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**GERT HUMMEL: IN MEMORIAM****DORIS LAX**

Together with many friends all over the world, the German Paul Tillich Society bemoans the sudden and unexpected decease of its president

PROFESSOR LIC. DR. DR. H.C. MULT. GERT HUMMEL, BISHOP OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

Bishop Hummel died on March 15, 2004 after three days in deep coma.

Bishop Hummel served as the German Tillich Society's president since 1992. Our worldwide international community has lost a great supporter of Tillichian scholarship and a true friend, whose exceptional generosity and personal warmth have considerably contributed to building not only scholarly but also personal bridges between the several Tillich societies.

On March 3, 1933, Gert Hummel was born in Stuttgart, Germany, where he grew up under the hardships of the Nazi regime, World War II, and the postwar years. After school he studied theology and German literature at Tübingen, Heidelberg, and Lund (Sweden); he obtained a philosophical doctorate (for his work on German literature) as well as a theological doctorate ("Lic.," an old version of the Th.D. given by the university of Lund), and worked as a teacher for two years until he became a teaching assistant at the university of Saarbrücken. After having written his habilitation thesis at the University of Heidelberg, he became a professor of systematic theology at the University of Saarbrücken in 1972, a position he had held until his retirement in 1998.

While teaching generations of students that theology is not just one of many sciences but much more a way of thinking and living that effects and affects one's whole life, he himself "lived" his understanding of theology, e.g., in founding and building up Germany's largest university partnerships with Eastern European universities, long before the end of the Cold War. Though his work was largely acknowledged—he was awarded three international honorary doctorates—he had to face harsh criticisms over his efforts to build bridges between the University of Saarbrücken and the Universities of Warsaw (Poland), Prague (Czech Republic), Sofia (Bulgaria), and last, but not least, Tbilisi (Republic of Georgia). Yet, all these struggles were rewarded

as they helped found manifold friendships and a fruitful international interdisciplinary exchange on personal as well as scholarly levels.

During his regular visits to the University of Tbilisi, he came into contact with a number of Georgian Christians, mainly of German roots and heritage, who asked him to preach to them whenever possible. Experiencing these people's spiritual as well as economic needs, Gert and his wife finally decided to leave Germany after Gert's retirement, have a church built in Tbilisi, and go there as the pastor of the newly (re)established Lutheran Church in Georgia. Both Gert's and his wife's financial, pastoral and, most of all, personal commitment for the Georgian Christians all over the country is beyond our imagination. All our thoughts and prayers, and if possible, financial support, should be with these people for they have not only lost a dear friend and teacher but their spiritual guide and a source of help that opened up ways to live a decent life. Gert's wife will stay as long as necessary to continue this large part of Gert's lifework until a successor will be found to further develop what they have started.

Another, though certainly smaller, part of Gert's lifework was his commitment to the Paul Tillich Societies and especially the International Paul Tillich Symposia that he established together with the late Carl Heinz Ratschow in 1986. Paul Tillich's philosophical theology had always been one of the main sources for Gert's own theo-anthropological way of living theology, centered in reconciliation. For Gert, Tillich's idea of developing a theology of the Concrete Spirit was not only an impetus to continue his own reconsideration of his theological outlook over and over again but also to try and bring together scholars from all over the world to discuss Tillich's views and exchange ways of further developing Tillich's theology in a changing world.

Since for Gert, Tillich's idea of the Concrete Spirit not only applied to intellectual and spiritual spheres but also to the human person as a whole, indivisible being, in whom the physical and bodily dimensions played an important role. This is why Gert's greatest joy always was to take the participants at the symposia to a special secret place on Saturday evenings for some cultural "nourishment" as well as a wonderful dinner.

No matter where and when, Gert was most happy when experiencing that people around him were happy, felt comfortable, and enjoyed moments of and in the wholeness of body, soul, and spirit.

Many times through the years, Gert presented people all over the world with an outstanding experience of sincere scholarly exchange, true friendship, and perhaps moments in the presence of the Concrete Spirit.

We will miss Gert as a brilliant organizer, wonderful host, great scholar, and most of all as a dear, true friend. Yet, he has opened up ways for many of us to follow our own ways of living a theology of the Concrete Spirit. Although Gert is no longer physically with us, his spirit will endure, as we move on to continue his lifework, the International Tillich Symposia.

### EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY ON THE DEATH OF GERT HUMMEL

Editor's Note: As a tribute to our colleague, Gert Hummel, the following expressions of sympathy sent to Doris Lax are published in Bishop Hummel's honor.

JOHN THATAMANIL, PRESIDENT, NORTH AMERICAN PAUL TILLICH SOCIETY  
Dear Doris Lax and Colleagues of the German Paul Tillich Society,

On behalf of the North American Paul Tillich Society, let me express our shared grief at receiving word of Bishop Gert Hummel's passing. I personally became acquainted with Gert Hummel only during my first visit to Frankfurt at the most recent gathering of the International Symposium. I found him to be a person of great warmth, sincerity, dignity, and exceptional generosity.

But I, like countless other Tillich scholars here in North America and around the world, have been profoundly shaped by Professor Hummel's contributions to Tillich scholarship, particularly in and through his exceptional service of making possible the gatherings of the International Symposia in Frankfurt and the subsequent publication of the proceedings volumes. Those volumes have unfailingly set the high water mark for Tillich scholarship. Generations of Tillich scholars have been served by them, and so owe to Professor Hummel an incalculable debt whether or not they have had the pleasure to meet him personally.

Professor Hummel's passing is a great loss for all of us. The members of the North American Paul Tillich Society will strive to honor Bishop Hummel's memory by redoubling our own efforts to extend the legacy so richly bequeathed to us by him

through our continued scholarly labors and by our commitment to keep vital our connection with our colleagues in the German Tillich Society, a connection that Gert Hummel did so very much to nourish.

Sincerely,  
John J. Thatamanil, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Theology  
Vanderbilt Divinity School  
Vanderbilt University

DR. MATTHEW LON WEAVER, VICE-PRESIDENT, NAPTS

How sorry I was to hear of the passing of Gert Hummel! Please accept my deepest condolences! In this difficult time for his family, please know that I will join the other participants in working to make the Frankfurt Symposium a fitting tribute to his life, his generosity, and his love of Tillich's thought.

Peace at this difficult time! Lon Weaver

DR. MARC BOSS, PRESIDENT, APTEF  
Chers amis, dear friends,

C'est avec une grande tristesse que nous apprenons la nouvelle du décès subit de notre ami Gert Hummel. A son épouse Christiane et à sa famille ainsi qu'à vous tous, ses collègues et amis, nous voulons exprimer notre profonde sympathie au nom de l'Association Paul Tillich d'Expression Française.

It is with heartfelt pain and sadness that we greet the news of our friend Gert Hummel's death. We join our hearts with those who grieve and express in the name of the French speaking Paul Tillich Society our deepest sympathy to his wife Christiane and to his family, as well as to you all, his colleagues and friends.

Marc Boss and Douglas Nelson

Die Wörter fehlen mir einfach (die deutschen Wörter ganz speziell, aber die französischen auch) um die Gefühle, die mich überschwemmen, auszudrücken. Ich habe Gert zwar erst in Toronto so richtig persönlich kennengelernt. Und doch habe ich das Gefühl einen echten Freund zu verlieren.

Marc Boss

HEIDRUN DÖRKEN, FRANKFURT

Ganz traurig und bestürzt! Danke für Deine guten Worte, die das Richtige getroffen haben. Ich kann nicht ausdrücken, was mir alles durch den Kopf und durchs Herz geht. Sehr herzliche Grüße, Deine Heidrun.

DR. JÖRG EICKHOFF, BONN

Ich bin geschockt, fassungslos, unendlich traurig,  
Jörg

PROF. DR. HERMANN FISCHER, HAMBURG

Liebe Frau Lax,

von einer knapp dreiwöchigen Reise aus Italien zurückgekehrt, finde ich hier die schreckliche Nachricht über den plötzlichen Tod von Gert Hummel vor. Ich bin bestürzt, weil mir Gert Hummel bei den Symposien und Akademie-Tagungen immer als ein vitaler, gesunder, ausgeglichener, humor- und geistvoller Mensch begegnet ist, erfüllt von Plänen und Aktivitäten, bewunderungswürdig vor allem auch dadurch, daß er sich nach seiner Emeritierung einer so schwierigen neuen und aufopferungsvollen Tätigkeit in Georgien gewidmet hat. Media vita in morte sumus. Daran denke ich auch deshalb, weil wir beide ein Jahrgang sind!

In Trauer und Mitgefühl grüßt Sie herzlich  
Ihr Hermann Fischer

DR. PETER HAIGIS, KERNEN

Ich bin tief betroffen von dem wirklich völlig überraschenden und unfassbaren Tod Gerts... Das ist wirklich erschütternd und braucht Zeit, es zu begreifen. Über die Entscheidung, das Tillich-Symposium dennoch stattfinden zu lassen, bin ich froh. Ich denke, dass es nicht nur Gerts Wunsch entspricht, sondern dass es auch wichtig ist, dass die internationale Forschergemeinschaft, die er aufgebaut hat, mit seinem Tod nicht zusammenbricht. Dass wir im zweijährigen Rhythmus zusammenkommen, verdanken wir ja vor allem ihm, und so sollten wir auch gemeinsam einen Weg finden, sein Andenken bei unserer Zusammenkunft im Juni zu wahren und zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Wie es in Georgien weitergehen soll, ist ein großes Problem, das mich im Moment auch sehr bedrückt. Es trifft eben alle furchtbar unvorbereitet.

Liebe Grüsse Peter.

PROF. DR. REINHOLD MOKROSCH, UNI OSNABRÜCK

“Mitten im Leben sind wir vom Tod umgeben...” Ich werde es nicht fassen. Ein angezündetes Licht mag mir helfen. Ihre wunderbaren Worte, liebe Frau Lax, trösten mich.

In herzlicher Verbundenheit  
Ihr Reinhold Mokrosch

PROF. DR. WOLFGANG NETHÖFEL, FRANKFURT

Mit großer Betroffenheit nehme ich Ihre Email zur Kenntnis. Ich stimme mit Ihrer Reaktion ganz überein. ...möchte auf jeden Fall so lange wie möglich in Ihrem Kreis [beim Symposium] zu sein und Gelegenheit zu haben, dieses bedeutenden Theologen und eindrucksvollen Menschen gedenken: wie Frau Hummel und Sie sagen: so wie es ihm gemäß ist. Ich gedenke seiner, aber ich danke auch für ihn im Gebet.

Ihr Wolfgang Nethöfel

DR. ILONA NORD, FRANKFURT

Die Nachricht ist sehr traurig. ...  
Sei herzlich begrüßt, I.Nord.

DR. MICHAEL RAINER, CHEF-LEKTOR, LIT-VERLAG, MÜNSTER

Das ist ja eine traurige Nachricht. Bin ebenfalls sehr erschüttert über Herrn Prof. Hummels plötzlichen Tod. Ich hatte noch vor ca. 6 Wochen ein sehr angeregtes Telefonat mit ihm, ca. eine Viertelstunde ging es über Gott und die Welt. Wir vereinbarten nicht nur zwei Tillich-Bände, sondern sprachen auch über einen Band zur Pastoral-situation in Tiflis... Wir greifen seine Impulse weiter auf und verlieren einen verlässlichen Partner.

Ihr M. J. Rainer

JÖRG RAUBER, SAARBRÜCKEN

Diese Woche war sicher für viele Menschen, die Gert Hummel gekannt haben eine schwere und mit sehr viel Aktivität verbundene... Wie muß es da erst bei der Familie und in der georgischen Kirche zugegangen sein. Gert war sicher an vielen Stellen nicht nur ein Rädchen sondern eine entscheidende Transmissionseinheit im Getriebe. Es muß weitergehen, Leistungen und Brücken dürfen nicht einfach infrage gestellt werden, weil ein Herz aufgehört hat zu schlagen. So wird Gert es sicher wollen. Wir sind bereit unseren kleinen Beitrag zu leisten...

Ich wünsche Dir ein wärmendes Licht in diesen Tagen!

Jörg

DR. ANDREAS ROESSLER, STUTTGART

Gestern aus einem Kurzurlaub zurückgekommen, musste ich die traurige Nachricht bei der Durchsicht der E-Mails zur Kenntnis nehmen. Man kann es sich

nicht vorstellen, dass dieser vitale, dynamische Mann schon gehen musste.

DR. JOHANNES SCHWANKE, UNI TÜBINGEN  
erschüttert lese ich Ihre Zeilen. Vielen Dank für Ihre bewegenden Worte, die genau das ausdrücken, was ich für Herrn Professor Hummel empfinde. Eben habe ich mit Herrn Professor Bayer telefoniert, der im Augenblick in Norddeutschland auf einer Tagung ist. Auch er ist tief bewegt und dankt Ihnen für Ihre Worte. Er ist dankbar für das reiche Leben Gert Hummels und für die Freundschaft, die er ihm geschenkt hat.

Es grüßt Sie Ihr Johannes Schwanke

DR. DETLEF SCHWARTZ, PHILIPPSBURG  
Mit großer Betroffenheit habe ich die Nachricht vom Tode Gert Hummels gelesen. Vielleicht kannst du meine Anteilnahme - auch wenn nicht persönlich bekannt - an die Familie Hummel weiterleiten.  
Herzlich, Detlef

KIRCHENPRÄSIDENT PROF. DR. PETER STEINACKER, DARMSTADT  
Mit großem Erschrecken habe ich Ihre traurige Nachricht vom plötzlichen Tod Gert Hummels erhalten. Das ist ziemlich schrecklich, auch wenn er sich seinen Tod so gewünscht hat. Wir hätten ihn nicht nur noch gebraucht, sondern wir verlieren auch einen so überaus fröhlichen und gelehrten Mitchristen. Sie wissen, wie unsicher es bei mir immer ist, zum Symposium zu kommen. Ich finde es richtig, es in seinem Sinn zu machen, zumal wenn es seine Frau sich so wünscht. Ich versuche zu kommen, wenigstens für ein paar Stunden. Sollten Sie an eine Gedenkfeier denken und die Hilfe unserer Kirche brauchen lassen Sie es mich wissen.

Seien Sie trotz des traurigen Anlasses herzlich begrüßt  
Ihr Peter Steinacker

DR. RUSSELL MANNING, OXFORD, UK  
I was extremely sorry to receive the sad news of Gert Hummel's death. Please accept my condolences. Although I had only met Professor Hummel a number of times in Frankfurt and Bad Boll, his wisdom and warm humanity were all too clear. He made a nervous English Ph.D. student more than welcome, for which I remain most grateful. I hope to assist in his remembrance at the Frankfurt Symposium in June.

With best wishes, Russell

PROF. DR. ETIENNE HIGUET, BRASILIEN  
En recevant la triste nouvelle, je me suis tout de suite rendu compte de ce que je ne pourrais pas écrire en allemand ou en anglais. Et puisque vous comprenez bien le français, voilà ma réponse dans cette langue... Il y a des êtres humains dont la présence est si forte - en dépit de la distance géographique et culturelle - qu'on finit par les croire immortels. Il me semble que le professeur Gert Hummel est de ceux-là. Il a consacré son existence à la rencontre et au dialogue entre les différences, à la traversée des frontières dont a si bien parlé Paul Tillich. Je dois au professeur Hummel d'avoir élargi mes horizons de pensée et d'humanité, qui sait aussi de transcendance. Grâce à lui, les lecteurs de Tillich ont pu étendre leurs regards jusqu'aux limites du monde. Bien sûr, il est parti trop tôt... Mais son oeuvre et sa mission étant accomplies, il repose maintenant dans la main de Dieu.

Puissiez-vous trouver en Lui le réconfort et la paix.  
Etienne Higuët.

PROF. DR. JACI MARASCHIN, BRASILIEN  
J. Derrida in one of his books mourns friends who have died. He says that this is the saddest thing in one's life: losing friends. I did not know Gert Hummel in the day by day life. I know only the reflex of his life and work through his very creative and inspiring contribution to the German Paul Tillich Society. But I want to be present with his friends and close colleagues at this time of mourning. I hope to attend the Frankfurt meeting and, of course, sharing with our group the "saudades" of this great man.  
Looking forward to seeing you and all friends in June, Jaci Maraschin

PROF. DR. MARC DUMAS, QUÉBEC  
Ich bin von dieser Nachricht total durcheinander. Ich habe am ersten Tillich Symposium Prof. Hummel kennengelernt und habe immer seine Art und Weise zu denken und seine Freundlichkeit geschätzt. Er hat uns in Quebec auch besucht und hat die internationale Beziehung besonders gepflegt.

Können Sie bitte an seine Frau und Familie mein herzliches Beileid ausdrücken. Es ist Zeit für mich zu beten.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen

Marc Dumas

PROF. DR. ANDRÉ GOUNELLE,  
MONTPELLIER

B. Reymond m'apprend le décès de Gert Hummel. J'en ai beaucoup de peine, et je garde le souvenir, en plus de sa compétence, d'un homme amical et chaleureux. C'est une perte pour nous tous.

PROF. DR. DENIS MÜLLER, LAUSANNE,  
SCHWEIZ

Sende bitte meine besten Gedanken und Grüße an Frau Hummel und ihre Familie  
Denis Müller

PROF. DR. JEAN-CLAUDE PETIT,  
QUÉBEC

Die Nachricht von Gerts Tod hat mich sehr betroffen. Nun ist Zeit, seiner in Stille und Besinnung zu gedenken und Gott dafür zu danken, dass wir diesem bemerkenswerten Menschen begegnen durften. Gert wollte, dass wir wiederum ein anspruchsvolles und fruchtbares Symposium zusammen erleben. So soll es sein. Und nach guter schwäbischer Art werden wir dabei fröhlich bleiben.  
Ihr Jean-Claude Petit

PROF. DR. BERNARD REYMOND, LAUSANNE  
Le décès de notre ami Gert Hummel m'affecte beaucoup, tant j'appréciais son contact et me réjouissais de le retrouver en juin à Francfort. Maintenant, Dieu l'ait en sa garde...Je suis certain que, effectivement, vous ne pouviez rien faire de mieux, pour honorer la mémoire de notre ami, que de maintenir le symposium tel qu'il a été prévu. Je vous suis reconnaissant qu'il en soit ainsi.  
Recevez mes meilleurs messages.

PROF. DR. JEAN RICHARD, VIZE-PRÄSIDENT  
DER APTEF, QUÉBEC

I fully share in your sorrow and in the mourning of all Gert's close friends. I myself knew him enough to realize he was a giant with a very human heart. I admired especially how he was equally close to the great of this world and to the poor... The last time I was at Schüssler's house, he showed me the 30 minutes video of the German television on "The Good Gert". The dignity and the ministry of a bishop suited him perfectly!

PROF. DR. DR. GABRIEL VANAHIAN,  
STRASBURG

It's a very sad news and I wish to share your grief and assure you of my full fledged support for the success of next June event as planned by our incomparable and most generous host for all these many years. No doubt, nothing will be like before. He was a born leader, and the most self-effacing one at that. A paradox of grace amidst a world most in need of it. Please convey my heartfelt condolences to Frau Hummel.

Gabriel Vahanian

PROF. DR. DONALD UND SHIRLEY  
ARTHUR, USA

Gert's death is a loss for us all and his memory will be our joy.  
Don and Shirley

DR. THOMAS G. BANDY, CANADA

I am very sad to hear of Gert's death...such a good man and great apostle. I admired him and appreciated his friendship...My thoughts and prayers are with his family.  
Tom Bandy

PROF. DR. YOUNG-HO CHUN, KANSAS CITY,  
USA

What a shocking and sad new it is to hear of the death of Prof. Dr. Gert Hummel! I am so sorry to hear such a sad news, it is truly sad and inconceivable. I was looking forward to seeing him again in June.

I have not had as close a relationship with him as you did, but I respected him greatly and feel honor to have known him. I am glad that I was a part of honoring him through the Festschrift that we dedicated to him last year. Yes, of course, we should meet as planned. Please convey my deep condolences to his spouse and the family.  
In Christ, Young-Ho Chun

PROF. DR. DONALD DREISBACH, UNIVERSITY  
OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN, USA

In Germany, he seemed like such a large person, large in stature, large in intellect, and large of voice. He seemed more like a force of nature than like a mortal human being. That makes his passing just hard to believe.

I'm very glad that Darlene and I had some time with him at meals and in bars here in America, where we

could experience a different side of him. When we were with him in Germany, he was in charge of things, had lots of responsibilities, and lots of people to talk to. Here we met him in a small group where he could relax. We found him not only charming, but funny, and a great dinner and drinking companion.

He was a smart and generous man. I will miss him.  
Sincerely, Don Dreisbach

PROF. DR. TERENCE O'KEEFFE,  
NORD IRLAND

What sad news to get, just after you had circulated the programme for next meeting. I only had the privilege of meeting Gert once—that is a real sadness now for me - but I was deeply impressed by his warmth, humanity, and genuine holiness. All the Paul Tillich societies have lost a great friend. My very best wishes and prayers are for his family (and do please express my deep sorrow to Frau Hummel if you get a chance). I will keep all his family in my thoughts and prayers.

Terry

MARION PAUCK, CALIFORNIEN:

Wie sehr traurig ist Ihre Mitteilung. Ich bete für Gert Hummels Familie und für seine Seele und bin traurig dass ich ihn nie persönlich getroffen habe.  
Affection and esteem, Marion Pauck

PROF. DR. A. JAMES REIMER,  
WATERLOO, CANADA

Unglaublich! Was kann man sagen! Jim.

PROFS. MARY ANN UND ROBERT STENGER,  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

I was so shocked when I read your e-mail about Gert's death. I found it hard to process but helped in some small way when reconciliation was the theme of the liturgy at church. Gert had so many gifts, and I have so many positive memories of him and of his theological work. And when I think of those things, I just can't believe I won't see him again. Even though I waited a few days to write this, I am still finding it hard.

Among the many things I appreciated about Gert was his infectious excitement (like a child on Christmas morning) about the secret Saturday evening events for the Tillich symposia. Another was his overwhelming generosity, hospitality, and support for so many of us. He gave of himself for oth-

ers, whether students, colleagues, or his church in Georgia.

I am glad that you and Peter did the festschrift and that you organized with Rob the group giving for his Georgia parish. At least in some small way we showed him our appreciation.

Please convey our deep sympathy to Gert's wife, son, and daughter and my thanks for their commitment to the symposium. Both Bob and I are grateful to have known Gert and deeply appreciate all he has given to Tillich scholarship and to creating and sustaining our Tillich community.

Love, Mary Ann and Bob

#### GERT HUMMEL: BRIEF REFLECTIONS FROM THE EDITOR

I first met Gert Hummel on a warm, muggy day in June of 1993 in New Harmony, Indiana, site of the Paul Tillich Memorial and the First International New Harmony Conference on Tillich. I recall Ray Bulman, my colleague and mentor in the Society, discussing with me en route the participants from Europe I had not met. "You're going to like Gert Hummel," he said, with a wry smile. Little did I know the giant of a man I would meet there and come to know and deeply appreciate during the next decade.

Gert was a man larger than life, in his kindness, his generosity, in his passion for Tillich scholarship, in his care and concern for others, and in so many ways known to his friends and colleagues. He was a scholar and a teacher, a pastor and bishop, a colleague and a friend. His contribution to Tillich scholarship in sponsoring the ten International Symposia in Frankfurt is immeasurable. When he retired from the academic world, he gave his full attention and his great heart to serving the people of Tbilisi, Georgia as their bishop.

I have been very blessed to know Gert Hummel even for a few years, separated by both ocean and continent. I was so pleased to be asked to contribute to the 2003 Festschrift in honor of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Like all people who appear larger than life, there will be no single memory of Gert. I will always recall his good humor, the twinkle in his eye, and his magnanimous spirit. Gert was the kindest and most generous man I have ever known. Above all, Gert Hummel was a man of grace.

In the traditional Requiem Mass, Christians are reminded that in death, "vita mutatur, non tollitur."

In this spirit, I would like to think of Gert, not of the past, but of the present and future. I imagine him even now planning another extraordinary Tillich Symposium in some eternal time and eternal place. I imagine his taking special relish in planning the banquet on Saturday night when not just Doris but all the angels will be kept in secret. I am sure that Paulus himself will join us there.

FREDERICK PARRELLA

### EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

Dear friends and colleagues,

You have all sent mails and letters of condolence expressing your sympathy to Gert Hummel's family upon his sudden death. I forwarded your letters to Christiane Hummel, whose words of thanks to each of you she asked me to forward to you. Let me enclose my own thanks, especially for the support you have offered with respect to the Frankfurt Tillich Symposium.

Doris Lax

Dear Friends of Gert's,

My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your sympathetic words on behalf of my husband's decease. Though Gert had to die this early and unexpectedly, he was called right out of the middle of his life and

creative work, thus sparing him to reflect upon a dwindling vitality.

Werner Schüssler wrote, "Gert was a genius of friendship," and I add, "he was a genius of relationships in general." Hence, he was always greatly attached to all of the members of the American and European Tillich Societies in supporting research on Paul Tillich's work and spreading it. Yet, this was not only meant to happen theoretically. For him this could only be put into practice in vivid and individual communication. Thus, it is in full accordance with his will to have this year's International Frankfurt Symposium.

During the last months, Gert had been deeply grieved for not having found enough time to express his thanks personally to the authors of the festschrift on behalf of his 70th anniversary, a book that had really taken him by surprise. Some of you, however, might have a faint idea of what life can be like in a parish, particularly in Georgia, and that any continuous scraps of spare time are something special and rare.

I thank you for all your sympathy and commemoration you have expressed for my late husband and remain

Yours cordially,

Christiane Hummel

### A THEOLOGY FOR EVOLUTION: HAUGHT, TEILHARD, AND TILlich

PAUL H. CARR

#### Introduction

John Haught's paper (2002) "In Search for a God for Evolution: Paul Tillich and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin" expresses doubt that Tillich's rather classical theology of "being" is radical enough to account for the "becoming" of evolution. Tillich's ontology of "being" includes the polarity of form and dynamics. Dynamics is the potentiality of "being," that is, "becoming." "Therefore, it is impossible to speak of being without also speaking of becoming." Tillich's dynamic dialectic of being and nonbeing is a more descriptive metaphor for the five mass extinctions of evolutionary history than Teilhard's progress. This dialectic is also a more realistic

description of cosmic evolution. Tillich's "Kingdom of God" within history as well as "the End of History," in contrast to Teilhard's Omega Point, does not appear to contradict the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics, which predicts that the universe will ultimately disintegrate. Haught's contrast/contact modes of relating science and religion would regard Teilhard's Omega Point as an expression of spiritual hope and purpose rather than a scientifically verifiable principle. The contrast/contact position is consonant with Tillich's description of religion as part of the *vertical dimension* of ultimate concern, and science as part of the *horizontal dimension* of relationships between finite objects. Tillich did not share Teilhard's optimistic vision of the future. Both Tillich and Teilhard have made contributions to a theology of evolution..

Teilhard and Tillich come from different professions and traditions. Teilhard was a geologist, paleontologist, and a Roman Catholic Jesuit who served



as a French stretcher-bearer in the First World War. Tillich was a philosopher and theologian, who served as a Lutheran Chaplain in the German Army during World War I. When Hitler came to power, Tillich had the “distinction” of being the first non-Jew to be dismissed. He was head of the Philosophy Department in Frankfurt, Germany. Reinhold Niebuhr then invited Tillich to teach at the Union Theological seminary in New York City. Similarly, Teilhard spent the last years of his life in New York City.

### The Evolution of Life

Haught’s paper (2002, 539) “In Search of a God for Evolution” states: “Teilhard would still wonder whether the philosophical notion of *being*, even when qualified by the adjective *new*, is itself adequate to contextualize evolution theologically.” Haught may have overlooked Tillich’s dynamic dialectic between being and nonbeing used so effectively in his *Courage to Be*. Courage is the affirmation of one’s own being in spite of the anxiety of nonbeing. The oscillation between being and nonbeing is more realistic metaphor for the mass extinctions of complex life in the evolutionary history of our earth than Teilhard’s progress towards an Omega Point. In the last 500 million years, life on earth has undergone five cycles of extinction and rejuvenation, the most familiar being the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. The “nonbeing” of dinosaurs must have been accompanied by massive creaturely suffering, but it made possible the “new being” or “becoming” of the mammals. Tillich’s dialectic of being and nonbeing is also consonant with the birth and explosive death or nonbeing of stars in super novae. Gravitational attraction causes the dust from these to coalesce and *become* new stars with their planets. We are made of stardust. The term “human being” derives from the root word “humus,” the fertile soil, decayed organic matter, which came from the nonbeing of plants. The dynamic dialectic of being and nonbeing leads to “new being” and “becoming.” (This “new being” is in contrast with Tillich’s New Being, the healing power manifest in Jesus the Christ, who reunites our estranged existence with our essential being.) “Being includes and overcomes relative non-being.” (Tillich, 1963, 25.)

Tillich (1967, 458) believed that scientists discover the nature of being: “The work of the scientists is of the highest theological interest insofar as it

reveals the logos of being, inner structure of reality... In this sense the witness of science is the witness to God.”

Contrary to Gillette (2002), Tillich’s concept of being includes becoming. His structure of being includes the polarity of dynamics and form. There is no being without form. We human beings identify each other by the form of our bodies. Dynamics is the potentiality of being, that is, becoming. Tillich stated: (1951, 181)

The dynamic character of being implies the tendency of everything to transcend itself and create new forms. At the same time everything tends to conserve its own form as the basis of its self-transcendence....*Therefore, it is impossible to speak of being without also speaking of becoming.* Becoming is just as genuine in the structure of being as is that which remains unchanged in the process of becoming.

Tillich in a dialogue with process theologian Charles Hartshorne stated: “I am not disinclined to accept the process-character of being-itself” (Kegley, 1961, 339).

Tillich (1963, 15-20) (James 1995) saw the evolution of life as the actualization of potential being. It took a billion years for the inorganic realm to evolve into the organic dimension characterized by self-preserving and self-increasing cells. “The dimension of the organic was potentially present in the inorganic, its actual appearance was dependent on the conditions described by biology and biochemistry” (Tillich, 1963, 20). The “Cambrian Explosion” about 600 million years ago produced conditions which enabled organic cells to actualize their potential to evolve first into animals and then into a being with language. It took tens of thousands of years for the being with the power of language to become the historical humans we know as ourselves.

Tillich’s idea of evolution as the actualization potential being can be expressed by the saying:

“We can count the seeds in an apple.

Only God can count the apples in a seed.”

The potential being of a seed is actualized in many apples. The primordial atom at the beginning of the “big bang” had the potential to become the present universe.

For Teilhard, life is the rise of consciousness. The cultural activity of human hearts and minds is creating a noosphere, which evolved from the biosphere, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, and the

geosphere. The internet that encircles our globe is a good example of the noosphere.

Tillich deals with the theodicy problem of how a compassionate God could have allowed the suffering and loss of, for example, the dinosaurs. His theodicy is thoroughly developed in his *Systematic Theology*, (1951, 269-270) (1963, 404). In summary, God, the ground of all being, which includes all forms of life, participates in suffering through the symbol of the cross. "God as creative life includes the finite and, with it, nonbeing, although nonbeing is eternally conquered, and the finite is eternally reunited within the infinity of the divine life." Teilhard (1961, 311-313) in a 3-page Appendix to *The Phenomenon of Man*, discusses the problem of evil and concludes: "Even in the view of a mere biologist, the evolutionary epic resembles nothing so much as the way of the Cross."

#### **Teilhard's "Omega Point" vs. Tillich's "End of History"**

Teilhard believed in spiritual evolution as well as material evolution. He said (1961, 287):

The end of the world: the wholesale introversion upon itself of the noosphere, which has simultaneously reached the uttermost limits of its complexity and its centrality.

The end of the world: the overthrow of equilibrium (heat death), will detach the mind, fulfilled at last, from its material matrix, so that it will henceforth rest with all its weight on God-Omega.

Haught's contrast/contact mode, analogous to Barbour's independence mode, is best for interpreting Teilhard when he asserts that a transcendent power drives evolution to higher levels of complexity converging in an Omega point. Haught's (1995) ways of relating science and religion are: conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation.

These four approaches may be summarized in the following manner. *Conflict*: science and religion are irreconcilable, such as creationism vs. scientism. *Contrast*: no genuine conflict as they are independent and deal with different questions. *Contact*: dialogue, interaction, and possible consonance. *Confirmation*: religion supports and nourishes the scientific enterprise.

In the contrast/contact view, Teilhard's Omega Point is a religious expression of spiritual hope, which motivates and gives meaning to our living. If taken scientifically, it violates the Second Law of

Thermodynamics for the increase of cosmic entropy (or disorder) as well as modern cosmology's prediction that the universe will "freeze" as it continues to expand. The metabolism that makes life possible increases the overall entropy of the cosmos. A metaphor for understanding the Second Law of Thermodynamics is the hapless Humpty Dumpty. W. B. Yeats put it this way:

"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold."

In the contrast/contact view, the Omega Point transcends the space-time dimensions of the physical world, and is therefore not subject to the Second Law. The conviction that the universe has direction is not capable of being demonstrated by science according to Teilhard.

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Tillich (1958, 1963 Space) saw religion as part of the *vertical dimension* of depth, ultimate concern, meaning, and purpose. He regarded science, as part of the *horizontal dimension* of relationships between finite objects. Tillich (1967, 456) states:

Science lives and works in another dimension and therefore cannot interfere with the religious symbols of creation, fulfillment, forgiveness, and incarnation, nor can religion interfere with scientific statements.

Dimensions cross without disturbing each other; there is no conflict between dimensions. Tillich (1963, 15)

Tillich's "Kingdom of God" as both as the "End of History" and within history is analogous to Teilhard's Omega Point. Tillich's metaphor does not appear to contradict the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The Kingdom of God overcomes historical struggle between being and nonbeing, for power is the symbol for the eternal possibility of resisting non-being, and God exercises this power. Every victory of the Kingdom of God in history is a victory over the disintegrating consequences of the struggle between being and nonbeing. The final conquest, however, raises the eschatological question, and this is answered by the symbol of the "End of History," in which the aim of history is achieved. The divine memory judges history by evaluating the negative as

negative and the positive as positive. In an eschatological pan-en-theism, all returns to God, its source and ground.

The history of the universe will be remembered in the mind of the eternal. The eternal is not endless time, but is part of the vertical dimension, which transcends space and time. Humanity's eschatological fulfillment is its ongoing existential participation in the "eternal now." We can experience the eternal vertical dimension as a transcendent quality of the present. The fragmentary nature of these transcendent experiences is part of our finitude. This contrasts with Teilhard's view that history as being drawn by the future Omega Point towards higher and higher consciousness and complexity.

Tillich (1963, 5) after reading Teilhard's *The Phenomenon of Man*, writes:

It encouraged me greatly to know that an acknowledged scientist had developed ideas about the dimensions and processes of life so similar to my own. Although I cannot share his rather optimistic vision of the future, I am convinced by his description of the evolutionary process of nature. Of course, theology cannot rest on scientific theory. But it must relate its understanding of man to an understanding of universal nature, for man is a part of nature and statements about nature underlie every statement about him.

Since Tillich was Protestant and Teilhard Roman Catholic, it is good to recall Tillich's "Protestant Principle" as being in dialogue with "Catholic Substance." Tillich's Protestant Principle is critical of all forms of absolutism and my paper is a critique of Haught's doubt that Tillich's theology of being is radical enough to account for evolution. "Catholic Substance" is the concrete embodiment of spiritual presence, which Teilhard exemplified in his practice of Ignatius' spiritual tradition of seeing God in all things as well as his writings on evolution. These were so radical that his Jesuit superiors forbade their publication during his lifetime. Teilhard's worldview was contrary to the absolutism of his superiors and thereby an example of the Protestant Principle!

### Conclusion

Both Teilhard and Tillich have made contributions to a theology of evolution. However, Tillich did not share Teilhard's optimistic vision of the future. Tillich's "Kingdom of God" within history as well as "the End of History," in contrast to Teilhard's Omega Point, does not appear to contradict

the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which predicts that the universe will ultimately disintegrate. Tillich's dynamic dialectic of being and nonbeing is a more descriptive metaphor for the five mass extinctions of evolutionary history than Teilhard's progress towards an Omega Point. Haught's contrast/contact mode of relating science and religion would regard Teilhard's Omega Point as an expression of spiritual hope and purpose in contrast to a scientifically verifiable principle. The contrast/contact position is also consonant with Tillich's *vertical dimension* of religion and *horizontal dimension* of science.

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**SYNCRETISM OR CORRELATION:  
TEILHARD AND TILlich'S CONTRAST-  
ING METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES  
TO SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY\***

MICHAEL W. DELASHMUTT

### Preface

My research began as a quest to analyze the ways in which Tillich and Teilhard uniquely approached the science/theology dialogue in their own day. My original assumption was that the only difference between their works would be the objects of their scientific inquiry, e.g. evolution for Teilhard, and what I hypothesized to be post-Einsteinian cosmology for Tillich. What I discovered was more than a topical difference, but a radical distinction in their various perspectives on the interface between science and theology. This difference appears to have extensive implications for the use of Tillich in this dialogue as it stands today.

### Introduction

Teilhard de Chardin and Paul Tillich were both keenly aware of the cultural power that science and technology convey, and as a result, they accommodated techno-scientific language within their own theologies. For both Teilhard and Tillich, the language of the sciences opened a new world of theological investigation, and increased the viability of theological discourse in an ever skeptical and disinterested world. Yet, the extent to which their respective theologies accommodated techno-scientific language contrasts greatly. Their primary difference is a methodological one.

Teilhard's approach, as both a paleontologist and a theologian, was to integrate not only the language of science but the ideas, concepts, and goals of a scientific worldview as well. Science contributed greatly to the development of his theology, both in regards to his scientifically informed anthropology, and his cosmic eschatology. Likewise, Teilhard's pursuit of the sciences was radically altered

Tillich, Paul. (1967) *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl Braaten, 458. New York: Touchstone/ Simon and Schuster.

by its encounter with confessional Christian theology.

Despite Tillich's use of science and theology, his methodological approach was radically different. As I understand it, his later perspective on the method of correlation prohibited a theologian from engaging in the type of wholesale syncretism between science and theology, which was practiced by Teilhard. The difference between the two can be highlighted by referring to what Tillich's describes as the "theological circle"—the semi-permeable membrane that protected the theologian-qua-theologian from becoming theologian-cum-scientist. The theologian's place within the theological circle forces his engagement with other disciplines to occur only within the realm of theological reflection. I will argue that if the science and theology dialogue is to continue using Tillich's method of correlation, to be true to Tillich, it must begin to utilize the concept of the theological circle. To illustrate my point, I will dialogue with Robert John Russell's 2001 *Zygon* article, "The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue,"<sup>1</sup> and argue that the approach taken by Russell, though viable and valuable, is not Tillichian, or at least not Tillichian in respect to his first volume of the *Systematic Theology*.

### Teilhard de Chardin: Syncretism in Science and Theology

Teilhard, in *Christianity and Evolution*, asks, "What form must our Christology take if it is to remain itself in a new world?"<sup>2</sup> The new world, which Teilhard identifies, is a world, which is aware of its own evolutionary history. Gone is the naïve belief in a primal origin of the world, founded in the unmediated creative activity of the Divine. The new world's creation myth is based on a collection of random chances and is no longer inspired by a belief in the intentional activity of the finger of God. Because of Teilhard's intellectual commitments—one to the natural sciences and the other to the faith of the Jesuit Order—he needed to reinterpret Christology to make it meet "the requirements of a world that is

evaluative in structure..."<sup>3</sup> What was at stake for Teilhard, was nothing less than the very efficacy of Christian worship. Teilhard writes, "if a Christ is to be completely acceptable as an object of worship, he must be presented as the savior of the idea and reality of evolution."<sup>4</sup>

### The Cosmic Christ

In order to make sense of evolution in light of Christian theology, Teilhard made accommodations both to strict evolutionary theory and to Christian cosmology and Christology. His was a Christocentric view of evolution. He wrote:

[I]t is then, in this physical pole of universal evolution that we must...locate and recognize the plenitude of Christ...no other type of cosmos, and in no other place, can any being...carry out the function of universal solidation and universal animation which Christian dogma attributes to Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Christ's place in the evolutionary process is described by Teilhard variously as the "the Omega Point," *Christus Evolutur*, and "the Cosmic Christ." Indeed, as we shall see, the "cosmicisation" of Christ is essential to Teilhard's Christology and to his understanding of evolutionary theory.

According to Teilhard, Christ is the energy behind all cosmic history; he is both the source and goal of human existence. He states that, "Christ occupies for us, *hic et nunc* [everything and nothing] as far as position and function are concerned... [He is]...the place of the point Omega."<sup>6</sup> All of existence is held together by Christ and collimates in him. The whole of cosmic history points towards its fulfillment in the unification of all humanity (and the cosmos) into the eschatological community of which Christ is the head.

By ascribing to Christ the title of "Point Omega" in his vernacular, Teilhard is saying that Christ is the zenith of cosmic history. Quite literally, all things are created *in Him*, and are destined for unification *with Him*. Christ as end-point signifies the end of evolution, but more importantly implies that evolution has some defined goal to which it strives. In Christ, at the end of time and space, all the vastness of cosmic disparity will end in ultimate unity and unification. Time and space converge onto the Point Omega inasmuch as evolution's goal is met in the person of the Cosmic Christ—the very meaning of history.

Teilhard's contribution to 20<sup>th</sup> century thought cannot be minimized. He recognized the impact which scientific discovery makes upon culture and ergo theology, and believed that science and theology could coexist without jeopardizing the unique place of the other. Teilhard's question, "Why must Christ be revealed in the evolutionary process?" can be answered simply enough. Humanity's discovery of the evolution of all life forces theology to re-understand Christ's role in the universal and multifarious variations of this life. Yet, Teilhard's position, no matter how noble it may appear, is plagued by two crucial problems, which are the direct result of his wholesale syncretism of science with Christian theology.

I have found Moltmann's critique of Teilhard to be helpful at this point. In the *Way of Jesus Christ*,<sup>7</sup> he agrees with Teilhard that there are benefits to be found in speaking of Christ in cosmic terms, yet he firmly disagrees with Teilhard when it comes to identifying Christ with the force behind evolution. Moltmann is concerned that Teilhard's position places priority on the goal of evolution, over and against the "myriads of faulty developments and the victims of this process [who] fall hopelessly by the wayside."<sup>8</sup>

The second problem with Teilhard's theory stems from the teleological claims that he makes regarding the evolutionary process itself. Evolutionary teleology is nearly unanimously decried by contemporary evolutionary biologists and theorists today. It is no surprise then, that for someone like the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, the idea of a guided or teleological form of evolution is pure nonsense.

If the idea of Christ as the agent of evolutionary selectivity is unacceptable to theology, and if a teleological view of evolution is no longer in scientific vogue, then we must ask ourselves if there is any value to be had in attempting to create a synthesis of evolution and Christology, or for that matter, a synthesis of science and theology. I argue that there is really no benefit to be found in synthesizing the two, at least in respect to the methodology employed by Teilhard. Rather, I wish to suggest that the best option for a true dialogue between science and theology is one that honors Tillich's method of correlation, viz., his insistence upon the theological circle.

### Paul Tillich—Self-limited Correlation in Science and Religion

According to Tillich, a theological system is, first, a “function of the Christian church.” As such, theology must, “serve the needs of the church,” which implies that it must “satisfy two basic needs: the statements of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation.”<sup>9</sup> By making the church and the “spiritual life of the church” the domains of systematic theology, Tillich situates all theological dialogue within the milieu of confessional faith. But the ecclesial situation in which Theology arises is not set apart from greater cultural influences. Theology when communicated to “every new generation,” must take a detour through categories of culture in order for its message to remain contemporaneous within the situation of the church. To do so, theology incorporates the categories, though not the content, of other cultural forms.

Tillich’s self-styled theology is an apologetic theology. That is, it is one that addresses the common ground between the situation of theology, and the situation of culture. But the nature of this apologetic theology is one that only engages with culture in a self-limited fashion. According to *Systematic Theology*, volume I, a theologian’s practice of correlation, can take place only within the domain of the theological circle. It is true that Tillich’s method of correlation concerns itself with the relationship between theology and a variety of alternative disciplines (e.g., science, philosophy, sociology, and depth psychology). Though these disciplines are helpful in explaining certain domains of reality, they leave bobbing in their wake basic yet unanswered questions about the existential situation of man, questions that a kerygmatic/ apologetic theology gladly answers through the structure of Christian Revelation.<sup>10</sup> Though there may be a close relationship between these various disciplines and theology, they are separated on two fronts: their differing functions (the kinds of questions they ask) and their differing objects (the kind of answers they seek). For Tillich, a Christian theologian approaches the objects of all other disciplines only through the lens of the theological symbolism.<sup>11</sup>

Tillich is resolute that Christian theology can have no other object, no other “content” besides the object of ultimate concern. A theology that remains within the theological circle can never try to function in an authoritative way in matters of penultimate or

“preliminary concern.” This includes the arena of aesthetics, science and physical theory, artistic creation, historical conjecture, medical healing, social reconstruction, and political and international conflicts.<sup>12</sup> For Tillich, there is no *Theological-art*, *Theological-science*, *Theological-history*, *Theological-medicine*, *Theological-sociology*, or *Theological-politic*. Tillich asserts that:

The theologian as theologian is no expert in any matters of preliminary concern. And, conversely, those who are experts in these matters should not as such claim to be experts in theology. The first formal principle of theology, guarding the boundary line between ultimate concern and preliminary concerns, protects theology as well as the cultural realms on the other side of the line.<sup>13</sup>

### Tillich and Science

Tillich provides us with a myriad of examples from which we can observe how the method of correlation and the theological circle are implemented in his own pursuit of interdisciplinary dialogue. For the sake of brevity, I wish to discuss here what I consider one of the more important examples. In his essay, “Science and Theology: A Discussion with Einstein,” Tillich answers the questions raised by Einstein by engaging in a robust theological apologetic. He does not remove himself from the theological circle, but remains resolutely (and confessionally) theological. The catalyst for Tillich’s essay was a speech made by Einstein, in which he rejected the belief in a personal God. The four grounds upon which Einstein based his position were in no way new or innovative, but demanded attention nonetheless, as such statements “became significant” coming from the “mouth of Einstein, as an expression of his intellectual and moral character.”<sup>14</sup>

According to Einstein, the idea of a personal God was not an essential part of religion. Rather, he saw it as a vestigial doctrine that emerged from primitive religious superstition. In light of our modern condition, this belief was not only seen as self-contradictory inasmuch as a supreme being such as God could not possibly be both perfect and personal, but also contradictory to the scientific world-view that Einstein wished to promote. By making such statements, Einstein as a physicist-cum-cultural icon, moved from the scientific circle of his own discipline into the domain of Tillich’s theological circle. It was in this context that Tillich’s apologetic and

kerygmatic theology could truly engage with the ultimate concern conveyed by science.

Despite his interaction with the 20<sup>th</sup> century's pre-eminent physicist, Tillich prevents his theological response from becoming either philosophy or science. Tillich argues on theological grounds that Einstein's claims regarding the self-contradictory and scientifically contradictory aspects of the belief in a personal God were based upon Einstein's misunderstanding of the symbol "personal god." The relationship between science and theology is a tenuous one, but Tillich's example shows that this relationship is best experienced when both partners show respect for the other's area of specialty. Just as science cannot speak authoritatively to theology, theology cannot build doctrinal affirmations upon "the dark spots of scientific research."<sup>15</sup> Furthermore:

Theology...must leave to science the description of the whole of objects and their interdependence in nature and history, in man and his world. And beyond this, theology must leave to philosophy the description of the structures and categories of being itself and of the *logos* in which being become manifest. Any interference of theology with these tasks of philosophy and science is destructive for theology itself.<sup>16</sup>

This does not mean that science and philosophy are worthless endeavors, but that when compared with theology, they pursue different questions and purvey different answers.

According to Tillich, science can lead one to the "experience of the numinous,"<sup>17</sup> or to an awareness of the groundless ground of being; and at this turn, scientific research becomes a theological conveyance. The experience of scientific discovery may be mediated through personal, communal, and ritual religious experiences, which convey cultural events (such as scientific discovery) through the experience of religious presence in symbolic forms.

In examining the way in which Tillich engages with Einstein in this instance, we see an example of his own use of the theological circle. According to the rule of the circle, Tillich's method of correlation only functions at the point of synapse between science and theology, and not in a viral encounter, conquest, or merger of the two disciplines. Tillich's theology answers science when science poses to theology a challenging question. Science, as a cultural force, can convey ultimate concern, and it is only at this juncture that it can be addressed by theological

language. Moreover, Tillich's approach hints at the nature of the different epistemological structures of scientific and theological language. For Tillich, "scientific language is predominantly calculating and detached and religious language is predominantly existential or involved."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, science and theology describe two different dimensions of reality. Science deals with interrelations within the finite dimension, and theology and religion concern themselves with the dimension of meaning and being, which is the infinite dimension. Speaking about one dimension is rather different from speaking about the other.<sup>19</sup>

### Bringing Back the Circle

I understand the import of the theological circle to be broadly reaching for the use of Tillich in interdisciplinary discourse. However, my position is not one that is held unanimously by Tillich scholars or by those interested in the science/theology exchange. In particular, it stands in tension with Robert John Russell's *Zygon* article, "The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue," published in June 2001. Russell's article makes some very insightful observations about the role that Tillich's method of correlation can play in this emerging interdisciplinary field. It is with much respect for Russell's work and a measure of humility that I offer the following corrective opinion. Although I agree with Russell that Tillich could be useful for this contemporary dialogue, I disagree with his use of Tillich and, in particular, with his modification of the method of correlation.

Throughout his article, Russell takes a somewhat selective attitude towards Tillich's methodology. He retains those aspects of Tillich that best suit his interdisciplinary interests, yet discards those positions that do not. To this end, his analysis is completely without any reference to the theological circle, which I believe is the chief difference between Tillich's engagement with the sciences and Teilhard's syncretism.

Russell argues that for science and theology to have a fruitful conversation, the "dialogue requires cognitive input from both sides."<sup>20</sup> According to Russell, such a conversation is facilitated best by Tillich's method of correlation, which he thinks can be seen as a "precursor of what is now one of the most productive methodologies in the growing interdisciplinary field of theology and science."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, he argues that a "theological method-

ology...should be, and in fact already is, analogous to scientific methodology."<sup>22</sup> His position is influenced by other forms of epistemic ordering that are found in the work of such science-minded theologians as Nancy Murphy, John Polkinghorne, and Arthur Peacocke. It has also been advocated in a somewhat modified form by David Klemm and William Klimsky in their recent *Zygon* article about the possibility of science-based theological modeling.<sup>23</sup> According to Russell, the open dialogue, which is presently experienced between the sciences and theology, is a creative mutual interaction that can be credited to Tillich's work in the method of correlation, especially from the first volume of his *Systematic Theology*.<sup>24</sup>

To express his position, Russell cites the work of Barbour, et al., regarding the similarities between science and theology, namely, that doctrines can be read as scientific hypothesis which are held fallibly and constructed in light of the data of theology. Doctrines are a combination of Scripture, tradition, reason, personal and community experience, and the encounter with the world, culture, and nature, including the discoveries and conclusions of the social, psychological, and natural sciences. They are held seriously but tentatively, and they are open to being tested against such data.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, according to Russell, theological doctrines must be allowed to stand or fall based upon developments in natural sciences. For example, [T]he theories and discoveries of cosmology, physics, evolutionary and molecular biology, anthropology, the neurosciences, and so on, should serve as crucial sources of data for theology, both inspiring new insights and challenging traditional, outmoded conceptions of nature.<sup>26</sup>

Russell acknowledges that scientists such as Schrödinger, Einstein, Bohr, and Hoyle<sup>27</sup> were all shaped and effected by either a religious or philosophical, pre-scientific disposition. These dispositions affected the way in which these scientists engaged with their field of research. Yet, beyond theology's tacit impact, Russell seems to encourage even more input from the part of the theologian. The dialogue that he calls for between science and theology is one that is situated within an "open intellectual exchange between scholars, based on mutual respect and the fallibility of hypotheses proposed by either side, and based on scientific or theological evidence."<sup>28</sup>

At first glance, this seems like an amenable solution. After all, it's only fair that if theology is go-

ing to be dictated to by the sciences, that the sciences should be required to listen to theology as well. Would not this indicate an egalitarian remedy to the problem of an epistemological hierarchy, whereby scientific knowing is placed above all else? What is more, this would appear to be a type of correlation, a dialogue, an interchange, a meeting in which despondent disciplines converge and learn from one another in a kind of academic *koinonia*. Though this is certainly a viable option for the science and theology dialogue to pursue, this kind of interpenetration is not what is facilitated by Tillich's method of correlation.

Russell creates a distillation of Tillich's methodology, and applies it selectively to his own interests in science and theology. What is significantly missing in his approach is any mention of the theological circle. Although in early and later Tillich, the theological circle was less emphasized (leaving the door open to interdependent dialogue between theology and other disciplines), in the Tillich of *Systematic Theology*, volume I, (the primary Tillich source used by Russell in his article), the theological circle prohibits the type of ideological syncretism that Russell is espousing.

Russell's position fails to recognize that the underlying foundation of Tillich's theological circle is the belief that theology, as based upon revelation, experiences "knowing" in a different way than do the sciences.<sup>29</sup> Tillich states that, "knowledge of revelation does not increase our knowledge about the structures of nature, history, and man."<sup>30</sup> Revelation and the miraculous operate on a level which points to the "mystery of being," yet does not contradict "the rational structure of reality." This implies that revelatory events are ontologically disconnected from natural events. Nonetheless, miracles, religious ecstasy, and revelation do not destroy the "structure of cognitive reason"; thus Tillich implores the reader to allow such events to remain open to "scientific analysis and psychological, physical...[and] historical investigation." Tillich encourages this kind of investigation because he is confident that, revelation belongs to a *dimension of reality* for which scientific and historical analyses are inadequate. Revelation is the manifestation of the depth of reason and the ground of being. It points to the mystery of existence and to ultimate concern. It is *independent of what science and history say about the conditions in which it appears; and it cannot make science and history dependent on itself. No*



conflict between different dimensions of reality is possible. Reason receives revelation in ecstasy and miracles, but reason is not destroyed by revelation, just as revelation is not emptied by reason.<sup>31</sup>

Tillich's use of multiple dimensions of reality facilitates his method of correlation by prohibiting one from falling back on what Russell terms as "epistemic reduction"<sup>32</sup>—that which makes truth claims of the ultimate contingent upon the preliminary. Yet, despite the fact that Russell is quick to laud Tillich's multi-dimensionality as a panacea for "epistemic reduction," he contradicts Tillich's overall methodology by asserting that, "scientific theories" may "offer modest and indirect support to theological theories by serving as data to be explained theologically or as data which then tends to confirm theology."<sup>33</sup>

Russell seems to wish to encourage an open dialogue between science and theology where theology can offer theologically inspired scientific observations to science, and science can offer scientifically inspired theological observations to theology. Yet, this pursuit seems paradoxical to me, as Russell leaves the theologian severely limited in his ability to contribute to this dialogue. Russell's so-called "asymmetrical" type of relation allows theologians a limited voice when engaging with the sciences. In one example, he cites how a theologian may engage with a physicist; yet the theologian's engagement is crippled, as he is forbidden from appealing to "some special kind of authority, whether based on scripture, church dogma, magisterial pronouncements, or whatever."<sup>34</sup> In light of this epistemic limitation, I wonder whether a theologian would have anything sensible to say at all. With scripture, dogma, and pronouncements removed from his cache, on what basis does a theologian speak? Is not theological proclamation based upon divine revelation which is ascribed by the community a "special kind of authority" and recognized by most to be either magisterial or scriptural? If theology is to follow a scientific methodology which uses scientific forms of verification, how can theories-cum-doctrines be created without these essential elements? It would seem that in this kind of relationship, the confessional theologian has little room to work. Although secular theology could thrive in this environment, the type of theology that Tillich offers us is removed from its ecclesial and communal context, and thus loses its kerygmatic edge.

By making science and theology interdependent dialogue partners, one fails to uphold Tillich's ideal of the theological circle, and in so doing, disregards his basic belief that theological truth is different from scientific truth. We learn from Tillich that religious truth claims describe the world in different ways than do scientific truth claims. The theologian bases his propositions on experience of ultimate concern, whether communal, individual, or historical, and operates within a world of texts, of myths, and of interpretations of culture. The hypothesis of Christian ecumenism—*credo in Deum Patrem*—cannot be dissected in the laboratory for analysis; it is simply believed in faith.

The problem of a Tillichian correlation transforming into a Teilhardian syncretism is reminiscent of the recent debate opened in *Zygon's* latest issue regarding the efficacy of theological modeling. David Klemm and William H. Klink wish to argue that theological propositions can be defended from a methodological position which is similar to that used by the sciences. In response to this, Langdon Gilkey writes the following poignant warning, which is apply suited to our matter at hand.

[T]here is at best only an *analogy* between the cognition achieved in science and that sought for in theology...I believe that we can in truth speak of cognition, of knowledge, and of truth in the area of theology; but we need to be very careful neither to claim it to be too similar to scientific cognition nor to deny any possibility of cognition. Above all, we need to recognize that there are seemingly different levels of truth and so different modes of cognition and of knowledge at best analogical to one another.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

In the context of the science and theology dialogue, it would seem that the example of Teilhard's syncretism is often mistakenly read into Tillich's method of correlation. If we truly wish to use Tillich for this dialogue, I suggest that we pause and reflect upon his own words regarding the problems of interdisciplinary epistemology:

Attempts to elaborate a theology as an empirical-inductive or a metaphysical-deductive "science," or as a combination of both, have given ample evidence that no such attempt can succeed.<sup>36</sup>

As Tillich would have understood it, apologetic/kerygmatic theology is based upon an "epistemol-

ogy” that is more about an ontological encounter with ultimate concern than it is about acquired knowledge based upon deduction. The risk in knitting too closely the content of theology with the content of the sciences is the reduction of the ontic nature of theological experience into the noetic and epistemological nature of scientific deduction.

Theological discourse is not something, which is grasped firmly in the hand, but something, which is accepted from the stance of a second naïveté. This does not mean that theology cannot cope with, or appropriate, certain aspects of the sciences, as they reflect an overarching form of cultural habituation; but it does imply that if theology is to be true to its message and history, it must remain dedicated to the existential and the symbolic. Science, with its emphasis on epistemological certainty, deduction, and empiricism does not often leave room for the symbolic, existential, or transcendental nature of theology.

In 1958, when Tillich’s innovative theology was seen as either being a step forward in translating Christian theology into the parlance of the world, or a step backwards in sacrificing the kerygma at the altar of culture, an editor at *Theology Today* wrote that he wondered, “whether in representing and translating the Gospel for our day Tillich actually provides new meaning for old truth or only succeeds in perverting and distorting what is essentially Christian.”<sup>37</sup> One wonders in light of the present use of Tillich in the science and theology dialogue, if representing and translating Tillich for our own day, the science and theology dialogue provides new meaning of old truth, or only succeeds in perverting and distorting what is essentially (or existentially) Tillichian.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Russell, “The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue,” *Zygon* 36, 2 (2001): 269-308

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. *Christianity and Evolution*, trans. René Hague (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969), 76.

<sup>3</sup> Teilhard de Chardin. *Christianity and Evolution*, 78

<sup>4</sup> Teilhard de Chardin. *Christianity and Evolution*, 78

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “The Confluence of Religions,” *Theology Today* 27 (April 1970): 68

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Super-humanite, Super-Christ, Super-Charite*, 1943, 9, quoted in N. M Wildiers,

*An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 135

<sup>7</sup> In his *Theology Today* essay, "Hope and History," Moltmann criticizes the worldview, from which Teilhard develops his theology. He argues against a cosmological metaphysic, from which God's existence is proved through phenomenology, because humanity's identity is no longer rooted in a connection with the cosmos qua cosmos. [Jürgen Moltmann, "Hope and History," *Theology Today* 25 (October 1968): 369-386.]

<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 292ff

<sup>9</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Digswell Place: James Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1964), 1:3

<sup>10</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:59ff

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:29

<sup>12</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:15

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:15

<sup>14</sup> Paul Tillich, "Science and Theology: A Discussion with Einstein," *Theology of Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 127

<sup>15</sup> Tillich, "Science and Theology: A Discussion with Einstein," 129

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 131

<sup>18</sup> Paul Tillich, "Religion, Science and Philosophy," in *The Spiritual Situation of our Technical Society*, ed. J. M. Thomas (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 162

<sup>19</sup> Tillich, "Religion, Science and Philosophy," 161

<sup>20</sup> Russell, "The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue," 270

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> David E. Klemm and William H. Klink, "Dialogue on Theological Models: Constructing and Testing Theological Models," *Zygon* 38, no. 3 (2003): 495-528

<sup>24</sup> Russell, "The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue," 270

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 273

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 277

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 276

<sup>29</sup> Tillich argues for the theological circle, as a means of providing an alternative compromise to the conflicting theological epistemologies of Barth and Bultmann. This issue became less pressing in Tillich's later work, and so the theological circle is not as prevalent a theme. Despite this, I contest that the theological circle remains an im-

portant issue when one considers implementing a Tillichian methodology.

<sup>30</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:129

<sup>31</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:130-1

<sup>32</sup> Russell, "The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue," 280

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Langdon Gilkey, "Problems and Possibilities of Theological Models: Responding to David Klemm and William Klink," *Zygon* 38, no. 3 (2003): 533

<sup>36</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:11

<sup>37</sup> Hugh T. Kerr, "Living on the Growing Edge," *Theology Today* 15 (April 1958): 10

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*Reminder for those attending the  
NAPTS Meeting in November in  
San Antonio: AAR and SBL Reg-  
istration and Housing opened on  
May 17.*

*Please send information about new  
publications, calendar events, or  
comments on the articles published  
in this issue to the editor.  
Thank you.*

*Coming in the summer Bulletin:  
news of the International Sympos-  
ium in Frankfurt and the annual  
meeting of the Brazilian Paul Til-  
lich Society*

**DIMENSIONS OF LIFE: THE INORGANIC AND THE ORGANIC IN PAUL TILlich AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN**

JAMES E. HUCHINGSON

The problem with comparing Paul Tillich and Teilhard de Chardin lies not in the lack of corresponding themes but in their abundance. In addition, each has assembled a conceptual system of vast sweep and great inclusiveness, with all elements tightly interwoven to the extent that any discussion of one inevitably leads to a discussion of all. Directing traffic at the intersection of their thought requires considerable vigilance. I would also like to include the notion of system, sometimes known as the systems approach, in an attempt to shed some additional light on several common themes. So now, our task is to direct traffic between three intersecting streets—a vastly more demanding task. In this situation, pileups are not uncommon, so stay alert.

Since the notion of system will provide much of the vocabulary, the warp and woof of this discussion, a short introduction is in order. Systems theory arose in part in reaction to attempts in the biological sciences to reduce the dimension of the organic to that of the inorganic, of reducing biology to chemistry and physics. Ludwig von Bertalanffy, sometimes hailed as the father of systems theory, recognized early on that this reductionistic program resulted in the death of life. He sought for a mediating approach between the two incompatible options of his day—mechanistic materialism and vitalism. The notion of *system* provided this mediating principle.

In simple, even trivial terms, a system may be defined as a bounded arrangement of parts or components and the relationships between them. Indeed, the “whole” is nothing more than the integration of the parts through their relationships. Systems may be found in every realm. In fact, since we have yet to discover an indivisible whole or absolutely simple element, all known beings are systems. The differences between systems lie primarily in their organization. Systems theorists do not ask, “What is it made of?” but rather, “How is it arranged?”. The degree of organization or arrangement is determinative. Machines and organisms are systems, albeit at opposite extremes of the spectrum of organization. Machines are relatively simple while living things are rich and complex. While they exist along a continuum, the distance between them is enormous.

Teilhard recognized this richness when he characterized life as the “physics of immensity.” He is right about that.

This immensity of associated particulars in an organic system is neither arbitrary nor homogeneous. It is highly structured. Both Bertalanffy and Teilhard rely heavily on the notion of complexity to express this structure. Teilhard offers a clear account.

We will define the ‘complexity’ of a thing as the quality the thing possesses being composed—of a large number of elements, which are more tightly organized among themselves. In this sense the atom is more complex than the electron, and a living cell more complex than the highest chemical nuclei of which it is composed, the difference depending (on this I insist) not only on the number and diversity of the elements included in each case, but at least as much on the number and correlation of the links formed between these elements. It is not therefore a matter of simple multiplicity but of organized multiplicity: not simple complication but centered complication (FM 105).

Essential to the “centered complication” of any natural system is the notion of groupings of components to form ever more complex and inclusive levels within the systems itself. That is, systems are hierarchically arranged such that simpler constituents integrate at one level to give rise to units at the next level constituted by this union. This structure means that the components of any level look *down* as systems to their components and *up* as subsystems to greater systems of which they are the essential components. Except at the extremes, all natural systems are what Arthur Koestler called “Janus-faced” because they do not escape this character of being compounded components. Teilhard, who subscribes to this principle, puts it nicely:

Each element of the cosmos is woven from all the others; from beneath itself by the mysterious phenomenon of ‘composition,’ which makes it subsistent through the apex of an organized whole; and from above through the influence of unities of a higher order which incorporate and dominate it for their own ends (44).

Tillich takes exception to this language of hierarchy or ascending scale of levels as a “uniting principle” (13). “The term level,” he says, “is a metaphor which emphasizes the equality of all objects belonging to a particular level. They are ‘leveled,’ that

is, brought to a common plane and kept on it. There is no organic movement from one to the other; the higher is not implicit in the lower, and the lower is not implicit in the higher" (13). This leaves the only relation of levels as interference in the form of either "control" or "revolt." A primary example of control is mechanistic reductionism in which "the inorganic swallows the organic" (14). A corresponding example of revolt is vitalism, where, to quote Tillich again, "inorganic processes are interfered with by a strange 'vitalist' force" (14).

His solution is to replace the metaphor "level" with that of "dimension." The advantage of "dimension" is that no interference is possible between several dimensions. In terms of space, for example, "depth does not interfere with breadth, since all dimensions meet in the same point" (15). He lists the inorganic, organic, psychological, spiritual, and historical as the major dimensions of life, while admitting that the actual number of intermediate dimensions is indefinite.

It is not clear that Tillich has advanced the issue significantly through his introduction of this new cluster of dimensional metaphors to replace those of hierarchy and levels. While the substitution avoids the interference problems of control and revolt, it leaves the troubling situation of the relation of the inorganic and the organic mostly in place. Actually, neither insulated levels nor dimensions disclose very much. The problem is that Tillich overemphasizes the distinction between levels by allowing no association between adjacent levels and by referring only to the common features of the components of one level while saying little about their consolidating interaction. I beg to disagree with his criticism that there is no "organic movement" from one level to another. In general systems theory and in the thought of Teilhard, it is precisely the coming together of particular elements at one level through association and connection (Teilhard referred to it as *rapprochement*) that gives rise to entities constituting the next higher level and provides for this organic movement. These more complex entities are different from their constituents in new and perhaps unpredictable ways, but they certainly are not independent of them. There is no severe demarcation between adjacent levels such that neither participates in the other. Any complex system presupposes the stable integration of its parts without which it would have no existence as a unique emergent entity. Indeed, the character and wholeness of any system as a

being in its own right arises from the interconnectedness and interaction of its components. It is constituted by this rich and dynamic association. I have used "levels" here, but I could have used "dimensions" instead and arrived at the same account. Perhaps the more appropriate metaphor is neither levels nor dimensions, but constitutive inclusiveness in which Tillich's "interference" is replaced by the more neutral term "influence" or by "mutual dependency."

In concluding his discussion of this topic, Tillich introduces an idea with which Teilhard and systems theorists can readily agree. He says that dimensions may be graded according to value. "That which presupposes something else and adds to it is by so much the richer" (17). Historical man is the highest grade and therefore to be most valued because he "includes the maximum number of potentialities in one living actuality" (17).

A complex system is rich in terms of its behavior. The greater the complexity of a system is, the greater its range of possible action is. With complexity come versatility, responsiveness, novelty, creativity, and directed action. Such systems are open in that they are capable of extensive and vital engagement with the world. The corresponding dimensions in Tillich are the psychological, spiritual, and historical. They are compatible with an account of open systems.

Tillich frequently refers to "the multidimensional unity of life" (15). By this, he means that these higher dimensions—the organic, psychological, spiritual, and historical—are potentially present in and funded by the lower dimension of the inorganic, in the physical and chemical realms. Indeed, he defines "life" as an ontological concept. Life is the process of the actualization of potential and a structural condition of all beings, not just organic or living ones. Hence, the higher dimensions of life are "potentially real" (15) in the inorganic where they await the appearance appropriate environmental conditions for their actualization. Indeed, Tillich says that, "the inorganic has a preferred position among the dimensions in so far as it is the first condition for the actualization of every dimension" (19). So, the multi-dimensionality of life includes possibility as well as actuality.

At this point Tillich and Teilhard are not far apart, except perhaps in their language. Tillich prefers an account that conforms to traditional ontological vocabulary. To this extent, he is insightful, but

not always specific. Teilhard employs terms and concepts taken from the natural sciences, and adds many neologisms. The process Tillich calls "life" is for Teilhard the universal process of in gathering in which the radically disconnected elements of a field of infinite multiplicity enter into an ever greater and more inclusive association tending toward, and finally culminating in, a cosmic arrangement of unsurpassable complexity and centeredness, the Omega Point. Of course, evolution describes this grand process as advancing through the various dimensions of the inorganic to complex organisms, to the human species and its consolidation in the noosphere, earth's envelope of consciousness, and eventually beyond. The higher dimensions emerge from the lower, thereby actualizing the potential of the inorganic, and they continue to depend on the inorganic for their material foundations even as they strive forward.

The two thinkers appear to diverge in one important respect, however. Tillich prefers to situate potentiality in the present actual where it awaits the opportunity to unfold and develop. Teilhard seems to locate potentiality in the future as unrealized prospects awaiting actualization through complexification. This difference may be no more than a matter of emphasis or way of speaking. But it may also indicate an important ontological distinction that gives rise to the ways that Tillich and Teilhard characterize their perspectives and approaches.

In pursuing further this question of the relationship between the inorganic and the organic, it would be fruitful to turn our attention to several of Tillich's higher dimensions, especially the psychological and spiritual (a discussion of the historical dimension is too ambitious for these limited remarks). The psychological dimension emerges from the organic when the constellation of conditions allowing for its actualization are present. With respect to the other dimensions, Tillich pays relatively scant attention to the psychological dimension. Its distinguishing feature seems to be that "inner awareness" that appears in the higher animals. In other discussions, he refers to "self awareness." Here is his definition: "Self awareness means that all encounters of a being with its environment are experienced as related to the individual being that is aware of them." (36)

In a subsequent discussion of mind in its relation to the spiritual dimension (24), Tillich includes awareness, perception, and intention, and also intelligence, will, and directed action. Mind, he says, ap-

pears in rudimentary form in higher animals, but becomes a matter of spirit only in man where it is related to the universals in perception and intention, thereby generating true meaning.

Teilhard places utmost importance on the psychological dimension. Self-consciousness is consciousness of oneself as an object. Animals know, but only humans know that they know, and this makes all the difference, because this dimension of reflection is accompanied by that fearful capacity of freedom, the presence of which is decisive for Teilhard.

With respect to the dimension of spirit, Teilhard frequently associates spirit with this self consciousness, sometimes even using these terms and others, such as "thought," as synonyms. This complicates any attempt to relate his use of these words to the multiple terms Tillich uses. It is certainly not the case, however, that Teilhard restricts his use of spirit to self-consciousness. One of Teilhard's most powerful and contentious ideas is the central role of spiritual energy, which is the "within" (*dedans*) of all things, so fundamental to the cosmic process of complexification. In its primordial manifestations, spiritual energy drives the elementary particles of being into associations and these primitive systems into greater associations with like entities, giving rise to ever more complex systems. In the realm of the inorganic, spiritual or "radial" energy is dominated by the material aspect of the physical world and by its dialectical partner, "tangential" energy, the energy of thermodynamics. Radial energy becomes detectable only in high grade or complex inorganic systems, living systems, and finally dominates in the most complex three pounds of matter known in the universe, the human brain. This description is, of course, a simple account of Teilhard's "law of complexity consciousness."

Tillich concurs in his location of spirit. He says "...the dimension of spirit appears for us only in man." But at one point, he allows for a more inclusive use of spirit. He asks "what keeps life alive?" and answers that "spirit is the power of life," but quickly adds the caveat that "spirit is not identical with the inorganic substratum which is animated by it; rather spirit is the power of animation itself and not a part added to the organic system" (21). Despite this disagreement, with a little imagination, Tillich's point can be translated into the systems perspective. For example, in one of his essays, Bertalanffy asks, what is the difference between a living and a dead

dog? After all, in terms of the inorganic dimension, a living canine and its corpse are essentially identical in their physical composition. What is surrendered at the point of death is the dynamic process of life, that “power of animation,” which, in terms of systems theory, is the incredibly complex pattern of interaction between the immense number and variety of components of the animal system that is terminally disrupted when the animal dies. The conditions necessary for life, expressed in the terms provided by biology (metabolism) or more generally in the notions of the theory of living systems, are no longer present, and Bertalanffy’s canine system falls apart, goes to pieces, loses its center, or as Tillich says in quoting Genesis 3:19, “Biblically speaking, you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken” (19).

Likewise, Teilhard’s spiritual energy is not some sort of ghostly vapor that saturates and animates complex organic systems. Rather it is utterly dependent upon physical or tangential energy, the measure of which is the task of science. Without the vehicle of inorganic and organic arrangement, and without the increase of that arrangement over time, spiritual energy would not be manifested, sustained, and increased. It, too, would be lost in the dissolution of its material vehicle at the point of death. This account resonates with Tillich’s multidimensionality of life. The actualized higher dimensions, beginning with the organic and moving on to include the psychological, spiritual, and historical, are dependent on the “constellation of inorganic structures” (19). Without these structures, “all realms of being would dissolve” (19). As dramatized by Bertalanffy’s canine, the death of an organism is such a dissolution.

Tillich and Teilhard come very close in their understanding of another common term, “center,” and its variants. Tillich associates centeredness with the individual. “The fully individualized being is...the fully centered being” (32). As he continues, Tillich closely approaches the systems understanding. “The term ‘centeredness’ is...metaphorically applied to the structure of being in which an effect exercised on one part has consequences for all other parts” (33). Since individualization is paired as an ontological and hence universal pole with participation, its cor-

related centeredness is also universal and applies even in the inorganic realm. “Every living thing,” Tillich says elsewhere, “is sharply centered; it reacts as a whole.” (35)

Teilhard and systems theory substantially agree. For Teilhard, centeredness is predictably the effect of complexification and a primary manifestation of spiritual energy. A system is centered, or possesses a center, when its many components are grouped together with a high degree of organization such that, as Tillich says, “an effect on one part has consequences for all the other parts.” This is just another way of saying that, in their overall coordination, the elements give rise to a whole whose actions supervene as an individual over the vast multitude of its constituents. The many become one—a whole or individual—and that one enjoys a freedom or spontaneity that is beholden to the rich arrangement of its parts and not reducible to them. Or, as Teilhard insists

Spiritual perfection (or conscious ‘centricity’) and material synthesis (or complexity) are but two aspects or connected parts of the same phenomenon (60-61).

If nothing more, this exploration reveals the Olympian inclusiveness of the respective philosophical systems of Tillich and Teilhard. Nothing remains unaccounted for in the shadows beyond the ontological and cosmic frame. One could anticipate overlapping agreement about certain aspects of the world. What is unanticipated, however, is the degree to which the concepts and terminology of systems thought, an approach more indebted to science than metaphysics, slips smoothly into this common ground to contribute illumination and insight.

**Note:** All references for Tillich are from *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, Part IV, Life and the Spirit, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963.

For Teilhard, all references are from the *The Phenomenon of Man*, London: Wm. Collins Sons & Co., 1959, except for a single quote from *The Future of Man* (FM), New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

Editor's Note: The following four articles are from a panel discussion of Bernard Patrick (Brian) Donnelly's book, *The Socialist Émigré: Marxism and the Later Tillich*. The book was published by Mercer University Press in 2004.

## TILlich AND MARX ON RELIGION

RONALD H. STONE

Last month I walked with my grandchildren into Humboldt University in Berlin. As a tourist during the cold war, I had lectured to the faculty on Tillich's religious socialism. I was astonished to see that the grand staircase still bore Marx's 11<sup>th</sup> thesis against Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it." My political-economist son and his German instructor wife who is now a minister debated the translation, and I stood there reflecting on the provocative character of this aphorism for a university, by its most influential student.

This panel comprises a discussion between two schools, the University of Ulster and the University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. There is agreement on the central thesis of Brian Donnelly's book<sup>1</sup> between the two schools that Karl Marx remained a source for Tillich's reflection even into his last years. There is originality in Dr. Donnelly's book of which Pittsburgh apprehended very little until he made his case. We will return to that subject in a few minutes.

Donnelly overcame a Republican ethicist (a lonely fellow in the Society of Christian Ethics), a neo-liberal economist, a relatively apolitical or non-socialist historian, and disappointed Tillichians to show that Marx remained an interlocutor of Tillich's Protestantism and that Tillich remained relatively involved in political issues until his death. I tend to think reference to the essays by Tillich, including the ones published in Germany and Japan, would accomplish this by itself. Knowledge of Tillich's biography reinforces the conviction that he was involved in several controversial political causes regarding Zionism, nuclear weapons, electoral politics, and political repression.

It is also interesting to note that, according to Christopher Niebuhr, he rejoined the Social Democratic Party of Germany after World War II.<sup>2</sup> Even while writing *Systematic Theology*, he was involved in more political controversy than most of the pro-

fessors of philosophy of religion at his respective schools of Union, Harvard, and Chicago.

Donnelly reviews most of the evidence of his late life's religious socialist commitments and his dialogue with Marx, and he is persuasive. He carries on his argument to show humanist-Marxist influence on Tillich's concepts of ideology and symbolism, the proletariat and the church, the relationship of theory and praxis, history and dialectics, power and revolution, and materialism and supernaturalism. These chapters are less persuasive to me than many of the ideas in his introduction and conclusion. If I understand his book, he wants to regard Marxian ideas as foundational for *Systematic Theology*. I regard Marx as a lively interlocutor of Protestant theology and their relationship being one of dialectic rather than dependence.

The references to Marx in *Systematic Theology* are not at crucial points and there is more utilization of Hegel and Schelling than of Marx. Tillich's use of Marx in *Systematic Theology* is meager while at the same time he is publishing on Marx elsewhere. He was publishing too much on Marx in the 1950s and 1960s to regard the absence of Marx from *Systematic Theology* as a political necessity. The threads of Marx are interesting, but the sources of Tillich include the German idealists and the existentialists as much as they do Marx whom Tillich read through Weberian glasses from his situation.

*Chapter 2: Ideology and Symbolism.* Donnelly thinks that his use of ideology and symbolism, "[i]s an instance where Tillich gains from Marxism a concept that affords expansion into theological thought."<sup>3</sup> But, of course, the study of symbol has many richer sources than Marxism and Tillich refuses the social-material reductionism of religion into ideology. Religion knows transcendence and the individual's relationship with the divine is related to, but not derived from, material conditions as Tillich asserted in his first writing on socialism for his defense to the Brandenburg consistory in 1919.

*Chapter 3: The Proletariat and Church.* Donnelly is correct that "the Proletariat" is an important concept for Tillich. The failure to locate an identifiable proletariat in America reduced his religious socialism to a concept rather than its being an active force of a political movement for Tillich. But I find it unconvincing that proletariat corresponds to his frequently used concept of the latent church. His significant encounters with the proletariat were as a minister in Berlin and as chaplain in the army. The



church was first, and every pastor worth one's keep discovers the latent church beyond the church. Tillich put it into words, as Ernest Troeltsch had earlier in his *Social Teachings*. The proletarian consciousness of Marx is too far removed from the Republican consciousness of the American church or American experience to be foundational for a serious student of the church or the latent church in America. One could argue for the proletarian consciousness of the civil rights movement, perhaps, but that that was more of a manifestation of the Black church, led by its leaders. The proletariat alive to Karl Marx in the 19th century was, as Terrence O'Keefe<sup>4</sup> argued, absent in the later Tillich. It was channeled into unionism in 20<sup>th</sup> century America. Is it not, rather than the concept of the proletariat carrying over into the concept of the later Tillich's latent church or latent spiritual community, that the religious elements including the prophetic critique of his religious socialism appear in his doctrine of the church.

*Chapter 4: Truth and Praxis.* This chapter focuses on the socialist essay "Kairos and Logos" (1926) and an existentialist essay "Participation and Knowledge" (1955) stressing their similarity and continuity in Tillich's epistemology. An even greater revolutionary socialist perspective lies under Tillich's notion of *kairos* than that of Logos. Donnelley "teases out" the influence of Karl Marx on Tillich's epistemology. Fuller inquiries into Schelling and existentialism are needed for the full story.

*Chapter 5: "History and Dialectics.* Tillich learned historical interpretation from many sources and among them was Marx. Whether his acceptance of the dialectics of history owes more to Hegel or Marx may await the transcription and translation of his writings on Hegel from the Harvard archive. But his long-term critique of Marx on history was to reject Marx's utopianism. He, of course, was not sympathetic to the graveside views of Engels that Marx had uncovered the laws of history. Nor was Tillich interested enough in the economic basis of Marx's dialectical materialism to ever learn much about economics. For Tillich, politics was the central determining force as he argued in *Systematic Theology*. His ideas about history are much freer than Marx's are. The concept of *kairos* may be compatible with Marx, the younger, but it is doubtful that the Marxists who relied upon the more determinative aspects of Marx's dialectical materialism would have found it acceptable. Certainly, Donnelley is correct: Marx's terms and aspects of his perspective linger in Tillich,

but in the *Systematic Theology*, they were changed. Even *theoria* and *praxis* are usually utilized in *Systematic Theology* in a non-Marxist separation of the two into two different processes. *Theoria* is the reception of culture while *praxis* is reactive to culture.<sup>5</sup> They are united in eternal life, but under conditions of estrangement they are two processes.<sup>6</sup>

*Chapter 6: Power and Revolution.* In the chapter on power, Donnelley tries to tease out the Marxian elements of two essays of Tillich, "The Problem of Power," and "Love, Power and Justice." I cannot find much characteristic of Marx in either one, but then it must be recognized we learned our Marx from different tutors and that mine came from the Oxford liberals from the continent, Isaiah Berlin and John Plamenatz. I would ascribe, as Tillich did, his awakening to power as a debt to Nietzsche. The chapter expounds very well the differences between Tillich and Marx on the state. Here Tillich in *Love, Power and Justice* remains the philosopher of politics as distinct from the elder Marx's economic interpretations or the earlier Marx's sociological interpretation. A rereading of the "Problem of Power" suggests it is more about the struggle between socialism and National Socialism in 1931 than it is about Marx. Engels at the graveside regarded Marx as above all a revolutionist; we would not so regard Tillich.

*Chapter 7: Materialism and Supernaturalism.* The chapter on materialism connects the Hegelian tradition through its Marxist embodiment to characteristics of Tillich's theology. Tillich could absorb dialectical materialism into his own synthesis. Most of his peers in the Fellowship of Socialist Christians were materialistic in the non-deterministic, humanitarian, and appreciative way Tillich interpreted it. Tillich chose to see materialistic dialectics sympathetically and interpreted it into his own theological perspective. Niebuhr rejected dialectical materialism while affirming Christian realism similar to Tillich's view of history. The inclusion and rejection by both of them was characteristic of their methods.

Finally, I like Donnelley's conclusion to his book. It has a humble touch, which causes me to wonder if I have exaggerated the stridency of some of the middle six chapters. He concludes that Tillich noted that Marxism could be utilized by theology so that the original Marxist ideas were obscured. This obscuration is even more noted when full credit to Tillich's use of the Bible, Augustine, Luther, Hegel,

Schelling, Weber, Troeltsch and the contemporary colleagues of Germany and America is provided.

I commend the book to the Tillich Society as a very fascinating read, and may it provoke many arguments.

<sup>1</sup> Brian Donnelly, *The Socialist Émigré* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003).

**SUBLIMINAL MARXIST OR OVERT RELIGIOUS SOCIALIST—RESPONSE TO BRIAN DONNELLY'S *THE SOCIALIST ÉMIGRÉ: MARXISM AND THE LATE TILlich***

**MATTHEW LON WEAVER**

Brian Donnelly's new book, *The Socialist Émigré: Marxism and the Late Tillich*,<sup>1</sup> pursues an important and basic question: did Tillich shed his Marxist—or more correctly, religious socialist—skin following his move to the United States? The book is thought provoking throughout. I appreciated the re-immersion into classic texts by Tillich on Marx. I found Donnelly's treatment of Tillich on ideology and utopia to be quite helpful. At the same time, I believe his interpretation of Tillich would have been deepened by the following: rooting Tillich's approach to power in the potencies of Schelling; fully embracing existentialism as the larger context for Tillich's approach to Marx; and more extensively painting the broader picture of Tillich's biblical and intellectual forebears that go significantly beyond Marx. In short, I believe portraying a broader Tillichian context, one in which Marx's insights played a role, would have strengthened the book. Further, given the publisher's goal of bringing the book to press in time for the 2003 North American Paul Tillich Society and American Academy of Religion meetings, I believe the book became vulnerable to minor editing lapses that require correction.<sup>2</sup> Finally, it is my view that Donnelly's interpretations of a handful of passages from Tillich do not fully reflect Tillich's perspective.<sup>3</sup> Since offering this response at the NAPTS meetings in Atlanta in November 2003, I have written to Mr. Donnelly with my questions and anticipate his response.

My primary interest here, however, is Donnelly's argument that Tillich was forced into a sub

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Niebuhr, "Card to Ronald H. Stone," (2001). In author's possession.

<sup>3</sup> Donnelly, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Donnelly, 78, n. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 403.

liminal Marxism, particularly in the cold war years. At one point Donnelly opines, "[W]e may speculate that in the circumstances of living in the paranoia of McCarthyist America, [Tillich] was less willing to speak too openly about Marx. And so to use Marxist concepts subliminally seems an understandable recourse for scholars such as Tillich."<sup>4</sup> Contrary to Donnelly, I believe the evidence argues for Tillich's less often expressed, but nonetheless, *open* and even *public* commitment to the same values of religious socialism in his later period as he had expressed in the earlier years.

First, Tillich's less frequent political commentary and activity was a result of failure rather than fear. In the late 1940s, Tillich frankly admitted his deep disappointment with the onset of the cold war and explained his lessening political activism as a result:

Instead of a creative *kairos*, I see a vacuum which can be made creative only if it is accepted and endured and...is transformed into a deepening 'sacred void' of waiting. This view naturally implies a decrease of my participation in political activities. My change of mind in this connection was also influenced by the complete breakdown of a serious political attempt I made during the war to bridge the gap between East and West with respect to the organization of postwar Germany.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, not an effort at concealment but rather failed political efforts of the past are one part of the less politicized Tillich, socialist or otherwise.

Second, the lessening frequency of Tillich's religious socialist theorizing is arguably related to what I have already implied in my introductory comments: Tillich's project was simply larger than Marxism. Tillich thought of Marx within the larger context of existentialism and had a plethora of other intellectual sources from which he drew besides Marx. Therefore, the implication is that Tillich had a

larger project in mind for the next period of his life beyond specifically political activities and writings. At war's end, Tillich was approaching his 59<sup>th</sup> birthday. He had talked of writing a systematic theology for most of his career. Is it not imaginable that Tillich knew that time was fleeting and that *the time*—a personal *kairos*—had undeniably come to concentrate his primary energies on what would become his magnum opus? This strikes me to be a very sensible possibility. Interestingly, Marx even finds its way into that work not only in “less open” ways, but also in overt ways that one could call the classically Tillichian approach to Marx.<sup>6</sup>

Third, it is important to consider the entire corpus of Tillich's religious socialist writings in the period in question. For this, the Tillich Archive at the Harvard Divinity School's Andover-Harvard Theological Library is of substantial help.<sup>7</sup> In his conclusion, Donnelly has a footnote listing thirteen essays that he terms “specifically Marxist” from the period between 1933 and 1965. By “specifically Marxist,” Donnelly seems to mean those with the word Marx or the words religious socialism or words conveying a peculiarly Marxist doctrine in the title, with the exception of the 1963 “The Prophetic Element in the Christian Message.”<sup>8</sup>

There are several observations one can make about the list. First, I believe that in order to argue for the absence or presence of religious socialism in Tillich's thought, some basis for determining what is “specifically Marxist” needs to be offered. Is it a matter of terms used in a title? Is it a matter of the percentage of the content of a piece overtly devoted to Marx? (What do we then mean by “overtly devoted”?) In short, what are the elements necessary and what is the critical mass of those elements necessary for an article to reach the saturation point of being “specifically Marxist”? Second, when one looks at the list, the “specifically Marxist” cold war writings outnumber the pre-cold war writings nine to four. Where is the impact of McCarthyism upon that pattern, for example? The significance of republishing the religious socialist writings included as part of the 1948 *The Protestant Era* (which Donnelly does not include in his list) is also of no minor importance in the discussion. When we add other writings from the period missing from the list (some available only from the Tillich Archives) and use Donnelly's own apparent criterion (conservatively understood), the number grows from thirteen to twenty-three.<sup>9</sup> Using the same criterion more liber-

ally understood, the number grows to thirty-three.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there are perhaps two to three dozen writings from the period that specifically and openly deal with the concerns of religious socialism. Now, it may be that Donnelly was thinking about writings that were *published* during the period in question. There are two things to say if this is the case: on the one hand, the list of writings still grows by ten; on the other hand, *not* including unpublished public lectures conveys a less complete picture of Tillich's output on the topic in question.

Fourth, Tillich's FBI file reveals that whatever the level of Tillich's apparent political activities, the Federal Bureau of Investigation had some level of interest in his activities for nearly three decades, stretching from the mid to late 1930s until his death, almost his entire period in the United States.<sup>11</sup> One of the earliest references in that file is that of an agent reporting on Tillich's speech at the famous 1938 Madison Square Garden rally against Nazi atrocities. Two days later, an entry is made on the appearance of Tillich's photograph in *The Daily Worker*, a periodical published by the American Communist Party. Several entries in the 1940s report Tillich's work with Selfhelp of Emigrés from Central Europe. In one of these entries, his association with the group is characterized as that of a person “dealing in refugee traffic and who [is therefore] deemed suspicious.” In a 1944 entry related to Tillich's election to the presidency of the Council for a Democratic Germany, he is noted as the “editor of the Soviet propaganda magazine, *The Protestant*.” That same year, an informant reported on Tillich's advocacy of including communists on the council, given what Tillich termed their “sincere opposition to the Hitler regime...[and] the honesty of their convictions,” a matter that—according to the informant—other members of the Council believed would lead to “the complete domination and control of the Committee by the communists.” A month later—June 1944—Tillich is cited for the inclusion of his name on an army list of those considered “‘unemployable’ in Germany or rejected for special democratization projects” following the war.

At the beginning of the Eisenhower years, a January 1953 entry notes that Tillich was listed as an initiator of the National Committee to Repeal the McCarran Act and was “a signer of an open letter to Congress urging the repeal of the McCarran Act.” (The McCarran Act was technically known as the Internal Security Act of 1950 and required—among

other things—that communist organizations register with the Justice Department.) A 1954 entry in the FBI file quotes a section of a column by Walter Winchell about the Christian Action organization:

Among the officers of a new outfit Christian Action, is a ‘clergyman’, Dr. Paul Tillich. This Tillich was once a functionary of the New York branch of the Moscow Free German Committee, a Soviet 5<sup>th</sup> Column outfit formed in 1944. Tillich has numerous Commie Front affiliations listed in the House Un-American Activities records. This new outfit has been formed to combat—that’s right—McCarthy & McCarthyism.

A 1961 entry refers to a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post* and *Times Herald* with the caption “Petition to the House of Representatives of the 87<sup>th</sup> Congress of the United States,” a petition calling for the elimination of the House Committee on Un-American Activities as a Standing Committee, a petition that was signed by Tillich. The last document in the file that the FBI releases to the public is an obituary by James West notable for the space it takes to describe the relation of Marxist thought to Tillich’s theology.<sup>12</sup> It is at least a matter to note that even if Tillich was not as self-consciously political as he had formerly been, J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI believed his politics to be worthy of observation to his dying day.

Finally, Tillich could have supplied his own newspaper clippings to the FBI to add to the cache of material in the press testifying to his political leanings and to the presence of his continuing religious socialism. Articles in the July 10, 1951 *Rheinische Post* and the July 11, 1951 *Mittag* covered his lecture, “The Protestant Vision,” where he outlined the “essence of his vision...in the unity of ‘Catholic substance’, ‘Protestant principle’, and ‘socialist decision’.”<sup>13</sup> A 1956 headline declares, “Tillich Describes McCarthy’s Influence as ‘Potential Fascism’ in PBH Speech.”<sup>14</sup> An October 1958 front-page headline announces, “Tillich Likens Bombings [of Jewish Temples in the South] to Nazi Terror Tactics.”<sup>15</sup> The front page of the October 11, 1961 *Harvard Crimson* reported Tillich’s dispute with fellow Harvard professor Henry Kissinger over the use of atomic weapons.<sup>16</sup> In 1963, the *Santa Barbara News-Press* headlined an article on Tillich’s lectures there with the title, “Tillich Says Birch Society Fascist.”<sup>17</sup>

In summary, while Tillich may have been less active politically following World War II, he contin-

ued to manifest not only an implicit belief in the helpfulness of the early Marx in the more theological writings, but an open appreciation revealed in other writings of the cold war period. While my argument challenges a sub-argument of Donnelly’s book, it is meant to buttress Donnelly’s central claim that Tillich never abandons the truths of religious socialism.

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Patrick (Brian) Donnelly, *The Socialist Émigré: Marxism and the Later Tillich [Final Galleys]* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> The editing errors I found fell into four classes: volume number or pagination within cites; locations of quotes; dating; and a general tightening of details. To list them in detail here would be a distraction. I have them in hand for those who would find them to be helpful.

<sup>3</sup> To my thinking, matters of interpretation rise to a level above the editing details to which I alluded in note ii. Therefore, I take the space here to elaborate on six places where I was struck by Donnelly’s interpretation. I present them in order of lesser to greater seriousness (clearly a judgment call on my part), rather than the order in which they appear in the book. Each of them elicited a response and motivated an examination of the given source because each struck me as being not exactly Tillich’s thought

First, on p. 243, Donnelly writes of “that central theological and archetypal claim of Tillich that humankind, individually and collectively, is goaded by an ultimate concern”. Does Tillich ever describe ultimate concern as something by which one is “goaded”? If not, does the difference between being “grasped” by ultimate concern (Tillich’s usage) and being “goaded” by ultimate concern matter? The latter strikes me as bearing less grace than Tillich tends to communicate.

Second, on p. 169, Donnelly cites Tillich’s *Love, Power, and Justice* for the spirit of this statement: “Power is politicized when it becomes separated from justice and love, and identified with compulsion.” If taken at face value, the force of Donnelly’s word “politicized” here would be that—for Tillich—politics is by nature unjust, unloving, and to be equated with compulsion. (I assume that this is not what Donnelly meant, but there doesn’t seem to be any other way to interpret “politicized” in this context.) Donnelly’s interpretation reverses Tillich’s use of the terms and neglects the subtle limitation Tillich intended to convey. In the passage in question, Tillich stated that politics always involves power. He believed that including power in the phrase, “power politics” is—on the face of it—a redundancy. However, he knew that “power politics” functioned as a term of art for a par-

ticular form of politics “in which power is separated from justice and love, and is identified with politics.” (*L/P/J*, 8) Therefore, the problem for Tillich is not that power is politicized, but rather that power is separated from the justice and love in some forms of politics, again not politics *in toto*.

Third, on p. 249 Donnelly speaks of Tillich being “seduced...to Marxist influences”. Given the force of Donnelly’s entire book, and given Tillich’s considered effort to interpret what he found useful in Marx throughout his post-World War I career, is it an accurate characterization to say that he was “seduced” by Marxism? I find that difficult to conclude.

Fourth, on p. 93, Donnelly writes, “Within the context and terms of socialism the vocational role of the proletariat is safeguarding and rescuing socialism from a diminished religious content and significance.” He then cites a quote from Tillich’s “The Class Struggle and Religious Socialism” to substantiate his claim. However, the quote is not about the proletariat “safeguarding/rescuing socialism” but rather religious socialism “safeguarding/rescuing” the church by means of the Protestant principle. Had Donnelly stated that the object of the proletariat’s saving/rescuing action was the “church”, he would have been closer to Tillich’s meaning, but it would have been for the purpose of reawakening it to its social justice responsibility according to the text of Tillich, rather than for increasing its “religious content and significance” as stated by Donnelly. Tillich’s repeated statements on the relationship of culture and religion would provide an important larger context for this line of thought.

Fifth, on p. 85, Donnelly cites a long quotation from “Christianity and Marxism” to support this statement: “The crucial thinking is that whichever historical group it is—the general proletariat or the elite avant-garde—they represent the proletarian consciousness, which Tillich sees as instructive and corrective to the social effectiveness of Christianity.” The difficulty is that both the particular content of the quotation he draws from Tillich as well as its general context within Tillich’s article convey precisely the opposite meaning. That which is functioning “correctively” and “instructively” in the pages cited from Tillich is Christianity towards the proletariat, not the proletariat towards Christianity. (This is not to say that Tillich did not possess the sentiment Donnelly attributes to him here. It is to say that Tillich was not saying this in the passage cited.) Donnelly tries to read the passage as representing the legitimate proletarian consciousness, but Tillich isn’t specifically concerned about that in the passage. Even if Tillich had been talking about the legitimate

proletarian consciousness in this passage, he was clearly saying—at least in the context in which he was writing—that Christianity was the phenomenon functioning more faithfully, in a sense “out-proletariatizing” the proletariat.

Sixth, and finally, on p. 169, a quote (attributed in note 13 to p. 52 of *Love, Power and Justice*) struck me as both a significant editing and proofing error as well as interpretatively incorrect. Donnelly places quotation marks around these words: “power is real only in its actualization in the encounter with other bearers of power. Nothing is determined a priori. Life includes continuous and conscious decisions and power bespeaks of the actualization of being as the stabilized balance of mights.” While it is attributed to p. 52, the quotation is not found there. Four-fifths of the quote is made up of fragments of sentences from a passage on p. 41, the order of which is switched. In one case, the meaning is significantly changed. While Donnelly writes, “Life includes continuous and conscious decisions,” Tillich wrote, “Life includes continuous decisions, not necessarily conscious decisions....” The final fifth of the passage is a brief phrase that seems to paraphrase a longer phrase on p. 52. Perhaps what Donnelly intended to be merely a paraphrase was caught in quotes. However, so many words overlap with Tillich that I assume Donnelly intended some type of quotation.

<sup>4</sup> Donnelly, 99.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, “Beyond Religious Socialism: Seventh Article on ‘How My Mind Has Changed in the Last Decade,’” *The Christian Century* LXVI, no. 24 (June 15, 1949): 733.

<sup>6</sup> I refer here to places in the *Systematic Theology* manifesting Tillich’s appreciation of these elements in the early Marx: the attack on ideology (I, 76); the nature of revolution (I, 87); the irrelevancy of philosophies that interpret without changing the world (I, 92; III, 330); dehumanization and estrangement within existence and Marx’s hope for collective fulfillment (I, 265-66; II, 25, 45; III, 356); vocational consciousness (III, 310); and the affirmation of economic materialism (III, 329). *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [I] 1951, [II] 1957, [III] 1963).

<sup>7</sup> Here I follow the example of Erdmann Sturm in using the acronym, PTAH followed box number and folder number in my references to the Paul Tillich Archive at Harvard. In conversation with Mr. Donnelly, he informed me that in when he did his research for the book in the mid-1990s, he was unable to persuade the archive

to get photocopies of material to him. (Conversation with Brian Donnelly, November 21, 2003)

<sup>8</sup> Donnelly, 246.

<sup>9</sup> These additions would include the following: "The Christian and Marxist View of Man" (1935/PTAH, 402:017); "Middle Class Problems in Germany; Questions about the Situation in This Country from the Point of View of Religious Socialism" (late 1930s/early 1940s, PTAH, 404:006); "What Strategy Should the Church Adopt with Reference to Communism" (late 1930s/early 1940s, PTAH, 408:031); "Man and Society in Religious Socialism" (1943); "Russia's Church and the Social Order" (1944, *Think/Cathedral Age*); "The Revolutionary Character of the Struggle Going on in the World Today" (mid-1940s/PTAH, 406A:015); *The Protestant Era* (1948); "Religion in Two Societies" (1952); "Some Christian and Secular Bases of Culture and Politics" (1953); "The Religious Meaning of Marxism" (mid-1950s/PTAH, 408:028). Sources found in the files of the Paul Tillich Archive at Harvard are referenced as PTAH, following Erdmann Sturm's pattern in the supplemental volumes of the *Gesammelten Werken* edited by him. The numbers following PTAH refer to the box and file numbers, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Here I would add the following pieces: the Voice of America speech, "Russia's Religious Situation" (13 April 1942, *An meine deutschen Freunde: Die politischen Reden Paul Tillichs während des Zweiten Weltkriegs über die „Stimme Amerikas"* [Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1973], pp. 22-26); the Voice of America speeches on the churches' call for economic justice and economic reorganization, "The Churches in the Struggle for Social Justice" and "Postwar Organization as Economic-Social Reorganization" (3 July and 25 July 1942, *An meine deutschen Freunde*, pp. 60-64, 73-77); "Democracy and Religion" (early 1940s/PTAH, 409:003); "Trends in Religious Thought that Affect Social Outlook" (1944, in F.E. Johnson, *Religion and the World Order* [New York: Harper]); "The Problem of Protestantism in a Collectivistic Age" (mid-1940s); "The Political Meaning of Utopia in the Life of Nations" (1951); "Past and Present Reflections on Christianity and Society" (1955/PTAH, 409:005); "Kairos and Utopia" (1959, Rauschenbusch Lectures of which "Between Utopianism and Escape from History" is the first lecture [of four]/PTAH, 408:026); and "Religion and Political Ideologies" (early 1960s).

<sup>11</sup> I don't know how a scholar outside of the United States would gain access to that information. I know that it took the persuasive power of Congressman John Murtha

and Senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum to get the file into my hands expeditiously.

<sup>12</sup> *FBI File #100-392815—Subject: Paul Tillich.*

<sup>13</sup> „Tillich: Die protestantische Vision," *Rheinische Post* (10 Juli 1951) and „Prof. Tillich: ‚Die protestantische Vision,'" *Den Mittag* (11 Juli 1951). (PTAH, 902A:019)

<sup>14</sup> "Tillich Describes McCarthy's Influence as 'Potential Fascism' in PBH Speech," *Harvard Crimson* (1956), PTAH, 902B:024. Also see the October 25, 1958 clipping from the *Gazette* of Haverhill, Mass. for the article, "Protestants, Catholics Denounce Anti-Semitism" in which Tillich is quoted as "warn[ing] that the bombing of the synagogues during the current unrest in the South 'follows very much the pattern experienced in Germany during Hitler's rise to power.'" (PTAH, 902B:026)

<sup>15</sup> "Tillich Likens Bombings to Nazi Terror Tactics," *The Harvard Crimson* (October 20, 1958): 1. (PTAH, 902B:026)

<sup>16</sup> "Frederic L. Ballard, Jr., "Two Professors Disagree on Use of Atomic Bombs," *Harvard Crimson* (October 11, 1961): 1 (PTAH, 902C:029).

<sup>17</sup> "Tillich Says Birch Society Fascist," *Santa Barbara News-Press* (March 19, 1963), PTAH, 902C:031. See also the report on Tillich's lectures at the Pacific School of Theology in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of February 20, 1963, "Theologian Sees Danger on the Right," (PTAH, 902C:031).

**REFLECTIONS ON BRIAN DONNELLY'S A  
SOCIALIST EMIGRÉ: THE LATER TILlich  
AND MARXISM**

**TERENCE O'KEEFFE**

There is a crucial relationship between supervisor and research student. And there is no more stimulating context for a supervisor when it is a doctoral student who is suggesting the need for some revision to the published work of the supervisor! As a busy Dean of a large Faculty of the University of Ulster, with a mind and vision bounded by salary budgets, curriculum changes, staffing problems and deficits, the only sanity I was assured of was in my regular meetings with Brian Donnelly when we discussed Paul Tillich.

For Brian Donnelly, too, these meetings were important. The Society should realize that he was not a standard full-time research student. Rather his doctoral thesis was achieved through part-time study while he fulfilled the duties of a hard-working Roman Catholic parish-based priest. Members of the Society might wish to ponder on the interruption caused to these scholarly activities when, as a curate in Omagh in Northern Ireland, he had to minister to the survivors of the horrific bomb that killed 29 people as well as unborn twins in one of the worst atrocities of Northern Ireland's bitter conflict.

It is his doctoral thesis, now published as an addition to the growing Mercer University Press collection of important volumes on Paul Tillich, which is the subject of this symposium of the North American Paul Tillich Society. Where did his thesis start? It began in my original conviction that, in examining the many roots of Tillich's thought, one important strand was his use of Marxism.<sup>1</sup> I was not talking about a generalized socialism or even his own "religious socialism," which shows itself in the period immediately after the First World War, in his "Answer to the Brandenburg Consistory."<sup>2</sup> Rather it was Tillich's deployment of classical Marxist themes and concepts in his socialist writings.

By Marxist themes, I mean those themes and concepts that are rooted in Marx's writings and which form part of Marxist socialism as opposed to social democracy, revisionist socialism, or whatever. Some of these themes can be enumerated as follows:

- an analysis of late capitalist society in terms of class division and the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, based on mutually antagonistic rela-

tions to the ownership of 'private property' construed as the ownership of the means of economic production;

- the central position of the proletarian class as the leading group in the creation and formation of socialist society;

- an analysis of late capitalist society in terms of economic structure and resulting and dependent superstructural elements;

- an affirmation of class struggle as a necessary and inescapable feature of late capitalism, based on this antagonistic relation to property;

- a vision of socialist society which results from the "socialization" of what Marxists often refer to as the "commanding heights of the economy";

- an interpretation of the movement and meaning of history as materialist as well as dialectical;

- the use of a concept of ideology which serves as a critique of certain ideas in the superstructure of such a society; particularly those which serve objectively to conceal the true nature of capitalist society, however subjectively they may be held in good faith by persons or groups in society.

Brian Donnelly rejects the notion of some commentators that Tillich's commitment to Marxism was muddled or even wrong, and who therefore prefer to speak of a more general and vague "socialist" framework of his thought. I believe that Donnelly establishes a strong case for saying that Tillich uses a theoretically well worked-out set of genuinely Marxist ideas and concepts, particularly during the 1930s, especially in *The Socialist Decision*.

If he is right—and I strongly believe that he is—the question inevitably arises: what happens to these Marxist themes and concepts after the 1940s? Do they just peter out, to be replaced by other sets of categories and concepts, perhaps quarried from existentialism or psychoanalysis? Take one example. Is the proletariat, which Tillich stressed as the key element in socialism in 1933, and which could not, in his own words, be "leaped over"<sup>3</sup> or by-passed in the development of socialism, simply replaced in the later Tillichian corpus by a more symbolic group of broken people, experiencing meaninglessness, despair and anxiety, and needing the courage to be rather than socialist expectation? In other words, does "proletarian consciousness," so important a concept in *The Socialist Decision*, simply get replaced or abandoned? My original intuition was to answer this affirmatively. Brian Donnelly was not so convinced and so the thesis, and this book, emerged.

Donnelly defends the view that there is no radical break between the Tillich of the Marxist period—say, up to the 1940s—and the later Tillich. In other words, it is not comparable to the common picture of the early and the late Wittgenstein, where it is clear that the later Wittgenstein of *Philosophical Investigations* repudiates the account of language and meaning, which he had earlier put forward in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, as philosophically mis-taken. Donnelly thus argues that there is a real persistence of genuinely Marxist themes and ideas throughout the Tillichian corpus. It is not that Tillich remained faithful to a vision of religious socialism, variously defined, even into his American period. That, I believe, is uncontroversial. Rather, it is that specifically Marxist themes and concepts remain identifiable in Tillich's later work and in particular in the *Systematic Theology*. Donnelly must therefore argue that these classical Marxist themes—about the role of the proletariat, class struggle, ideology, historical materialism and so on—do not disappear but rather continue right through the later, more theological period of Tillich's thought.

I believe that Donnelly succeeds in his argument, and he succeeds by arguing that Tillich slowly detached the political implications of his Marxist categories from the more socio-critical and, eventually for Tillich, from the more specifically theological implications.

Take the political implications of Marxist analysis of society. Tillich certainly believed during the 1920s that socialism, based on Marxist principles, was emerging in Germany, however the younger Tillich envisaged just such a socialist revolution. And it is equally certain that Tillich never seriously envisaged a socialist or a social revolution emerging in America, or even in Europe after the rise of Nazism and the defeat of the left in Weimar Germany.

Adolf Löwe, Tillich's life-long friend, fellow socialist and source of much of Tillich's economic understanding of Marxism, in correspondence with me in 1980, commented on this point. Tillich's political involvement after the collapse of Weimar, was, he insisted, concentrated on the reconstruction of Germany after its defeat in the war. Tillich chaired the Committee for a Democratic Germany, an organization that included a broad range of German political exiles, from German Communist Party members, Social Democrats, and other leftist groups through to ultra-conservatives, seeking (vainly) to establish a "government in exile" which would be

ready to take over after the war ended. He even sought, in a visit to the American President, to urge certain approaches to the economic rebuilding of Germany. On that visit, he was accompanied by Löwe, by this stage Professor of Economics at the New School for Social Research in New York, and Hans Staudinger, the Dean of the New School. (They got little encouragement from President Roosevelt for their economic advice; he merely suggested that they concentrate on providing the textbooks that the new, de-Nazified Germany would need<sup>4</sup>).

When I asked Löwe to comment on Tillich's engagement with anything like political socialism in America after the War, he replied in these terms:

Tillich never made political life here a major subject either in his writings or in his actions. For this, I guess, there is more than one reason, not least the absence of anything that could be called a 'socialist' movement. I need not tell you that figures like Norman Thomas, quite impressive as personalities, were always on the fringe of political life.

In other words, Tillich did not find the context, the environment, the tradition, or the movement in America that has supported his overt espousal of socialism in Germany between 1919 and 1933.

What Brian Donnelly has succeeded in doing, however, is to show how the fundamental Marxist categories Tillich had used from 1919 onwards became translated and reshaped, rather than simply abandoned. In doing this, Tillich shows a radically different attitude to his Marxism in comparison with those other exiles from Germany, the Frankfurt School. In the case of thinkers like Horkheimer, Lowenthal, and Pollock—the exception is clearly Herbert Marcuse—there was much more of a theoretical collapse.<sup>5</sup>

In this regard, I keep getting drawn back to those records of discussions, some very short but others well developed, between Tillich, Löwe, Horkheimer, Pollock, and others between 1941 and 1945, preserved in the Tillich archives. (These documents are curious in that at least two of the participants, Löwe and Pauck, were astonished to learn that such records existed and denied that they ever saw such accounts of their contributions to these discussions.<sup>6</sup> The internal evidence points in my view to these being records made by Pollock for the members of the Institute.)



One document in particular is very important for the themes we are discussing. It is entitled *Theorie und Praxis*, dated 1945, and is the record of a discussion between Tillich, Löwe, Horkheimer, and Pollock. The discussion centers on value of political activity or praxis in the present context of the defeat of Germany. In particular, the discussants focus on Tillich's involvement in the Council for a Democratic Germany and on his hope to influence the reconstruction of Germany.<sup>7</sup> Löwe accuses Tillich of verticalizing the Absolute and becoming "more spiritual and unhistorical." Tillich defends himself: "I was never a primitive utopian and today I am not a primitive absolutist." But he does accept that in 1945 he has become "more relativist [and] my attitude towards time has become more skeptical." He sees his main hope now as "restricted to giving the Americans a well worked-out theology which they never in fact have had."

A far cry, then, from the clarion call to socialism of 1933. But it is at the same time far from the intellectual collapse from any Marxist conviction that Horkheimer shows in the same discussion. In the course of the conversation, the theme of the role of the proletariat in the future of society is raised. Horkheimer has this to say: "(Marx) stood for the revolutionary proletariat... I believe that what was in his case the unity of theory and practice consists today in the absolute isolation of those few human beings which we represent."

It is clear from the discussion that Tillich, although unsure of the extent to which he should commit himself to the practical politics of the work of the Committee rather than writing his *Systematic Theology*, nevertheless believes that he is closer to a Marxist understanding than Horkheimer. "I believe that with the most wretched of the political attempts that I am now making, I am much closer to the true unity of theory and practice than Horkheimer."

Indeed, this point can be born out by consideration of the "Program for a Democratic Germany" which was published under Tillich's name as Provisional Chairman of a "group of German leaders" in *Christianity and Crisis* in 1944.<sup>8</sup> Despite the wide sweep of the document, representing as it does a broad anti-Nazi coalition, Tillich does not hesitate to insist on certain labor and socialist values. In addition to the liquidation of the Nazis and the prosecution of war criminals, he insists that, "those groups which were the bulwark of German imperialism and which were responsible for the delivery of power

into the hands of the Nazis must be deprived of their political, social and economic power."<sup>9</sup> And he insists that this applies to "the large landholders, the big industrialists, and the military caste." His call for the German people to "decide to dissolve large landholdings, to control heavy industry", etc. sounds a strong socialist note. He insists on the need to re-establish freedom of organization and a strong labor movement in a new, democratic Germany.

This establishes a definite difference between the elitist position increasingly taken up by the Frankfurt School theorists and that of Tillich. But Brian Donnelly's thesis claims much more. His claim is that, for example, in relation to the role of the proletariat in society's transformation, as with other key Marxist themes, Tillich does not abandon these as did the Frankfurt School, but rather recasts them. Thus, the proletariat in Marx's thought was in process of becoming the universal class because it represented common humanity. It was the group whose calling or vocation was to be the bearer of history. It was to be the class that alone stood in a non-ideological, non-deceived position and whose consciousness unmask the reality of a class-divided society. Its calling was to be the constant critic of society as it exists, until it transforms it. It is with this notion of proletariat and proletarian consciousness that Brian Donnelly works with to suggest that this role and these tasks do not disappear from Tillich's thought. They cease to be identified politically or economically in a particular class, to be sure, but the spiritual community becomes the locus of this vocation.

Brian Donnelly's thesis is that there is a persistence of Marxist themes in Tillich's later thought. As with the example of the proletariat, he examines the classical Marxist themes of ideology, truth and praxis, history and dialectics, revolution and materialism. He insists that it is Marx as theologian that persists, taking his cue from Tillich's insistence that Marx was one of the most important theologians since the Reformation.<sup>10</sup> It is not, therefore, the Marx that inspired political passion and revolutionary calls to action, nor the Marx that produced a social critique from an anti-bourgeois perspective that we should look for in the later Tillich.

I find such readings of Tillich very rich and we should be grateful to Brian Donnelly for giving us much to consider and to debate. Perhaps we should consider some final points. There are many background elements in Tillich's thought, in addition to

biblical and strictly theological influences, of which Marxism is only one. Tillich's engagement with other philosophical movements, such as phenomenology, might open interesting perspectives. His encounter with other thinkers—Nietzsche's thought and Tillich's appropriation of it, for example—would repay consideration. So too would a study of Tillich and Heidegger, with whom he taught at Marburg, at least in terms of the Heidegger of *Being and Time*. Finally, some consideration is overdue of Tillich's encounter with and understanding of Existentialism. I know that Brian Donnelly will take this with a wry smile; at my suggestion, a long section on this very theme was, at my suggestion, excised from the final thesis as tangential to his main argument. Perhaps Tillich's definition and use of Existentialism merits another thesis!

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<sup>1</sup> See my "Paul Tillich's Marxism" in *Social Research* 48, 3 (1981), 472ff.

**COMMENTS ON THE SOCIALIST  
ÉMIGRÉ**

BRIAN DONNELLY

May I begin by first thanking the North American Paul Tillich Society for the kind invitation to be here and for this opportunity of reviewing my work, *The Socialist Émigré*. I am grateful to Ron Stone, Lon Weaver, and to Terry O'Keeffe for their views and comments.

Lon, I believe, highlights a crucial issue in relation to the later Tillich; was he a subliminal Marxist or an overt Religious Socialist? This is a pertinent question and one that surfaced in my mind as I attempted to write this study, and it occurred to me that Marxism and Marxist theory is such a huge, broad body of thought that there are aspects that can be suitably utilized subliminally whereas others possess an unavoidable overt expression. Marxism is not monolithic. Consequently, for example, the Marxist theory of ideology is such a seminal and fruitful area of thought it has found integration into a variety of literary and contextual theories whereas in contrast the theory of revolution and/or collective ownership are/is perhaps less easily disguised or transmogrified in the agitation of thought or in the

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<sup>2</sup> "Der Sozialismus als Kirchenfrage" in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol.2, 13ff.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, translated by Franklin Sherman (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 64.

<sup>4</sup> Pauck, Wilhelm and Marion Pauck. *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought*. Vol. I, Life. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Peter Slater, *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School* (London: Routledge, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> Personal correspondence with Adolf Lowe and Wilhelm Pauck 1979/80

<sup>7</sup> The quotations are taken from the unpublished *Theorie und Praxis* document, originally made available to me by Frau Stoeber.

<sup>8</sup> "A Program for a Democratic Germany," in *Christianity and Crisis*, 4, 8 (1944), 3ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, edited by Carl Braaten (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

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development of other knowledge forms. Marxism, it seems to me, represents a wide gamut; it is a broad church so to speak—and not all identifiable concepts therein carry the same weight, especially in relation to the dialogue with or in their transference to a religious philosophy. Perhaps a more correct question with regard to the later Tillich is not that of either/or, which Lon proposes, but rather, when/and: *when* was Tillich subliminally Marxist *and* when was he overtly a religious socialist?

Writing this work in Ireland inhibited me in two ways, which arguably restricted a detailed understanding of Tillich's intellectual journey and of the personal and subtle ways he struggled and coped with misunderstanding and opposition in the new academic climate of the States.

Firstly, I lacked access to the all-important archival material at Harvard. That is a rich resource as clearly highlighted by Lon. Patently, there exists much evidence still to be uncovered and further research still to be undertaken as to the extent and nature of the political activism and socialist views expressed both privately and publicly by the later Tillich. What I found in the restricted material available to me was clear evidence of a man anxious to secure his livelihood and not to be pilloried as a dissident or a Marxist anarchist in his newly found homeland.

Obviously, Marxism meant something altogether different to the American people generally than to the German-minded and politically curious Tillich.

Secondly, the fact of my being culturally and geographically placed in Ireland disadvantaged my understanding and fuller appreciation of the complexity and the extent of the McCarthy period, the role of the FBI then, and the measure and freedom to which Communism, or related Marxist organizations, could openly express their political views. Aspects are still somewhat undecided for me: Did McCarthy target all immigrants in a blanket suspicion? Was it entirely politically motivated? And to what extent did it become an irrational mass hysteria? These are some of the questions that profile the background of where Tillich found himself after World War II.

In that respect, I found Lon's comments extremely helpful in bringing to focus the extent to which we may speak of the politicization of the later Tillich. I am reminded here of a thesis undertaken at the University of Lancaster in 1993 by Elliot Harvey Shaw, entitled *The Americanization of Paul Tillich: 1945-1955*. Here Shaw presents anecdotal evidence that Tillich was blacklisted by the United States army and denied permission to travel abroad because of his perceived pro-communism. But Shaw also outlines how Tillich suppressed from his Terry Lectures of 1950, to what became later the basis of his final published book version of 1952, *Courage to Be*, clear Marxist references; the implication is that the *Courage to Be* became sanitized for the wider American audience and readership.

Fascinating as it may be, it should be said that the issue of the politicization of the later Tillich is not the issue of the *Socialist Émigré*. The central thesis with the *Socialist Émigré* is the extent to which Marxist philosophy goaded and shaped *certain* aspects of Tillich's theology. It is the presentation of a central philosophical framework, which Tillich carried into his theological research and in the determination of a theological system. This is not to preclude or discount other influential philosophers who were central to the formation of Tillich's thought, such as Schelling, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Freud, and so forth, but rather to identify one critical vein of thought and how this affected the eventual outcome of Tillich's later writings. Clearly, Tillich was eclectic. But to read Tillich is, as T. S. Eliot said, "to learn new ways of thinking and the illumination of subjects apparently remote from those with

which the author is concerned." And it is this indirect character of Tillich's thought as much as that with which Tillich was directly concerned, which fascinated the writing of the *Socialist Émigré*.

The book is not about a single or sole reliance on Marxist ideas as foundational for Tillich's opus, *Systematic Theology*; that would be too naïve an approach for author, reader, or even Tillich himself. Tillich is too much a complex, and, dare I say, Socratic a writer, to be charged with that claim. In keeping with his Protestant outlook, Tillich mistrusted dogmatic or definitive formulae from whatever source, Marxism included. He used concepts only to refute conceptual dogmatism, in this way he kept arguments moving and advancing, steered by the conviction that only Being-itself remained fixed, and all else is given to reform and change.

For example, when speaking of the concept of the Proletariat, the later Tillich realized its possible conceptual extinction, as socially understood and identified by Marxists. But the conceptual collapse of the Proletariat is not the expiration of the consciousness it originally delineated. And it is this proletarian consciousness that is embryonically or correlatively religious and theonomous for Tillich and survives to be more significant in the movement forward and beyond the original and erstwhile conceptual surrogation in the Marxist identification of the Proletariat. In any case, as Tillich would explain elsewhere, everything can be a vessel of the unconditional but nothing can be unconditional itself, including, we may add, the proletariat. Consequently, the later Tillich advised that there were groups other than the proletariat that, by breaking through their own ideological self-seclusion, could become as important as the proletariat for a socialist organization of society. In that respect, Tillich sought this as elementary in the vocational mandate of the spiritual community or what he correlated as the self-transcendence of the latent church. This development of thought illustrates how Tillich saw Marxist ideas more in the terms of instrumental reasoning rather than of formal reasoning in the explication of some of his theological concerns. In this regard, it would be inaccurate to speak of Tillich as merely relaying Marxism. Rather, he reconstructs Marxism and becomes, as Ron Stone points out, an interlocutor between Marxism and theology—a critical point, which I hope the *Socialist Émigré* brought out.

Finally, the structure of the book builds thematically, not only by the obvious polemics of the vari-

ous chapters, indicated by their titles, but also in the sequence of themes. The discourse on materialism and supernaturalism crystallizes Tillich's interpretation of Marx and perhaps opens the debate further as to whether Tillich correctly interpreted Marx. I believe Tillich advanced the religious element of socialism as well as contributed to Marxist revisionism. But this is to serve yet the more fundamental

philosophical issue that facets of Marxist thought can and do stimulate the expansion of religious hermeneutics. This Tillich demonstrated and which made him regard Marx as his religious ally and to declare in 1963 that Marx was "the most successful of all theologians since the Reformation." *The Socialist Émigré* is my modest attempt at explaining and honoring that claim of Paul Tillich.

**REMAKING TILlich AS A  
PRAGMATIST: FROM  
FOUNDATIONALIST ONTOLOGY TO  
PRAGMATIC CONSTRUCTION**

RICHARD GRIGG

Allow me to begin by clarifying my vantage point on Tillich and pragmatism. I have read more Tillich than pragmatism. By no means do I consider myself an "expert" on Tillich. I reserve that accolade for those few scholars who know the breadth of Tillich's corpus and know it in depth, such as my always much-appreciated mentor, Robert Scharlemann. But I have spent a fair amount of time studying Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, and I at least want to claim that I can produce a coherent, if contentious, interpretation of that work. Pragmatism is another matter: while I find the pragmatists ever engaging, I have read them much less thoroughly. Hence, I cannot offer you a technical paper with a title such as "Peircean Thirdness in Tillich's *Dynamics of Faith*." Nor have I produced a talk entitled "Tillich to the Rescue: the 'Neglected Argument' Neglected No More!"

While on the subject of what I cannot or will not do here today, let me also point out that I will not seek existing pragmatist elements or influences in Tillich's thought. Undoubtedly they are there, and undoubtedly it is important to find them. But this work is already being ably carried out by a number of scholars, including Professor Robison James. I am interested in taking another tack: I want to attempt actually to remake Tillich as a pragmatist, but to do so in a way that does not wholly betray Tillich's vocabulary and intentions. In order to carry out this task, it is imperative that I state at the outset what I shall mean by "pragmatism." Unlike the infamous neo-pragmatist Richard Rorty, I am not necessarily interested in giving up all notions of correspondence,

nor do I shy away from the word "truth." I mean by pragmatism that view of the human relationship to the world that defines truth as what will work to solve a particular problem or satisfy a particular need. The problems and needs may be everyday or momentous, merely technical or existential.

Tillich is most easily read as an author of foundationalist ontology. Though he proceeds phenomenologically, and hence from the perspective of human beings and their experiences and needs, he nonetheless supposes that his phenomenological investigations can describe beings and being-itself in a decisive fashion, a fashion applicable in a very wide range of times and places, if not universally. Notice, for example, that Tillich, along with his methodological compatriot Karl Rahner, implies that beginning with the subject-object or self-world structure of human consciousness as a key to reality is *inescapable*, inasmuch as any attempt to deny that there is such a structure exemplifies that very structure. Now the assertion that a particular starting point for ontology is genuinely inescapable goes against the grain of pragmatism. The pragmatist would say that what we understand by being and how we get at it depends on what would be useful for us in the particular situation in which we find ourselves, whether that situation be trivial or of the greatest significance. Tillich's inescapable starting point, by contrast, is an example of what is usually meant by foundationalism—an indubitable foundation upon which the philosophical-theological edifice can rest—and it suggests that there is a privileged vantage point upon the really real.

How, then, shall we wean Tillich from his foundationalist ontological predilections and make his thought amenable to at least some constituencies within the pragmatist camp? (At the end of the paper, by the way, I shall get around to talking briefly, about why we should *want* to undertake this philosophical makeover.) Regrettably, for the Tillich-

ans in the room, we cannot avoid briefly rehearsing Tillich's ontology and notion of God, for we must have clearly in view that which we wish to transform. Tillich undertakes a transcendental phenomenological investigation. What are the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of my experiencing anything at all, conditions uncovered in an analysis of how the world shows itself to us? The most basic condition, Tillich contends, is a self-world structure, a framework in other words in which a self always stands over against an objective pole of experience. This self-world structure of experience is the key to the very structure of human being and, at least by analogy, of finite being in general. From it we can derive the so-called polar elements, elements that mirror the self-world structure and are constituted in such a way that the more fully one element is realized, the more also will its partner be actualized. These polar elements Tillich specifies as freedom and destiny, dynamics and form, and individuation and participation.

It would be tempting to look for the Christian God of Tillich's Protestant tradition on the world side of the structure, or in the elements of destiny, participation, and form. Not that God is a part of the world—traditional Christian dogma of course teaches that God created the world and transcends it. But "world" in Tillich's structure does not mean the physical universe, but, rather, anything that can be directly intended by human consciousness. Don't we encounter God as a being over against us who addresses us in revelation? Tillich rejects this line of thinking: God is never to be found on either side of the structure of finite being, the self-world polarity. Indeed, strictly speaking, God does not exist, since existence is reserved for individual beings. Rather God is the depth of the structure of finite being. He is being-itself, which allows beings to be. He is the Ground of being.

We are now in a position to note two quite non-pragmatist elements in Tillich's thought, the second of which, in particular, will be a focus for Tillich's philosophical makeover. First, Tillich believes that his transcendental analysis leads to understanding the essential nature of human being. Pragmatists, I take it, are generally less interested in timeless essences than in the way of being human practiced by historical persons in specific cultural and personal circumstances. Tillich, of course, can talk about the existential *distortion* of essential being and the ambiguous mixture of distortion and essential being,

which he thinks we confront in actual life. But this does not change the fact that existential distortion is distortion precisely because it varies from a clearly delineated essential being.

A second element of Tillich's thought that is at odds with pragmatism is his notion of God as being-itself. Although we can never know God directly, we know him truly and surely via his effects within the finite structure of being, including his communication of New Being in Jesus as the Christ, which overcomes existential distortion. While of course dependent upon symbols in his talk of God, Tillich supposes that his theology equips us to think of God in the way that he must necessarily be thought, since this approach to God follows unambiguously for Tillich from his foundational analysis of the structure of human being, in particular, and of finite being in general.

I plan to keep Tillich's notion of the self-world structure of being, but not to interpret it as a necessary point of departure or to claim that it provides a foundation for intuiting some essential form of human being. Similarly, I will hold onto Tillich's God as the depth of the self-world structure, but I will see this approach to God in terms significantly different from Tillich's own. Augustine famously addressed God in the *Confessions*, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." The same must be said of Tillich's God: God is the ground of our being and hence the invariant clue to our essence and telos. But as I shall interpret it, the depth of the self-world structure will not be some unavoidable undergirding for our essential being, but one possible pragmatic construct (a construction that, I should indicate, just to avoid confusion, bears no important resemblance to Gordon Kaufman's notion of the construction of a God-concept).

Because we have set for ourselves the task of remaking Tillich as a pragmatist, let us turn to the concrete problem that Tillich engages. Several decades ago, philosopher of religion T. Patrick Burke opined that some religions clearly articulate a "cosmic complaint," and attempt to provide a cosmic deliverance. Buddhism certainly does. After all, the Buddha's first Noble Truth is that life is suffering, *dukkha*, and he offers deliverance from suffering in the form of nirvana. Christianity too has a cosmic complaint: sin as estrangement from God. Not surprisingly, Tillich follows his tradition's lead here, simply giving it a more up-to-date description. Sin

and estrangement, for Tillich, are part of the story of existential distortion. They are manifested most concretely, as he explains in his classic book *The Courage to Be*, which collects his Terry Lectures at Yale, in the threats of fate and death, guilt and condemnation, and emptiness and meaninglessness. These threats are made present to us in the mood of anxiety.

While Tillich supposes that these dilemmas are built into the human condition, it surely does not take a pragmatist to dispute this. There is room for feminist critique here, for example, or perhaps even for the put down by the Diane Keaton character in Woody Allen's *Manhattan*, that such concerns represent a fashionable adolescent pessimism (Ouch!). I wish to split the difference between Tillich and such critics. That is, I take the anxieties Tillich sets forth as still representative of a cosmic complaint for many persons in first-world culture, but I do not assume that these problems are inherent in the human condition. Rather, they may well be racially situated, culturally situated, class-situated, and gender-situated problems. It is these problems, nevertheless, along with the self-world structure into which they fit, that we are going to address, and we shall address these versions of the Christian cosmic complaint with a reconstituted version of Tillich's God as the Ground of the self-world structure.

I contend that handling the problems of fate and death, guilt and condemnation, and emptiness and meaninglessness is connected with the phenomenon of self-transcendence (here, and throughout, I am indebted to Guy Hammond's fine book on Tillich, *The Power of Self-Transcendence*). That is, if we are to deal with these threats, we must participate in something beyond ourselves, yet the problem will not be solved by extinguishing the self. Self-transcendence is that phenomenon in which the self is able to participate in something that transcends it but retains its sense of identity and selfhood, indeed "loses the self in order to find the self," to use the language attributed to Jesus. To take but one example, I might face the anxiety of death by cultivating a sense of participation in the larger human community or perhaps in the physical cosmos: I as an individual physical being will die, but to the extent that I *identify* with these realities that transcend me, I partly transcend death. It is evident that such self-transcendence will not simply remove the anxiety of death. Rather, in Tillich's language, it will aid me in courageously affirming my being in spite of the

threat posed by death. Indeed, any single act of self-transcendence will probably fail to accomplish even this modest task. I argue that in order to deal effectively with the threats that confront us, such as death, we must find the *source* of participation and self-transcendence.

Now in one sense, the whole self-world structure is about self-transcendence; it is a matter of Heidegger's observation that there exists no monadic Cartesian subject, but that the subject is always concerned with and in part constituted by engagement with a world. Of course, self-transcendence in this general sense can include something like being a member of the Nazi party. Obviously, Christian self-transcendence, as in losing the self in order to find it, involves a self-overcoming that produces a self that is, by the standards of the Christian community, spiritually and morally more mature than the self with which we began is. Perhaps it would not be going to far to describe this self-transcendence via Frederick Streng's definition of religion, namely, the quest for "ultimate transformation." Let us designate this most desirable form of self-transcendence "religious self-transcendence."

What sort of constructed depth of the self-world structure can provide the requisite self-transcendence? We can take a preliminary step toward answering this question by returning to the Terry Lectures, but this time not to Tillich's *The Courage to Be* but, rather, to John Dewey's much underrated *A Common Faith*. There Dewey suggests that we can employ the notion of God as a symbol of the unity of our ideal ends, along with the conditions in nature that make the realization of those ends possible. This is a construct that pulls together the totality of our ideal ends, and that construct may well be rendered a more attractive and emotionally engaging focus for our existential attention by naming it God, that is, by using the *traditional* notion of God, which points to an actually existing Supreme Being, as a *symbol* to denote the construct.

Tillich's reconstituted depth of the self-world structure too will involve an encompassing unity. My proposal is that *the depth of the structure is to be thought as the unity of all possible means of self-transcendence*. The depth of the self-world structure is here being conceived as a human construct, the idea of the unity of all those opportunities for self-transcendence contained in the physical and human universes. It is not a matter, then, of any one particular opportunity for self-transcendence that can be

found in the relation of self to world. Instead, the depth of the structure is viewed as the unified repository of all possible acts of religious self-transcendence and, as such, the enabling *source* of the phenomenon of religious self-transcendence. We call this depth God, then, because it is, in Tillich's famous vocabulary, the focus of our ultimate, unconditional concern. As Tillich also says, God is a symbol for God. That is, our traditional notions of and associations with God are no longer countenanced as real but are used as symbols of the construct, which is functionally God in that it is the focus of our ultimate concern and the source of our courage to be in spite of the threats that confront us. Note that this God, the imagined unity of all possible opportunities for self-transcendence, is not at all the same as the notion simply of the totality of beings that make up the household of reality, nor of being in general. To embrace such an interpretation would be not only to fall back into a standard, non-pragmatist ontology but, God forbid, to commit onto-theology, an egregious error in the lexicon of Heideggerian thought. Nor is this God simply the totality of all possibilities of religious self-transcendence, what we could technically call the *set* of all such possibilities. Rather, our pragmatic construct of the depth is the idea of the actual unity of the possibilities of self-transcendence, a whole greater than the sum of its parts. In this way, it is certainly more God-like and a more viable candidate for ultimate concern.

Note carefully this fact about the construct: it is indeed the *depth* of the self-world structure, for the unity of all possible means of religious self-transcendence can never be intuited within the self-world structure itself (an observation akin perhaps to Kant's claim that the first cause argument, for example, fails in part because an infinite series of events can never be given to sensible intuition). All that we can directly cognize are discrete, if multiple, possibilities of self-transcendence. Perhaps that includes the ability to directly cognize the *idea* at least of the totality of all such possibilities. But we cannot directly cognize the *unity* of all opportunities for self-transcendence. How would we think the thousands of interconnections among possible acts of

self-transcendence? Indeed the unity is unthinkable because it is in a constant state of flux: choosing to actualize one particular possibility for self-transcendence alters the relationship among all the others. The notion of the unity may indeed be a fiction, but one way or another we cannot think it directly. (Just as an aside, I suspect that if we were to attempt to conceptualize this unity at all, however inadequately, it would involve the notion of community; the unity of opportunities for self-transcendence will somehow be a function of how my acts of self-transcendence can fit harmoniously with other persons' actualization of possibilities of self-transcendence). But, in any case, if the unity at issue here cannot be thought directly, then how can it function as God-for-us, in other words, as the object of our ultimate concern, since ultimate concern requires a concrete content for consciousness? The answer is consistent with Tillich's pre-pragmatist system: we think this God via symbol. Symbols are concrete objects for consciousness, and they stand in for what cannot be directly thought.

Now, very briefly, what is the motivation for turning Tillich into a pragmatist? For one thing, it frees him from foundationalism, which is of course oh-so-out-of-fashion today. Foundationalism is, it seems, the leisure suit in the back of the epistemological closet. Yet, while the escape from foundationalism may be unambiguously good philosophically speaking, it is not at all clear that such is the case theologically. After all, one of the most visible results of the abandonment of foundationalism in theology has been the creation of noisy neo-fideisms.

The more important reason springs from the overwhelming and ever-strengthening phenomenon of religious pluralism in our world. Any claim to have a privileged access to religious truth becomes increasingly implausible, if not simply incredible. Thus, if we can save a great deal of Tillich's system while reading it as an optional, if eminently helpful, pragmatic construction, rather than as a system which must vie for superior access to the really real, then that is all to the good.

**THE VARIETIES OF MYSTICAL  
EXPERIENCE:  
PAUL TILlich AND WILLIAM JAMES**

DAVID H. NIKKEL

Paul Tillich and William James both offer rich resources for thinking about the interrelated topics of mysticism, religious faith, the object of religious faith, and the ultimate meaningfulness of life. In spite of interesting similarities in their efforts, differing epistemologies of religious experience lead them to contrasting conclusions. These conclusions, however, may, complement each other at key points.

It is no coincidence that indices for Tillich's major works include multiple entries for "mysticism." For Tillich bases religion on a mystical *a priori*, an immediate connection or identity of each person with the ultimate, the holy, the divine. The centrality of this mystical *a priori* can be discerned in relation to key concepts in Tillich's theology. His most famous concept of "ultimate concern" involves not only our subjective concern but a grasping of "or rather a being grasped by" the object of that concern, however distorted, idolatrous, or even demonic our understanding of the ultimate may be. Indeed, the immediacy of the connection entails for Tillich a transcendence of the normal subject-object structure, which always involves separation or "cleavage" (e.g., ST 3:242). Thus the ultimate or God is not external to us in the way other finite beings are. As Tillich puts it in *Dynamics of Faith*: "In terms like ultimate, unconditional, infinite, absolute, the difference between subjectivity and objectivity is overcome. The ultimate of the act of faith and the ultimate that is meant in the act of faith are one and the same" (11). Revelation is always the correlation of miracle and ecstasy, the latter literally meaning "to stand outside oneself," which means that "reason...is beyond its subject-object structure" (ST 1:112) Tillich is quite clear that there is "a mystical...element in every type of faith" (DF 71), that "the element of identity on which mysticism is based cannot be absent in any religious experience" (CB 160; see also ST 2: 83). Conversely, when this mystical element is ignored or rejected we have problems. According to Tillich, modern philosophy of religion—in this context meaning since St. Thomas Aquinas!—"has gone astray by undermining the ontological approach to God, wherein the human being "discovers something that is identical" with

oneself (TC 10 ff) and which brings "immediate religious certainty" (TC 16).

Taking a historical perspective in the spirit of James's pragmatism, we should not find the strong mystical element in Tillich at all surprising. For his theology has its primary roots in German Romantic idealism with its emphasis on religious feeling and its affinity with mystical experiences of God and nature. To risk a wider historical perspective (perhaps bordering on meta-narrative?), one could regard Romanticism as a backdoor attempt to fulfill the modern quest for absolute certainty launched by Descartes, as I have argued elsewhere: As it became clear that the Enlightenment hope of a universal religion based on reason was quixotic, some retreated to the alleged certainty of feeling and the intuitive ("DS").

Last year, we celebrated the centennial of the first publication of William James' classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It is probably due to James that the phrase "religious experience" has taken on specialized meaning in religious studies as a direct contact with the divine or with a religious figure or power. Defined in this manner, all humans have religious experiences in Tillich's system, whether or not they label them as such; because of its *a priori* nature, religious experience is inescapable, inalienable for Tillich. Identifiable mystical experiences are thus an intensified and prolonged version of what all humans experience through the mystical *a priori*. Crucially for James, religious experiences in general, and mystical experiences in particular, are epistemologically *a posteriori*. That is, they exist as particular, contingent experiences that only some humans undergo. This is precisely what we would expect, given James's pragmatism. It is not an overstatement that mysticism is the *sine qua non* of religious experience for James. James sounds wistful in conceding that he can consider "mystical states" "only at second hand," for "my own constitution shuts me out from their enjoyment almost entirely" (VRE 370). Such states of consciousness then are extraordinary experiences open only to a distinct minority.

Because of their differing epistemologies, on the broadest level Tillich and James mean different things by "mystical" experiences. But Tillich does expound on "full-blown" mystical states, so we can set the stage for comparing his "oranges" to James's. For sacramental faith, a concrete object or person symbolizes the ultimate and becomes a bearer of the



holy (DF 66ff). Mystical faith recognizes the inadequacy of any finite reality to fully capture the ultimate “not to mention the idolatrous tendency to identify the symbol with the ultimate (ST 1:139-40). So, while not necessarily rejecting sacramental faith, mysticism attempts to transcend it, indeed to transcend “every piece of reality as well as reality as a whole” “to the point in which all concreteness disappears in the abyss of pure divinity” (DF 69). Yet for Tillich, to fully or finally transcend the concrete is neither possible nor desirable. Humans participate and are embodied in a world in time, in a natural and historical world. And thus, the unconditional can concern us ultimately “only if it appears in a concrete embodiment. (TC 28). Even mysticism then always involves “concrete formulas and a special behavior” “expressing the ineffable” (TC 28). When mystics lose sight of that truth, mysticism becomes problematic; so at least in its extreme forms, “[m]ysticism does not take the concrete seriously” (CB 186) and “implies an ultimate negation of...existence in time and space” (ST 1:140). The divine perspective here correlates to the human one: In keeping with German idealism, and particularly with Hegel, the infinite expresses itself, indeed fulfills itself, in and through the finite.

As suggested earlier, for Tillich religious faith or ultimate concern involves an immediate certainty by virtue of the mystical *a priori*. But this self-evident, “immediate awareness of the Unconditioned” (TC 27), this “unconditional certainty” (TC 23), does not provide any particular cognitive contents. So uncertainty and risk invariably enter in with any concrete, conditioned embodiment of our ultimate concern (TC 27ff). Here empirical messiness reigns. Here our encounter with the divine is “fragmentary, anticipatory and threatened by the ambiguities of religion” (ST 3:242). But the *prius* of religions faith is the mystical *a priori*, the ground which makes particular mystical and other religious experiences possible “for every human, and which grounds us in a primordial certainty.

For William James by contrast, the *prius*, the starting point, is religious faith. We begin with no certainty of any stripe. Rather than an inalienable religious experience making faith possible for all a la Tillich, instead religious faith helps make possible mystical and other religious experiences, at least for some. Here we have faith as a matter of will, indeed, as “The Will to Believe.” Where empirical evidence is more or less inconclusive, the will can and should

tip the balance. A willing openness to the supernatural, a willingness to meet “the more” halfway, is a precondition for religious experience in general and for that gold standard of said experiences, “mystical states” in particular. Indeed, for James the will must decide. Neutrality is not an option. A supposedly neutral attitude toward religious belief is itself a decision against openness, against reaching out and searching for the divine. From the start, we are ensconced in empirical contingency and messiness, and the possibility of mystical experience, of an intimate connection with a higher power, depends upon us, upon our individual nature and upon our deciding and acting.

Interestingly Tillich does speak of James “will to believe” as he analyzes the fate of the ontological approach in the modern world “and his evaluation is not positive. He characterizes “the will to believe” as a “Scotistic doctrine” (TC 22). Tillich regards St. Thomas, Duns Scotus more radically than Aquinas, and James as too imbued with a “cosmological approach” to philosophy of religion. Here God is inferred from the nature of the world. Here we meet a “stranger” when we meet God, a stranger about whose nature we can issue “only *probable* statements” (emphasis Tillich’s) (TC 10). On the other hand, Tillich does tantalize with a reference to “genuine pragmatism,” which partakes of the ontological approach to the extent it rejects cosmological arguments for God’s existence and “refuses to accept the cleavage between subject and object as final” (TC 22).

As above, religious experience begins with an existential certainty for Tillich. Can religious certainty of any kind “perforce *a posteriori* be realized in James” view? James does, of course, observe that noetic “insight” and “authority” are common to mystical experiences (VRE 371) and does note a subjective certainty: mystics consider the noetic implications of their extraordinary states of consciousness to be “invulnerable” (VRE 414-15). James himself judges that mystics have in fact encountered higher powers. To what extent does this judgment involve his “will to believe” in the face of inconclusive evidence? James does assert in *Varieties* that the “drift of all the evidence” (309) and “experience” (509) urges the reality of God. Yet, James recognizes that others with other commitments do not share his reading of the evidence. His “will to believe,” his openness to signs of God’s reality, enables him to interpret the evidence as he does. So,

mystics have no epistemological basis to compel others to accept the truth of their experiences or of their interpretations (however general or inchoate these latter may be). Mystical experiences in and of themselves constitute compelling evidence for mystics but not for third parties (VRE 415ff).

The Latin root of “intuition” is “to look at or towards” and, suggestively, since ancient times, the word has carried meanings of “contemplation.” Though construed differently, intuition is crucial for both Tillich and James. Tillich essays to avoid “intuition” or “experience” in relation to the mystical *a priori*, since these terms normally connote particular objects or concrete cognitive contents, preferring instead “awareness” (TC 22ff). With that caveat understood, though, we can aver that this awareness is for Tillich an *a priori* intuition, not formed by any particular experiences, but rather an intuition with which we have any experience in and of the world.

For James, religion begins in the realm of the intuitive-emotional (VRE 422ff). In keeping with James’s pragmatism, though, this intuition is *a posteriori*, arrived at through experience. The object or content of this religious intuition is summarized in James’s philosophical works: a spiritual reality (or realities) that is more than the physical world and more than ourselves, but akin to our higher or “tenderer” qualities (e.g., PU 307), first in “being and power and truth,” the most “primal” (VRE 35) and the most “eternal” or lasting, “throw[ing] the last stone and say[ing] the final word” (“WTB”), the most “overarch[ing]” and “envelop[ing]” (VRE 35). What is the empirical evidence for the reality of the object of said intuition? James has a place for judgments or proto-judgments about the nature of the universe, judgments that suggest (a) higher power(s) at work in the universe. At least this can be one import of his claim that “spiritual judgments” are primarily based on “immediate feeling” or “immediate luminousness” (VRE 19). Also, James’s avowal that any “spiritualistic philosophy” involves a basic attitude of trust regarding the universe, whereby we keep no ultimate fear, is congruent with this thesis (PU 31-32).

However, for James the strongest evidence for the reality of the “more” is precisely religious experiences, in the sense of a direct perception of the “superhuman.” “This awareness comes by the auspices of the subconscious” (VRE 229ff, 473, 501ff), whether the experiences be mystical, visionary, or just a general or “inchoate” sense of a divine pres-

ence (VRE 58 ff, 468). Here we encounter James’s formulation of what Tillich appreciates about “genuine pragmatism”: knowledge of the ultimate power comes not from the “cosmological approach” of deriving God from the nature of the world but rather from the “ontological approach,” with its direct connection of the human person with the ultimate. Still there is a difference in how this connection is construed by Tillich and James. Tillich simply proffers an absolute immediacy transcending the subject-object structure and cleavage. James is less univocal. On the one hand, his use of “perception” is significant (VRE 63ff, 237). Perception is cognitively more direct than discursive reasoning but hardly escapes the subject-object structure or correlation. From this perspective, religious experiences are relatively direct, but still the subconscious *mediates* the supernatural rather than providing total immediacy. Indeed, James titles a section of *Varieties*, “The subconscious self as intermediating between nature and the higher region,” and refers to this subconscious self as a “mediating term” (VRE 501). On the other hand, James ultimately admits the possibility of mutually enveloping or coterminous religious experience, where the human becomes directly aware of a superhuman consciousness at what normally is the margin of our consciousness. His references in *Varieties* to the more as “continuous” with parts of us may be indicative (e.g., 509, 515). But it is in his further deliberations in a *Pluralistic Universe* that he writes of a “compounding” of minds, where “finite minds may simultaneously be co-conscious with one another in a superhuman intelligence” (PU 292). Here depicted is a merging or coinherence of human and divine consciousness, here would be immediacy. We must remember, though, that such immediacy, if real, is available only for certain individuals at certain times, rather than humankind’s inalienable possession as in Tillich.

The other side of Tillich’s applauding pragmatism is its rejection of cosmological arguments for God’s existence. Here Tillich uses “cosmological” broadly, including teleological arguments as well. James does fit the bill here. He overviews the weakness of theistic arguments (VRE 427 ff) and notably dismisses the traditional “watchmaker” type argument that induces an external creator (VRE 73). To use James “Will to Believe” terminology, this idea of divinity is not a live option for his educated contemporaries, whose subconscious intuitions are

compatible with a more organic and immanent understanding (PU 29-30). In keeping with the primacy of the intuitive and emotional, any (proto)-judgments about the existence of superhuman power(s) derived from the nature of the universe (e.g., VRE 421ff), while cosmological in approach on Tillich's definition, are definitely not "cosmological arguments," in that James posits no conscious inference or discursive argumentation. Whether in the form of "spiritual judgments" or of direct experiences of "the more," our intuitions and feelings may later find conceptual development "or over-development" in philosophical and theological systems (VRE 422). Again, this development itself is profoundly influenced by the subconscious elements that constitute the spirit of an age, according to James. In this "spirit," I will note how deeply James himself was influenced by Romanticism and by liberal Protestantism in his high regard for intuition and for religious feeling.

Tillich's and James's diverse epistemologies and consequent views of religious faith lead to differing understandings of the nature of the object encountered in religious experience. Tillich emphasizes the immediate, unitive aspect of mysticism and of all religious experience "as grounded in the mystical *a priori*." Recall again that such experience transcends the normal subject-object cleavage: one is aware of a unity with the ultimate, the unconditioned beyond particular contents. That this unconditioned reality transcending the subject-object structure of the universe is *one* rather than many is assumed more than argued by Tillich. To be sure Tillich indicates that if the ultimate were conditioned by any other reality, it could not be ultimate, unconditioned, and infinite (e.g., CB 184-85, ST 1:237). If an alleged higher power were rivaled by another, it would fail the test of ultimacy, and we would be forced to look to a "God above" for such a god. In addition, Tillich regards "pluralism of ultimate principles" as inconsistent with the order and unity that permits us to talk of one world (ST 1:232). However, Tillich's logic here is not patent to all, including William James. Tillich is certainly profoundly influenced in a monotheistic direction by the weight of the Christian tradition, as well as encouraged in some monistic tendencies by the Western mystical tradition, most proximately by its manifestation in German Romantic idealism. On this latter score, Tillich once confessed that the total "feel" of the presuppositions of Spinoza resonate with him more than those of any

other thinker (Ferre). And various critics were quick to accuse Tillich of pantheism. While Tillich sees the need for a pantheistic element in any viable theology (ST 1: 234), and rejects the notion that God is *a person* or being among others, the intent of Tillich's theology is best described as panentheistic rather than pantheistic. While the finite is in the infinite, which for Tillich involves the immediate coherency of the mystical *a priori*, the world retains its integrity, freedom, and value. The proper interpretation of any genuine religious experience involves an attitude of transformation where other finite realities are no longer treated as separate(d) from us (ST 3:119); but as earlier indicated, Tillich critiques forms of mysticism that posit the devaluation or disappearance of the finite and its meaning in the divine abyss. Finite reality offers meaning to be actualized, and this means something to God, according to Tillich. Above I referred to the "intent" of Tillich's theology. Elsewhere I have argued that Tillich's difficulties and ambiguities in jettisoning concepts of divine immutability, impassibility, and timelessness compromised his panentheistic intent to portray a God who genuinely relates to a world in mutual freedom (PHT); but the intent is unmistakable.

In *Varieties*, James first appears to interpret "or at least report how mystics have typically interpreted" mystical experiences analogously to Tillich. Because of their unitive and enlarging dimensions, such states point to monism (and optimism) (407ff). But then James confesses that he has "oversimplified" for "expository reasons" (VRE 416). There are in fact varieties of mystical experiences or rather varieties of theoretical interpretations. The "mystical feeling of enlargement, union, and emancipation has no specific intellectual content whatever of its own" (VRE 416-17). Notice here the parallel to the contentless character of Tillich's mystical *a priori* or "absolute faith" (CB, 176ff). Exceptions to "monistic" mystics include dualists and theistic personalists (VRE 416).

In *A Pluralistic Universe*, James develops his over-beliefs about the more that mystics and others experience. James regards monism in general and Hegelian absolute idealism in particular as rationalist speculation that ignores the empirical, yielding various improbabilities and problems. The biggest one is that of evil. If God is the absolute and all-inclusive one, evil becomes an insoluble mystery for which God is ultimately responsible (PU 124, 294). Instead, James defends the notion of "a pluralistic

metaphysic” and a “finite God, “ where God is a part of the totality of reality, where God is within a wider universe with an “external environment,” where God faces some “limits.” (PU 124, 310-11). At the same time, James, as mentioned earlier, rejects the notion of God as external creator and endorses the more organic and pantheistic spirit of his age. Indeed, he is quite taken with the work of a German Romantic idealist, Gustav Theodore Fechner (PU 152ff). He sympathizes with Fechner’s theory of concentric enveloping consciousnesses, an earth-consciousness containing the experiences of earth’s inhabitants, then a solar system consciousness, and *perhaps* God as the most inclusive of consciousnesses. But he will not follow Fechner in positing God as “the total envelope” (PU 292ff), judging that this conclusion is appended, tangential rather than integral, to Fechner’s system (PU 153-54). Again, God must be finite, limited “either in power or knowledge or in both” (PU 311), and something must be outside of God (PU 110-11) if only “metaphysical necessity” (PU 294), or else God as the whole will be responsible for evil.

While multiple and *ontologically independent* gods, superhuman powers working for good in the universe are compatible with James’s perspective, a close reading of his philosophical theology suggests little real interest in such strict polytheism. He attributes his use of the singular “God” in *A Pluralistic Universe* to his Christian background and audience; but his general sympathy with an organic and pantheistic spirit and particular sympathy with Fechner’s theology suggests his over-belief preference for one enveloping “but not all-enveloping” God. While he labels Fechner’s belief in an earth consciousness as “clearly polytheistic” (PU 310), this “god” is not ontologically independent but instead included in a larger consciousness. The universe is adequately pluralistic for James as long as there is *some* reality that resists God’s total control; his “finite God...may conceivably have *almost* nothing outside of himself” (PU 125). One could speculate whether familiarity with the concept of pantheism in contrast to pantheism, or anachronistically with Whiteheadian process theology, might have enabled James to fashion some concept of divine all-inclusiveness *sans* traditional divine omnipotence. But as his thought stands, James parts company with Tillich on the finiteness of God. Tillich would regard James’s God as one instantiation of “theological theism,” where God “is seen as a self which has a

world, as an ego which is related to a thou, as a cause which is separated from its effect, as having a definite space and an endless time. He is a being, not being-itself” (CB 184).

Both Tillich and James deal with doubt regarding the meaningfulness of life. Tillich is famous for his claim that meaningless is the chief existential threat of the modern age (CB 61-63). James for his part penned that religion’s “universal message” is that, “All is not vanity in the universe, whatever the appearances may suggest” (PU 38). Their differing epistemologies, though, result in different construals of how such doubt is confronted and overcome. In Tillich’s system our intuitive connection with the God above the God of theism can give us “the courage to be,” even when all particular meanings have vanished in an abyss of meaningless, including God as a being external to us (CB 182 ff). As we are grasped by the God above God in “absolute faith,” we become aware of the source of our courage to be in the face of fate, guilt, and emptiness, a source that infinitely transcends yet includes our concrete and fragmentary meanings. Because of this certain connection with the ultimate, we receive an absolute assurance of the ultimate meaningfulness of our life, even in the absence of any concrete evidence supporting such assurance. Concurrently on the divine side, God’s overcoming of all nonbeing and ultimate fulfillment transcends “potentiality and actuality” (e.g., ST 1: 251-52). To borrow a category from James, this absolute guarantee seems well suited for those with a twice-born temperament.

For James, our intuitive judgments about the existence and nature of a higher power are not so certain; nor even are our mystical and other religious experiences, which are only the privilege of some of us on some occasions. And from the divine perspective, given the “pragmatic” upshot of a pluralistic universe for James, God must work against realities and powers that resist the divine will. So ultimate victory is far from assured. Yet, if we in faith work with the higher power, we “may actually help God...to be more effectively faithful to his own greater tasks” (VRE 509). So, while the victory of meaning is uncertain, our very efforts increase its prospects.

The primary purpose of this paper has been to expound and amplify the respective positions of Tillich and James, through comparison and contrast. However, I will take the opportunity to conclude this exercise with brief evaluative remarks. Overall

James's epistemology is the more defensible, particularly in light of postmodern concerns. Tillich's positing of an *a priori* and certain connection with the ultimate appears very modern and Romantic indeed from today's vantage point. I do accept the postmodern dictum that all human experiences are mediated through our bodies, organs of perception, language, etc. By this criterion, even James empiricism is implicated in Romantic modernism in a liberal Protestant vein, by allowing for a rather direct infusion of a superhuman consciousness into ours. I would note that although both thinkers accept inclusion or "enveloping" of our consciousness by the divine, the relationship is hardly transitive: it does not follow that we can or must include the divine in ours.

James maintains the existence of realities with ultimate ontological independence from God "realities opposing God" as the only adequate explanation for evil. James might defend this opinion as an empirical observation or at least an easy inference from one. But at the metaphysical level of articulated generality, simple empiricism is inadequate and inferences are never easy, or at least never uncontested. (I do not follow radical postmodernism in disavowing metaphysics.) Tillich "and I" would ask James who or what creates the environment, the universe for God, and the power(s) resisting God, who or what sets the conditions for their interaction? Perhaps indeterminacy and chance are inherent in the very nature of finite existence "and if this be a "metaphysical necessity," must we construe it as a reified power *ontologically independent of, outside of the divine*, even though freedom and randomness often frustrate God's highest hopes for the world? The intent of my rhetorical questions is to suggest that some form of pantheistic monotheism resembling Tillich's may be possible and rational, constituting an over-belief that stops short of the idealistic monism James rightly and cleverly rails against.

I will point out that the alleged empirical basis for James's support for higher forms of consciousness enveloping lower forms has largely vanished today. Recall James's approval of Fechner's purportedly scientific notion of an earth consciousness, solar system consciousness, and other expansive forms of awareness. Despite proponents of Gaia and neo-shamanism, who often tout the backing of "newer" science, support for Fechner's version of panpsychism among academic philosophers, theologians, and natural scientists is virtually nil. Empiri-

cal scientific observation, which could demonstrate any mechanism or means for an earth or galaxy consciousness, does not constitute a live option for James's scholarly successors.

I have questioned Tillich's affirmation of the meaningfulness of life, in spite of whatever particular meanings are thrown into doubt, insofar as its foundation is the mystical *a priori*. However, another ground for an intuition of the basic meaningfulness of life is possible. It is more empirical, though involving a judgment transcending mere observation or experience; and it has connections to James's question of whether we can have a basic attitude of trust towards the universe. The intuition: bodily existence, given normal integration and functioning, is inherently good. Normally, to be, to see, to hear, to move, etc., are intrinsically valuable. Of course, physical and psychological disease or trauma can override the normal goodness of animal life, of embodied existence. So, whether the good outweighs the evil in a particular individual's life as a whole or in any given stretch is a messy empirical matter. So, unlike Tillich, I can make no absolute claim as to the meaningfulness of *my* life. But this intuition, if valid, upholds the meaningfulness of life at a basic level, such that the overall meaningfulness of existence is not closely tied to particular outcomes. This intuition, this over-belief if you will, "again if valid" would offer greater assurance than does James that religion's abiding claim is indeed true: All is not vanity.

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“DS” “Discerning the Spirits of Modernity and Postmodernity.” *Journal of Religious Studies* (forthcoming)

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Ferre, Nels F. S. *Searchlights on Contemporary Theology*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1961.

## THE PRAGMATISM OF PAUL TILlich

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Fate dealt Paul Tillich some cruel blows in the 1930s. As is well known, he was forced to flee for his life from the Nazis. As is not so well known, perhaps, the *timing* of his forced emigration added a nasty twist to that cruel fate.

It was late 1933 when Tillich came to these shores. Had he come to the United States sometime prior to around 1930, he might have had a lot of ranking American philosophers as his conversation partners. As it was, however, he arrived at a time when the work of such figures as William James, John Dewey, and Josiah Royce was going into eclipse. It was a time when the reigning styles in academic philosophy were becoming positivism and analytical philosophy. And it was a time when G. E. Moore could rise and say, after listening to one of Tillich's lectures, “Mr. Tillich...won't you please try to state one sentence, or even one word, that I can understand?”<sup>1</sup>

We are in a different situation today. Since around 1980, the work of Quine, Sellars, the later Wittgenstein, Davidson, Thomas Kuhn, Hilary Putnam, Richard Rorty, and others has had the effect of reviving the American pragmatist tradition, and of putting the kind of empiricism that bedeviled Tillich very much on the defensive. Although Tillich is not here to take advantage of this new and more congenial situation, his works are still with us. In fact, beginning as early as next year, a publication project that I have been asked to lead should begin making more of Tillich's writings available in English than have ever been available before.

I offer this paper, then, in the hope that a kinder

fate may now await Tillich's philosophical work than was earlier the case. My thesis is that Tillich belongs substantially within the broad tradition of American pragmatism.

Tillich's dynamic theory of truth helps make understandable William James's idea that “truth is what happens to an idea.” I try to show that in this paper. Not addressed here is the fact that Tillich could help Richard Rorty round out the polytheistic “romanticism” that Rorty has recently confessed.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. The Verifying Test: Tillich a Pragmatist Despite Himself<sup>3</sup>

“The verifying test belongs to the nature of truth,” Tillich writes in 1951. “But it is not permissible,” he goes on, “to make the experimental method of verification the exclusive pattern of all verification.” In addition to experimental verification, Tillich explains, there is the far more pervasive phenomenon he calls “experiential verification,” namely, verification “within the life-process itself.” (ST 1:102)<sup>4</sup>

Substantially this same contrast—the contrast between experimental verification and experiential verification—was in Tillich's mind when he wrote something ten years earlier. I want to quote this earlier text of 1941 at some length. I quote it because it gives us about as much explanation as Tillich ever provides in one place as to how he thinks he differs from pragmatism

In this passage, Tillich uses two expressions to refer to his own theory of truth, a theory he had developed in the 1920s in Germany (MW 1:113-305).<sup>5</sup> He refers both to “a dynamic truth” and to “the dynamic-symbolic interpretation of religious knowledge” (MW 4:274).

In the passage, we also hear Tillich refer to one of his special ideas, the *kairos* doctrine. This doctrine states that we sometimes find ourselves in a

“fullness of time,” an especially advantaged time. In such a time and place—in such a *kairos*—social and historical forces, as well as personal and intellectual forces, make some things powerfully *true* for us. These things become convincing, significant, and motivating.<sup>6</sup>

When I first came to [the United States, says Tillich,] I tried to connect ‘the philosophy of existence’ and pragmatism, but with insufficient means. Since that time the problem has always interested me, especially because the idea of a ‘dynamic truth’ as is implied in the doctrine of the ‘Kairos’ served as a mediating concept between the two philosophies. But the difference between the two philosophies is as important as the relationship. The decision [or judgment], which belongs to the dynamic-symbolic interpretation of religious knowledge, is not a decision [or judgment] based on activities which follow the pattern of means and ends, *i.e.* the technical, instrumentalistic pattern which allows for the distance of aloofness of a testing experiment. But it is the decision which involves surrender, venturing faith, and for which there is no criterion and experimental test outside the situation itself (MW 4:274).

I call attention here to a key assumption Tillich is making.<sup>7</sup> He assumes that, in all pragmatist verification, pragmatists will conduct an experimental test in which they remain aloof, outside of, and at a distance from the situation in which the test is in progress. Tillich appears to assume here that, for *all* pragmatists, the knowing subject manipulates variables, observes outcomes, always keeping personal and subjective concerns and interests scrupulously out of the picture (cf. ST 1:44). In that way, knowing subjects learn what produces this or that result. And, after having demonstrated that something is an effective instrument for achieving certain desired goals or ends, the pragmatist *then* accepts it as true.

Is Tillich right about this? His characterization of pragmatist verification fits well enough a pragmatism that is oriented primarily to the natural sciences, as perhaps in the methodological pragmatism of Nicholas Rescher.<sup>8</sup> But Tillich’s characterization does not apply very well to the verification we might do in religious, interpersonal, and moral affairs, and therewith it does not fit that major strain of American pragmatism that can claim William James as an ancestor.<sup>9</sup>

In *The Will to Believe*,<sup>10</sup> James could not be clearer that, in the kind of experiment he wants people to engage in, these people will not be distant or aloof. They will be completely *involved* in the situation. As James puts it, when people make the more important of such decisions, they act “irrevocably”; they stake everything they have, precisely in the way Pascal describes his famous idea of a “bet” or wager; and they “stick to it that there *is* truth” of this kind “with their whole nature,” resolving “to stand or fall by the results.” Each of the key terms and phrases I have just uttered is James’s own.<sup>11</sup>

Granted, James does not use Tillich’s vocabulary. He does not say such issues are matters of ultimate concern, that they are existential, or that they are matters of our being or not being (ST 1:12-14). But James says virtually the same thing in his own terms. He uses a trilogy of terms in the following way: (1) Our decisions regarding such matters are “momentous” rather than “trivial.” (2) They are “forced,” which means that we cannot avoid or evade them, and that our deciding them one way rather than another way changes the world in which we live. And finally, (3) we cannot exercise such choices unless they are “live” options.<sup>12</sup>

The latter point means that we can only make a choice that “appeals” to us, or that we have a “tendency” toward. And, as James makes clear, whether we tend toward these choices or find them appealing depends upon the kind of corporate human existence in which our lives are embedded at the time (James 9). That last idea is in outline the same as Tillich’s *kairos* doctrine. I return to this *kairos* character of Tillichian verification and explain it further at the end of both part two and part three of this paper.

Thus, we need to enrich if not actually to correct the way Tillich distinguishes himself from pragmatism here.<sup>13</sup> There is no way anybody, even a pragmatist, can try out a religious belief, liturgy, or practice without *plunging into* the experimental situation. The whole point is to ask what is happening to me, and to the group I identify with, *because and insofar as* we are existentially involved.

Nevertheless, Tillich has a point. In order not to lose his point, I shall speak of two different “moments” within the process of pragmatist verification. The fictional Amy Smith will be my example of this. She is a pragmatist who is trying out a religion. In one moment, Smith is involved in the practice or commitment that her chosen religion involves. In a second moment, she reflects upon what the results of

this kind of practice and commitment are, mentally distancing herself from that involvement. And if Smith gets an encouraging result, she will repeat her verifying experiment to see if the particular example of religion she is engaged with is an effective means toward the ends she wishes to achieve—peace of mind, or the awareness of being reconciled and forgiven, or empowerment, or a sense of “connection” and alignment in relation to “the way things are.”<sup>14</sup>

Further, in some of her reflective moments, Smith will decide to try *different examples* of religion. Tillich is very impressed with the way pragmatism is always open to something new, to something that might work better (cf. ST 1:150).

We cannot forget, however, that we are dealing here with religion; and that the whole point in finding something that is religiously true is to find values, beliefs, and practices that we can sooner or later *settle down with indefinitely*. Thus it is inevitable that, when Amy Smith is getting encouraging feedback, the involved moment in which she is “trying out” a concrete religion will become longer and longer until it is lifelong – so far as Amy Smith can foresee. Experimental verification becomes experiential verification.

Nevertheless, given the way in which I have described her approach, Smith still has her pragmatic credentials. And, on the other side, in order to keep Tillichians and other existentialists happy, I hope to show the following a bit later below: as the distancing and the involved moments come together, so do means and end. This proceeds until means and end are located in the same, ongoing, lived “place.” They mutually interpenetrate. In that way, Tillich’s forbidding image of a manipulative, technical, instrumentalist testing of religion disappears in the morning light, like a figure out of a bad dream. It does not describe the kind of thing a Jamesian pragmatist is doing.

On the present issue, I therefore conclude that, if we are talking about the more-or-less Jamesian sort of pragmatism, the difference between pragmatism and Tillich’s dynamic-symbolic view of verification disappears.<sup>15</sup> As one sees in the long passage quoted near the beginning of part one of this paper, that pragmatist verification “allows for” the distancing test. The locution Tillich uses (“to allow for”) has two consequences. (1) It means that Tillich does not quite say that every instance of pragmatic verification will employ such a test; “allowing” such a test may mean that it may be, but need not be, con-

ducted, and that it is conducted only sometimes. More interestingly, however, (2) in describing a verification procedure that merely “allows” for a distancing test, Tillich describes something that, when it is worked out concretely, is indistinguishable from his own theory of verification. That is to say: How could Tillich “disallow” that such distancing moments will occur in the experiential verification he recommends, and how could he deny that such moments will play a role in the verifying of the truth of the religion in question? He is quite insistent upon the role of doubt in mature faith.<sup>16</sup>

At this point, it would further strengthen my overall argument if I took the time thoroughly to demonstrate the following proposition: the truth of the religious symbol is pragmatic. However, that comes close to being “true by inspection” for those with a little knowledge of Tillich’s doctrine of the symbol; and, more to the point, I believe the next section of this paper will make the proposition evident. Thus, I content myself here with pointing out the following about the beliefs, practices, and so on that Amy Smith is trying to verify. If these things she is trying out are religious, they are *symbolic*, according to Tillich. They are “symbolic” in the special sense of the religious symbol.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, when we ask whether this or that religious belief (or this or that religious *anything*) is true, we are asking whether this or that *religious symbol* is true.

## 2. The Trinity, as a Religious Symbol, Is Pragmatically True

Here in part two, I try to show that the symbol of the Trinity is pragmatically true (if it is true at all). At the same time, I also try to show what it means *in real human experience* for a religious symbol to be true.

I begin with something I call “our trinitarian problem.”<sup>18</sup> It belongs to our humanity that we have concerns. We experience some of them as ultimate and overriding. At the heart of every concern that even begins to be ultimate or religious, two opposed drives are in contention. On the one hand, we want all the big fulfillments of our lives to be “here and now,” up close, as solid as possible, and face to face. In Tillich’s word, we are everlastingly driven toward *concreteness* in our experience – insofar as it is religious.

But the opposite thirst is also in us. Whenever a concern takes hold of us as religious, or as ultimate,



we find ourselves drawn and driven by it in such a way that we reach or yearn for a fulfillment that would be total, infinite, and unsurpassable. In Tillich's view, we are eternally driven toward *ultimacy* in our experience, insofar as our experience is religious.

In the perceptive analyses of human experience for which Tillich is famous (e.g., ST 1:174-92), he makes it credible—I would say he makes it *convincing*—that there is an ongoing struggle in human life between the drive toward concreteness and the drive toward ultimacy. The struggle is fought out within each human breast, and throughout every personal life – even in the case of those who think they are secular. This is our “trinitarian problem.”

But why should we call it anything so religious-sounding as a “trinitarian problem”? The reason is, that it is a contest between polytheism and monotheism. On the one hand, we are pulled apart into un-integrated “many-ness”: we become practical polytheists. Or, on the other hand, our various particular involvements are drained of their richness, or they are squelched and suppressed, when we are driven *beyond* our lovely little limited concerns by some starkly transcendent concern. In this latter case, we become practical monotheists—although we are in that case monotheists of an *exclusive* kind.

What is exclusive monotheism? As an example of exclusive monotheism, I choose the legendary football coach, Bear Bryant. Alabama football was the god of Bear Bryant. It was his ultimate concern, and a jealous and *exclusive* concern it was. One reason he refused for years to retire was, as he put it, “I would croak in a week.” He was wrong about that—but not by much. He died *three* weeks after he retired.

By contrast, with exclusive monotheism—whether our jealous, exclusive deity be football or something else—what is it like when our experience of ultimate concern assumes a trinitarian form? In trinitarian monotheism, our conflict is resolved. We are made whole because the one ultimate so *unites* itself with the plural passions and cares that drive us, that our erstwhile polytheistic gods fuse with the ultimate. They become one with it. Our plural concretes are “of the same substance with” the ultimate in the glory of the one godhead. We now “believe in the Trinity.” We are trinitarian monotheists, whether in Christian terms, or in terms of symbols found in some other religion—or in terms of “deities” that are configured for us in secular, quasi-religious terms.

In telling the story here of the trinitarian problem and its solution, I have spoken almost entirely in individual and personal terms. However, this part of our human story is also writ large in the history of religions, Tillich believes, and that great macro story sheds a good deal of light on the micro stories of our individual lives. It would probably clarify matters if there were room here to repeat what I have written elsewhere about the way the doctrine of the Trinity emerged according to Tillich.<sup>19</sup> The kernel of what he says is that, in the experience of the early Christians, their life-altering attachment to the concrete figure of Jesus was thoroughly unified with the ground and goal of all that exists (cf. ST 1:229).

But we ask: in what sense is this trinitarian monotheism true? It is true *because* it serves the human need I have described. It solves our trinitarian problem. Our bipolar splits are healed. And it is true *insofar as* it serves that human purpose. In other words, its truth is pragmatic.

I hope something is evident here. Because trinitarian faith is a healing of the split inside our lives, it does not become true *until we believe it*, that is, until in faith we are grasped by it as true. For that reason, it is a beautiful illustration of Tillich's *kairos* doctrine, and it is at the same time a beautiful illustration of how Jamesian pragmatism works—that is, how truth is for James something that happens to an idea.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. The Truth of Tillich's Ontology Is Pragmatic

We have seen that the Trinity is pragmatically true when it functions as a symbol. I hope now to show that the Tillichian Trinity is also *non-symbolically* true, or, as Tillich also phrases it, that the Trinity is directly, rationally, and conceptually true.

If the Trinity *is* both symbolically and unsymbolically true, that tells us that it inhabits a very interesting part of Tillich territory. The Trinity inhabits the *boundary* between the religiously symbolic and the religiously non-symbolic (ST 2:10).<sup>21</sup>

Let me try to evoke the *two sides* of this boundary, each in turn. The fact that the Trinity is on this boundary means (a) that, as something we can reach out for mentally and *grasp in an abstract way*, the Trinity is the knowable structure of actuality. It is the structure of being. This should not be surprising. For a pantheist—even for a *qualified* pantheist such as Tillich—the inner structure of the triune God is

also, at the same time, the inner structure of all that exists.

But the fact that the Trinity is on this boundary also means (b) that it becomes far more than an abstract concept for us to grasp. When we are struck with the mystery of life and of the universe, we are likely to feel that this mystery gets at us in three ways: first, as the roiling “Whence” of all that is, second, as the defining “What” of everything that exists, and third, as the imperious “Whither” of what can be, or ought to be.<sup>22</sup> In such a mood, we typically sense that the triune mystery I have just described is the Power that picks us up, hurls us into being, defines us for what we are, fills our lives with whatever meaning they have, surpasses us, lures us, judges us, reclaims us, and eventually overruns us, all this in a way that we cannot possibly “get a handle on”—*except* that this Reality presents itself to our apprehension in this or in that gripping metaphor, or in this or in that set of symbolic terms.

But let us look again at the *unsymbolic* side of this boundary. Barely on the unsymbolic or conceptual side of this border are the trinitarian principles. They are three: Ground-Abyss, Form-Logos, and Act-Spirit (cf. ST 1:249-52; 3:284). You recognize them. Thinly clad in a metaphor, they are the Whence, the What, and the Whither of which I have just spoken. *And* when these three principles are arrayed in all the shimmering, symbolic garb of Father, Son, and Spirit, they are the Christian Trinity. But, as I say, I want to look at them now as concepts, not as symbols. Seen as concepts, they are the three elements in the dialectics of life. They comprise the knowable structure whereby anything that exists is actualized. They are the sinews of Tillich’s ontology.<sup>23</sup>

What is the status of these trinitarian principles, and of the dialectical structure they make up? Tillich is clear and confident that, insofar as they are ingredients in his philosophical ontology, they are non-symbolic. They are a properly rational grasp of the real (ST 1:249-52; 2:90-91; 3:284).

I am not so sure about that. I am not convinced that the dialectical structure I have just described is a direct, conceptual grasp of reality. I take Tillich’s triune dialectic, rather, as an impressive *model* of reality. Further, although I would make at least one big change in it,<sup>24</sup> I like this model. I find it both fruitful and useful.

And this is precisely my point. Tillich’s would-be structure of the real is fruitful. It is useful as a

construct that well serves the purpose for which it was built, namely, *to render reality comprehensible as a functioning, systematic whole*. It is true *because* it serves that purpose, and its truth is its *fulfilling* that purpose. In other words, the truth of Tillich’s systematic ontology is pragmatic. Further, and finally, in order to bring out the Jamesian and the kairos flavor of what is involved here, let me add the following. This fruitful model of reality only *becomes* true where and when it is being embraced and affirmed as adequate in this way – as the most adequate model, we may say.

Am I right about this? Tillich comes surprisingly close to saying I am. Here is the passage.

The way in which philosophical systems have been accepted, experienced, and verified points to a method of verification beyond rationalism and pragmatism. These systems...have been refuted innumerable times. But they live. Their verification is their efficacy in the life-process of mankind....This method of verification...throws out of the historical process what is exhausted and powerless and what cannot stand in the light of pure rationality. Somehow, it combines the pragmatic and the rational elements without falling into the fallacies of either pragmatism or rationalism (ST 1:105).

Tillich almost says here that his and other philosophical systems are pragmatically verified. Moreover, I find that the *momentum* of what he is saying topples him over into the pragmatist camp. I doubt that we even need to push him. If we do need to push him, however, it is only a small push.

Here is the small “push” I have in mind. First we say that the supposedly non-pragmatic or rationalistic elements he is talking about boil down to the criteria of consistency, coherence, completeness, and the like. And then we say that these criteria *also* are pragmatically verified. They are verified because we need them to do something we want to do, namely, to think and argue; and when we *manage* to think and argue, we show that they are true or valid. They are true *because, insofar as, and when* they are serving this need, and fulfilling this purpose.

However, there is a key passage in which Tillich suggests that it may not even require a “push” to get him into the broader pragmatist camp. The passage is Tillich’s decisive discussion of “the epistemological character of all ontological concepts” (ST 1:166-68). There Tillich says his ontological concepts are *a priori*, but that they belong to “a relatively but not

absolutely static a priori.” They are relative to the historical humankind that is “given in present experience and in historical memory.” Human nature changes, Tillich says, “but human nature changes in *history*. The structure of a being *which has a history* underlies all changes” (167).

Are we confronted here with a non-pragmatic sort of foundationalism? I do not believe we should understand this “underlying” structure in a foundationalist way. One reason we should not is that Tillich proceeds immediately to exegete the passage by saying that what he has just stated “agrees with a powerful tradition in classical ontology and theology represented by voluntarism and nominalism,” including Duns Scotus, Bergson, and Heidegger.

I thus conclude that Tillich’s “relatively a priori structures” (168) are indistinguishable, epistemologically, from the pragmatically verified notions discussed in this paper. The way in which these Tillichian structures or notions are *conditions for* experience, and *present in* all experience, as Tillich puts it (166), is that they *become* true: they are not first accepted as true so as thereafter to ground all else, but they become true when and insofar as they prove to be useful, indeed necessary, for us—for us as we pursue the purposes and projects that qualify us *as historically human beings*, including our purposes of thinking and arguing about what models best allow us to make sense of reality as a whole.

What do we do, however, with Tillich’s disavowals of pragmatism early and late in life?<sup>25</sup> As I have already pointed out, I blame these disavowals in very large measure upon the fact that Tillich was not aware that the boundaries of American pragmatism were wide enough to include him. He was more American than he knew.

I therefore conclude as follows. Whether we examine Tillich’s verification procedure, or his philosophical ontology, or his view of the truth of religious symbols, as in his understanding of the symbol of the Trinity—we should say that Tillich is most aptly understood as a pragmatist.

I say he is “most aptly” construed in that way. That is a rather pragmatist way to speak, of course. But what did you expect?

#### Abbreviations for Works by Paul Tillich

**GW** *Gesammelte Werke*. Edited by Renate Albrecht. Fourteen volumes. Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959-1990.

**MW** *Main Works / Hauptwerke*. Edited by Carl Heinz Ratschow with the collaboration of John Clayton, Gert Hummel, Erdmann Sturm, Michael Palmer, Robert P. Scharlemann, and Gunther Wenz. Six volumes. Berlin and New York: Walter De Gruyter—Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1987-1998.

**ST** *Systematic Theology*. Three volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963.

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<sup>1</sup> John Herman Randall, Jr., “The Ontology of Paul Tillich,” in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 133.

<sup>2</sup> Both Marc Boss of Montpellier’s Protestant Faculty of Theology and I have shown that Richard Rorty has a surprising soft spot in his heart for Tillich. Boss did this in his as-yet-unpublished paper at the 2002 meeting of the AAR in Toronto, and I in “Le socialisme religieux de Paul Tillich comme ressource pour une éthique sociale pragmatiste aujourd’hui.” Trans. Jean Richard. In *Le socialisme religieux de Paul Tillich: Une Éthique Sociale en Devenir? Actes du XVe Colloque International Paul Tillich, Toulouse, 2003*. Münster, Hamburg, London: LIT-Verlag, forthcoming 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The principal ideas in part one of this paper, although they are completely reworked here, were first published in my “Reconciling Paul Tillich and American Pragmatism,” in *Brücken der Versöhnung: Festschrift für Gert Hummel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Haigis and Doris Lax (Münster, Hamburg, London: LIT Verlag, 2003), 77-81.

Several of the main ideas I develop later in the paper – although not the ones at the end of parts two and three that I consider the most decisive – appear in different and generally in more expansive form, with other material included, in my “Tillich’s Trinity: A Venture in Pragmatism,” in *Trinity and/or Quaternity: Paul Tillich’s Re-opening of the Trinitarian Problem*, Proceedings of the IX International Paul-Tillich-Symposium, Frankfurt/Main, May 31-June 2, 2002, ed. Gert Hummel and Doris Lax (Münster, Hamburg, London: LIT-Verlag, forthcoming 2003).

<sup>4</sup> See “Abbreviations for works by Paul Tillich” at the end of this paper.

<sup>5</sup> He developed this view especially in *Das System der Wissenschaften*, 1923, MW 1:113-263, and in “Kairos und Logos,” 1926, MW 1:265-305. See “Abbreviations for works by Paul Tillich” at the end of this paper. For English translations, see Paul Tillich, *The System of the*

*Sciences*, trans. with introduction by Paul Wiebe (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1981), and “Kairos and Logos,” trans. Elsa L. Talmey, in Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History* (New York, London: Scribner’s, 1936), 123-175.

<sup>6</sup> I try to show how Tillich’s kairos idea connects with William James’s pragmatism at the end of part three of this paper, and in the eighth paragraph of part four. In my thumbnail description of a kairos in the text above, I have left out most of the theology that is involved, giving only what I need for present purposes.

<sup>7</sup> At the end of this part of the paper I point out in a footnote that, so far as this assumption is concerned, Tillich has left a loophole in case his assumption is wrong, and that this loophole could undermine his case. He leaves this loophole, perhaps unintentionally, when he uses the expression “allows for” in speaking of “the technical, instrumentalistic pattern which *allows for* the ‘distance’ of aloofness of a testing experiment.”

<sup>8</sup> Nicholas Rescher traces his “hard” pragmatism, as he calls it, back to C. S. Peirce. Nicholas Rescher, “pragmatism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 710-13.

<sup>9</sup> As Rescher sees the matter, William James is the fountainhead of the “softer” form of pragmatism, while the third “founding father” of pragmatism, John Dewey, “straddles the fence,” *ibid.*, 712.

<sup>10</sup> The book was first published in 1897 under the full title of the work I shall be citing, namely, William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy and Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956). Cf. page ii.

<sup>11</sup> James 3, 5, 23, 94. One is struck here with the way the American James emphasizes the active and conative ingredient in faith in a way that contrasts – in emphasis – with the way the Lutheran Tillich stresses the passive element in faith. Tillich characteristically says such things as, “Faith is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern” (*Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955] 51). However, Tillich presents faith as an “act” in which the will is most certainly involved (*Dynamics of Faith* [New York: Harper Torchbooks; Harper & Brothers, 1957], 4-8) and, as I am about to point out, James is most certainly not talking about a purely subjective “will to believe.” For James, if we’re to speak of a true belief, something from beyond the believer must happen. Truth “happens to an idea,” as we shall see; and we can exercise the kind of

commitment he is talking about only when something is a “live” option for us, when the configuration of circumstances in which we find ourselves makes it “appealing.” In such expressions the passive element in faith that Tillich stresses comes through quite clearly. To use my own terms: for James, the reality in which our lives are set must “conspire with” our subjective will to believe – if what we believe is to be true, or even if we are to commit ourselves.

<sup>12</sup> What I have just presented is confirmed by the well-known way in which James distinguishes “ultimate” decisions from the preliminary issues of everyday life (James 1-4, 8-11, 26-30; cf. Ellen Kappy Suckiel, *Heaven’s Champion* [Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1996] 27-37, and Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe* [Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001] 58-59).

<sup>13</sup> Even in the case of thinkers who are extraordinarily self-aware, as I believe Tillich was, I think it is possible for their interpreters to see *certain things* in their thought that these thinkers did not see. But I do not need to go that far in this paper, and I doubt that I do. What I do is to say that Tillich made a mistake in the way he distinguished himself from a Jamesian kind of pragmatism because he did not understand *pragmatism* well enough, not because he did not understand his own thought well enough.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Huston Smith, *The Way Things Are* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 22-23.

<sup>15</sup> The difference disappears, that is, except for some difference of relative emphasis upon the passive and the active ingredient in religious faith. See the long footnote 11 above.

<sup>16</sup> See and *The Courage to Be* and, specifically, *Dynamics of Faith*, 16-22.

<sup>17</sup> See “The Religious Symbol / Symbol and Knowledge,” MW 4:253-277.

<sup>18</sup> That term is faithful to Tillich, although Tillich uses the term “*the trinitarian problem*” [emphasis added] in a history-of-religions context, and I shall be using my term primarily with an individual reference.

<sup>19</sup> See Robison B. James, “Tillich’s Trinity: A Venture in Pragmatism,” referenced in an early note above.

<sup>20</sup> For the feature of James’s pragmatism that is at issue here, see the beginning of the sixth lecture in William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1995), 77-78: “The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events.” Hilary Putnam sees four strains in James’s theory of truth and discusses the strain

that is evident in the James passage just quoted at Hilary Putnam, "James's theory of truth" in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 166, 172, 177-79.

<sup>21</sup> See Robison Brown James, *The Symbolic Knowledge of God in the Theology of Paul Tillich*. Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1965 (Ann Arbor, MI.: University Microfilms Number 65-4861, 1965), 257-71.

<sup>22</sup> See Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1977), 1-10.

<sup>23</sup> Robison B. James, "Tillich's Dialectic: Key to His Cosmic Vision and His Idea of Knowledge." *Papers from*

*the Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society, Washington, D. C., 1993*. Ed. Robert P. Scharlemann (Charlottesville, VA.: North American Paul Tillich Society, 1994), 9-17.

<sup>24</sup> I would make a change with regard to the encounterable "Thou-ness" of the ultimate in being and meaning. Robison B. James, "Is Ultimate Reality Personal? Adding Buber to Tillich," chapter 8 in Robison B. James, *Tillich and World Religions* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 141-15

<sup>25</sup> ST 3:28-30; MW 4: 131-32, cf. 128. The same German citations are in GW 1:315-16, cf. 310.

### OEUVRES DE PAUL TILlich (COLLECTED WORKS OF PAUL TILlich IN FRENCH)

Published by Editions du Cerf (Paris), Editions Labor et Fides (Genève), Les Presses de l'Université Laval (Québec, Canada, G1K 7P4). This list was given to the Bulletin by Jean Richard, the 2003 NAPTS banquet speaker.

1. *La dimension religieuse de la culture. Ecrits du premier enseignement (1919-1926)*. Traduit de l'allemand par une Équipe de l'Université Laval avec une introduction de Jean Richard, 1990, 311 p.
2. *Christianisme et socialisme. Ecrits socialistes allemands (1919-1931)*. Traduction de Nicole Grondin et Lucien Pelletier, introduction de Jean Richard, 1992, XC-546 p.
3. *Ecrits contre les nazis (1932-1935)*. Traduction de Lucien Pelletier, introduction de Jean Richard, 1994, CXXI-338 P.
4. *Substance catholique et principe protestant*. Traduction et introduction sous la direction d'André Gounelle, 1995, 443 p.
5. *Dogmatique. Cours donné à Marbourg en 1925*. Traduction de Paul Asselin et de Lucien Pelletier, introduction de Jean Richard, 1997, LXXX-437 p.
6. *Le courage d'Être*. Traduction et introduction de Jean-Pierre LeMay, XVI-183 p.
7. *Documents biographiques*. Traduction et introduction de Roland Galibois, 254 p.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Paul Tillich, *Odvaha byt*, translated by Daniel Miksík from the English edition of *The Courage to Be*, with an introduction by Peter Gomes, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. *Cogitatio religionis*, 1. Praha: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2004.

This new translation of *The Courage to Be* into Czech contains the following note: "Acknowledgement is gratefully given to the North American Paul Tillich Society for financial support of this work."

Paul Tillich. *Berliner Vorlesungen II (1920-1924). Ergänzungs- und Nachlassbaende zu den Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich*, Vol. XIII. Edited by Erdmann Sturm. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter 2003. This volume contains the following lectures of Paul Tillich:  
Der religiöse Gehalt und die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der griechischen Philosophie (1920/21)  
Der religiöse Gehalt und die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der abendlaendischen Philosophie seit der Renaissance (1921)  
Geistesgeschichte der altchristlichen und mittelalterlichen Philosophie (1923/24).

Jari Ristiniemi, *Wholeness and the Integral Mind. Towards Self-Transcending Humanity*. Gävle, Sweden: The University of Gävle Press, 2003.

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