



# BULLETIN

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### ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society will take place in Chicago on November 16 and 17, 2012. As always the meeting is in conjunction with annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion from November 17 to November 20. For the time schedule for housing and registration for the AAR meeting, please consult:

[http://www.rsonline.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1019&Itemid=1201](http://www.rsonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1019&Itemid=1201)

### NEW PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

O'Meara, Thomas F. *Vast Universe. Extraterrestrials and Christian Revelation*. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2012.

Respecting all of the sciences that disclose the reality of the universe, Thomas O'Meara speculates about good and evil, intelligence and freedom, revelation and life, as they might exist in other galaxies. In this short book, one possible aspect of the universe we live in meets the perspective of Christian revelation.

Richard, Jean. "Histoire et histoire du salut chez Paul Tillich," *Laval Theologique et Philosophique*, 67, 3 (October, 2011), 565–586.

Hammond, Guy B. "Tillich on Divine Power and Ultimate Meaning in Human History," *Laval Theologique et Philosophique*, 67, 3 (October, 2011), 553–564.

Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans, 2012.

The book transforms Tillich's Protestant Principle into the Pentecostal Principle in the light of the current move of the Spirit in the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches worldwide and resurgence of religion. This is Wariboko's third book that uses Tillichian paradigms and insights to explain and theologize current global economic and religious situations and to rethink social ethics. The others are *God and Money: Theology of Money in a Globalizing World* (2008) and *The Principle of Excellence: A Framework for Social Ethics* (2009).

Ristiniemi, Jari and Sundqvist, eds. *The New Student as Didactic Challenge*. Upsala, Sweden: Swedish Science Press, 2011.

Professor Ristiniemi remarks that this book was inspired by Paul Tillich's pedagogical approach.

Nina de Zepeda Garmucio, Rafael. *La Ambigüedad de la técnica. Comprensión de la técnica en la perspectiva de su ambigüedad, en la teología de la mediación de Paul Tillich*. Translation: *The Ambiguity of technology. Understanding of the technology in the perspective of its ambiguity, in the theology of mediation of Paul Tillich*.

Ph.D. Dissertation for the Faculty of Theology of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

*David Nikkel* is the recipient of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching for 2012 for the University of North Carolina, Pembroke. This is the highest award in the University of North Carolina System and comes with a bronze medallion and a stipend.

*Frederick J. Parrella* was named Faculty Senate Professor at Santa Clara University for the academic year 2011–2012. The award is recognition of a colleague by her or his peers for outstanding professional achievement during a significant period of

time as a faculty member at Santa Clara. The winner each year receives a one-course reduction in teaching and, stipend, and will present the Faculty Senate Professor's Address at the opening of 2012-2013 academic year.

**PAUL TILlich AT HARVARD  
SPEAKERS RECALL THEOLOGIAN AS A  
STUDENT OF 'ULTIMATE CONCERNS'**

CORYDON IRELAND  
HARVARD STAFF WRITER

Former University Marshal Richard M. Hunt said Tillich's title of "University Professor" was shared by only four others at the time, and it conferred on him the freedom to teach undergraduates—something Tillich had never done before—as well as lecture widely to students in law, medicine, divinity, public health, art, and education.

When he started teaching at Harvard in 1955, Paul Tillich (1886-1965) was one of the world's foremost theologians. His early romantic views of the world had been tempered in the cauldron of World War I, where he served as a frontline German Army chaplain. But he became a Christian existentialist eager to fill up the seeming emptiness of modernity with moments of ecstasy.

Tillich was 69 when he began his sojourn at Harvard. He had longed for a setting where he could reconnect the deep inquiries of art, science, and religion that modern culture seemed bent on dividing. Harvard became that setting, an intellectual crossroads where poets, scientists, artists, and philosophers were gathered. The University witnessed Tillich's final flowering as a great synthesizer; his goal was to connect the myriad ways we grapple with what he called ultimate concerns.

This important scholar of theology, art, and philosophy—author of the landmark *The Courage to Be* (1952)—was celebrated last week in an evening symposium at the Memorial Church. It marked the 50th anniversary of his retirement from Harvard and—by chance—the 100th anniversary of his ordination as a Lutheran minister.

The occasion was the 39th of the Paul Tillich Lectures, founded in 1990 by William R. Crout, S.T.B. '58, A.M. '69, and delivered once a term. Previous lecturers have included former Harvard President Nathan Marsh Pusey (1993), who had hired Tillich to revive a sagging divinity program; humanist and eminent biologist Edward O. Wilson

(1997), Harvard's Pellegrino University Professor *Emeritus*; and the late Rev. Peter J. Gomes (1999).

Gerald Holton, Ann Belford Ulanov, Harvey G. Cox Jr., and Richard M. Hunt recalled the spiritual and intellectual ambition of theologian Paul Tillich in an event marking the 50th anniversary of his retirement from Harvard.

This term's lecture was unusual: four speakers instead of one. They all remembered Tillich in person. Called "Paulus" by his friends, Tillich loved being at Harvard. "Part of the reason is this University's fortuitous openness," especially in the years just before and just after World War II, said onetime University Marshal Richard M. Hunt.

Like his contemporary Albert Einstein, Tillich was a product of a particular educational ideal in the Europe of his boyhood: Master *Kultur*, then hew to a specialization. Harvard offered a matching intellectual depth, along with an engaging émigré community of European scholars who came up in the same way.

Then, said Hunt, there was Tillich's title of "University Professor," shared by only four others at the time. (There are 24 University Professors at Harvard today.) It conferred on him the freedom to teach undergraduates — something Tillich had never done before—as well as lecture widely to students in law, medicine, divinity, public health, art, and education.

Charming, modest, intellectually eager, a great listener—"he seduced us all," said speaker Gerald Holton, remembering Tillich at a faculty dinner in 1955. (Holton, whose relationship with Harvard began in 1943, is Harvard's Mallinckrodt Professor of Physics and professor of the history of science *emeritus*.)

Tillich lived to regard his time at Harvard as "the fulfillment" of his career, said Holton, and in the meantime added a presence that was "magisterial and accessible, and just fun."

Harvard was also where Tillich arrived at his final sense of where science stands in the quest for meaning. Early in his life science was "a respected part of *Kultur*," said Holton. Then came a long middle period of doubt about science and technology. As late as 1957 Tillich wrote that "the dimension of faith is not the dimension of science."

Yet Harvard inspired a third phase—not one of harmony between science and religion, but at least a "fruitful tension," said Holton. In a 1959 Harvard lecture, Tillich held that "ultimate questions appear in different disciplines."

Holton delivered a Tillich lecture in 2004 on the "quest for the ultimate" that Tillich shared with Einstein, a man who was sometimes his philosophical adversary. "They both reached out to the limits of human understanding," Holton said then—and the two men shared a common theme: "the quest for the unification of apparent irreconcilables." Einstein's quest was to unify the major threads of physics; Tillich's was to synthesize the seemingly divergent paths of science, art, and religion in the modern age—"the reunion of what eternally belongs together," he wrote, "but what has been separated in history." The first non-Jewish scholar that the Nazis dismissed from a university, Tillich immigrated to the United States in 1933. He found a 20-year haven at Union Theological Seminary, but only at Harvard did he open his arms wide, happy, he said, to be among more than just theologians.

Tillich was ready for years of "conversation at the heart of reality," said Ann Belford Ulanov, a 1959 Radcliffe College graduate who saw him lecture in the 1950s. She teaches psychiatry and religion at Union Theological Seminary, and delivered Tillich lectures in 1995 and 2002.

Start with his collected sermons, she advised, which were delivered in the pared-down English he started to learn only in his late 40s. They provide a pathway to his more complex academic work. (It was at Harvard, for one, that Tillich finished his three-volume "Systematic Theology.")

Another speaker, Harvey G. Cox Jr., the Hollis Research Professor of Divinity, was a Harvard graduate student during the Tillich era. He remembered the great man's final home seminar, the last of a series of gatherings at his apartment on Chauncy Street. A print of Picasso's "Guernica" hung in the apartment's seminar space, a rendering of the mural-size painting of German and Italian warplanes bombing the civilians of Guernica, Spain, in 1937. Tillich, no stranger to war, regarded the iconic Picasso image as "the greatest religious painting of the 20th century," said Cox.

A visual thinker, Tillich saw great art, music, and literature as a natural font of the symbols and analogies necessary to understand the nature of the divine in a modern age that eschewed religious expression. He had a "willingness to stare modernity in the face," said Cox—and a willingness to let go of traditional religious expressions like "God" and "faith" and "grace" that had "lost their original power."

Finding analogs to these old concepts meant spirited inquiries into other disciplines, and Harvard allowed Tillich that room, said Cox—“the scope he

needed to pursue his lifelong project: crossing boundaries.”

**TILlich’S THEOLOGY OF CULTURE IN  
RELATION TO THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS-  
SECULAR DIALECTIC**

MARY ANN STENGER

From early in his writings, Tillich addressed the issue of the inter-relationship between the religious and the secular, making it a centerpiece of his theology of culture. From his 1919 lecture to the third volume of his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich argues for an understanding of religion as “directedness toward the Unconditional” (1919, 162) or “experience of the unconditional” (ST, 3: 101-102), with either formulation allowing an understanding of secularism and secular cultural creations as having a religious dimension. In his theology of culture, Tillich applies this understanding to a variety of cultural spheres and functions to show religious meaning or depth, where traditionally many would not see it. For areas of culture revealing a loss of depth rather than depth itself, he identifies underlying existential questions to which people seek healing answers. He also recognizes the need for critique and judgment of culture, with the critique rooted in the unconditional. Finally, Tillich expresses a hope for a more theonomous future—a hope that is present after World War I and still present in his last lecture.

The question that centers my analysis in this paper is to what extent or how these aspects of Tillich’s theology of culture might be applicable to contemporary American culture, with test cases of popular culture, superficial uses of religion, and indifference to religion. After a brief comparison of Tillich’s cultural contexts with that of the United States in 2011, I will divide my discussion of applicability into five areas: (1) the issue of religious depth everywhere; (2) the issue of loss of depth or lack of depth; (3) existential questions of meaning; (4) critique and judgment of culture in relation to the unconditional; and (5) the possibility of hope for a more theonomous future.

**A. A Brief Comparison of Cultural Contexts—  
Tillich’s Contexts to 2011 America: Focus on Issue of Religious Meaning and Depth**

A survey of cultural productivity in Germany, especially in Berlin, after the First World War, reveals that the post-war uncertainties—political, economic, and cultural—fostered creativity in arts, politics, philosophy, and theology, with Tillich’s own work an example of this. Engaging with other young people in the classroom and in various social and intellectual gatherings, Tillich connected with the theoretical and political issues of his day.<sup>1</sup> In spite of facing personal and cultural challenges, Tillich produced an amazing number of essays and books in those first five years after the war, with almost all addressing theologically the issues of his time. Perhaps the chaos surrounding the end of the war moved Tillich and many of the young German intellectuals, artists, and writers to use their creative outlets to bring order to their lives, both spiritually and psychologically, if not quite yet socially or politically.

Almost all of Tillich’s writings in the post-World War I period can be described as theology of culture, with the 1919 lecture, “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” providing the theoretical groundwork. There, Tillich works to overcome the binary of religious and secular with his broad understanding of religion as “directedness toward the Unconditional” and his affirmation that “the religious principle is actualized in all spheres of spiritual or cultural life.”<sup>2</sup> Applying that theory to concrete examples from art, philosophy, ethics, politics, and the church, drawn from the religious-cultural context of 1919, he analyzes briefly, but substantively, Expressionist art, neo-Kantian philosophy, Nietzschean ethics, a new “mysticism of love” expressed in political speeches, Tolstoy, the poems of Rilke and Werfel, and religious socialism.<sup>3</sup> In these writings, Tillich identifies the religious dimension of directedness toward the Unconditional: specifically, toward religious meaning, an ethics of grace, a hope for a community of love, and an ideal state that brings together the human community with the help of its philosophers, artists, ethicists, and re-creators of the economy. He sees all aiming toward theonomy,<sup>4</sup> reflecting a deep, religiously rooted hope.

Throughout his life, Tillich maintained his affirmation of the religious or depth dimension in all areas of humanity’s spiritual life and professed his religiously rooted hope for the future. Rather than

surveying the numerous examples of this,<sup>5</sup> let me summarize simply with two familiar points: (1) Tillich argues that religion is the dimension of “depth” in all areas of life rather than a special spiritual area.<sup>6</sup> (2) As Tillich states succinctly, “religion is the substance of culture, and culture is the form of religion.”<sup>7</sup> Whether addressing the questioning of the radical secular doubter (*The Courage to Be*) or reading the creative expressions of the 1950s (visual arts, poetry, music, literature, architecture, dance, philosophy) [“Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture”], he affirms the ontological root of all forms of courage in the power of being-itself and the “unconditional character” implied in the concerns of everyday life—every moment, activity, and experience.<sup>8</sup>

Parallel with the description of post-World War I Germany, one could describe the present American context as one of uncertainties—political, economic, and cultural. And certainly, we can see extensive cultural productivity, not only in popular culture that “sells” well but also in more elitist areas of culture. Even with the explosion of the information age, accessible in small hand-held devices, we still see a proliferation of non-virtual products. Just consider the size of the book exhibit at this annual meeting! And, of course, consumption drives the U.S. economy, with various industries setting goals that envision us creating and consuming more products. But, do we have cultural examples comparable to Expressionist art, neo-Kantian philosophy, Nietzschean ethics, Rilke’s poetry, or religious socialism? Can we see cultural productivity aiming toward theonomy? In his 2007 book, *Modes of Faith*, Theodore Ziolkowski, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Princeton University, notes that, “many observers would say that our society today in the United States is undergoing a spiritual crisis and transition similar to that of the 1920s.”<sup>9</sup> He uses examples from literature to compare contemporary interest in diverse religious traditions and New Age fads that challenge traditional Christian beliefs to turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries expressions of the religion of art, efforts to assimilate Indian traditions, socialism, interest in myth, and the longing for utopia.<sup>10</sup>

So, acknowledging some parallels between the context that fostered the first expressions of Tillich’s theology of culture and our own context, do the differences in what we produce challenge Tillich’s theology of culture as applicable to today? Are we asking the same questions Tillich identified in his time? Do we live with the same degree of religious depth

or hope that grounded Tillich’s theology of culture? Does the religious–secular dialectic move in the same ways that Tillich saw it in his own time? To answer these questions, at least partially, I will analyze to what extent Tillich’s theology of culture applies today in the U.S., keeping in mind the relationship of the religious and the secular.

## **B. Application of Tillich’s Theology of Culture to Contemporary American Culture**

As indicated earlier, I will divide my discussion of applicability into five areas, with most of the analysis focused on the first two: (1) the issue of religious depth everywhere, (2) the issue of loss of depth or lack of depth, (3) existential questions of meaning, (4) critique and judgment of culture in relation to the unconditional, and (5) the possibility of hope for a more theonomous future.

### **(1) Religious Depth Everywhere?**

Central to Tillich’s theology of culture is his conviction that the religious dimension of depth penetrates all cultural functions. Culturally, this means that there is no separation of religious and secular realms. Individuals experience this dimension of depth as “the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Tillich argues that this ultimate or unconditional dimension “refers to every moment of our life, to every space and every realm. The universe is God’s sanctuary. Every workday is a day of the Lord, every supper a Lord’s supper, every work the fulfillment of a divine task, every joy a joy in God. In all preliminary concerns, ultimate concern is present, consecrating them. Essentially the religious and the secular are not separated realms. Rather they are within each other.”<sup>12</sup> In listening to this, you might think I was quoting Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s *The Divine Milieu* (except for “ultimate concern”) rather than an essay by Tillich! But, of course, that presents only one side of Tillich’s analysis. Tillich does see the religious dimension as universal because the unconditional or ultimacy is ontological, but, as I will discuss later, he also distinguishes between the essential possibilities for humanity and the actual state of human existence that reveals a “loss of the dimension of depth” for many, especially in relation to the effects of industrialization and technical transformations.<sup>13</sup> But that recognition of the loss of depth does not change Tillich’s conviction that religious depth can be seen everywhere.

As Kelton Cobb so ably pointed out in 1995, most of Tillich's examples of religious depth in various cultural forms represent elite culture rather than popular culture.<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, Tillich mostly analyzed the cultural ideas and objects produced by the intellectual or the artistic community with which he associated. And, as Cobb argues, many views of mass culture or kitsch expressed by Tillich reflect those presented by several representatives of the Frankfurt School.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to those views, Cobb argues for shifting attention to popular culture as showing more fully people's cultural values as well as anxieties and longings today.<sup>16</sup> He particularly mentions "Disneyland-like shopping malls," habits of tourists, and the National Parks as ripe for theological analysis.

In recent years, several theorists have analyzed popular culture as reflecting religious dimensions, but few use Tillich's framework of ultimate concern or religious depth as their approach. Rather than theologies of culture, they often produce phenomenological analyses that show parallels to religious structures, such as sacred place, time, symbols, rituals, ethics, etc. Some see religious direction in activities of popular culture, but the question remains of how deep that direction is.

British social scientist Jonathan Benthall begins his book on religion in relation to the secular by stating his "presumption that the religious inclination, the need for a framework of orientation or object of devotion, is a human universal."<sup>17</sup> He notes the use of religious vocabulary (examples might include mantra, true believers, guru, have faith, etc.) in a variety of social and political contexts and asks: "Is this just a matter of surface vocabulary, or a sign of deeper infiltration? Has religion become a metaphor for everything but itself?"<sup>18</sup> To answer these questions, he analyzes various "quasi-religions" in Europe and the United States, such as Communism and football/soccer, as well as the humanitarian, animal-rights, and environmentalist movements.<sup>19</sup> The title of his final chapter conveys his conclusion in non-academic terms: "Throw Religion Out of the Door: It Flies Back by the Window." He sees his studies of these "secular" movements supporting the view that if secularizing societies repress the religious inclination, it will erupt in other places or forms.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Ziolkowski argues that, "religious faith constitutes a powerful and often fateful force in the affairs of our modern, widely secularized world."<sup>21</sup> He then suggests that today, the virtual

reality of computer games and "reality" shows replace the early twentieth century's "art for art's sake"; extensive travels to every part of the world replace trips to India for spiritual guidance; and government entitlements and retirement plans replace socialist dreams while movies and television give us myths. The longing for utopia takes people to Las Vegas, golf communities, and gated enclaves. These are new forms but are not new in substance, he argues. Moreover, he notes that all of these still leave us with "a world still disenchanting and...lives still unfulfilled."<sup>22</sup> People may be searching, but what they find does not have sufficient religious depth to fulfill people's longings.

In the *New York Times* Book Review of *All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age* by Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Dorrance Kelly, January 20, 2011, moral philosopher Susan Neiman critiques Dreyfus's and Kelly's idea that there is "genuine meaning" in the exuberant responses to special events, such as many experienced in the election victory of Barack Obama or experience in sports victories or even in "savoring a cup of coffee."<sup>23</sup> She does agree with them that nihilism threatens "our ability to lead meaningful lives in the 21st century" but is unwilling to mystify, as they do, the moments of joy and pleasure as offering genuine meaning.

I find myself agreeing with Neiman and see the same questions arise if we try to apply Tillich's understanding of all people as religious to the popular activities of many people. I especially question whether such activities should be dignified with the attribute "religious" as seen as showing "depth." Should we see living for present pleasure as "religious," as showing a search for ultimacy or the unconditional? Are great moments in sports or films or music, or joy in buying the "perfect" item or obtaining a "great bargain," moments of depth? For many, are these not just fleeting moments of pleasure (or, to be fair, sometimes suffering when the sports results or purchased items fail to live up to expectations)? To state it differently, how many people participating in these popular kinds of activities are asking existential questions? I acknowledge that some may be, but many are indifferent to such questions and certainly resist the idea that there is *religious* meaning or *depth* in such activities.

In *Dynamics of Faith*, Tillich describes "the ultimate concern with 'success' and with social standing and economic power" as the "god of many people in the highly competitive Western culture."<sup>24</sup> He

sees such a concern demanding “unconditional surrender” and sacrifice,<sup>25</sup> thereby fitting the description of ultimate concern, but he also views such an ultimate concern as misplaced faith or idolatrous faith.<sup>26</sup> While Tillich saw faith as an essential possibility for human beings, he also recognized that many lived with distorted types of faith. Note that it is not that he sees some people leading secular lives rather than religious lives, but rather he analyzes a religious dimension in finite concerns with success and then judges it misplaced or idolatrous. Actual lives can contrast greatly with the essential possibilities Tillich envisions. Thus, he also addresses the loss of depth experienced by many people.

## (2) Loss of Depth

In Tillich’s view, people’s experience of the loss of depth occurs, in part, because of an awareness that things are not ideal; they experience the contrast between how things actually are and what things could be. Tillich suggests that the separation of the religious and the secular reveals humanity’s “fallen state.”<sup>27</sup> Where ideally ultimate concern would “consecrate” ordinary, preliminary concerns, instead, in actual life, the secular often tries to “swallow” the religious and vice versa.<sup>28</sup> One may particularly see this in industrial society; Tillich identifies the “spirit of industrial society” as one that calculates, manages, and transforms life with increasing technology and leaves people with no experience of the dimension of depth.<sup>29</sup> To the technical world, “God has become superfluous,”<sup>30</sup> and humans see themselves capable of conquering the world and resolving problems. One cannot help but think of the Internet when reading Tillich’s statement that “[t]he scientific and technical conquest of time and space is considered as the road to the reunion of [hu]mankind.”<sup>31</sup> Similarly, he sees people replacing God with the universe, Christ with humanity as the center, and the Kingdom of God with the expectation of peace and justice in history.... The dimension of depth in the divine and demonic has disappeared.<sup>32</sup>

Today, I see the loss of depth showing up in superficial insertions of religion into otherwise secular cultural arenas, ranging from governmental agencies and courthouses to schools to marketing of non-religious products under religious auspices. My favorite example of such superficial efforts is a law that the Kentucky General Assembly passed in 2006 in connection with setting up a Kentucky Office of Homeland Security. One part required training materials to state that the General Assembly had stressed

“dependence on Almighty God as being vital to the security of the Commonwealth.” Another part “required a plaque to be placed at the entrance to the state’s Emergency Operations Center in Frankfort, Kentucky that said, in part, “the safety and security of the Commonwealth cannot be achieved apart from reliance upon Almighty God.”<sup>33</sup> The legislator who placed that language in the law is a Baptist minister who, when faced with a judge’s ruling that such references were unconstitutional, answered that those references did not have to do with religion. “God is not a religion. God is God.”<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Rev. Riner argued: “This is no small matter, the understanding that God is real.... There are real benefits to acknowledging Him. There was not a single founder or framer of the Constitution who didn’t believe that.”<sup>35</sup> While dependence on God may be the center of Rev. Riner’s ultimate concern, his legislative effort to “establish” this in Kentucky through statements in training materials or on a plaque clearly trivializes that concern. Such an effort is not an example of illuminating depth in culture but rather of providing a superficial religious covering over ordinary activities.

Similarly, marketing of “Christian” businesses in the Christian Yellow Pages or placing copies of the Ten Commandments on classroom walls or a creation museum or a Noah’s Ark theme park (both in Kentucky) do not call people to religious depth but rather call into question what people mean by “Christian” or what purpose such a descriptor has. Are these just a form of American religious capitalism, i.e., a way to use “religion” to make money?

Using Tillich’s analysis, we can say that such superficial uses of religion reflect the loss of depth in our present culture and a failed search for religious meaning. But such superficial uses of religion reinforce the views of people who see the loss of religious meaning as a positive thing. For some, what is needed is to lose the religious dimension in order to transform people’s lives for the better. Why add the religious dimension? Why move to religious meaning rather than staying simply with humanist meaning? Does religion more often prevent people from living fully and authentically rather than empowering them? These are questions that I sometimes hear from students who appreciate critical analyses of culture and deep philosophical discussions, but see no need for adding a religious dimension. Forgetting God would be a step forward for humanity, they argue.

Tillich, however, would still see such responses as reflecting both the loss of the depth dimension and also a search for deeper meaning. For him, the loss of the depth dimension shows up in people's existential questions, expressed in many different ways in various cultural forms.

### (3) Existential Questions of Meaning

While acknowledging that some people experience "God" as "superfluous" and human beings as "the center of the universe," Tillich sees the cultural expressions of this as revealing both the human predicament and a "theologically significant" "protesting element."<sup>36</sup> In many great cultural works, Tillich sees expression of destructive elements in culture that reflect estrangement and humanity's fallen state, but he also identifies a protesting strength in the courage to face the destructive aspects and to transform culture creatively.<sup>37</sup> He sees people searching for healing, for answers. "Anxiety and despair about existence itself induces millions of people to look out for any kind of healing that promises success."<sup>38</sup> In 1956, he notes the success of "sectarian and evangelistic movements" as examples of the search for healing, but he also describes these as "primitive and unsound."<sup>39</sup> Certainly, we can see parallels with the success of similar movements of today. And also, we can see some parallels with the cultural productions of today in visual, art, poetry, philosophy, etc., reading many of these as expressing a search for meaning and sometimes a "return" of religious meaning.

For Tillich, the drive toward religious meaning is rooted in the existential questions that he sees human persons asking. In his 1963 Earl lectures, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, Tillich provides these examples:

What is the meaning of my being, and of all being of which I am a part? What does it mean to be a human being in a world full of evil in body and mind, in individual and society? Where do I get the courage to live? How can I save my personal being amid the mechanized ways of life? How can I have hope? And for what? How can I overcome the conflicts that torture me inwardly? Where can I find an ultimate concern that overcomes my emptiness and has the power to transform?<sup>40</sup>

While those of us who directed our academic studies toward philosophy and theology probably find these questions familiar, we also recognize the depth conveyed in such questions. But, how widespread are

such existential questions? To what extent does popular culture even try to address such questions? If we look at some of our examples of popular culture, such as sports and consumerism, how many people participating in these popular kinds of activities are asking existential questions? I acknowledge that some may be, but many are indifferent to such questions and certainly resist the idea that there is *religious* meaning or *depth* in such activities. To the extent that people find such activities sufficient and do not seek deeper meaning leads us to the issue of judging cultural forms.

### (4) Judging Cultural Forms in Relation to Religious Depth

Tillich believed so strongly in the presence of the holy in the midst of culture that he could not see it otherwise. I quote again from the Earl lectures:

And in all *cultural* creations too we must show the presence of the holy. We need an understanding of culture not only measured by productivity but in terms of the ultimate meaning that shines through—through the most seemingly atheistic novels and the most radically anti-human visual art of our time. This ultimate meaning shines as well through the different political experiments all over the world, shines through social systems, even through one of the worst forms of objectifying persons—modern advertising. In their unholiness all these things nevertheless have a point that, however small, is inexpressibly strong: the divine ground that shines through every creative human act.<sup>41</sup>

Cultural creations express both holiness and unholiness, and that fact of ambiguity in all cultural forms makes judgment of cultural forms a necessity. Whether it is the manifest Church or latent spiritual communities, Tillich sees a prophetic role to judge culture, including both avowedly religious forms and avowedly secular forms. Particularly important is judgment of demonic distortions that claim unconditional power and truth for conditional, finite realities.<sup>42</sup> This can happen in churches as in all other areas of culture. Tillich invokes the Protestant Principle against idolatry, against elevation of finite reality to ultimacy.<sup>43</sup>

In *Dynamics of Faith*, Tillich notes the consequences of idolatrous faith when people realize that the preliminary concerns thought to be ultimate turn out not to be so. Individuals experience "existential disappointment" that penetrates their whole being, while groups also can be left with a loss of meaning

and direction. When whole societies participate in the idolatry of finite forms, they also usually engage in injustice, elevating one group of people over another.

In relation to the religious-secular dialectic, Tillich's theology of culture calls for recognizing the depth dimension in all areas of culture *without* making those finite areas themselves into unconditioned objects. In addition, one also has to recognize that the experience of depth or ultimacy coming through cultural forms is real to the person experiencing it. But the reality of the experience does not determine whether what is experienced is actually the ultimate. Tillich calls for judging every "faith" experience according to the "ultimacy of the ultimate" expressed and guarding against seeing the forms of that expression as absolute rather than finite.<sup>44</sup> Cultural forms, whether termed secular or religious, can convey ultimacy but cannot be seen as ultimate in themselves. Even though the churches or church leaders can sometimes be judged as idolatrous or even demonic, still Tillich sees the Christian message as worthy of ultimate concern. The Christian message of "a new healing reality" and the Christian symbols "point to that which alone is of ultimate concern, the ground and meaning of our existence and of existence generally."<sup>45</sup>

### **(5) Hope for Theonomous Culture**

In spite of his experiences of demonic distortions of power and cultural forms, in spite of his recognition of the loss of religious depth for so many people, Tillich never loses his hope for theonomous culture.

In the post-World War I era that influenced the development of his theology of culture, Tillich envisioned spiritual communities where the religious dimension would break through existing cultural forms and theonomy would be realized.<sup>46</sup> He envisions this through not only the activities and cultural creations of artists, philosophers, and leaders of cultural reform but also in new forms of state and of the economy. In his last lecture, he calls theonomy the "inner aim of the history of religions," where autonomous forms of culture, including knowledge, aesthetics, law, and morals, point to the religious depth, to the "ultimate meaning of life."<sup>47</sup>

Does the hope for a more theonomous future that Tillich held seem possible today? In one sense, Tillich's hope and optimism is refreshing; yet, to many, it appears disconnected from the realities of life today. Tillich would likely respond that his hope is

grounded in *the reality* that underlies all life, religious and secular, negative and positive, namely in the Unconditional. He questions hope based on belief in human abilities or human progress as finally misplaced. For Tillich, the dimension of depth is necessary to ground hope for the future. In a sense, wherever that depth breaks through, hope will arise as well.

In conclusion, when we look at Tillich's theology of culture in relation to contemporary culture, we need to look beyond his holding together of the religious and the secular in his recognition of the direction toward the unconditional in all forms of culture. A focus on this aspect primarily can lead to over-dignifying and over-theologizing people's finite experiences. We need to also consider application of the idea of the loss of depth and the judgment of idolatry against efforts to identify the finite as unconditional. When we see religious depth in every cultural object and activity, we suggest that theonomy is present. However, such a claim cannot forget the ambiguities of life and the existential distortions of culture. We need to distinguish whether unconditional meaning really comes through the object and activity or whether the claim of religious meaning is in fact superficial. Hope for the future is needed today but, for Tillich, it must be rooted in ultimacy and direction toward the unconditional, not in humanity or in finite cultural forms alone.

### **Appendix: American period—1950s**

As we know, throughout his life, Tillich maintains his affirmation of the religious or depth dimension in all areas of humanity's spiritual life. In several writings, he repeats this understanding as an answer to questions he identifies in western culture. In "Religion as a Dimension in Man's [sic] Spiritual Life" (1954), he addresses criticisms of religion that come from both theologians and scientific critics. He argues that their criticisms stem from seeing God as a highest being who offers information about himself.<sup>48</sup> As in 1919, Tillich argues: "Religion is not a special function of man's spiritual life, but it is the dimension of depth in all of its functions."<sup>49</sup> He analyzes efforts to connect religion primarily to the moral or the cognitive or the aesthetic or the emotional functions of life, concluding that religion does not need to and should not connect to just one of these as its "home" but should be "at home everywhere, namely, in the depth of all functions of man's spiritual life."<sup>50</sup> The implication he draws out is that

a person cannot reject religion in the name of any one of the specific functions of human spiritual life because religion is present in each function—present as “the substance, the ground, and the depth of man’s spiritual life.”<sup>51</sup>

In *The Courage to Be* (1952), Tillich argues for that religious depth in various forms of the courage to be as a part or in the courage to be as oneself, including existentialist expressions of meaninglessness. He answers the questioning of the radical secular doubter, who doubts not only the existence of God but also of any absolute meaning, with his affirmation of “the courage to take the anxiety of meaninglessness upon oneself.” In this courage, he sees the re-establishment of all forms of courage “in the power of the God above the God of theism. *The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.*”<sup>52</sup>

All forms of courage rest in the power of being-itself, just as all forms of culture incorporate a religious depth. Listen to these words from “Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture” (1956):

If religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, this state cannot be restricted to a special realm. The unconditional character of this concern implies that it refers to every moment of our life, to every space and every realm. The universe is God’s sanctuary. Every work day is a day of the Lord, every supper a Lord’s supper, every work the fulfillment of a divine task, every joy a joy in God. In all preliminary concerns, ultimate concern is present, consecrating them. Essentially the religious and the secular are not separated realms. Rather they are within each other.”<sup>53</sup>

What a beautiful theological proclamation! However, we need to note Tillich’s next sentence: “But this is not the way things actually are.” He immediately moves to discuss the effects of human estrangement that lead people to separate the secular and the religious, establishing them as unconnected (or disconnected) realms.

Yet, he then moves to his famous affirmation: “religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion.”<sup>54</sup> From that base, he argues that one “who can read the style of a culture can discover its ultimate concern, its religious substance.”<sup>55</sup> In that time-period of the 1950s, Tillich identifies industrial society as the predominant movement, with existentialist analysis as its countering protest.<sup>56</sup> He focuses on the investigative, technical, and business

calculations that remove God from the center to a place alongside the world and sees humans as the center.<sup>57</sup> Preferring the existentialist approach to a neurotic response, Tillich argues that the artistic, creative expressions of the time (visual arts, poetry, music, literature, architecture, dance, philosophy) express encounter with non-being and “the strength which can stand this encounter and shape it creatively.”<sup>58</sup> So, he calls on theology to use these creative expressions to understand that culture should respond with the Christian message of Jesus as the Christ.<sup>59</sup> Prophetic voices in the culture, he says, may come from outside the “manifest Church,” and he calls on the manifest Church to listen to those voices but also serve as “a guardian against the demonic distortions.” Tillich wants the Church to judge both culture and itself with focus on the depth or religious substance in both the Church and the culture, countering demonic distortion in both.<sup>60</sup> Tillich’s affirmation of the religious depth or substance in the secular serves both as a basis for analysis of culture and as the ground for critique and judgment of culture, including its overt religious forms.

Similarly, Tillich’s analysis of faith in *Dynamics of Faith* stems from his understanding of faith as “the state of being ultimately concerned.”<sup>61</sup> His critique of nationalism and of personal success as ultimate concerns centers on these as offering false promises of ultimate fulfillment.<sup>62</sup> The chapter of this book, however, that is most interesting for the focus here on the religious–secular dialectic is his discussion of the truth of faith (ch. 5). As one finds in his earliest German writings, Tillich affirms the interconnection of faith and reason, with reason as “the precondition of faith” and faith as “the act in which reason reaches ecstatically beyond itself.”<sup>63</sup> Reason and faith “are within each other.”<sup>64</sup>

When it comes to faith in relation to scientific truth, psychological truth, or historical truth, he argues that each of these belongs to a different dimension of meaning than that of the truth of faith. Yes, he does see the search for truth in all of these dimensions as an effort to reach the “‘really real.’” But, the connection appears to end there, as he argues that science or psychology or history have “no right and no power to interfere with faith and faith has no power to interfere” with them.<sup>65</sup> Although it becomes a bit more complex with connections between historical truth and the truth of faith, he still keeps the dimensions somewhat separate. Although Tillich does not use these terms, the text reads as if he sees the truths of science, psychology, and history as ad-

ressing secular dimensions of life, where the religious truth and the secular truths should not interfere with each other.<sup>66</sup> Tillich's goal in that book is to show those who reject faith that they misunderstand faith because in his understanding, "faith is an essential possibility of man [sic], and therefore its existence is necessary and universal."<sup>67</sup>

### **American Period—1960's—after several "dialogues" with Buddhists.**

In the 1961 Bampton Lectures, published in 1963 as *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, Tillich critiques the secularizing influence of technology that connects with the development of the so-called "quasi religions" of nationalism, Fascism (including Nazism), and Communism, all of which destroy old traditions in culture, including those of manifest religious groups, with examples taken from many parts of the world, north, south, west, and east.<sup>68</sup> With the widespread effects of these secularizing movements, Tillich sees a "vacuum" in the cultures of that time, and asks the question: "What is to fill it? This question is the universal question of mankind [sic] today."<sup>69</sup> After his analysis of Christianity in relation to various world religions, especially Buddhism, Tillich addresses the "attack of secularism on all present-day religions" by arguing that secularization should not be seen as "merely negative" but perhaps as the way to the "religious transformation" of humankind.<sup>70</sup>

Tillich cannot imagine the end of religion because "the question of the ultimate meaning of life cannot be silenced" as long as humans are humans.<sup>71</sup> In his last lecture, he affirms theonomy as the "inner aim of the history of religions," an aim realized only "in fragments, never fully."<sup>72</sup> When he addresses directly the issue of the relationship of the religious and the secular, he argues that the holy is open to both demonization and secularization, with the latter "the most radical form of de-demonization."<sup>73</sup> In other words, he interprets secularization as liberation in the context of the Holy repressing ordinary demands of life. He argues: "In this sense, both the prophets and the mystics were predecessors of the secular. The Holy became slowly the morally good, or the philosophically true, and later the scientifically true, or the aesthetically expressive. But then, a profound dialectic appears. *The secular shows its inability to live by itself* (emphasis added)."<sup>74</sup> He sees the secular as correct to fight against "domination by the Holy," but he also recognizes the danger

that such a fight can lead to emptiness and often to oppressive quasi religions. Tillich must affirm theonomy and the possibility of depth and the Ultimate in reality, in culture, or else, he sees only autonomy or heteronomy, with neither satisfying human needs, either individually or culturally.

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<sup>1</sup> W. and M. Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His life and Thought*, vol. 1: Life (New York: Harper, 1976): 61-62.

<sup>2</sup> "On the Idea ...," 162, 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-179.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-174.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Tillich, "Religion as a Dimension in Man's Spiritual Life," (1954) *Theology of Culture* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," *Theology of Culture*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>9</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, *Modes of Faith; Secular Surrogates for Lost Religious Belief* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 4-8.

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," p. 41.

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

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," 43-44.

<sup>14</sup> Kelton Cobb, "Reconsidering the Status of Popular Culture in Tillich's Theology of Culture," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63:1 (Spring, 1995), 54.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-73.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 78-80.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Benthall, *Returning to Religion; Why a Secular Age is Haunted by Faith* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 4 and 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, *Modes of Faith; Secular Surrogates for Lost Religious Belief* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), ix.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Neiman, book review January 20, 2011, *New York Times*.

<sup>24</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Note that these elements were not true of the examples discussed above.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 & 12.

- <sup>27</sup> Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," 42.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 43.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 44-45.
- <sup>33</sup> www.msnbc.msn.com/id/32581781/ns/us\_news-faith/, August 27, 2009.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., 44-47.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 46-47.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 50.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, p. 13.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 62-63.
- <sup>42</sup> Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," 50-51.
- <sup>43</sup> Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, 50-51.
- <sup>44</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
- <sup>45</sup> Tillich, "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture," 49-50.
- <sup>46</sup> Tillich, "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture," 173-174.
- <sup>47</sup> Paul Tillich, "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian," in *The Future of Religions*, ed. by J.C. Brauer (New York: Harper & Row, Publ., 1966), 90.
- <sup>48</sup> "Religion as a Dimension in Man's Spiritual Life," (1954) *Theology of Culture* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 4-5.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 5-6.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., 7.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 8.
- <sup>52</sup> *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 190.
- <sup>53</sup> "Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture" (1956), *Theology of Culture*, 41.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 42.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., 42-43.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 43.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., 46-47.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., 49.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 51.
- <sup>61</sup> *Dynamics of Faith*, 1.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 1-4
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 81, 82-89.

<sup>66</sup> This relationship becomes more complicated in relation to philosophical truth, where Tillich sees much more interconnection (89-95).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>68</sup> *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, 12-25.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 95-96.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>72</sup> "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian," *The Future of Religions*, edited by Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper & Row, Publ., 1966), 90.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 90.

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## SCENES FROM PAUL TILlich AND REINHOLD NIEBUHR

RON STONE

The interactions of Paul Tillich (1892-1965) and Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) chosen for this essay are mostly “battle scenes.” They were wartime theologians and the wars of their time impacted their theologies at the core. Except for the traumatic affects of World War I and its aftermath, the conflicts in World War II, and the Cold War, they would not have met. These events from 1914-1971, and in the continuation of the Cold War into 1989, dominated the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their lives and work. They were closest in their convictions and politics in World War II, they were enemies in World War I, and sometime allies in the Cold War. The essay will explore five encounters of Tillich and Niebuhr: World War I, Socialist theory in 1932, *The Interpretation of History*, World War II, beyond religious socialism into the Cold War; it will then comment on the new interesting book by Andrew Finstuen, *Original Sin and Everyday Protestants: The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Billy Graham, and Paul Tillich in an Age of Anxiety*.

### World War I

The terrorist shots that killed the Archduke and Duchess in Sarajevo led the alliances of European powers into four years of terrible and unnecessary war. Tillich joined it out of love of the Emperor, the Fatherland, and God. His lieutenant’s helmet expressed it: “Für Vaterland, mitt Koenig and Gott.” Niebuhr was drawn into it out of love for the United States and belief in the idealism of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the enthusiasm of Yale for the war. The slaughter in Europe had extended for three and a half years before Tillich’s Christian soldiers would fight Niebuhr’s Christian soldiers in the Belleau Woods, Chateau Thierry, and the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Niebuhr served enthusiastically to the point of nervous exhaustion as the Evangelical Secretary of the Evangelical Synod’s war effort. He counseled chaplains, supervised the literature sent to Evangelical soldiers, and represented the church in wartime councils. His own volunteering for the chaplaincy was overruled by his church superiors, and he continued in this role pushing American patriotism until the end of the war. Tillich had collapsed twice before the arrival of the Americans. He

had attempted to resign his commission and to seek appointment to Berlin. Just before the entry of the Americans into the Second Battle of the Marne, he had written to his father:

Today or tomorrow, our troops will reach the Marne, and we follow behind. The wounded are in good spirits, everything is different, everything entirely different and much, much better than before. Our regiments are magnificent and I am grateful to the chief of chaplains for forcing me to experience this. This is the first time in war that we have experienced something of victory and advance. The result is that we are fresh.<sup>1</sup>

Just after this letter, the Americans poured into the lines, the German advance was thwarted, and the months of German defeat followed until November 9<sup>th</sup> of that year. After winning the Iron Cross for heroism in June, Tillich was reassigned to a base, Spandau in Berlin, for the remainder of the war. Their reasons for the war having disappeared, Tillich was in defeat, and Niebuhr made his first visit to Germany in 1924. German suffering and French *politique de la force* confronted him with the irrelevance of his ideals in politics. The failure of the Versailles Peace Treaty would drive Niebuhr close to cynicism, and “Wilsonianism” became an epitaph for naïve idealism. The defeat of patriarchy, empire, and the idealist imperial God drove Tillich into the camp of the revolutionary socialists seeking a new church. Still Tillich could start his academic career, and Niebuhr could resume his duties in a Detroit parish. They were forever marked by international power politics, and they would make their intellectual contributions to it while forsaking the religious nationalism that had driven them into World War I. The wartime tensions among France, England Germany, Russia, and the United States would dominate their views of contemporary reality through their lives. To Jose Miguez Bonino, a third world theologian, even though taught by Niebuhr and Tillich, these experiences would make their thought and contributions overly Eurocentric.

### Socialist Theory in 1932

Tillich’s 1926 book, *The Religious Situation*, reveals Tillich struggling to be a faithful realist while articulating a socialist critique of capitalist Germany. The thought of both Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber is accompanied by the contributions of Karl Marx to the critique. Reinhold helped produce the money for

H. Richard Niebuhr to study in Berlin and to produce his outstanding dissertation on *Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of Religion* in 1924). H. Richard later translated Tillich's 1926 work into *The Religious Situation* (1932). From his visits to Germany, Reinhold had learned of and mentioned in his writing the young socialist theologian Paul Tillich. When Tillich lost his position as Dean of Faculty and Professor of Philosophy and Sociology at Frankfurt in 1933, Niebuhr and his Columbia colleague, Horace Freiss, invited him to Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. Tillich would credit the Niebuhr brothers for saving his life. Practically speaking, Reinhold's greatest contribution to American theology was assisting Tillich to relocate in Union Theological Seminary and for Tillich to put his philosophy in the service of theology.

Months before Hitler assumed power in Germany, Niebuhr and Tillich wrote their major socialist works in the middle of the depression. They had both warned of the dangers of Hitler earlier, but their respective volumes, published in December of 1932 and January of 1933, preceded his seizure of power. Their work as socialist theoreticians bonded them even more closely than their theological work or the common German language. As Harry Ward and Niebuhr pulled apart, Tillich was the closest to Niebuhr in the Union faculty. The scholarly vocations of most of the other faculty inhibited their making a contribution to the political discourse and Niebuhr had confessed to Ursula how alone he felt among the faculty before Tillich came.<sup>2</sup>

Tillich's book of 1932 is unaware of developments in America, and Niebuhr at the time could not foresee the meaning of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's victory that autumn. The U.S. was trying to isolate itself from the problems in Europe. In both countries, the influence of progressive Christian social movements was at low ebb. The Protestant enthusiasm for Wilson had faded, and their campaign for prohibition was waning. Some of the agenda of the Social Gospel movement in union organization, more fair wages, and the ending of child labor had not yet been realized. Both of their books utilized the early philosophical manuscripts of Karl Marx that had just been published in German. Tillich argued explicitly that the new manuscripts of Marx established his humanism and overcame the deterministic interpretations of Marx revealing the eschatological and action oriented aspects of Marx's thought. Tillich concluded in 1932 that the choice of Germany would be that of democratic socialism or Nazism.

He hoped that democratic socialism energized by hopeful action would lure out of Nazism progressive elements to save Germany. Unless a renewal of socialism in the direction of prophetic-eschatological understanding could defeat Nazism, the victory of the Nazis would bring barbarism and then war to Germany. Niebuhr's book may have been less hopeful regarding socialism. He hoped for socialism also and thought its victory could only occur on the other side of economic collapse and disintegration. He hoped for a general strike, union action, and a willingness to defend social victories might move the country toward socialist reform. Niebuhr's book had more economics than Tillich's work, and it was more detailed in weighing different courses of action. Lacking what Tillich called "expectation" or eschatological driven action, Niebuhr thought in his last sentences that perhaps illusions of victory could drive progressives to act for fundamental change. Criticism led him soon to withdraw his support of decisive action through illusion in 1933. Niebuhr and Tillich rejected the idea that liberal society would operate efficiently through competition to encourage humanitarian progress. Whereas their models of society recognized social cooperation, they were more fundamentally models of social conflict rooted in insecurity and greed. Class conflicts were real, and the losers suffered and sometimes starved. Laissez faire economics led to imperial competition and depression. Social planning was required. Rational social planning was needed to replace control of the major sources of transportation, mining, means of production, and banking by decisions that produced profit for the ruling oligarchs.

Tillich's argument was that socialism had to decide to act forcefully for its realization. Forces as diverse as the religious and socialist parties including some of the Nazis had to choose real socialism. His argument proceeded by ideal type analysis with a particularly high regard for symbolism. Politics for him depended upon an analysis of human nature. Human nature revealed its need to tend to the forces of origin, its rational capacity, and its capacity for hopeful action. The two ideal types of politics were those of origin and those of the ultimate demand. The focus on origins led to conservative politics or to romantic politics. The focus on the ultimate demand of the consciousness of justice led toward modern politics in its forms of capitalism and socialism. Tillich, like Niebuhr, joined the socialist party in 1929, and beyond his many abstractions he made

it clear that he intended the Social Democratic Party to carry the future. The book, reflecting on the humanism of the young Marx, shows how in reality the two types of politics intermixed and produced the variety of parties active in Germany.

The themes of his exploration of the recent history were love, power, and justice. The solution for Germany would not be the Russian Revolution of 1917, but its own realized form of German socialism. The conclusion to the book was "The Future of Socialism." The conservatism of Germany had no future, capitalism promised only chaos, and Nazism led to barbarism. Only a reformed socialism that realized the possibilities of hopeful action promised a human solution. Socialism was for Tillich the principle of the conscious proletariat that needed to draw forces of origin to its cause. He saw both danger and opportunity. The Nazis were nearly defeated in 1932, but, with the help of nationalist industrialists, they survived and made an alliance with the conservatives. Through the alliance, Hitler was able, with the Reichstag fire and terror, to seize the government. Tillich's hopes for socialism were utopian, although he thought he had overcome utopianism. As Tillich finished his book on socialist theory in Germany in 1932, Niebuhr was finishing his in America at the same time.

Niebuhr had started his volume, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, in the summer of 1931, and it came out in December of 1932. Its dialectic was that between the would-be moral man and the relevant Marxist informed radical. The vision of the moral man was that of a disciplined Christian. The social reform called for was that of socialism open to some careful use of violence to achieve its social reforms. The vision of the moral man was individualistic while recognizing community, particularly the church and that of the social reality of a party seeking to be a vanguard in a chaotic, capitalist world, which required social solidarity and social planning. The book showed how the individual could not expect moral fulfillment in either the structure of capitalism or socialism.

Although the socialist fire of *Moral Man* was drawn from the sources of British Christian Socialism and Karl Marx, the evaluation of the movement was forged through American pragmatism, drawing upon William James. It was unable to muster the social forces heavy enough to change reality, and its pacifism fell short of the requirements of defeating Hitler. By 1936, only four years later, Niebuhr's

vote would be for Roosevelt and not Norman Thomas, whom he supported while writing the book.

Two years after its publication, Niebuhr would resign as Chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation over the use of violence to protect striking workers. He still preferred non-violent tactics, and he would represent the *World Tomorrow* in 1932 in London to interview members of Gandhi's circle. He wrote to Ursula to allow time for meeting with Gandhi's group, indicating that C. E. Andrews "is a good friend of mine." He did not meet Gandhi because of their approaching marriage in Winchester Cathedral.<sup>3</sup>

Niebuhr's socialist theory was more pessimistic than Tillich's as he lacked the power for change that Tillich wove into his concept of *expectation*. Norman Thomas would regard Niebuhr's book as pessimistic or defeatist. In hindsight, Tillich seemed utopian and Thomas incorrect. There were always possibilities for reform in the future and action to be taken now. Over an eight-year period of discussion with Niebuhr, I never saw him defeated, although his candidates for public office often lost, and he was suffering the depressing affects of living with a crippling stroke and fighting other physical problems. His action in the period around *Moral Man* included running for Congress, raising funds for the Highlander School established in 1932, visiting embattled coal miners in 1932, and founding the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen in 1934. He also served as Chair of the Board for the Delta Cooperative Farm, staffed by Sam Franklin who, moved by *Moral Man*, returned from the mission field to study with Niebuhr and then become director of the farm. Students from that time remembered Niebuhr advising them in their summers of intern work there in interracial ministry. All of this was surrounded by preaching and lecturing throughout the country most weekends.

Richard Fox<sup>4</sup> discussed the voracious criticism of Niebuhr's book, but he erred in thinking Niebuhr reduced his social activity. Rather, he gradually shifted his energies out of the Socialist Party into to para-church organizations which he often founded as he developed his Christian Realism. The title of the book was perhaps too dialectical, and his brother H. Richard Niebuhr reminded him that humanity sins in both its personal and its social life. Niebuhr's point had been that as a Christian he would need to engage, as a socialist, in social tactics that he would find personally ambiguous. His younger brother had other criticisms, but was thrilled by the book and

regarded it as well written and illuminating.<sup>5</sup> Richard had added a jab about Reinhold's relationship to Hobbes, but, in fact, Reinhold was more dependent upon his brother's work than upon Hobbes. The primary intellectual figure behind the book was Ernst Troeltsch.<sup>6</sup> He had admitted his dependence on Troeltsch along with that of Hobhouse to Ursula in correspondence while she was in England preparing for their marriage.<sup>6</sup>

The ideal-real contrast in the book and in the rest of his writing reflected both Troeltsch's sense of how the church sought to express its ideal in the world through compromise as well as Niebuhr's early training in metaphysics. Even more important were in his own experiences in war, industrial strife, and racial conflicts in Detroit. His own work, whether through social gospel efforts within the church or socialist efforts after coming to New York, affirmed how difficult social reform was to realize. Beyond this, his own sense of Christianity led him to seek a life of moral integrity for the self. He did not want to minimize the difficulty of maintaining moral self-hood while engaging in political struggle. The dialectic of the title is best explained by seeing Niebuhr as the moral man and the immoral society the society he had to work in, and the socialist tactics he regarded as necessary. Given the debates over the use of force in politics, it is also possible to see it as the struggle between the non-assertive Christian ethic and the violence of society.

Tillich's socialist theory, struggles with Nazism, and his bold critique of the Third Reich led to his leaving Germany, with Niebuhr leading Union and Columbia University to sponsor his new life. After a stormy trip across the Atlantic, the Tillichs arrived at their ground floor apartment at Union Theological seminary on 122 Street New York City. Mrs. Ursula Niebuhr was the first to greet them in their new home. That evening a small welcoming party was held for the Tillichs and their daughter, 6 year old Christianne Erdmuthe, by the Dr. and Mrs. Horace Friess from Columbia University and the Niebuhrs. Much of the conversation was in German and the new partnership was initiated. Together their power would transcend that of the other outstanding faculty at the Seminary and lift it to its preeminent role in American seminaries' social thought.

### **Interpretation of History**

Tillich was still trying to master English in 1936. He turned the galley proofs of the *Interpreta-*

*tion of History* over to Niebuhr. Niebuhr was terribly disappointed in its English rendition, whereas Tillich was just hoping to get his ideas out into his new country. Niebuhr expressed his anger at Bill Savage of Scribner's to Ursula who had gone to England to care for her ailing mother for accepting the translations.<sup>7</sup> Niebuhr undertook to rewrite in English the section which became "On the Boundary" during the Easter season when he was finishing up some classes, trying to help the reformers of the Socialist Party, speaking on weekends, making trips to Buffalo and Harrisburg, helping to maintain the Highlander School and the Delta Farm, and preparing to join Ursula in England. His letters to her are full of his tiredness, and his discouragement with his colleagues, and the President of Union Theological Seminary. He and President Coffin took out their frustration on each other, and both thought they might have been better off serving in local churches. Harry Ward's romanticism about the Soviet Union soured Niebuhr on his elder colleague, and he would write to her about the Seminary: "He was the only one on the left who was right." On Easter Sunday he wrote to her that he had spent the previous night rewriting the translation of Tillich and that he hoped to take in a service at St. John the Divine in the afternoon. Later he confessed to her that he had spent 70 hours working on Tillich's manuscript and that he just had to turn it over to the publisher as it was. In the completed volume Niebuhr's translation of "On the Boundary" sparkles in his forceful writing. Chapters on "The Demonic" and "Kairos" still show their origins in abstract German, and they are horrible to read in English. The translation of Parts Two, Three, and Four by Elsa L. Talmey cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Tillich in the Preface acknowledged Niebuhr's help:

I want to thank my friend Reinhold Niebuhr without whose help neither I could be in this country nor would I have had the occasion to publish this book. I am indebted to him further for many suggestions which have improved its form and style.<sup>8</sup>

Niebuhr had written to Ursula:

The translation is simply terrible. It gave me a pain in every bone. Consequently, I spent all night and all this morning [Easter morning] working on them. I have only finished one third. I will turn the rest over to the Stanleys. I can't devote any more time to them as much as I would like to whip this stuff into shape...worked some more on Tillich's translation. By the way I gave him your ad-

dress...He hopes to see you, but doubts whether he can be allowed out. J. H. Oldham has him dated practically every day.<sup>9</sup>

Later he wrote one more time complaining about the translation and asserted Tillich had no idea how many German constructions were still remaining in the translation.

Tillich for his part was enjoying being introduced by Ursula to British life and people that she assumed he would be interested in seeing. He was so taken by titles and the aristocratic manners of some of the English people she introduced him to that she wrote: "Tillich is a real snob." Ursula provided Reinhold the details of their visits to museums, conversations, and Tillich's reactions to Britain. Reinhold finally wrote in response to her detailed letters about Tillich that he was jealous. He kidded her by reporting that Mrs. Hannah Tillich invited Reinhold to accompany her to a dinner at Max Horkeimer's. Reinhold knew of Horkeimer, of course, but they had not met. He accepted the invitation and had a good evening with the refugees from the Frankfurt School of Social Research. He suggested it was something of retaliation for Ursula's entertaining Tillich, but jokingly assured her that she had gotten the best of the deal.<sup>10</sup>

The translations aside, the only disagreement Niebuhr expressed to Ursula that he had with Tillich was that Tillich did not take England's responsibility for the Empire seriously enough. Both of the Niebuhrs at this point were comfortable with the Empire, and Tillich was unsympathetic to the idea that England would coddle Germany as long as Britain's empire was not threatened.

Within a year of Tillich's arrival, his impact on Niebuhr's thought became clear as Niebuhr's book, *Reflections on the End of an Era*, followed Tillich's political analysis in chapter IV, "The Significance of Fascism," and in chapter X, "Mythology and History," and assumed arguments from Tillich's *Interpretation of History*. In 1971, shortly before he died, Niebuhr was cheered by my finding the book relevant, but he warned me it was his most radical book and too much informed by Marxist apocalyptic thinking. In his 1935 book, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, he confessed:

I also owe a particular debt of gratitude to my colleague Professor Paul Tillich, for many valuable suggestions for the development of my theme, some of them made specifically and others by the innumerable discussions on the thesis of the book.<sup>12</sup>

In 1936, Niebuhr was still giving speeches at Kirby Page's peace rallies and not understanding the need for American rearmament. He had broken with absolute pacifism, but regarded international war as beyond the limitations of Christian ethics. He was, however, supportive of sanctions against aggression and criticized George Lansbury, the Socialist leader in England, for failing to see the need for sanctions against Italian aggression. Niebuhr was in transition, as he had campaigned for Norman Thomas, but finally saw the uselessness of this since America voted for Roosevelt. Tillich was moving toward American citizenship but still held on to his socialism more strongly than Niebuhr, even though he doubted its American future.

The next year Niebuhr would promote Tillich's assistance in America by an essay he published in 1937. He portrayed him as a foil against Barth's supernaturalism and rejection of natural theology. He concluded his essay:

For he is not only one of the most brilliant theologians in the Western World, but one whose thought is strikingly relevant to every major problem of culture and civilization. His terms may be abstract, but his thought is not. It deals in terms of religious realism with the very stuff of life.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to a critique of Barth, referring to Tillich's essay of 1935, "What's Wrong with Dialectical Theology?," he also referred to his concepts of the demonic and kairos. Niebuhr would adopt Tillich's use of demonic as he did many of Tillich's other insights, but he never, as far as I know, joined in the usage of Kairos. Even though Tillich came to interpret it as the Kingdom of God in the ambiguity of history, Niebuhr refrained from using it. Probably it was too utopian for Niebuhr, though Tillich tried to guard it from that interpretation.

In 1937, both Tillich and Niebuhr were preparing their papers for the Oxford Conference, which would engage theology with the threatening world situation. Tillich confessed, when they were working together in Switzerland, that he felt personally closer to Niebuhr than ever before. Tillich was hurrying around Europe trying to form a covenant of intellectuals against Hitler, and, at their meeting in Switzerland where Tillich recorded his warm feelings for Niebuhr, he was assisting Niebuhr in translating one of his many lectures into German. That year before the war, Niebuhr published his important essay on symbolism in the festschrift for his professor Douglas C. Macintosh. Though it does not mention Til-

lich, whose work on symbols in 1928 had preceded Niebuhr's, the influence of Tillich on Niebuhr is evident in the work. It freed him for the work over the next two years on *Nature and Destiny of Man* of writing of the religious meaning of symbols which he did not believe were historical or empirical realities. Tillich recorded that he and Niebuhr discussed the content of the volume in their walks on Riverside Drive in New York City.

## World War II

Niebuhr and Tillich expected a European War. They shared the belief that Nazism was an eruption of the demonic in human history. Until 1939, Niebuhr advocated boycotts and economic sanctions and called for the European democracies to stand up within the League of Nations to thwart Italy and Germany's bellicosity. Interestingly, a year earlier in 1938, he had castigated Roosevelt for his naval buildup in preparation for the war. Tillich's first public speech in a far-left rally at Madison Square Garden was on the evil of anti-Semitism. He did not speak specifically on American policy until he became a citizen in 1940. Neither did he advocate America's enter the fighting until the country was attacked. Niebuhr, in particular, felt with Roosevelt there was not enough unity in the nation to take it to war. His polemics were directed against isolationism and pacifism. As a central European, Tillich was never tempted by either of those American movements.

In 1939, Niebuhr turned toward intervention on behalf of the threatened democracies, but still without advocating U.S. entry into the war. He applauded the U.S. surrendering its neutrality to supply the fighting democracies—by 1941 this was only the British Empire. Tillich approved the supplying of Britain with 50 destroyers for bases, lend lease, arming of U.S. merchant ships, and convoying supply ships to Britain, all initiated by President Roosevelt. He understood such policies along with German submarine warfare would draw the U.S. into the conflict, but he dreaded going to war with a divided country. Early in 1941, Niebuhr called for the defeat of Nazism and though his opening editorial for *Christianity and Crisis* did not ask for a declaration of war, its direction was clear.

We think it dangerous to allow religious sensibility to obscure the fact Nazi tyranny intends to annihilate the Jewish race, to subject the nations of Europe to the domination of a "master" race,

to extirpate the Christian religion, to annul the liberties and legal standards that are the priceless heritage of ages of Christian and humanistic culture, to make truth the prostitute of political power, to seek world dominion through its satraps and allies, and generally to destroy the very fabric of our western civilization.... We cannot, of course, be certain that defeat of the Nazis will usher in a new order of international justice in Europe and the world. We do know what a Nazi victory would mean, and our first task must be therefore to prevent it.<sup>13</sup>

The cost of WW I, pacifism, isolationism, and alterative strategic thinking kept Roosevelt from asking for war. December 7<sup>th</sup> and the foolhardy Japanese raid against Pearl Harbor, and the following German declaration of war ended the debate and unified the country.

Tillich and Niebuhr made their contribution to the war effort as participating public intellectuals. Niebuhr's founding of *Christianity and Crisis* as an interventionist journal breaking with the isolationism of *The Christian Century* was a major effort. His *Christianity and Power Politics* of 1940 was directed against pacifism, isolationism, and other policies he regarded as irresponsible. Tillich's chairmanship of the board of *The Protestant* (1941-43) gave him his own journal while he still contributed to Niebuhr's. The debate over war aims in the journal gave voice to the socialist interventionist perspective while Niebuhr resigned from the Socialist Party in 1940 because of its pacifism. Both of them had contacts with the German underground and came under suspicion from the U.S. government. Tillich and others from the Frankfurt School took their concerns about the prosecution of the war directly to Roosevelt who disdained their advice. The outlines of Christian Realism became clear in his recommended World War II policies and other writings. They developed their critique of anti-Semitism and institutionalized it in the Christian Council on Palestine. To reach a larger public, *Christianity and Society* succeeded *Radical Religion* but continued its policies. Niebuhr would cross the Atlantic during the war under either church auspices or government sponsorship, and speak and help organize non-governmental support for the war. Transportation was alternatively in a bomber or the Queen Mary avoiding submarines. In London, he was forced to seek shelter during a bombing raid with Edward R. Murrow under a table.

They both participated with John C. Bennett in the work of the Commission on a Just and Durable peace chaired by John Foster Dulles. Tillich's lectures were critical of the American righteousness of the committee. John Foster Dulles took the Federal Council's support for a United Nations to the President. Its work was probably the most important example of church influence in foreign policy as through conferences and campaigns it helped win American public opinion to the creation of a United Nations.

Tillich prepared and delivered over one hundred manuscripts for broadcasts into German occupied Europe interpreting the war. Niebuhr wrote in 1943 his intellectual defense of democracy, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, in a time that was still threatening to it. Tillich chaired the Council for a Democratic Germany of German exiles to attempt to put forward a plan for a united, democratic Germany, while Niebuhr chaired a supportive committee of Americans. The Council broke apart under the pre-cold war pressures of the division of Europe into Communist and democratic zones of influence.

They undertook all this work while continuing busy teaching schedules in popular courses and adding new work for a speeded up program at Union for chaplains. This practical work drew them closer together in their friendship and admiration for each other. Niebuhr was largely unaware of how their developing theologies were pushing them apart and post-war debates would stress the tensions between their theological approaches to the point of Tillich's argument in *Biblical Religion and Ultimate Reality*.

Tillich appreciated Niebuhr's Biblical religion, but he always argued Niebuhr should be more explicit in his use of philosophy. They both taught in the Philosophy of Religion section of the Seminary's curriculum as well as in their own specialties. Niebuhr used his existentialism that was enriched by conversations with Tillich. But Niebuhr's foundations in American pragmatism were sharply different from Tillich's in German idealism. Tillich's biblical religion is more apparent in his three books of sermons than in his three volume systematic theology. Langdon Gilkey writes that both used a method of correlation. I think this insight is helpful, though Niebuhr emphasized the negatives of the Christian answer to the philosophical traditions while Tillich emphasized their positive correlations.

During the War, they found their politics to be mutually supportive except for Tillich's retaining a

loyalty to European democratic socialism and Niebuhr abandoning American socialism for progressive social reform. While Niebuhr had obtained an influence with Norman Thomas in the Socialist Party beyond anything Tillich attained practically in Germany, Tillich would rejoin the Socialist Democratic Party of Germany under Willy Brandt's leadership after the war. But before too much is made of this post-war distinction, the Niebuhr Fellowship gave one of its first awards to Willy Brandt.

### Post-War Era

After the war, they continued to teach together. John Bennett has confessed how daunting it was to have a class in room 214 in an hour between these giants. Their classes were popular and greatly appreciated. Niebuhr would storm through his lectures waving his hands and marking his perplexities with a paused finger before his mouth and, according to earlier students, he would sometimes scratch his left ear with his right hand or place a pencil upon his bald head in a moment of forgetfulness. Tillich, on the other, had read his lectures in a monotone. I must admit to inheriting the paused finger in front of the mouth, and my students probably thought the lectures I read in a monotone, some of the time, reflected an earlier generation of pedagogues.

In the post-war period, Niebuhr and Tillich continued to cooperate in The Fellowship of Socialist Christians, which changed to Christian Action, and in publications in *Christianity and Crisis*. They continued to praise each other in public and to spar gently over the importance or relevance of Tillich's idealism and ontological philosophy and the hidden philosophic assumptions of Niebuhr, while inspiring a generation of Christian preachers to articulate their messages in terms of existential theology. Ursula recorded this nicely in her reflections of a post-party late night, coffee gathering in which Niebuhr explained to W. H. Auden Tillich's philosophic theology including the concept of anxiety.

### Original Sin

Andrew S. Finstuen's book *Original Sin and Everyday Protestants: The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Billy Graham, and Paul Tillich in an Age of Anxiety* opens with a reference to W. H. Auden's poem, "The Age of Anxiety," describing the period of 1945-65. Contributing to the age was the Cold War's nuclear rivalry that Niebuhr wrote about man-

aging with the Soviet Union. Tillich called for resistance to nuclear weapons, which was a step beyond Niebuhr's criticism of U.S. policy based on first strike capability. He advocated vigorously resisting nuclear war and advocated a policy of no first use. During the cold war, Tillich could in a few instances be found agreeing with the more gentle John Bennett rather than Niebuhr. He praised Bennett's less polemical approach toward the USSR, and in one instance, asking for Bennett's advice, he referred to him as his "Godfather in politics." The differences are a matter of nuance as they were all allies and they were all critical of U.S. nuclear preparations and policies. Some of Niebuhr's comments on the arms race in particular resound to the "Age of Anxiety" interpretation that characterizes Finstuen's period of research. (I will recommend Finstuen's book to a class on Niebuhr I am teaching at Carnegie Mellon University this spring.)

Elizabeth Niebuhr Sifton's reference from her childhood memories of Uncle Paul going downtown to the radio studio for his recording of broadcasts to Germany during the war captures the friendship she describes between the two philosophers who lived in the same apartment house for some of their tenure or just across Claremont Ave. for the remaining years. These realities and the content of Ursula Niebuhr's *Remembering Reinhold* falsify Finstuen's interpretation in one detail.

Despite their shared leadership of post-war Protestantism, Niebuhr, Graham, and Tillich had little in common on a personal or intellectual level. Separated by age, geography, and theological disposition, these men came from and operated in quite different worlds.<sup>14</sup> His point is granted for Billy Graham's being different, but Tillich and Niebuhr's both coming from German speaking parsonages in the United Church of Prussia and its American counterpoint the Evangelical Synod were not that different. Tillich and Niebuhr's Christian faith derived from life in the church and their catechism was radically different from Graham's emotional evangelical preaching. The two of them had different understandings of original sin, too, than did Billy Graham.

Many of Niebuhr's teachers at Eden Seminary and Yale University were indebted to the University of Berlin as was his father, a student at a distance of Harnack. Their partnership continued until Tillich had to retire in 1955 at the age of 68. His going to Harvard and then the University of Chicago distanced him from Niebuhr who could not travel much after 1952. They would meet again as distance and

health allowed, and despite their different methods they continued to acknowledge each other's greatness. Their final meeting was at the marriage in Riverside Church of Wilhelm Pauck, the closer friend of Tillich, to Marion Hausner. The presence of Reinhold Niebuhr as best man and Paul Tillich as presiding minister inspired one wit to refer to it as not so much a wedding as a Protestant summit. Still, when Tillich in 1965 planned to accept an offer from the New School, his planned move to New York included living at Union Seminary and teaching one more course there. But, this was not to be, and so the final conversations walking with Reinhold Niebuhr on Riverside Drive never occurred.

Finstuen has provided a major service by estimating the influence of Graham, Niebuhr, and Tillich on the modern humanity of the years 1945-65, and I agree their influence was substantial. His mastery of the correspondence of the three with ordinary Protestant laymen of the period and his sensitive sharing of it is a major contribution to understanding them. But my reading of the correspondence with Niebuhr and Tillich from the archives in Cambridge and Washington D.C. does not support the notion that the central subject was original sin. The correspondence with Niebuhr is more about international politics, which he admittedly emphasized more than theology in his last years. The second subject with Niebuhr is about "the meaning of life" more than it is about original sin. Tillich reported in 1961 that Niebuhr had given up the focus on "original sin" because it did not communicate in his day. In an interview with me in 1969, he dismissed his use of original sin as a pedagogical error. In both *Man's Nature and His Communities* and in the Harold Landon-edited book in 1962, he repudiated use of the term. I think Finstuen knows this as he quoted Niebuhr from *Man's Nature*, but he neglected Niebuhr's rejection of the concept in the modern world because of its historical baggage. Of course, Tillich's rejection of the term was earlier. He published in *Systematic Theology*, Volume II in 1957 his understanding that original sin was so burdened with historical and ecclesiastical absurdities that it was almost impossible to use it anymore.<sup>15</sup>

Niebuhr's use of the term in *Nature and Destiny* and other books through 1955 contributed to its discussion in the public in that period. But in the Preface to the republication of *Nature and Destiny of Man*, he regretted the use of terms "fall" and "original sin" in his major work as they obscured his essential thesis.<sup>16</sup> By the time I was at Union in the

1960s, there was more interest in the chapter on justice and the Kingdom of God among my peers than there was on the two chapters on original sin in *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. The interpretation of Niebuhr needs to be undertaken from a chronological perspective; he may change his position in different periods of his long career and the better interpreters will take account of the beginning, middle, and ending of his reflections on a particular subject. Tillich, after World War I, shows more minor changes in his thinking. Finstuen is very sympathetic to Billy Graham and it may be true that original sin was central to Graham's perspective; I am not qualified to judge that interpretation. However, Finstuen's interpretation intends:

By recovering the doctrine of original sin as the theological center for all three Christian leaders and by recovering its importance in the lives of lay theologians this work intends to illuminate that common theological ground...existed in an era conventionally defined by a culturally captive faith.<sup>17</sup>

I am very appreciative of Finstuen's work examining the influence of Tillich and Niebuhr in American culture. That influence extended beyond the particularities of their theologies or politics. As Finstuen says, many people have different Niebuhrs or Tillichs. As I expressed it in dialogue with a rabbi two weeks ago over the Palestinian Christian document Kairos, "Presbyterian Elders are like rabbis; in both cases if you have two of either together there will be three or four opinions." The evidence in their writing denies the centrality of original sin in the writings and teaching of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr. Neither of them should be reduced to *one* central concept or doctrine; their thought is much more complex than that. They stopped using the term a

few years earlier than Finstuen's book suggests. Christ or the meaningfulness of human life and history, or even politics, has more fitting claims for importance in Niebuhr. Tillich's *Systematic Theology* denies the term's usefulness and is organized around God, Christ, Holy Spirit, and Kingdom of God, all of which are more crucial than a term he rejected. One anecdotal piece that is of interest is a story Niebuhr told me in 1967. Reflecting on his association with George Kennan on the Policy Planning Staff, he recalled one meeting in which the Staff and advisors listened to proponents of world-government type solutions to the problems of world politics. According to Niebuhr, who was sitting next to Kennan on the Staff side of the table, Kennan turned to him and whispered the difference between the two sides of the table is that those of us on this side of the table believe in original sin and those on the other side of the table do not.

Niebuhr's harsh criticism of Protestant Evangelism in terms of its obscuration of moral issues by its individualism and perfectionism in the same chapter where he had praised developments in Catholicism and Judaism's moral rigor revealed his distance from Billy Graham at the end of his writing. At the last drink I enjoyed with Langdon Gilkey at the AAR following Elizabeth Niebuhr Sifton's presentation, she joined us, and when asked about the relationship between her father and Paul Tillich she said: "They were friends." I assumed she meant in the full Aristotelian understanding of friendship.

**ROTKAEPFCHEN RESCUED, OR  
RECASTING ROB'S ALLEGORY**

DURWOOD FOSTER

Call me Rumpelstiltskin—the unpleasant dwarf who stamps his foot. Though charmed by Rob's redo of Brothers Grimm, I have to veto most of the role assignments. Surely, Grandmother should be Tillich's *original* position on symbolizing God, well formulated in "Das religioese Symbol," 1928.

Therein *all* primordial religious concepts are declared symbols of "das Unbedingt-Transzendente" which transcends both "Sein-an-sich" and "Sein-fuer-uns." [Danz. et al., eds., *Ausgewahlte Texte*, 2008, *passim*]. After Urban's objecting that a link to rational discourse is missing, the wolf ensconcing himself in Grandmother's bed cannot be our un-lupine Rob but is obviously the *second* Tillichian position—"being itself" as the *only* and *entirely non-symbolic* expression for God. Rob is as wrong, I think, to give the grandmother this role, as he is *not* to give her the first role. Rotkaepfchen, the third pivotal character, outwits the wolf and restores Grandmother, or pansymbolism, now more circum-

spect—and certainly not as Rob portrays it—through the crescendo of Tillich’s theologizing, 1957 to 1965.

Rob correctly casts Rotkaeppchen as the innovation of 1957, the ST II proposal that the sole non-symbolic statement about God is that all statements about God are symbolic. Rob sees Rotkaeppchen as a troublemaker, since he believes the 1957 change was a “slip” on Tillich’s part. I mostly like what “Little Redcap” did, retracting what I take as the real “slip,” the claim made in ST I that God is *literally* being-itself. But, as cited below, Tillich soon found a less controversial way to express his renewed pansymbolism, so that Rotkaeppchen as such does not reappear after ST II.

In my reshuffling of Rob’s allegory, there is also a reversal of the action of the pigs. *They* build the straw house for the *wolf*. They are those scholars who, apparently not having read John Clayton, inno-

cently take what is forcefully said at the end of ST I [cf. pp. 238-9] as Tillich’s final word on the matter. Further, in my costume ball, the wolf gets somewhat redeemed. I do not agree with medieval Europe that this animal is *only* a vicious character. Besides being the source of our best friend, the dog, there is his remarkable courage and pack loyalty. We have to limit this partly noble creature, as ranchers insist, but by no means wholly negate him. Transposed to “being itself,” this means, contrary to Rob’s assertion, I am far from wanting to banish that concept from theology. I greatly respect Aristotle, who first proposed being qua being is God, but feel that we who live and think this side of Troeltsch can no longer with St. Thomas enthrone Aristotle as “the” philosopher. We have to take account also of Sankara, Nagarjuna, Kant, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, and lots of others. For that matter, St. Thomas was aware God as being-itself is not the whole true God, who is rather the trinitarian deity savingly active in Christ, to whom our reason while relevant is essentially inadequate. Therefore, God as being-itself is analogical. As is even more obvious in the *via negativa*, everything we rightly say about God points beyond itself. Does Tillich’s *via symbolica* do anything other than meld these classic ways of expressing God? Hardly! This is what I mean by his pansymbolism.

Rob supposes to limit the wolf we have to exterminate him—that is, if we concede being-itself is symbolic, even partly, as Tillich has it, we collapse religious faith into poetry, devoid of reality claim.

Yes, that would scuttle theology, as most of us understand it, especially Tillich’s kind. Patently, Paulus himself did not so intend the ST II innovation; he continues to employ being-itself as a positive theological tool. What the 1957 change does is *demote* that concept from the *only* non-symbolic expression of God to one that is partly symbolic and now on a par with three or four other expressions—never tightly enumerated by Tillich—such as “the Absolute,” “the Unconditional,” and “the Infinite.” I strongly agree with this, believing the time is ripe for worldwide ecumenism in religion *and* philosophy in which mutual inquiry is pursued into discordant notions of ultimacy. Beginnings of such ecumenism are long underway, and Tillich was a significant contributor to it, as in the Harvard dialogues with Hisamatsu Shin-ichi. In the 1987 international Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Berkeley (the largest yet held) Paulus was by far the Christian thinker to whom Buddhist participants most referred.

Remember that Masao Abe, Hisamatsu’s student, who was with us in this society a number of times, always challenged Paulus on the ultimacy of being-itself. Instead of being, Abe, devoutly Zen Buddhist, proposed nothingness as the ultimate. He too took Tillich’s statement at the end of ST I as a sacrosanct text and would not accept that ST II had altered the stance of Paulus. I team-taught with Masao during his early 90s visit to Pacific School of Religion and saw interfaith progress beckoning if he could have absorbed the change in Tillich. A situation might have opened in which both being and non-being were appreciated as partly symbolic expressions of ultimacy, both helpfully significant but also pointing beyond themselves without either claiming exclusive literal adequacy.

Tillich himself, decades before, in his zestfully open-spirited Bampton Lectures of 1962 [*Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, published 1963] had endorsed and exemplified just such an approach to the competing concepts of ultimacy in world religions. These lectures have not been sufficiently heeded, and I am happy to find them among the extremely valuable selection of Tillichiana recently edited by our German Society colleagues Christian Danz, Werner Schuessler, and Erdmann Sturm. Let me cite a passage that refers explicitly to being-itself.

The *esse ipsum*, being-itself, of the classical Christian doctrine of God, is a transpersonal category and enables the Christian... to understand the meaning of absolute nothingness in

Buddhist thought. The term points to the unconditional and infinite character of the Ultimate and the impossibility of identifying it with anything particular that exists [Ausgewahlte Texte, ed. Danz et al., 2008, 442]

In my wrangle with Rob over whether a change occurred in 1957, clearly some of the most pertinent data are the writings of Tillich after that date. The Bampton Lectures are a crucial instance, and I shall adduce others below. Rob has acknowledged in his paper that Paulus never reiterated his ST I assertion that being-itself is the only completely non-symbolic statement about God. Some might think that this ought to settle the issue, but not Rob. Nor by a long shot is he the only student of Tillich who, along with Abe, has insisted on the immutability of ST I in this matter. Rob is probably right that the great majority who know anything at all about Tillich assume anyone of his stature and systematic prowess simply *could* not six years later contradict what was formulated with deliberate point in the acclaimed first volume of his magnum opus—especially if he himself did not, as was the case, explicitly flag the recantation.

This somewhat uncomfortable state of affairs underlines how much Tillichians lost in the premature death of John Clayton—and it points up how dire is the continuing need to read Clayton's incisive unflinching investigations of Tillich. John writes, with formidable grounding, motivated by a mix of love and dismay, of "Tillich's notorious tendency to reform constantly even his most basic concepts" ["Tillich and the Art of Theology," in *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, ed. by Adams, Pauck and Shinn, 1985]. Rob, we recall, made it clear awhile back *he* does not detect any basic change in Tillich after the early 1920s. On this, he and Clayton are as far apart as it gets. I have learned much from both but on the issue of change in our mentor, I have to side preponderantly with Clayton.

I definitely, though, do not fully agree with Clayton. While I can appreciate his proposal that Paulus's technique of unrelenting reconception vis-a-vis context "constitutes his most enduring legacy to the future of theology" [*Idem*], Clayton does not thematize as adequately as Gilkey, Rob, and others the overall systematic achievement of Tillich. Rob, however, I truly believe, could galvanize *his* positive insights into that achievement more efficiently if he would follow Gilkey and recognize the pivotal shift his so-called Rotkaeppchen brings about in ST II [Cf. *Gilkey on Tillich*, 1990, 105].

Rob and I have different understandings of pan-symbolism. For him it means *not* to have any link to rational discourse. That is *not* what I mean when I use it to designate the position to which Tillich shifts in 1957. Even if Paulus himself, when seeking to satisfy Urban, may have used the word pejoratively, for me it means only that every proposed *expression of God* is (at least partly) symbolic.

There is, in any case, still a measureless and indispensable link to rational discourse and/or universal experience of reality. This link for Tillich is everything he explores and configures as *the human question*. Rob, intent on discrediting Rotkaeppchen, seems—incredibly—to miss this entirely. How could he do this, since the basic anatomy of Tillich's ST is precisely this duality of question and answer? As we all know, the "question" in each part of the magnum opus connects as fully as possible with philosophy and general human existentiality; it is completely responsible to universal reason. On the other hand, the "answer" in each part is dependent on revelation which, ecstatically transcending (though not defying) reason, requires faith for its reception. This is "abc" Tillich, and is fully stated and exemplified in ST I prior to what I deem the wolf's entry, i.e., the claim made toward the end of that volume that being-itself is *literally* the meaning of God.

When Paulus wrote this, he contradicted what he had written in 1928, and, in 1957, he contradicted what he had written in 1951. This is part of what Clayton means when he speaks of the "many glaring inconsistencies" in Paulus [Ibid., 288]. It would be quite wrong, though, to say Paulus "contradicted himself." He was committed to the utmost logical consistency attainable at a given time. But he was also a restlessly interlocutive thinker courageous enough to contradict what he himself had earnestly written at a previous time. This is very significantly different from "contradicting oneself."

The question/answer structure was of course solidly in place for Tillich when he wrote toward the end of Volume I what he would then take back in the "new introduction" to Volume II. In the latter volume's "restatement," as he calls it, he *does* invoke the human question, the "quest for God" [ST II, 9] as the link desiderated by Urban without which Rob thinks the sky will fall. Why does he not do this six years earlier, in the closing sections of ST I, where—quite unnecessarily—he instead brings in being-itself as the only literal ascription to God? I personally believe it had to do with his current reading of Heidegger, but the problem transcends our

present compass. I hope to address it on a future occasion. What then instigates the restatement six years later? Tillich himself alludes here to “public discussion” [ST II, 9], which obviously must embrace the critiques offered in *The Theology of Paul Tillich* [ed. Kegley and Bretall, 1952] by Randall, Hartshorne, and Emmett. I believe additionally the emphatic rejection of Heidegger’s “being-itself” as a surrogate for God by Martin Buber in New York in 1952 [Cf. his *Eclipse of God*] had an important impact.

It is ironic that “being-itself,” while it did serve as a link to rationality for a considerable number (myself among them), was arguably to many more, both West and East, a stumbling block to grasping Tillich. I know that was true for the majority of my students at PSR. In the world at large not only linguistic analysts and Buddhists, but even Heideggerians—all for their own reasons—immediately launched barrages against Paulus at just this point. A Graduate Theological Union colleague of mine on sabbatical in Tübingen sent a snapshot of a dump truck seen there, heaped with black German clay. His quip read: “At last I’ve found what Tillich may have meant by the Ground of Being.”

As for Rob’s jitters that having no completely literal conceptual surrogate for God would be a “killer mistake” depriving theology of its *fundamentum in re*, do his misgivings not smack of the “only a symbol” attitude Tillich especially deplored?

Moreover, would not Rob’s view of art (painting, sculpture, poetry, belles lettres) as *unconnected* with reality greatly distress Paulus as well as those numerous friends and colleagues we have in “religion and the arts.” This is not present business, but Rob’s own artistry with his trumpet is to me a very real thing.

Among the post 1957 writings of Tillich that especially illuminate our issue, the recent *Ausgewählte Texte* also include the brief 1961 article “The God above God.” It is interesting to compare this piece with 1952’s *The Courage to Be*, for which it is expressly an apology. Whereas the latter (Paulus’s all time best seller), is quite in sync with ST I’s claim for the literal fundament of being-itself, the later essay harmonizes with ST II. It is the human question—ultimate concern—instead of any single positive concept of God—which offers the irrefragable reality link that remains when faith is shattered.

Especially notable also is the last public utterance of Paulus, the Chicago address of October 1965 on “The Significance of the History of Religion for

the Systematic Theologian,” for the complete absence of any mention of being-itself. The tone is very much that of the Bampton Lectures. In concluding, for our future work in theology and the study of religion, a five-step program is proposed. The first two steps are critical use of what is still valid in the traditional methods in appropriating scriptural revelations and the natural theology drawn from reason and culture. The third phenomenological step is wide-open assemblage of the disparate and similar symbols, ideas, rites, and actions of world religious experience. The fourth step is the critical sifting, testing, and digesting of the gathered multifarious data. Finally, the historian of religions tries to distill an overall dynamics of religious and secular history and place the results in our present situation. In our mentor’s own words, the five steps include part of the ‘earlier methods’ but they introduce that which was done... earlier... into the context of the history of the human race and into the experiences of mankind as expressed in the great symbols of religious history [*Ausgewählte Texte*, 464].

I submit that without repudiating the enduring greatness of Aristotle and St. Thomas, Paulus in his culminating eight years has clearly expanded our theological agenda beyond any one culture’s set of categories. His asseverations here are unmistakably governed not by ST I on being-itself, but by ST II’s declaration that “God,” as our human ultimate concern, is and can only be expressed symbolically.

In his very last paragraph Paulus emphasizes that any possible theology must be “rooted in its experiential basis.”

...(I)t tries to formulate the various experiences which are universally valid in universally valid statements. The universality of a religious statement does not lie in an all-embracing abstraction which would destroy religion as such, but it lies in the depths of every concrete religion [*Ibid.*, 465].

This, I suggest, is Paulus’s last *allusion* to being-itself. It comprises the recantation of ST I’s claim for that venerable concept (as literal and exclusive) that was never previously explicitly made. “The universality of a religious statement does not lie in an all-embracing abstraction which would destroy religion as such, but it lies in the depths of every concrete religion.” Even here Paulus uses a blindfold; he cannot bear to censure so dear and veteran a concept as being-itself by name.

I conclude my response to Rob with one further citation from Tillich’s post-1957 work. In 1963,

Paulus accepted an invitation from PSR to offer the Earl Lectures, which at that time still comprised the flagship theological lectureship on the West Coast. Because of his immense prestige, as well as the crackling disputes about his views, it was decided, quite unusually, not to assign a topic but to leave to him complete freedom to say what was on his mind and heart at what obviously was almost the end of the scintillating and exhausting career. He chose as his theme “The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message.”

After sketching the emerging matrix of modernity, and how it renders much we cling to irrelevant, Paulus came in his remaining hour to a compressed plea for what he espoused as the essential relevance of his never relinquished faith. One pillar of this could help calm Rob about not being “nailed to reality,” viz., Tillich’s emphasis on Jesus the Christ as “an event *which has happened*” [*The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, 1996, 46]. However, I hasten on to what is said directly of God. Here again, in sync with ST II, Tillich says we should not start with the “question of God” as such, since it has become mired in objectification. We should start rather with our ultimate concern. Still we cannot avoid naming God, he avers, and again I quote:

[T]he power and universality of the divine... transcends everything we can say about the divine. Let us avoid objectifying statements about the holy. Let us avoid giving it names, even the traditional ones of theology. When we do give it names—as we must in speaking of it, or even in silent prayer—then always let us have a yes and a no in our statements [Ibid., 60].

Hold it right here a moment. This is what I meant above, near my outset, in saying Tillich found a less controversial way of putting his rehabilitated

pansymbolism. The frenetically disputed term “symbolism” is avoided. Paulus continues, first with what I believe he learned from Martin Buber:

It is remarkable how the biblical language, especially the Old Testament, presents a very concrete God whom it seems everyone could make into an object alongside other objects. But try it. This God will evade you. You never can fix this God. Hence the prohibition to name God, since a name is something you can grasp, something which tries to “define” or make finite. This is the greatness of the biblical language. It avoids objectifying. In all great religious experiences, the divine appears and disappears—a thing Calvin still knew. For this we have the word “epiphany,” which means the appearing of an ungraspable divine power—being there and not being there. This “yes and no” is the foundation of all speaking about the divine. The universality of a religious statement does not lie in an all-embracing abstraction which would destroy religion as such, but it lies in the depths of every concrete religion [Ibid., 60-61].

I rest my case. If anyone does not see this is a simpler, more graphic version of what is said about symbolism by Rob’s rejected Rotkaeppchen, in other words in the new Introduction of ST II—revoking the claim of ST I that being-itself (with its synonyms) is a literal, and the only possible literal, statement about God—then further argumentation seems pointless at least for now. Of course, tomorrow is another day. Thank you, Rob, and thank you all!

Ashland, Oregon

November 13, 2011.

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**THREE PIGS, RED RIDING HOOD, AND THE WOLF SOLVING THE RIDDLE OF TILlich’S UNSYMBOLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT GOD**

ROB JAMES

The three volumes of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* appeared in 1951, 1957, and 1963, respectively. In the introduction to the second volume (ST II, 9), Tillich wrote four sentences in which he at least *seemed* to change a position he had laid down in three paragraphs in the first volume six years ear-

lier (ST I, 238-39). I do not know anyone who has studied the two passages who believes that the four younger sentences of 1957 can be reconciled, as they stand, with the three older paragraphs of 1951.

Thus, the question of this paper is posed in its most basic form. Did Tillich change his position in 1957, or do we seek another explanation, for example, that the sentences written in that year must be discounted or even rejected as some kind of slip on his part?

On November 19, 2011, at the Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society in San

Francisco, Prof. Durwood Foster and I delivered dueling papers in which we debated this issue. I argued that the older paragraphs of 1951 stood, and that the younger sentences were a lapse on Tillich's part. Durwood argued that Tillich changed his position.

My paper could not be published in the form in which I delivered it. Its argumentative thread was in one document, and I read and often interpreted numerous primary texts from another, a handout I circulated. By necessity, then, this paper is a revision. I have gone beyond necessity in dropping things, rearranging things, and adding things, especially in the first argument. It is the most difficult, and the most conclusive single argument.

Durwood's San Francisco paper, which follows mine, is unrevised. Nominally, his was a response to mine. At most, however, he barely had time to look at mine before he finalized and delivered his own.

On the other hand, for eighteen months prior to our San Francisco encounter—that is, beginning with the Spring 2010 issue of the *North American Paul Tillich Society Bulletin*—the two of us took turns briefly stating our opposed views in five issues of that quarterly journal; and during those months we continued to exchange emails, as well. At one point I even thought—mistakenly, it turned out—that we had resolved our differences. In the present paper, I respond at several points to things Durwood said in our published *Bulletin* exchanges. However, this paper does not take cognizance of his San Francisco paper. I hope to respond to it in a future issue of this *Bulletin*, and I anticipate that Durwood will want to respond to my response, in turn.

### I. The Allegory: Its Characters and Its Plot

Looking toward San Francisco, I realized that I could not deal responsibly with the issue in dispute without an extremely close reading of a very large number of Tillich texts. Could a live audience follow the tedious arguments that this would demand? In order to hold my listener's attention, then (in addition to preparing the handout), I tried to make things lively by casting much of my paper in the form of an allegory. I retain that allegory here, partly as a record of what happened. I have shamelessly mixed two different fairy tales, and my allegory departs dramatically at points from both children's stories.

In essence, I have already introduced the two main characters in my allegory in the opening paragraph of this paper. The four younger sentences of 1951, taken as a block, are Rotkäppchen. *Rotk*

*phen* is German for “Little Red Riding Hood.” And Rotkäppchen is a spoiled brat, at least at the outset of my paper. Durwood, of course, will say in his paper that Rotkäppchen is ever the likable and well-behaved child; but it is my task to be sure the truth is known. She is a troublemaker. She refuses to visit her grandmother. She will not listen to the wise old woman. The wise Grandmother, I hardly need say, is equivalent to the three older paragraphs of 1951 that appear in the first volume of *Systematic Theology* (hereafter ST).

But what do the Grandmother and Rottkäppchen texts say that puts them at such odds with each other? The three Grandmother paragraphs of 1951 say quite a bit. After all, they include a total of eighteen sentences. However, sentences twelve and thirteen are the focus of the present altercation in a special way, and most especially sentence twelve. Thus, *Grandmother says that when people speak, not merely as religious persons but as theologians—for example, when advancing a doctrine of God—*

**[Text 1: Grandmother, sentences 12-13]**...they must begin with the most abstract and completely unsymbolic statement which is possible, namely, that God is being-itself or the absolute. [Paragraph] However, after this has been said, nothing else can be said about God as God which is not symbolic. (ST I, 239)

(To facilitate references back and forth among the *indented Tillich texts* that I cite, I assign a number to each, and place the number in bold font within square brackets, as just above. The texts are not numbered in chronological order, but simply in the order in which they appear in this paper.)

On a standard reading, Text 1 says: (a) that there is only one unsymbolic statement that can be made about God; (b) that this one statement is “God is being-itself”; and (c) that theology must begin its doctrine of God with that statement.

I am content to start from that reading, but to the extent that it is relevant I will seek to justify my belief that, according to the position stated in Grandmother—which I believe governs ST as a whole—we may make other unsymbolic statements about God also, including conceptual statements and metaphorical statements, quite apart from the statement we shall hear about shortly from Rotkäppchen.

And what does Rotkäppchen say? Just before Tillich wrote the four Rotkäppchen sentences, he had occasion to say that, “everything religion has to say about God, including his qualities, actions and manifestations, has a symbolic quality...” (ST II, 9).

Referring to that statement, *Rotkäppchen's four sentences state*:

[Text 2: **Rotkäppchen**] But, after this has been stated, the question arises (and has arisen in public discussion) as to whether there is a point at which a non-symbolic assertion about God must be made. There is such a point, namely, the statement that everything we say about God is symbolic. Such a statement is an assertion about God which itself is not symbolic. Otherwise we would fall into a circular argument. (ST II, 9).

Rotkäppchen's most pointed divergence from Grandmother is that the one unsymbolic statement about God—Rotkäppchen seems to assume there is only one—is no longer “God is being-itself.” It is now “everything we say about God is symbolic.”

In agreement with the large majority of Tillich scholars (but not all Tillich scholars), I believe that Tillich's position on the issue here in dispute remained unchanged in 1957. And I account for these four sentences as some kind of lapse on Tillich's part. In what follows, I advance four arguments to support this view.

Or rather, the wolf does this for me. The wolf is the argument of my paper. When he gets our errant little lady to submit to Grandmother's wise discipline, Tillich's system is able to function at its fullest, free from the noisy distraction of this one-time terrible child.

And who was it that spoiled Rotkäppchen? It was the pigs! Actually, they meant well. Charmed by the flattering attention paid them by the young miss, they constructed for her the most splendid house they could imagine, waited upon her hand and foot, and treated her in every way as though she were royalty. No wonder Rotkäppchen was spoiled rotten! She thought she really *was* a queen, and looked down her nose at Grandmother.

However, the material that the pigs had built their house of was straw. That is to say, the pigs' house was constructed of *four mistaken assumptions*. “Four piggy assumptions,” we may call them. And here is the key point: So long as the four Rotkäppchen sentences are read *within the framework of these mistaken assumptions*, some of these assumptions or all of them—that is, so long as Rotkäppchen is living within the pig's house—she will appear to be a queen, and Grandmother will be disparaged as old hat.

But this is not the way the keen-eyed wolf sees it! He can tell at a glance that the piggy assumptions are straw. Mustering his four arguments, he huffs, he

puffs, and he blows the pigs' house down. Rushing into the wreckage, he gathers a terrified Rotkäppchen in his arms, soothes the child and restores her to wise Grandmother—who takes care that the young lady thenceforth is well instructed in all the necessary and decorous arts.

Nor is the wolf through. In his best imitation of a border collie, he proceeds to round up the pigs as though they were sheep. And the pigs, persuaded by his logic and sweet reasonableness, promise never again to make royalty of Rotkäppchen. But a murmur was overheard as one pig whispered to another: “Did you notice what large, sharp teeth that border collie had?”

In order not to lengthen this paper unnecessarily, I will usually speak of “my argument,” etc, and leave the activities of the wolf and the pigs implicit. I will continue to refer to the key passages as “Grandmother” and “Rotkäppchen,” however.

## II. Four arguments, Each Answering One of the Mistaken or Piggy Assumptions

The four arguments that follow are by no means all that could be mustered in the present cause. They have been selected and tailored with an eye to Durwood's assumptions and arguments. I believe arguments 1 and 4 are of the decisive kind. Arguments 2 and 3 are not. Argument 2 says the Rotkäppchen passage is sufficiently incoherent and self-undermining that it is difficult to take it as a serious, thought-through proposal. Argument 3 does not attempt to do anything more than to neutralize or outweigh one un-provable theory by championing another, and in that way to undercut the assumption that, in writing Rotkäppchen, Tillich deliberately set out to change the Grandmother version of the unsymbolic statement about God.

**1. First mistaken assumption:** *That Tillich's Systematic Theology works fine on the basis of the pansymbolism and circularity in which Rotkäppchen lands us.*

Tillich is well known for insisting that God is religiously and existentially known only through the revelatory breakthrough that comes in religious symbols, normally those of some religious community (MW IV, 395-403). He is just as insistent, however, that his own *Systematic Theology*—which can be effectively defined as the rational interpretation of the religious symbols of the Christian faith<sup>1</sup>—is a cognitive enterprise.

That fact is not diminished by the further fact that, in relation to God and transcendent matters, his *Systematic Theology* deals with *symbolic* knowledge. However, if this symbolic knowledge is to be *knowledge* rather than something else, the theologian must proceed with care. Tillich explains some of the care that must be taken in the Grandmother passage. I quote parts of it now that, for the most part, are not cited as Text 1 above:

**[Text 3: Grandmother, sentences 4, 6, 7, 10-12]** God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself...They enable us to use symbols which we are certain point to the ground of reality...The statement that God is being-itself is a nonsymbolic statement...Other assertions about God can be made theologically only on this basis. Of course, religious assertions do not require such a foundation for what they say about God; the foundation is implicit in every religious thought concerning God. Theologians must make explicit what is implicit in religious thought and expression; and in order to do this they must begin with the most abstract and completely unsymbolic statement which is possible, namely, that God is being itself or the absolute (ST I, 238-29).

This text is like a launching pad for my first argument, and sentence 4 from it may serve as my motto: "God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself." I hope to make it palpable what this motto means. In the process, I will try to make it clear what pansymbolism is, and why it would undermine Tillich's project in his *Systematic Theology*.

To carry all this out, I will employ three further Tillich texts. It is of peculiar importance that one of these texts, Text 8, appears in ST II *after* Rotkappchen. That is important because Durwood could argue that—since Grandmother and the Texts 4 and 5 that I cite below are *earlier* than Rotkappchen—they must be part of the body of doctrine that Tillich jettisoned when he made the change that Durwood thinks Tillich made in Rotkappchen in 1957. However, Durwood cannot set aside Text 8 on these grounds. Interestingly, the paragraph in which Rotkappchen appears is 18 sentences long, the same number of sentences as Grandmother; and, among those 18 sentences, Rotkappchen is equivalent to the first 4, and Text 8 is equivalent to the last 14 (ST II, 9-10).

My next two indented Tillich texts are Text 4 from 1952 and Text 5 from 1940-41. Unless they are dealt with together, the 1952 text is subject to a misunderstanding. It is only a subsidiary part of this argument for me to allay that misunderstanding. However, it is still important that I do so. The reason, as we shall see, is that this misunderstanding seems to have led Durwood to the mistaken view that Tillich was a "pansymbolist" for most of his life.

In 1952, a year after ST I was published, *The Theology of Paul Tillich* appeared (hereafter TPT).<sup>2</sup> The book contained fourteen essays of interpretation and criticism by as many authors. Following those essays was a 24-page "Reply" from Tillich. At one place Tillich provided background for the Grandmother passage in ST I as follows.

**[Text 4]** An early criticism by Professor Urban of Yale forced me to acknowledge that in order to speak of symbolic knowledge one must delimit the symbolic realm by an unsymbolic statement. I was grateful for this criticism, and under its impact I became suspicious of any attempts to make the concept of symbol all embracing and therefore meaningless. The unsymbolic statement which implies the necessity of religious symbolism is that God is being itself, and as such beyond the subject-object structure of everything that is. (TPT 334)

Without naming it, Tillich speaks here of pansymbolism. He does that when he speaks of making the concept of symbol "all embracing"—all embracing in relation to God, he means, as the larger context indicates. He tells us that, if we are to speak of "symbolic knowledge," we must delimit the symbolic realm by an unsymbolic statement. (Per the larger context, he means: if we are to speak of symbolic knowledge *of God*, we must delimit the symbolic realm of statements *about God* by an unsymbolic statement *about God*.)

Now we are ready for our next text. Twelve years earlier, in 1940, the English translation of Tillich's basic and oft-republished "Das religiöse Symbol" of 1928 appeared in the *Journal of Liberal Religion*. It was accompanied by a brief critique by W. M. Urban. Urban took exception to Tillich's statement in "The Religious Symbol" that all knowledge of God has symbolic character. Such a view, Urban said, could be described as "pan-symbolism." He explained, "the notion of symbolic knowledge (and symbolic truth) is meaningless except in contrast with non-symbolic knowledge" (MW IV, 270).

Tillich replied in the next issue of the same jour-

nal in 1941. He said he stood by his statement, “All knowledge of God has symbolic character.” But once he had said that, he showed that he had taken Urban’s advice to heart. He wrote,

[Text 5]...I would admit that any symbolic knowledge presupposes some basis of non-symbolic knowledge and that pan-symbolism defeats itself. (This, by the way, is the reason I have criticised Cassirer who seems to me *the* outstanding representative of pansymbolism.) The non-symbolic element in all religious knowledge is the experience of the unconditioned as the boundary, ground, and abyss of everything conditioned. (MW IV, 273)

There are three issues in this text that need to be developed at some length.

(1) For the first time in my paper, we encounter here that crucial notion of a certain kind of “boundary” about which Tillich speaks from time to time. Tillich’s statement here in Text 4 goes some distance, simply in its own terms, toward making it clear why it should be the case, as he puts it, that “The non-symbolic element in all religious knowledge is the experience of the unconditioned as the boundary, ground, and abyss of everything conditioned.”

But it will clarify things greatly if we are also aware of a fuller discussion of this particular boundary, a discussion in which Tillich brings out its two-sidedness, that is, its simultaneously symbolic and unsymbolic character. In Text 8, a text that I will examine also in argument 4 (ST II, 10), Tillich speaks of this boundary as “the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide.” We should be careful to note here that this boundary is most certainly not a line *between* the symbolic and unsymbolic. Rather, the symbolic and unsymbolic modes *overlap* on this boundary. Or better, they “coincide” there, as Tillich puts it.

In Text 8, Tillich also gives us more help in “locating” this boundary, as it were. Whereas in the present Text 4 he mentions only “the experience of the unconditioned,” in Text 8 he tells us that we are on this boundary when—in our quest for God—we fasten our attention upon, or find ourselves in the grip of, the unconditional, or the infinite, or being-itself. When in our concerned quest for Him we say God is any of these three notions, we speak rationally and ecstatically, unsymbolically and symbolically, both at the same time, he tells us. Given that we are able conceptually and unsymbolically to grasp these notions, it is the case that *when* we enter-

tain these notions seriously and existentially, they precipitate in us states that are very likely to become self-transcending, states that take us into ecstatic “territories of awareness” (my term) that are negotiable only via religious symbols (ST II, 9-10).

Our situation, then—and this is the situation that makes symbolic knowledge of God possible—is this: Those profound *unsymbolic* conceptions and expressions of which we are capable when we are genuinely concerned and “on this boundary” coincide with our *symbolic* intuitions and expressions of God (ST II, 10). Obviously, these concepts and these symbols are related. Given Tillich’s discussions of philosophy and theology, for example, we probably read Tillich aright when we say that the unsymbolic or conceptual elements are the formal, knowable skeleton of the second, and the symbolic gripping, lifting presence is the wholesome coming-alive for us of some aspects of the first.

That is to say: our conceptual grasp of the infinite and of other elements of the structure of being is formal and, simply as such, it is also empty. It gains its living fullness when and insofar as, in our grasping it, *we are grasped*—grasped by that transcendent power that reaches us in and through the symbols that are alive for the human community that most defines us in depth—which usually means the religious community where we find our existential home. And the availing Power here is the revealing and healing effectuator in us of new being.

But if such engagement in existential transformation is to admit of being known (per *symbolic* knowledge, of course; and that is what ST is all about!), the crucial things are (a) that the mass of symbols in and through which this knowing takes place shall not be all-encompassing: it must not be, for all we know, an untethered, boundless pansymbolism that merely “floats” above or beside our quotidian, unsymbolically-knowable reality, a cloud of symbols that do not knowably strike into and connect with our own being, and the Being that transforms us; and (b) these symbols must also be construable theologically in terms of the structures of being that are ingredient in those symbols. For being has structure, structure is cognizable, and knowing is in fact recognizing something as in being.

Here then is the reason why the two-sided, symbolic-unsymbolic boundary is so crucial. It ensures that the symbols through which we apprehend God symbolically are informed by—they are “inwardly structured by”—and are therefore interpretable and knowable in terms of, the structured reality that can

be conceptually grasped by the same human mind to which revelation is ecstatically given in the symbol. It is indeed true: “God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself” (ST I, 238).

(2) As noted above, the “2” subsidiary point to which we now turn, together with the “3” that follows, is a bit of a bypath from argument 1. However, the Text 4 that is now before us is illuminating on a significant point. It suggests that, way back in early phases of Tillich’s career, Durwood may have missed the trail of Tillich’s development on the issue that is in dispute between us. From Text 4 of 1952, and from what he knows of the early Tillich, Durwood believes Tillich was a pansymbolist prior to his 1940 encounter with Urban’s critique, and that Tillich deserted that pansymbolist stand for only about a dozen years thereafter. As Durwood puts it, Tillich “was persuaded by Urban to repudiate pansymbolism for only several years, during which ‘being-itself’ was proposed as ‘the only non-symbolic’ expression for God.”<sup>3</sup>

Quite to the contrary, in “Das religiöse Symbol” of 1928, Tillich tells how he worked out his own symbolism ideas over against the well-known view of Ernst Cassirer (MW IV, 218-221, cf. 259-263); and now, in our present Text 5 of 1941, Tillich tells us that he, the transcendent realist, differed from Cassirer—by which he can hardly mean other than during the 1920s—by rejecting the pansymbolism that he recognized in the great critical idealist.

Further, Tillich’s original 1928 article on symbolism roots the religious symbol reciprocally in two things, both (a) in the active receptiveness at the deeper levels of the human groups among whom the symbol has its “acceptability as such” (the fourth characteristic of the symbol in the 1928 article), and (b) in the givingness or grace of the real transcendent that co-constitutes the symbol by giving it its “innate power” (the third characteristic of the symbol [cf. MW IV, 213-14, 254]). And something analogous to this “a” and “b” is true likewise for Tillich’s half-dozen later articles on religious symbolism, as I have shown in my doctoral dissertation.<sup>4</sup>

The continuity between the Tillichian symbol theory found in his classic 1928 article and in his later articles on that subject is strongly marked, and his symbol theory in the articles is of a piece with what we find explicated and put to work in ST.<sup>5</sup> But we ask, what follows from this seamless continuity in Tillich’s symbol theory from the 1920s into the decades of the ST?

Quite a bit—though not everything, to be sure. It is to be granted, for example, that the Tillich of the 1920s did not use the *explicit language* of “the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary” that he would detail in 1957 (see Text 8). However, the continuity in Tillich’s symbol theory does mean that the two sides of Tillich’s symbolic-unsymbolic boundary discussion would be reflected somehow—better, they are formatively present in, with, and under the “a” and the “b” that I have identified two paragraphs above. The “a” involves our readiness in reaching toward God to focus, for example, upon the infinite, the unconditioned, or being-itself, and to do so in the company of whatever concrete imagery facilitates that quest; and the “b” betokens the ecstatic presence that overtakes us, filling without erasing what is intuitively and even thinkably before us, rendering it symbolic without necessarily (except for the apophatics) denuding it of all its cognizable elements.

Very well, and what does *that* mean? It means that—just as elements of unsymbolic knowledge of God are present in the symbolic knowledge of God that Tillich sets forth in his discussion of the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary (ST II, 10)—so elements of unsymbolic knowledge of God are present also in the symbolic knowledge of God that Tillich presents in his classic 1928 article. And—finally!—*this* means that Tillich was as little a pansymbolist in the 1920s article as he was in 1957 in ST II of his later magnum opus.

It is another question, however, whether Tillich might need to be a bit more circumspect in some of his generalizing statements if his language was to pass muster with so careful a philosopher as Urban. We look at that question in “3” next.

(3) But we must begin with a different question: Do we have a discrepancy between what Tillich says in Text 4 of 1952 and what he says in Text 5 of 1941? The 1952 text could sound as though Urban pointed out a self-defeating position that Tillich had occupied for years without knowing it—pansymbolism—and that Tillich accepted Urban’s correction and abandoned that position in 1941.

However, Text 4 of 1941—reading it now in the light of what we have just seen in “2” of this argument—is saying that Tillich had *not* occupied that position. Both his stated disagreement with Cassirer and his transcendent-realist understanding of the symbol in his 1928 article make this clear (MW IV, 263). Thus, whatever Urban may have thought about Tillich’s article—and Urban was clear that he did not understand some of it—the burden of Urban’s

advice *on this issue* winds up being not much more than some suggestions as to how Tillich could avoid inadvertently making his idea of symbolism technically and linguistically meaningless. Tillich gladly accepted his suggestions.

We are ready for Text 6, which comes from 1961. In it Tillich helps us with an awkwardness that many may have felt, namely, that it is sometimes hard to state in simple terms what it is that is so self-defeating about pansymbolism. Tillich makes the problem in pansymbolism more concrete by using the image of a circle. He speaks of it as a “vicious circle” because he has in mind a group of symbols in which each symbol refers only to another, none to anything real. What he has in mind we might think of as a mass of images suspended from nowhere and referring, in a shimmering, infinite circle, to nothing but themselves. He writes,

[Text 6] To what does a religious symbol refer, one asks? How can it be reached? And if it can be reached by symbols only, how can we know that something is reached at all? Such questions are certainly justifiable. One can sum them up by asking: Is there a nonsymbolic statement about the referent of religious symbols? If this question could not be answered affirmatively the necessity of symbolic language for religion could not be proved and the whole argument would lead into a vicious circle. (MW IV, 417)

Earlier, when we first read the Rotkäppchen passage (Text 2 above), we noticed that, in a natural reading of that passage, Tillich in these four sentences is abandoning the Grandmother version of the unsymbolic statement, “God is being-itself,” and adopting in its place the different unsymbolic statement, “everything we say about God is symbolic.” But this new Rotkäppchen statement is on its face and in its essence a definitive affirmation of pansymbolism: everything we say about God is symbolic!

And this means: Rotkäppchen lands us in pansymbolism and the vicious circularity that comes with it. Only on the assumption that Tillich’s ST in volume I and overall will work on a pansymbolist basis could Rotkäppchen be accepted. But I hope I have made it clear that such an assumption is a very serious error. Not only does Grandmother of 1951 tell us how elements of unsymbolic knowledge of the structure of being must be involved if we are to have the symbolic knowledge of God that ST seeks to propound. The following is also true, namely, that the boundary discussion of 1957—which is in the

same volume two with Rotkäppchen, and follows her, and is in the same paragraph with her—spells out in detail how unsymbolic knowledge of God as well as symbolic knowing of God will be jointly operative in the self-transcendent or ecstatic idea of God, beyond naturalism and supranaturalism, which Tillich intends his ST to put before the public (ST II, 9-10).

*2. Second mistaken assumption: That the Rotkäppchen sentences are coherent enough to command respect as a serious, thought-through proposal on Tillich’s part*

Neither this second argument nor the third belongs to the genre of argumentation that could be conclusive. Nevertheless, we see in them the kinds of arguments, especially when two or more are taken together, that establish presumptions about a text that will gain respect for it and cause us to sit up nights taking it seriously. Or not.

In this argument I want to deal with the presence in Rotkäppchen of two problematic phenomena. The first of these phenomena is an apparent non sequitur between sentences 4 and 2. The following Text 7 gives us at least part of each of the four sentences in Rotkäppchen. Tillich says that the

[Text 7] point at which a non-symbolic assertion about God must be made...[is] the statement that everything we say about God is symbolic. Such a statement is an assertion about God which itself is not symbolic. Otherwise we would fall into a circular argument.

Tillich shows awareness here that, when we engage in a theology like his, we must avoid a certain problem, the circular argument, and that it requires a non-symbolic statement to rescue us from that problem. So far so good. However, in sentence 2 he somehow fails to recognize that the particular unsymbolic statement he calls upon to rescue us from this ill (“everything we say about God is symbolic”) is a bald statement of the very ill that we need to be rescued from, namely, pansymbolism—the view that generates and is equivalent to the vicious circle that we are trying to escape from! Pity us if the savior Tillich provides for us is the devil we flee!

Given the size of this non sequitur in a text so brief, I think we may fairly say that the brief Rotkäppchen statement is incoherent. The fact that Tillich has left it standing implies considerable inattentiveness upon his part. It may explain this inattentiveness, though it does not make it any less, if it was the shadow side of his being fascinated with

something glitzy about sentences 2 and 3. I shall come back to that hypothesis in the next argument.

And thus I come to the second problematic phenomenon in Rotkäppchen, namely, the paradox of self-reference it contains. Rotkäppchen tells us (sentence 3) that her new unsymbolic statement “is an assertion about God which itself is not symbolic.” However, it is not a statement about God. It is a statement about statements. And if we rephrase it to be about God, or if we just understand it to be about God, a funny thing happens. Though it is supposed to be our one new *unsymbolic* statement, and though it cannot do its “rescue job” unless it is unsymbolic, it suddenly becomes symbolic! Why? Because of what it itself *says*: it becomes symbolic because it says that everything we say about God *is symbolic*, and we have just made it or declared it to be a statement about God!

To allay the problem of this self-referential paradox, we could put Rotkäppchen into a meta-language or a second-order language, a language in which one talks about a more basic language. I believe Foster mentions this (*Bulletin* 37, 1, page 4). But that would make it final and definitive that Rotkäppchen is a statement about statements, not about God.

Or, again, Foster has suggested that the alleged paradox in which Tillich landed himself is no more off-putting than the Cretan’s statement that “Cretans always lie,” or the confession that “We are all sinners, and the truth is not in us” (*ibid*). Although Foster’s strategies may help to allay Rotkäppchen’s self-referential problems for some, I do not derive help from them.

I conclude that it is not a safe assumption that, in Rotkäppchen, we are dealing with a thought-through proposal on Tillich’s part. It is even questionable whether Rotkäppchen possesses enough assertoric coherence on the key point to posit *any* alternative to the unsymbolic statement about God that Grandmother gives us. If it is too much to say that these four sentences are “an incoherent mess”—and it is too much, but not by a lot—it is also too much to say that they are “Tillich first class,” such that we should salute them and fall in line with them. Holding them at arm’s length or keeping them on a tight leash seems more like it. And I say those things not out of anti-Tillich bias, but as one who wants Tillich’s magnum opus to be able to flourish in all its splendor.

### 3. Third mistaken assumption: That in Rotkäppchen

*Tillich set out to retract, or at least to qualify, what he said in 1951 about “the one unsymbolic statement”*

It is true that, in reading Rotkäppchen’s four sentences, one gains the rather clear and strong impression that the following “story” is true. I shall call it the “familiar story” about why Tillich wrote Rotkäppchen. It goes like this: Tillich is assuming and virtually asserting in those sentences that theology needs and possesses only one unsymbolic statement about God. Whereas Grandmother said this statement is “God is being-itself,” Tillich is retracting that statement and replacing it with the statement that “everything we say about God is symbolic.” Or, if Tillich is not saying all that, he is at least proposing to qualify the Grandmother provisions in some significant way. And further, so goes this familiar story, Tillich *deliberately set out* to accomplish these things in writing Rotkäppchen.

However, there are at least three kinds of reasons for dismissing the familiar story I have just told as an untenable assumption. (1) First, there are the incoherency problems in Rotkäppchen, which I have examined in argument 2. They prove nothing directly, of course. In writing Rotkäppchen, Tillich could have set out to make the all the changes noted in the familiar story and made the incoherent botch of the job that we have detailed in the preceding argument. But these incoherencies do at least prompt us to take a long, skeptical look.

(2) What is literally said and not said in Rotkäppchen, carefully parsed, falls decidedly short of nailing down the details of the familiar story. For example, Tillich does not say there is only one unsymbolic statement about God. He asks “whether there is a point” where such a statement is to be made, and he answers, “there is such a point, namely, the statement that everything we say about God is symbolic.” To say there is such a point is not to say there is only one such.

Further, if Tillich was retracting the Grandmother statement, he could have said he was doing so, but he said nothing at all about that. (Lest I be unclear: I am not claiming to prove my side of the argument here. I am seeking to show that the other side is not required by what is literally said and not said in Rotkäppchen.)

(3) Step by step, we are showing that the familiar story is an unprovable possibility, a “likely story,” as it could be called. In order to gainsay it with just the right amount of force, I want to counterbalance it with an *alternative* likely story. Accord-

ing to the “likely story” that I shall propose, Tillich did not set out to write Rotkäppchen in order to retract or qualify Grandmother. My likely story, which I believe is at least as likely as the familiar one, runs as follows.

In a 13-paragraph section of the Introduction to ST II, Tillich presents his ecstatic or self-transcending idea of God. At the end of paragraph 12, he winds up on an enthusiastic note, saying that everything religion says about such a God must be ecstatic, expressed in symbols. Once that is said, it appears to have triggered in Tillich the warnings he internalized long before regarding the need to avoid the vicious circle in our symbolizations of God. He remembered that the theologian needs an unsymbolic statement to head off such a danger.

Thus, at the beginning of the very next paragraph, paragraph 13 of that section, Tillich drafted what I believe was a hasty version of a nonsymbolic statement in the first two sentences of Rotkäppchen. I believe it was hasty because of the incoherencies we have seen in Rotkäppchen.

I hypothesize further, however, that Tillich did not see the problems squirming around in the depths of that innocent-looking statement, and that one reason he did not see them is that the statement he had drafted fascinated him. It looked like a genuine discovery. It must have seemed foolproof. I can visualize his dwelling a moment on his discovery as he wrote the third sentence in Rotkäppchen: “Such a statement is an assertion about God which itself is not symbolic.” Of course, as we’ve seen, it wasn’t about God, and it wouldn’t remain unsymbolic if it ever *became* an assertion about God.

But this, so my story goes, was one of several things Tillich did not see. This entire bundle of doctrine had been precipitated in his thinking only at a late point in his intellectual development, mostly by American philosophers, and I doubt that Tillich was always comfortably in command of it.

In any case, Tillich decided to risk his new “insight.” He was not confident enough of himself to disturb in any way what he had laid down in Grandmother. And—since I do not think he believed there was only one unsymbolic statement about God, anyway—I doubt that he thought his new unsymbolic statement contradicted the Grandmother version, anyway. Thus he retracted nothing, and said nothing about the Grandmother contentions.

The new version of the one unsymbolic statement seemed so promising, however, that Tillich was willing to put it into ST II, perhaps as a bit of a

trial balloon. Or better, he put it into ST II in order to learn whether his critics would see more problems in it than he did. They did.

Now the point of this third argument is to say that I do not believe one is entitled to the assumption that Tillich set out in Rotkäppchen to retract or to qualify what he had said in Grandmother. I believe my suggested account of what prompted Tillich to write Rotkäppchen is at least as likely as is the familiar story. But the overriding conclusion here is that I do not think we know.

**4. Fourth mistaken assumption: That in locating being-itself on the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary, Tillich made it unable to be unsymbolic or to be asserted unsymbolically of God**

Durwood Foster believes that when Tillich made the alleged change in 1957 in Rotkäppchen, one of the things he did was to locate being-itself on the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary from 1957 on, and this meant that being-itself could no longer be used unsymbolically, as in saying unsymbolically that God is being-itself.

Thus in his third and last contribution to our debate in the *Bulletin*, Durwood says that, when Tillich put being-itself on the boundary, Tillich *demoted* “being-itself.” Durwood means that Tillich demoted being-itself from the status he gave it in the Grandmother passage: Tillich demoted it “to a border status, both symbolic and unsymbolic, more or less on a par with several other expressions such as ‘the unconditional.’” (*Bulletin*, 37, 3, p. 4) He explains further:

Prof. James entirely ignores...Tillich’s statement that, “If we say God is the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time.” [Tillich] further elucidates that these predications “precisely designate the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide.” How could anyone assert more definitely that they will not serve as the one un-symbolic statement? (*Bulletin* 37, 1, p. 4)

I am baffled as to why Durwood draws the conclusion he does here. I cite much more fully just below the text from which he is drawing (my Text 8), and we see in that text that Tillich three times, in sentences 11, 12, and 15, emphasizes the fact that being-itself, along with the infinite and the unconditional, are notions that are simultaneously predicable of God both unsymbolically and symbolically.

Thus, it simply cannot be that Rotkämpchen ruled out the *unsymbolic* status of the assertion that God is being-itself—not when Tillich says, in the very same paragraph, that we human beings must make that very statement (sentence 9), and that we must make it in an unsymbolic manner, as part of our quest for God. Here now is the fuller text:

[Text 8, sentence numbers showing] <sup>8</sup>[T]he state of being ultimately concerned, a state which is universally human, whatever the content of the concern may be [...] <sup>9</sup>[...] is the point at which we must speak non-symbolically about God, but in terms of a quest for him. <sup>10</sup>In the moment, however, in which we describe the character of this point or in which we try to formulate that for which we ask, a combination of symbolic with non-symbolic elements occurs. <sup>11</sup>If we say that God is the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time. <sup>12</sup>These terms precisely designate the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide. <sup>13</sup>Up to this point, every statement is non-symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). <sup>14</sup>Beyond this point every statement is symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). <sup>15</sup>The point itself is both non-symbolic and symbolic (ST II, 9-10).

In conclusion, I submit the following. Durwood's contention that Rotkämpchen retracts, or that Rotkämpchen replaces her Grandmother, will not stand. It was only those piggy assumptions, all of them made of straw, which made it *sound* as though she did. But the big, bad wolf has now blown all these assumptions away. *Grandmother still reigns.*

**DOUBT, COURAGE, AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF REDEMPTION  
WITHIN GLOBALIZATION:  
COMBATING ENTRENCHMENT**

VERNA MARINA EHRET

**B**ecause of the effects of globalization, there is tremendous difficulty in coming to a religious understanding of human fulfillment. The world we face today appears to be one of extremes. On the one hand, the hyper-theism of fundamentalism can lead to the entrenching of specific beliefs into a meta-narrative to the point of idolatry that poses genuine risks to the human future.<sup>1</sup> Redemption for funda-

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<sup>1</sup> ST I, 62; Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism," in F. Ernest Johnson, ed., *Religious Symbolism* (New York: Harper, 1955), 108.

<sup>2</sup> Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 333-34; hereafter TPT.

<sup>3</sup> *North American Paul Tillich Society Bulletin*, vol 37, no. 3, page 3; hereafter *Bulletin*.

<sup>4</sup> Robison Brown James, *The Symbolic Knowledge of God in the Theology of Paul Tillich* (Ph. D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1965), chapter five.

<sup>5</sup> I have worked this out in detail in an incomplete, unpublished article in my files that I was unable to cut down to a size small enough to be included in the *Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*. It is also relevant that Tillich republished his 1928 symbolism article or its English translation about a dozen times virtually throughout the rest of his life, up to 1961.

mentalism, as some see it, becomes redemption from a world that has become hostile to Truth. In this narrative the best one can do to live in the world is insulate oneself through either withdrawal from or domination of the world until one reaches one's full human potential in the life to come. In opposition to this narrative is the over-humanization of post-modernism. This over-humanization can lead to a matrix of contextual narratives. Redemption becomes the redemption from redemption, from the need for a meta-narrative of redemption. There is a constant risk of the entrenchment of these extreme positions. Yet we are not forced to choose between these paths.

Redemption can be understood as freedom from bondage to sin in order to allow human beings to realize their full human potential—to live good hu-

man lives. The question is: what might one mean by freedom, bondage, sin, and human potential? How one understands these ideas reflects what one thinks it means to be a good human being—for oneself, for others, and for the world. How one understands redemption will affect one's understanding of responsibility to others in the world. I argue that realizing our full human potential and living a full human life cannot happen in a vacuum—locked into rigid understandings of the world—but it happens in relationship with and responsibility to others. While the focus of this essay is the way narratives of redemption become entrenched, the goal is to point toward a path out of this entrenchment.

Using the idea of courage as found in Paul Tillich, it becomes possible to identify alternative narratives of redemption from those of fundamentalism and postmodernism. Tillich's presentation of the courage to be as oneself, to doubt and challenge beliefs in order to seek what centers oneself, and the courage to be as a part, to belong to a community larger than oneself through which one can understand and engage the world, are the tools for constructing this alternative narrative. Tillich is careful to warn us that the courage to be is not a matter of choosing one path or the other, but rather of living in the tension of both, and in that process to realize one's full humanity through the courage of transcendence.<sup>2</sup> The dialectical engagement of the extremes through the discussion of courage illuminates this third path of dialectical mediation achieved through Tillich's full understanding of the courage to be.

We know ourselves by the stories we tell and how those individual stories both fit into and shape the narratives of our lives. These narratives are the worldview by which we interpret and engage the world. This is not, of course, a new idea. Augustine's *Confessions* are precisely such a layered narrative of redemption: he is, first, telling his stories to God; second, telling them as an extended activity of reflexive thinking about his own thinking in order to understand himself as a religious person; and third, creating an extended narrative to be used as a model for others to achieve the centered self he has achieved through his conversion process.<sup>3</sup>

There are three types of narrative identity at work in the unfolding understanding of humanity through redemption. The first is meta-narrative, where a particular narrative is seen as both universal and true in an absolute way. The second is the contextual narrative, which is the recognition of the dependency of any narrative on its context, the com-

munity and individuals from which the narrative arises. Finally, there is the trans-contextual narrative, where there is an acknowledged tension between context dependency and the notion of certain qualities that transcend particular narrative while always being expressed within the language of a community. Where the courage to be as a part is the understanding of human fulfillment in meta-narrative and the courage to be as oneself is the understanding of that fulfillment in contextual narrative (or the narrative of abandoning narrative), the fullness of the courage to be—as the continual process of redemption of the person in and for the world—unfolds in a trans-contextual narrative that adds the courage of transcendence to the dialectical tension of the other two. These narratives are continually unfolding sacred histories—stories of humanity in relation to the divine—which are deeply affected by globalization, another idea that is very difficult to pin down yet affects us daily.

In his brief text, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, Manfred Steger distinguishes between globalization and globality, where globalization is the process of the ever increasing interdependence of the world in a multitude of ways, and globality is the condition of interconnection that currently exists.<sup>4</sup> Globalization as a process is continually unfolding, and has had a profound impact on both the fundamentalist and postmodern mind. It has, as Steger points out, created in people a global imaginary that is rapidly replacing their national imaginary.<sup>5</sup> People's self-understanding and worldview is not limited to national identity as developed in the modern period, but is increasingly connected to global identity—an awareness of being a member of the world community. There is, however, significant resistance to this global imaginary from those who argue for care of the nation, or of sub-communities within it, above other individuals, communities, and nations—even to the detriment of these others.

Globalization and globality, then, are the process and condition under which religion exists today and to which it must continually respond in promoting fulfilled human lives. Globalization at once threatens identity by making infinite possibilities available with no way to choose between them, and becomes an opportunity to think differently about redemption. Globalization aids the development of both fundamentalism and postmodernism in responding to the challenges and opportunities of globalization. But it is these very challenges and opportunities that can lead to the extremes of over-humanization and hy-

per-theism through focus on a single aspect of courage rather than the dialectical engagement of all aspects of courage.

With globalization come the three anxieties laid out by Tillich in *The Courage to Be*: fate and death, emptiness and meaninglessness, and guilt and condemnation.<sup>6</sup> Courage, basically, is the courage of being in the face of non-being. Each type of anxiety, then, is both awareness and threat of non-being. The anxiety of fate and death is ontic anxiety, the fear of the contingency of one's life (lack of freedom) and the inescapable reality that we will all die.<sup>7</sup> The anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness (arguably still the dominant concern of people today) is spiritual anxiety, the anxiety of relative and absolute threats to ultimate concern, particularly in the face of the multiplicity of religious voices globalization makes available to us.<sup>8</sup> Tillich has argued in the *Dynamics of Faith* that faith as ultimate concern is the centered act of a whole personality.<sup>9</sup> The loss of ultimate concern, then, is loss of oneself, one's identity and possibilities for flourishing. Doubt of faith can lead to this emptiness and even meaninglessness. And yet, as we shall see, for Tillich doubt is an integral part of faith and the courage to be. We cannot escape anxiety, and the desire to do so leads to pathological anxiety that becomes a quest for certainty and ends in the idolatrous faith of raising finite realities to infinite status, making belief themselves ultimate rather than pointers to ultimate reality.<sup>10</sup> Globalization's challenge to concrete beliefs makes the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness a powerful motivator for the radicalization of fundamentalism. Finally, the anxiety of guilt and condemnation is moral anxiety. Tillich says, "In every act of moral self-affirmation man contributes to the fulfillment of his destiny, to the actualization of what he potentially is."<sup>11</sup> The anxiety of guilt and condemnation, then, is the anxiety of not having lived up to one's full potential while in morality itself that actualization of oneself appears to unfold. One might look, for example, to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, where those who see the kingdom of God are those who have cared for people in need.<sup>12</sup> Yet, the constant anxiety of not having done enough hangs over us.

If redemption is freedom from bondage in order to realize one's full human potential, anxiety can be seen as the basic bondage of humanity and courage as the path of redemption. Ontic anxiety can be overcome by the courage to be as a part, the affirmation of life that comes from belonging to a group.<sup>13</sup>

The willingness to accept belonging—to be a part of the symbols, myths, and language of a community rather than seek a radical freedom from belonging—does not eliminate ontic anxiety, but does give it a manageable context to understand it. Spiritual anxiety can be overcome in the courage to be as oneself, to embrace doubt as a necessary part of faith.<sup>14</sup> The Greek phrase *mathein pathein*, to learn is to suffer, beautifully illustrates this idea. Doubt challenges deeply held notions and, as they are challenged, anxiety causes pain. Yet, the challenging allows for continued thriving of the spiritual life rather than its reification. Finally, moral anxiety is overcome by the courage of transcendence or to accept acceptance—to be aware of human fallibility and yet not be rendered impotent by it.<sup>15</sup> In each case, courage is the path to living a full life, but there are pitfalls in the first two types of courage. The courage to be as a part separated from the courage to be as oneself—the primary expression of the hyper-theism of fundamentalism—and the courage to be as oneself separated from the courage to be as a part—the primary expression of over-humanization in postmodernism—can distort the redemption of courage through extreme one-sidedness and the entrenchment of these positions. The fullness of courage combats these positions of entrenchment through the dialogue between them and expresses redemption fully in Tillich's threefold character of salvation as seen in the *Systematic Theology*: a) salvation as participation in the New Being (regeneration), b) salvation as acceptance of the New Being (justification), and c) salvation as transformation by the New Being (sanctification).<sup>16</sup>

### Fundamentalism

The hyper-theism of fundamentalism responds to both modernity and post-modernity in the creation of a meta-narrative of redemption to combat all forms of anxiety brought on by globalization and globality. In the introduction to *The Fundamentalism Project*, Martin Marty and Scott Appleby attempt to provide basic parameters for the idea of fundamentalism. Marty and Appleby make use of a framework developed in H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*.<sup>17</sup> There he identifies several ways in which Christian groups have responded to the world, related to the "sacred" and "profane." Adapting Niebuhr's scheme and *The Fundamentalism Project* to this essay, a spectrum can be seen from withdrawal from the larger society on the one hand to efforts at dominion of society on the other. The center, and the

position that would seem to best characterize the position of many so-called “Mainline” Protestant churches, is adaptation. In this middle position, the dictates of a modern and secular society are not seen as antithetical to religious life and worldview, but rather as mutually engaging. There are many variations on the extent of the adaptation, but the broadening of tolerance for difference not only in religious views but also in lifestyles, is often seen as the awakening of the church to a larger and valuable world to which it needs to respond. However, it is precisely this adaptation to a modern world originating in the Enlightenment and carried into contemporary churches, that fundamentalism has seen and continues to see as the greatest threat to Christianity.

Adaptation is a threat because it calls into question the absolute exclusivity of the Christian message, that, “No one comes to the Father except through me.”<sup>18</sup> What comes out clearly here is the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, but rather than embracing doubt, doubt is the enemy. This anxiety is conquered in a radical way through the courage to be as a part. The tendency in fundamentalism to withdraw from society does not mean complete disengagement, however. Rather, broadly speaking, Marty and Appleby define fundamentalism through what I describe as an attitude of withdrawal-dominance, expressed by Marty and Appleby as fighting back.

*Fighting Back.* It is no insult to fundamentalism to see them as militant, whether in the use of words and ideas or ballots or, in extreme cases, bullets. Fundamentalists see themselves as militant. This means that the first word to employ in respect to them is that they are reactive (though not always reactionary). These essays make clear a feature which in our inquiries to date have struck us with surprising force and have appeared with astonishing frequency: fundamentalists begin as traditionalists who perceive some challenge or threat to their core identity, both social and personal. They are not frivolous, nor do they deal with peripheral assaults. If they lose on the central issues, they believe they lose everything. They react; they fight back with great innovative power.<sup>19</sup>

In the most extreme forms of this fighting back, one finds the rise of religious nationalism. Mark Jürgensmeyer has studied this phenomenon for years and has created a framework for understanding this tendency. There is a four-fold process at work. First there is the despair over secular nationalism.<sup>20</sup> Here

the concern may come from the idea that the community is struggling and the reason is the lack of religious influence guiding the nation. The globalizing power of the internet means that in a few minutes one can see this move through group websites, news, and blogs from Dominion Theology, Reconstruction Theology, and the Christian Identity movement to name a few. Second is the move to seeing politics in a religious way. Again the internet—news, campaign pages, etc.—shows how Tom DeLay, Newt Gingrich, Sarah Palin, Rick Perry, Rick Santorum, and a host of other politicians have made this move in their political agendas. The third stage is identifying the enemy and seeing the world in terms of a cosmic war between good and evil. From the Westboro Baptist Church, to the rise in Islamophobia, and increased violence against Latinos in an anti-immigration backlash in the Tea Party movement, this demonizing has grown and become entrenched in American society. The final stage is the inevitable conflict, whether with words or acts of violence. The Southern Poverty Law Center tracks acts of violence in the name of religion and makes available its disturbing discoveries of the radicalization of hypertheism.

One of the epicenters of anti-abortion extremism seems to be in North Carolina, where the FBI in September arrested Justin Carl Moose, the self-professed “Christian counterpart to Osama bin Laden,” for conspiring to bomb an abortion clinic. Moose told a confidential FBI informant he was the organizer of a “phantom cell” for the Army of God, a theoretical group (no real structure is known to exist) composed of those who have attacked abortion providers...

Moose’s words to an online sympathizer left little doubt about whether he might follow through with his threats: “As far as I’m concerned, nothing is off limits to stop abortion. Anything and everything goes. I have learned a lot from the Muslim [sic] terrorists and have no problem using their tactics.”<sup>21</sup>

Yet, once this boiling point of threat is reached, which Tillich would describe as idolatrous religion, the ultimate goal is peace. The drive within these movements is the possibility of living well as human beings, but the narrowness of the vision about what that means, the replacement of ultimate reality with beliefs about ultimate reality, obliterate courage. As Tillich points out,

The other criterion of the truth of a symbol of faith is that it expresses the ultimate which is

really ultimate. In other words, that it is not idolatrous. In the light of this criterion the history of faith as a whole stands under judgment. The weakness of all faith is the ease with which it becomes idolatrous. The human mind, Calvin has said, is a continuously working factory of idols. This is true of all types of faith, and even if Protestant Christianity is considered as the point in which the different types converge, it is open to idolatrous distortions... Every type of faith has the tendency to elevate its concrete symbols to absolute validity. The criterion of the truth of faith, therefore, is that it implies an element of self-negation. That symbol is most adequate which expresses not only the ultimate but also its own lack of ultimacy.<sup>22</sup>

In hyper-theism, the symbols take on ultimacy and one no longer is responding to the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness with the courage to be as a part. One has become a part of a mindless collective, where doubt is obliterated from view and in the process a basic component of the human experience is simply ignored. One cannot live well with such blinders on. Moreover, one becomes a threat to the larger society. Yet, for many of these extreme movements, the fear is so strong that their own belonging to a set of principles laid out by a clear community simply trumps the right of those outside it to flourish.

Fundamentalism is fighting against that which threatens its core identity and in that fight the core identity itself arises. The sacred canopy of Christianity, under which they fight, houses the central role of salvation from the world through the personal relationship with Christ. Fundamentalists are fighting for a view of the world shaped by the Great Commission and the imminence of the Rapture.<sup>23</sup> The fighting itself becomes a part of the work of redemption in focusing the understanding of God's will for the people and in reshaping the world to promote the work of redemption. Embedded in each of these categories is "fighting against." Fundamentalists fight against others deemed enemies both within and outside their larger tradition. Pluralism and secularism—any attitude that promotes multiple perspective—create a chaotic relativity and seemingly active opposition to a "Christian" way of life.

### Postmodernism

As with fundamentalism, postmodernism is a difficult category to define. There is a great deal of diversity within the forms of thought considered

postmodern. In an attempt to limit the voices to those most appropriate for this project it is necessary to set parameters around my use of the term, "postmodern." To do this I have employed the definition of postmodernism provided by Kevin Vanhoozer.<sup>24</sup> Vanhoozer claims that postmodernism is best understood as a condition rather than a period in time. First, postmodernity as a condition of knowledge is a state of things affecting the function of knowledge. Vanhoozer sees postmodernity as reducing the meta-narratives, appeals to universal sacred canopies, of modernity to what I have called contextual-narratives. There is a multitude of narratives about any given subject, and one chooses among them.<sup>25</sup> But in this choice, rather than seeing the narrative as the only narrative that can be told, one recognizes that a certain narrative best meets one's needs, best responds to one's elective affinities, within a marketplace of such narratives where others *could* have been chosen.

Because postmodernity deals in terms of multiple narratives that shape life, language is a central concern. According to Vanhoozer, the postmodern claim about language is that there is no non-linguistic access to the world, that context shapes meanings and understanding, and context is shaped by language. Nevertheless, while language provides the structural narratives of life, it is this radical emphasis on language that opens the door for deconstruction, as can be seen in Taylor's work. According to Vanhoozer,

*The postmodern condition thus pertains to one's awareness of the deconstructibility of all systems of meaning and truth.*

"Language" thus stands for the socially constructed order within which we think and move and have our being. Our speech and action are always already situated, and hence conditioned, by one vocabulary or another. Postmodernity is thus a linguistic or textual condition in which human beings "suffer" language...Those who get to make the distinctions [and language is an activity of making distinctions] control the social imagination and thus hold the reins of power.<sup>26</sup>

We understand the world and ourselves by means of language. But language is ambiguous, duplicitous, and can be manipulated to shape a person's reality. By revealing the connection between language and power through narrative shaping of meaning, postmodernism contributes a great deal to the critique of fundamentalism and shows why

postmodernism can be seen as a kind of dialectical move forward. Language contextualizes human being, shapes our understanding of reality. In so doing, those who shape the use and meaning of language hold power over all those who listen to them, to shape the reality of the community.

To begin the work of breaking down the barriers that subjugate difference in favor of identity, we can turn to the deconstructive work of Mark C. Taylor in *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*. Taylor turns to what could be called the four pillars of traditional theology from which fundamentalism is built: God, self, history, and book.<sup>27</sup> In these four pillars one finds the logic of identity that entrenches a worldview of conflict between “us” and “them.” The logic of identity assumes an initial unity in each of these pillars, grounded in the absolute unity and presence of God. The logic of identity claims that, “I am myself and not you. I am distinct from you.” This logic is translated to the community of the redeemed in fundamentalism, “We are redeemed and you are not. We are separate from you.” But this unity, according to Taylor, is an illusion. Multiplicity is not a threat but rather is the nature of the world into which we are thrown and the selves that we are that engage the world. Multiplicity, in postmodernism, becomes an opportunity for exploring ourselves, because it is not unity but rather difference that is primary. In the deconstruction of God, self, history, and book, Taylor unfolds an understanding of each as not one but multiple, and in that multiplicity, interconnected.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor recognizes the primordially of difference in language. Meanings are not originally single and then divided over time. Because the meaning of a particular word is provided in distinguishing it from other words, it is difference that takes priority over sameness in language.<sup>29</sup> Because we have no non-linguistic access to the world and because language as a structure of meanings can be deconstructed in this way into a multiplicity rather than a foundational edifice from which meanings are clear, the whole structure of thinking that provides a theology of redemption from the world through a logic of identity can be deconstructed.

Through Taylor and others within postmodern a/theology, the notion of narrative was challenged and appears ultimately to have been undone. But this claim of lack of referent, standard, or narrative that speaks beyond the community in Taylor becomes over-humanization. Postmodernism and the end of narrative are responses to ontic and moral anxiety

through the courage to be as oneself. Crispin Sartwell, in pressing Taylor’s over-humanization, uses the Abraham and Isaac story as a path to the end of story that leads to what he sees as liberation. What Sartwell is trying to show is that in relinquishing his telos—by being willing to sacrifice Isaac and thus the covenant—Abraham becomes himself, who he always was. In other words, the narrative narrates the loss of narrative.<sup>30</sup> But what Sartwell must also recognize is that what is happening is the loss of one type of exclusivist narrative for the sake of that narrative. In giving everything to his original life story, Abraham blows the story apart. The exclusivist story is self-destructive. But it is not the complete loss of narrative. Rather, it is the transformation of narrative. Abraham does not cease to be himself nor does he cease to have a story. In a move seemingly designed by postmodernity, the story is broken apart, and in breaking it apart, perspective is gained. Yet the narrative continues. Its thread is not lost.

There are two things at work, then, in anxiety and courage as addressed by postmodernity. The first is recognizing the danger of a single-minded teleological narrative from which one cannot diverge. Such narratives lead to self-destruction if the narrative falls apart. The second thing the Abraham moment, read through Kierkegaard and Sartwell, shows the risk of over-humanization. As Tillich points out, “The self, cut off from participation in its world, is an empty shell, a mere possibility...It gives content and for this reason it restricts his freedom to make of himself what he wants.”<sup>31</sup> In Taylor and Sartwell, there is a press for the freedom to be oneself, to choose one’s trajectory and be master of one’s context that leads to the deconstruction and loss of narrative. Yet, despite Taylor and Sartwell’s likely protests, the story is regained as the story of a person who belongs, who has an identity. Abraham was and continues to be Isaac’s father, but now his vision is expanded, his horizons are broadened. The story, though altered, does not cease to function as a part of Abraham’s self-understanding. The nature of narrative is challenged, but narrative remains. Abraham sacrifices the story he was living, but regains it. So the question is how does one sacrifice the story?

The risk of postmodernity, in the work of deconstruction and redefinition of self, is over-humanization, the egoism that leads to the loss of belonging and the capacity to make judgments about how one acts in the world because there is a loss of a universal standard. While narratives may be contextual, they are still a part of our identity and redemp-

tion. How one tells the story of the end of story creates an understanding of human beings that is profoundly contextual, but still seeks the goal of flourishing within community, a potentially universal normative claim.

Arguably, then, the story is sacrificed through discourse, or what Tillich would describe as the power of doubt within faith that will prevent faith from becoming a single-minded teleological trajectory.<sup>32</sup> There is an embracing of unintelligibility and incomprehensibility in Sartwell's work that can become a path beyond absolutizing narratives. And it is here that a return to Tillich and *The Courage to Be* become most useful in this narrative quagmire.

The purpose of this paper is to use Tillich's articulation of doubt and courage to understand the entrenchment and conflict arising in theological discussions about how one lives a life of redemption. Responsibility for others within globality and in response to globalization is a part of living well as a human being—the life of redemption. The postmodern critique of fundamentalism shows that one cannot simply dominate the other through a meta-narrative of “be like me or else.” At the same time, fundamentalism shows the importance of belonging within a community. Blending these two perspectives in connection to others will allow for the development of a new way to conceptualize and engage global responsibilities that draws on the strengths of two positions.

Based on Tillich's typology of the ontological structure of anxiety, one can argue that the form of redemption grasped by fundamentalism arises predominantly out of the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, while the form of redemption grasped by postmodernism arises out of the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. Fundamentalism sees modernity, immigration of ideologies from around the world, and secularism, as threats to *true* religion. The response is a growth in the emphatic expression of personal salvation rather than a messiah sent because God so loved the *world*. Fundamentalism clings to a redemption that emphasizes the particular and exclusive symbols of Christianity, the figure of Jesus and the second coming that will save all “good Christians” from the world. Life is meaningful because one is saved. Emptiness is staved off because one is filled with the love of Christ through one's personal relationship with Jesus. Fundamentalism is a literal and particular grasping at the concrete in order to fill the soul, to overcome feelings of emptiness caused by a chaotic world.

However, while the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness may predominate in fundamentalism, the other forms of anxiety also play a role. One can see ontic anxiety, the anxiety of fate and death, as well. There is a distinct concern in fundamentalism about death itself that is expressed in the continued conviction that the imminence of the Rapture means Jesus will come for them before they have to face death. Moreover, the moral anxiety of guilt and condemnation plays an important role in the unpacking of the idea of redemption. The world itself is riddled with guilt and condemnation. Again and again one sees such figures as Tim LaHaye, the Rev. Pat Robertson, and the Rev. Fred Phelps describing tragic events as the wrath of God. God's wrath is unleashed on a world that has embraced multiculturalism as an “anything goes,” that flies in the face of the Christian God, who responds with death and destruction.<sup>33</sup>

The drive to the personal relationship with Jesus requires a certain moral code that identifies one as saved from that wrath. Bad things that happen to the saved, however, are not the wrath of God but rather tests of faith that strengthen one's certainty of salvation.<sup>34</sup> Once one identifies oneself as a fundamentalist Christian, one who is born again, one has already escaped that wrath and has been freed of guilt and condemnation. While certain moral concerns (homosexuality, welfare, etc.)<sup>35</sup> are often used to move fundamentalists and evangelicals alike to act and believe in certain ways about social and political life, it is the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, the distance from the holy because of science, technology, rationalism, and pluralism, which is at the heart of fundamentalist concerns about redemption. Personal relationship gives meaning and fills the void of an empty life. An abstract concept such as “ground of being,” “numinous,” “feeling of absolute dependence,” or “power,” does not give comfort in a world of moral, social, and spiritual chaos. The world is complex and disordered. God in the form of Jesus is personal, accessible, the one with whom a relationship can be formed and around whom a community of like-minded people can be developed. As a result, fundamentalism clings to the community of belonging as globalization increases contact with the “other” every day, to the point of turning community-belonging into blind collectivism and hypertheism. Certainty requires fear of the other and relinquishing the freedom to doubt.<sup>36</sup>

Postmodernism, on the other hand, is motivated in its vision of redemption by the anxiety of guilt

and condemnation. We are not who we are meant to be, because human beings are not uniform but multiple, and continued efforts at uniformity stifle the difference that we are. We are united in our very multiplicity of perspective. The attempts to drown that multiplicity by the centralization of religious truth within “identity and community-creating” theology is absolutist and complete, which is unconscionable under the conditions of fallibility, plurality, and globalization. Deconstruction allows for dissenting voices, but these dissenting voices suffer from the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. There is guilt and condemnation directed at oneself in so far as one is complicit regarding the destructive aspects of globalization. There is also guilt and condemnation regarding fundamentalism that, from the perspective of postmodernism, increases the guilt and condemnation of destructive absolutist ideological globalization. Dissenting voices against absolutism are the response to this guilt and condemnation. These voices struggle to affirm their community in such a way that other communities are affirmed as well without falling into meaningless relativism. They embrace contextual-narratives and “small truths” of everyday life, but the fear of the destructive power of absolutist language robs postmodernism of a sense of belonging in community.

Within communities, anxiety can be kept under control and courage can continue to be exerted as power of being as long as the structures of meaning, power, belief, and order do not disintegrate. Human beings are social. We come to ourselves in relation to others. We act for justice in the context of social life. We critique those actions through self-reflection and by maintaining the power of doubt. But when this power becomes *the* standard by which life is judged, the structures of society are destroyed. In our efforts to speak to humanity, we lose the power of actualizing our ideas. In other words, redemption for the world requires maintaining a sense of belonging made possible through structures of meaning, and these are maintained through narrative.

While the crisis of faith presented by a modern world spurs the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness in fundamentalism, the crisis of moral and spiritual absolutism, which has no awareness outside those perceived absolutes, spurs the anxiety of guilt and condemnation in postmodernism. In turn, postmodernism spurs a secondary crisis of meaninglessness and emptiness. Placed in dialogue with each other, the two seem to form an infinite loop as a constant need for one type of courage or the other as

an expression of redemption in globalization. Courage provides the mode of translating redemption into action as the expression of power of being. What is required is a theology of redemption that speaks both to participation and doubt in a world shaped by the simultaneous globalization of sameness and difference.

These reflections on Tillich’s notion of courage in relation to fundamentalism and postmodernism not only provide tools for understanding the strengths of the position of each in regard to redemption, but also for illuminating their weaknesses. Redemption is redemption of the human person, not just the mind, not just the spirit, not just the body, but the whole of human being in its integration with life itself. The competition between fundamentalism and postmodernism creates a mutual entrenchment that calls for a third option. The thrust of Tillich’s work in responding to ontological crises is the balance of the forms of courage. This courage is the courage of transcendence. Tillich’s threefold understanding of courage becomes a trans-contextual narrative of redemption culminating in the God above the God of theism. As Tillich says:

Absolute faith, or the state of being grasped by the God beyond God, is not a state which appears beside other states of the mind. It never is something separated and definite, an event which could be isolated and described. It is always a movement in, with, and under other states of the mind. It is the situation on the boundary of man’s possibilities. It is the boundary. Therefore it is both the courage of despair and the courage in and above every courage. It is not a place where one can live, it is without the safety of the words and concepts, it is without a name, a church, a cult, a theology. But it is moving in the depth of all of them. It is the power of being, in which they participate and of which they are fragmentary expressions.<sup>37</sup>

The symbols and language of religion are significant, but doubt is not the enemy of redemption. Courage to be as a part without courage to be as oneself is destructive of otherness, asserting itself only when the other is denied and overcome. Courage to be as oneself without the courage to be as a part lacks content and context, a place from which to engage the world. Taken by itself, the courage to be as oneself is a potentiality that craves but cannot find actuality. In the expression of these two forms of courage in fundamentalism and postmodernism, one sees how the courage of each becomes distorted

when they are kept apart. Each is expressing a primordial aspect of our humanity, but in being separated they become distorted. Taken alone, each negates the other. Held together the two forms of courage can be mutually informing. The possibility, even necessity, of holding these two together points toward a theology of redemption for the world that overcomes the variety of forms of bondage to anxiety found in globalization.

The courage of transcendence does not negate the other forms of courage, nor does it eliminate their tension. What it does is provide the capacity to transcend their limitations. The trans-contextual narrative that can be built from these is the idea that contextual narratives are integrated. They live not against each other but with each other, creating both a sense of belonging in community and a capacity to reach beyond one's particular community to the "other." The trans-contextual narrative of the courage of transcendence is the dynamic nature of the life of faith, that one lives within a set of symbols, but that recognition of the limitation of those symbols, their finitude, allows one to live with and feel responsibility for the flourishing of not only oneself and one's community, but also the whole of humanity in the context of globalization and globality.

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<sup>1</sup> David Klemm and William Schweiker, *Religion and the Human Future: An Essay on Theological Humanism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 155-156.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. M. Boulding (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009),

<sup>5</sup> Steger, *Globalization*, 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 40-54.

<sup>7</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 42-45.

<sup>8</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 46-51.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper One, 1957), 4-9.

<sup>10</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics*, 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 52.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 25: 31-46.

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 86-112.

<sup>14</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 113-138.

<sup>15</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 155-177.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Volume II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 176-180

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<sup>17</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Collins), 1951.

<sup>18</sup> John 14: 6.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, "The Fundamentalism Project: A User's Guide" in *The Fundamentalism Project: Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), ix.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Jürgensmeyer, "The Global Rise of Religious Nationalism," in *Religions/Globalizations: Theories and Cases* ed. Dwight N. Hopkins et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 66-83.

<sup>21</sup> Ryan Lenz, "Intelligence Briefs" *Intelligence Report* 141 (2011): 5.

<sup>22</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics*, 111-112.

<sup>23</sup> Thadeus Coreno, "Fundamentalism as a Class Culture" *Sociology of Religion* 63:3 (2002), 337-338.

<sup>24</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, "Theology and the condition of postmodernity: a report on knowledge (of God)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Vanhoozer, "Theology and the condition of postmodernity," 10.

<sup>26</sup> Vanhoozer, "Theology and the condition of postmodernity," 13.

<sup>27</sup> Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern Altheology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, *Erring*, 152.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, *Erring*, 48-49.

<sup>30</sup> Crispin Sartwell, *End of Story* (: SUNY Press, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 151.

<sup>32</sup> Tillich, *Dynamics*, 1957.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example the website of the Westboro Baptist Church, <http://www.godhatesfags.com/>.

<sup>34</sup> Tim and Beverly LaHaye, "Christian Children Persecuted in America" *Fundamentalist Journal* 8 (1989): 51.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, the ministry of Pat Robertson, <http://www.patroberson.com/index.asp>.

<sup>36</sup> See Rev. Phelps' website [www.godhatesfags.org](http://www.godhatesfags.org) and Nancy Ammerman, *Bible Believers: fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New York: Rutgers, 1987).

<sup>37</sup> Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 188-189.

**ANALYTICAL REPORT ON PAPERS  
DELIVERED AT TWO TILlich MEETINGS  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
29–30 OCTOBER 2010<sup>1</sup>**

ROB JAMES, EDITOR, LOYE ASHTON,  
CHARLES FOX, RONALD MACLENNAN,  
AND JOHN STARKEY<sup>2</sup>

On Friday and Saturday, 29-30 October 2010, the Annual Meetings of the two main Tillich organizations in America took place in Atlanta, Georgia. On Friday, Friday night, and again on Saturday morning, the North American Paul Tillich Society held five sessions, counting the Society's Annual Banquet. An aggregate of seventeen papers were heard in these five sessions. Except for the banquet—which took place in a nearby restaurant—each of the five sessions was held either in the Hyatt or in the Marriott Hotel, two downtown hotels directly across the street from each other. In these sessions, attendance ranged from 25 to 40 persons. Fifty people gathered for the banquet.

On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, the Tillich Group of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) conducted its two sessions, both in the Marriott. Thirty-five and 45 persons attended the two sessions, respectively. Those present heard nine papers at the Saturday session, and another five on Sunday.

Although the papers are numbered 1-26 below, papers 10-26 actually preceded papers 1-9. The chronological order of the two organization's sessions is here reversed. On the calendar, the Society's sessions always precede those of the AAR. For the sake of fairness, however, in some years this report reverses that order. Most of the papers reviewed below have appeared or will appear in *The Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society*, either in volume 37 (2011) or in volume 38 (2012).<sup>3</sup>

**First Session of the AAR Tillich Group, Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM**  
*Tillich and New Directions in Science and Theology*

1. Samuel M. Powell, Point Loma Nazarene University, "Tillich's Theology and Cognitive Science: The Prospects for Theological Anthropology." Reviewed by John Starkey.

This rich and complex paper covers a good deal of ground well. I summarize by imposing from out-

side a past, present, and future grid. For the past, Powell reviews Tillich's relation to Freudian depth psychology, how Freud's de-centering of consciousness dove-tailed with Tillich's insistence that sin and its roots lie far beneath the typical, conventional, surface level of Protestant moralizing. For the present, Powell articulates how current evolutionary psychology can serve a similar function. For the future, Powell is concerned that we get straight what is and is not empirical in psychology, what is and is not methodical, and what can and cannot be used for theology.

I will not rehearse Powell's reading of Tillich's dialectical relation to Freud—his alliance with Freud over the retrieval of the irrational and the unconscious, and his acknowledgement that Freud affirms scientism in his theorizing, even while Freud fights against modern humanistic versions of what is, at base, semi-Pelagianism.

More important here is his creative work on evolutionary psychology. Powell shows how this psychology de-centers consciousness for our day even more than Tillich's Freud did. It shows how our cognitive functions are more "an ensemble of evolved functions" than elements in an easily centered and integrated self. Conversely, Powell sees in this psychology a Tillichian refusal to bifurcate the human into the material and the spiritual. Putting the two together, Powell argues that Tillich's Schellingian vision of the self as "a harmony of contrasting forces" can be explicated by an evolutionary psychology that shows just how difficult it is to get down to and influence our most anciently evolved behaviors—yet just how necessary it is to do this. That salvation happens in the unconscious is Powell's Tillichian leitmotif. What is at issue ultimately is precisely salvation, not health methodically achieved. We must struggle for and work out—but in the end must participate in and receive—a relation between evolution and spirit.

Tillich would have cheered.

2. Ryan T. O'Leary, University of Iowa, "Being and Gaia: Seeking Resources toward a Vocabulary for Naturalistic Theology." Reviewed by Loye Ashton.

O'Leary undertakes an ambitious and creative task: to reinterpret James Lovelock's well-known and long debated theory from the 1970s, the "Gaia Hypothesis." He uses a Tillichian analysis to see how the Gaia model may enhance a natural theology that is both ecologically sophisticated and philoso-

phically coherent. His first move identifies the points of commonality between the Gaia model and Tillich. He does this both through Tillich's understanding of God as being-itself, the ground of the structure of being, and through Tillich's description of the divine life as a religious symbol. That symbol points to the dynamism, activity, and "interplay" of the structural elements of being. Just as the structure of being is dialectical, so also are the processes of life, and, for this reason, the structure of God. At least this is the case insofar as we are speaking of the *living* God, that is, the God involved dialectically in finite being as its source.

In employing Tillich to rethink Gaia, O'Leary wants to avoid the purely "reductive naturalism" of materialist mytho-environmentalism. He wants at the same time to offer more traditional eco-theologies the chance to take seriously once again the symbolic power of the Gaia principle. This is a power for reimagining how the divine life is both constituted by, and transcends, the natural givenness of creation that confronts us in the dialectic of ontological ground-structure dynamism. Here O'Leary makes some compelling comparisons between the way the dual symbols of Gaia for Lovelock et al., and "the divine life" for Tillich, can find common ground in their processive, active participation in the structures of being, as the latter drives toward creative self-manifestation, self-transcendence, and self-realization. It is not clear in the end that the Gaia principle can accommodate, as fully as Tillich's view of the divine life can, the presence of the infinite within the finite. That question, however, is one to be interrogated in further study of this highly suggestive pairing.

3. J. Patrick Woolley, University of Oxford, "Tillich's Critique of Einstein and the Struggle with Natural Theology: Geometry of Nature and the Finite-Infinite Relation." The author of this paper declined to have it reviewed for this report.

4. Adam Pryor, Graduate Theological Union, "Tillichian Teleodynamics: An Examination of the Multidimensional Unity of Emergent Life." Reviewed by Rob James.

This is a most promising paper that—perhaps with one change—will constitute a valuable contribution to studies on the relation between theology and science. I first describe the task Pryor undertook, and then say how I think a misstep was made, and why Tillich's thought can be hard to follow at that

point.

Pryor uses the method of Richard Russell called "Creative Mutual Interaction" according to which a Scientific Research Program and a Theological Research Program may each influence the other in heuristic ways. His chosen theologian is Tillich, specifically, the "multidimensional unity of life" that Tillich develops early in ST III. Moreover, Pryor's chosen scientist is Terrence Deacon, specifically, his idea of the "autocell," as it figures in questions about the emergence of life. On the path of these mutual interactions, Pryor finds it possible to draw some exciting conclusions regarding the origins of life, but to do so he finds it necessary to make two changes in Tillich.

I believe at least that the first of these is a misstep. There is nothing forbidden about adapting Tillich for one's own constructive purposes if we are honest about it, and if the adaptation yields a coherent structure of thought. Pryor is utterly forthright, but I am not convinced that he arrives at a coherent body of philosophical thought when, treating the inorganic as the ground of the living, he says he will no longer speak of the inorganic realm as "living"—as Tillich does in Tillich's *ontological* sense of "living."

The key here is the distinction Tillich makes between an ontological concept, which is a priori (ST I, 166-68), and an empirical concept. This gets tricky at ST III, 11-12, where Tillich explains that he will use the concept "life" in an ontological sense to mean "actuality of being," and in a different, generic sense, to refer to the realm of organic beings. Both the organic *and the inorganic* realms are "living" in the ontological sense: they are actual, and not merely potential, and it is crucial to Tillich's system to make the distinction that is involved. However, the fact that the inorganic is actual does not mean it is generically alive. Pryor could have used Tillich's terminology as it stood.

### Second Session of the AAR Tillich Group, Sunday, 9:00 - 11:30

*On Overcoming Dualisms with Paul Tillich: Reconsidering Empire, Secular Reason, Religious Fundamentalism, and Everyday Religious Practices*

5. Jacob J. Erickson, Drew University, "The Ambiguity of Power: Paul Tillich, Empire, and the Kingdom of God." Reviewed by John Starkey.

Every so often, a scholar takes a major thinker, such as Tillich, and up-dates him, re-stating key themes and issues in terms of the new vernacular of the current day. That is a large part of what Erickson does here. He takes Tillich's own concern with empire, nurtured positively by German high culture and negatively by World War I, and begins to translate it into the "postcoloniality" and "empire studies" of two groups of scholars, the former including such theorists as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, the latter including such political theorists as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. But Erickson does not stop with translation, or even interpretation. He has a thesis to argue, namely that the Tillichian "history-bearing group" is conceived in too homogeneous a fashion. To be sure, as he rehearses Tillich's World War I experience and his European experience generally, Erickson sees how and why Tillich would have had that emphasis. But precisely what Erickson takes from the aforementioned theorists is that in our day it is not the named, vocation-bearing groups that are creating the empire that can free us, but in fact enslave us. Rather it is decentered and largely anonymous economic groupings.

A good deal of the paper is concerned, not surprisingly, with Tillich's symbol of the Kingdom of God, and the more fundamental concern with the ambiguities of power and its relation to justice and love—and the ultimate concern with God's power as it breaks forth in "kairic" moments. Here, unsurprisingly as well, Erickson stresses the fragmentary presence of the Kingdom of God. For Erickson, not only are "the powers that be" increasingly fragmentary even as they are increasingly overwhelming. So, too, are those groups that enjoy moments of kairic fragmentary, both in the larger picture of world history, and within themselves. There is more, but I leave it to the reader. (24)

6. Daniel Miller, Mt. Allison University, "The Dualism of Radical Orthodoxy and the Promise of Tillich's Correlational Method." Reviewed by Charles Fox.

In this paper, Miller confronts the claims of "Radical Orthodoxy" (RO) (vide John Milbank and Graham Ward) to have overcome the "dualisms" perpetuated by the liberal Protestant tradition, particularly around the relation of theology and secular reasoning. RO argues that theology must once again become a "meta-discourse" positioning all other cognitive discourses, or it will itself be "positioned" by the categories of "secular reason." For RO, "there

can be no extra-divine ontology or realm of being." This is not a "God without being" thesis, but rather the reassertion of a Neo-Platonic Augustinian vision where the whole world "participates" in the "being of God."

As patently Tillichian as that view may sound, Miller fails to note or evaluate that fact. However, according to Miller, the "paradigmatic figure" of capitulation to secular reason for RO is none other than Tillich! His God can only be articulated, per Milbank, "in terms of philosophically derived categories of being and knowing." "Tillich's concern for the 'ultimate' [is] an appeal to a supposed universality exceeding the specifically theological." Miller perceives the perversity of this reading of Tillich, not least by its transformation of the aim of existential concern into "an ultimate being."

Therefore, Miller turns the finger pointing around and declares that it is actually RO that "constitutes itself on the basis of that to which it stands opposed" and cannot itself escape a fundamental dualism. By contrast, for Tillich "the mutual interdependence of finite and infinite...announce...the disappearance of the gap between the sacred and secular realm." The instrument of this achievement is Tillich's notion of the religious symbol by which "conditioned realities become vehicles of the unconditioned" in a "revelatory correlation." Not only can the specific cultural locus of a revelatory event not be determined in advance, but also the historical persistence of a revelatory medium cannot be guaranteed. On this view, there cannot possibly be a dualism of religion and culture. But curiously, Miller in the end chastises Tillich because "what is experienced as 'unconditional' is not the giving of 'being-itself' but the very non-ultimate character of our reality as it is normally constituted. The unconditional [thus] is not an ontological positivity." But, Tillich knows that. Indeed, it is a fundamental premise of his project.

7. Mary Ann Stenger, University of Louisville. "Theologies of Culture as a Base for Interreligious Efforts to Address Fundamentalism." Reviewed by Ron MacLennan.

Stenger lives and works amidst a strong presence of fundamentalism. Enlisting works of Paul Tillich, Mark C. Taylor, and Peter Berger, her paper seeks to develop a more productive alternative to dualistic approaches to dialogue with fundamentalisms, especially the dualism of relativism versus absolutism. Much of her argument

hinges on aspects of Tillich's thought that explicitly move beyond dualism. For example, unconditional meaning is always a breakthrough of conditioned forms. This understanding allows the genuine religious conviction of fundamentalists to be recognized. In addition, Tillich's doctrine of theonomy establishes a third alternative to absolutistic heteronomy and relativistic autonomy. Taylor's "Infinite" expresses a notion of religion that both gives life structured meaning and purpose while at the same time disrupting, dislocating, and disfiguring every such structure. Berger discerns a fundamental religious experience expressed in multiple forms.

After summarizing the three thinkers' critiques of fundamentalism and sketching issues both religious and secular that have most often been met by dualistic approaches, Stenger presents her constructive proposal: that voices be raised "that respect religious experience, are open to new possibilities, critique absolutisms, and engage in self-critique." Her goals are wisely modest. Fundamentalists may not be convinced. The hope, rather, is to develop, clarify, and promote alternatives to dualisms in the dialog with fundamentalisms. A virtue of her proposal is her inclusion of three thinkers whose work is quite different and whose writings span a century. Surely, the front she establishes could be broadened and deepened.

**8.** Justin Rosolino, Vanderbilt University, "Lingering Dualisms: A Wittgensteinian Critique of Tillich's Account of the Subject-Object Divide and a Call to Concrete Christian Practices of Agape in the Everyday." Reviewed by Rob James.

In the last half of his paper, Rosolino provides wholesome emphases that might be added to our reading of Tillich's soteriology. He wants us to live out the *agape* embodied in Jesus the Christ, and not to devalue ordinary acts of helpfulness in the workaday world. Tillich does not make enough of this, though he does provide for it in his theology.

On the other hand, a poorly formulated sentence by Tillich appears to have played a role in leading Rosolino into a significant misreading. Using Wittgenstein as his foil, Rosolino presents Tillich as holding a Cartesian view of the subject and a kind of dualism in which there is a gap between "inner mind/ 'spirit' and external world."

Among the many places where Tillich explains himself quite otherwise is ST I, 171. There he rejects Descartes (and Hobbes) and makes "the self-world

correlation" (and the polar elements that comprise it) ontologically constitutive of all beings whatsoever (ST I, 163-186), whether in the vast or tiny pre-human realms, or in the recently arrived human realms of spirit and history (ST III, 11-30).

Rosolino's misreading appears to arise from a poorly drafted sentence of Tillich that we find in ST III, 72: "the subject tries to bridge the gap by receiving the object in words, concepts, and images, but never achieves this aim. There is reception, grasp, and expression, but the gap remains and the subject remains within itself." We may read Tillich here to say that the subject has not *completely* missed its goal: the subject has *received*, *grasped*, and *expressed* the object—but only partially or in a distorted way.

That is, it belongs to the ambiguities of estranged existence that the subject does not reach the fulfilling unity with its objects that it seeks. To describe this, Tillich writes the unfortunate phrase—which Rosolino italicizes: the "subject remains within itself."

**9.** Mike Grimshaw, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, "Response: The Irrelevance and Relevance of Paul Tillich." Reviewed by Mike Grimshaw.

An AAR Guest Scholar from New Zealand, Michael Grimshaw was an invited as a respondent to this session as a whole. In his response, he stepped outside the usual practice by engaging Tillich via the announced themes of the session (see the session theme above). Taking note of the sidelining of Tillich in his own country, Grimshaw engaged Tillich via the tropes of boundary and *flâneur*. He viewed Tillich as a boundary walker against the crowds, a *flâneur* against both the secular and theological.

Noting the rise of the American Empire, Grimshaw re-imagines Tillich as a cosmopolitan *flâneur*, re-read from a series of boundary experiences of Empire. He reads Tillich as secular apologetics, within a society after theology but within modernity, arguing that Tillich should be read today as a resource for our secular present, and not as a series of systematics for a past theology. Taking seriously Tillich's theology of culture and the secular culture in which Tillich's theology exists means one should not become a Tillichian. Rather, Tillich should be used to critically engage with the issues of modernity. Tillich is thus a starting point for the theological hermeneutics of an unfinished modern project

that exists within an unfinished project of Christianity.

For our attempts to engage constructively with Tillich and the modern world, three Tillichian positions are offered, neo-Tillichian, para-Tillichian, and post-Tillichian. This constructive engagement is also to recover Tillich against the captured theological Tillich, to return Tillich to his audience of modern thinking and doubting people. This recovery of Tillich results in what Grimshaw terms a cosmopolitan Christian existentialism and the resultant secular theological apologetics that arise from such a position.

**First Session of the Tillich Society: Friday, 9:00 - 11:30 AM**

*Tillich and Barth (and Bonhoeffer)*

**10.** Rob James, University of Richmond, “Historicizing God à la Tillich and Barth (Both!): Formula for Good Theology.” Reviewed by Rob James.

Is Tillich’s theology of history Barth’s doctrine of election demythologized? This paper seeks “to produce some useable theology by letting Tillich help us with our understanding of divine immanence, and by letting Barth help us understand God in God’s transcendence.” It seeks to do this by looking at certain ways in which the two thinkers respectively “historicize God” in those two opposite respects. Thus: (a) Tillich’s God is reminiscent of the essentialism of Hegel’s Spirit unfolding in human history, though freedom in Tillich gives us “an everlastingly but not an eternally frustrated essentialism”; (b) by seeing God immanent in this nation’s history—and by seeing the demonic powers in history—one can mobilize Baptists and others for “separation of church and state” without undercutting the convincingness of the ground one stands upon; and (c) Barth, in a historicizing statement about the God transcendent, affirms that in an eternal decision that for us who dwell in time has never not already happened (sic), God determines Himself as for us and with us, *electing us* in a covenant of grace; God thus determines Himself, in one of His three ways of eternally being God, as the Son, the Word, the historical man Jesus Christ. (James acknowledged his debt to B. McCormack for the theological ontology of God in Barth in which God is historicized.)

James calls upon Tillichians to read Barth’s election narrative as myth, but to read it thus without lessening its existential force, as Tillich’s symbol

theory requires. James continues: For Tillich, the concept of “new being” must be central to any Christian theology. He contrasts this with Eastern religions. They seek to escape from the new, or to reverse the new, in a return to Origin. Tillich claims, further, that to deny or affirm “the new” is, *ipso facto*, to deny or affirm “the historicity of history.” If it is the very nature of history to bring the new into being and to value each being for its unique individuality, what of these beings’ futures? Tillich’s “essentialization” doctrine says the positive achievement of each being in history is meaningful to God and retained forever in God’s eternal memory.

Despite large differences, there is some analogy between (a) our being elected into a covenant relation with God in Barth, before and through the creation of the world, and (b) our being “elected” into a covenant-like relation with God through the very nature of the cosmic-historical process that Tillich describes. One could say, as James almost manages to say at the end of this paper, that “b” is a demythologized version of “a.”

(Early in his paper, James likens it to two of his earlier publications related to Buber. This is a mis-cue. The earlier efforts were utterly frank in proposing major changes in the foundations of Tillich’s thought. The present paper remains on Tillich’s turf.)

**11.** Sven Ensminger, University of Bristol, “‘Beyond a Disagreement on Criteria’—Paul Tillich and Karl Barth on Interreligious Encounters.” Reviewed by John Starkey.

Sven Ensminger begins with an observation about both Tillich and Barth that provides a helpful limitation for the scope of his paper: both came to the question of inter-religious encounters relatively late in their careers, after handling issues that each found more pressing early and throughout their middle years. Thus, Ensminger is concerned with publications from the 1950s and 1960s. But the point is that in those years he finds many similarities, grouped in three headings. (1) Though Barth is predictably more negative in his view of religion than Tillich, still, both apply some version of the Protestant principle: Christian religion stands as much under judgment as any other. (2) Next, however different their two views of revelation, it is indeed to revelation that both turn to find the criteria for this judgment by which concrete religion is found wanting, indeed sinful; and it is to some sort of Chris-

tological core that each turns as well. (3) Finally, even though Tillich has obviously the more generous attitude toward revelation outside the sphere of Christianity, Ensminger points to clear texts in the later Barth in which he allows for the possibility of “a true word” that Christianity cannot simply ignore, however much it subjects such words to a Christological criterion.

The paper is short, but that is no fault. It is a focused piece, and I myself found the approach helpful and the conclusions persuasive. Though the paper spends more space detailing the differences than can or need be reproduced here, Ensminger succeeds in showing that a dialogue between these two was and is possible. And, in addition, he has written a piece that could well be offered to graduate students as a point of entry to the issues involved before they read primary texts by Tillich or Barth, perhaps with the assignment to argue for or against Ensminger’s conclusions in relation to such texts.

**12.** Christian Danz, University of Vienna, “Religion and Modern Culture: Considerations on Theology of Culture of Paul Tillich and Karl Barth.” Reviewed by Rob James.

If Prof. Danz’s challenging proposals receive the attention they deserve, they should set in motion some intense discussions. There is one limit to their validity that I believe we might agree upon at the outset of such discussions. Danz is forthright, of course, that Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* offers no theology of culture; however, he believes that, from about 1910 until at least 1923—apparently right through the 1920s—Barth upheld a theology of culture that had numerous points of contact with Tillich’s theology of culture.

He derives this mostly and quite plausibly from Barth’s Tambach lecture of late September of 1919. One finds mention there of “the breakthrough of the divine into the human,” and of “God in consciousness,” including “God in history,” and of “a new compulsion from above.” Though such tropes can be found in the first edition of Barth’s *Commentary on Romans* of 1919, they would hardly appear in Barth beyond the next year. The process eschatology of the 1919 edition had been abandoned and replaced by the consistent or future eschatology of the famous, influential, second edition of 1922.

Danz cites the two editions together indifferently (n. 17), but it is the different theology of the second edition, not the first, that underlies Barth’s mean-spirited response to Tillich’s genteel remarks of

1923. Asked in that year to comment on the dialectical theologies of Barth and friends, Tillich noted that we must speak of the Unconditional paradoxically, but that a “positive paradox” of creation and grace comes first. It must provide us a “place” from which to speak in dialectical fashion. Danz aptly takes this positive paradox as shorthand for Tillich’s theology of culture and sets out to explain it, and to defend it from Barth, partly by showing that the early Barth had such a view, also.

Danz cannot be faulted for making things easy for himself. He quotes the swaggering, caricaturing passage of 1923 from Barth at the outset of his paper—at length. Danz might be mildly faulted for what appears to be a lack of clarity in the concept of a “theology of culture.” In his works on the subject, Tillich views “theology of culture” as a *wissenschaftlich* or “scientific” discipline. In addition, the treatment of Barth in this paper would have worked better if it had been clearly handled under that rubric. However, virtually throughout, the subject matter with which Danz actually deals is religion, especially pure religion, vis-à-vis culture—that which theology of culture is to study.

**13.** Bruce P. Rittenhouse, “Self-Affirmation and Self-Denial in the Ethics of Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.” Reviewed by Loye Ashton.

In this paper, Rittenhouse seeks to compare Tillich and Bonhoeffer on the topic of the ethics of self-realization. Arguing that both have been stereotyped into the distorted positions that Tillich is pro self-affirmation and that Bonhoeffer is pro self-denial, Rittenhouse instead wants to show that each thinker has a much more nuanced view of the ethics of selfhood. The norms of selfhood that Rittenhouse seeks to underscore in the work of each theologian are those of both self-affirmation and self-denial in a dialectal relationship of balanced (or as the case often is, imbalanced) polarities. Both theologians, using Jesus Christ as the normative standard for the selfhood that God intends for all people, describe the proper balance of polarities as that which is achieved when self-affirmation is realized in the sacrificial self-denial of the self for the sake of others through the power of love.

Given that much has been made of the distinctions between the ethics of self-affirmation and self-denial in Christian thought over the last century, particularly with respect to denominational identity and liberation concerns, Rittenhouse is right to point out how both Tillich and Bonhoeffer have great insight

on the question and how shallow appropriations of their work stack one side against the other, and misunderstand the deeper theological value of their work. Rittenhouse also wants to stress that for both Tillich and Bonhoeffer this balance of the polarities of self-affirmation and self-denial according to the norm of “Christomorphic” life (Reinhold Niebuhr via Langdon Gilkey) is not something that is a superhuman transcendental achievement. In a move that brings together Tillich’s existentialist analysis of the human situation along with Bonhoeffer’s Neo-Orthodox appreciation of the price of standing up for truth, this ethical balance is the actualization of true humanity through the grace of God in Christ through the power of the Spirit, right here in the world we have under the conditions of existence.

**Second Session of the Tillich Society, Friday, 1:00-3:30 PM**

***Tillich and Interreligious Encounter***

**14.** Claude Perrottet, University of Bridgeport, “Guide to the Perplexed: An Attempt to Make Sense of the Tillich-Hisamatsu Dialogues.” Reviewed by John Starkey.

Claude Perrottet’s well-organized, clear, and lengthy paper is a defense of the significance of Tillich’s three dialogues with Shin-ichi Hisamatsu, a disciple of Nishida who taught at Harvard in 1957, given that some have regarded the dialogues as “a rather inconclusive and even clumsy attempt to bridge the gap between East and West.” Perrottet first contextualizes the dialogues; he then surveys what he sees as points of contact or even agreement. But, he does not turn next to differences. Rather, and intriguingly, he investigates in detail many instances in which Tillich seems not to understand his partner, instances in which the partner seems unable to present his ideas in any form Tillich could grasp. However, Perrottet is not out to critique. He wants to investigate why the differences in their backgrounds and “systems” (my scare quotes, to accommodate both the paradoxical elements in Tillich’s system and the oddity of applying the term to Hamamatsu’s thought) *must* lead to acknowledged misunderstanding—as the only route towards better understanding. Indeed, Perrottet praises the two for the willingness to disagree, as a valuable complement to Tillich’s more irenic approach in his 1961 Bampton Lectures at Columbia.

A sketchy summary must suffice for the rest. Hisamatsu, says Perrottet, starts from the formless

self, from antimonies of logic, will, and feeling that cannot be overcome, which simply defeat the intellect. However, Hisamatsu for his part is still doing, says Perrottet, what as a Buddhist he wants to eschew: metaphysics. I think the paper is too short to make good the claim, but long enough to draw us into the question. And he follows up with a fine look at three senses of paradox in Tillich, by which Tillich does get beyond objections to metaphysics. Then we find, along with much else too rich to even mention, a detailed exposition of the two thinkers on the universal and the particular. This Perrottet finds a key site of both difference and convergence—a site well worth visiting.

**15.** Ivan Hon, University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UK), “Paul Tillich’s Thoughts and the Religiousness of Confucianism.” Reviewed by Loye Ashton.

It has been so far a rare occasion to witness Paul Tillich being brought into dialogue with Confucian thought. At the dawn of this new Chinese Century, however, I expect that we will be seeing a great deal more. In such a new opening of intellectual exploration, Ivan Hon is giving us a helpful map of the possible paths that might be taken, especially with respect to the New Confucian scholars of the contemporary period such as Du Weiming and Liu Shuxian. Hon outlines a fruitful area of comparison between the New Confucian articulation of “*anshen liming*” as spiritual crisis (attaining spiritual stability amidst a time of spiritual unrest) and Tillich’s existential diagnosis of the religiously human condition as one of searching for ultimate concern among a multiplicity of competing trivializations. The question of what it means to be religious in the contemporary world is one that held Tillich fast, and the same is the case with the New Confucians. Being religious when one’s ontological character is inseparable from one’s moral achievement constitutes a deep systematic question for a theologian—something of which Tillich was well aware. Furthermore, retaining religious identity while not being limited by, or perhaps even interested in, the personal attributes of God as a singular Being among beings, is something that resonates deeply within Tillich’s own filial piety, particularly given his intellectual ancestors, Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, and Schelling. Instead of being concerned with the singular Being, God, one is drawn to metaphysical conceptions of ultimate reality in order to move beyond the division of religious vs. secular, or sacred vs. profane. In this work, we

are indebted to Hon for his thoughtful reading of both Tillich and New Confucianism. He has identified key areas for dialogue between the two, and given rise to the hope that a re-contextualization of the two religious systems will generate creative interpretations and constructive engagements.

**16.** Tim Helton, Drew University, "Finitude in Tillich: Talking Points for Jain-Christian Dialogue." Reviewed by Loye Ashton.

Helton's project deserves much credit for bringing Tillich to bear as a resource for the exploration of dialogue between Jain and Christian traditions. Such an unusual and original application of Tillich is not often seen within the highly specialized and technical arguments that comprise the bulk of contemporary research on Tillich and his theological writings. The approach of comparison here in this paper, however, is a bit confusing since Helton chooses to use Tillich as a single theologian to represent "Christianity" on the one hand while using more general principles and ideas to represent "Jainism" on the other, even as no single Jain thinker or intellectual is offered as a parallel for the place of Tillich within Jain religious philosophy. The method of "dialogue" here seems like an odd mismatch: single thinker from one tradition to general ideas of another. After all, Tillich himself, for all of the incredible breadth of theological tradition that his system engages, is still historically positioned within a particular location of the unfolding Christian story. Having said this, however, I actually like the conceptual tools that Helton employs in his comparisons. He succeeds in finding rich material in Tillich to use in thinking through how Christian and Jains might tackle the problem of time and finitude, particularly the fate of post-mortem subjectivity. Helton correctly reads Tillich on the topic of time and eternity, recognizing that Tillich has a sophisticated understanding of the eternal as neither endless time nor timelessness. In this way what Helton describes as Tillich's "transtemporal" view of the human soul from a Christian perspective may be a possible avenue for understanding the Jain view of the transmigration of souls in the context of *samsara* under the principle of *karma*. Likewise, in his discussion of spiritual austerity and materialism Helton is careful to lift up the differences and acknowledge that the points of intersection here cannot overlook significant divergences. But, in so doing, he uses Tillich to expand the possible ways that Christians might be able to better understand how Jains unite metaphysics

to moral identity, a worthwhile goal that Tillich's own system sought deeply to explore.

**17.** Lawrence A. Whitney, Boston University, "Mission Theology and Interreligious Encounter: 1910-2010." Reviewed by Ron MacLennan.

Mission has seldom come to the fore in discussions of Tillich's theology. Thus at the least Whitney disabuses those who are shocked "to find that Tillich has a theology of missions *at all!*" However, Whitney does far more. Relying primarily on ST III and a 1955 Tillich article, "The Theology of Missions," he develops a reading of Tillich in which—despite his finding things in Tillich that sound more like the triumphalistic missionary theology of a century ago—Whitney finds a subtle reversal of that notion. In Tillich's words, "The work of missions is not to make Christianity universal but to reveal the potential universality of Christianity already at work." The message Whitney gains from Tillich is that mission is transformation from the latency of the New Being to its manifestation. He develops this understanding through Tillich's theology of culture and doctrine of symbols into a theology of missions that is characterized by humility, vulnerability, and "deference to difference." In particular, other religions and ideologies (specifically paganism, Judaism, and humanism) provide prophetic critique that is essential for doing a missionary Christian theology that "can unleash a creative semiosis."

Whitney's paper is clearly focused. A next step could be to consider in detail Tillich's encounters with other religions and ideologies (e.g., his lifelong connection with Judaism and his late-in-life interaction with Buddhism). Can Whitney's reading be supported in such cases and extended to others? As ST III was finally being finished, arguably obsolescent even before its publication, Tillich considered making a new start for his theology, only to realize he was too old to finish the task. That is up to us.

**Third Session of the Tillich Society, Friday, 4:00-6:30 PM**

*New Directions in Tillich and Art (and Deleuze!)*

**18.** David Nikkel, University of North Carolina, Pembroke, "Updating Tillich on Religion and Art." Reviewed by Charles Fox.

This essay is an effort to extend the categories of Tillich's theology of art to interpret a series of artistic styles that were emerging at the end of his life. Using Tillich's last public lecture on theology and

art as his point of departure (“Religious Dimensions of Contemporary Art,” 1965), Nikkel discusses at length a series of artists. He finds some of Tillich’s commentaries “inconsistent with his best insights on artistic style.” Indeed, the most insightful element in this section of Nikkel’s paper deals with Andy Warhol, whom Tillich did not cite (he noted Roy Lichtenstein as an exemplar of pop art instead).

Along the way Nikkel reintroduces a point he made in a prior publication: Tillich actually introduced a fourth stylistic category for the theological analysis of art (beyond his oft-repeated, early and late, categories of naturalism, idealism, and expressionism). Taking Tillich’s earlier essay on “Art and Ultimate Reality” (1960) as his cue, he cites Tillich’s reference to “a ‘mystical’ artistic style” which “tries to reach ultimate reality without the mediation of particular things.” Nikkel finds that this marginal Tillichian category actually holds the best promise for theologically reading abstract expressionism. Tillich never gave this art any attention—unless one counts de Kooning in this category, which he did not. However, Tillich does cite the somewhat earlier “radical abstractionist” artists, Mondrian and Kandinsky. Their mysticism remains flat, without depth: “the spatial emptiness of some pictures indicates merely artistic emptiness.” In a more positive vein, Tillich commented in 1960 upon Pollock’s work, “Number 1-A”: “I have become very much reconciled with this fullness of reality without concrete subject matter.”

**19.** Russell Re Manning, University of Cambridge, “A Kind of Metaphysical Dizziness. Tillich’s Theology of Culture and the Encounter with ‘Non-Art.’” Reviewed by Charles Fox.

Manning’s essay reviews Tillich’s last formal lecture on theology and art (1965). Tillich here recites his familiar approach to the interpretation of art, going back to the early 1920s. However, we are now looking at art that seems to him to be “non-art,” based on his earlier categories. Thus Manning’s question: Can the categories Tillich developed in that earlier period grasp the art of the emerging, as yet unnamed, “post-modern” world?

For Tillich the “non-art” quality of this new “art” seems consistent with other cultural trends of the time: the “religion of non-religion...theology that makes use of language ‘without God’ ...philosophy [that]...seeks to avoid the question of wisdom.” Has the implicit relation of all culture to the Unconditional now vanished spiritually, and with

it any “ultimate concern”? In this situation, “a kind of metaphysical dizziness grasps us,” induced by a reduction of reality to “surfaces” without “depth.” “An artistic revolt against the *disruption* of surface reality is taking place.” Nevertheless, Tillich urges that “we must encounter [this art].” This is Manning’s task.

Of course, Tillich’s earliest fascination with art was expressionism, so much so that one might argue that his “theology of art is definitively determined by the expressionist culture from which it emerges.” And, of course, expressionism was “seriously concerned with metaphysical questions, the most basic [being] that of the Unconditional.” Does this imply that Tillich’s art historical project is now impossible? Manning boldly confronts this situation by reminding us that Tillich’s work of the later 1920s was concerned with articulating what he called a “believable realism,” which was reflected in the newly emerging art “seeking to drive forward beyond expressionism to the undistorted surface reality of things without returning to...bourgeois capitalist realism.” And Manning claims this situation is analogous to the present. Even if it was too late in life for Tillich to digest the art of the early 1960s, his theology of art has the resources for doing so. This is evident in the work of his contemporary heir as a theologian of culture, Mark C. Taylor, “who makes use of what are recognizably modified versions of the framework of Tillich’s theology of art.” This is Manning’s answer.

**20.** Jari Ristiniemi, University of Gävle, Sweden, “Differential Thinking and New Aesthetics: Potentialization, Essentialization, and Art.” Reviewed by Charles Fox.

In this complex and nuanced essay, Ristiniemi explores the roots of Tillich’s philosophy of life as well as his interpretation of the function of art in Schelling. In contrast to the binary thinking of modernity, classically formulated in the Enlightenment, Schelling develops a “differential thinking.” Ristiniemi does not use the term, but one might characterize this understanding of the spirit as structured through *polar* relations. Thus, Schelling says, “activity and receptivity arise simultaneously in one and the same indivisible moment, and precisely this simultaneity of activity and receptivity constitutes life.” There is no binary opposition: thinking and feeling, activity and passivity, “play with each other...in the synthesis of personality.” One readily senses the continuity here with the polarity of “onto-

logical elements” in Tillich’s ST I, and with “essentialization” in ST III. In Schelling, the latter process of actualization is “potentialization.”

Thus, the working of art is understood by Schelling as a task of “reality-making.” “Potentialization in Schelling seems to be that of the synthesis between active and passive forces both in universal being and in human persons, a dynamic coming together of opposite elements and forces.” By contrast, “depotentialization is the shattering of the synthesis.” Thus, Schelling moves away from a representational, one might say mimetic, view of art: “painting is not a naturalistic reproduction of images but is powers and forces of being expressed in and through art; painting is a manifestation or expression...and the artist becomes a means of potentialization.” Thus, it follows, in words that resonate with Tillich’s project of a theology of culture, “the relation between being itself, or the infinite, and the concrete material thing, or the finite, becomes discernible in art...and the work of artists.”

**21.** John Starkey, Oklahoma City University, “Tillich and Deleuze.” Reviewed by John Starkey.

John Starkey asserts that connecting Tillich and Derrida, however valuable with respect to the transcendence of Being or of *différance*, is incomplete, and even misleading without connecting Tillich and Deleuze on the immanence of Being. Tillich in his time combined what others said could not and ought not be combined: the ontological tradition with the existentialist one. Deleuze’s project provides a parallel: to think being and difference together, to see the real as indeed *being’s* process of differing. Starkey draws out Tillich’s and Deleuze’s common sources, however differently used: Scotus on the univocity of being (Being as absolutely opposed to *ouk on*), Schelling on the wildness at the heart of the real (the irrational leap from Being to becoming), and Spinoza and Bergson on the radical unity of what *is* in the face of all dualisms (Being-Itself as transcending the polar pairs). The project Starkey suggests, then, is using Deleuze’s ontology to read Tillich for a new, thoroughly Western non-dualism.

Three notions of Deleuze’s are seen as amenable to Tillichian development: (1) Deleuze’s insistence that the medieval view of God as uncaused cause is too static, and his preference for Spinoza’s God as *causa sui* in the sense of *natura naturans*, can make sense of Tillichian participation, for creatures can be seen as sites of the *causa sui*, not just its products; (2) Deleuze’s view of Nietzsche’s eternal return as

the ceaseless return of differentiation, and *not* of the same, provides a way to develop Tillich on Spirit in ST, Part IV; and (3) that Deleuze’s trademark differentiation between virtual and actual being provides a superior conceptual framework for what Tillich had spoken of in Platonic terms as essence and existence. The presentation was suggestive, not expository—but some Tillichians may want to investigate the suggestion.

#### **Fourth Session of the Tillich Society. Annual Banquet, Friday, 7:00 - 10:00**

**22.** A. Durwood Foster, Pacific School of Religion. Banquet Address: “Merging Two Masters: Tillich’s Culminating Years at Union.” Reviewed by Ron MacLennan.

“Merging Two Masters” is not prime rib with fiery horseradish sauce. Appropriate for its role as an after dinner speech, it is Bananas Foster, which, if memory serves, was the dessert concocted for Foster’s self-described panegyric after the 1995 Tillich Society Banquet. The 2010 speech is a sweet but not saccharine paean dedicated to Tillich, “our mentor” and “our guru.” Foster is uniquely able at this point in history to give an intimate portrait of Tillich, based on personal association, beginning in Tillich’s later Union years.

Foster’s theme is Tillich’s double vocation as theologian of culture and theologian of the church. He finds the relationship between the two to be both contentious and complementary. His argument is buttressed by an encyclopedic knowledge of the sources from the pre-World War I *Vernunftabenden* with Wegener through Tillich’s last public lecture. Foster stresses a development from conflict to “two theologians indwelling *one* cerebrum.” Perhaps the conflict, which seems ambiguous in a re-reading of the 1919 “On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,” can be mediated by two considerations. First, in 1919, Tillich is suffering the anxiety of meaninglessness. He is concerned that he has fallen behind his peers who have not gone to war; so, in the tradition of academia, he is combative. America smoothed Tillich. Second, Tillich is deeply imbued with the Kantian Duty Ethic; throughout his life, he did what he was assigned to do: chaplain, German university instructor and professor, trainer of church leaders at Union, University Professor in the hot-house culture of Harvard. Nonetheless, Foster’s point of two vocations is a key to understanding Tillich.

As a bonus, Foster brings to life dozens of people close to Tillich as dialogue partners who shaped and molded Tillich's thought and life. It is a masterful speech. Read it. Thank you, Durwood. It is not yet an encomium. No hymn of ultimate theological victory can be sung in this life by any of us. The task of gathering theologies of culture and church under one *Kopf* is perennial. Existential questions must be discerned, and answers brought forth from the theological tradition. "We must try again."

**Fifth Session of the Tillich Society, Saturday, 9:00-11:30 AM**

***Recent Developments in Tillich Scholarship***

**23.** Jeff Moore, U. S. Navy, "Tillich at the Tip of the Spear." Reviewed by Ron MacLennan.

Does love make the world go round? Moore submits this question to a tough test, that of the warrior at the point of life and death confrontation, and insists that "[a]n ethic of love...points a way forward for warriors engaged 'at the tip of the spear.'" Moore recognizes the objection that at the point of "kill or be killed" the very assertion of an ethic of love seems nonsensical. Reading Tillich through Heidegger, Buber, and others, Moore argues that at a pre-ontological and un-thought level, Tillich's understanding of love as the drive for the reunion of the separated provides a better alternative even at the tip of the spear than does virtue or deontological ethics. Such love is based on the recognition of the other, even and especially the enemy, as a person; it cannot be coerced; it can only be called forth by persuasion.

Moore is to be commended for opening to his audience the field of military ethics, which is unfamiliar to many. One wonders whether much military ethics belongs in yet another category, utilitarian ethics. The goal is known; ethics has to do with the means to the obviously yet questionably desirable end. E.g., how does the military get a higher proportion of its troops actually to discharge their weapons at the enemy? Also, from the point of view of Tillich scholarship, insights could be deepened by more attention to Tillich's World War I experience as a chaplain. Tillich was somewhat reticent about that horrific experience. However, documents such as his battlefield sermons survive, and Tillich would occasionally open himself up, especially to others who had been chaplains.

**24.** Daniel A. Morris, University of Iowa, "Reconsidering Commitment: A Case for Tillich in Studies of Religious Violence." Reviewed by Loye Ashton.

In Tillich's theory of religion as "the state of being ultimately concerned," Morris senses a challenge to the very identity of religious studies as an academic discipline. In comparing Tillich's theory with that of Robert D. Baird in the context of recent work on religious violence, Morris points out that, despite its advantages, Tillich's idea as an interpretive tool threatens to "unsettle" those who work in the area of religious studies as a research area inasmuch as Tillich's work (so Morris) purports to focus on the bright side of human self-transcendence. In its universal aspect of the union of objective reality (ultimate) and subjective apprehension (concern), Tillich not only provides a theoretical model for human behavior and belief that is trans-culturally religious, but he allows for a model that does not presuppose moral categories either in the nature of the objective reality nor in the character of the subjective apprehension.

Enter here the work on religious violence in new religious movements (NRMs) such as the Branch Davidians (in the work of Dean M. Kelly) and the People's Temple Church at Jonestown (in the work of Catherine Wessinger). In these examples, Morris applies Tillich's theory to show that these groups are indeed illustrations of real religious phenomena, even as disturbing as they are in their use of violence to express the depth of their subjective apprehension of concern. Religious studies scholars should not be tempted always to see ultimate concern as leading to abundant life. However, Morris points out that Tillich also provides an antidote here as well: because doubt has to play an integral role in faith (the Protestant Principle), there exists at all times the demand to be self-critical about one's participation in the union of concern and ultimate reality. Obviously, Tillich's personal experience of the rise of National Socialism in his own society allowed him to develop a sophisticated understanding of the "demonic" that is the shadow to any naïve reading of a theory of religion as ultimate concern that glosses over the destructive potential of misdirected faith.

**25.** Stephen Butler Murray, Endicott College, "Exile, Symbols, and the Courage to Be: The Influence of Paul Tillich on the Womanist Theology of Delores S. Williams." Reviewed by Ron MacLennan.

What has the theology of Paul Tillich, male, white, privileged, to do with the theology of Delores Williams, female, black, womanist? Murray, one of Williams's last doctoral students before her retirement from the Paul Tillich Chair in Religion and Culture at Union, takes advantage of his unique connection with both Tillich and Williams to offer a host of reasons. A few may be mentioned here.

First, Williams valued Tillich's work because it grew out of the circumstances and choices of his life. Second, both were survivalists, a label Williams prefers to liberation theology because liberation has repeatedly been denied to black women. Third, both of their theologies are built on an active engagement with the world, and are socially responsive. Fourth, she, like Tillich, employs inventive language, as in Williams's coinage of "demonarchy." Fifth, she and Tillich share an ambivalent attitude toward the church. We are indebted to Murray for tracing with care the connection between Tillich and Williams.

We need to become ever more aware of the connection between Tillich's life and his thought. He was a survivalist, enduring war, the uncertainties of his German academic career, and his exile to a foreign land, the United States.

Less has been done to trace Tillich's influence, which extends far beyond the obvious examples. The case of Williams is explicit. Often Tillich's influence leaps out through a word or phrase (*The Courage to Teach*). Sometimes the connection is largely one of opposition (Barth). Sometimes the connection must be ferreted out. At Union, Tillich prepared church leaders. At Harvard, he attracted hundreds of students who became leaders in many fields. At both places, he attracted a broader audience. There is work to be done to trace Tillich's influence.

**26. Matthew Aaron Tennant, University of Oxford, "Unity between the Ultimate and Concrete: The Success of Tillich's Trinitarian Theology."**  
Reviewed by John Starkey.

Tennant's paper can perhaps be summarized in one concept, or perhaps better, one image: that of the Trinity as "movement," a term that recurs throughout the paper, often in conjunction with related terms, such as "dynamic" or "ongoing." Tennant believes Tillich was working out a conceptuality in which the traditional (and static) alternatives of modalism or pluralism could be avoided, and indeed

Tennant believes that in so doing Tillich was doing what the Cappadocians had attempted in their time, a rational specification of the relation of *hypostases* to *ousia* in such fashion as to respect mystery while simultaneously acknowledging and developing revelation. Indeed, the structure of the paper is to trace out a movement from Revelation (of the Ultimate), to Christology (the particular, yet the divine), to Trinity (unifying God and the Existential).

It is no surprise that as the paper develops, Tennant comes to focus on ST, vol. III. It is in the dynamics of that section of the *Systematic Theology* that he finds Tillich cashing out, so to speak, the notions he had already set up in volumes 1 and 2, and doing so in Trinitarian coinage (the metaphor is mine, not his). It is in the theory of the divine life, or as Tennant likes to put it, "God's movement within Godself," that we find, as Tillich intended, the coming together of the Concrete and the Ultimate and the Concrete that were/are originally experienced in the symbol of Jesus as the Christ. Nevertheless, Tennant's final section is not abstract and conceptual: he himself brings these back to the concrete and the particular, through exposition of Tillich's sermon on "Universal Salvation" in *The New Being*.

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<sup>1</sup> This report in a slightly longer form is appearing in volume 7 (2012) of the "International Yearbook for Tillich Research / Internationales Jahrbuch für die Tillich-Forschung / Annales internationales de recherches sur Tillich," edited by Prof. Dr. Christian Danz (Vienna), Prof. Dr. Marc Dumas (Sherbrooke, Canada), (Prof. Dr. Dr. Werner Schüßler (Trier), Prof. Dr. Mary Ann Stenger (Louisville, Kentucky), and Prof. Dr. Erdmann Sturm (Münster), and published by Walter de Gruyter (Berlin/New York).

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<sup>3</sup> Papers 10-13 are in vol. 37 number 1; papers 14, 17, 20, are in 37/2; papers 18, 24, 25, are in 37/3; paper 26 is in 37/4; and papers 1, 2, 7 are in 38/1.

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