

herself,” as Arthur Peacocke emphasizes (anonymously quoting Schelling).<sup>44</sup> This image strikingly illustrates Tillich’s understanding of the person as a micro-cosmos and living, multidimensional unity.

I want to share this multi-faceted betweenness<sup>45</sup> and its pictorial macro- and micro-cosmoi precisely *not* as a foundation (*Grund*), on which one could construct fixed visions and vague illusions. It rather signifies a possible ground of and perspective for constructive anthropology, in which to *reconfigure our differences*.<sup>46</sup> So...instead of a conclusion, but certainly *not* instead of the sensibility, subtleness, and love of the spirit, which inspires a “seeing” from which “all science starts, [and to which] it must always return.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Coakley, Sarah, *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 130; 151 (indirect quotation). Doctoral dissertation in progress at Heidelberg University (Mentor: Professor Dr. Dr. Michael Welker). Draft title: ‘*You Never See With the Eyes Only*’: *The Making of Paul Tillich’s Anthropology in an Epistemological and Ontological Perspective* (2006). I am grateful to Mark Lewis Taylor, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Catherine Keller, Drew University, for discussing with me parts of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis TR. Coakley quotes from Thomas, Ronald Stuart, “Suddenly.” In *Laboratories of the Spirit* (Macmillan: London, 1975), 32. Thomas’ poem describes the in/visibility of the risen Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Biblical Religion and the Search of the Ultimate Reality* (Chicago: University Press, 1955), 23.

<sup>4</sup> Keller, Catherine, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 2; 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003), xv.

<sup>6</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Volume I* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), 168. *Ibid.*, *Systematic Theology: Volume II: Existence and The Christ* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 44ff. *Ibid.*, *Systematic Theology: Volume III: Life and the Spirit: History and the Kingdom of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963), 30ff. *Ibid.*, *Systematische Theologie I*, ed. A. Rathmann, transl. R. Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1956<sup>3</sup>), 199. *Ibid.*, *Systematische Theologie II*, ed., transl. R. Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1958<sup>3</sup>), 52ff. *Ibid.*, *Systematische Theologie III: Das Leben und der Geist. Die Geschichte und das Reich Gottes*, ed., transl. R. Albrecht (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1966), 42ff.

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I abbreviate “Systematic Theology” by ST and the number of the prevailing volume. The first page number refers to the English, the second to the German edition.

<sup>7</sup> Kristeva, Julia, *Revolution in Poetic Language*. I owe this reference to Catherine Keller.

<sup>8</sup> ST III, 63/79f.; 75/93. Emphasis TR.

<sup>9</sup> James, Robison B., “Mystical Identity and Acceptance ‘In Spite Of’: Paul Tillich as a Synthesis of Cusanus and Luther.” In *Mystical Heritage in Tillich’s Philosophical Theology*, 164-176, ed. G. Hummel *et al.* (Münster: LIT, 2000), 170. Gregersen, Niels Henrik, “Varieties of Personhood: Mapping the Issues.” In *The Human Person in Science and Theology*, 1-17, ed. N. H. Gregersen *et al.* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Footnote 1.

<sup>11</sup> Keller, *Web*, 2f.

<sup>12</sup> Tillich, “Seeing and Hearing.” In *The New Being*, 125-134 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955), 128.

<sup>13</sup> See also Pannenberg, Wolfhart, *Was ist der Mensch: Die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1995<sup>8</sup>), 5f.

<sup>14</sup> Moltmann, Juergen, “Von Angesicht zu Angesicht.” In *Denkwürdiges Geheimnis: Beiträge zur Gotteslehre*, 375-386, ed. I. U. Dalferth *et al.* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 379.

<sup>15</sup> Welker, Michael, “Is the Autonomous Person of European Modernity a Sustainable Model of Human Personhood?” In *The Human Person in Science and Theology*, 95-114, ed. N. H. Gregersen *et al.* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 96ff.

<sup>16</sup> ST I, 170/201.

<sup>17</sup> Roesler, Tabea, “Reconstructing Paul Tillich’s Anthropology: Multidimensional Life in Dialogue With Feminist Process Theology.” In *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, ed. T. Peters (Spring 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Keller, *Web*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Randall, John Herman Jr., “The Ontology of Paul Tillich.” In *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 132-161, ed. C. W. Kegley *et al.* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 153f. Hartshorne, Charles, “Tillich’s Doctrine of God.” In *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 164-195, ed. C. W. Kegley *et al.* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 164ff. The volume came out *before* the appearance of ST II.

<sup>20</sup> ST I, 23f./32f. Emphasis TR.

<sup>21</sup> Roesler, “Tillich’s Anthropology” (Spring 2006).

<sup>22</sup> ST I, 278/319; III, 201/232f. (footnote 3). This sentence seems to be the only *direct* quotation within *Systematic Theology*. Nevertheless, it is *not* correctly quoted: Hauschild, Wolf-Dieter, *Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte: Band 2: Reformation und Neuzeit*

(Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1999<sup>2</sup>), 713. Emphasis TR:

“Leiblichkeit ist das Ende der *Werke Gottes*.”

<sup>23</sup> Jenson, Robert W., *Essays in Theology of Culture* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995), 220. Schwoebel, Christoph, “Once Again, Christ and Culture: Remarks on the Christological Bases of a Theology of Culture.” In *Trinity, Time, and Church: A Response to the Theology of Robert W. Jenson*, 103-125 (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 119.

<sup>24</sup> Tillich, “A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Incarnation.” In *The Church Quarterly Review: Vol. CXLVII*, 133-148 (October-December, 1948; January-March, 1949), 137.

<sup>25</sup> Boss, Marc, “*Coincidentia oppositorum* und Rechtfertigung—das cusanische Erbe in Paul Tillich’s Denken.” In *Mystical Heritage in Tillich’s Philosophical Theology*, 135-163, ed. G. Hummel *et al.* (Münster: LIT, 2000), 135ff. See also Weaver, Matthew L., “The Vehicle(s) of Salvation According to Paul Tillich and Stanley Hauerwas.” In *The North American Paul Tillich Society Newsletter* (Vol. XXVIII, Number 4, Fall 2002, 5-13), 5f.

<sup>26</sup> Cassirer, Ernst, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), 40ff.

<sup>27</sup> See the multiplicity of human and divine “gazes” in Luther, Martin, *Das Magnificat: Verdeutscht und ausgelegt durch D. Martin Luther* (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 33ff.

<sup>28</sup> See also Tillich, “Universal Salvation.” In *The New Being*, 175-179 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955), 178.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, “Seeing,” 129. See also Parrella, Frederick, “Paul Tillich and the Body.” In <http://www.metodista.br/correlatio/num06/cap02.pdf>, 17-25 (10/10/2005).

<sup>30</sup> Spaemann, Robert, *Personen: Versuche über den Unterschied zwischen ‘etwas’ und ‘jemand’* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1996), 144.

<sup>31</sup> Roesler, “Tillich’s Anthropology” (Spring 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Abram, David, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Pantheon, 1996), x. Schweidler, Walter, “Hinter dem Horizont: Überlegungen im Anschluss an Merleau-Ponty.” In *Horizonte des Horizontbegriffs: Hermeneutische, phänomenologische und interkulturelle Studien*, 205-226 (Sankt Augustin: Academia, 2004), 210ff.; 220ff.

<sup>33</sup> Corrington, Robert S., *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 178ff.

<sup>34</sup> ST II, 90/100. Emphasis TR.

<sup>35</sup> Keller, *Web*, 156: “It is precisely a matter of connection. For the *meta* of metaphysics can mean ‘with’ as well as ‘beyond,’ (and so with and not ‘beyond the physical’) the sense of a perspective that moves *beyond* any isolated being into its interlinkage *with* all others.”

<sup>36</sup> Grau, Karin, “*Healing Power*”—*Ansätze zu einer Theologie der Heilung im Werk Paul Tillichs* (Münster: LIT, 1999), 168f.

<sup>37</sup> Tillich, “Answer.” In *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, 329-349, ed. C. W. Kegley *et al.* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 330.

<sup>38</sup> ST III, 15/26.

<sup>39</sup> Keller, *Face*, 180-82.

<sup>40</sup> Tillich, “Seeing,” 129f.

<sup>41</sup> Taylor, Mark Lewis, *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*, ed. M. Taylor (London: Collins, 1987), 212ff.: “expressionist portrait Christology.”

<sup>42</sup> Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism*, 116. See also Thatamanil, John J., “God as Dynamic Ontological Creativity: Exploring the Possibilities for a Tillichian Process Theology.” In <http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2002/pbook/abstract.asp?ANum=A247>, 2-3 (10/10/2005).

<sup>43</sup> Stenger, Mary Ann, “A Comparison of Spiritual Presence with Buddhist *Sunyata*.” In *Mystical Heritage in Tillich’s Philosophical Theology*, 463-478, ed. G. Hummel *et al.* (Münster: LIT, 2000), 464f.

<sup>44</sup> Peacocke, Arthur R., “Theology and Science Today.” In *Cosmos as Creation: Theology and Science in Consonance*, 28-43, ed. T. Peters (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 36. Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph, *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände*, ed. T. Buchheim (Hamburg: Meiner, 1997), 31. See also Keller, *Face*, 191.

<sup>45</sup> Roesler, Dissertation draft 11/07/2005, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1-4. Mentor: Dr. Mark Lewis Taylor.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, “Introduction: The Process of Difference, the Difference of Process.” In *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, 1-29, ed. C. Keller *et al.* (New York: Albany, 2002), 12f.

<sup>47</sup> Footnote 12.

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