



BULLETIN

of

The North American Paul Tillich Society

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Religious Studies Department
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2006 NAPTS AND AAR PROGRAM

Editor's note: Please bring this Bulletin with you for the program information you will need at the meeting. Time and room assignments are subject to change; final time and room assignments are available in the onsite *Annual Meeting Program At-A-Glance*.

You may also consult this program at:
<http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2006/pbook/pbook.asp>

A17-6

North American Paul Tillich Society

Friday - 9:00 am-11:15 am

CC-140A

Terrence O'Keefe, University of Ulster, Presiding

Theme: *Philosophical and Theoretical Assessments of Tillich*

B. Keith Putt, Samford University

Affirming Acceptance/Accepting Affirmation: Tillich's "Stroke of Grace" and Derrida's "Yes"

Daniel J. Peterson, Pacific Lutheran University

Where to Find the Hidden God: The Turn from Self to Other in Tillich's Theology

Jari Ristiniemi, University of Gävle

Ethics and Expressionism: Things, Individuals,

and Common Concerns

Francis Ching-Wah Yip, Chinese University of
Hong Kong

*Capitalism as Quasi-religion? A Durkheimian
Enhancement of Tillich*

A17-7

North American Paul Tillich Society

Friday - 11:30 am-1:15 pm

CC-140A

Matthew Lon Weaver, Duluth, Minnesota, Presiding

*Theme: Tillich and the Dialogue of Theology
and Psychology*

John P. Dourley, Carleton University

Tillich's Dialogue with Psychology

Britt-Mari Sykes, University of Ottawa

*Analyzing the Experiential Side of Sin: A
Dialogue Between Paul Tillich and Existential
Analysis*

Terry Cooper, St. Louis Community College District

*Tillich, Sin, and Psychotherapy: A Replay of the
Pelagian Controversy*

A17-51

North American Paul Tillich Society

Friday - 2:15 pm-4:00 pm

CC-140A

Stephen Butler Murray, Skidmore College, Presiding

*Theme: On the Personal God: A Tillichian
Conversation*

Robison James, University of Richmond and Baptist
Theological Seminary at Richmond

*Dealing with the "Personal Encounter Deficit"
in Tillich*

Jean Richard, University of Laval

*The Personal God as Objectivation of Religious
Experience*

A. Durwood Foster, Pacific School of Religion

Tillich's Two God-Models

A17-107

North American Paul Tillich Society

Friday - 4:15 pm-6:30 pm

CC-140A

Rachel Sophia Baard, Villanova University, Presid-
ing

*Theme: Issues Concerning God, Christ, and the
Trinity in Tillich's Theology*

Owen C. Thomas, Episcopal Divinity School

*Historical Criticism, Faith, and Christology:
Tillich in Conversation*

Stephen Butler Murray, Skidmore College

*The Essential Place of the Knowledge of God
and Acceptance of Revelation in Tillich's
Metaphysics of Divine Action*

Lars Heinemann, MLU Halle-Wittenberg

*Tillich's Shift to Ultimate Meaning and the
Origin of his Theory of Symbols (1919-1924): A
Two-fold Argument against Exclusive Claims
about the Absolute*

Chung-Hyun Baik, Graduate Theological Union

*Paul Tillich's Trinity: Tension between Its
Symbolic and Dialectical Characteristics under
the Trinitarian Structure of System*

A17-108

North American Paul Tillich Society Banquet

Friday - 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Clyde's of Gallery Place ([see information below](#))

707 7th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: 202.349.3700

Speaker: William R. Crout, Harvard University,
founder and curator of the Paul Tillich Lectures at
Harvard University

Tillich's Years at Harvard

A18-38

**North American Paul Tillich Society Board of
Directors Meeting**

Saturday - 7:00 am-8:30 am

GH-Renwick

A18-39
North American Paul Tillich Society Annual
Business Meeting
Saturday - 11:45 am-12:45 pm
CC-154A

A18-124
Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture
Group
Saturday - 4:00 pm-6:30 pm
CC-150A

Mary Ann Stenger, University of Louisville, Presiding

Theme: *Postmodernism and Tillich*

Robison B. James, University of Richmond and
 Baptist Theological Seminary, Richmond
*Paul Tillich: Prophet and Partial Practitioner of
 the Postmodern*

William F. Stevens, University of Edinburgh
*Gift as Icon and Gestalt in Tillich and Jean-Luc
 Marion*

Jonathan Rothchild, Loyola Marymount University
*The Aporia of Law, Justice, and Gift/ Grace:
 Dimensions of Forgiveness in Paul, Derrida,
 and Tillich*

Sigridur Gudmarsdottir, Drew University
*"Dark Depths of Madness!": Tillichian Anxiety
 Meets Kristevan Abjection*

A19-34
Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture
Group
Sunday - 9:00 am-11:30 am
CC-207A

Rachel Sophia Baard, Villanova University, Presiding
 Theme: *Encountering the Divine in a Pluralistic
 World*

David H. Nikkel, University of North Carolina,
 Pembroke
*Negotiating the Nature of Mystical Experience,
 Guided by Tillich and James*

Christian Danz, University of Vienna
*Breakthrough of the Unconditional: Tillich's
 Concept of Revelation as an Answer to the
 Crisis of Historicism*

Bryan Wagoner, Harvard University
The "Jewish Dimension" of Tillich's Thought

C. Peter Slater, University of Toronto
*Tillich and Bakhtin: Dialectical or Dialogical
 Comparative Theology?*

AAR Group Business Meeting:

Robison B. James, University of Richmond, and
 Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Pre-
 siding

Mary Ann Stenger, University of Louisville, Presiding

A19-97
Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture
Group and Cultural History of the Study of Re-
ligion Consultation
Sunday - 3:00 pm-4:30 pm
CC-202B

Robison B. James, University of Richmond, Baptist
 Theological Seminary at Richmond, Presiding
 Theme: *Is Paul Tillich "the Unacknowledged
 Theoretician of the AAR's Entire Enterprise"
 (Jonathan Z. Smith)?*

Panelists:

Jonathan Z. Smith, University of Chicago
 Tomoko Masuzawa, University of Michigan
 John Thatamanil, Vanderbilt University

BANQUET INFORMATION

Location The annual banquet of the North
 American Paul Tillich's Society will be held this
 year on Friday night, November 17, 2006, from 7:00
 to 10:00 PM at :

Clyde's of Gallery Place
 707 7th Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20001
 Phone: 202.349.3700

The restaurant is located between H Street and G
 Street just north of the MCI Center. This is an easy
 walk from the headquarter hotels, the Renaissance
 Washington Hotel, which is located at 999 9th St.

NW and the Grand Hyatt Hotel at 1000 H St. NW

Speaker William R. Crout, Harvard University, founder and curator of the Paul Tillich Lectures at Harvard University

Title of Address *Tillich's Years at Harvard*

Reservations The banquet room is large enough to hold anyone wishing to attend. At the same time, an exact number must be given to the restaurant 72 hours before the banquet, so reservations must be received no later than Monday, November 13.

Three ways to reserve a place:

(1) Email fparrella@scu.edu with your name and the number in your party.

(2) Call 408.259.8225 with the same information.

(3) US mail to the secretary treasurer with your name and number in your party. You may also pre-pay this way.

Please remember to bring your checkbook or cash to the banquet if you reserve a place by email or telephone. Thank you.

NEW DUES METHOD OF PAYMENT

For many people who live *outside* the United States who are members of the Society, some good news! You may now pay your dues by credit card—Mastercard or Visa. Please be sure to return your pink dues registration form with your number and the expiration date. So far, this applies only to those who are *not* able to pay by check in US dollars.

If you haven't sent your dues in—no matter where you live—please do so soon. You may also pay me in person at the meeting in November by check or in cash.

Thank you.

IN MEMORIAM: DON ARTHUR

The North American Paul Tillich Society has lost a fine scholar and warm friend in Don Arthur, who died on August 28. Don had lung fibrosis, which eventually involved his heart giving out. Born on Jan. 26, 1931, Don was a lifelong Tillich enthusiast. Many of us were greatly enriched by Don's knowledge as well as his deeply personal encounters with Paulus. As a military chaplain, Don spent a considerable amount of time talking with Tillich about Tillich's own experience as a Chaplain in World War I. Don was also a student of Tillich's

seminars and fireside chats in Chicago, as well as one of the last people to visit Tillich before Tillich's death in 1965. Don's passion for Tillich studies was contagious and he will be deeply missed by his colleagues in the Society.

—Terry Cooper

Condolences may be sent to:

Mrs. Shirley Arther
194 Braeshire Drive
Ballwin, Missouri 63021

NEW PUBLICATIONS

John Thatamanil. *The Immanent Divine: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament. An East-West Conversation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 2006.

Christian Danz, "Die Krise der Subjektivität und ihre geschichtsphilosophische Überwindung. Überlegungen zu Paul Tillichs frühem religiösen Sozialismus," in *Krisen der Subjektivität. Problemfelder eines strittigen Paradigmas*, Hrsg. v. I. U. Dalferth and P. Stoellger, Tübingen 2005, 157-174.

Gunther Wenz, "Paul Tillich. Fraglichkeit und Sinnerfüllung," in Christian Danz, Hrsg., *Große Theologen*, Darmstadt 2006, 271-285.

ERDMUTHE (MUTIE) TILlich FARRIS IN HONOR OF HER 80TH BIRTHDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2006

If myself did not have one more birthday than Mutie Tillich, I would find it hard to believe that she has accumulated 80 of them. To be with her is to experience life as something sweet, tender, and wonderful. In my mind, the two of us are still graduate students at Columbia University's Department of English and Comparative Literature, where we both concentrated on drama and theater, although not, I think, at just the same time. Probably she got there before me, since I first spent a few years studying theology with her father. After finishing her Ph.D. at Columbia, she taught modern drama for years at the Julliard School of Music. That ended when the school was re-organized, after which she gave most of her time to her children and to her father's legacy. Although I do not see her frequently, it comforts me whenever I stop to think that we have been neighbors on Morningside Heights for 56 years.

Hannah and Paulus (mostly Hannah, I've been told) had her christened as Erdmuth, but the name should have been Cordelia. I did not know her as a child growing up, nor even when she was a young woman. As far as I remember, we held our first conversation only after her father's death and her mother's publication of *From Time to Time*, which, for understandable reasons, I had liked better than Mutie did. So, in my eyes, Mutie was the great man's daughter returned from some far country with a forgiving heart, ready to do whatever she could on her father's behalf, looking for no reward, motivated only by love of his work and by her own generosity. For this she is widely loved among all those who hold her father in high regard.

I need to stress how Mutie supports and encourages Tillichian scholarship without any attempt to control its direction or outcome. She seems to have inherited from her father the blessing of an open mind. She is genuinely interested in new ideas, new interpretations, and new discoveries. She seems to honor the past as something still alive, still capable of growing. The North American Paul Tillich Society would not be the dynamic organization that it is if it had not had the benign attention and quiet moral and intellectual support of this earth-woman, but also fair daughter Cordelia, whom so many of us know and love as Mutie.

—Tom F. Driver

It is always a delightful addition to our meetings of the North American Paul Tillich Society when Dr. Mutie Tillich Farris can attend. It seems to me that she has been present at many of our meetings since 1965. I can remember when on one occasion when she was accompanied by her late mother Mrs. Hannah Tillich. Hannah, I remember, was a formidable presence, whereas Mutie has always been a quiet witness to the beauty of the English language in which she did her graduate work and began her vocation as a professor, and to the relevance of her father's work to the contemporary questions and moral issues of the time.

She favored me with some of her time, I think, not because I was a disciple of her father, but because I was interested in his contributions to the social ethical dimensions of the world political/ social situation. Our conversations have always been interesting to me for her incisive comments on the contemporary social situation as well as her special knowledge of her father's life and work. If our con-

versations have been as much about the current crises of the world as about the philosophy of Paul Tillich, then this is the way I would have imagined conversations or dialogues with Paul Tillich to have been.

Mutie is a great conversation partner, and that may be especially true when we have had a few occasions to dine together with a decent bottle of wine around our conversations about editing or publishing Paul Tillich's works. I would like to confess that some essays were omitted from Paul Tillich's *Theology of Peace* because, though I had reconstructed Tillich's lecture manuscripts as best I could, they did not meet Mutie's standards. The volume was the better for those omissions. I look forward to her advising the editorial committee for the Collected Works of Paul Tillich, and to many more years of her active participation in the North American Paul Tillich Society both at our meetings and in her consultations with officers and editors of the Society.

—Ronald H. Stone

**CALL FOR PAPERS
FROM CHRISTIAN DANZ OF DPTG**

**Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft
Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte
(1919-1920)**

Erster Internationaler Kongress der DPTG in
Halle/Saale
Halle/Saale, 18. bis 21. 10. 2007

Vom 18. bis 21. Oktober 2007 veranstaltet die Deutsche Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft e.V. in Halle (Saale) einen internationalen Kongress zum Thema „Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919-1920)“. Der Kongress macht es sich zur Aufgabe, die werkgeschichtliche Entwicklung der Theologie und Religionsphilosophie Paul Tillichs zwischen 1919 und 1920 anhand der Texte über *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* von 1919 (vgl. EW X, 127-230), der Vorlesung *Das Christentum und die Gesellschaftsprobleme der Gegenwart* vom SS 1919 (vgl. EW XII, 27-258) sowie der Vorlesung über *Religionsphilosophie* vom SS 1920 (EW XII 333-584) zu untersuchen.

Neben Plenumsvorträgen sind zwei Sektionen zu Tillichs Theologie und Religionsphilosophie zwischen 1919 und 1920 vorgesehen. Die DPTG bittet alle, die gerne einen Sektions-Vortrag im Rahmen dieser Themenstellung halten möchten, ihre The-

Themenvorschläge sowie ein Exposé von max. einer Seite bis zum **01. Februar 2007** an eine der beiden folgenden Anschriften zu senden:

—Prof. Dr. Christian Danz

Vorsitzender der DPTG

Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität
Wien

Schenkenstr. 8-10, A-1010 Wien

Email: christian.danz@univie.ac.at

—Prof. Dr. Dr. Werner Schüßler

Stellv. Vorsitzender der DPTG

Lehrstuhl für Philosophie II, Theologische Fakultät
Trier

Universitätsring 19, D-54296 Trier

Email: schuessw@uni-trier.de

Ein Bescheid über die Annahme des Vortrags
ergeht bis zum 28. Februar 2007.

**HOW TILlich OUTWITTED
A PUBLISHER**

A STORY FROM
ROBISON B. JAMES

On December 9, 2005, I uncovered a story about some rather secretive actions of Paul Tillich in 1961. I heard this account at a Christmas party in the riverfront retirement neighborhood of Merry Point, Virginia. The story came out as I spent over an hour in intense conversation with another guest. That guest was the author of the first treatment of Tillich's theology to be published after the final volume of his three-volume *Systematic Theology* appeared in 1963.

The author I talked with is Alexander J. (Sandy) McKelway, Professor Emeritus of Religion at Davidson College near Charlotte, North Carolina, now a resident of the Merry Point area in White Stone, Virginia. Sandy wrote his 1964 book initially as a dissertation at Basel, Switzerland, under Karl Barth. He entitled it *The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich: A Review and Analysis* (John Knox Press, 1964).

Standing at the front of Sandy's book is a five-page "Introductory Report" written by Karl Barth. It is an important statement about Sandy's book, but it is perhaps even more important for what it reveals about Barth's opinion of Tillich's theology in the early 1960s.

Though I had read McKelway's book decades earlier, I re-read some of it by flashlight during the ninety-mile trip from my home in Richmond to the Christmas party. My wife was driving; the party was

at her brother's home. I wanted to be ready to pursue some questions with the author, whom I had never met. My questions turned up the unexpected story. One thing I asked Sandy about was his statement in the acknowledgments that, in the summer of 1961, Tillich had "allowed" him a copy of the "working manuscript" of the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*.

Sandy has cautioned me that he would not characterize Tillich's actions in this episode as "stealthy," or anything of the sort. Thus, if I bring out what might appear to be the "cloak and dagger" side of the events, I do so on my own. And I do so in order to make what happened sound like the good story it is.

In any case, the story Sandy narrated tells how Tillich first tried, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to make available to this student of Karl Barth's an advance copy of his *Systematic Theology* III—a volume that would not appear in print for another two years.

On that first attempt, Tillich's secretary threw up an unbreachable barrier: the publisher would not hear of any such thing! When Sandy then followed up with Tillich, however, he was told privately that better things would be possible in Europe a little later.

And so it was. The forbidden handover of the text of volume III took place in Tillich's palatial hotel in Hamburg, Germany. At the agreed-upon time, Tillich descended the steps into the lobby carrying a huge stack of typed pages, 550 in all. Sandy was told he could keep them for several days—over a weekend—but that they must be returned punctually. This was the only copy Tillich had with him in Europe, and it was the basis for the lectures he was *then giving*.

But what could Sandy do with a manuscript of that size in only a few days? It was impossible for an impoverished graduate student to pay the usual rate to have it photocopied, given the expensive technology of the time. He would try, however. Upon the advice of the retail, Kinko's-type establishment they first visited, Sandy and his wife Babs (a piano-teacher colleague of my wife's in Virginia) were directed to a wholesale dealer in the copying machines. There they were miraculously able to complete the task in a single day.

The project was carried out in a dockside warehouse in Hamburg. Sandy and Babs used a machine they were able to rent very cheaply from the distributor. Even so, the last fifty pages of Tillich's

manuscript would not have been copied had not some of the German salespeople pitched in, late in the day, putting other machines to work alongside the machine the McKelways were using.

The reason the process was so time-consuming was that the technology available in Hamburg in 1961 required that each page be hung up to dry as one proceeded. Moreover, even after the frantic day of work was done, Babs and Sandy had a large number of pages that had not yet had time to dry. They knew these pages would stick together unless something were done. Thus they pasted the ill-smelling sheets of paper all over the walls of their economy hotel that night. They were afraid of the fumes, but the windows were left open, and the two lived to awaken the next morning, still in good health.

Today, on a shelf in his study, Sandy has the bulky manuscript he copied forty-five years ago. The yellow pages are clamped together in four large binders. Although they are thoroughly legible, there is a peculiar kind of stain on quite a few of the pages.

About those stains: During the time he was writing his dissertation, Sandy attended a seminar taught by Karl Barth on the first volume of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*. The stains on Sandy's manuscript pages come from the drippings of Karl Barth's pipe. Such marks were a kind of calling card Barth sometimes left on papers he was reading—when he put down his pipe to read with extra care.

BOOK REVIEWS:

***THE NEW GOSPEL OF CHRISTIAN ATHEISM
AND GODHEAD AND THE NOTHING
BY THOMAS ALTIZER***

REVIEWED BY CHRISTOPHER RODKEY

Thomas Altizer. *The New Gospel of Christian Atheism*. Aurora, Colorado: The Davies Group, 2002. xi, 158 pp. ISBN 1-888570-65-2.

Thomas Altizer. *Godhead and the Nothing*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003. xiii, 165 pp. ISBN 0-7914-5796-6.

Thomas Altizer's two new books indicate a significant shift in the theologian's thought since his last published work, *The Contemporary Jesus* (1997). *The New Gospel of Christian Atheism* (2002) is a rewriting of his original *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* (1966) positing his theology of the last forty

years in a systematic nature that leads directly into *Godhead and the Nothing* (2003). In *The New Gospel*, Altizer writes that the original *Gospel* "was very much a product of the Sixties, hence it is apparently wholly irrelevant today"; however, Altizer's project of developing a genuinely radical Christian—which is to say, *apocalyptic*—theology, he believes, remains ignored by others and sorely needed in "our postmodern world" (ix). While "theology is being reborn in French philosophy, and this is not happening elsewhere," Altizer believes that a truly modern theology has yet to emerge (vii). As such, Altizer picks up where he claims that Barth and Tillich left off: "while Barth and Tillich could encounter the Nothing, that is not occurring theologically today.... While nihilism is at the forefront of contemporary philosophy and literary theory, it is absent from our theological thinking, and this despite the fact that our deeper naming of the Nothing has always been a theological naming, for the Nothing is truly unknown apart from a theological horizon" (*Godhead* xi-xii).

Drawing on his typical source material (St. Paul, St. Augustine, apophatic theology, Eastern mysticism, Joyce, Blake, Milton, Melville, Hegel, Nietzsche, Barth, and Tillich), Altizer has always argued that a Tillichian kind of atheism is the inevitable end of Christianity and is the true key to understanding the Christ-event. Altizer sees his theology as "a full and actual atheism" which is "impossible apart from...transcendence, so that our atheism is...inseparable from Christian orthodoxy" (5). Also continuing is Altizer's long-standing meta-argument (in my reading of him) that in the challenge of Tillich's late work, Christian theology must search for a uniqueness that is uniquely Christian and presents a genuinely original option against other religions' philosophical structures and systems.

In many ways, this resistance against a pluralistic theology is Altizer's unstated starting point. Altizer writes, "at no point is Christianity more unique than in its dissolution of an undifferentiated Godhead," that is, the *kenotic* death of God in the Christ-event (12). Although Altizer wrote in his early work of a kenotic Christology being more than a simple self-emptying but a self-negation or self-annihilating action, his new development (following D. G. Leahy's continuation and critique of Altizer's work) is to posit the Godhead as *the Nothing*. Altizer asks: "Can theology truly be liberated by finally knowing the nothingness of nothingness, and thereby knowing that God *is* God only by knowing

the nothingness of nothingness, and is that finally what the very word 'God' most truly and most actually means?" (53). He then answers, "It is this negation [the death of God] and this negation alone which makes possible an epiphany or a realization of the actuality of nothingness, as the dissolution or self-emptying of that God whose 'isness' is the very annihilation of nothingness [which] inevitably and necessarily calls forth an absolute nothingness, an absolute nothingness which truly is the absolute 'other' of Godhead itself" (58).

By going through a lengthy summary of his earlier work on the Christian epic tradition and a very interesting death-of-God liturgical theology, Altizer writes of the crucifixion of Jesus as "an ultimate and final sacrifice...releasing an absolutely sacrificial body, a body embodying apocalyptic sacrifice itself" (152). Therefore, the emptied-out God is not really empty, but rather it is "the embodiment of a purely negative abyss, a negative abyss which is an absolutely negative body, but nevertheless one which is essential to the very actuality of the absolute sacrifice" (153). He concludes with the following definition:

[God's] self-negation realizes an absolutely actual dichotomy in the Godhead, a dichotomy in which Godhead itself is absolutely torn asunder, now absolutely divided between its positive and negative poles.... Now absolute beginning is and only can be an absolute ending, but that absolute transfiguration of the poles of the Godhead releases an absolute negativity that is absolutely new, and absolutely new as an absolutely transfiguring power.

That transfiguring power is inseparable from that Nihil that it embodies, a Nihil that can be named as the dead body of God or the Godhead, an abysmal body of the Godhead, which is the inevitable consequence of an absolute sacrifice of the Godhead. Now this is just the sacrifice that is reused in every Christian apprehension of the absolute sovereignty and the absolute transcendence of God. That refusal inevitably impels a radical movement away from that very actuality which is a necessary consequence of the absolute sacrifice of the Godhead, or that actuality, which in full modernity, realizes itself as an absolute immanence, and an absolute immanence that is the necessary consequence of the pure reversal of an absolute transcendence. That reversal can be understood as occurring in the full sacrifice of the Godhead, for if that sacrifice is

the absolute negation of absolute transcendence, its inevitable consequence is the realization of the very opposite of that absolute transcendence, an opposite which is absolute immanence itself, and an immanence only possible by way of the negation and reversal of absolute transcendence. The very advent of that immanence is inseparable from the realization of the full and actual emptiness of absolute transcendence, and emptiness that is truly alien emptiness, and one realized as the Nihil itself (154).

Altizer's philosophical argument for transcendence comes from a political motivation—which for me draws a similarity to Kathryn Tanner's more widely-read *The Politics of God*. Altizer writes that what he believes to be a "genuinely modern" theology has become a subversive rarity even among theologians. He writes in the preface of *Godhead and the Nothing*:

It is possible that theology is now our most forbidden thinking, that thinking least tolerated in all of our worlds, even being absent as theology itself from our seminaries and churches, only being accepted when it is an ethical theology; but an ethical theology today is divorced from all understanding of God, and hence has ceased to be a genuine theology.... If ours is the most conservative world since the advent of modernity, it could be that the absence of theology from our world could be a deeply positive sign, or a positive sign to theology itself, just as it could be that nothing could more subvert our world than a genuine theological thinking, and a theological thinking calling forth that which is the most "other" than our world. (xii)

Though the political is subtle in Altizer, he does show a socio-political dimension of his theology later in *Godhead*, which is similar to Tanner's (both are Episcopalians):

Yes, this [theology] is a call to an absolute reversal to high and low, one which is the very advent of a deep and ultimate anarchism, an anarchism which is fully paralleled in Taoist prophecy, and which is inseparable from a full assault upon every historical source of order and authority. Here, a prophetic naming of God is a fully anarchic naming, assaulting every name of God which it confronts, and not only assaulting but reversing it, as every given and established name of God is transposed into its very opposite, and everything once known as "light" now is realized as darkness itself (130).

While Tanner attempts to call her theology “radical transcendence” because she denies a hierarchy of transcendence in the world (*The Politics of God* 147), perhaps “radical” is a bit of a hyperbole: “consistent transcendence” might be a better term. On the contrary, as a political theology, Altizer’s nihilistic transcendence is “pure and absolute” transcendence, pointing to the polar-binary nature of traditional understandings of the Christian God as posited as polar-binaries because of the subtle sameness of transcendence and immanence (*Godhead*, 4). This nihilistic sameness, Altizer argues, is made possible only through the kenotic movement of the Godhead and the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

These difficult texts are at once brilliant and impenetrable outside of the larger context of Altizer’s earlier work, which he downplays in his recent work, and D. G. Leahy’s ontotheological works, *Novitas Mundi* and *Foundation*, which I do not yet fully grasp. Helpful for me has been returning to Altizer’s 1970 work, *The Descent Into Hell*, which moves beyond the original *Gospel of Christian Atheism* to more fully describe the apocalypticism in more systematic terms. Re-interpreting the doctrine of the descent into Hell as the actual motion of divinity in history, spirit is seen as emptying out into flesh following the crucifixion, which creates an apocalypse of the present. Key heresies here are a denial of an absolute immutability of the Christian God and an outright rejection of the ascension of Christ in any sense of the ascension’s *upward* and *backward* motion. Altizer’s question for today is: following the “death” of God (in all of its meanings), and the Kingdom of God established in the present, in a world where there is no ascension and the new flesh of the resurrected Christ is carried on by *us*, how might we still speak genuinely of God, amidst such collapse and dissolution? We are called to the edge of language in following Altizer’s questions, and in doing so, it seems that Altizer invites us to *think* the kenosis while walking such an edge.

**MYSTICAL AND PROPHETIC:
THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILlich
RECONSIDERED**

LOIS MALCOLM

of life. Religion is at the forefront of much political and cultural debate, both national and international. Spiritualities of all kinds are flourishing. Philosophers are turning to religion. Among the competing theologies emerging throughout the world, traditional beliefs and practices are gaining, for the most part, center stage. What is needed in our time is a mode of discerning what lies at the heart of the meanings and forces—both spiritual and mundane—that shape or distort our lives.

This requires an understanding of the Spirit and the therapy of faith and love that Tillich considered (especially in volume 3 of his *Systematic Theology*)¹ but which needs to be developed further. Toward that end, this paper offers a brief overview of the main themes in Tillich’s theology in order to grapple with how our personal and corporate lives—and the powers and loves that govern them—are judged and healed by divine holiness, both in its depth and inexhaustibility and its justice and truth. I argue that his theology be read as a critical phenomenology that draws on two strains in the history of Western thought—the mystical and sapiential, and the prophetic and apocalyptic—in order to distinguish the holy in these loves and powers from the demonic or the profane.²

I develop this argument in three parts. First, I give historical texture to my case. Focusing on Paul, Augustine, and Luther, I trace how Tillich appropriates specific mystical–sapiential and prophetic–apocalyptic traditions drawing on a wide range of sources—biblical traditions, ancient philosophical schools, early and medieval figures and debates, and modern philosophers and theologians. Second, I draw on this historical texture in order to integrate the major ideas Tillich uses for thinking about God (Spirit, Trinity, life, being and non-being, and holiness). I then relate these ideas to an understanding of life’s multiple dimensions and the ways not only power and love but also justice and truth both are ambiguously and unambiguously manifested within its complexity. The third part employs this view of God to interpret classic theological understandings of creation, fall, and sin; who Jesus is as the Christ; and how the Spirit’s presence ecstatically heals personal and corporate lives—not only in spiritual communities (as the church, both latent and manifest) but also in all of history (as the kingdom of God), ultimately leading to union with God in eternal life. What I present in this paper is a précis of an argument I am developing much more extensively in

Some of the deepest conflicts among people today revolve around competing convictions and ways

a book I am currently writing entitled *God the Spirit of Life: the Theology of Paul Tillich Reconsidered*.

A Context for My Argument

How does my argument differ from previous readings of Tillich? His critics often use him as a foil to represent an outmoded theological liberalism.³ George Lindbeck, for example, classes him as an “experiential expressivist” who reduces the complexity of traditional Christian doctrines and practices to existential self-expression.⁴ In turn, positive interpreters of his work, like Langdon Gilkey, have tended to describe him as one who defended, in the face of declining interest in traditional beliefs and practices, the reasonableness and meaningfulness of Christianity by relating the “Christian message” to questions emerging from within human “existence.”⁵

My reading differs in both context and thrust from these negative and positive assessments of Tillich’s work. My context for interpreting Tillich is one in which Christianity in particular and spiritual and religious activity in general play a central role not only in the lives of individuals and community but also in the politics, economics, and cultural debates of societies throughout the world. My thrust in analyzing his work is not on how he defends the reasonableness and meaningfulness of Christianity in the face of its modern detractors,⁶ but on how his theology enacts a critical phenomenology that discerns the meanings and powers emerging in both secular and explicitly religious or spiritual aspects of our lives.⁷

Part 1: A Historical Context

Given this context and thrust, I argue that Tillich’s method is not a matter of technique but a matter pertaining to “fall” and “salvation” (ST, 1: 74).⁸ It is a critical phenomenology that reflexively enacts the assertion that our lives participate not only in finitude, with its potential for tragedy and sin, but also in the healing and transforming power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, the Logos of reality (ST, 1: 24).⁹ Rooted in a theology of the Word (as both *kairos* and *logos*), this phenomenology entails certain sources (that is, biblical traditions, histories of Christianity, and histories of religion and culture) and media (that is, ecstatic experience, personal and corporate). The material norm measuring these sources and mediums is “the new being in Jesus as the Christ” (the messiah as *kairos* and *logos*). The

formal criterion measuring them is “ultimate concern,” the first commandment or divine holiness. “Ultimate concern” has to do with (1) what is unconditioned and universal (i.e., what is “ultimate”), and (2) what can potentially destroy or save (i.e., what is of “concern”). As a form of ontological reason, this critical phenomenology enacts a therapy of both faith and reason drawing on distinctive conceptual and experiential tools (including symbol, dialectics, and paradox). These tools, I argue, have roots in historic mystical-sapiential and prophetic-apocalyptic practices that distinguish the holy from the profane or the demonic.

Paul, Augustine, and Luther are resources for understanding how Tillich draws on these historic practices.¹⁰ From Paul, he appropriates the following prophetic-apocalyptic emphases: the symbol of “new creation”; an eschatological consciousness; and the experience of justification by faith.¹¹ Nonetheless, he is also influenced by Paul’s mystical account of the Spirit’s presence and the fact that it can be experienced here and now.

Augustine is the source of two streams in Western thought: (1) a “main (mystical-sapiential) stream” that seeks to understand the “form, element and law” identified with the “Logos” of ancient philosophy (and Plato, Cusanus, Spinoza, and Kant); and (2) a “little developed (prophetic-apocalyptic) stream” that depicts the “creation, conflict, and fate” identified with the “Kairos” of biblical traditions (and Luther, Böhme, the latter Schelling, and Nietzsche).¹² The two streams embody tensions in Augustine’s thought—tensions between (1) his focus on epistemology as the immediate awareness of the unconditioned and conceptions of God and humanity that unite knowledge and love, the *eros* of Neoplatonism and *agape* of the Bible; and (2) his focus on predestination (and freedom, the fall, sin, and grace), sacramental holiness, and ecclesiastical authority. These themes and tensions are played out in major medieval debates influential on Tillich’s theology—between Franciscans and Dominicans, Augustinians and Aristotelians, Thomists and Scotists, and realists and nominalists.

Martin Luther is important for understanding the influence on Tillich’s thought of the second line from Augustine. Luther’s contributions include his conception of sin as unbelief, demonic powers, and faith; his idea of God as hidden and revealed; and his correlation of Christ and forgiveness, attention to the cross and the incarnation, doctrine of the Word and corollary understanding of the Lord’s Supper. Exis-

tentialists are obvious inheritors of this second line given their understanding of existence as estrangement and a series of unreconciled conflicts in the individual (Kierkegaard), in society (Marx), in life (Nietzsche), and existence (Heidegger). Even Hegel is a representative of the second line, given his attention Christian paradox and non-being, passion and interest, and “estrangement” and an “unhappy consciousness.” Finally, Kant and Spinoza are both important for understanding how Tillich rethinks classic mystical and prophetic traditions in modern secular terms.¹³

Part 2: God the Spirit of Life

This historical backdrop provides a context for understanding how Tillich draws on a range of resources in developing his constructive theology. For example, he uses the concepts of life and Spirit to describe God and God’s relationship to creatures—drawing on biblical depictions of the living God, as a God who acts, suffers, remembers, anticipates, has personal relationships and plans, as well ancient reflection on fate and tragedy and modern philosophies of Spirit and life.¹⁴ “Spirit” (following Hegel) depicts the movement of separation and union in divine and creaturely life. “Life” (following Aristotle and Nietzsche) depicts how this movement permeates forces and energies in the universe as they move through life and death (in self-creation), health and disease (in self-integration), and the great and the tragic (in self-transcendence). This dialectical movement is at the heart of Christian Trinitarian accounts of God’s threefold manifestation in Jesus as the Christ as creative power, saving love, and ecstatic transformation and reaches its nadir, which is also paradoxically its apex, in the cross of Christ.

Tillich also uses the concept “being” to describe God. For this, he is informed by medieval, ancient (e.g., Parmenides in Greece, Shankara in India), and existentialist philosophers (e.g., Heidegger and Marcel).¹⁵ God as “being-itself” is also God, as the power of being, which heals the anxiety human beings experience because they are finite—and not infinite—in the face of fate, or the threat of nonbeing. Nonbeing is identified with three forms of anxiety discussed in the history of western thought— anxiety about fate and death, anxiety about guilt and condemnation, and anxiety about meaninglessness and God-forsakenness.¹⁶ By way of an analysis of the concept of courage in Socrates, Aquinas, and Spinoza, Tillich describes how God as the power of

being itself is the salvation enacted in mystical and prophetic traditions, culminating in the encounter of the Crucified with the God beyond God (see Mark 15:34).¹⁷ Tillich’s experiential appropriation of the ontological argument, we should note, which draws primarily on Anselm but also on Augustine as his “mystical” exemplar and Kant as his “prophetic” exemplar, is not irrelevant to his account of how we experience the power of being overcoming nonbeing.

This dialectical movement is also related to the tension within the experience of “holiness” between the absolute (tending toward monotheism and the profane) and the concrete (tending toward polytheism and the demonic). Tillich identifies this tension in the history of Judaism and Christianity, the history of religions as a whole, including Eastern and Western traditions, and in various philosophical ways of thinking, e.g., the contrast between Plato and Ockham. Corresponding polarities depict this tension: On one side are individuation, dynamism, and freedom, linked with the prophetic-apocalyptic fulfillment of *kairos*. On the other side are participation, form, and destiny, linked with the mystical-sapiential intuition of the *logos*.

In turn, Tillich’s construal of holiness offers a theological and ethical understanding of how love, power, and justice are enacted in our personal and corporate lives.¹⁸ Drawing on Luther’s highly spiritual ethics of love and his highly realistic politics of absolute power—that is, his contrast between love’s “proper” work of forgiving and “strange” work of judging and punishing—Tillich interrelates the following: (1) a philosophical concept of *eros*, from Plato, Augustine, and Spinoza, with a biblical understanding of *agape*, from the two great commandments; (2) a conception of power and compulsion, from philosophers of life and political realists, with a notion of providence and spiritual freedom, from the Stoics and the Bible; and (3) a legal conception of justice as distributive and retributive, from Aristotle, legal biblical traditions, and others, with a theological understanding of justice as creative and transformative, from the prophets and Paul.

Part 3: Life’s Ambiguities and Fragments

We turn to discuss how Tillich relates the rest of life, with all its ambiguities, to his understanding of God as Spirit. We begin with his view of creation, fall, and sin. Tillich’s notion of life’s created goodness centers on his concept of “providence,” drawing

on Plato, the Stoics, the prophets, early Christianity, and modern notions of harmony.¹⁹ As a paradoxical faith “in spite of” the exigencies of finitude and its fate, providence integrates classic theological depictions of God’s preservation of the world, God’s sustaining activity through the universe’s natural laws, and God’s creation of the world *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, i.e., the absolute negation of non-being by the power of being. Tillich’s views the fall, which depicts humanity’s estrangement from its true being, here and now, as an estrangement that cannot be divorced from its finite freedom. This estrangement manifests itself as sin, which Tillich depicts as a complex phenomenon involving unbelief, concupiscence, and tragic *hubris*. For this, he draws not only on classic sources of Greek tragedies, Genesis, Paul, Augustine, Luther but also on modern thinkers such as Hegel and Marx on “estrangement,” Kierkegaard on “despair,” Nietzsche on “the will to power,” and Freud on “libido.”

We turn to his view of Jesus as the Christ.²⁰ In addition to patristic and modern theology, that is, Nicea and Chalcedon, and Schleiermacher, Tillich also draws on the New Testament—appropriating Paul on “new creation,” the “cross” and “resurrection,” the Synoptics on the activity of Spirit, the reign of God, healing, and demonic forces, and John on the “Word made flesh.” His central Christological claim is that as the Messiah, Jesus as the Christ ushers in a new eon that overcomes the estranged world ruled by structures of evil, structures which, according to prophetic and apocalyptic descriptions, are symbolized as demonic powers and rule individuals, nations, and even nature, producing anxiety in its forms. Drawing especially on Paul and John—but also Irenaeus, Aquinas, Luther, and Anselm—Tillich contends that Christ overcomes these powers, and the sin and evil they engender, by taking on the destructive consequences of estrangement upon himself, fully maintaining his unity with God even as he sacrifices everything he could have had for himself from this unity.

We turn to his view of the Spirit.²¹ For Tillich, the Spirit is the Divine Life present within life’s ambiguities. The content of this Spiritual Presence is a salvation that brings about healing in three ways—through regeneration (participation in the new being), justification (paradoxical acceptance), and sanctification (transformation). Its mode of manifestation draws on two traditional sources: a Lutheran understanding of Word and sacrament, which presupposes both Protestant principle and Catholic sub-

stance, and a Pauline phenomenology of the structure and ecstasy of spiritual manifestations, a phenomenology that is echoed in Spirit-movements throughout Christianity’s history—from the early Montanists to the radical Franciscans of the 13th century, the German mystics of the 14th century, the radical Reformers, and modern awakening movements. Tillich’s draws on Paul, Acts, and Luther for his account of the church, which he calls a “spiritual community.” As created by the Spirit, this community bears the marks of holiness as faith and love, unity, and universality in an unambiguous, albeit fragmentary and anticipatory, way. A paradoxical reality, the church is both sociological and theological, both latent in society (i.e., not explicitly Christian) and manifest (i.e., explicitly Christian). Wholly involved in the ambiguities of life, its aim is to conquer those ambiguities through the power of the Spiritual Presence; it does this through its various functions, which Tillich describes as constitutive (balancing tradition and reformation), expanding (balancing verity and adaptation), and constructive (balancing the transcending and affirming of form).

As depicted in prophetic and apocalyptic biblical imagery, the symbol “Kingdom of God” describes how God’s Spirit overcomes the ambiguous demonizing and profaning forces in history and the church by ushering in a reign that both judges and heals individuals and societies.²² Tillich interprets this symbol in relation to other views of history, ancient and modern—the non-historical (tragic, mystical, and mechanistic) and the historical (conservative, revolutionary, and his own proposal for a prophetic “religious socialism”)—and discusses what such an interpretation might have to say about world history, the churches, and the individual. He also relates it to the symbol of eternal life, which he defines not as an endless continuation of categorical existence, but as the conquest of the ambiguities inherent in our finitude. Mediating Augustine and Origen, he also interprets the meaning of “heaven,” “eternal judgment,” “eternal blessedness,” “resurrection” and what he calls “eschatological panentheism,” in which “eternal life is life in the eternal, life in God” (ST, 3:449).²³

Conclusion

In this brief overview of Tillich’s systematic theology, I have sought to offer a way of reading his work as a mode of discerning—interpreting, testing, and criticizing—how the meanings and powers that

constitute our lives are judged and healed by divine holiness, in both its justice and truth and its inexhaustible depth. Some of the deepest conflicts among people today revolve around competing convictions and ways of life. Theologies that reflexively attend to the ways we profane and demonize life offer insight into what ultimately heals, in both our personal and public lives, within and outside of religious communities. But such attention, as authentic prophetic and mystical traditions attest, is only valid when ultimately judged and healed by divine holiness—and the power, justice, and love it enacts.

¹ *Systematic Theology*, vols. 1-3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963), hereafter cited as *ST*.

² My argument is informed by David Tracy's contrast of 'manifestation' and 'proclamation' and 'dialectical' and 'analogical' languages in *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1998; reprint) and his more recent distinction between the 'mystical-priestly-sapiential-aesthetic' and the 'prophetic-ethical-historical' in, among others, his *Dialogue with the Other: The Interreligious Dialogue* (Louvain: Peeters Press and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). Compare my use of this distinction for reading Tillich with Tracy's earlier appropriation of Tillich in his correlation of 'Christian fact' and 'common human experience' in *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

³ See, e.g., the depiction of Tillich in Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989).

⁴ See George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1984).

⁵ See Langdon Gilkey's *Gilkey on Tillich* (New York: Crossroad, 1990). See also other major attempts to grapple with Tillich's theology as a whole—James Luther Adams, *Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Inc., 1965) and David Kelsey, *The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

⁶ My focus on the theological discernment of spiritual powers and meanings is also what distinguishes this study from other recent studies. See, e.g., John J. Carey's *Paulus, Then, and Now: A Study of Paul Tillich's Theological World and Continuing Relevance of His Work* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1992); Mary Ann Stenger and Ronald H. Stone, *Dialogues of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002); and Mark Kline Taylor, *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*, which

includes an introductory essay on Tillich (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1987). Other recent studies of Tillich include Richard M. Pomeroy's *Paul Tillich: A Theology for the 21st Century* (Lincoln, NE: Writer's Showcase Press, 2002), which introduces his work, and Alexander C. Irwin's *Eros Toward the World: Paul Tillich and the Theology of the Erotic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), which focuses on his understanding of sexuality.

⁷ My argument is informed by William Schweiker's work, which seeks to develop a theology of culture in Paul Tillich's tradition. See, among other books, *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics: In the Time of Many Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004).

⁸ See *ST*, 1: 3-70, Part 1 ('Reason and Revelation'), and *ST*, 3: Part 4 ('Life and the Spirit'). On Tillich's use of Luther's distinction between law and gospel, see Carl Braaten, "Paul Tillich and the Classical Christian Tradition," in *A History of Christian Thought*, xxviii-xxix.

⁹ Compare this "critical phenomenology" with Pierre Hadot's understanding of philosophy as a spiritual exercise in *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). See also David Tracy's work on the "mystical" and "prophetic" mentioned above.

¹⁰ In addition to the *ST*, I draw on lectures given at Union Theological Seminary and the Divinity School at the University of Chicago and published in *A History of Christian Thought*; various essays of Tillich's in *Writings in Social Philosophy and Ethics*, ed. Erdmann Sturm (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998); *Writings in the Philosophy of Culture*, ed. Michael Palmer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990); *Writings in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. John Clayton (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987); *Writings on Religion*, ed. Robert P. Scharlemann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988); and his autobiographical essays in *The Protestant Era; My Search for Absolutes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), *My Travel Diary: 1936: Between Two Worlds*, ed. J. C. Bauer (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), and *Boundaries of Our Being: A Collection of His Sermons . . . with His Autobiographical Sketch* (London: Collins, 1973).

¹¹ Note the centrality of Romans 8 for Tillich's theology; see *ST*, 17. See John Charles Cooper, *The Spiritual Presence in the Theology of Paul Tillich: Tillich's Use of St. Paul* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997).

¹² Tillich, "Kairos and Logos: A Study in the Metaphysics of Knowledge," in *Interpretation of History*, 123-178. See also his "Philosophical Background of my Theology (1960)," in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. Gunther Wenz, 411-420.

¹³ Note, e.g., Tillich's observation that "Spinoza's influence [on his work] is prophetic and mystical as well as sapiential," *ST*, 3, 3.

¹⁴ See *ST*, 1: Part 2 ('Being and God') and *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

¹⁵ See *ST*, 1: Part 2 ("Being and God") and *The Courage to Be*.

¹⁶ Note that these three forms of anxiety correlate with the three moments in Tillich's dialectical concept of life—the moments of self-creation (mortality), self-integration (morality), and self-transcendence (meaninglessness or tragedy)—and the three moments in his understanding of sin (discussed below)—concupiscence, unbelief, and tragic hubris.

**CONFRONTING THE POWERS: TILlich,
STOUT, AND WEST ON DEMOCRATIC
PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES**

JONATHAN ROTHCHILD

Recent debates regarding the formal characteristics of democracy have been widespread and polemical. Whether construed in terms of imperialistic concerns (e.g., the imposition of American political values on non-democratic and non-Western countries), constitutional questions (e.g., the blurring of church and state through administered services of faith-based organizations or religiously affiliated hospitals), or identity politics (e.g., the question of whether democracy protects and cultivates pluralism or homogenizes and reduces otherness to sameness), these debates compel interrogation of the basic presuppositions underlying democratic principles and procedures and the extent to which theological reflections inform these presuppositions. Paul Tillich experienced the horrors of non-democratic seizures of power in his German homeland, and his emigration to America deepened his resistance to the demonic powers that dehumanize, destroy, and dominate social and political life. This essay argues that Tillich's writings on political life, particularly his 1933 *The Socialist Decision*, challenge democratic theorists and current public policy makers to rethink their assumptions about the form, function, and meanings of democracy.

My purpose is to engage Tillich and present interlocutors on democracy. Such a conversation re-

¹⁷ Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 189.

¹⁸ See *ST*, 1: Part 2 ('Being and God'), *ST*, 3: Part 4 ('Life and the Spirit') and *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954). On "holiness," see Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958, 2nd edition).

¹⁹ See *ST*, 1: 252-271 ("God as Creating") and *ST*, 2: Part 3 ("Existence and the Christ").

²⁰ See *ST*, 2: Part 3 ("Existence and the Christ").

²¹ See *ST*, 3: Part 4 ("Life and the Spirit").

²² See *ST*, 3: Part 5 ("History and the Kingdom of God").

²³ "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Rom 11:36); quoted in *ST*, 3: 6.

quires a multi-layered analysis: (1) An excursus into the historical trajectories in American politics vis-à-vis the relationship between church and state that problematizes strict separation and strict union; (2) An engagement between Tillich and Jeffrey Stout and Cornel West on the anthropological, experiential, and religious dimensions of democracy; and (3) An analysis of the present policies of President Bush and the "elite" democracy of Richard Posner with respect to the perspectives of Tillich, Stout, and West. My thesis holds that separation, whether construed in terms of the strict separation between church and state, between individual and community, or between power and justice, has overdetermined contemporary visions of democracy at substantial moral costs. Though they differ in significant ways, the models of democracy envisaged by Tillich, Stout, and West more comprehensively address the necessarily dialectical interplay between separation and union within a democracy than the policies implemented by the Bush administration.

**I. A Brief History of Church-State Relations:
Separation and Democracy**

Discussion of the church-state relations can be traced back to the Gospels, when Jesus' dictum to render unto Caesar (Mark 12:17; cf. Matthew 22:21) exposed the co-existence of two spheres, religious and political. Models of the interaction of these two spheres range from Augustine's two cities, Aquinas's eternal, natural, and human laws, and Martin Luther's two kingdoms. To contextualize our analysis of democracy and its modern theological and phi-

losophical discontents, we must limit our scope to a brief examination the trajectory of the church versus state debate in the United States. Such an examination reveals the ambiguities embedded in notions of strict separation. Philip Hamburger begins his 2002 *Separation of Church and State* by citing the “strict wall of separation between Church and State”¹ in Thomas Jefferson’s 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists. Hamburger works meticulously to disabuse the assumption that such a wall of separation was unanimously embraced or even actively tolerated by American religious and political actors. Examining the writings of seventeenth and eighteenth century Protestants such as Richard Hooker and Roger Williams, Hamburger clarifies that their misgivings about union between church and state “was not a demand for separation.”² Hamburger argues that practices such as the exclusion of clergy from civil office stemmed from a variety of factors,³ but these factors did not include the grounds of separation. In the early nineteenth century, motivated by political exigencies, Thomas Jefferson and the Republicans opposed the Federalists and began to promote a separation between church and state that persuaded later presidents such as James Madison and Andrew Jackson. Yet, in what Stout and West would praise as thick description, Hamburger explains that these appeals to separation were largely politically motivated rhetorical devices until they confronted the practical religious conflicts in the mid-nineteenth century, notably the rise of anti-Catholicism. Spurred by violent clashes and quarrels over public school funds between Protestants and Catholics and exacerbated by Catholic resistance to separation, many Protestants “used the principle of separation to argue against Catholic participation in politics.”⁴ These conflicts increasingly helped instill separation among the Protestant majority as cultural assumptions that contributed to the evolving democratic traditions.

An insightful component of Hamburger’s analysis (and one that has relevance for our discussion of democratic principles) is his recognition of the moral costs of a purely procedural separation. Hamburger notes that separation, in some contexts, enabled “Americans to fend off moral demands with which they did not wish to comply”⁵ and thereby raised the democratic stakes of the distinction between church and state. These moral costs reflected the reticence of political minorities and the church to offer critical voices that, as we will observe with respect to West, Stout, and Tillich, constitute *sine qua non* for de-

mocracy. Despite these costs, separation continued to gain favor after the Civil War, when President Ulysses Grant championed separation as the best way to preserve individual freedom. This call for freedom was embraced in the early twentieth century by nativist Protestant groups, including the decisively undemocratic Ku Klux Klan, whom Hamburger holds, “probably more than any other national group in the first half of the [twentieth] century, drew Americans to the principle of separation.”⁶ Driven by the “culture of Americanism and its conception of separation as an American liberty”⁷ and continuously funded by anti-Catholicism (exemplified by the reaction to Catholic Al Smith’s presidential bid) but also emergent secularism, separation as a fundamental aspect of American democracy continued to marshal support.

Nonetheless, Hamburger notes, it was not until 1947 in *Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing* (330 U.S. 1) that the Supreme Court finally interpreted the First Amendment as requiring separation of church and state.⁸ In writing the decision for the court, Justice Black cited Jefferson’s 1802 letter advocating for the wall of separation, thus suggesting circularity to the historical phenomenon of separation. But this circularity, as will be noted in the next section with respect to the myth of origin, cannot address the in-breaking of the new. Hamburger describes the paradoxical reception of the *Everson* decision in decades that followed: “Even as Americans wondered about separation’s meaning, they treated its constitutional legitimacy as sacrosanct. Having enshrined the doctrine of separation in their Constitution, they deferred to it with reverence and viewed any dissent from it as profoundly anti-American.”⁹ This failure to examine self-reflexively the principles and procedures of one’s own democratic traditions accounts for the present polemical debates and the potentially unresolvable democratic disagreements regarding separation.

Hamburger’s work thus reveals the ways in which the roots and formation of separation lie less in purely constitutional foundations but rather in a conflicted history that occasionally restricted freedom when “American majorities used the separation of church and state to impose their vision of their religion and their Americanism upon religious minorities.”¹⁰ Such a history serves as a useful point of departure for our study because it invites critical reflection on mediating grounds between union and separation within a democracy.

The remainder of the essay will expand the question of union and separation of church and state to encompass the questions of union and separation within the democratic process as a whole.

II. Stout, West, and Tillich: Confronting the Challenge of Separation

A. Stout's Pragmatic Mediation of Rawls/Rorty and Hauerwas/Milbank

The basic thesis of Jeffrey Stout's 2004 *Democracy and Tradition* is that democracy is a tradition, that is, it "inculcates certain habits of reasoning, certain attitudes toward deference and authority in political discussion, and love for certain good and virtues."¹¹ As we will note below with respect to West and Tillich, Stout foregrounds his discussion of political structures and procedures with an analysis of its humanly experienced motivations and effects. Stout's pragmatism, which he designates as "*democratic traditionalism*,"¹² therefore locates the significance of democratic tradition not within procedures but rather within the formation of "enduring attitudes, concerns, dispositions and patterns of conduct" wherein "normative commitments are embedded as well as discussed."¹³ These normative commitments signify the products of deliberative debates, always subject to the "critical scrutiny"¹⁴ advocated by Tillich and West, and necessarily involve appeals to religion. These appeals vitiate the assumptions of strict separation within democracy. The questions regarding the role of religion within democratic tradition, Stout believes, have been complicated by two approaches, one the secular liberal approach of thinkers such as Rawls and Rorty, and the other the new traditionalism of Hauerwas and Milbank, which, for radically distinct reasons, separate religion and democracy. Stout depicts the prominence of these two approaches as interrelated: "The more thoroughly Rawlsian our law schools and ethics centers become, the more radically Hauerwasian the theological schools become."¹⁵ Thus, Stout's book seeks to mediate between the separation of religion and democracy, that is, between the Rawlsian/ Rortian view of religion as a conversation-stopper for democratic consensus and the Hauerwasian/ Milbankian view of religion that neglects the importance of democracy for religious structures and beliefs.

Stout's brand of pragmatism appropriates various strategies to carry out this mediation. Stout combines the Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, criticisms of

Kantian pure practical reason (also noted by Tillich),¹⁶ and dialectical normative expressivism with an Emersonian celebration of historical consciousness and "a form of social life that celebrates democratic individuality as a positive good."¹⁷ Democracy must therefore accommodate individual, community, and society in ways that do not reduce their interactions to purely abstract formalism or procedures. Stout posits that religious voices must contribute to the ongoing conversation of what undergirds democracy. Whereas Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory* "leaves democracy almost entirely out of the picture,"¹⁸ Stout lauds Barth's *Barmen Declaration* that opposed the Nazis as "a theologically rich account of what it means for Christians to be involved in modern, secularized political communities."¹⁹ Though Stout seemingly oversimplifies the radicality of Barth's theology²⁰ that some interpreters, including Tillich, have critiqued, Stout concludes that Barth's assertion of truth claims is vital to democracy because "[w]ithout truth-claims, there would be no communication, no exchange of reasons."²¹

Stout castigates Stanley Hauerwas for conceptualizing democratic citizens as "essentially rootless individuals"²² or, as I have identified it, as essentially separated individuals. Hauerwas's own vision, informed by Yoder and MacIntyre, does not endorse democracy in the decisive means for cultivating virtue; rather, his view insists that the Christian life is revealed in faith narratives, which Stout argues are located within a "premodern authoritarian tradition."²³ Stout's criticisms are trenchant, but he does not fully appreciate the extent to which Hauerwas does affirm Christian participation in democratic structures. As Hauerwas has written: "[Christians] have a stake in fostering those forms of human association that ensure that the virtues can be sustained."²⁴ Stout's critique, however, does correctly point to the limits of Hauerwas's perspectives, vis-à-vis democracy as a tradition. Hauerwas's view cannot appreciate that our situatedness in a democracy necessitates the formation of broader communal frameworks and participation in discursive practices of normative expressivism that shape character and identity without eviscerating individual uniqueness or truth claims.

Stout affirms that these discursive practices can and should make claims to truth instantiated, for example, in Christian claims. How then can Stout bring together the Rawlsian call for consensus and the Hauerwasian demand for distinctiveness? Does Stout's mediated solution exact any moral costs of

its own? Stout's rejoinder minimizes these moral costs by coalescing objective and subjective moral dimensions, where "[p]ragmatism offers a social theory of moral objectivity—according to which both objective ethical norms and the subjectivity of those who apply them are made possible in part by social interactions among individuals."²⁵ In terms of the moral objectivity, Stout argues that the expressive function of democracy can entail claims to unconditional obligations without violating the democracy as a discursive and social practice. In terms of moral subjectivity, even as he repudiates the correspondence theory of truth because "it has no explanatory values,"²⁶ Stout insists that moral diversity neither reduces democratic conversation to a relativist conception of truth nor results in an "antitheological" stance.²⁷ Stout determines that "[t]he concept of truth is normative," but his pragmatist remedy demands that we "drop the identification of truth with power."²⁸ Thus, in Stout's judgment, religious claims or other truth claims shorn of their metaphysical presuppositions can fund critical democratic reflection on the normative rules and substantive meanings of political discourse. In ways similar to the establishment of soccer rules as an "objective affair,"²⁹ Stout envisions that religious claims contribute to the rational revision of democratic principles and procedures. These revisions reflect careful, but contentious dialogue within thick cultural contexts, though Stout's model admits latitude and even reversals "when we undergo social and spiritual crises"³⁰ and thereby must transcend our own tradition. This dialectic of tradition and crisis affords necessary correctives to the strict separation between the theoretical and practical dimensions of democratic reflection.

B. West's Pragmatic Mediation of Imperialism and Nihilism

Cornel West is a synthetic intellectual who, similar to Stout and Tillich, diagnoses the current situation and correlates it with answers by meditating different traditions. Indebted to the "unashamedly moral emphasis and its unequivocally ameliorative impulse"³¹ of American pragmatism, Marxism,³² and critical poststructuralist theory, West employs a structural and prophetic critique of democracy. In his 2004 book, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism*, West juxtaposes the three most pernicious threats to democracy—free-market fundamentalism, aggressive militarism, and escalating authoritarianism—with the traditions that sustain

democracy—Socratic questioning, prophetic critique, and tragicomic hope.³³ The threats to democracy derive from two principal sources, an imperialistic and corporate-driven base of power, and the general apathy of a society reluctant to challenge this power that separates individuals, communities, and society. The vibrancy of a democracy, cautions West, depends crucially on democratic vigilance, a core characteristic of the democratic traditions in America.

One of West's insights, as we observed with Stout and will with Tillich, is that theorizing about democracy requires inquiry into human anthropology and the humanly experienced beliefs (particularly despair, cynicism, and hope) vis-à-vis the prospects for democratic procedures. West steadfastly asserts with John Dewey and Ralph Waldo Emerson that "[d]emocracy is not just a system of governance, as we tend to think of it, but a cultural way of being."³⁴ West and Stout both understand democracy as principally a way of life and not a configuration of procedures, but Stout suggests that their anthropological perspectives regarding democracy signal a key distinction between his pragmatism and West's: "But we differ over the grounds of democratic hope in a way that leaves me closer to Ellison and him closer to an Augustinian like Reinhold Niebuhr."³⁵ Disturbed that "Socrates never cries"³⁶ and therefore misunderstands democracy's tragic character, West holds with Niebuhr (and Tillich) that one must take seriously the flaws, faults, and moral blindness of individual and systems. These faults and blindness—encapsulated in Augustine's notion of the self *curvatus in se*—problematize democratic assumptions and exacerbate separation. I therefore argue that West's anthropological model more effectively captures the current discontent for democratic practices than Stout's.³⁷ West explains that Dewey's pragmatism—a pragmatism to which both Stout and West are indebted—fails to "meet the challenge posed by Lincoln, namely, defining the relation of democratic ways of thought and life to a profound sense of evil."³⁸ Identifying Josiah Royce but also Chekhov, Coltrane, and Niebuhr as those who confronted this challenge, West affirms that "a deep sense of evil and the tragic must infuse any meaning and value of democracy."³⁹ Recognizing the inexorable tensions between evil and good, tragic and hope, or, as Tillich puts it, the inner contradiction of human life, West affirms that pragmatism renders these tensions productive by promoting individual volition and com-

munal justice in the face of historical limits, human evil, and fateful circumstances.

In addressing this evil, tragic, but ineluctably hopeful current context, West builds on his earlier book *Race Matters* and characterizes the current situation as one of crisis or consciousness of meaninglessness and nihilism among minority and marginalized communities. Using language that resembles Stout's idea of crisis and Tillich's ontological concepts of non-being and estrangement, West describes the youth of America: "[M]any lack the necessary navigational skills to cope with the challenges and crises in life—disappointment, disease, death. This is why so many are enacting the nihilism of meaninglessness and hopelessness in their lives that mirrors the nihilism of the adult world."⁴⁰ This nihilism has a perniciously self-destructive character that West identifies as "walking nihilism," or "*the imposing of closure on the human organism, intentionally, by that organism itself.*"⁴¹ The resonance between West's walking nihilism and Tillich's demonic will be noted below, but, here it is imperative to note that what is equally troubling for West is the moral blindness to this destruction and self-destruction that lies at the roots of the American democratic tradition. West argues that the practice of slavery and imperialist exploitation "*were undeniable preconditions for the possibility of American democracy.*"⁴² These racist and imperial preconditions impose a hypocritical separation of individuals onto the American democratic foundations; they press Tillich's system, though it refutes dehumanization, to rethink its drive toward self-centeredness, and they censure Stout's attempt, though it acknowledges the pernicious effects of racism, to unify the objective and subjective dimensions of democratic life. In fleshing out the moral costs of this exploitative basis for democracy, West would additionally criticize Tillich's appeal to elite forms of art as only partially disclosive of form and meaning that must also include forms of popular culture (e.g., hip-hop) and power struggles in the streets.⁴³

Given West's concerns for the racist and imperialistic dimensions of democracy, he turns, as does Stout, to resources within democracy's traditions to retrieve and self-reflexively to critique these foundations. West appeals to two strands, an Emersonian and a Melvillean strand. The former, represented by thinkers such as James Baldwin, focuses on the individual commitment to democracy and democracy's potential, but it also seeks to "inspire an America

caught in a web of self-deception and self-celebration."⁴⁴ The latter, represented by thinkers such as Toni Morrison, unmasks the procedures and prejudices that threaten individuality and intends to "shatter moral numbness and awaken sleepwalking."⁴⁵ Both hermeneutical strands resonate with Tillich's religious socialism and cultivate resistance by critically correlating democratic practices, beliefs, and procedures in a way that restores relationships between individuals, communities, and society. Christianity, in West's judgment, provides a vital role in this resistance, for "[t]he most influential social movements for justice in America have been led by prophetic Christians."⁴⁶ West adamantly denounces a Christian co-opting of power, tantamount to a Constantinian Christianity, that threatens tolerance and open dialogue, and therefore he censures the "terrible merger of church and state [that] has been behind so many of the church's worst violations of Christian love and justice."⁴⁷ In light of Hamburger's history of the complex variables that impact relations between church and state, West's point is well-taken, but it would need to be reconceived more carefully to address better the underlying issues.

However, similar to Hamburger's problematizing of strict separation discussed above, West also resists the temptation to compartmentalize and thereby separate religion and democracy. In explicitly endorsing the attractiveness of Stout's mediating between secular liberals and religious traditionalism,⁴⁸ West, on the one hand, gainsays Rawls's proceduralism ("it fails to acknowledge how our loyalty to constitutional and civic ideals may have religious motivations"⁴⁹) and Rorty's pragmatism ("his secular policing of public life is too rigid and his secular faith is too pure"⁵⁰). On the other hand, West cannot concur with Hauerwas's vision ("he unduly downplays the prophetic Christian commitment to justice and our role as citizens to make America more free and democratic"⁵¹) and Milbank's model ("he fails to appreciate the moral progress, political breakthroughs, and spiritual freedoms forged by the heroic efforts of modern citizens of religious and secular traditions."⁵²) In his own forging of a prophetic pragmatism as an intermediary between these perspectives, West insists that Christianity must play an important role without usurping or co-opting secular power, lapsing into utopia or radical pessimism, or eliminating the problem of fatedness; rather, Christianity and prophetic pragmatism strengthen democracy by interrelating the potency of human creativity

for good and evil with the absolute demands of justice within the postmodern context marked by “degraded otherness, subjected alienness, and subaltern marginality.”⁵³ In this way, Christianity and democracy are neither completely separate nor completely unified, and West affirms the formula articulated by the “prophetic pragmatist” theologian Reinhold Niebuhr: “Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”⁵⁴

C. Tillich’s Prophetic Critique of Power

In the Foreword to his 1933 *The Socialist Decision*, Paul Tillich reflects on the crisis of the situation, where the enemies of socialism “threaten the future of the nation and of Western civilization.”⁵⁵ The mobilization of the Nazis terrorized individuals, communities, and society, and Tillich works to combat such atrocities.⁵⁶ Yet, similar to Stout’s and West’s appeal to Socratic questioning, Tillich’s diagnosis of the situation also includes self-reflexive interrogation of one’s own political agenda, where “[a] movement that no longer questions the rightness of its own assumptions has become ossified” because this movement “must unmask all ideologies, including its own.”⁵⁷ As part of this process, in ways similar to Stout’s privileging of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, though aware of its limitations,⁵⁸ Tillich attempts to circumscribe the political movement within the unity of being and consciousness or “the interrelation of drives and interests, of pressures and aspirations, which make up social reality.”⁵⁹ To account fully for being and consciousness, however, Tillich appropriates the ontological polarities of individuality and universality and freedom and destiny. Social reality must be infused with ontological reality to ascertain that being and consciousness entail the universal: “Human beings become human by participating in universal reason.”⁶⁰ The appeal to universal reason does not disqualify the particular, but it compels political reflections on power that sustain the particular but also transcend the particular: “Being comes to fulfillment only by transcending its immediate power.”⁶¹ The pragmatism of Stout and West rightly press the epistemological limits of Tillich’s ontology, but Tillich’s ontology, in return, can push Stout and West to transcend their situated pragmatism.

In analyzing the presuppositions of political romanticism, Tillich isolates the dominant myth of the origin. This myth of the origin, rooted in blood, soil, and social groups and resonant with many of Bush’s policies (see next section), can be broken only

through the prophetic “unconditional demand”⁶² for justice. This unconditional demand applies to political powers but also to Christianity: “A Christianity that abandons its prophetic foundation by allying itself with political romanticism has lost its own identity.”⁶³ Tillich then makes an important observation that suggests that prophetic critique and democratic freedom are not antithetical; *a fortiori*, in and through the example of Liberal Protestantism, “it has become evident that prophetism as well as autonomy in their isolation from each other eventually fall back again into the myth of origin.”⁶⁴ Prophetic critique helps ensure that power and freedom do not become exclusively heteronomous or autonomous (that is, constitutively separate) but rather theonomous expressions of the interpenetration of religion and culture, the import of the Unconditional and autonomous cultural consciousness.

To be sure, the objectives of Tillich’s religious socialism do not equate precisely to West’s and Stout’s traditions of American democracy,⁶⁵ but they do articulate the function of the political in terms of social or communal duties (prophetic demands for justice) and individual freedom.⁶⁶ Perhaps more pointedly, all three thinkers recognize the potency of political mechanisms and their deleterious effects on individual, community, and society or, as I have put it, the moral costs. Tillich describes the rise of the national power-state, the fusion of “the myth of origin and capitalistic imperialism,”⁶⁷ that has, in the case of Germany during Tillich’s time, stifled democratic procedures and subdued the democratic spirit: “The *German bourgeoisie* has never fought to actualize the democratic demands of its own principle” because “it accommodated itself to feudal forms.”⁶⁸ In these ways, the myth of origin cannot overcome its contradiction and cannot protest adequately against “the dehumanizing consequences of an exclusively rational system”⁶⁹ that “oppress and crush the individual.”⁷⁰ The sophistication of Tillich’s historical, philosophical, and theological analysis in addressing these moral costs responds to West’s cautious limitation of religion’s contribution to democratic reflections attributable, in West’s judgment, to its inability to “provide the analytical tools”⁷¹ and its “lacking in serious philosophical substance.”⁷² Tillich’s more substantive vision of the role of religion extends Stout’s claim that religion can contribute to democratic tradition.

In turning to the bourgeois principle and the proletariat, Tillich further examines democracy as “the rational drive to shape reality”⁷³ and the democratic

presuppositions of religious socialism. Democracy and religious socialism function as correctives for each other and not as forces of separation. On the one hand, Tillich contends that the democratic principle promoting “the free decisions of all individuals” becomes “thwarted, however, by the reality of class rule.”⁷⁴ Religious socialism therefore presses democracy and its susceptibility to the exploitative capacities of capitalism by adopting “the prophetic attitude.”⁷⁵ On the other hand, attributable to its own inner antimony or contradiction, religious socialism needs democracy because just power reflects “*the actualization of social unity*” and the inclusion of individual will within “the will of the whole.”⁷⁶ Democracy challenges religious socialism to adopt human structures, where, for example “[r]ationality in economics is not to be abrogated but is to be placed into the hands of human beings.”⁷⁷ In this way, democracy functions as a “corrective”⁷⁸ to religious socialism’s own mediating between the myth of the origin’s quest for power and the ultimate demands of justice. Religious socialism and democracy converge in expectation: “This is the deeper meaning of egalitarianism, of *the demand for equality*, in prophetism and socialism. The inescapability of the demand, a demand, that is addressed to everyone, makes all persons equal.”⁷⁹ This pursuit of equality does not translate into merely democratic equitable procedures; rather, given that expectation entails both the universal, unconditional demand for justice and conditional practices grounded in the concrete situation (both of which are encapsulated in Tillich’s term *belief-ful realism*),⁸⁰ expectation—similar to Stout’s concept of crisis and West’s concept of hope—must be both immanent and transcendent. Democratic, socialist, and prophetic expectation constitutes “*a protest against false concepts of transcendence that inevitably call for, in opposition, false concepts of immanence.*”⁸¹ These false concepts of transcendence include an empirically derived utopia—analogue to the utopias that concern West—that can take the form of one that “*is impotent against the actual forces of society,*”⁸² a reactionary restoration of male patriarchalism,⁸³ or “the hegemony of the myth of origin [that] means the domination of violence and death.”⁸⁴ These false forms of democratic life reinforce and ossify the status quo in ways that prohibit or stifle transformation. Similar to West’s “walking nihilism,” Tillich’s concept of the demonic expresses this lack of transformation: it is “possession” (*Besessenheit*) that inhibits self-centeredness because it is an attack (*Angriff*) on the

oneness and freedom of the individual.⁸⁵ Moreover, similar to West, Tillich indicates that the demonic can take on a social dimension that engenders self-sufficient finitude in the form of capitalism and corrupts power in the form of nationalism, or the great demonic of the present (*Gegenwart*).⁸⁶ The in-breaking of theonomous forms of prophetic critique and democratic corrective as imports of hope and self-transcending realism overcome demonic separation and promote reunion and healing of individuals, communities, and society. Tillich describes this moment as the idea of *Kairos*, “which also does not lead to rational utopianism or to the mystical negation of the world, but, rather to a new and creative fulfillment of forms with an import borne by power and eros but penetrated by obedience to unconditioned form.”⁸⁷ *Kairos* thus also meditates between strict separation and strict union—a mediation that the Bush administration seems unable or willing to pursue.

III. Bush and Posner: The Hermeneutics of Democratic Distrust

The current United States administration, in my judgment, does not promote a democracy governed by concerns for social justice and the interrelationship between union and separation. Firmly entrenched in its own myth of origin, the Bush administration appears ossified in the circular movement of preserving its own origin of power. As Tillich writes in *The Socialist Decision*, “This demand [of the myth of origin] does not reach out to the new, to that which transcends the origin. It confirms the origin, but does not go beyond it. It confirms the powers of origin, the feudal and priestly authorities.”⁸⁸ The insulated bureaucracy of the Bush administration, whether illustrated in its unilateral pursuit of war, its reconfiguration of the Geneva Convention’s rules for prisoner interrogation,⁸⁹ or its privileging of large corporations on environmental and tax issues, creates procedures that reinforce its own power base and separate and marginalize individuals. Additionally, as Stout, West, and Tillich caution, any political principle and procedure must be subject to a radical, self-reflexive critique. For example, consider Bush’s policies pertaining to the war on terror. To be sure, threats to security demand proactive measures that perforce compromise some of the ideals of democracy in order to preserve other values, but West and Stout both articulate criticisms of the Bush’s policies, that is, they note the moral costs of such

measures. West points to the ill-conceived democratic rationale underlying Bush's strategies: "The Bush administration has subverted the public in order to leads its war against terrorism in the way it wanted to—attacking Iraq and instituting the dangerous doctrine of preemptive strike rather than focusing on the real terrorist threat."⁹⁰ Stout similarly indicates that self-reflexive critique has been absent thus far in the war on terror: "In the long run, the ideological-moral front is the one on which the struggle against terrorism will be won or lost, and we are now losing it badly. In truth, there is only one way to win it, namely, by applying our ideals and principles to our own conduct with the same sense of purpose and courage that we demonstrated when denouncing Taliban thugs."⁹¹

A recent articulation of democracy by legal theorist and federal judge Richard Posner encapsulates many of the current administration's sensibilities. Posner appropriates pragmatism, but a form of pragmatism quite distinct from that of West and Stout. Posner's everyday pragmatism, whose roots, he suggests, lie in Machiavelli,⁹² seeks to disengage itself from academic pragmatic philosophy⁹³ or critical reflection on the moral dimensions and costs of democracy. Posner envisages the democratic process as one of competition, where, appealing to the work of Joseph Schumpeter, he submits that democracy should be an elite democracy: "Here democracy is conceived of as a method by which members of a self-interested elite compete for the votes of a basically ignorant and apathetic, as well as determined self-interested, electorate."⁹⁴ The self-interested political elite therefore exploits social structures and, as West put it above, the public's sleepwalking lack of resistance to confront this exploitative power. Posner distinguishes the transformative and participatory democratic models of Mill and Dewey (and, we might add, Stout, West, and Tillich) that focus on the "cooperative search for truth"⁹⁵ from his preferred Machiavellian and Weberian vision of democracy that "requires a willingness to compromise, to dirty one's hands, to flatter, cajole, pander, bluff, and lie, [and] to make unprincipled package deals."⁹⁶ This willingness to dirty one's hands has been a hallmark of the Bush administration. These practices may protect some democratic values, but we must again ask at what moral costs.

The limitations and flaws of Posner's model of democracy and Bush's enforcement of it can be categorized around two central loci. First, Posner's anthropological assumptions delimit human beings,

particularly his reductive portrait of humans as "merely clever animals."⁹⁷ His focus on rational self-interest as the primary mode of being in the world disavows the central roles of communal values, principles, and traditions as well as the unity of being and consciousness advocated by Tillich. Posner's everyday pragmatism insists that individuals within a democratic and free-market environment necessarily would "focus on their material concerns, personal interests, and opinions."⁹⁸ Stout's model also invites such focus on concerns and interests, but in ways that foster dialogue and not monologues of power. Posner's anthropological reductions inform a second weakness, his myopic and attenuated assessment of common impulses to participate in democratic procedures. "The United States is a tenaciously philistine society. Its citizens have little appetite for abstractions and little time and less inclination to devote substantial time to training themselves to become informed and public-spirited voters."⁹⁹ Emphasizing the efficiency and procedural aspects of democracy in ways analogous to corporate management, Posner submits that "[t]he relation of officials to voters resembles that between sellers and consumers"¹⁰⁰ Posner's elitist model suffers from what I denominate as a hermeneutics of trust and distrust—a trust in the ideology and internal mechanisms of a powerful elite and a distrust of democratic principles and traditions among the majority. Such a hermeneutics balkanizes competing voices and centralizes power, paradigms that clearly operate within the Bush administration. This separation exacerbates tendentious clashes along ideological, ethnic identity-based, and class lines.

IV. Concluding Reflections

Where does this leave us? What constructive proposals might be gleaned from the American history of the separation of church and state, the insights of Stout, West, and Tillich, and the challenges to Bush and Posner? I offer a few modest proposals as a conclusion. Through our procedures and power structures, we have lost sight of the individual within the democratic process. Reclaiming the voice of the individual within the cacophony of lobbyists, partisan rhetoric, and corporate posturing seems vital to our democratic health. Writing his *Democratic Vistas* shortly after the crisis of the Civil War, Walt Whitman, beloved by West and Stout alike, admonishes the individual to "[a]lways inform yourself; always do the best you can; always vote" but, at the

same time, to remain vigilant against opportunistic political parties: “it behooves you to convey yourself implicitly to no party, nor submit blindly to their dictators, but steadily hold yourself judge and master over all of them.”¹⁰¹ Whitman’s commitment to the individual within democracy, tempered by a hermeneutics of suspicion (and not a hermeneutics of trust and distrust), underscores the dialectical character of separation and union between individual, prophetic critique, and democratic structures.

The communities of democratic discourse also have been attenuated by separatist groups (e.g., Stout’s criticisms of Black nationalism), marginalized groups (e.g., West’s diagnoses of nihilism and meaninglessness of those disenfranchised), and dehumanized groups (e.g., Tillich’s concerns over the corrosive features of capitalism). One mechanism that could re-invite these groups back into the collective would be to cultivate what Jane Mansbridge identifies as protective enclaves to support the voices of muted communities and to reconfigure hardened boundaries.¹⁰² Such enclaves enrich the democratic exchange of ideas, surmount the impasse of language and power, and ameliorate the one-sidedness of separation or union. Our three interlocutors have argued that these voices must be heard. Rather than promoting the distrust of religion within society (Rorty and Rawls), distrust of the masses (Posner and Bush), or distrust of democracy (Hauerwas and Milbank), Tillich, Stout, and West affirm that we must consider the prospects for and the challenges of ultimate concern, the formation of individuals in and through social participation, the interpenetration of religion and culture, and the tensions between evil and good, power and justice, and tragedy and hope. Addressing these dimensions requires that we consider both the immanence of thick historicism and our situation and the transcendence of the prophetic critique and spiritual crisis. Though they differ on the specific meanings of these dimensions, Stout, West, and Tillich articulate the anthropological, experiential, moral, and axiological dimensions of democracy in ways that can revitalize our troubled democracies.

¹ Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, 1.

² *Ibid.*, 28. Rather, the focus was on distinction, or the “opposition to an impure union” (*Ibid.*, 28).

³ Among the possible reasons, Hamburger points to “an odd combination of Calvinism, anti-Catholicism,

theories of taxation and representation, solicitude for the clergy, and suspicion of the clergy” (*Ibid.*, 83).

⁴ These violent attacks include Protestants’ burning of Catholic churches (*Ibid.*, 216), and the quarrels over public school funds concentrated on New York City and the influx of Catholic immigrants (220). A key Catholic condemnation of separation can be found in Pope Gregory XVI’s 1832 encyclical, *Mirari Vos*, which motivated American Protestants to endorse separation (230). *A fortiori*, Hamburger declares that “the pope did more than Jefferson to popularize the idea of separation of church and state in America” (482).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 265. Hamburger cites examples of these costs as the calls for the elimination of state charity by an 1859 New York manual on local government and the Christian reluctance to condemn slavery, “a matter belonging exclusively to civil government” (265).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 407. Hamburger writes: “When recruiting [its nearly five million] members, the Klan sometimes distributed cards listing, ‘[t]he separation of church and state’ as one of the organization’s principles” (408).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 446.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 454.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 478.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 484.

¹¹ Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, 3. He later remarks that “democratic culture is best understood as a set of social practices that inculcate characteristic habits, attitudes, and dispositions in their participants” (203).

¹² *Ibid.*, 13 original emphasis.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3; 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁶ Tillich concurs with Stout’s critique of Kantian pure practical reason: “there is really no more impotent form of criticism than Kantian criticism. For it is not upheld by the power of an emerging form. It is abstract and condemned to be merely a subject for academic debate; at the most it can only obstruct concrete criticism” (“Protestantism as a Critical and Creative Principle,” in *Political Expectation*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971, 19).

¹⁷ *Democracy and Tradition*, 84. In *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), West adumbrates the Emersonian ideas that anticipate American pragmatism: “Emerson’s dominant themes of individuality, idealism, voluntarism, optimism, amelioration, and experimentation prefigure those of American pragmatism” (35).

¹⁸ Ibid., 106.

¹⁹ Ibid., 109.

²⁰ Stout presupposes too easily that Barth's polemical perspectives and deeply confessional Christocentric theology create opportunities for inter-religious conversations and other forms of democratic discourse. For example, Stout's call for Barth as a core text within Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic schools is theologically naïve: "It would be a good thing if the relevant parts of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* came to hold a prominent place in the seminary curricula of all the desert faiths" (Ibid., 298).

²¹ Ibid., 111. Stout puts it simply: "But democracy will suffer greatly, I fear, if orthodox Christians are unable to find a way to maintain their own convictions while also taking up their responsibilities as citizens" (116).

²² Ibid., 145.

²³ Ibid., 152.

²⁴ Hauerwas, "A Christian Critique of Christian America," in *The Hauerwas Reader*. Edited by John Berkman and Michael Cartwright. Originally published in *The Cresset* 50:1 (1986): 5-16. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001, 479.

²⁵ Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 274.

²⁶ Ibid., 248.

²⁷ Ibid., 256.

²⁸ Ibid., 254; Ibid., 256.

²⁹ Ibid., 272.

³⁰ Ibid., 269.

³¹ West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, 4.

³² West does contend that the Marxist locus of economic exploitation fails to address the fact that "many social practices, such as racism, are best understood and explained not only or primarily by locating them within modes of production, but also by situating them within the cultural traditions of civilizations" ("Race and Social Theory," in *The Cornel West Reader*. Edited by Cornel West. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999, 262).

³³ West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004, 7; Ibid., 16. Earlier (in 1993), West had similarly identified that principal obstacles to democracy as "the pervasive process of objectification, rationalization, and commodification throughout the world" ("The New Cultural Politics of Difference" in *The Cornel West Reader*. Edited by Cornel West. Originally published in Cornel West, *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America*. New York: Routledge, 1993. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999, 137.

³⁴ Ibid., 68. In the sense that West follows Dewey on this point, West writes: "Dewey is in search of a culture of democracy, of ways of life guided by experimental method, infused with the love of individuality and community, and rooted in the Emersonian theodicy" that address that "need for an Emersonian *culture* of radical democracy in which self-creation and communal participation flourish in all their diversity and plurality" (*The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, 103; 103 original emphasis).

³⁵ Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 57. Stout does affirm that both thinkers (and the traditions) can affirm hope: "It is therefore no small matter for democratic citizens to find reasons for hope in the here and now, whatever their religious differences might be. This is a task that Augustinians can share with the likes of Ellison and Emerson" (59).

³⁶ West, *Democracy Matters*, 213.

³⁷ To be sure, Stout does not neglect the indifferent and even morally problematic character of Americans; he points to such examples as the ignorance of the poor, the preference for wealth over justice, and the desire for separation (24).

³⁸ West, "Pragmatism and the Sense of the Tragic," in *The Cornel West Reader*. Edited by Cornel West. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999, 175.

³⁹ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁰ West, *Democracy Matters*, 176.

⁴¹ West, "A World of Ideas" (Interview with Bill Moyers) in *The Cornel West Reader*, 293.

⁴² West, *Democracy Matters*, 45 (original emphasis).

⁴³ For example, in his criticisms of democratic socialist Michael Harrington, West stipulates that cultural criticism cannot be severed from lived experience: "The major problem I have with Harrington's impressive project is that it remains too far removed from lived experience in advanced capitalist societies. Despite his call for a new culture, he does not discuss the civic terrorism that haunts our streets; the central role of TV, video, radio and film in shaping the perceptions of citizens; the escalating violence against women, gays, and lesbians; the racial and ethnic polarization or the slow decomposition of civil society (families, schools, neighborhoods, and associations)" ("Michael Harrington, Democratic Socialist," in *The Cornel West Reader*, 306). Or, as West explains to bell hooks, "I focus on popular culture because I focus on those areas where black humanity is most powerfully expressed, where black people have been able to articulate their sense of the world in a profound manner" ("Conversation with bell hooks," in Ibid., 547).

⁴⁴ West, *Democracy Matters*, 84.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 152.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 148-149.

⁴⁸ West praises Stout's revitalizing the tradition of protest as crucial for sustaining democracy: "Jeffrey Stout—himself the most religiously musical, theologically learned, and philosophically subtle of all secular writers in America today—has, by contrast, argued that American democrats must join forces with the legacy of Christian protest exemplified by Martin Luther King Jr." (Ibid., 163).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 160.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 161. West elsewhere adds that Rorty's project "refuses to give birth to the offspring it conceives. Rorty leads philosophy to the complex world of politics and culture, but confines engagement to transformation in the academy and to apologetics for the modern West" (*The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, 207).

⁵¹ Ibid., 162.

⁵² Ibid., 162.

⁵³ West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, 237.

⁵⁴ West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, 162, cites Niebuhr's dictum (originally found in Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and A Critique of Its Traditional Defense*. New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1944, xiii).

⁵⁵ Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*. Translated by Franklin Sherman. New York: Harper and Row, 1977, xxxi.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Tillich's addresses to the German people in *Against The Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Addresses to Nazi Germany*, edited by Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

⁵⁷ Ibid., xxxiii; Ibid., xxxvi.

⁵⁸ Tillich does offer several criticisms of Hegel's method, including Hegel's collapsing—rather than inter-relating as ontological polarities—particular and universal: "Hegel spoiled his own [philosophy of history] by identifying a particular form of being as the tangible fulfillment of being. Thereby—in contradiction to the basic impulse of his thought—a particular spiritual and social configuration of history was equated with the goal of expectation" (Ibid., 108). The ramifications include the conflation of 'is' and 'ought', whereby "[t]he 'ought' is swallowed up by the 'is'; the powers of origin have escaped from the demand; the conservative form of political romanticism has triumphed" (Ibid., 108). West remains

sympathetic to the historicism of Hegel, but he too seeks to disabuse Hegel's totalizing history and simplifying emancipation in ways similar to Dewey's censuring of metaphysical residues in Marx (see West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, 71).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁶¹ Ibid., 107. Indebted to Heidegger, Boehme, and Schelling, Tillich asserts that being transcends, but also relies upon, power: "Power is the possibility of self-affirmation in spite of internal and external negation. It is the possibility of overcoming non-being" (Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954, 36).

⁶² Ibid., 21.

⁶³ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁵ Tillich would no doubt be encouraged by West's position as one of the honorary chairpersons of the Democratic Socialists of America.

⁶⁶ Consequently, Tillich affirms that "[s]ocialism is a prophetic movement on the soil of autonomy and rationality" (Ibid., 109).

⁶⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 43; Ibid., 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 85.

⁷¹ West, "A World of Ideas" (Interview with Bill Moyers), in *The Cornel West Reader*, 297.

⁷² West, "The Historicist Turn in Philosophy of Religion," in *The Cornel West Reader*, 367. In advancing this critique, West refers to theologians such as Gutiérrez, Daly, and Cone.

⁷³ Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 53.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 59; Ibid., 59.

⁷⁵ Tillich, "Basic Principles of Religious Situation, in *Political Expectation*, 60. Originally published in 1923. Isolating the dangers of capitalism is a common motif throughout Tillich's writings. We will let two examples suffice. In his 1930 "The State as Expectation and Demand," Tillich describes the power of capital (*die Gruppe der Kapitalherrschaft*): "Almost without exception, behind Western democracy stand the great capitalists as the group that upholds the structure of the state: not unequivocally, frequently divided among themselves, often restricted by powers that are not yet absorbed by the market, but always present, and finally always victorious" (*Political Expectation*, 110). In his 1954 *Love, Power, and Justice*, Tillich notes: "Justice is always violated if men are dealt with as if they were things. This has been called 'reification' (*Verdinglichung*) or 'objectification'

(*Vergegenständlichung*). In any case it contradicts the justice of being, the intrinsic claim of every person to be considered a person” (60).

⁷⁶ *The Socialist Decision*, 138 original emphasis; *Ibid.*, 139.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 90 original emphasis.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 142. Isolating the dangers of capitalism is a common motif throughout Tillich’s writings. In his 1930 “The State as Expectation and Demand,” Tillich describes the democratic corrective as that which stands in conflict with the group bearing power, or the tension of “valid demand and the immediate power of being (*Seinsmächtigkeit*), of ideal justice (*Sollensrecht*), real justice (*Seinsrecht*)” (*Political Expectation*, 111).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 105 original emphasis.

⁸⁰ For example, Tillich writes: “*Expectation is always bound to the concrete, and at the same time transcends every instance of the concrete*” (*Ibid.*, 132 original emphasis). In *The Religious Situation* (Translated by H. Richard Niebuhr. New York: Living Age Books, 1956), Tillich defines *belief-ful realism* as “an unconditioned acceptance of the serious importance of our concrete situation in time and of the situation of time in general in the presence of eternity” (116).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 111 original emphasis.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 107 original emphasis. West agrees that Christianity dissuades the impulse toward utopia: “In Christianity, you have a strong anti-utopian element in terms of talking about human history” (“The Indispensability Yet Insufficiency of Marxist Theory,” in *The Cornel West Reader*, 219).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁸⁵ Tillich, “Das Dämonische,” in *Main Works*, Volume 5: Writings on Religion, edited by Robert Scharlemann, 105.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁸⁷ Tillich, “Basic Principles of Religious Socialism,” in *Political Expectation*, 86, originally published in 1923.

⁸⁸ Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, 105.

⁸⁹ For further discussion, please see Jonathan Rothchild, “Moral Consensus, the Rule of Law, and the Practice of Torture,” in *The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Fall/Winter 2006 (forthcoming).

⁹⁰ West, *Democracy Matters*, 204.

⁹¹ Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 307.

⁹² Posner, *Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, 51.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁰¹ Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*. (1867 and 1871) in *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose*. Introduction to Sculley Bradley. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc. 1949, 521.

¹⁰² See, Mansbridge, “Using Power/Fighting Power: The Polity,” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Edited by Seyla Benhabib. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, 46-66.

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