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DUES AND NEWS

With the summer issue of the Bulletin, it is time to pay dues once again. For those receiving the Bulletin by mail, please fill out the dues form, indicating changes in address, and send your check to:

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EXCITING NEWS ABOUT MEMBERSHIP:

At the biennial colloquium of the Association Paul Tillich d'expression française in Fribourg in May of 2007 (report immediately below), there was an opportunity for the officers of the three of the Tillich societies—Ann Marie Reijnen, President of the APTEF, Christian Danz, President of the DPTG, and Frederick Parrella, Secretary-Treasurer of the NAPTS—to discuss joint membership. It was decided that membership in one society would constitute limited membership in the other two societies. There would no longer be need of joint membership. All the publications—the NAPTS *Bulletin*, the DPTG *Dialog*, and the APTEF *Nouvelles*—would be made available to all, *as long as* the member is willing to receive the publications electronically.

Of course, this proposal needs the approval of the boards of the societies and questions and issues need to be discussed. It will also take time to have the email lists merged, but it seems like a worthwhile and sensible step as we continue to move into an electronic age. Of course, *The Bulletin*, *Dialog*, and *Nouvelles* will continue to appear in hard copy for those members of the respective societies who still require hardcopy as well as a service to academic libraries.

Please send your remittance in a timely manner:

50 USD for regular membership

20 USD for student membership

Thank you!

**REPORT ON THE XVII^E COLLOQUE
INTERNATIONAL DE L'ASSOCIATION
PAUL TILlich D'EXPRESSION FRANÇAISE**

The biennial international colloquium of the Association Paul Tillich d'expression française was held in Fribourg, Switzerland from 3 to 5 May 2007 under the patronage of the Theological Faculty of the Université de Fribourg and the Institut romand de systématique et d'éthique (Fédération des Facultés de théologie de Geneva, Lausanne et Neuchâtel), with the support of the Fondation Ulrich Neuenchwander in Berne. The meeting was held at Notre-Dame de la Route, a Jesuit retreat house just outside of Fribourg.

The theme of this year's meeting was "Les Peurs, La Mort, l'Espérance autour Paul Tillich." In addition to the excellent papers in French by members of the APTEF, papers in English (by Mary Ann

Stenger, Terence O'Keeffe and Frederick Parrella) and German (by Christian Danz, Peter Haigis, and Martin Leiner) were also presented in simultaneous sessions. The meeting formally opened with comments from Bernard Reymond and closed with final remarks by André Gounelle. At their business meeting, the APTEF re-elected Anne Marie Reijnen as President of the Society. The next Colloque will be held in Paris in the Spring of 2009, where the theme will be Paul Tillich and Karl Barth.

Frederick J. Parrella

**REPORT ON THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
GERMAN PAUL-TILlich-SOCIETY (DPTG)
13–15 APRIL 2007
IN HOFGEISMAR, GERMANY**

The annual meeting of the German Paul Tillich Society took place on April 13 to 15, 2007 at the Protestant Academy of Hofgeismar and had as its theme "Friedrich Nietzsche and Paul Tillich." Friedrich Nietzsche was one of the most read authors in the German empire at the beginning of the 20th century. The background of the fascination with Nietzsche is a result of the process of modernization changing German society at the turn of the century. Nietzsche's writings, with his proclamation of the death of God, the changing values, and the crisis of modern culture hit the nail squarely on the head. Paul Tillich, who was reading Nietzsche's writings during the First World War, looked at him as a prophet of modern culture.

The papers followed the traces of Nietzsche in Tillich's writings from different perspectives. The opening paper, "The Question of God in Nietzsche's 'Rescendent' Metaphysics," was given by Professor Dr. Ingeborg Schüssler (Lausanne). She showed that Nietzsche turned against the history of metaphysical thinking from Plato to Martin Heidegger. By using the term "rescendent" for Nietzsche's concern, she expressed the countermovement against the transcendent thought of the Platonic tradition.

Saturday's sessions considered the theological reception of Nietzsche before and after the First World War. Professor Dr. Arnulf von Scheliha (Os-nabrück), in her paper, "Luther and Nietzsche. Hidden Continuities in Sight of Paul Tillich and Emanuel Hirsch," discussed interpretations of Nietzsche in Georg Simmel, Karl Holl, Emanuel Hirsch, and Tillich, and demonstrated Luther's influence on Nietzsche. Professor Dr. Tom Kleffmann (Kassel) spoke about "The Reception of the 'Di-

onysisches' in the Christian Dogmatics. Nietzsche, Tillich, and the Protestant Dogmatics in the 20th Century." He considered the correspondence between Tillich and his friend Hirsch from the First World War up to Tillich's Dogmatics Lecture given in 1925 in Marburg and later in Dresden. He underlined the importance of Nietzsche for Tillich's concept of life. On Saturday afternoon, there were roundtable discussions with the speakers, the business meeting of the German Paul Tillich Society, and in the evening a piano concert. Professor Dr. Yves Ledure (Metz), an expert of the philosophy of Nietzsche, gave a lecture on Sunday about "Paul Tillich and Friedrich Nietzsche on Philosophy of Existence."

The annual meeting illumined Tillich's dealing with the philosophy of Nietzsche and how much Nietzsche had been received by the Protestant theology in the beginning of the 20th century in the interest of coping with a crisis-ridden modern culture. The lectures will be published in the third volume of the *International Yearbook for Tillich Research*, along with some other contributions to the theme of Friedrich Nietzsche and Paul Tillich. The 2008 meeting will take place in Berlin from March 29 to 30, 2008, and has as its theme: "Religion and Politics. Paul Tillich and Religious Socialism".

Christian Danz, Vienna

Translated by Uta-Marina Danz, Vienna, with minor revisions by the editor.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Dupré, Louis. "The Role of Mythology in Schelling's Late Philosophy." *The Journal of Religion*, 87 (2007): 1–20.

Baard, Rachel. "Original Grace, Not Destructive Grace: A Feminist Appropriation of Paul Tillich's Notion of Acceptance," *The Journal of Religion* 87, No. 3 (July, 2007): 411–434.

Rothchild, Jonathan. Review of Ronald H. Stone, *Prophetic Realism: Beyond Militarism and Pacifism in an Age of Terror* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 2005). *The Journal of Religion* 87, 3 (2007): 459–461.

Lamberti, Marjorie. "German Antifascist Refugees in America and the Public Debate on 'What Should be Done with Germany after Hitler,' 1941–1945," *Central European History* 40, 2 (June 2007): 279–305.

This article discusses Tillich's activity as a leading figure in the Council for a Democratic Germany and

presents a carefully documented interpretation of his reactions to wartime events. The article is based on sources in the Tillich Archives at Harvard, the correspondence and other records of the Council for a Democratic Germany in the Houghton Library at Harvard, and the papers of other German emigrants in other archive collections. Cambridge University Press publishes *Central European History*, and this issue of the journal is now available online. The author is Professor of History at Middlebury College in Vermont.

Please send notice of any new publications on Tillich or by members of the Society to the editor. Thank you.

ON THE CALENDAR

The first international Congress of the Deutsche Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft will be held in Halle from 18 to 21 October 2007. The theme will be: "Religion—Kultur—Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte." The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Theological Faculty of Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Professor Christian Danz of Vienna, President of the DPTG, will preside.

THE NEW ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

If you now receive the Bulletin by mail and wish to have it forwarded to your email box as both a Word and PDF Attachment, please contact the editor. This will help keep costs down, especially with the recent rise in U.S. postal rates. Thank you.

PAUL TILlich: THE HARVARD YEARS

WILLIAM R. CROUT¹

[Author's note: This Banquet Address to the North American Paul Tillich Society at its Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. on Friday, November 19, 2006 had no written text. It was delivered only from notes. The text that follows is a greatly expanded development of what was said and while now offered for publication in this state, it is intended to be expanded yet further for a more complete record of Tillich's seven years, 1954/55–1962, as University Professor at Harvard. I am deeply grateful to President Terrence O'Keefe and the Officers of the Society for their kind invitation and express great thanks

to them and to those present for their attentive interest. With my thanks, I express sincere apologies for the regrettable delay in submitting a text of the address to the Society.]

Prologue

There is a prologue to Paul Tillich's Harvard years, and that prologue is a name: Reinhold Niebuhr.

Tillich's first visit to Harvard was on April 30, 1935, less than two years after he arrived in New York, an émigré from Nazi Germany. He came to give the Dudleian Lecture, Harvard's oldest endowed lecture (1750), and seized the occasion to give a strong critique of Karl Barth and the "theology of crisis."

It is easy to see the hand of Reinhold Niebuhr in this early invitation to Tillich for Niebuhr was already an influential presence at Harvard. From the 1930s, he was a member of Harvard's Board of Preachers, a small group of leading clergy who preached annually in its Memorial Church and counseled students. (Langdon Gilkey, in 1940 a philosophy senior styling himself "an ethical humanist" and about to graduate, heard Niebuhr preach, and it changed his life.) In 1942 President James Bryant Conant, who greatly respected Niebuhr, proposed to appoint him University Professor, but being forewarned about collegial resentment, he declined. In 1944, Conant, citing him as "a Christian philosopher," conferred on Niebuhr an honorary degree, and in 1945 appointed him to serve on Committees of the Board of Overseers to visit both the philosophy department (Alfred North Whitehead and J. Robert Oppenheimer were colleagues) and the Divinity School. The latter Committee, chaired by Charles W. Gilkey, Langdon's father, the first dean of the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel and himself an Overseer, issued a scathing report about the School's moribund state, with no money, perpetually in debt, and only five faculty, three of whom were about to retire. The following year, 1946, Conant appointed a Commission, chaired by John Lord O'Brian, distinguished Washington attorney, devout Episcopal layman, and president of the Harvard Alumni Association, to study whether Harvard should abolish or retain its Divinity School. Niebuhr was named one of its six members, each representing a mainline Protestant Church.

The Commissions' Report, issued in 1947 and co-authored by Niebuhr, urged not only that Harvard keep its Divinity School but that it "should be radi-

cally enlarged and improved so that it can take its place as one of the world's leading university schools of religion." Weighing heavily in this recommendation were doubts that after the European catastrophe the leading German schools—Berlin, Heidelberg, Tübingen, Marburg—could be revived. The Report further urged that the strengthened Divinity School could contribute to the need for religious instruction in the College, "particularly if that faculty contained eminent teachers in the field of religious thought." Was Niebuhr already thinking of Tillich? Conant, backed by vigorous alumni support, accepted the Report and set about implementing it. A fund-raising committee was appointed, also chaired by O'Brian, and its success, boosted by a gift from the Harvard Corporation and a decisive contribution of \$1,000,000 from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. not only ensured the School's survival but the next year influenced the Corporation's choice of Nathan Marsh Pusey as Conant's successor. It was Pusey's mandate for religious renewal and reconstruction which, with Niebuhr's counsel among others, brought Tillich to Harvard. Reinhold Niebuhr was indeed a catalyst for these historic developments just as Tillich himself became a catalyst for Pusey's revival of religion at Harvard.

I.

Pusey ('28), a classicist, Harvard's 24th president, like O'Brian was a devout Episcopal layman and churchman. As president of Wisconsin's Lawrence College, he had attracted attention as an effective fund-raiser, an innovative educator, and especially as a courageous opponent of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Within days of his installation, and on the recommendation of Acting Dean of Divinity, George Huntston Williams, Pusey delivered the Divinity School's Convocation Address, the first president in forty-four years do so, an event so newsworthy it was widely reported by the press. The following year as lay visitor to the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Pusey was invited by Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill to become an official delegate and later was made a member of the Council's Central Committee, a unique identity for a Harvard president.

Pusey was my president, and I have had talks with him from Maine to Manhattan. In November 1993, he was also the sixth of the Paul Tillich Lecturers, his topic, "Tillich and Religion at Harvard." Pusey's aim was not just religious renewal but the recovery of Harvard's historic religious tradition,

and his program was two-pronged: to re-establish the Divinity School not as it had been since its founding in 1816, nominally Unitarian, but as Protestant Christian, and with it to re-introduce the teaching of religion in the College. In his words: "I did this on my own, and I had two things in mind in bringing Tillich here. I wanted the most outstanding theologian we could get for the theological faculty and, second, I brought him here to teach undergraduates. These were the two things."

Pusey was very aware of how daunting his program for an undergraduate religious curriculum would be. Harvard had no department of religion and religion, as Pusey remarked, "was in disrepute." Although undergraduates interested in religion were permitted to register for courses in divinity, the moribund School, despite its eminent scholars, was hardly compelling. The University, as Pusey remembered even from his undergraduate days, was proudly secular. "There were those in the University very hostile to religion," he said. "Religion was really very suspect in the University. There were those who wanted to keep it out and had kept it out, and there were those who could not understand how a president of Harvard could be committed to religion and who were hostile to me because of my interest in religion." For many in the University, religion, resurgent in those early Eisenhower years, meant Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and Norman Vincent Peale. This was the climate of religious renewal into which Tillich came.

On becoming president, Pusey himself took over the immediate running and future of the Divinity School. For its faculty and especially its intended theological luminary he set about consulting with numerous people, but Union Seminary's formidable dean, Henry Pitt Van Dusen, was not among them. "Not with Pitt," Pusey said. "I would hardly have consulted with him for I was taking his man." Like Conant, however, he did consult with Niebuhr, commenting that his Gifford Lectures, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, "were so incalculably significant in my own thinking."

I began inquiring about who was the leading theologian in the country, and Tillich's name came up. I had never read anything by Tillich, although I knew of him, of course. In addition, he was then wanting a change of situation. He had been all his years in America in Union Theological Seminary, and he wanted to be in a more open, a less restricting place, in a place where he could be involved in and express the

great breadth of his theological and philosophical concerns. And so I appointed him. I was the Czar, appointing him was something I could do without consulting anybody, and that's what I did.

Although Harvard presidents nominate University Professors without consulting anyone, nominees have to be approved by the governing boards, the Corporation and Board of Overseers, and Pusey had the Corporation's approval and the Overseers' consent. Conant had established the University Professors in 1936 to be "roving professors" who had freedom of the University" to work on "the frontiers of knowledge" without restriction of department or discipline and who in doing so would enhance "vertical integration" in the University. They were to be kept at five, and although Tillich's appointment, Pusey's first, was the sixth, he was successor to retiring Nobel laureate in physics Percy W. Bridgman and the number remained at five.

The appointment received the Overseers' consent on April 12, 1954 and was announced on April 14, effective from July 1st, but with a year's leave of absence "without pay" permitting Tillich to deliver the Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen and to return as visiting professor to Union in spring 1955. Van Dusen had hoped that on Tillich's retirement Harvard and Union might share him, but Pusey's appointment undercut that hope, and Van Dusen was furious. At Harvard's commencement in June, four months later, Pusey attempted to smooth Van Dusen's ruffled feathers by conferring an honorary degree on him, as he did also on Tillich and distinguished Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, but Van Dusen was apparently not mollified: in a letter written three years later he was still smarting from Pusey's move.

Although a member of the faculty of Divinity, Tillich as University Professor came to the University. The import of this cannot be overstated. His was a *double* situation, and he fully understood that. He knew what his appointment as University Professor meant and what his own mission was in Pusey's larger aims. It was a convergent vision and purpose, a personal and institutional *kairos*. As University Professor Tillich taught in the Divinity School, the philosophy department, in General Education, and lectured in the Law School, the Business School, the Medical School, the School of Education, and even the School of Public Health, as well as addressing countless other groups, academic and non-academic, including church congregations. Robert Bellah has

said that Tillich fulfilled the ideal of University Professor more fully than anyone he knew, but as Niebuhr, in declining Conant's appointment, had been forewarned, there would be resentment, and Tillich at Harvard did not escape that fate.

With Tillich's appointment Pusey also appointed George Arthur Buttrick, one of the nation's leading preachers, senior minister of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, and renowned scholar-editor of *The Interpreter's Bible*, as Preacher to the University, the ancient title, and Chairman of the Board of Preachers. Buttrick, having on a visit examined the University's hymnal to assure himself it was not Unitarian, accepted the appointment and assumed his duties in January, 1955. He, too, would teach undergraduates in a General Education course, "The New Testament and the Modern Mind." At the 1954 Evanston WCC Assembly, Pusey had met and come to know Douglas Horton, scholar-ecumenist, translator of Barth, lauded for mediating the merger creating the United Church of Christ, and succeeded in securing him as dean of the new divinity faculty. Amos Wilder and Krister Stendahl in New Testament were other appointments of 1954. John Dillenger, given a tenured appointment in theology, came from Columbia in 1954 to prepare the way for Tillich and to assist in forming the department of theology. A notable arrival as guest lecturer in 1953-54 was James Luther Adams, influential Unitarian from Chicago's Meadville Seminary, translator and editor of Tillich's *The Protestant Era*. Acting Dean George Williams, who had written his doctoral dissertation on Tillich with Adams, hoped for his tenured appointment, but Pusey was hesitant, apprehensive about a strengthened Unitarian presence. Two years later, under Horton, he returned as full professor.

II.

Tillich's appointment at Harvard was a Big Thing, an Event, in the University and in the theological world, a phenomenon reverberating across the country and the oceans. In the University, there was enormous curiosity about this world-famous theologian coming to Harvard. *The Harvard Crimson*, the College newspaper, partially scooping the announcement but getting facts wrong, published articles about him. There was a deluge of inquiries from students wanting to study with him, and invitations from all quarters followed. William Stringfellow invited him to speak at the Law School Forum; John Coolidge, director of the Fogg Museum, knowing of

his interest in art and his friendship with Alfred Barr, Jr., director of New York's Museum of Modern Art, offered the Fogg's slide archives for his lectures; even Henry Kissinger, completing his doctorate and editor of the Summer School's journal *Confluence*, wrote soliciting an article; Tillich declined. The national press paid attention, including newspapers and newsweeklies, especially those of Henry Luce, whose religion column in *Time* kept an eye on Tillich. The 1955 Christmas issue of *Life* published a photo essay on the revived Divinity School, with Tillich, Buttrick, other faculty, and a chapel service, prominently featured.

But there was also opposition, resentment, apprehension at what was perceived by secularists and the anti-religious as a new sectarianism at Harvard, believing the worst about Pusey's program, even a turning of the clock back to the seventeenth century by what was disparagingly called "Pusey pietism" and "creeping Puseyism." Morton White, professor of philosophy, who had arrived at Harvard in 1953 concurrently with Pusey, published two articles in Kissinger's *Confluence*, in 1954 and then 1957, proposing an alternative "study of religions" approach to the reorganization of the Divinity School and the teaching of religion in the College. Scientists were unhappy because Tillich had succeeded a Nobel laureate physicist as University Professor and they had wanted another scientist appointed. Seeing Pusey the classicist-humanist as successor to Conant the chemist-scientist, they feared a diminishment of science. Philosophers, resistant and even hostile to religion, among other vexations feared Tillich might be foisted upon them. Unitarians were disturbed and even angered as they saw "their" School re-established not only as Christian but as Neo-Orthodox, so identifying Tillich, Horton, Buttrick, Dillenger and, after 1956, Paul Lehmann and R. Richard Niebuhr.

For students who came to Harvard in 1955, however, the first class of the new faculty and reorganized School, including seven women, the first ever admitted, it was a time of electric exhilaration. In all the tumultuous ferment and creative chaos, the "booming, buzzing confusion," there was tremendous intellectual and institutional excitement. We felt it; we were caught up in it and swept forward by it. It was a time of rebirth, regeneration, something historic, and we knew it. It was an "ecstatic moment." Students, mostly male, mostly white, were astonishingly diverse: Unitarians and evangelicals, liberals and conservatives, left-wing and right-wing,

agnostics and seekers, from north and south, east and west. With a new dean, a new faculty, a new president, we were on the threshold of a vivifying theological adventure. And at the inchoate center, whatever the perspective, was Tillich, a dominating presence, a giant in our midst. "Are you studying with Tillich? Are you in Tillich's course?" were asked by student to student as we shopped courses, talked with advisors, and arranged schedules. And for me, that first year resident in a Graduate School hall, living and dining with physicists and linguists, mathematicians and philosophers, historians and law students as well as my divinity peers, I was in a university.

For divinity faculty, however, the School's reorganization and Tillich's dual status were more complicated. There were inevitable tensions and resentments as everyone was challenged by the new circumstances, not only of professional adjustment but of establishing scholarly identity and with it status and recognition in a School on the periphery of the University that had long been disrespected and was now viewed with both suspicion and alarm as sectarian. With the School re-established, McGeorge Bundy, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, immediately forbade academic credit for undergraduates in its courses. While divinity students could cross-register in arts and sciences, "the Yard," as I did, undergraduates were denied registration in divinity. For them, however, Tillich's courses in General Education had the dignity of all other arts and sciences courses; it was in those courses that philosophy students had a problem.

III.

Tillich's first words to the Divinity School and the University were in the form of a statement to Divinity Alumni for their annual dinner held on January 31, 1955, read by John Dillenberger, since Tillich was unable to attend. He wrote:

The reconstruction of the theological faculty at Harvard is, in my conviction, not only an important event for theology and the church, but also for the cultural universe whose scientific exponents are the great universities. As no culture can keep alive without religious substance, so no religion can keep vital without cultural expression. This, I believe, defines the function of a theological faculty within the life and work of a university.

For their import to Tillich, these words might have been engraved in bronze not only on the door of Di-

vinity's Andover Hall but also on the door of Massachusetts Hall in the Yard, Harvard's oldest building and the location of Pusey's office. They serve as a clarion statement of Tillich's *credo*, a manifesto for his Harvard years as for his life, to be the presupposition of every lecture, every address, every sermon, every discussion and conversation. In the long reach of Harvard's history, it could be read, and heard, as his interpretation of the University's two ancient seals, *Christo et ecclesiae* and *Veritas*.

While colleagues in divinity were competing for space and facilities, Tillich was given the largest office available, one that would accommodate a cot for resting, in the Semitic Museum, a structure halfway between Divinity's Andover Hall and Harvard Yard, fortuitously appropriate for his double situation, in the middle of the science laboratories, across from the natural history and anthropology museums and adjacent to the Yen-Ching Institute. Every day as he walked the four long blocks from his residence in the Hotel Continental Apartments (where in 1956 Vladimir Nabokov was resident), passing the Law School and Walter Gropius's *Bauhaus* Harkness Center, he entered this scientific and intellectual vortex of the University. He had an assistant, the first of four, Walter Leibrecht, who came with him from Union and, with the title of assistant professor, taught philosophy of religion, and a secretary, Grace Cali Leonard. With the highest salary and commanding the highest fees, a power and presence always felt even when absent, as he was for most weekends, "a widely traveled lecturer," as he later wrote, it is understandable that there would be collegial resentments and jealousies. Krister Stendahl has spoken candidly of them. But it must always be emphasized that Tillich's double situation conferred a singular role not just for the School's reconstruction but also for the crucial re-introduction of a religious curriculum in the College and the enhancement of religion's repute in the University.

Tillich participated in faculty meetings of both divinity and arts and science, entering into discussion of administrative matters and also, contrary to what some thought, was advisor for at least three doctoral dissertations. In 1957–1958, two issues divided the Divinity faculty, with Tillich joining Lehmann and Buttrick in opposition to other colleagues. This was occasioned by the generous gift by Charles Chauncey Stillman of an endowed chair in Roman Catholic Studies, the first such chair at Harvard, followed by the proposed gift of funds for creation in the Divinity school of a Center for the Study of

World Religions. Theirs was not an opposition in principle, however, but a judgment of timing; acceptance of both gifts, they thought, would be premature. The Divinity School, in their judgment, should be firmly established as Protestant in character before these significant expansions were undertaken. Both votes, at different times, were favorable, although the Stillman chair was stipulated initially to be a "guest professorship." The vote for it, however, was taken at a faculty meeting in Tillich's absence; informed there would be no vote, he taught his concurrently scheduled theology course. On learning of the vote, he was furious and wrote a heated letter in protest.

Tillich's theology courses, beginning with Part III, his Christology, and following with Parts I and II, were given in the Semitic Museum classroom, across the corridor from his office. In addition to divinity and graduate students and students from other theological schools in the area, they attracted alumni, ministers, visitors from the community, and faculty wives. Hannah Tillich attended those early lectures, sitting in the front row, very attentive, her hair in braids around her head, and Matilde Valenti Pfeiffer, wife of Old Testament scholar, Robert Henry Pfeiffer, was also present, later delivering a paper on Tillich's thought to her Mother's Club. Present too was elegant Joan Ryerson Brewster, poet, theologically astute wife of architect and painter George W. W. Brewster, a couple who became intimate lifelong friends with the Tillichs, often entertaining them with other guests in their spacious Brookline home. Tillich, along with Hannah, also enjoyed renewing friendships from the New York years and sharing in the hospitality of his new Cambridge colleagues, James Luther Adams (the "dean of Tillich scholars"); Amos Wilder (from the Theological Discussion Group); John Wild (from the APA, whom Tillich in 1956 nominated to be its president, and whose daughter Mary in 1959 married Tillich's son Rene, a Harvard senior); Paul Lehmann (who, as a friend remarked, "found it difficult to be Number Two," whose students tended to separate themselves as Barthians from Tillichians); as well as the Hortons and the Puseys. Tillich and Amos Wilder in World War I had been on opposite sides of horrific battles on the Western Front, but neither realized this as colleagues, and, regrettably, as Wilder told me, never spoke of it. Wilder was then the Hollis Professor of Divinity, incumbent of Harvard's oldest endowed chair.

IV.

Tillich's relations with members of the philosophy department, with few exceptions, were from the outset formal and strained, never amicable, and remained so. To a department predominantly defined by linguistic analysis, mathematical logic, and scientific empiricism, Tillich came as an unwelcome outsider. If not outright hostile, the department resisted religion but "wanted to appear objective about it," in the words of a former member. Alfred North Whitehead and William Ernest Hocking had regularly attended Memorial Church, but Hocking retired in 1943, while Whitehead, who retired in 1937, remained a Cambridge resident and member, with Niebuhr, of the Overseers' Committee to visit the department; he died in 1947. President Conant, who himself taught the philosophy of science, had attempted, unsuccessfully, to open up the department by enlarging its faculty, including, as noted, his invitation to Niebuhr (Oppenheimer and Isaiah Berlin were proposed). With Tillich's appointment, Pusey accomplished what Conant did not, but Pusey's religious program, with a University Professor on the steps of Emerson Hall, so to speak, had incurred explicit opposition, prompted also, among other antipathies, by fears that budgetary allocations would be transferred to the Divinity School. The most religiously committed and active member of the department, Anglican John Wild, whose move from Thomistic realism to Kierkegaard and especially Husserl and Heidegger, so increasingly isolated him that he resigned to accept a major appointment at Northwestern.

The most internationally renowned member of the faculty, Willard van Orman Quine, whom many considered America's foremost philosopher, for whom "philosophy of science is philosophy enough," as he famously remarked, hardly suppressed his hostility to religion and his lack of sympathy for all forms of non-analytic philosophy, and their adherents. (In 1990, however, he graciously accepted my invitation to attend as guest the inaugural Paul Tillich Lecture, given by the former colleague of both, Hiram McLendon, of New York University.) Henry Aiken, who taught moral and political philosophy, author of *The Age of Ideology*, wittily referred to 19th century German idealists as *Geisteswissenschaftmongers*. Morton White, who arrived from Columbia in 1953, became Pusey's most outspoken critic within the department. His articles in *Confluence* have been noted, and he soon became a leader of the anti-Pusey opposition. As

chairman in 1956, however, White invited Tillich to offer a course in post-Kantian German idealism, which that fall became Tillich's heavily subscribed course, "German Classical Philosophy," taught three times during his tenure. It was philosophically highly regarded and attracted top graduate students. Among them that first year was Susan Sontag, then an entering student in the doctoral program. Rogers Albritton, a later chairman, invited Tillich to offer a course in philosophy of religion, which he did in spring 1962, his last term, and which he taught in Emerson Hall, his only course there. These were Tillich's two courses in the department.

The question early arose, however, about department credit for philosophy concentrators taking Tillich's courses. The answer was quickly forthcoming from Morton White: credit would be granted for his department-listed courses, but no credit would be given for his courses in General Education (always cross-listed as theology in the Divinity School). An amusing anecdote is reported about this issue. In fall 1956, Tillich's humanities course, "The Interpretation of History," attracted such a horde of students it had to be moved to Harvard's largest hall, Sanders Theatre. When a philosopher concentrator raised the question of credit with Tillich's assistant, Calvin Schrag, he was referred to Chairman White. On returning, the student reported with intense disappointment that credit would not be granted. When asked why not, the student replied, "Professor White said that Tillich is not a philosopher." "What did he say he is?" asked Schrag. "He said he is a thinker," the student replied. Thereafter the joke circulated among divinity students: "Would you rather be a philosopher or a thinker?"

The fact that Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, and Jaspers were not considered philosophers and not approved by the department occasioned not only disappointment but even bitterness for students interested in their thought. As a gifted undergraduate complained, "When you are told by leading members of the department that those thinkers are not philosophers, that what they are doing is not philosophy, you believe them because of their position and their eminence. Then you learn it is ideological bias." Gabriel Marcel was invited to be the William James Lecturer for 1961-62, and the rumor circulated he was invited to be an example to students of what philosophy should not be. At the end of Tillich's tenure, a more personal and religious criticism was expressed to me by the noted classical philosopher Raphael Demos, nominally

Greek Orthodox and a communicant at the local Episcopal Church. A *Crimson* article had quoted Demos as saying his students were asked to read *The Courage to Be* to learn what philosophy was not. "Yes, Tillich is influential here," Demos told me, "but it is a bad influence. He is unchristian and a bad influence on the young people. He is a philosopher of power, a German romantic, with a concern for 'being' and not value. The philosophy of power is dangerous; it produced Hitler. His major ethical concept is courage, but courage is pagan, it is not Christian."

Tillich was not denied recognition in philosophy. In February 1956, he was presented by Harvard's graduate philosophy club whose president, Hubert Dreyfus, became his grading assistant and who later collaborated with John Wild in an informal translation of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. (He was also my colleague at MIT and in the Fall 2003, he was the Paul Tillich Lecturer, speaking on Tillich and Heidegger.) That same month Tillich addressed the Boston University Philosophy Club on "The Meaning of Truth," fielding sharp questions from a large group of faculty. In December 1956, at Yale, Tillich participated in a symposium on existentialism at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association. Two members of Harvard's department, Donald C. Williams, metaphysics, and Henry D. Aiken, moral and political philosophy, on occasion attended Tillich's graduate colloquium, and when after Tillich's departure Aiken himself resigned to accept an appointment at Brandeis, in a publication he expressed admiration and appreciation for Tillich. Whatever the resistance and antipathy, Tillich sought to engage philosophers and to participate in the department, attending faculty luncheons, where he sat with one or two at the end of an oblong table, and even a Christmas party. He continued his unrelenting fight against positivism, nominalism, scientism, and all forms of reductionism, and he felt that at Harvard he succeeded in "rehabilitating" Hegel, in "reasserting" the philosophy of religion, and in effectively interpreting existentialism.

V.

In a university again, Tillich encountered science and scientists in a way that he had not done at Columbia and certainly not at Union. Despite a problematic beginning, Tillich came to enjoy not only stimulating relations but also warm friendships with leading Harvard scientists. Foremost among these

were biologist and later Nobel laureate George Wald, and Gerald Holton, distinguished physicist, historian, and philosopher of science, who is a world authority on Einstein whose archive he was instrumental in assembling and for whose *Collected Papers* he still serves as a member of the editorial board.

On Tillich's arrival at Harvard, however, there were high hurdles to overcome. In the aftermath of World War II, with the Cold War already darkening the future, Harvard scientists had been dismayed by the Corporation's choice of Pusey, churchman and classicist, to succeed Conant, chemist-scientist, but they were filled with consternation when Tillich's appointment was announced, realizing immediately he had been chosen by Pusey as successor to Nobel laureate Percy W. Bridgman, physicist, who would retire as University Professor that June. With other faculty they were uncertain of the University's future under Pusey, apprehensive of a de-emphasis on science and a Divinity School reorganized as sectarian. I myself can attest this. As an entering student in Divinity in 1955, active in the student council and strongly believing we students should contribute to the renewal of the School, I proposed that the council invite leading Harvard faculty for an evening of conversation. Because of his illustrious reputation referred to Professor Wald, I sought an appointment and extended our invitation. This led to a surprising conversation: expressing deep concern about the new "sectarian" School, he declined.

It was not long, however, before Wald and a small group of scientists took the reverse initiative. In his published report, Wald writes: "[We] approached the theologians in our Divinity School with the proposal that there, in the forum of a great university, we begin an engaging dialogue. To our surprise, the theologians backed off. They clearly wanted no part in such a dialogue. Failing that," he continues, "we decided to smoke out the most distinguished member of the Divinity faculty, the great and charismatic Protestant theologian Paul Tillich. We asked him to have dinner with us. Strangely enough, even he seemed intimidated. He asked to bring along a 'young friend,' the theologian John Dillenberger." After initial wariness and reserve in their interchanges, in which Tillich, as Wald reports, acknowledged his deficiencies in science, a warmly cordial conversation ensued, leading eventually to their firm friendship.

By the end of the evening, Tillich warmed up considerably. He said that perhaps it would have

been better had he studied some science. (As it was, his theology was very broadly conceived, that is why we had come to him.) At one point he chuckled and said, 'Some of my colleagues regard me as an atheist.' 'Do you have a dogma?' I asked. 'Well,' he said, "I am a Christian." 'What does that mean?' I asked. It means that I believe in the divinity of Christ,' he said, 'whatever that means.'

Gerald Holton, in his superb Paul Tillich Lecture, "Alfred Einstein and Paul Tillich: The Quest for the Ultimate," now published, offers a vivid account of meeting Tillich at one of President Pusey's dinners for faculty in the General Education program. "Even during the casual dinner conversation before his talk, one sensed his special quality, his membership in the great European tradition of culture, his familiarity with high-level intellectual controversies and also his liveliness at age sixty-nine." At this dinner, Tillich introduced himself by making a statement about his theology, which led to continuing discussion, then and later, about his meaning of God, his concept of Ultimate Concern, and especially, with mathematicians present, of his meaning of the concept of the infinite. This meeting began a friendship that continued, Holton said, "during the nearly seven years while we were faculty colleagues at Harvard. We had many discussions, and appeared together at invited presentations on science and religion. Hannah and Paulus were frequent guests in Nina's and my house, and we in theirs." Tillich accepted Holton's invitation to become a member of the consulting board of *Daedalus*, of which he was editor, which then published his essay, "The Religious Symbol."

At the Faculty Club dinner or February 1956 as reported by Wald, Holton was also present as well as the celebrated Harvard astronomer Harlow Shapley, famous for his "greatest single contribution to astronomy, the discovery of the dimensions of our Galaxy, and of the location of its center." As a result of that evening's conversations, both Holton and Shapley afterward sent articles and books to Tillich, which he acknowledged with gracious appreciation. Tillich himself in his farewell address refers to that memorable evening:

The first year the natural scientists got hold of me, or I of them, and then I learned something. They are not interested in what I do as a man of the 19th century (I lived fourteen years in the 19th century); they were not satisfied when I set clear boundary lines between science and the ultimate.

They said, 'You set boundary lines of the ultimate, and we must not trespass.' 'No,' they said, 'that is not enough. What we do has religious significance.' This was a joy to me. What they do has religious significance, and what they give out of their scientific knowledge is valid for the meaning of life.

This first encounter with Harvard scientists, only six months after Tillich's arrival, and the friendships it led to, were among the most consequential of all Tillich's encounters at Harvard and, as he affirmed, it had a lasting influence on his thinking.

VI.

Tillich's relations with students, especially Harvard and Radcliffe undergraduates, is one the most fascinating and untold stories of his Harvard years. As he remarked in his Farewell address, he had never before taught undergraduates:

I remember when I first heard the word 'undergraduates.' I didn't know what it meant. At Union and in Germany we never taught undergraduates, only professional students. But there they were, and I learned what it meant to speak to undergraduates—to speak to a large group of people who are open to things as they are, as the professional departments are not always able to be for they are narrowed by the professional demand. I have become enthusiastic for undergraduates.

Students are always caught up in eager expectancy about the arrival of famous faculty, and they were avidly curious about Tillich. They flocked to the first of his General Education lectures, "Religion and Culture," the skeptics and scoffers with the serious shoppers and seekers. If they had difficulty at first in following his accent or grasping his concepts and language, they felt his charisma, his magnetism, and the power of his thought as well as his presence. They were spellbound, mesmerized, rapt, and they early began their spontaneous applause after every lecture, which continued throughout Tillich's tenure. "Like Augustine hearing the preacher Ambrose, I came to scoff and stayed to pray," but another said, "I feel hoodwinked." The *Crimson* was quick to pay attention to this phenomenon, and one of its gifted writers, who later became a colleague at MIT, wrote a brilliant piece wittily satirizing in mock-sophisticated language cocktail party conversations that were presumably to be heard about "being," "nonbeing," "ultimate concern." Once as I passed two Radcliffe women in the Yard, I heard one ask

the other, "Are you taking both Buttrick's and Tillich's courses?" "No," was the reply, "I don't want to take too many courses in God, I'm afraid I might change my point of view."

More seriously, students were astonished to learn that theology, as one remarked, could be as intellectually respectable as math and physics. Another, hearing Tillich's lectures on the Renaissance while concurrently taking a course also on the Renaissance taught by a distinguished historian, told me that Tillich's lectures were far more profound and insightful. Students began gathering at lecture hall entrances to greet Tillich as he arrived—if they did not have to dash to find a seat, which became increasingly necessary as many students found themselves sitting on the floor. Some students were so awed they kept their distance; others were not so deterred. A swashbuckling freshman, later a Rhodes Scholar, having just arrived from a summer's adventure of hitch-hiking from Capetown to Cairo, boldly requested admission to Tillich's graduate colloquium; permission granted. Another freshman by request was admitted to Tillich's upper level course on the philosophy of religion and wrote the most brilliant examination paper of all those I graded, including those of seniors and divinity students. His honors thesis in philosophy was on Husserl and Heidegger—it was a more open time—and he also continued his study as a Rhodes Scholar. He is now a highly praised film director, one of his films having been nominated several years ago for an Academy Award. Tillich was captivated by these students, by their openness, their freshness, their hunger, their needs, their intelligence, and their seriousness. He learned from them, they empowered him, and they challenged him to yet sharper, more meaningful formulations, with concrete, relevant illustrations, rare in his books. In an aside once, he told them that he was "very visual" and how interesting their faces were to him. He sensed their conflicts and their anxieties, the pressures of conformity, their concern for security, the uncertainties of their future. He solicited their questions—always to be placed on the lecture stand to await his arrival—and answered them with unhesitating seriousness, turning even the most inane question into an occasion for illumination, a grace that has impressed generations of students.

Sometimes he was challenged by them, and I will never forget one such challenge. A student in the philosophy of religion course placed on the lecture stand not a question but a statement. After read-

ing it Tillich, before responding, described it as “setting forth a position that characterizes a whole stream of thought which contradicts a philosophy of religion. As it is an excellent statement of what we stand against if we try to develop a philosophy of religion or a theology,” Tillich stated that he would comment on it, exhorting the class “to take this very seriously, the majority of the ‘mature people’ around these sacred halls are of the opinion of this statement.” It and Tillich’s response are too long to quote from my class notes, but the following will convey his forceful passion in responding, thrusting his hands in the air and becoming increasingly agitated as he spoke.

Reality is what it is. All right. I accept this tautology. I ask only one little question: What does it mean to say that something ‘is’? You can avoid this question and go have a drink. O.K. But if you ask the question, it must be taken with greatest seriousness. It is a question that has brought restlessness to the human mind since the earliest thinkers...You can say, ‘I don’t care.’ Then there is nothing left. But if you do care, then you have to deal with the whole history of Asiatic thought and the history of Western thought.

Life is a fact; the mature mind is not astonished by it; to be astonished by life is sophomoric. To this I ask another counter question: What about the mature mind who is not sophomoric any more, who *is* astonished by life? That statement, that the shock of life is sophomoric, means that Aristotle is offended—Aristotle, who said philosophy begins with wonder. I prefer to be a sophomore with Aristotle than a mature mind with the author of this statement.

In contrast to this provocative statement, there is another statement, a cherished personal statement from a very bright philosophy senior, Jewish, that expresses in the most insightful and deeply thoughtful way what Tillich meant to a very large number of students. One day in conversation about Tillich with this student, I was so struck and moved by the sincerity of his words that I asked if I might type what he was saying as he spoke. I share a few of his comments, just as typed, unedited:

[Tillich] represented the whole Greek and German tradition in his spirit, in his whole character. This was a great breath of fresh air, I feel, in contrast to the extreme materialistic and Enlightenment orientation of the undergraduate education at Harvard. I feel that he provided a

depth to the education that tends to be too quantitative. He was here the living embodiment of *paideia*, not just quantity and empiricism, but depth, quality, profundity. And not just profundity in his ideas, but in him, just in him.

Now I can honestly say in reference to myself, and I can also say honestly in reference to many individuals whom I can think of, he literally both affected and changed my whole life. You know, that’s something different, that’s different from what any other professor could possibly have done. In other words, my encounter with him was not purely intellectual, it was really a *paideia* experience, changing my whole personality, changing my whole ideas on life, and most important of all, changing my whole value system. And I am not alone here. I can really think of many individuals on whom he had the same effect. You see, this is very important personally for me and for other individuals. Tillich was saying many things which we, most of us, had always felt intuitively or latently, but couldn’t say or were afraid to say or about which we’d been inhibited, because the whole educational atmosphere at the Harvard undergraduate level is toward emancipation, and when emancipation is pushed to its logically absurd conclusion, it can mean emancipation from all spiritual and moral values....This is why I feel that Tillich was a complete breath of fresh air in a Harvard education.

This statement, so movingly honest and personal, could be the words of hundreds of Harvard and Radcliffe undergraduates whose lives and minds were inexhaustibly enriched by hearing and knowing Tillich.

VII.

The year 1958 was a pivotal year for Tillich at Harvard. The preceding year had seen publication of *Dynamics of Faith* and the long-awaited Volume II of *Systematic Theology*, the dialogues with Shin’ichi Hisamatsu, and the first lectures in Harvard, in fall 1957, of “Life and the Spirit,” Part IV of the *Systematic*, followed by Part V, “The Church and the Kingdom of God,” as it was then called, in spring 1958. Tillich was now at what would be the midpoint of his seven-year tenure, fully established in the University, knowing his students, his colleagues, his mission, his critics, his challenges, an assured master of his double situation, sought as dinner guest in Cambridge and Boston, pressured by publishers

and pursued by colleges, universities, and other groups both in the area and throughout the country. His schedule and his stamina were amazing. He was at a peak moment of his powers, his influence, and acclaim.

On June 6, Tillich's office was moved from the Semitic Museum to a spacious office on the top floor of Harvard's Widener Memorial Library. Ironically, the move was to provide space demanded for the University's new Center for International Affairs, Harvard's response to increasing Cold War tensions. The Center's associate director was Henry Kissinger, who the next year would be named director. Tillich in his new location, with windows "looking out over unknown Boston," as he said in his farewell address, was among Harvard's elite. Adjacent offices were those of University Professors Werner Jaeger, classicist, Sir Hamilton Gibb, Arabist, Professors Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., David Riesman, naval and Harvard historian Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, and Harry Wolfson, "the first fulltime scholar of Judaica to be appointed to an American University."

Tillich's move to the top of Widener in the center of the Yard, at the center of the University, became physically symbolic of his ascendancy at Harvard, in his 72nd year, the third of his return to a university. On June 14, there immediately followed publication in *The Saturday Evening Post* of "The Lost Dimension in Religion." The response was astonishing, little less than phenomenal, putting Tillich "on the map" among the wider populace as *The Courage to Be* six years earlier had in the universities and among the more highly educated. His burgeoning recognition in this country was paralleled across the Atlantic when the City of Hamburg awarded Tillich, teaching in its University that summer, its prestigious Hanseatic Goethe Prize, awarded annually "to a person whose lifework has contributed to understanding among nations."

But 1958, before Tillich's move to Widener, had become pivotal in another more institutionally and religiously consequential way. In April, with Tillich midstream in his theology and humanities lectures (on "Religion and Society"), there erupted a religious controversy that rocked the University and raged with ferocious intensity for almost three weeks. The occasion was a lengthy article published in the *Crimson* and boldly headed "Religion at Harvard: The Philosopher, The Pundit, The Priest, and The President," subtitled "Button-Down Hair Shirt in the Yard." Its author was William Warren Bartle

III ('56), an undergraduate tutee in philosophy of Raphael Demos and second-year graduate student advisee of Morton White. Cleverly written and heavily slanted by innuendo and misrepresentation, the article was a double-barreled attack on Pusey, Tillich, Buttrick, and Wild, venting, from within philosophy, simmering opposition to Pusey, his program of renewal, and the three persons most identified with it.

The article, appearing the last day before spring break, may have passed with little consequence except for a brief paragraph implicitly imputing anti-Semitism to Buttrick for allegedly denying use of Memorial Church for a Jewish wedding. When the Church edifice was dedicated 1932, policies governing its use had been set forth, with Corporation approval, by Willard Sperry, then Preacher to the University, and inherited by Buttrick. Although the presumed facts prompting the innuendo were known but to few and never clarified—for instance, among other pertinent facts that it was to be a mixed marriage vehemently opposed by both sets of parents—when Buttrick remained silent and Pusey, after spring break, responded with a letter to the *Crimson* insensitively asserting the Church's Protestant Christian character in historic continuity with the University's founding, the storm broke. For more than two weeks, the University was in turmoil, embroiling faculty and students in the graduate and professional schools, alumni, area clergy, and members of the community. There were passionate and restrained formal and informal discussions, with almost daily reports by the *Crimson*, including letters from various faculty. Two members of the faculty, Morton White and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., took the initiative in drafting a response to Pusey's *Crimson* letter, calling for "the University to reaffirm its belief in tolerance and the freedom of religion." With more than fifty signatures, the letter was presented at a meeting with Pusey by a delegation that included leading senior professors. Also in the delegation, significantly, were James Luther Adams and Krister Stendahl, who wanted to ally themselves as divinity faculty with University colleagues on this issue. Former Acting Dean of Divinity George Williams, now Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History, sent a letter to the *Crimson* and a long letter to Pusey. Tillich refused to be drawn into the fray, but in the waning days of the tumult, resolved by the Corporation's unambiguous statement affirming the openness of the Church for private ceremonies, he participated with Donald C. Williams, secularist phi-

losopher, and Jerome Bruner, Jewish psychologist, as panelist in a packed local church, sponsored by its student fellowship.

Although the controversy swirled around the Memorial Church, the larger issues raised by the article, explicit in its title, had to do with the nature and place of religion and a religious curriculum in the University. When Tillich returned from Hamburg and East Hampton in the fall, he was called on repeatedly to address these questions. He accepted Pusey's invitation to speak to the Board of Overseers in November, and he participated in a "Colloquy on the Unity of Learning," sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, with Professors Bruner, Quine, Shapley and others, and published in *Daedalus*. When invitations came from beyond the University to lecture on these questions, he seized opportunities in his courses to speak implicitly and explicitly to them, and they sharpened his lecture topics and themes for his remaining years at Harvard.

On November 24, Tillich addressed the Board of Overseers on "Religion in the Intellectual Life of the University," as it was titled when published by the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, a forceful statement of enduring value by Tillich and worthy of widespread dissemination, today as then. To the Overseers, Tillich first affirmed the need and justification of a theological faculty in a university, noting that "theological faculties...represent the religious element in the whole intellectual enterprise," for theologians, he said, "contribute immensely to the understanding of culture and man in all areas." He affirmed that "[r]eligious education is necessary as a part of teaching in the humanities, because of the interdependence of all cultural creations in all periods" and stressed that "the enormous ignorance in religion surpasses that of ignorance in any other field." In emphasizing "the two poles in the teaching of all humanities," detachment and participation, Tillich implicitly addressed Bartley's misrepresentation of subjective commitment and clearly affirmed his meaning. "The religious question is the question of the meaning of human existence and existence generally," he stated, and one by one he delineated how "ultimate questions" appear in different disciplines, with an echo of his meeting with Harvard scientists. "University education," he concluded, "should comprise both strict scientific discipline and the opening up of vistas in which the questions of life are seen in the light which the scholarly endeavor sheds upon them. This is what our best students are looking for,

they should not be disappointed." Before this, the elective body of the two governing boards Tillich reiterated and in substance reinterpreted at length the *credo* sent to the Divinity School in 1955.

Tillich referred to this moment in his farewell address and remarked that "in this discussion he who asked by far the most decisive questions of religion in the University was he who is the present President of the United States," referring to the then Senator John F. Kennedy, who was a Harvard Overseer. (On learning of this fascinating encounter, the first of Tillich's two with Kennedy, I asked President Pusey if there were a record of this interchange but was informed no minutes were taken. It regretfully did not occur to me at the time to pursue other Overseers for their memories.)

VIII.

In spring 1959, Tillich was on leave. He did not go to Russia in August as he hoped—the meeting of Khrushchev and Castro in New York that April had cast its chill—but when he returned to Harvard in the fall, he had made significant progress on the manuscript of *Systematic III* and, as he told his students, he had completely rewritten his lectures on "Religion, Art, and Science/ Religion and Society." In May and June 1960, he made his historic trip to Japan, visiting Hisamatsu and giving a succession of lectures in leading universities. That fall at Harvard, he introduced his celebrated four-term humanities course, "The Self-Interpretation of Man in Western Thought," including now with this and his other courses, references to Japan and new emphases from his encounter with the East.

Tillich's address to the Overseers and his farewell address help frame and focus the trajectory of Tillich's culminating three years at Harvard. But just before the latter, there was inevitably Tillich's final lecture at Harvard on May 5, 1962. It was an extended lecture for the four-term humanities course, presented in Harvard's largest hall and illustrated with slides exemplifying self-interpretation in art from the archaic of Greece to Picasso and Kandinsky, Orozco and Morris Graves. A packed audience overflowed Sanders Theatre's 1200 seat capacity, with a huge screen lowered from above the stage, Tillich alone behind the podium, and rapt students and visitors fortunate to find a place. A standing ovation erupted at the end, and bouquets of flowers cascaded on the stage, an image appearing on the front page of the next day's *Crimson*.

Tillich's farewell address was delivered at an elegant dinner three weeks later, on May 24, 1962, fittingly held in Harvard's Busch-Reisinger Museum (Krister Stendahl's report of the menu for this dinner is regretfully inaccurate.) Called "the Germanic Museum" from its opening in 1903 to 1950, it was the first museum in the United States devoted exclusively to the art of Central and Northern Europe. It is worth noting that as the Semitic Museum, which housed Tillich's first office as well as the classroom for many of his courses, had been a gift of a native of Frankfurt, New York banker Jacob H. Schiff, it is equally notable that the nucleus of the Germanic Museum's collections were formed by donations from Kaiser Wilhelm II himself. (On its exterior is engraved Kant's maxim, *Du Kannst denn du must.*) With quartets by Mozart ("the dance of the essences in the Heavenly Spheres") and Haydn performed from a mezzanine above tables placed in the main hall, with Dean Samuel Miller as Toastmaster and tributes by Wilhelm Pauck, Elfriede Krueger, Rollo May, James Luther Adams, and President Pusey, Tillich arose to respond, beginning with the words, "This is the most difficult speech I ever was asked to give..." He continued simply and movingly to share memories of his seven years, "which I can only give," he said, "according to the structure of my mind, with a systematic interpretation!" And then, everyone riveted, intensely aware of the significance of the occasion, punctuated by a crashing thunderstorm, he brought us to his climactic conclusion:

Now the greatest thing that Harvard gave me, the opportunity—more than any other place—to carry through the experiment to which my entire life is dedicated, the reunion of what eternally belongs together but what has been separated in history. Whether we call it the religious and secular or religion and philosophy, most of my lectures, public and private, centered around this question.

To me this is one of the most significant autobiographical statements we have from Tillich, certainly from the Harvard years. It shines a laser light on these historic seven years, revealing how profoundly aware he was of his singular opportunities, and how fully he understood what it would mean and had meant for him to be in a university again, in this greatest of universities. Prepared by his initial conversations with President Pusey, what he envisioned in his "experiment" was clear from his statement to the Divinity School in January 1955 concerning the relation of religion and culture. But he

could not have foreseen how that "life's experiment" would work itself out at Harvard. He had not taught undergraduates, he could not have known what it would mean to encounter the East, and he could not have fully anticipated the form Harvard's challenges as well as its opportunities would take.

He became master of his "double-situation," and in those last courses, German Classical Philosophy, the philosophy of religion, his lectures on "Life and the Spirit," his four-term course of man's self-interpretation, and the graduate colloquium, there was an extraordinary manifestation of Tillich's concentrated thought and passion, his embodied *eros* and purpose. It was like a magnificent tapestry, or a monumental symphony, with the architectonic theme of "reunion of the separated" itself a uniting of encompassing and interwoven motifs.

There was the motif of synthesis, recovering anew in the Harvard context the "uniting work" of the German philosophers, especially Schleiermacher and Hegel, and Abelard before them, of reconciling Christianity and the modern mind, which Tillich daringly undertook, knowing that like them he would not succeed, that his efforts, however heroic, would be fragmentary, provisional, but also knowing he had to undertake the task and that it must be undertaken in every generation.

There was the parallel motif of correlation, impelled anew by writing the third volume of the *Systematic Theology*. Here he recovered with sharpened formulations in a new context that early ambition in Germany to write a philosophy of life, and now, in his "phenomenology of Spirit," accomplishing that while in his answers returning again and again "to earth" in the questions, driven, as he said, by "the restlessness of the human heart."

There was the motif, parallel to both, of now uniting the two philosophical strands of his thought, essentialism and existentialism, intensified in the post-war years and impelled in these last years, after Japan and by the needs of the young, of a "turn to essentialism" with its pervasive emphasis on the doctrine of man, Tillich's anthropological as well as ontological monism, man "the question of being," a fascinating reversal of Schelling, the turn to essentialism, a turn to an identity philosophy.

There was the motif of the convergence of the philosophy of religion and theology, the former the apologetic forecourt of the latter, and with it the intrinsic interrelation of religion and culture. And, throughout in these last years, the motif of the divine Spirit, incarnated (as he told Rabbi Ben-Zion Gold

in the colloquium), the dynamic, implicitly trinitarian, uniting presence of the Ultimate. "The divine Spirit," he said, in a favorite quote, "is present to the human in every moment. But if it is not known in the here and now, it is not known at all."

These, and more, were the motifs of those final years, Tillich's visionary equivalence of Beethoven's last quartets, of Bach's B-Minor Mass, with his Amen of the farewell address:

And so I say my last words to the University and to friends surrounding. Give to the future university and not only to the dimension of finitude the greatest seriousness. But where the finger pointing to the ultimate dimension is visible, there give most seriously of study and work.

Epilogue

There is an epilogue to Tillich's years at Harvard. After his move to Chicago in June 1962, he returned annually to preach in Memorial Church, in 1963, 1964, 1965, each sermon filling the 1200-seat sanctuary beyond capacity. And he participated in two major University-wide events, both attracting huge audiences, again with standing room only in the 700-seat Lowell Lecture Hall, where many times I had sat on the floor for his lectures. The first of the special events was a colloquy in May 1963 with the eminent Jesuit theologian, Gustave Weigel, on "Religious Language, Myth and Symbol." Questions from the floor were answered by each in turn, Tillich animated and energized, Weigel, reciting the creed, more measured, conscious of the conspicuous number of nuns and priests in the audience. In his conclusion, Tillich said, "We both believe in God. In that we are supreme realists."

The second event, again with standing room only, was a lecture in March 1964 arranged at my urging by Buttrick's successor, Preacher to the University Dr. Charles Phillip Price, to coincide with Tillich's return for his sermon and titled "Grounds for Making Moral Choices." Afterward Tillich continued the discussion with invited students in Dr. Price's adjacent residence. In February 1966, Tillich was to have returned again to deliver the Memorial Church's William Belden Noble Lecture, but it was not to be.

Word of Tillich's death in October 1965 was received at Harvard with shock and sorrow. The *Crimson's* lengthy front page report was headed "Theologian Mourned by Faculty and Students." Two weeks later, on November 4, a memorial service was held in Memorial Church, conducted by Dr.

Price. Knowing that President Pusey would speak, I rushed to his office to deliver with covering letter a freshly typed copy of my verbatim notes of Tillich's farewell address, hastily recorded on multiple menus as he spoke, the only record, thinking Pusey might wish to use it for his remarks, which he did. The Church was filled beyond capacity. Those who spoke were President Pusey, Dean Samuel Miller of the Divinity School, Professors James Luther Adams, Erik Erikson, George Wald, Robert Bellah, Tillich's last assistant Paul Lee, and two of Tillich's graduate students.

Among the most deeply felt words were those spoken by soon-to-be Nobel laureate George Wald, who had been one of the first critics of Pusey's program, who with fellow scientists had sought a dialogue with Tillich soon after his arrival at Harvard, and who during those years had become a friend, a friendship that continued in Chicago. I quote his closing words:

Behind the forms and symbols of institutional religion, Tillich sought out always the deeper realities. Indeed, he recognized that the deepest of religious impulses is the seeking itself.

So this was before all a task for Paul Tillich. Once in the hope of furthering it somewhat, I tried to bring Niels Bohr and Paul Tillich together. I think they would have understood each other, and I hoped great things would come of it. Having heard that Bohr was coming again to America, I tried to arrange such a meeting, but it was too late. Bohr never came here again, and shortly he was gone. Now Tillich too is gone. Who is to take up that task? One has only to ask that question to know what we have lost.

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**AFFIRMING ACCEPTANCE/
ACCEPTING AFFIRMATION: TILlich's
STROKE OF GRACE AND DERRIDA'S
"YES"**

B. KEITH PUTT

The following essay mimics a palimpsest, a multi-textual hypertext that weaves together various strands from the works of Paul Tillich and Jacques Derrida. This cross-contamination of apparently disparate authors results in both Tillichian texts being written (and read) above Derridean and also Derridean texts being written (and read) above Tillichian. Such a hyperbolic hypertextualization ensures

that both traditions are written *sous rature* as any good palimpsest should be—one text visible over the erasure of the other, one text constantly haunted by the spectral trace of the other. Furthermore, I gloss this Tillichian/ Derridean palimpsest with visible and invisible marginalia taken from the work of John D. Caputo—a seasoned Derridean who has recently developed a taste for Tillich. I also offer one caveat: this intertextualizing should not be misread as implying either that Tillich is anachronistically a deconstructive postsecular theorist or that Derrida is a latent Christian existential theologian. My hermeneutical thought experiment involves the more modest proposal that by refracting each text through the prism of the other, fascinating divergent convergences and convergent divergences may be identified in their respective perspectives.

Among the several congruities discernable between the Tillichian and Derridean texts, perhaps none is as significant as the centrality of affirmation. Although each may prosecute the idea in diverse ways, they both function as apologists for the inescapable and systemic acceptance of an existential meaningfulness inherent in reality. On the one hand, arguing that theology must be constructive and not merely descriptive, Tillich declares that theology depends upon “ecstatic reason,” which itself depends upon the reality of revelation.¹ Yet, he further argues that revelation cannot be separated from the presence of salvation. The two actually share the same history, since revelation manifests the “shaking, transforming, and healing power” of “saving events in which the power of the New Being is present.”² As a result, one might interpret Tillich’s entire theological project as an extended soteriology, a constructive system that attempts to comprehend and proclaim the salvific reality that God’s first word to humanity is “Yes” and not “No,” an affirmation that invites estranged individuals to be reunited and reconciled through the divine love and justice inherent in God’s unconditional forgiveness and agapic acceptance.³

On the other hand, although desiring to distinguish events of revelation from a structural “revealability”—what Caputo calls religion *sans revelation*⁴—and simultaneously negotiating between the absence of salvation and the inexorability of soteriology, Derrida prosecutes the idea that deconstruction likewise celebrates the acceptance of affirmation. He rejects the confusion of *deconstruction* with *destruction*, stating unambiguously that deconstruction is a “thinking of affirmation.”⁵ It seeks the

openness of the *peut etre*, what “may be,” or better, what “may happen,” the openness of a “perhaps” that constantly affirms what is to come and evokes as the proper response to that perhaps the affirmative reduplication of “yes, yes, amen, amen.”⁶ Indeed, Caputo accurately states Derrida’s position when he declares: “To deconstruct something is not to wreck it but to rewrite it, reformulate it, redo it, remake it... What is at work in the texts of Derrida is an affirmation of the singular one, an *affirmatio ad infinitum*....”⁷

Tillich establishes his soteriology of acceptance on what he considers the heart of the Christian gospel—the Pauline/Lutheran idea of “justification by grace through faith.” This doctrine, which he terms the “Protestant Principle,” encapsulates the “paradox of salvation” as a theology of divine affirmation. By participating in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, individuals experience reconciliation as an unconditioned act of divine grace and love that overcomes the sin of estrangement, which alienates each self from itself, from others, and from God. Tillich chooses to replace the traditional Protestant discourse of justification with the more existential nomenclature of “acceptance,” claiming that divine grace results, not so much in a legal fiction of imputed righteousness, but in our being “accepted by God although being unacceptable according to the criteria of the law.”⁸ He emphasizes that God accepts those who are unacceptable; that is, in spite of the doubt, guilt, anxiety, and despair in which we human beings exist, God heals (*salvus*) our broken spirits and repairs our shattered relationships. Grace overcomes all of these negativities by reuniting humanity within the New Being through the creative and affirming power of forgiving love.

Ironically, this soteriology of God’s acceptance of the unacceptable paradoxically prohibits any finality to the reality of “the unacceptable.” Since no one exists beyond the potency of divine grace and reconciliation, everyone is ultimately among “the acceptable” in spite of everything. Of course, Tillich recognizes that not everyone accepts God’s affirmation in the New Being, because not everyone has faith that God has accepted her unconditionally. For salvation to impact the individual’s lived experience, she must respond to God’s call to reconciliation by relinquishing confidence in the self and placing confidence solely in God’s healing power. Such relinquishing, however, occurs only as one acknowledges the divine gift of faith, the faith that leads to the confession that accepting God’s affirmation is predi-

cated upon God's prior affirming acceptance. One might say, therefore, that Tillich's "answering theology" refers not only to the interrogatory dynamics of his method of correlation but also, and more fundamentally, to his interlocutory soteriology whereby God's vocative announcement of acceptance empowers and implores the human response of accepting that acceptance by means of the divine gift of faith.

In his model of atonement as acceptance, Tillich never compromises his rejection of auto-redemption, the arrogant notion that human beings can deliver themselves from the abyss of estrangement or through self-alteration become worthy of divine favor. On the contrary, no intellectual acumen or moral *phronesis* can evoke the New Being or reconcile the existential alienation that separates and fragments finite being. Only through the gift of the divine acceptance of the unacceptable, of God's redemptive "Yes" addressed to those who dwell in the "No" of sin, may we experience the fulfilling of life that results from the emptying of guilt, anxiety, and separation. Consequently, Tillich insists that the divine affirmation comes only as "that stroke of grace," only as an aleatoric event of divine acceptance that happens quite gratuitously. The stroke of grace that impacts the individual resembles Kierkegaard's *Augenblick*, that "blink of an eye" moment in which God's loving presence overwhelms the individual and symbolically speaks the comforting words, "Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!"⁹ To be struck by divine grace, therefore, is to experience the unexpected, to participate in the New Being that one could never anticipate, and to be transformed by an event that does not conform to the necessity of the past or that does not perform the tired movements of the *status quo ante*. Tillich agrees with the Apostle Paul that the New Being results in a new creation, in the creation of the new, in that stroke of grace that comes according to its own itinerary exempt from human calculation and manipulation.¹⁰

Derrida made his most explicit statement on the notion of divine grace almost five years ago at the AAR in Toronto when, in response to a question by Kevin Hart of Notre Dame, he stated, rather apodictically, that "about 'grace given by God,' deconstruction, as such, has nothing to say or to do. If it is given, let us say to someone in a way that is absolutely improbable, that is exceeding any proof, in a unique experience, then deconstruction has no lever on this. And it should not have any lever."¹¹ By ex-

empting the experience of grace from a deconstructive reading, Derrida makes two significant moves. First, in acknowledging that deconstruction cannot engage the givenness of divine grace as such, he adds grace to his list of "unconditionals," those realities that cannot be deconstructed in themselves, such as hospitality, the gift, forgiveness, faith, and justice. Amazingly, as an "unconditional," grace is not only *not* an object of deconstruction but it may well also be an originary incitement *to* deconstruction. Derrida admits to a Kierkegaardian pedigree and connects grace with faith as a passion for the excessive, as an excessive passion for what cannot be domesticated in the rational categories of ethics, politics, or society. This passion actually impels deconstruction, summons it forth (*se mettre en mouvement*) like some energizing secret, the "absolutely secret experience" that stimulates deconstruction and that, *mirabile dictu*, Derrida compares explicitly to divine grace. Indeed, he even associates the name of the secret with the name of God.¹² This "gracious" secret impassions an openness and affirmation of alterity, of an otherness "to come," and does so regardless of whether there is a secret or not. Even if the secret is that there is no secret, the secret remains "the very essence of otherness."¹³ Yet, a radical acceptance of radical otherness leaves open a justice that is always "to come," a justice that Derrida testifies to be the very essence of deconstruction, *s'il y en a*—"if there is such a thing."¹⁴ Consequently, one could state by analogy that without grace, there would be no deconstruction, that the constancy of grace in Derrida's life is called by other names, such as, the "secret," the "gift," or, perhaps, condensed simply into the synecdoche for all of the unconditionals, "justice."

By adding grace to the list of unconditionals, Derrida also authenticates including grace in the affiliation that already obtains among the other topics in that group, a fascinating inclusion given our Tillychian context. For example, the ideas of gift and forgiveness correlate quite well with the affirmative power of grace. Derrida contends that the gift, as such, always shatters economic cycles of exchange, indicting every interpretation of giving as nothing more than the reciprocity of a *quid pro quo*. When interpreted economically, the gift incurs an obligation, a duty to return to the giver another gift or to pay the giver a debt of gratitude. Under these conditions, the gift is annulled and reduced to either an earned wage or a deserved reward. On the contrary, a pure gift, or genuine grace, must be freely given as

an undeserved expression of excessive love and mercy. Likewise, forgiveness must be given without antecedent conditions and must be differentiated from reconciliation and atonement, since the latter require some semblance of reciprocity and response. Derrida insists that pure forgiveness must not respond to repentance or restitution, must not be a conduit for reestablishing or saving relationships (a salvation he, nonetheless, supports) but must, instead, be freely bestowed upon those who unapologetically do not confess their need for forgiveness or who do not desire an exchange of good will. In other words, pure forgiveness can only be expressed as the impossible proffer of pardon to the unpardonable, the impossible event of forgiving the unforgivable, or if translated into Tillichian terms, the impossible possibility of accepting the unacceptable—but, of course, without any necessary release from estrangement.¹⁵

Second, in referring to grace as a “unique experience” or as a “moment,” Derrida implicitly associates grace with his idea of the event and, furthermore, with a lingering notion of the salvific. He insists that an event is always unique and singular; it consists of the coming of the new and of the “first time ever.”¹⁶ The event marks the coming forth (*evenire*) of what cannot be programmed or anticipated, of what comes to (*ad-venire*) or comes in (*in-venire*) as the unexpected, the adventure and invention of the future as a surprising event.¹⁷ Since the event cannot be foreknown or foreseen, it shatters every horizon of expectation, thereby establishing a systemic agnosticism and an anticipatory blindness in that one can neither know nor see who or what is coming.¹⁸ Consequently, Derrida insists that the event is the possibility of the impossible, which can only announce itself as impossible, as impossible of being announced, as coming “without forewarning (*prévenir*), announcing itself without announcing itself...”¹⁹ Derrida names this systemic agnosticism “undecidability,” which results in decisions being made in the context of risk and uncertainty. Undecidability does not prohibit decisions but demands them, actually establishes the grounds for genuine decisions to be made, because one only decides when one faces the aleatoric, confronts the event that just happens exceptionally and incalculably beyond horizons, teleology, and foresight.²⁰ The undecidability inherent in event signifies that events cannot be pre-programmed by human ingenuity or by rational possibility, that they occur as interruptions, as the call of alterity or the incoming of the

impossible, the very possibility of the impossible.²¹ As Caputo might express it, “*es gibt*” event, “there is”—“it gives”—event, with event just happening, being given, perhaps by an impossible grace that is a *je ne sais quoi*.²² Such a perspective on grace as event certainly converges with Tillich’s perspective, providing a valid translation of his “stroke of grace,” which, according to him, just happens and happens without being forced or prescribed. Consequently, to translate Derrida into a Tillichian idiom, one might say that the incoming of grace as event preempts any auto-redemption, that is, any human attempt to manipulate, demand, or establish that grace.

Of course, Tillich recognizes that the event of infinite and unconditional grace comes into human reality through the mediation of finite and conditioned forms. Although grace has no specific form *in se*, it comes clothed in various embodied forms *pro nobis*.²³ He maintains that the Gestalt of grace “must be permanently actual *in history* [although it does] not derive *from history*,” and, therefore, imperceptible grace must be mediated through perceptible forms, such as, “*through* the humanity of Christ, *through* the historical weakness of the church, or *through* the finite material of the sacrament.”²⁴ Notwithstanding a certain transparency to these sacramental forms, one still needs a discerning capability to acknowledge them as the breaking through of divine grace. Yet, again, Tillich emphasizes that such discernment cannot be a human achievement; instead, it depends upon the faith-inducing power of God’s providence. Of course, providence should not be confused with the belief that God magically intervenes to “alter the conditions of finitude and estrangement” or that God predetermines every movement of existence as if it were some “efficient machine.” Instead, the doctrine of God’s providential care actually signifies that nothing can occur that will prohibit or inhibit the divine acceptance and “that there is a creative and saving possibility implied in every situation, which cannot be destroyed by any event.”²⁵ Faith *in* providence is faith produced *by* providence; it is the human activity of affirming acceptance, which happens only as a response to the divine activity of grace. Here Tillich prosecutes the traditional notion of *gratia praeveniens*, of prevenient grace, a grace that comes (*venire*) before (*prae*) the coming of salvific grace.²⁶ Here, too, is his version of Kierkegaard’s “pugnacious proposition” of how one gets started. We may only start to accept God’s acceptance of us because that acceptance is always already at work in the struc-

tures of our lives.²⁷ God's affirming call and promise of acceptance act as the grounds for the possibility of our accepting that we are accepted, as the "*prius*" that enables our faithful response to and our rational reflection on God's reconciling grace. Salvation, grace, forgiveness, love, faith, and the New Being are, therefore, divine gifts, loving transcendentals that come before we receive them or reject them.

Although the historical and sacramental forms may be functionally translucent to the revelation of divine grace, Tillich warns that they must never be confused with that grace, since to do so would be idolatrous and demonic.²⁸ Derrida would most certainly agree with Tillich at this point and contend that, with reference to the various historical media of providence, grace is no longer immunized against the infection of deconstruction. Whereas deconstruction is "totally, totally useless and disarmed" against the secret experience of grace/faith as such, that invulnerability vanishes once the experience becomes "embodied in a discourse, in a community, in a church, in a religion, [or] in a theology."²⁹ Once the event of grace enters into the textuality of discourse and institutions, then, to adopt Caputo's language, one must admit that deconstruction is no longer "disarmed," but actually adopts a stance of "armed neutrality,"³⁰ whereby it neither affirms nor denies grace as such (neutrality) but *does* question any putative transparency to the finite forms (armed). In other words, mediated grace cannot escape *dif-férance*—Derrida's neologism for the interplay of semiotic difference and semantic deferral—the iterability of signification, and the endless translatability of meaning. Perhaps this is *Derrida's* deconstructive admonition against the temptation to idolatry and the demonic, of confusing or reducing grace with or to any language, culture, or institutional power structure. This tension between grace as such and various instantiations of grace may be analogous to what Caputo articulates about any divine revelation: "It is not that the voice of God is nowhere to be heard, but only that this voice is always and already couched in human terms, and that the task of differentiating the human and the divine is subject to a permanent and ineradicable undecidability."³¹ Yet, this undecidability does not deny the validity of a hermeneutic that considers "the horizons of space and time...to be radically permeable and porous to the grace of God."³² But would such a hermeneutic not be a hermeneutic of faith? Is that potentiality not yet another translation of "justification by grace *through faith*?" Have Tillich and Derrida not once again cross-

contaminated each other with reference to a quasi-transcendental affirmation? Perhaps.

Fearing that I have been overly gracious in correlating Tillich's theology of acceptance with Derrida's deconstructive affirmation, I wish to conclude with a negation, a rather significant difference in their soteriologies, recognizing, however, that within this final "No" continues to echo the call of an originary "Yes." When Tillich paraphrases the soteriological paradox of the stroke of grace into a more existential philosophical discourse, he transcribes his "accepting the acceptance of the unacceptable" into the idiomatic phrase "the courage to be." For Tillich, the "courage to be" conveys the "affirmation of self 'in spite of' non-being."³³ That is, the existing individual becomes aware that she is finite, that her present being constantly conflicts with both the "not yet" of the future and the "no more" of the past, the two ecstasies that characterize temporal being; consequently, being finite "means carrying within one's being the destiny not to be."³⁴ This awareness of one's finitude, what Tillich calls the "ontological" or "metaphysical shock," produces an anxiety that threatens the integrity of the self and its relationship with the world, leaving the self a "prey of non-being."³⁵ Accepting the grace of divine acceptance as the courage to be attenuates the threat of non-being that derives from the transitory nature of finite existence and supplies an antidote to the contagion of contingency that disrupts the stability of consistency and corrupts the possibility of any necessary meaning.³⁶ The courage to be as the acceptance of divine grace and providence indemnifies against the risk of the "ultimate indeterminacy" of a completely open future and overcomes the instability of anxiety and the menace of an indeterminate "not yet."³⁷ Salvation, then, comes as the stability of an ontological continuity in spite of the anguish that an indeterminate me-ontology engenders.

Derrida, on the other hand, discovers nothing quite so menacing in the contingency of the future yet to come. When prosecuting the idea of the "to come," *l'a-venir*, Derrida resorts to an explicitly religious vocabulary and labels the coming of the other to be an expression of a messianic dynamic,³⁸ which requires both the active calling *for* the other to come as a responding *to* the call of the coming other and also the passive and "patient *perhaps*" of an exposure to what is to come, which is, indeed, a compliant trust in the fidelity of an originary promise or affirmation.³⁹ The quasi-transcendental vocation of affirmation is genuinely a *vocation*, a call (*vocare*)

issuing forth from a “Yes,” whose summons ensures that every reply to that call be a recall, a repetition or reiteration of an non-original “originary affirmation.”⁴⁰ We cannot speak, or write, or act without signaling the trace of that “Yes,” the lingering influence of a prior promise that establishes the doubling of a “double affirmation,” that is, the pledge that my “Yes” always both archives the genealogy of a timeless primordial affirmation and also commits me to subsequent temporal recitations of my responsive “Yes.”⁴¹ Derrida calls this “the gramophone effect” whereby our “Yes” both accepts an originary affirmation and projects our future intent to remain faithful to that “Yes,” to say “*me voici*” “here I am,” and “*oui, oui*”—“yes, yes” to that which is “to come.”⁴² One might, therefore, interpret Derrida’s “originary affirmation” as a type of *gratia praeveniens*, the grace that comes before (*prevenir*) our “yes” to that which is to come.

For Derrida, saying “Yes” to *l’invention de l’autre* (the incoming of the other)—which consistently maintains a hospitality toward the contingency of the future (*l’avenir*)—leaves one responsive to the impossible possibility of the advent of justice, of a justice “to come,” a messianic justice that *is* as always *to come*—which is, again, not a bad deconstructive translation of “grace.”⁴³ Caputo would assuredly concur with such a translation, since he claims, in a separate context, that what Derrida considers to be the “play of chance” might be interpreted by others as a cipher for grace.⁴⁴ Consequently, the contingency that threatens Tillich with the anxiety of non-being seduces Derrida with a passion for the impossible, with a desire beyond desire for the advent of an affirmation that will have been in some future perfect of an alterity always to come. Yet, Derrida affirms that this promise of the other to come resembles a soteriology, a “saving” (*soter*) word (*logos*) intimating that there may be something salvific inherent in the idea of event as a messianic interruption.

Perhaps Derrida’s passion for the impossible is the passion of faith, of a “yes, yes, amen, amen” to a moment, or stroke, of grace that affirms our acceptance and whose acceptance we affirm.⁴⁵ Perhaps that passion begets Tillich’s courage to be and leaves one vulnerable to unexpected revelations of divine providence. Perhaps it is, indeed, the passion for the absolute future of a messianic “Yes” that is always the salvific “to come” of the New Being. Perhaps both Tillich and Derrida would then voice the same prayer:

He who testifies to these things says,
 “Yes, I am coming quickly.”
 Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.
 Amen.

¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), I: 53. Hereafter cited as ST.

² ST, II: 166-67; I: 144-46.

³ Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 86; ST, I: 285.

⁴ John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 166.

⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Points... Interviews, 1974-1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 186, 211.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 35; Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 14.

⁷ John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 194, 200.

⁸ ST, III: 224-25.

⁹ Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), p. 162.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 182-83; ST, II: 118-19.

¹¹ John D. Caputo, Kevin Hart, and Yvonne Sherwood, “Epoché and Faith: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in *Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments*, eds. Yvonne Sherwood and Kevin Hart (New York: Routledge, 2005), 39.

¹² Jacques Derrida, *Circumfession: Fifty-nine Periods and Paraphrases*, in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 156.

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit, trans. David Wood, John P. Leavey, and Ian McLeod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 30.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 243.

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 349-51; Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*,

trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (New York: Routledge, 2001), 32-33.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Inventions of the Other," in *Reading de Man Reading*, eds. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 28.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 42; Derrida, *Negotiations*, 96.

¹⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 135, 143; Cf. also Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*, trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava, and Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 160, and Jacques Derrida, "The Spatial Arts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts*, ed. Peter Brunette and David Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 27-28.

¹⁹ Derrida, *Rogues*, 144.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

²¹ Jacques Derrida, *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, eds. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 146; Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*, 137; Derrida, "The Spatial Arts," 27; Derrida, *Rogues*, 144.

²² John D. Caputo, *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 224.

²³ Paul Tillich, *What Is Religion?*, trans. James Luther Adams (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), p. 84.

²⁴ Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, abridged ed. trans. James Luther Adams (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 212.

²⁵ ST, I: 267; *The Shaking of the Foundations*, 106.

²⁶ ST, I: 285.

²⁷ ST, II: 80.

²⁸ Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, 212-13.

²⁹ Caputo, Hart, and Sherwood, *Derrida and Religion*, 39.

³⁰ John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 12-19.

³¹ Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 100.

³² John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 204.

³³ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 34, 155.

³⁴ ST, I: 189; Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*, 39.

³⁵ ST, I: 113, 196; Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 163; ST, II:34.

³⁶ ST, I: 193-94.

³⁷ Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 129-30; ST, I: 168, 196.

³⁸ Derrida, *The Specters of Marx*, 28.

³⁹ Derrida, *Rogues*, 91.

⁴⁰ Derrida, *Negotiations*, 219.

⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce," in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), 298; Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism; or The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 21-22, 67.

⁴² Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone," 276.

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Religion*, eds. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 17.

⁴⁴ John D. Caputo, *Philosophy and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 62.

⁴⁵ Derrida, *Monolingualism*, 68; Derrida, *Negotiations*, 362.

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**ETHICS AND EXPRESSIONISM: THINGS,
INDIVIDUALS, AND COMMON CONCERNS**

JARI RISTINIEMI

In his early study on Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, perhaps the leading postmodern French philosopher, speaks about the philosophy of expressionism. He discusses Spinoza in relation to Leibniz, because even he had an expressive part in his *Monadology*, according to Deleuze. Deleuze's point is that something of the unity beyond the body and soul distinction is expressed in these two philosophies. "Expression takes its place at the heart of the individual, in his soul and in his body, his passions and his actions, his causes and his effects. And Leibniz, by monad, no less than Spinoza by mode, understands nothing other than an individual as an expressive center."¹ Expressionism in Deleuze is about a plane beyond the dual oppositions; he called this plane "the plane of immanence" and "the plane of consistency."² In his later studies Deleuze returns to Spinoza, but the focus of his work is now on the interaction between the individual and the society, or rather, on those assemblages or constellations that determine the lives of individuals in modern and postmodern societies. Paul Tillich in his later works talks about "the spiritual unity beyond the subject and object distinction" and he claims that "expressionism is the genuinely theonomous element."³ He even wrote that in Spinoza "the ontology of courage has reached its fundamental expression."⁴ The Spiritual Presence expresses itself in time and space, in immanence.⁵ How and where does that happen according to Tillich?

I like to point to some parallels between Gilles Deleuze and Paul Tillich considering expressionism and social ethics. First, I will concentrate on societal organizational forms, their conditions, and presuppositions in today's world; I focus on what these two say about the human predicament in postmodern societies. After this, I will try to lift up some guidelines of action and activity in social ethics. What did Deleuze and Tillich say about action and activity?

Organizational forms

Regarding the organizational forms in Western societies, both authors seem to say that the villain of the piece is the binary logic with its binary organizations. Tillich analyzed the conditions of the binary logic and pointed to the processes that led to dual oppositions. In the *Systematic Theology*, vol. III, it is

the subject/object distinction between the human person and his or her world that defines the problematic. "This practical gap between subject and object has the same consequences as the theoretical gap; the subject-object scheme is not only the epistemological but also the ethical problem.... The inherent ambiguity of language is that in transforming reality into meaning it separates mind and reality."⁶ The human subject and the object, the individual and the world or the universe, are set apart from each other. This separation gives the basic cognitive relation, but it also leads to binary constellations like mind *and* body, thinking *and* feeling, I *and* not-I, and, finally, to the organization of society on dualistic lines. The binary logic is the logic of either-or: of either us or them; either man or woman; either inside or outside; either winners or losers; either rich or poor.⁷ The rule of binary logic in the self-understanding of the modern individual is also observed in feminist theology.⁸ The binary constellations, in Deleuze's view, segment society. "We are segmented from all around and in every direction.... We are segmented in a binary fashion, following the great major dualist oppositions: social classes, but also men-women, adults-children, and so on."⁹ The way society is organized is dependent on the ways of thinking and it is dependent on the kind of people we are.

The focus of Deleuze's later studies is on the interaction between the individual and the society, or rather, on those "assemblages" or organizational constellations and structures that determine the lives of individuals in postmodern societies. The assemblages are the basic elements of thought *and* life. "There exist no other drives than the assemblages themselves."¹⁰ The assemblage functions like a kind of a filter or regulator in a society and it functions even on the global plane. Today's regulators are global and they are dual or bipolar. In "the machinic assemblage"—the regulator in modern societies—individuals turn into things and they are made into parts of the machine. Individuals are run by the machine, but the machine is also run by individuals and their mentality structure. Machinic operations rule over the lives of individuals, which is a well-known theme, but Deleuze and Guattari (Félix Guattari became a coauthor with Deleuze) take the theme further. The assemblages, as synthesis, as "holding together," gather heterogeneous materials.¹¹ The central assemblage Deleuze and Guattari call "the axiomatic" and this assemblage operates globally. Earlier the "axiomatic" was found between industrialized

alized countries and the Third World, recently between North and South, now the center and periphery are internal to the axiomatic: "The more the worldwide axiomatic installs high industry and highly industrialized agriculture at the periphery, provisionally reserving for the center so-called post-industrial activities [automation, electronics, information technologies, the conquest of space, over-armorment, etc.], the more it installs peripheral zones of underdevelopment inside the center, internal Third Worlds, internal Souths.... Subjection remained centered on labor and involved a bipolar organization, property-labor, bourgeoisie proletariat."¹² It is not only the bipolar organization with machinic enslavement that has characterized the axiomatic, but the war machine is installed in it.

The war machine takes on a specific supplementary meaning: industrial, political, judicial, etc.... [It] no longer had war as its exclusive object but took in charge and its object peace, politics, the world order, in short, the aim.... It is politics that becomes the continuation of war; it is peace that technologically frees the unlimited material process of total war.... The war machine reigned over the entire axiomatic like the power of the continuum that surrounded the 'world-economy,' and it put all the parts of the universe in contact.... Wars had become a part of peace."¹³

In their constructivism, Deleuze and Guattari have moved beyond the world in which wars had become a part of peace and that is why they use the *tempus* of imperfect. But the war machine is not only a phenomenon on the global plane, there is another kind of war as well. There is the war against rigid structures; war loosens nomadic flows and in this sense it belongs to the constructive side of *Nomadology*. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy is *Nomadology*, not *Monadology*. It is about drives and about the interplay between drives and basic constellations; war is a kind of interplay. War, Heraclitus said already, is the father of all things. The unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari claim, is nomadic, it is vital, it is flow. Here a parallel could be drawn to Tillich's vitalism.

The plane of consistency makes use of the "both/and" logic. It is not the "either/or" logic that characterizes the basic structures and movements, but a "both/and" logic with the included middle: the center is all over and the periphery is in the center. The "classical" logic of the excluded middle does not give means to analyze the structures and the or-

ganizational forms of today's world. In the "either/or" logic, center-periphery, we-them, North-South are put apart from each other; in the "both/and" logic they are parts or elements of the same constellations. This is not to mix everything or that "everything goes"; it is to make a difference between the analytic, analyzing side of mind, and the synthetic, synthesizing side of mind. It seems to be that the analyzing side of the mind uses the "either/or" logic, and the synthesizing side makes use of the "both/and logic." With "both/and" logic, we could say that humans have both capacities. But mind's synthesizing capacities are on a higher plane than the partial analyzing capacities. Mind gives syntheses in terms of both/and, it moves with wholes. I will continue with the human predicament in the global world.

Macropolitics and Micropolitics

We can talk about two movements in globalization: a globalization from above run by large institutional agents like World Trade Organization and others, and globalization from the below initiated by the people, for example, the Women's Bank in Bangladesh, to take a recent familiar example, and various forms of local currency. Two levels are discerned in the phenomenon. The two movements and levels, a superstructure and a substructure can be found both in Deleuze's and in Tillich's analyses as well. According to Tillich, "there is no real separation between substructure and super-structure."¹⁴

In Deleuze and Guattari, the two levels are expressed with terms like "the majoritarian language" and "minority"; "macropolitics" and "micropolitics"; "macrohistory" and "microhistory"; "molar" and "molecular"; "the striated space" and "the smooth space." The last two concepts are especially interesting and important; the smooth space goes back to Plato's talk of the soft. Food industry, biochemistry, and energy investments today belong to high-level macropolitics; they are at the top of the striated space. Making use of high levels of abstraction, they also produce and make use of synthetic fibers. The striated space is the world of abstractions, but also the world of mathematics, geometry, and geographic. The smooth is the synthetic mind-field—perhaps the delta of human nature.

Change in Deleuze's and Guattari's view comes from the below, from micropolitics.

It is wrongly said [in Marxism in particular] that a society is defined by its contradictions. That is true only on the larger scale of things. From the

viewpoint of micropolitics, a society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular. There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine: things that are attributed to a 'change of values,' the youth, women, the mad, etc."¹⁵

People, individuals, escape the rigid macropolitical orders, the molar mass, striated and segmented space, by taking a flight into "new creativity." Lines of flight are molecular, that is, it is the individuals that speed up the processes of creativity. There is, however, no revolutionary nostalgia in Deleuze and Guattari; even fascism is a micropolitical movement making use of cells, bands, and groups, that it, it makes use of molecular organizations. "Only micro-fascism provides an answer to the global question: Why does desire desire its own repression, how can it desire its own repression?"¹⁶ It can do so as the drive is bent back on itself to control itself and this drive-constellation or assemblage is kept up by social groups. People with similar mentality structure speed up repression in each other. This was seen by Tillich, as well, in Nazi Germany: "The desire for life, which is natural for every person, is bent back into the desire for death.... The community, which should bestow life, turns into a community that, in word and song and deed, prepares for death."¹⁷ Deleuze puts this in the following way: "Fascism is construed on an intense line of flight, which it transforms into a line of pure destruction and abolition."¹⁸ Individuals belong both to the super- and to the sub-structure; we have a part in both areas and the organizational constellations or assemblages effectuate the individual.

In his analyzes of the recent political situation, Tillich, much in the same way as Deleuze and Guattari, focus both on the macropolitics and on the micropolitics. It might happen that "one of the great powers will develop into a world centre, ruling the other nations through liberal methods and in democratic forms!...The technical union of the world favors centralization... For even then disintegration and revolution are not excluded. New centers of power may appear, first underground, then openly, driving towards separation from or towards radical transformation of the whole. They may develop a vocational consciousness of their own."¹⁹ There are many groups with vocational consciousness, but in Tillich's view this consciousness is to be related to *justice*. The name Tillich gave to the process of developing new vocational consciousness was "trans-

forming justice" and "creative justice."²⁰ For Tillich, justice means that humans and groups are able to reach and fulfill their potential as humans and as societies. The just, meaningful, and rightful society, the place where individuals in cooperation with each other and with things reach their potentials, is the transformative goal of history; it might be unattainable in history in its entirety, but as the goal of history it exercises its influence *in* history. It is the Spiritual Presence, working in the human spirit that according to Tillich directs the individual and the society towards the goal. This *directing activity* is one of the first expressions of the Spiritual Presence.

The idea of creative justice might be combined with Deleuze's and Guattari's "the line of flight" and their "new creativity." The striated space of global technical-mechanical world order has a counterpart in the smooth space. The question is: what do we, with our thinking and relating, promote, i.e., give our consent to? This is an ethical issue.

For the stakes here are indeed the negative and the positive in the absolute: the earth girded, encompassed, over-coded, conjugated as the object of mortuary and suicidal organization surrounding it on all sides, *or* the earth consolidated, connected with the Cosmos, brought into the Cosmos following lines of creation that cut across it as so many becomings [Nietzsche's expression: "Let the earth become lightness..."].²¹ Taking the line of flight is not a "no" to technology, it is a "no" to its one-sided domination. Only in the "either/or" logic is the striated space preferred to the smooth space. Tillich held a similar view about technology. Even technology could be used for creative action, when it is filled with an artistic-creative import and not with merchandized and utilitarian over-coding. Tillich could state that the Spiritual Presence might come to expression in and through the technical Gestalt: "For the Spirit, no thing is merely a thing.... Tools, from the most primitive hammer to the most delicate computer... can be considered and artistically valued as new embodiments of the power of being itself. This *eros* toward the technical *Gestalt* is a way in which a theonomous relation to technology can be achieved."²² The earth becomes lightness, when being itself is expressed in and through technology.

More could be said about the state of things in the modern world, but the interesting point in the above is the move away from a partial view and *the position* from which the organizational forms, factual and possible, are perceived. There is both in

Deleuze and in Tillich a realistic analysis of the present situation and constructive alternatives. There is the move away from enslavement and subjection, not a flight from life, but a look at life from the position of life itself; there is thought *and* life in both. Deleuze and Guattari talked about the “free action,” which is a component of the new creativity; Tillich talked about the creation of the new in history and about the action in relation to it. Both seemed to agree that the response to the prevailing situation should be characterized by action, not by compulsory reaction. In claiming this, they refer to Spinoza. What is action or activity?

Action

In Spinoza there is a move from reaction to action and activity. Reaction is always a passivity, the individual is affected by something external, a real or imagined object. “For an ignorant man, besides being agitated in many ways by external causes, never enjoys one true satisfaction of the mind: he lives, moreover, almost unconscious of himself, God, and things, and as soon as he ceases to be passive, ceases to be.”²³ Reaction is no free action. But there is also another possibility, another way of living, and *Ethics* points out a way to that: “If we remove disturbance of the mind or emotion from the thought of an external cause and unite it to other thought, then love and hatred towards the external cause, as well as waverings of the mind which arise from these emotions, are destroyed.”²⁴ We should understand that “the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.”²⁵ In the passivity of passion, when we are agitated in many ways, the connection of ideas and the order of things do not have to be the same; the order of ideas is set by imagination. Imaginary and represented mental objects take over the emotions, and we are triggered emotionally so that we only react. Individual is to learn how imagination works within them. Imagination is able to pick up both the high and the low in the emotional content. Action is the activity of the mind; the mind works on itself and puts things right. What is it to put things right? It is that the essential mind is higher than the accidental mind. The order of things, I read this in this way, is that the essential mind is higher than the accidental mind. The accidental mind follows imagination and the passivity of passion. The same procedure as was used in imagination is to be used at the level of essential mind; the mind’s activity is one and the same. “This mental love must be referred to the ac-

tions of the mind which therefore is an action with which the mind regards itself accompanied by the idea of God as a cause.”²⁶ Imagination is on the subjective side, that is, the mind is able to regard itself accompanied by the idea of God, in the same way as it is able to regard itself accompanied by some agitating causes. On the objective side, we deal with “an action by which God, in so far as he may be expressed through the human mind, regards himself accompanied by the idea of himself.”²⁷ In Spinoza, the eternal and essential part of the mind is in God. Even though the mind is in God, this participation does not destroy the human activity and action. In Spinoza, there is the self-transcendence or “opened mind.” The mind is active in itself and this activity comes to expression when the mind works on itself by construing the mind-space and its relations. The result of this work is right self-love and the love of other people; the hatred, agitation, and fear are tuned down and replaced by love. In Spinoza, reaction gives way to action, to the self-activity of the mind, in which the mind works on itself.

The trans-moral world in the world of morals

In Tillich’s expressionism during his American years, there are four main components: multidimensional unity of life, self-transcending character of life, the human spirit with essential humanity, and the Spiritual Presence. The Spiritual Presence comes to expression in the human spirit. “In the human spirit’s essential relation to the divine Spirit, there is no correlation, but rather, mutual immanence.”²⁸ This is Spinoza. Essential humanity is not Essentialism in the sense of abstract universalism but “the word ‘humanity’ [is used] in the sense of the fulfillment of humankind’s inner aim with respect to him or herself and his or hers personal relations, in coordination with justice as the fulfillment of the inner aim of social groups and their mutual relations.”²⁹ In existence, the individual, however, is in the state of estrangement from his or her essential humanity, and the more he or she tries to bridge over the gap, the deeper the estrangement. His or her essential humanity stands now over against him or her as the law of “ought to be.” We can differentiate between the world of morals and the trans-moral world. We could say that the experience of the “ought to be” is in the world of morals and essential humanity in the trans-moral world. The “ought to be” is one of the first expressions of the trans-moral world. The “ought to be” is formulated as the law. It is not the law that gives the essential humanity back, but nei-

ther is it possible to know the essential humanity without the law, “for maturity is the result of education by the law,” Tillich writes.³⁰ Law has its place in the life of the individual, and it has its place even in societal life. In Tillich’s view, however, it is only the Spiritual Presence that gives the connection to essential humanity. Given the connection with the essential humanity, some marks or expressions follow: increasing awareness, increasing freedom, increasing relatedness and increasing transcendence.³¹ These are expressions of the work of the Spiritual Presence in the human spirit. What about society? We have already mentioned the directing activity, how does that directing activity come to expression?

Considering the possible organizational forms Tillich held a plural view: the Spiritual Presence expresses itself in different kinds of societies and in their power structures. The Spiritual Presence comes to expression, for example, “in so far as the centering and liberating elements in a structure of political power are balanced.”³² This balancing happens in the power of justice and it is justice that is determinate over compulsory elements like punishment and war. There is an affirmation of “compulsory elements in cases where justice is violated” but there is also the conquering of compulsion when the ruling group “transforms the objects of centered control into mere objects.”³³ Today terror has reached new heights, not only from the side of fundamentalist Islam, but also from the other side, which through objectification transforms human beings into objects. This is inhuman, terrific, and demonic; it is a reaction and revenge, not action. War, violence, and compulsion belong to the historical dimension, and they are to be found in the world of morals, but justice belongs to the trans-moral world. The trans-moral world is in the world of morals, both transcendent and immanent in relation to it, and it comes to expression within it. Tillich considered that the expression of the eternal is possible only indirectly, through that which is not eternal in itself. The trans-moral world can come to expression through the finite, whether this be an individual, a thing, or an organizational form in a society. “In so far as democratization of political attitudes and institutions serves to resist the destructive implications of power, it is a manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history. But it would be completely wrong to identify democratic institutions with the Kingdom of God in history.”³⁴ The active element expresses the trans-moral world in the world of morals indirectly. Action in Tillich is “essentialization,” that is, the expression of the es-

sential reality of humans and things in society, in history, and in the multidimensional unity of life. Essentialization expresses something that is to be made by persons; it does not express a given and fixed, static essence. Essentialization is activity, but such an activity is not individual-centered action. In essentialization, the reactive and compulsory elements are tuned down and the activity is heightened. It is the accidental mind that makes use of the reactive strategies even on the societal and global plane.

Deleuze, on his side, writes: “Everywhere we see the victory of No over Yes, of reaction over action. Life becomes adaptive and regulative, reduced to its secondary forms; we no longer understand what it means to act.”³⁵ To reduce life to its secondary forms is to presuppose that structures like democratic institutions are all there is. The institutions are for the people, the people are not for the institutions. What does it mean to act according to Deleuze? Life is experimentation, a nomadic experimentation. Instead of a rigid holding to perhaps a hierarchical structure and assemblage, people constantly create new organizational forms. For a moment desire settles within these new assemblages, but in the end they turn on the individual and become an apparatus of capture since desire wants more, it wants desire. Life, as lived experience, is an inter-play between flows, drives, desires, and basic structures. What humans are able to reach is the Body without Organs, and Spinoza’s *Ethics* in Deleuze and Guattari’s view is about creating the Body without Organs.³⁶ Organs are reactive, they need nourishment; they are passive forces. In creating the Body without Organs the reactive elements and reactive strategies are tuned down and the activity of the uninhibited flow comes forth. Ethics, not only Spinoza’s *Ethics*, is about life that is not stuck into one structure or organization, one system of belief, including one way of thinking.³⁷ Nomadic people bring new worlds in those places where the old worlds are about to vanish.

¹ Deleuze, G. (2005), *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. New York: Zone Books. p. 327.

² See for example Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), *What is Philosophy?* New York: Vertigo.

³ Tillich, P. (1976), *Systematic Theology III*. Chicago: The University of Chicago University Press. pp. 274ff.

⁴ Tillich, P. (1980), *The Courage to Be*. Glasgow: Collins. p. 33.

⁵ “The holy is in time and space.” Tillich, P. (1976). Mark C. Taylor writes considering Tillich’s position: “If

God is being or the power of Being, then everything that exists is, in some way, united with the divine. God, in other words, is immanent in self and world.” Mark C. Taylor (2004), *Confidence Games. Money and Markets in a World without Redemption*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 314.

⁶ Tillich, P. (1976), 68f.

⁷ “Though details obviously vary, the binary structure of all such schemes remains the same.... The opposition between the transcendent and the immanent translates into intra-worldly oppositions between good and evil, believers and non-believers, redeemed and condemned life.”

Taylor, M. C. (2004), 320.

⁸ See for example Radford Reuther, R. (1983), *Sexism and God-talk. Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon Press.

⁹ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 208.

¹⁰ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 259.

¹¹ “This is a question of consistency: the “holding together” of heterogeneous elements. At first, they constitute no more than a fuzzy set, a discrete set that later takes on consistency.... What we term machinic is precisely this synthesis of heterogeneities as such.” Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 323, 330.

¹² Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 469.

¹³ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 466f.

¹⁴ Tillich, P. (1960), *Love, Power, and Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 72.

¹⁵ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 216. “The question of whether individuals or “masses” determine history must be replaced by an exact description of their interplay.” Tillich, P. (1976), 313.

¹⁶ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 215.

¹⁷ Tillich, P. (1998), *Against the Third Reich. Paul Tillich's Wartime Addresses to Nazi Germany*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 18f.

¹⁸ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 230.

¹⁹ Tillich, P. (1960), 105f.

²⁰ Tillich, P. (1960), 64.

²¹ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1998), 510.

²² Tillich, P. (1976), 258f.

²³ Spinoza, B. (1977), 224.

²⁴ Spinoza, B. (1977), 202.

²⁵ Spinoza, B. (1977), 202.

²⁶ Spinoza, B. (1977), 219.

²⁷ Spinoza, B. (1977), 219.

²⁸ Tillich, P. (1976), 114.

²⁹ Tillich, P. (1976), 67.

³⁰ Tillich, P. (1976), 370.

³¹ See Tillich, P. (1976), 231.

³² Tillich, P. (1976), 386.

³³ Tillich, P. (1976), 385f.

³⁴ Tillich, P. (1976), 385.

³⁵ Deleuze, G. (2002), 75.

³⁶ “After all, is not Spinoza’s Ethics the great book of the BwO.” Deleuze, G & Guattari, F. (1998), 153.

³⁷ “Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties. It is *haptic* rather than optical perception.... Intense *Spatium* instead of *Extensio*. A Body without Organs instead of an organism and organisation.” Deleuze, G & Guattari, F. (1998), 479.

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**NEGOTIATING THE NATURE OF
MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE, GUIDED BY
JAMES AND TILLICH**

DAVID NIKKEL

Informed by William James's and Paul Tillich's respective understandings of mystical experiences, this essay will venture into contemporary epistemological debates on the nature of mystical experience. Over the past fourteen years of that debate, no less than seven articles focusing on mystical experience have marked the pages of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, the most widely circulated religious studies periodical. In its critical-constructive work, this paper will ultimately offer an embodied model of such experience that attempts to mediate between two polar positions.

Let me begin with a summary of the debate between those diametrically opposed construals, between essentialists and cultural-religious constructivists, the former maintaining a common, even *sui generis*, basis for mystical experience involving intimate contact with the divine. I will divide the essentialists into two camps: (1) those like W. T. Stace, Robert K. C. Forman, and Jonathan Shear who claim that *some* experiences are of immediate identity, undifferentiated unity, transcending completely the subject-object structure; (2) others, like Bernard McGinn, Moshe Idel, and Henry Simoni-Wastila, who counter that any mystical experience must have some object not identical with the mystical subject without remainder. This latter implies some mediation, though much of the normal mediation inherent in human consciousness may drop away.

In their portrayals of immediate identity, Stace, Forman, and Shear emphasize the purity of mystical experience, that is, its contentless nature. It is an experience of nothing—no-thing—in particular, non-intentional in the sense of intending no object. Forman labels it a “pure consciousness event (PCE)” and Shear an “introspective mystical experience (IME).” Shear goes on to describe it “as devoid of phenomenological contents (sense perceptions, images, thoughts, emotions, sense of individual identity, etc.) whatsoever” (320). Earlier Stace wrote of “a kind of consciousness which has no objects,” “without any empirical content” (82). Unlike these three thinkers, I would raise the possibility of our ordinary, everyday consciousness occasionally lacking focus on any particular object, thought, emotion,

etc. Clearly, however, these essentialists intend something extraordinary about the nature of mystical experience. In his *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* piece, Forman does not commit himself to any one interpretation of awareness per se, of the “knowledge by identity,” of mystical experience: the fact that “it is beyond all ordinary concepts and language, leaves it open to a virtually infinite range of theories, explanations, modes of expressions and descriptions” (727). However, the mystics he cites consistently interpret this experience as one co-extensive with the ultimate reality behind all things. Following Stace, Shear sanctions bypassing the need for interpretation by positing an “extrovertive mystical experience (EME)” related to the introvertive, delineated as “awareness of this same empirically contentless, abstract, transcendental ‘reality’ as underlying every object in one’s experience, external (trees, the sky, etc.) as well as internal (thoughts, feelings, etc.)” (320).

Unlike the proponents of undifferentiated unity, the other camp of essentialists stresses the metaphysical particularity and distinctness of finite human beings. Simoni-Wastila puts it this way: “Human beings, who by nature are finite and limited in their metaphysical boundaries, can never escape their particular natures. They cannot join with or become undifferentiated from God’s creative oneness, unity, and simplicity” (858).

Thus, Simoni-Wastila, along with McGinn and Idel, maintain some necessary distinction between subject and object in mystical experience. In so doing, they stand with most modern philosophy since Hume and Kant in insisting that consciousness is always intentional, always of something. I note here that James’s model of perception of a wider consciousness normally subliminal to our consciousness falls under the category of mystical experience as involving an object rather than that of undifferentiated unity.

Before leaving this discussion of the essentialists, allow me to complicate things further by introducing additional distinctions. Clearly the first camp posits an undifferentiated experience of identity of human and divine beyond the subject-object structure. Nevertheless, proponents of such experience typically do not hold that this experience encompasses *all* of God’s or the divine consciousness. Divine knowledge of the world represents a prime example of contents of consciousness that mystics typically do not claim. (Interestingly, Simoni-Wastila demurs from divine omniscience to ensure

the “radical particularity” of creatures, contending that “God cannot know our heart of hearts” (860). While process theology strenuously rejects his opinion that “God cannot fully co-experience the feelings of others” (861), it does delay God’s all-inclusive knowledge of a creature’s experience till *after* the unit occasion has made its decision, lest God pantheistically determine that decision.) In a move towards monism, one way to handle this possible discrepancy, as in neo-Platonism and Advaita Hinduism, relegates divine knowledge of the world to lower knowledge. *Nous* (Greek, “mind”) knows the Platonic forms and the World Soul the material world, while Saguna Brahman comprehends the world according to Advaita Hinduism. The One of Plotinus or Advaita’s Nirguna Brahman remain unsullied by lower knowledge, experiencing only the higher knowledge of pure oneness, an experience the mystic believes she or he shares. While the devotee of unmediated identity traditionally holds that knowledge of the world drops away in mystical experience, another option is theoretically possible: Just as the divine in the opinion of some has both the knowledge of pure oneness and of the world, one could maintain that the mystic at one and the same time has knowledge of undifferentiated unity with the divine at the highest level along with some ordinary consciousness of its being in the world.

In fact, that is precisely Paul Tillich’s position. Therefore, Tillich’s thought has affinities with the camp of undifferentiated unity over against those who uphold some subject-object distinction. Tillich insists on that point of “identity” in all religious experience in his “doctrine” of the “mystical a priori” (23), whether that experience be a cultivated mystical state of substantial duration or not. On the other hand, Tillich’s posited experience of that which precedes the subject-object cleavage never constitutes the whole field of any moment of human awareness. Furthermore, *a mediation of sorts* always pertains: in this life at least one never has an experience of unity *beyond* subject-object without something *within* the subject-object structure of the world becoming the vehicle or springboard for the experience. As I have argued elsewhere, visual art provided that springboard for Tillich personally (Nikkel, 2006b: 17-21). The raft metaphor from some forms of Eastern spirituality may help here: while the raft or object is necessary to get to the other side, one throws it away because it becomes irrelevant there. Because of the incidental nature of the specific content of the finite that occasions mystical identity

and because it is distinct from the experience of identity, this experience maintains its “purity.”

On the opposite side are constructivists like Steven Katz, Hans Penner, and Wayne Proudfoot, who maintain that no common core exists in mystical experiences, whether mediated or beyond all mediation. Rather, mystical experiences are wholly constructed by the mystic out of his or her own religious tradition. Note that the second group of essentialists above allows for some construction of the experience by the mystic, though crucially insisting on objective contact with the divine. One could label them as not simply essentialists but contextualists as well. “Constructivism,” as I refer to it, is thoroughgoing. Its assumption is both that there is no objective religious object that is mediated and that the strictly subjective constructions are unique to each mystic. Thus, either no mediated object internal to the mind obtains or, in the case of Proudfoot, an inchoate emotive-physiological state receives linguistic definition (see G. William Barnard on Proudfoot).

Judging that the above brief overview will suffice for introducing the relatively clear-cut constructivist position, I will broach an additional option before critiquing constructivism. Simoni-Wastila, Martin T. Adam, and F. Samuel Brainard have recognized various efforts to find a third way to “mediate” the gap between essentialists and constructivists. Brainard notes the strategy of some, like Michael Sells on Western mysticism and Toshihiko Izutsu on Eastern mysticism, to acknowledge the similarity of mystical texts while bracketing the “ultimate” question of a common core (361-62). However, such skimming of the surface, so to speak, merely postpones rather than dissolves the question of a common core. Brainard favors a *tertium quid* of his own centering on the paradox of certain language about ecstatic experiences that both retains and collapses the subject-object scheme (385ff). Brainard’s proposed solution entails embracing the validity of “both-and” mystical experiences, where supposedly the subject-object/ nominalist–realist/ constructivist–essentialist distinctions are both upheld and transcended at the same time. Looming in the background is the ineffability of mystical experience, as Brainard assumes that language cannot get beyond an either-or answer to the question of these polarities. Though he does not find them promising, Brainard also mentions “no-pole (e.g., non-foundational...) alternatives” (388). He includes “perhaps James’s pragmatism” here but says no more. Maybe Brainard alludes to James’s theory of

pure experience where subject-object are blended at the most fundamental level. This theory might dissolve the paradox of mystical experience through its analogy to (a basic level) of ordinary experience. Yet this model of perception does involve contents and ultimately (further or greater) objectification. Or perhaps Brainard simply alludes to James's belief that moral fruitfulness constitutes one test of a mystical experience's validity. James, however, has much more to say on the matter and believes overall in the objective truth of mystical experience. Finally Brainard mentions (388) and Adam describes a "family resemblance" approach: "mak[ing] no ontological claims... It acknowledges family resemblances among the diversity of experiences called 'mystical' while at the same time picking out for examination subsets of experiences having similar descriptions" (813). As with the approach of noting textual similarities, though, this approach just postpones or ignores the ultimate issue: Are mystical experiences just constructed from traditions by individuals or is there a common core—or perhaps several common cores—behind them?

Brainard's proffered solution represents the most interesting of these various middle ways, so I will address it separately. Its plausibility rests on the truth that any experience with non-linguistic elements can never be fully expressed through language—so how much more might that be the case with an ultimate experience of ultimate reality.

Yet, if we can bother to verbalize about mystical experience at all, I would insist that we could say *something* about the manner and the extent to which it transcends or blurs and to which it retains the subject-object distinction. The fact that mystics' own linguistic interpretations of their experiences disagree on whether and to what extent this distinction remains, while belying any easy consensus on the matter, at least supports the possibility of saying something relevant. Likewise, I would insist that we can say something about whether mystical experiences are wholly constructed by the subject or have some "objective" reality behind them. Brainard agrees with what James labeled the "noetic" quality of mystical experience, that the mystic believes he or she is in touch with some reality. But Brainard's apparent contentment with leaving it there, declining to verbalize about the nature of that reality, strikes me as a cop-out. A constructivist would certainly feel no challenge to take mystical experiences seriously on those terms—or lack thereof.

The fundamental weakness of these above attempts at a *tertium quid* is this: they do not help to resolve the debate unless and until they address *what*, if anything, is mediated—or unmediated—in mystical experience. This brings us back to the question of a common core. Common sense seems to cry out for some common or similar core(s) to mystical experiences. Very similar descriptions of experiences of pure consciousness beyond subject-object cut across various traditions, as do depictions of mystical experiences of divine love. Furthermore, beyond anecdotal evidence of the physiology and mental functioning of meditative adepts, earlier scientific studies monitored the autonomic nervous system (through pulse and blood pressure measurements) and brain wave patterns (using electroencephalography [EEG]) during meditation while contemporary scholars like Eugene d'Aquili and Andrew Newberg have imaged neurological patterns in brain activity common to mystical states.

Let me summarize the scientific findings thus far. At least four brain areas appear relevant to mystical experiences: the thalamus (involved in integrative and non-specific functions), the limbic system (involved with emotions), parts of the pre-frontal cortex, and the posterior sections of the parietal lobes. These latter two areas have the most prominent roles in mystical experiences. The posterior parietal lobes house what Newberg terms "the Orientation Association Area (OAA)" (2002). More specifically the left lobe provides a spatial sense of self, while the right defines the physical space in which the self interacts. The pre-frontal cortex contains "the Attention Association Area (AAA)," which focuses attention on intentional or goal-directed thought, actions, and behavior (Newberg, 2002). In particular, parts of the pre-frontal cortex show elevated activity during thinking about or acting on social relationships (Monastersky). How do cognitive neuroscientists learn what happens in the relevant parts of the brain during meditative and other states? Able to expand upon general conclusions from EEG studies, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) detects blood flow, while positron emission tomography (PET) and single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) can also monitor metabolism and some neurotransmitter activity.

While other areas of the brain undoubtedly also play a role in our sense of self, as suggested earlier the posterior parietal lobes figure crucially. D'Aquili and Newberg coined the phrase "the Unitary Con-

tinuum” to refer to the degree of connectedness to others—or to put it conversely how sharply the self is defined over against others—in various human experiences. On the “less connectedness” side of baseline fall some pathological conditions, including depression. On the extreme of the “more connectedness” side falls what they identify as “Absolute Unitary Being.” Newberg describes this state as one “where there is no perception of spatial or temporal boundaries whatsoever, accompanied by the experience of absolute unity, devoid of content and with even the self-other dichotomy obliterated” (2002). D’Aquili and Newberg’s familiarity with the model of undifferentiated identity of one essentialist camp is unmistakable. Neurological studies so far have not been so precise as to distinguish definitively between reported experiences of undifferentiated unity versus those of a unity of love versus those of “cosmic consciousness,” as Newberg cites the well-known experience of Richard Bucke of the universe as a living consciousness even as individuals retain their individuality (2002). Nevertheless, neuro-studies yield a consensus on reduced activity in the posterior parietal lobes during meditative and contemplative states, pointing to a diminished sense of self vis-à-vis others or, put positively, a greater sense of connectedness and unity with others.

Inversely the studies generally show increased activity in parts of the pre-frontal cortex, apparently corresponding to focusing on relationships with others. In experiences of undifferentiated unity, we seem to find enhanced focus but not on any object in particular. Studies of the autonomic nervous system, as summarized by Newberg, support the existence of this paradoxical condition. Some studies have associated meditation with a relaxed state where the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in and lowers heart and respiratory rates, blood pressure, and metabolism—this would be the common wisdom. Other studies have suggested a more complex picture of meditative states: heightened activity of the parasympathetic nervous system can happen at the same time as heightened activity of the sympathetic nervous system, the system associated with arousal (increased variability of heart rate is one sign of this). As Newberg notes, this “fits characteristic descriptions of meditative states in which there is a sense of overwhelming calmness as well as significant alertness” (2006).

When we move from physiological and neurological studies to a purported genetic basis for the sense of spiritual connection, we slide on thinner ice.

I share with most other participants in the religion and science dialogue some skepticism about Dean Hamer’s assertion of a “God gene.” While he does acknowledge the influence of culture and more personal environment on individuals’ spirituality, his precise claim that genes account for half of the variations in degree of spirituality strikes me and others as too quantitative and reductive for such a complex dimension of human life. Despite my caveat, Hamer may be on to something regarding human tendencies to construct a sharp sense of self versus tendencies to feel connected to wider realities, which would have obvious implications for mystical experiences. Specifically a variation of the gene VMAT2 in some individuals allows for greater dopamine, serotonin, and noradrenaline effects, apparently on the pre-frontal area associated with relationships with others. This suggests that some persons have a stronger proclivity towards unitive experiences than others. In general, this thesis harmonizes with a 2002 neurological study cited by Newberg, indicating increased dopamine activity “during meditation related practices” (2006). In an interesting negative example, decreased activity in this area seems to be associated with a decreased sense of connection with others: a 1994 study showed decreased glucose metabolism in murderers (Newberg, 2002).

Thus, both common sense and diverse scientific studies point to some common or similar core(s) to mystical experience. Yet the constructivist position, presented by Stephen Katz in his 1978 *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* that launched the current debate, defies such apparent common sense and scientific research. Hans Penner probably has stated these constructivist ramifications most bluntly: “...mysticism now covers a host of beliefs and experiences which have no relation to each other whatsoever.” As Martin Adam has aptly observed regarding the Kantian perspective in which Katz understands himself to stand, a peculiarity emerges: for Katz no particular data or object is present in mystical experience to interpret—the concepts of the mystic’s tradition are wholly determinative; so everything is interpretation but ironically nothing pushes back on us calling for interpretation. For Kant, *noumena*—objects in themselves—are never experienced; rather one experiences the appearances of the object, namely, *phenomena*. For Kant, though, we perforce unconsciously interpret objects through basic categories like space and time. The conscious concepts of religious traditions constitute another layer of in-

terpretation. However, as Adam notes, not only the constructivists but some essentialists as well conflate the two types of interpretation, usually by reducing all interpretation to the more or less conscious conceptual level (804ff.).

Not surprisingly, Katz finds the strongest support for his position of interpretation all the way down in the difference between claimed experiences of undifferentiated unity versus those where some distinction remains between subject and object: There is no intelligible way that anyone can legitimately argue that a “no-self” experience of “empty” calm is the same experience of intense, loving, intimate relationship between two substantial selves, one of whom is conceived as the personal God of western religion and all that this entails (39-40).

Obviously my structuring of this article recognizes the validity and importance of this distinction. However, noting a distinction between two basic types of experience as conceptually interpreted—and perhaps difference on the experiential level of the degree to which a sense of self abides or departs—hardly denies the possibility of similarities or common core(s) to mystical experiences.

We have seen the irony of the constructivist premise of no *noumena* or proto-object to interpret—or at least nothing that constrains interpretation. In a further irony, the constructivists end up with a position regarding the issue of mediation similar to those who tout undifferentiated identity, for both maintain the strictly content-less nature of whatever, if anything, the mystic experiences prior to interpretation. Of course, these latter essentialists hold that pure, content-less, unmediated experiences occur apart from interpretation afterwards. But for the former, experiences lack content save for the mystic’s conceptual constructs; from an opposite direction mediation is absent, for again nothing exists—no object—to mediate, or at most an utterly inchoate and content-less emotive-physiological state.

Speaking of mediation, the contemporary consensus accepts the mediated nature of ordinary consciousness and experience. Before proceeding further in the tasks of tackling critically and constructively mystical experience and mediation, I will introduce my perspective of “radical embodiment,” wherein everyday consciousness is radically mediated by the body, indeed rooted in the body, substantively as well as instrumentally. Elsewhere, I argue that even our linguistic experience always builds and relies upon our sensorimotor orientation to and ac-

tion in the world (Nikkel, 2006a). Human consciousness is *embodied* consciousness that evolved biologically for the sake of the organism. Neuroscientists Antonio Damasio and Gerald Edelman theorize that consciousness arises through brain mappings of one’s body in correlation to the environment. As suggested earlier, while mappings in the posterior parietal lobes appear to play an especially significant role in spatial orientation, many parts of the brain figure in our sense of self. Indeed, for Damasio and Edelman, every perceptual sense involves mappings of our bodies in relation to the environment. Both scientists conclude that all mammals have a “basic” or “proto” consciousness that distinguishes self from others and the environment. Only humans have a higher consciousness that entails the ability through language to objectify and reflect upon our sense of self. Damasio in particular focuses on emotions or feelings as integral to the sense of self. Emotions are first of all about the body and its state—though usually involving some direct or indirect relationship to the social or natural environment. I find especially helpful Damasio’s notion of “background body feelings”: in addition to stronger feelings of, say, sadness or joy, we do have feelings about the state of various parts of our body, not only on the surface or near surface areas but also with respect to our viscera. It is no coincidence for Damasio that “how do you feel?” is a common question of greeting. For persons with an integral sense of bodily consciousness, we immediately become aware of a pain say in our big toe because of this constant monitory awareness. These background body feelings, normally peripheral to our focal consciousness, still inescapably color all our ordinary conscious experience. The embodied reality, for example, of a mouse or a dolphin means that the color or tone of its experience will differ somewhat from ours.

Now we are ready to proceed further in considering mediation and mystical experience. I will examine in turn three types of experiences: (1) the most radical: an experience of the divine, circumscribed both as to the number of participants and in time, where *all* sense of ordinary subject-object consciousness drops away; (2) the Tillichian model with its ubiquitous immediate experience of the divine beyond subject-object, albeit usually in the background, always accompanied by some subject-object consciousness; (3) the Jamesian model where some distinction between human subject and divine object remains at every point.

I can think of two models for the first type, radical and exclusionary in the sense that subject-object consciousness completely rescinds. Of course, any serious scholar within the academy or a major world religion acknowledges that normal consciousness always correlates with neural activity. Nevertheless, at least a few dualists regard this correlation as metaphysically incidental and inessential (for example, Eccles). This position is compatible with the further theory that when the subject-object component of consciousness, correlated with brain activity, fades away, pure consciousness, divine consciousness, the deeper essence of consciousness unmediated by any neural activity, remains. Whether or not anyone today explicitly advocates this theory, it does accord with some traditional mystical philosophy in at least Advaita Hinduism and Theravada and Mind-Only Buddhism.

A more plausible model, however, holds that the brain does mediate an experience of identity with the divine completely transcending subject-object consciousness. This model, in keeping with the results of neuroscientific research, grants that various parts of the brain involved in ordinary consciousness differentiate or become quiescent. Note what this model entails: those mediating parts of the brain are utterly transparent to this pure divine consciousness. Though normally involved in subject-object consciousness, they do not color or filter this experience. Background body feelings, referred to earlier, in no way impinge on this state of consciousness. That one may achieve absolute knowledge unmediated by human language, culture, tradition, and bodies I regard as an Enlightenment conceit. Or more precisely, the conceit assumes that such human mediators have no effect on our knowledge—it assumes their absolute transparency to their object. (Unwittingly some radical postmodernists or poststructuralists end up replicating the error of the incidental nature of these human mediators through an unbridled constructivism, though now there is no concrete object to reach [Nikkel, forthcoming].)

To say more about inductive evidence that mediation affects all human knowledge is beyond the scope of this article. I concede the theoretical or logical possibility of the complete transparency of some human brains to a divine consciousness beyond subject-object. But I would note that the supporters of this model carve out an exception to the way the brain otherwise functions in knowing—albeit this alleged pure consciousness is an exceptional state. One does not need to be convinced as I

am that mediation makes a difference in all knowledge to judge this model negatively. Those taking embodiment or evolutionary biology/ neuroscience seriously will likely find it implausible as well. For if our brains evolved in conjunction with our bodies as biological organisms, the evolution of brain structures able to function as a transparent conduit to a divine consciousness seems improbable.

I will now consider the second scenario where an experience of undifferentiated unity with the divine constitutes only part of one's total experience or awareness. As one reader of the proposal for a version of this essay put it, one may have a mystical experience even as "the bodily feelings... just inevitably come along for the ride." Indeed, Tillich's "mediated, unmediated" experience of the ultimate falls precisely under this hybrid category: humans have an awareness of ultimacy beyond the subject-object cleavage that never constitutes their total awareness at any moment. Tillich's mystical *a priori* always combines with an *a posteriori*, in a kind of synthesis reminiscent of Kantian epistemology. The pure experience of the divine makes up part of an "impure" total experience. Before directly addressing the problem of mediation, I will note a radical aspect of Tillich's model. Unlike the first model, everybody has a mystical awareness as a component of every experience—or at least every human of a certain age with normal capabilities. But why stop there? Might not any animal with some awareness or consciousness have such an experience? As the prius of all subject-object relations, logical consistency would seem to demand that, if one type of sentient creature experiences the divine, all do. Obviously a mouse or lizard could not conceptualize or interpret its experience of the mystical *a priori*. This fact points to an interesting issue: while Tillich characterizes the identity beyond subject-object as contentless, this awareness is associated with a sense of the unconditional nature of this divine reality. This awareness has clear parallels, in a Romantic intuitionist vein, to Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence." While this kind of awareness strikes one as more general than particular or specific, one could well regard it as a type of content rather than strictly content-less. The question arises: Does a feeling of unconditionedness or of absolute dependence occur as part and parcel of the experience, or is it an interpretation or (at least proto-) conceptualization, albeit intuitive? Since for Tillich the mystical *a priori* comes with every human experience even though we might fail to consciously recognize it—

and by extension probably with every creaturely experience, I conclude that this sense of unconditionedness involves some interpretation.

Admittedly the above has been something of an excursion. But I will now cut to the chase. What, if anything, mediates this universal awareness of the divine? We could hypothesize that the mystical *a priori* simply bypasses our brains, as we first did with the exclusionary or unmixed experience of identity beyond subject-object. However, for Tillichian thought, a theologically fatal objection arises: This alternative more than smacks of the “supranaturalism” anathema to Tillich. (Though at least in this case of a universal mystical *a priori* sans bodily mediation, the supranaturalism would be built into the structure or “pre-structure” of the universe rather than constitute an occasional intervention.)

The second possibility, again paralleling our consideration of the unmixed experience, is that our brains mediate the mystical *a priori*—human brains and mouse brains—although, in the latter case no conceptualization could ensue. Yet to uphold the crucial element of transcendence of the subject-object structure, this mediation must be completely transparent, as with the exclusionary model. We must imagine then that the brains of all sentient creatures evolved so as to allow this transparency. While theoretically possible, this seems much more implausible than the notion that only human brains happened to so evolve.

The reader for whom my above arguments and assumptions resonate will grant the improbability of mystical experience with no mediation or transparent mediation, where all sense of subject and object vanishes. Yet what of those mystical experiences, perhaps involving some images and/or some emotions, perhaps involving a profound sense of divine love, where some distinction between subject and object remains, even though much of the usual sense of separation has evaporated? William James postulates a mystical experience involving our perception of supernatural mind(s). His use of “perception” is significant for it entails some retention of a subject-object structure. Still this perception is rather direct. Our subjectivity remains and our brains still operate, though in an unaccustomed way, but the fence at the margins of our consciousness comes down, allowing us to experience the consciousness of another, which is normally subliminal to us. This supernatural consciousness of which we become aware does itself lie within the subject-object realm and thus has contents. However, our awareness of it lacks specific

knowledge of the contents. It is somewhat analogous to the memory we sometimes have of a dream where all the details have vanished. (Interestingly, James regarded several of his dreams as such an awareness of supernatural consciousness.) Having outlined James’s postulation of direct human perception of a supernatural mind when the fence confining our ordinary consciousness comes down, I now raise the critical question of whether this model squares with his understanding of consciousness as a psychological and biological process. James himself would see this as a legitimate question, as he regards all experiences as instantiations of these processes.

James’s delineation of consciousness as a flowing activity is still standard in the field of psychology. He noted both consciousness’s orientation to the general environment or “streaming array” as well as its recognition of particulars that satisfy biological needs or drives. James’s most basic theory of consciousness, therefore, acknowledges its entailment of a subject aware of its environment and of objects, some of the latter of which may be subjects in their own right. Since James does not endorse undifferentiated unity, we have a preliminary consistency with respect to his model of mystical experience. While James obviously did not possess today’s knowledge of evolutionary development and neuroscience, he did uphold the evolutionary adaptiveness of consciousness along with its biological nature. So how might subliminal awareness of other consciousnesses that occasionally becomes direct fit into James’s scheme? James of course just dealt with human awareness of other consciousnesses, but I see no reason why it should not apply to other animals given his assumptions. *If* awareness of other consciousnesses were both specific *and* under the organism’s control, the survival advantage for some creatures is apparent: for example, a mouse would find it most helpful to know of Tabby’s intention to pounce. Unfortunately, as we have seen, such awareness normally lacks specificity. (Exceptions for James include automatic writing and mediumship where deceased human spirits might transmit a particular message.) Also unfortunately, the subliminal does not come into direct awareness whenever it would benefit the organism.

In addition, as with Tillich’s mystical *a priori*, awareness of a supernatural consciousness would not prove beneficial to a non-human animal unable to interpret or conceptualize it. Furthermore, according to James these experiences sometimes prove negative due to the psychological make-up of the experi-

ent and/or possibly due to the evil intentions of a supernatural consciousness.

Thus, our discussion of the biological adaptiveness of mystical and related extraordinary experiences on James's model ends in ambiguity. More daunting, however, as with experiences of undifferentiated identity, is the question of mechanism. What perceptual sense or combination of senses—or any aspect of the body and the brain, however intuitive—inputs these other consciousnesses? To my knowledge James did not address this issue. Neopragmatist William Dean, however, has. Given that the five senses are “in abeyance” (James, 1902:424), Dean characterizes this direct perception as a bodily “non-sensuous perception.” Further, he claims that in general “what the body receives is mostly non-conscious, indefinite, and neither transmittable to nor translatable by the senses or cognition” (8). I agree with the non-conscious nature of most of what our bodies input and would add that the bulk of what contributes to our explicit knowledge is subconscious, tacit, and indefinite—explicit cognition forming the tip of the iceberg. The controversial—indeed if my intuition is correct—dubious, part concerns the assertion that we receive input from outside our bodies not transmitted through our five senses that contributes to cognition—in this case cognition of a divine consciousness. Granted the jury is still out on at least one type of extraordinary sense perception, namely, whether people can detect at a rate greater than chance when they are being observed by another without any direct perceptual signals. That leaves us, however, with a dearth of empirical evidence of extraordinary cognition of the consciousness of another.

Moreover, the lack of any candidates from contemporary scientific knowledge for the mediation of such experiences of the contents of other consciousnesses definitely counts against the plausibility of James's model—and probably against other models—of mystical experience where some distinction between human subject and divine object remains. On the face of it, this rather direct transmission of the mental contents of one being to another appears more immaterial or idealistic than bodily. Finally, one could resort to a supernaturalism tailored to mystical experience where some subject-object distinction abides: God miraculously works on the brains of mystics to induce whatever experiences God desires, but leaves no physical evidence of this divine action in the external environment. This would contradict Jamesian metaphysics, however,

where even “supernatural” forces act within the laws and processes of the universe in the broadest sense.

James appended to his basic psychological model of consciousness a theory of perception as “pure experience” of a datum combining subject and object, which we then sharpen into a clear subject-object distinction. This theory does not insist on a complete absence of distinction between subject and object in the earliest moments of perception. However, it does uphold a much greater unity of subject and object than we find in finished perception and experience. The sharing of the phrase “pure experience” with many mystics and scholarly proponents of undifferentiated unity is suggestive. If true, this theory of perception would increase the plausibility of direct experience of the supernatural. Unfortunately the whole thrust of evolutionary biology in general, of the neurobiological theories of Damasio and Edelman in particular, and of neuroscientific evidence thus far indicate that consciousness evolved through the plotting of changes in the (relatively homeostatic) body with respect to changes in the environment. As suggested earlier, our brain-map what occurs in our bodies, what occurs in our environment, and the correlations between the two. This is to say that a subject-object distinction enters on the ground floor of conscious perception (indeed built upon preconscious processes of correlative representations of environment and organism).

Before advancing to my own constructive work on the nature of mystical experience, I want to address a common argument for the reality of mystical experiences of either the undifferentiated or differentiated kind: the sense of the reality of the object or of that which transcends subject-object by many mystical experiencers. Newberg, though not a philosopher or theologian, addresses this issue from a so-called “neuroepistemological” perspective. He cites three criteria by which the brain might judge an experience as real: “the subjective vivid sense of reality,” “duration through time,” and “agreement intersubjectively as to what is real,” but concludes that the latter two collapse into the first (2006). I judge that he dismisses duration and inter-subjective agreement much too quickly. He gainsays the former by noting that the brain structures one's sense of time, with certain brain injuries distorting one's perception of time while some mystics experience no sense of time or duration at all. Yet we do have more, objective scientific evidence that time in any given spatiotemporal frame of reference passes at the same rate whatever our subjective experiences.

On the latter, while undoubtedly some more or less instant neurological criteria exist that enable us to consider some experiences and not others as candidates for “reality,” inter-subjective agreement constitutes a powerful tool to judge the reality of experiences called into question. Thus I conclude that a subjective sense of reality does not succeed as a strong argument for the reality of their object/“non-object.”

From the above, I obviously part company with both camps of essentialists. Yet, as suggested earlier, both reports of mystical experiences and scientific research point to some experiential and physiological-neurological common core to most mystical experiences, both more emotive-imagist and “purer” ones. I propose that the mystical object is not an “external” supernatural one, but more internal to our embodied consciousness. But what mediates what in mystical experience? Larry Short makes a good start in theorizing that the mediation in mystical experience is non-linguistic (though of course describing the experience afterwards entails linguistic mediation) (664ff). Barnard also admits the reality of “pre-linguistic” or “trans-linguistic” experience. Larry Short suggests that any experience involving “an interruption in the movement from signifier to signified,” where we “get hung up in between”—in other words involving consciousness but not of any particular object, and which takes on religious meaning is mystical (668ff). This strikes me, though, as insufficiently specific. Brief, indeed momentary, everyday experiences where one loses awareness of object or signified would not usually, if ever, incorporate a diminished sense of self let alone unity with some larger reality. Mystical experiences by contrast, usually cultivated and relatively sustained, do entail a change in sense of self. Some have hypothesized that all religious experiences involve cross-modal translations of various perceptual senses, thus promoting a unitive feeling (e.g., Winkelman). However, in many mystical experiences the senses do seem to be in abeyance. Amy Hollywood in her recent book, *Sensible Ecstasy*, highlights the frequent employment of erotic images and language in the descriptions of medieval mystics and recommends the cultivation of diverse forms of sensual experience. Previously Jeffrey Kripal authored *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism*. In that work he notes that erotic love in general diminishes the sense of a separate self as it increases the sense of unity with another (12). However, I would note crucial dissimilarities

of ordinary erotic experiences from mystical ones: in human sexual experiences pronounced physiological changes occur in certain parts of the body and the brain, while the one with whom one unites is a particular finite individual. With respect to the brain, Newberg notes similarities between orgasmic and unitive states, but also significant differences: the hypothalamus appears to play a more prominent role in sexual climax, while cortical frontal lobes take a more active role in mystical states (Horgan). In *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul*, Ariel Glucklich considers the role of pain in stimulating certain religious experiences. Glucklich argues that pain can break down the sense of self, thus opening one up to a sense of unity with the sacred (e.g., 207). Without disagreeing with that assessment, I would observe that pain bears no necessary or unique relationship to mystical experience. On the one hand, overwhelming pain sometimes simply dissolves the sense of an integrated self, leaving one incapable of reintegration with a larger reality or meaning. On the other hand, most mystical experiences have not involved pain as a method to achieve greater unity.

The above theories on mystical experience have the advantage of highlighting our embodied nature. Except for Short’s account, they rightly highlight a lessened sense of a distinctive self to the benefit of a greater sense of unity with the other as crucial to mystical experience. I will advance an embodied version of mystical experiences wider in some ways than any of those accounts, yet still circumscribed: its object is not as definite as in cross-modal or erotic experiences, nor is pain a necessary preliminary object, yet its content differs in kind from any mundane experience where one momentarily loses awareness of any particular object. Mystical experiences consist of a distinctive sense of bodily harmony conjoined with a general openness to the potentialities of an integrated environment—thus their expansive and unitive quality. A lessening of the sense of one’s self as simply separate and distinct from others and a concomitant upsurge in the sense that one forms part of a larger reality along with other particular realities constitute a key part of the distinctive quality of this type of experience or state. This state involves distinctive neurological processes, referred to earlier, about which our scientific knowledge continues to grow. Such experiences may be, and historically sometimes—indeed often—have been, interpreted as escape from our world to an otherworldly reality. But a better interpretation is avail-

able: the special sense of openness to unity with an other typical of mystical experiences conduces to a deep sense of harmony and empathy with our fellow human beings, other living creatures, as well as with the supernatural ultimate of the world's religions.

Before concluding, let me review and summarize the reasons and arguments I cited against the essentialist positions: Human (and other animals') bodies and brains evolved in order that biological organisms might flourish in natural (and social) environments. This entailed some distinction between subject and object on the ground floor of sentience or consciousness. While one cannot rule out *a priori* the possibility of human or other animal brain structures evolving with a transparency to the divine consciousness, this is unlikely given the more "translucent" mediation of object by subject that pervades conscious life. Regarding essentialists who maintain some distinction between mystic and the divine, implausibility lies in the empirical lack both of identifiable brain structures or mechanisms to tap into the divine consciousness and of evidence that organisms gain awareness of the consciousness of other organisms apart from perceptions and reflection upon these. What of the mystic advocating unmediated identity who claims that the reduced sense of distinction of self from other that I posit in mystical experiences can reach the point where sense of self somehow disappears and even that what remains is precisely divine consciousness? I would first refer back to the general non-reliability of subjective certainty in such matters. More particularly, I would suggest that the mystic is probably misreading her or his experience, given what we know about the nature of human and animal consciousness.

Undoubtedly for some, my denial of unmediated or direct connection with the divine concedes game, set, and match to the constructivists. Yet given other reasons discernible from our bodily being in the world that validate the truth of the purposive interconnection of all life within the span of such an ultimate reality, why should we not value mystical experiences so interpreted? After all, epistemologically speaking, James and Tillich both hold that mystical experiences never yield specific information about the divine: Tillich because of his espousal of the universal mystical *a priori* and James because we finally cognize only a holistic sense of the co-conscious enveloping supernatural rather than any particulars. And, of course, James's pragmatic concern with moral fruitfulness invites us to value mystical experiences whatever their ultimate cognitive

status. We no longer live in or under the influence of a Romantic age that assumed a direct connection with the divine at the level of intuition or feeling. But the varieties of mystical experience that captivated William James and Paul Tillich may stimulate us to imagine more bodily connections with the divine for a postmodern age.

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