



# BULLETIN

*The North American Paul Tillich Society*

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## **In this issue:**

- The Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society in San Diego and the New Officers of the Society
- Call for Papers for the 2015 Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society
- Call for Papers for the American Academy of Religion Group "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture," November 2015
- Call for Book Proposals and Articles by Walter de Gruyter
- Invitation Letter: "Ultimate Concern—Paul Tillich, Buddhism, Confucianism," July 2015 at Hong Kong Baptist University
- Letter from* Kent Schuette, Member, Robert Lee Blaffer Foundation Board of Directors
- Spring Meeting of the Deutsche-Paul-Tillichs-Gesellschaft
- New Publications on Tillich
- In Memoriam: William R. Crout by Charles Fox
- The Annual NAPTS Banquet Address by Peter Slater: "Looking Back While Looking Forward"
- Review of Ronald Stone, *Politics and Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich at Union Seminary in New York* (Mercer Tillich Series) by Marion H. Pauck
- "Freedom as Autonomy: Observation of Paul Tillich' Reception of Nietzsche" by Christian Danz
- "Trinitarian Symbolism, Mysticism and the God above God" by Keith Chan Ka-fu

**THE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
NORTH AMERICAN PAUL TILlich SOCIETY  
AND THE ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS**

The annual meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society was held in San Diego, California on Friday, November 22, and Saturday, November 23, 2014, in conjunction with the meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The AAR Group, "Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture" also met on Sunday and Monday, November 24 and 25. The meeting on Monday was a joint meeting with the AAR's Kierkegaard Society

The annual banquet of the Society was held on Friday night, November 22, 2014, at *Seasons 52* Restaurant, near the San Diego Convention Center. The guest speaker at the banquet was Peter Slater. His banquet address is published in this Bulletin.

New officers were elected to serve the Society for 2015:

***President***

Charles Fox, SUNY/ Empire State College  
Emeritus

***President Elect***

Bryan Wagoner, Davis and Elkins College

***Vice President***

Daniel Peterson, Seattle University

***Secretary-Treasurer***

Frederick Parrella, Santa Clara University

***Past President and Chair, Nominating Committee***

Duane Olsen, McKendree University

Three new members of the Board of Directors were also appointed for a three-year term, expiring in 2017:

Christopher Rodkey

Zachary Royal

M. Lon Weaver

The Officers and the Board of the Society extend their most sincere gratitude to those members of the Society who have served on the Board for a three-year term expiring in 2014:

Marc Dumas, Université de Sherbrooke

Janet Giddings, Santa Clara University and  
San Jose State University

Marcia MacLennan, Kansas Wesleyan  
University

*Congratulations to the new officers!*

**NAPTS CALL FOR PAPERS  
2015 MEETING  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

In commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Paul Tillich's death and in honor of his enduring legacy, paper proposals for the 2015 Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society in Atlanta are welcomed on the following topics:

- (1) First-person accounts of how Tillich has affected your own teaching;
- (2) Tillich and Lutheran theology;
- (3) Feminist appropriations and re-assessments of Tillich;
- (4) Interdisciplinary engagements with and responses reflecting the legacy and enduring appeal of *The Courage to Be*.

Tillich-related papers on other themes will be seriously considered, with specific themes for sessions determined by the merit of the proposals received. Proposals submitted to the AAR Tillich Group that are not selected will also be considered with permission of the author.

Please send proposals by April 1 electronically to:

Bryan Wagoner, Davis & Elkins College

Email: <wagonerb@dewv.edu>

Method of proposal submission: MS Word  
Attachments preferred

**Deadline:** 15 April 2015

**CALL FOR PAPERS  
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION GROUP  
"TILlich: ISSUES IN THEOLOGY,  
RELIGION, AND CULTURE"  
2015 MEETING  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

**Statement of Purpose**

The AAR Group fosters scholarship and scholarly exchanges that analyze, criticize, and interpret the thought or impact of Paul Tillich (1886–1965) and that use his thought—or use of revisions or reactions against his thought—to deal with contemporary issues in theology, religion, ethics, or the political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, or artistic spheres of human culture. We cooperate with the North American Paul Tillich Society (a

Related Scholarly Organization of the AAR), which is linked with the German, French, and other Tillich societies. Papers at our sessions are published in the Society's quarterly Bulletin without prejudice to their also appearing elsewhere.

### 2015 Program Plan

In honor of the 50th anniversary of Paul Tillich's death on October 13, 1965, we call for papers that assess Tillich's impact in a variety of areas, such as philosophical theology, religion and science, black theology, feminist theology, Asian theology, art(s) and religion, and popular culture.

We are also interested in papers that present an exploration of future possibilities for incorporating Tillich's ideas. For example, in his last public lecture in Chicago he specifically stated that his hope for the future of Christian theology lay in its encounter with world religions. What progress has been made in interreligious dialogue, and what remains to be accomplished?

Papers that address other aspects of the range, diversity, and depth of Tillich's thought, past, present, and future, are welcome.

We also welcome suggestions for roundtable sessions. A roundtable session has one announced theme and participants in the session address that theme but do not present separate formal papers. Please provide information about the theme under consideration, a list of participants' names and institutions of affiliation, the name of the person who will preside, and the name of the person(s) asked to respond (if applicable.)

**CALL FOR BOOK PROPOSALS  
AND ARTICLES**

From Katarzyna Tempczyk of De Gruyter Open, a part of De Gruyter publishing group:

De Gruyter Open, a part of De Gruyter publishing group, invites book proposals for the Open Access program on Theology and Religious Studies. Especially welcome are proposals for the new series on: Hinduism, New Religious Movements and Philosophy of Religion.

More details to be found at:

[http://degruyteropen.com/you/book-author/subjects/theology\\_religious\\_studies/As](http://degruyteropen.com/you/book-author/subjects/theology_religious_studies/As)

Call for Submissions—*Open Theology Journal*

*Open Theology*—an international Open Access, peer-reviewed academic journal (<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/opth>), launched recently by De Gruyter Open, welcomes contributions addressing religion in its various forms and aspects: historical, theological, sociological, psychological, and other.

The journal encompasses all major disciplines of Theology and Religious Studies, presenting doctrine, history, organization, and everyday life of various types of religious groups and the relations between them. We publish articles from the field of Theology as well as Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology of Religion and dialogue between Religion and Science. The *Open Theology* does not present views of any particular theological school nor of a particular religious organization. The contributions are written by researchers who represent different religious views. The authors present their research concerning the old religious traditions as well as new religious movements.

The authors are given a variety of benefits:—convenient, web-based manuscript submission and tracking system;

—transparent, comprehensive and fast peer-review;

—efficient route to fast-track publication and full advantage of De Gruyter's e-technology;

—no publication charge in the first three annual volumes;

—free language assistance for authors from non-English speaking regions;

All accepted papers will be immediately available on-line.

More information about the journal may be found at:

<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/opth>

To submit an article for *Open Theology*, please use the on-line submission system

<http://www.editorialmanager.com/openth/>

Please feel free to forward this invitation to any interested colleagues and associates.

**INVITATION LETTER  
ULTIMATE CONCERN:  
Paul Tillich, Buddhism, Confucianism**

*Centre for Sino-Christian Studies*  
Hong Kong Baptist University

24 November 2014

Dear Prof. Frederick J. Parrella:

Paul Tillich, 20<sup>th</sup> century Protestant theologian and philosopher of religion, was one of the great heritages in the 20th century. As David Tracy said, "the impact of Paul Tillich's work in contemporary theology is the influence not of a school but of a pervasive presence." His theological ideas still have remarkable influence on 21<sup>st</sup> century theological landscape in different directions. In Germany, the Tillich-Renaissance is motivated by the Paul Tillich German Society under which many early Tillich's manuscripts were published. The portrayal of early Tillich, closely connected with German philosophical traditions, provides us more information to understand his career and thought comprehensively. In the United States, Tillich is still an important dialogue partner with respect to different current issues. All these features are recorded in *North American Paul Tillich Society Bulletins*. In Chinese worlds, many scholars from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan fruitfully appropriate Tillich's ideas in their contextual readings.

2015 will be the 50th anniversary Paul Tillich's death. It is a good time for us to organize an international conference to memorize this event. We want to locate Tillich in a globalized context not merely because Tillich provides rich resources in religious dialogue, but also his ideas, we believe, can shed light on our contextual and globalized situation. Tillich's spirit would be adapted in this conference across boundaries in order to enrich the East-West dialogue in numerous issues. In the following list, the first item already explicitly links the two sides of our conference theme; all others have this condition as their basic assumption. There are three objectives of this conference:

1. To appreciate Tillich's heritage within the Western and Eastern contexts;
2. To appropriate critically Tillich's ideas under global-localized contexts;
3. To explore the possibility of global religious-cultural understanding through the dialogue of Tillich's thought and the East-West religious-cultural matrix.

Therefore, we organize the following sections:

Tillich and Western Heritage  
 Chinese reception of Tillich  
 Tillich and Chinese and East Asian Philosophy  
 Tillich and Buddhism  
 Roundtable: The Future of Tillich

We will provide a round-trip ticket in economy class together with free accommodations

during the conference period. If you would be interested in participating in our conference as a speaker, we would be very grateful to have you fill out the attached form and return it to our CSCS office, so that we can anticipate your needs as we continue to work on the details of our conference.

Thank you in advance for considering taking part in this Paul Tillich International Conference!

Yours sincerely and collegially,

Lauren F. Pfister

For the Organizing Committee

Organizing Committee Members:

Prof. Lauren F. Pfister, Director, CSCS, HKBU  
 Prof. Kai Man Kwan, Head, Religion and Philosophy Department, HKBU  
 Dr. Kwok, Wai Luen, Assistant Professor, Religion and Philosophy Department, HKBU  
 Dr. William NG Yau-nang, Associate Professor Religion and Philosophy Department, HKBU  
 Dr. Keith CHAN Ka-fu, lecturer, Religion and Philosophy Department, HKBU

Centre e-mail address: [cscs@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:cscs@hkbu.edu.hk)

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Centre Mailing Address:

Centre for Sino-Christian Studies  
 Hong Kong Baptist University  
 34 Renfrew Road, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong, China

*[Editor's Note: Please email the CSCS for the proposal form.]*

**Letter from KENT SCHUETTE  
 MEMBER, ROBERT LEE BLAFFER  
 FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

November 25, 2014

Dr. Frederick J. Parrella  
 Professor of Theology  
 Department of Religious Studies  
 Kenna Hall, Suite 300 Room H  
 Santa Clara University  
 Santa Clara, CA 95053

Dear Fred,

It was great talking with you. I am beginning the process of exploring what would be the best way for the Blaffer Foundation to rededicate Tillich Park on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Paul Tillich's

passing on October 22, 2015. My communication has taken time, as I wanted to have this correspondence reviewed by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

We have three guesthouses in our holdings, which I have blocked for the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> of October. I have also arranged to have The Richard Meier Atheneum available for a program on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.

We have formally adopted "The Jane Blaffer Owen Sanctuary" as a permanent program of the Foundation. It consists of all the grounds of the Foundation.

We have begun the process of regenerating Tillich Park (Phase I) with the planting of 60 Norwegian Spruce trees, and the installation of pine needle mulch. The park was originally planted with 350 trees.

We have established "The Friends of the Jane Blaffer Owen Sanctuary" and are establishing cumulative patron membership levels from \$25.00 to \$500,000.00. We have established a tree registry for Tillich Park that will be permanently housed in the Paul Tillich Archive of the Foundation. The Paul Tillich Park Patron level is \$250.00. All funds donated to the tree registry will be used to buy an additional 60 trees. Any residual funds will be used for the long-term care and maintenance of the park.

We are removing original trees only when they are dead. After this regeneration, it is our hope to add a few trees each year, so the canopy as a sense of enclosure, is always present.

Tillich Park has moved from being a secular park to a sacred place and a refuge from everyday life for many. A large number of visitors to New Harmony return year after year to walk the town's landscape and experience the regeneration of one's soul. Tillich Park is a permanent part of a great many pilgrimages, in all four seasons and all hours of the day and night.

It is a walking garden with no benches, swings, or seats, except the earth itself. When you move to sit in its arms, the mounds visually and acoustically remove you from the real world that surrounds the park. You are truly held in the arms of sacred Earth, and experience the sounds of nature.

As Rollo May stated, "Paul Tillich in a sense was a man without a place. He lived and taught in many places—Berlin, Frankfurt, New York, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Chicago—yet it is

hard to think of him as really belonging to any of them. It should be said of him as was said of Erasmus, 'He was not a citizen of any country; he was a citizen of the world.' How appropriate then that he should come to rest finally in a place symbolic of his own deepest aspirations. If Paul Tillich belongs anywhere, it is in a utopian setting such as New Harmony."

If any society members would like to support the sanctuary's efforts in regeneration of Tillich Park, their gift should be made to:

The Robert Lee Blaffer Foundation  
Post Office Box 399

New Harmony, Indiana 47631

Please note that the gift is for Tillich Park.

I would also ask that you help identify the most appropriate individual to ask to present a program on October 24<sup>th</sup> in New Harmony. Is that you?

Respectfully,

Kent Schuette

Member, Robert Lee Blaffer Foundation Board of Directors

Chairman, Building and Grounds Committee

(765)532-8655

[schuette@purdue.edu](mailto:schuette@purdue.edu)

#### SPRING MEETING OF THE DPTG

#### **Handeln im Horizont der Zeit:**

Ethik und Eschatologie bei Paul Tillich

**P**aul Tillich (1886-1965), einer der bedeutendsten Theologen und Religionsphilosophen des 20. Jahrhunderts, hat den radikalen Wandel der Welt seiner Zeit intensive wahrgenommen. Seine Beschreibung der fundamentalen Umbrüche aus dem Jahr 1963 mutet an, als sei sie der Gegenwart entnommen: Wir leben „in einer geschichtlichen Epoche..., die durch eine radikale und revolutionäre Umwandlung eines geschichtlichen Zeitalters in ein anderes gekennzeichnet ist ... Wir stehen in der Mitte einer Weltrevolution, die jeden Bereich der menschlichen Existenz ergreift und uns eine neue Deutung des Lebens und der Welt aufdrängt“.

Paul Tillich hat sich in seinen ethischen Schriften deshalb intensiv mit der Frage beschäftigt, welche Gestalt eine Ethik haben musste, die diesem radikalen Wandel der Welt

Rechnung trägt. Eine solche Ethik müsse Tillichzufolge eine Ethik jenseits starrer Normen und Gesetzeseinerseits und rein pragmatischer Ansätze andererseits sein, eine Ethik jenseits von Absolutismus und Relativismus. Es musste eine Ethik sein, die auf den jeweiligen geschichtlichen Augenblick, den für Tillich so wichtigen Kairos, bezogen ist. Auf der Tagung werden sich etablierte Forscher und Nachwuchswissenschaftler in dem aufgezeigten Horizont mit verschiedenen Facetten der Ethik und Eschatologie Paul Tillichs beschäftigen. Auch wird es hinreichend Gelegenheit geben, die in den Vorträgen erörterten Aspekte des Tagungsthemas vertiefend zu diskutieren. Herzliche Einladung nach Bad Boll!

Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll  
FAX 07164 79-5206  
Sekretariat Karin Nitsch  
Akademieweg 11  
73087 Bad Boll

Prof. Dr. Gudrun Holtz  
Prof. Dr. Christian Danz

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Adam Pryor, *The God Who Lives: Investigating the Emergence of Life and the Doctrine of God* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

*The God Who Lives* considers "life" as a conceptual problem, examining how new studies about the emergence of life have critical implications for interpreting the religious symbol "God is living." In particular, Pryor suggests how absence and desire, what is termed "abstentional desire," are critical principles of life for scientific and philosophical thinking today. He goes on to develop a constructive theological proposal drawing on ground of being theologies, particularly as inspired by Paul Tillich, in which the theological meaning of the symbol "God is living" is interpreted in terms of the insights garnered from the principle of abstentional desire, concluding that God can be understood as akin to the role played by absence in living things. Life is an absent but effective whole in relation to the material parts of which it is comprised. God as living is a similarly effective absence in relation to the world.



#### MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM R. CROUT

CHARLES FOX

With sadness I must report to the members and friends of the Society that our long-time colleague in Tillich studies, William R. "Bill" Crout, died on February 11, 2015, at a hospice center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Born in 1929 in a small town in southern Mississippi, close to the Gulf, Bill was 85 years old at the time of his death. The world of Tillich scholarship has lost someone who understood Tillich's *opus magnum* intimately; I have lost a friend of some 55 years.

Members of the Society may most immediately recall the very engaging talk that Bill gave to our Annual Banquet in 2006 on "Tillich's Harvard Years" (an expanded text of which appeared in the Summer, 2007, issue of the *Bulletin*). In rich detail, and with a host of fascinating anecdotes, Bill recounted to us the multi-dimensional interaction of Tillich with the Harvard community during the period of 1955-62, when he taught there in the elite status of a "University Professor." That account ranged over Tillich's relations to the Divinity School faculty (generally smooth), to the members of the Philosophy Department (generally rough), to selected faculty in the sciences (unexpectedly admiring), to undergraduates who packed his lectures (awestruck, but commonly baffled), and not least, his relations to those of us who were his graduate students during that period of time (overwhelmed by the consistent brilliance of his insights). This recollection provides the most comprehensive and insightful portrayal we have of Tillich during his Harvard years, when he had become an international celebrity intellectual, and a theological "rock star" if ever there were one.

In recent years, Bill Crout also contributed three lengthy obituary tributes to the *Bulletin*. The first, on Krister Stendahl (Fall, 2008), a New Testament professor, and then Dean of Harvard Divinity School during the tumultuous years of 1968-79, recalled with candor the rather ambivalent (and manifestly envious) attitude of Stendahl toward Tillich. The second, on Jane Blaffer Owen (Summer, 2010), detailed the path by which Ms. Owen discovered Paul Tillich and came to transform her husband's family home of New Harmony, Indiana, with the creation there of the Paul

Tillich Park and the interment of Tillich's ashes therein. The third, on Joan Ryerson Brewster (Winter, 2010), provided a series of warm recollections of a woman who seldom missed a class or presentation by Tillich in any setting during his whole Harvard career.

As an undergraduate, Bill Crout attended Millsaps College in Mississippi, where he majored in both philosophy and music. Indeed, as Rishi Preddie records in her *Boston Globe* obituary, "while a college student he represented the state of Mississippi in the Associated Concert Bureau of New York's National Piano Finals, performing at Carnegie Hall." After his graduation from Millsaps, Bill came to pursue a Bachelor of Divinity degree at the Boston University School of Theology. Upon completion of that program, he served as a Chaplain in the Navy for four years before coming in the Fall of 1955 as a graduate student in Harvard's newly formed doctoral program nondescriptly titled "Higher Degrees in the Study of Religion." That cross-departmental program, created as part of the revival of the Divinity School under the new presidency of Nathan Pusey, linked the study of religion in the Divinity School with various faculties in the School of Arts and Sciences. Bill's focal field was Theology, which of course immediately brought him into contact with the eminent Paul Tillich, who also had arrived at Harvard in the Fall of 1955. Tillich had been personally recruited by President Pusey to assume one of the distinguished University Professor chairs at Harvard, of which there were always to be only five at a time. Tillich replaced the retiring Percy Bridgman, a Nobel Laureate in Physics.

During the next seven years, Bill Crout was a dedicated student of Tillich, attending all of his course lectures, even those being offered for the second time around, when, of course, they were never the same as the first time around. This was especially true (as I shall further detail momentarily) for the lectures associated with the last two sections of the *Systematic Theology*, which were offered twice during this period. Volume III finally appeared in print a year after Tillich's "second retirement" of 1962 (his first retirement, of course, being from Union Theological Seminary). Following his Harvard retirement, Tillich had become the John Nuveen Professor of Theology at the University of Chicago, where he remained until his death in October 1965.

I first met Bill when I came into that same doctoral program in the Study of Religion, though my field was officially Philosophy of Religion. We were both among the most dedicated and passionate of Tillich's students and theological admirers. During the last two years of Tillich's tenure at Harvard, his Teaching Assistant was Paul Lee. Given the overwhelming student enrollments in Tillich's courses at that time, Lee recruited Bill and me to join him as Grading Assistants during Tillich's last year at Harvard. His courses were flooded not only with Harvard undergraduates (a term Tillich confessed to never having heard before coming to Harvard), but also with student "emigrés" from nearby MIT.

In that context we both had occasion to work ever more closely with Tillich himself. Indeed, in August of 1963, just prior to the release of Volume III, Bill visited Tillich at his summer home in Easthampton, Long Island to assist him in reviewing the galley sheets for the upcoming publication. About a year and a month later, I also came to visit Tillich in Easthampton, and I excitedly brought along my copy of Volume III for Tillich to inscribe. But when I got there, I discovered that Tillich was in quite a despondent state. By this point in time (1964), Harper and Row had secured the rights to publish a one-volume edition of the *Systematic*. Using his vacation sojourn to reread Volume III in preparation for this upcoming edition, Tillich found that time and again the text did not seem to say in English what he knew he wanted to say. There were too many obscure passages in which Tillich felt he had groped for the proper English expression but had failed to capture it in his final formulation. In that state of mind, Tillich asked if Bill and I might undertake the task of critically reviewing the whole text of Volume III to offer him our suggestions about how he could improve it.

Upon returning to Cambridge, I discussed Tillich's request and proposal with Bill, and he and I decided to divide the text of Volume III in such a way that I would work on the revision of Part Four, "Life and the Spirit," and he would work on the revision of Part Five, "History and the Kingdom of God." Bill in turn enlisted the aid of Joan Brewster to work with him on Part Five. For the sake of clarifying the historical record here, it should be noted, as I pointed out to Bill right after his memorial tribute to Brewster appeared in the Winter 2010 issue of the Bulletin, that he had

there inadvertently reversed our division of labor. I recall his chagrin during our phone conversation as he asked, "Oh my goodness, is that what I wrote? Thanks for reminding me."

Over the course of the next year, from September of 1964 until August of 1965 when I departed for a teaching appointment at Williams College, Bill and I met regularly (just the two of us) to review my proposed clarifications of Part Four and his (and Joan's) proposed clarifications of Part Five. The task quickly became quite overwhelming, and ever more voluminous in outcome, especially in the case of Bill's meticulous effort to make Tillich speak ideas deeply rooted in 19<sup>th</sup> century German thought with an English clarity, which tended to require the translation of complex German multi-words into complete English sentences. But then on the evening of October 22, 1965, came the phone call that Tillich had died a few hours earlier, and we knew that our task was at an end. Thus it came as no surprise, when we eventually approached Bob Kimball, Tillich's literary executor, with the results of our labors and the request to incorporate them in some fashion into the one-volume edition now moving forward, Kimball rejected this as completely impossible. Indeed it was impossible, for translation quickly elides into interpretation, as Schleiermacher long ago realized in his efforts to translate Plato, thus spurring his development of modern hermeneutic theory. So, needless to say, the products of our year-long devotion descended into our respective file cabinets, where they have lain ever since.

After a brief period of teaching in the Humanities program of MIT at the end of the '60's, Bill veered away from a more conventional academic career to assume various roles on the staff of the Memorial Church in Harvard Yard. And in due course, he was appointed to a position within the University Marshall's office, a position he retained until his retirement just a few years ago. In the context of that role, and in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Tillich's death (1990), with the support of the Marshall's office, Bill founded the Tillich Lecture Series at Harvard. In the early years, there were commonly two lectures a year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring, though in later years a single lecture occurred, in the Spring. Over the course of this series, Bill recruited an impressive array of scholars from a variety of creative domains to deliver this lecture. As the years went

on, and the familiarity with Tillich's thought and his memory at Harvard waned, it seemed that Tillich's name was invoked more honorifically than substantively in the lecture presentations. But certainly the series, which was dear to Bill's heart and mind, served to keep alive the memory of our esteemed teacher for a later generation at Harvard who at most, but surely also at best, had read only his brilliant volume, *The Courage to Be*.

Although my relation to Bill was always very much concerned with our mutual interest in and commitment to the thought and legacy of Paul Tillich, I gradually became aware of many other fascinating activities that engaged the rich array of Bill Crout's interests. He became an avid collector of Asian art, and even worked for a while on the side in an art dealership. In the last decade or so of his life, Bill told me about his intimate engagement with the Lowell House Senior Common Room at Harvard, where the testimony of others indicates his empathic spirit had a profound influence on the lives of many undergraduates. Also, for some 22 years Bill led the Cambridge Writers Group, a colloquium of writers and poets that he had founded some time in the early '90's. The aforementioned Rishi Preddie, a writer herself and a member of the group, has described to me the compelling influence of Bill's gracious but meticulously refined sense of the written word upon the participants of that group.

At some point later this Spring, a special memorial event for William R. Crout will occur at Harvard's Memorial Church, and his remains will be subsequently interred in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Immediate survivors include one brother, who lives in Huntsville, Texas.

Charles W. Fox

Williamstown, Massachusetts

### **TILlich AT HARVARD: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

PETER SLATER

*Editor's Note: This speech was delivered at the annual banquet of the North American Paul Tillich Society on Friday, 21 November 2014, at Seasons 52 Restaurant, San Diego, California.*

Like hundreds of others, excited by reading *The Courage to Be*, I went to Harvard because Tillich was there. In the Fall of 1957, first year stu-

dents were not admitted to his advanced seminars. But we could take his M. Div. lecture course for credit. He would lecture for an hour, take a break, and then lecture for another hour, speaking to propositions that formed the basis of his forthcoming book. The formula was one carried over from his years in Germany and continued at Union Theological Seminary in New York. That year, the lectures were on what would be Volume III of his *Systematics*.

During the break, students wrote out questions and left them on the lectern for him to answer at the beginning of the second hour. His answers almost always unpacked relevant passages from the *Systematics*. The heavily accented word I most remember from his discussions of *Geist* was “dy-nahmic.”

That was the year, as Bill Crout mentioned a few meetings back, when one of the questions was a unique request. Sputnik was due to orbit over eastern Massachusetts during the second hour. It would be visible from Harvard Yard. Could we please go outside and see it?

Tillich read the questions aloud before answering them, exegesis as he went along, paraphrasing them, while obviously pondering from which section of the *Systematics* to answer us. The challenge, when framing a question, was to put in enough qualifiers to prevent his “eisegeting” our queries, then produce an answer not at all related to the question one had had in mind.

It was a challenge to correlate my questions with any of Tillich’s answers. The only example I have from my old lecture notes is a question, with many sub-clauses, asking why, in his lectures on actualizing Spiritual Presence and the coming Kingdom, he only unpacked the traditional Protestant conceptions of faith and love, without ever developing the third theological virtue, hope. Liberation theology was not then on his horizon. In the printed version of Volume III, he does allude in passing to Ernst Bloch’s “principle of hope.”

On the day Sputnik flew over, we could see Tillich at the lectern visibly pondering where, from within “the System,” to find a reply, until it was explained to him that the question was about taking an unscheduled break to see Sputnik, not understanding the Holy Spirit. A look of delight spread across his face and he happily led us out, to join the throngs in Harvard Yard gazing expectantly up into the sky. And indeed, we did all witness an historic moment that day.

Our only personal contact with Tillich, when taking his large-enrollment basic courses, was limited to that brief chance to write out a direct question and hear his answer. Discussions of term-paper topics, grades, and the like were handled by his teaching assistant (that year, Bob Kimball).

In my case, I had come directly from studying Patristics at Cambridge University (UK) and, before that, linguistic analytic philosophy at McGill University in Montreal. There, as in the Philosophy Department in Harvard Yard, the reigning oracle was Wittgenstein, not Heidegger. The only member of the Harvard Philosophy Department in regular conversation with Tillich was John Wild, who was translating Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* into English. (John Macquarrie actually beat him to the publishers.)

Tillich never learnt to differentiate between linguistic analysts, invoking the later Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle. He dismissed them all as positivists. The Harvard philosophers read W. V. Quine on symbolic logic, and were adamant that they were not positivists.

To Anglo-American empiricists and pragmatists, Tillichian references to ontology sounded like language “going on holiday.” I arrived at Harvard having studied Kant, but never having heard of Schelling. I had to rework my first term paper for Robert Kimball several times, before I could connect my way of putting things with Tillichian theological locutions. One imperative that came through loud and clear was: be systematic.

As a University Professor, Tillich was allowed to offer courses in any department of the university. He regularly gave one in the Philosophy Department on German Classical Idealism. I audited it in the Fall of 1958 and still have my lecture notes.

They begin with him stressing that his course title was “German Classical Philosophy,” not German Classical Idealism, counting as idealist those whose subjective powers of conception shape their perceptions of objects, not vice versa, moving from object to subject. His argument was that not all the Germans philosophizing about religion were idealists in all their phases. Those discussed in detail were Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.

Looking back at my notes for his first lecture, I am struck by Tillich’s exposition of how the German Classical philosophers differed from their French and English contemporaries. Their idea of

“classical” was based on recovering Plato and Aristotle, whose “classical period” was in reaction against critical, “revolutionary” predecessors. Plato aimed at a rational synthesis that would re-establish the greatness of the past aristocratic ethos of a Greek city-state.

The German classical philosophers were similarly reacting to the philosophy of Kant and Enlightenment criticisms of dogmatic theology. They aimed to synthesize religion and philosophy by analyzing the universal structures of reality behind natural processes, doing justice to subjective perspectives.

Because of the “postponing effects” of the Reformation, according to Tillich, Renaissance humanism arrived later in Germany than elsewhere. The ideas of the classical philosophers in Germany did not inform the thinking of the intellectual elites of the whole nation, as a relatively small number of Christian humanists did in Britain.

The German masses were under the sway of Lutheran paternalism. They lacked the “shaping power” of thought that comes from having lived through a successful revolution. To Lutherans, Tillich remarked, all power is from God. Ideologically, that belief did not prepare them to challenge Hitler when he seized power.

Politically, neither Hegel nor Schelling could have produced a revolution, according to Tillich. Their ideal of ultimate freedom was propounded as a reaction against ecclesiastical heteronomy. In Hegel’s system, the central idea of the Prussian state stifles the ideal of freedom.

By comparison, in France, the modern intellectuals’ conflict was with the Roman Catholic Church, which they dismissed. In England, religious concerns were mainly liturgical and a *laissez-faire* attitude fostered tolerant Christian humanism.

Kant was called “the philosopher of human finitude.” His question was: what makes knowing with certainty possible? An object is only known to a subject when confirmed by direct observation. After Kant, the goal of the German Classical philosophers was to synthesize philosophy and religion, while unpacking the finite-infinite identity undergirding the known world. As we all know, Tillich looked to aesthetics, when seeking ideas for synthesizing pure and practical reason.

From my British empiricist perspective, the German classical philosophers’ school was the

only one whose history Tillich did not distort with his editorial slant. This was because his own thinking was so close to theirs. I left much more aware of important differences among Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, dizzied by how many phases and stages of Schelling’s positions he took us through.

Those of us concentrating on systematic and philosophical theology, in our advanced degree programs (Ph.D. and Th.D.), first met, not in Tillich’s graduate seminars, but in Paul Lehmann’s. He was working through the newly published English translations of Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*, that year, happily for me, Volume II-2 on predestination. By the time we got into Tillich’s graduate seminar, during our second year, we were nearly all Barthians. However, even the most Barthian among those who took the Tillich seminar (George Kehm), was not still a Barthian within a decade or so of graduating.

His graduate seminars met weekly in the Tillich’s apartment after supper, where he served us beer. He assumed that the systematic weakness of English theology was due to the fact that the English drink tea. I suggested it was due to their drinking sherry. Only recently, while checking Hannah’s memoirs of their years in Frankfurt, did I discover that Tillich loved his sherry.

Hannah recalled their Harvard years as among their best in America, because, as a University Professor, he was not expected to live up to any current American stereotype of Protestant theologians. Furthermore, he was paid more in accord with his status as an international celebrity.

Like Tillich, my father had been an army chaplain, serving in Burma during World War II. My mother, my brother, and myself were evacuated to Australia for the duration. We did not see him again for five years. I learnt later that he told my mother not to feel bound by their marriage vows, during their years of separation. She remained completely chaste. But that wartime context prepared me to hear of Tillich’s sexual affairs without being judgmental, as many in America were.

We used to wonder whether a gorgeous blond, whom we met occasionally, entering the elevator to go up in the Tillich’s apartment building, as we exited going down, was one of his more notorious admirers. But Hannah’s memoirs indicate that their Bohemian post-World War I lifestyle was well behind them by then.

When Tillich moved to Harvard, he also got to choose his junior colleague in Theology. He was John Dillenberger, who ended his days at Berkeley. He and my father were among the many World War II veterans who took Tillich's courses in Systematics at Union. There they all lived in the on-campus suites for married couples and often met informally after class.

My father fancied himself as a journalist and was writing a novel about his war experiences. For his Tillich term paper, he submitted a short story about an Anglican bishop, who was too busy with committee meetings to have time for the pastoral problems of individual visitors. Tillich's TA at Union (Dillenberger or Cornelius Loew?) was unsure how to evaluate it as a paper, so passed it on to Tillich. He approved its literary contrast between *kairos* and *chronos*, and gave it an "A."

My mother and Hannah Tillich were on friendly terms from those New York days, because they both wrote poetry and had to live with larger-than-life clergy husbands who, as former army chaplains, did not fit the conventional image of American Protestant theologians.

My father was my first theology professor during my one year as a Divinity student at McGill. I partly went to Cambridge (UK) to get away from him, so I was horrified, when he showed up on the Harvard faculty, during my third year, as its first ever "Professor of World Religions." His doctoral thesis for Columbia was a comparative study of Christian ideas of heaven and Burmese Buddhist teaching about Nirvana/Nibbana.

As Grace Cali's memoir of his Harvard years attests, Tillich always put his students ahead of most other commitments. That meant, if a committee meeting was called when his class was scheduled, he usually skipped the meeting. He was furious with Dean Horton for pushing through the motion to appoint Christopher Dawson, as the first ever Roman Catholic on the faculty of the Harvard Divinity School. He made sure that he was at the meeting that voted on my father's appointment.

Unknown to me (one of their graduate students and later one of their Teaching Fellows in Theology), Tillich and all my professors in the Theology Department (Lehmann, Dick Niebuhr) voted against my father's appointment. They argued that it and the Catholic chair should be in

the Yard, not diluting the newly revitalized Protestant image of the Divinity School. Tillich was most upset by the Dawson appointment, not wanting a Catholic sitting in judgment on Dillenberger, when he came up for tenure. Ironically, the current Catholic chair-holder is Frank Fiorenza, who is the only one now at Harvard directing theses on Tillich.

Krister Stendahl was a Scandinavian Lutheran who believed that studying the history of religions should be an intrinsic part of Divinity programs. His position won the day. After the Center for the Study of World Religions was built, my father persuaded Tillich to serve on some of its doctoral advisory committees. I waited on table at a private luncheon that my father hosted for Tillich and Eliade, when they discussed the idea of giving a joint seminar, the year Tillich was leaving to go to Chicago.

James Luther Adams, one of Tillich's earliest American boosters and editor/compiler of *The Protestant Era*, was by then another colleague at Harvard. He was a Unitarian proponent of the history of religions and an avid religious tourist. When in Japan, he would go and sit cross-legged at Zen temples and eat whatever holy food was put before him. He and my father finally persuaded Tillich to go to a gathering in Tokyo. Tillich insisted on staying at a safe western-style hotel and spent most of the time as the star presence at round-table discussions of Christianity and Buddhism. Hannah was the one who went out and learnt how the locals lived.

Tillich was not interested in my father's expertise on Theravada Buddhism, but he did solicit suggestions regarding the Tillichs' upcoming trip to Israel, where he hoped to reconnect with Martin Buber. I have a copy of Hannah's memento of their visit signed by "Paulus."

The usual format for Tillich's graduate seminars was to have each student present for debate his prospective thesis topic. (I don't remember any "hers.") The most memorable session for me was when Eberhard Amelung, an exchange scholar from Germany, presented the view that Bonhoeffer and Tillich were ahead of others, in opposing Hitler, because of their Prussian self-confidence, due in no small measure to their family backgrounds. By contrast, Catholic priest-theologians were often the first generation from their lower class families to have attended univer-

sity. They were very, very reluctant to jeopardize their prized professorships.

During the last semester, before he left for Chicago, we asked Tillich to go over with us themes on which he had published during his earliest years. His most memorable comment for me was when he off-handedly remarked that “the method of correlation” was a locution urged on him by one of his TAs at Union, Bill Coleman, on the grounds that North Americans were generally not familiar or comfortable with his preferred label of “dialectics.”

The member of those graduate seminars who went on to most acclaim in later years was actually an auditor, Robert Bellah, who was brought up a Calvinist. In his last, massive book, he acknowledges “three great teachers who taught me face-to-face...Talcott Parsons, Wilfred Smith, and Paul Tillich...Tillich (he writes) taught me to see ‘the dimension of depth’ in every cultural expression and that Christianity is not ‘belief in the unbelievable’ at a time when I thought it was”(xxvi-xxvii).

As Hannah Tillich and others have attested, Paulus was always approachable and interested in his students’ concerns. The one student or auditor he suffered rather than encouraged was Peter John, whose ambition it was to record for posterity every word from the master’s lips, including such earth-shaking questions as: shall we break for coffee?

Tillich did not have to preach as regularly at Harvard as he did at Union. But I remember his sermons in the Divinity chapel as models of what my Presbyterian homiletics professor at McGill considered good preaching to be—responsible to the biblical contexts of his texts and relating them to the existential concerns of the congregation present.

In the end, I switched to a concentration in philosophy of religion, writing a thesis on Augustine on evil, rather than compete with classmates, who were much better versed than I was in the Lutheran and Calvinist traditions, which were assumed by Tillich and Lehmann as professors on a Protestant faculty.

What I most valued about Tillich, then and now, was his largeness of mind and championing of apologetics, when Barthians considered this a dirty word. The way to get him to consider an idea that he initially rejected out of hand was to tell that he was not being dialectical enough. He would then say, “Yah, Yah” and listen more

closely. Overall, his Yes’s were stronger than his No’s, both on academic questions and in relations with his colleagues.

**REVIEW OF RONALD STONE’S BOOK:  
POLITICS AND FAITH<sup>1</sup>**

MARION H. PAUCK

Ron Stone has packed an enormous amount of material into this volume about Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. I commend him for his industry and research. As it happens, he has written an encyclopedia. Details from published books, lectures, and personal conversations have been gathered from a variety of mostly contemporary sources. Unfortunately, his wish to interview me was not fulfilled. Stone alternates between quoting the many facts and observations he has gathered, simultaneously debating with others, sometimes asserting his own point of view. Each chapter begins with biographical material about each thinker, followed by a description of the work being done at the time, in the midst of the political situation, the wars, the major events of the time. Although Stone has gathered an enormous amount of information and presents fact after fact, he fails to deliver “the inner man.” Perhaps that is asking too much. For only Tillich wrote about his inner life, often in veiled terminology, and Niebuhr when he did write concentrated on outer events. Thus, a special part of these very different but greatly influential thinkers is missing. And that something goes beyond motivation. I hope this is not seen as too severe an indictment. Stone, after all, has not sought to do the work of a biographer but rather, as I see it, he has collected as much fact and contemporary observation as possible. This works well for the most part. And I admire Stone greatly for his industry.

At times, however, Stone rejects the very point made by reliable witnesses, e.g., in his interview with Elisabeth Niebuhr Sifton, he quotes her as saying that RN and PT were friends but not intimate friends. He then writes that Ms. Sifton *meant* to say they were close friends. Knowing Ms. Sifton intimately, I dare to suggest that she said what she meant to say, and nothing more or less. Yet, again and again, Stone points out that Tillich and Niebuhr were close friends. In fact, Tillich thought of Niebuhr as his savior from certain imprisonment and death by the Nazis. He was al-

ways a little bit in awe of Niebuhr who was a true American at home in this country; moreover, he was a most faithful human being, faithful to his family, to his friends, to his students. There was a certain amount of awe in Tillich's attitude towards Niebuhr. He was also in awe of Henry Sloane Coffin, who was president of Union Theological Seminary until 1945. He therefore attended chapel every morning although he was used to life in a secular university. And consequently, he rarely attended a Sunday morning service unless he himself was preaching.

In fact, Reinhold Niebuhr knew very little about Tillich's personal life until a dramatic event occurred during Tillich's last year at Harvard University when an irate husband called to tell him that the great Paul Tillich had written love letters to his wife. This gentleman banged on Tillich's office door and threatened him unless he left his wife alone. And then he visited Niebuhr and expressed his outrage. Niebuhr was taken by stunning surprise and immediately telephoned Wilhelm Pauck, who, while the two were taking a long walk on Riverside Drive, enlightened Niebuhr. It was Pauck who was Tillich's close friend and who kept his secrets. (As, of course, was Adolf Löwe.) There is no doubt that Niebuhr's views of Tillich the private person were dramatically changed by this event. Nevertheless, to my knowledge, he never confronted Tillich directly. Despite Pauck's own misgivings about Tillich's life style, he also remained his loyal friend. It is true, however, that had Tillich's goings-on been made public, let us say, long before *The Courage to Be* was published, he might very well have been sacked. Tillich lived in constant anxiety but could not change.

Who among us is perfect? In the chapter about Hannah's book and the general reaction to it, Stone quotes the feminists at great length. And he himself makes what I consider a weak defense of Tillich. Had he re-read the chapter, titled "Between Two Worlds," of our biography of Tillich he would have found Tillich's own argument for his lifestyle. Tillich knew himself better than most anyone else, certainly better than his detractors. The fact is that the United States of America was then, and continues to be, torn between pornography and Puritanism. This was true when I was very young, and it is true now. Regard the front page of *The New York Times*, which carries a photograph of an old, defeated looking black ac-

tor/comedian, who has been accused of dalliances with women and the rape of at least one. Is this bit of news as important as the fact that many Americans are without food and shelter in a time of great prosperity? Or that ISIS is beheading its captives? Please do not misunderstand me. I certainly do not approve of rape nor do I applaud extra-marital affairs. But are we all so perfect that we dare to be excessively judgmental about sins of the flesh? I am reminded of Jesus' words, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Tillich's inner struggle with his life style is reflected in a sermon titled "You Are Accepted." I recall hearing it when he first delivered it at Union in James Chapel. On the top of the manuscript itself, he wrote the words, "For Myself! 20 August 1946." It was his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. He writes, "...It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joys and darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying, 'You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you...'"

When Stone says that Tillich's reputation never recovered from the confessions of Hannah and the discussion that followed them, I take issue with him. Hannah herself told Wilhelm and me a few years after her book was published that she regretted writing it and regretted even more publishing it. The fact is, however, that so many years later, Tillich's books are still bestsellers, and he is still considered as one of the most creative minds of the last century. Moreover, our biography of Tillich is being published again by Wipf and Stock. I teach a course at Stanford in my little Lutheran church, and it is crowded with eager adult students when we read and study Tillich. Professor Parrella teaches courses on Tillich as do many in the society. Even my physicians at the Palo Alto Medical Clinic eagerly read Tillich not only because of my connection to him but because they are in need of words that inspire them and keep them from being preoccupied with death. Tillich's words about his inner struggle have the ring of truth. Please do not think that I am unsympathetic to the feminist cause, although my own professional experience has been unusually free from male opposition. My teachers at Union were all men, and they were all supportive. I was the first woman to be religious book editor at the Oxford University Press. I spent nearly ten

productive and interesting years working there until I was offered the chance to work on the Tillich biography. To be sure, I had difficulties with my immediate superior who was a man, but I managed to escape him. Immediately after I left Oxford University Press, I was offered an executive position in another prestigious book publishing firm. Moreover, the vice president of the *New York Times* interviewed me and put me on the short list to be the first religion editor/columnist for the *Times*. My marriage to Wilhelm Pauck prevented me from accepting that grand offer for I was told I would belong to the *New York Times* "body and soul." And my body and soul already belonged to Pauck.

Stone, unfortunately, fails to quote those who understood Tillich's views on love and marriage. Rather he quotes those who express typical American puritanical views. Personally, I do not applaud Tillich's *modus vivendi*, but as a biographer I try to understand him and, as a native American of German-born parents, I probably have a better chance. At least I do not condemn him wholesale. Tillich's mistake doubtless was that he exported a lifestyle that was acceptable in post-World War One Europe but not in the United States. There is a sense, finally, which made it impossible for him psychologically speaking to return to what he felt was a prison. Those of us who cared about him do not applaud this behavior, but although we do not imitate his lifestyle, we do not condemn him.

Both in my biographical work and in various lectures delivered throughout the years, I have emphasized my knowledge of Paul Tillich. I have written much less about my other teacher and close friend, Reinhold Niebuhr. I have asked myself why this is the case. The answer is that I was afraid of sounding as though I worshipped him. And he would not have liked that. He knew very well in what high esteem I held him. Once when I criticized Roger Shinn for being too critical in a book review of one of Niebuhr's last books, Niebuhr teased me and said, "Marion, you are prejudiced." And we, Ursula, Wilhelm, and I, all burst out laughing. Yes, I was and am prejudiced. But the fact is that Niebuhr's character seemed to be without the kind of inner conflict that Tillich bore. It is true that he suffered from another kind of conflict that had to do with the strokes that stopped him in his tracks. But this conflict was not the same as Tillich's, in either content or substance. Niebuhr was absolutely straight and hon-

est. He also gave the impression of seeing right through human frailties and dishonesties. I worked for him for two years as managing editor of *Christianity and Crisis*, and I saw him nearly every day. I recall treating him as though he had not been struck down and weakened. And I was told he was grateful to me for just that sensitivity towards him. Although I had met his wife, Ursula, in my years at Barnard College, I was a philosophy major and I failed to take any of her courses. But we knew and liked one another. When she heard that I wanted to take a Master's degree at Union but that my father had threatened to disown me, she was instrumental in helping me face up to him. She arranged a meeting between Reinhold Niebuhr and me. I have written about this meeting before and how impressed I was that such a great and busy man had saved time for me, serving tea in the bargain. He gave me "the courage to be" myself and to say "No" to my father. When I recall that he said, he understood what German fathers were like, and I understood why he gave me such good advice.

When Wilhelm and I were married, Reinhold Niebuhr was best man, and Paul Tillich the officiating minister. We had wanted Niebuhr to officiate, but he was too shaky on his feet. So he said, "Bill, I have never been best man. I would like to do that very much indeed." On our wedding day, therefore, in the little room outside the chapel where we were married, Niebuhr and Tillich, while they waited for the wedding march to begin, discussed the life eternal. Later Wilhelm told me that Niebuhr said, "I doubt the life eternal. I just don't believe in it!" And Tillich responded, "I am uncertain and a little afraid." This conversation continued at the wedding luncheon that followed the wedding. A few days later, Niebuhr said to Wilhelm in a wonderful letter thanking him for having invited him to be best man, "Marion is a good woman. You will be happy together." No ifs, ands, and buts, no psychological problems, just "you will be happy." A few months after our wedding, Tillich came to New York, and telephoned. Wilhelm answered. Tillich asked in German, "How are you two?" Wilhelm said, "Wonderful. We are very happy." Then Tillich asked, "And Marion? How is she?" And Wilhelm said, "She is happy, too." Whereupon Tillich replied, "Oh but that is so rare! That is wonderful."

Although I have told these stories in earlier lectures, I find that they illustrate so perfectly the

personality and character of both men. And they do so more than any long lecture or book with footnotes could possibly achieve.

I wish to thank you for inviting me to take part in this discussion. My criticisms should not remove anyone's pleasure in reading Stone's book. I am only sorry that I shall miss the discus-

**FREEDOM AS AUTONOMY**  
**OBSERVATIONS ON PAUL TILLICH'S**  
**RECEPTION OF FICHTE**

CHRISTIAN DANZ

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1954, in Stuttgart, at the congress of the "Allgemeine Gesellschaft für Philosophie in Deutschland," on the occasion commemorating the one hundred anniversary of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's death, Paul Tillich gave the ceremonial address "Schelling and the Beginnings of Existential Protest."<sup>1</sup> Right at the beginning of his talk, Tillich makes clear Schelling's significance for his own thought: "He was my teacher although the beginning of my studies and the year of his death are 50 years apart. In developing my own thought I have never forgotten my dependence on Schelling. [...] My work on the problems of systematic theology would be unthinkable without him" (MW I, 392). Schelling's philosophy does indeed play a foundational role in the formulation of Tillich's theology. Tillich dedicated two dissertations to it.<sup>2</sup> If, then, the following is to pursue the theologian Fichte's reception, Schelling's influence ought nevertheless not be contested. Having said this, Tillich's way to Schelling goes through Fichte, who is decisive for Tillich during his four-semester stay at the theological faculty of the University of Halle, between 1905 and 1907. Concerning his time in Halle, Tillich remarks almost 40 years later, in a letter to Thomas Mann, that it was "the greatest period of my life" (GW XIII, 26). The lecture from 1954 also makes mention of this. The analyses of his "esteemed teacher and guide to Fichte and Schelling, Fritz Medicus" (MW I, 395) are what initiated him into German Idealism. The engagement with Fichte's philosophy as well as the significance of his philosophy for the genesis of Tillich's theological thinking has hitherto been left unexamined.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, posthumous texts published in recent years—a seminar paper from 1906 entitled *Fichte's*

sion in San Diego, not to mention a walk by the ocean for both are bound to be lively. Warm greetings to you all!

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<sup>1</sup> *Politics and Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich at Union Seminary in New York* Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2013. (Mercer Tillich Series)

*Philosophy of Religion in its Relation to the Gospel of John*<sup>4</sup> and the doctoral lecture from Breslau in 1910,<sup>5</sup> *Freedom as a Philosophical Principle in Fichte*—make clear that Tillich's entry into German Idealism is mediated by Fichte's philosophy as interpreted by Fritz Medicus. This picture is further confirmed by the examination paper from 1908, "What is the Significance of the Opposition of Monistic and Dualistic World-View for the Christian Religion?"<sup>6</sup>, as well as Tillich's correspondence with Friedrich Büchsel and the scarcely known article from 1912, "Knowledge and Opinion" on the occasion of Fichte's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>7</sup> "The necessity of moving beyond Kant," according to the programmatic opening of the monism text, manifests itself as "a necessity of moving in the direction of Fichte" (EW IX, 28). With this program, the young theologian, like others of his time—such as Emmanuel Hirsch, Friedrich Gogarten, and Emil Lask—builds upon the Idealism-renaissance around 1900, one of the most important representatives of which was Tillich's teacher and promoter in Halle, adjunct professor of philosophy, Fritz Medicus.<sup>8</sup> Tillich's occupation with Fichte's philosophy during his studies, according to the thesis to be expounded here, is in no way to be seen merely as a stopover on his way to Schelling. Rather, the engagement with the *Wissenschaftslehrer* established fundamental convictions for the young theologian on the basis of which he takes account of Schelling's philosophy, and which remain fundamental for his further work. For example, the form-substance schema (constitutive for the later theology of culture), stems from the Fichte interpretation of his teacher, Medicus. Moving on, there is the notion of autonomy. Tillich solves the problems connected with the conceptual development of autonomy by recourse to the philosophy of Schelling. In this way, the concept of freedom is expanded, so that freedom, in the sense of autonomy, from then on corresponds to the Fichtean concept. For the time being, the form-substance schema will have to be left aside. I turn now to

the formulation of the concept of freedom that the young theologian in Halle developed in the course of his engagement with Fichte's philosophy. This will happen in two steps. To be considered first is the appropriation of Fichte in the seminar paper from 1906, and the Monism-text from two years later. Then the presentation of the Fichtean concept of freedom in the Breslau doctoral lecture from 1910 will be reconstructed.

### 1. The Fichte of Halle, or Theology in the Spirit of the *Wissenschaftslehre*

The young Tillich's image of Fichte underwent a change during his studies.<sup>9</sup> This is most clearly visible in the seminar paper from 1906, the first document from his engagement with Fichte, as well as in the examination paper. During his first semester in Halle in 1905 and 1906, the young theologian visited a seminar of the adjunct professor of philosophy, Fritz Medicus, on the theme of "Philosophical Exercises (Fichte)."<sup>10</sup> It is this seminar to which the paper, "Fichte's Philosophy of Religion in its relation to the Gospel of John," harkens back. The paper sets itself the task of "working out the main ideas" of Fichte's philosophy of religion, "and comparing them with those of the Gospel of John" (EW IX, 9). For this, Tillich assumes a concept of religion according to which religious consciousness is the "most central...all determining expression of the spirit" (EW IX, 4). The functions of thought and will are constitutive for the life of the spirit.<sup>11</sup> For the theology student, these pre-conditions result in two fundamental types of religion or notions of God: a voluntaristic type and an intellectualist type. While Judaism produced a voluntaristic notion of God, an intellectualist formulation was more significant for the ancient Greeks. Tillich ultimately understands Christianity as a synthesis of voluntarism and intellectualism.<sup>12</sup>

Against the background of this constellation, Tillich compares Fichte's philosophy of religion with the Gospel of John on the basis of three "aspects": the metaphysical basis (i.e., the notion of God and its relation to the world); the "historical significance of Christ and Christendom;" and its "moral-religious consequences" (EW IX, 9). At this point, a detailed engagement with Tillich's deliberations must be left aside. Although I will limit myself to a systematic aspect of his Fichte interpretation, it should nevertheless be pointed

out that the 19 year-old theologian mainly refers to—what he, following Medicus, calls—the third phase of the development of the history of Fichte's philosophy. By this is meant the *Instruction for the Blessed Life* from 1806. Furthermore, the citations that the theologian procures from the works of the philosopher likely do not go back to his own extensive reading of Fichte, but rather to Medicus's book from 1905, *J. G. Fichte. Thirteen lectures Held at the University of Halle*.<sup>13</sup> But now, we turn to Tillich's early image of Fichte.

According to the young theologian, Fichte's philosophy of religion had indeed overcome Kant's "subjectivism and skepticism" (EW IX, 7), and namely, in the last phase of his works, the Johannine, had propounded a concept that accounts equally for the subjective and objective sides of religion. However, his interpretation of Johannine Christianity excludes all voluntative moments. Thus, his philosophy of religion is intellectualist and does justice neither to the synthesis arrived at in Christianity, nor (as Tillich shows by going through the three above named aspects) to the Gospel of John.

The young theologian's image of Fichte, as expressed in the seminar paper from 1906, is quite critical. In the comparison of the philosopher with the fourth evangelist, he thoroughly determines Fichte's intellectualism. Above all, this is reflected in Fichte's concept of sin. In Fichte, evil is "something totally other than the negative. It is the positive, indeed the powerful positive, which rules the world" and no mere "not-I." The seminar paper from 1906 represents an intermission. In the following years, Tillich seems himself to have engaged with Fichte's texts more thoroughly, at least with the *Foundation of the Entire Science of Knowledge* from 1794. The excerpts of Tillich's posthumous writings that are preserved in Harvard bear witness to this.<sup>14</sup> The fruit of these subsequent readings of Fichte are apparent in the examination paper from 1908. Its concern is a rehabilitation of idealism for theology, and, it carries distinct traces of his teacher, the interpretation of Fichte, by Fritz Medicus.<sup>15</sup> The young theologian is concerned with a monism of the spirit that takes dualism up into itself as a necessary moment of passage.<sup>16</sup> In this program, the motifs emerge that will occupy him in all his further works. However, here they are still accomplished thoroughly on the basis of Fichte's philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Yet we must also leave a detailed reconstruction of

the monism text aside, and limit ourselves to how Tillich carries the two above-mentioned critiques of Fichte forward—intellectualism on the one hand, and the notion of sin on the other hand.

While the theology student interpreted Fichte's philosophy as intellectualism in his seminar paper, the examination paper completely rejects this image. Now, Fichte's philosophy appears as a synthesis of intellectualism and voluntarism on the basis of practical reason, the freedom of self-determination. The accusation of intellectualism is now turned on Hegel.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the concept of sin appears in a new light. "Sin is the limitation of the spirit, which is to be overcome. Or, put more sharply: the lack of overcoming the "not-I," the lag of intellectual personhood behind its *telos*" (EW IX, 68). Though Tillich had criticized Fichte's understanding of sin as negation in the seminar paper from 1906, he now takes it up. Sin is an act of self-positing in which the "I" takes up the "not-I" into its self-understanding. Thus, neither self-recognition, nor a representation of God in the overcoming of the "not-I" are achieved.<sup>19</sup> In sin, the human misses autonomy.

Tillich's image of Fichte had changed during the short time between the seminar paper from Halle and the examination paper from Berlin. Fichte's conception of reason in terms of freedom, in Medicus's interpretation, advanced to become the basis of the theological system.

## 2. Formal and Material Freedom, or Fichte's Completion of Critical Philosophy as its Restriction

"In the case that authorities such as Schlatter and Schmuhl carry weight with you, then I inform you that I have arrived at the philosophical presupposition of both: the second Schelling" (EW VI, 76). This comment is taken from a letter of Tillich's from 1909 to his student friend and later brother-in-law Alfred Fritz, in which he tells of his reading of Schelling's works. It is revealing that the philosophy of the later Schelling is referred to as the philosophical presupposition of the theology of his Tübingen and Halle teachers, Adolf Schlatter and Wilhelm Lütgert.<sup>20</sup> Tillich had engaged with the thought of the Leonberg philosopher within the framework of his dissertation project since 1909.<sup>21</sup> As is well known, he handed in the dissertation in Breslau as philosophical dissertation, although it was originally planned for

the attainment of a theological licentiate degree, in order to obtain the secular stipend offered by the city of Berlin. It is no longer possible to determine who proposed the theme of the dissertation from the hitherto passed-on sources and documents. Against the background of the course of his studies, and his early Fichte reception, an engagement with Schelling did not immediately suggest itself, even if it was undoubtedly within the sphere of the contemporary renaissance of idealism. Although the examination paper from the 1908 documents suggests a strong affinity with German idealism, Schelling in particular does not play a fundamental role in it. This changed, however, in the years around 1909, as the above cited statement from the letter to Fritz Medicus documents. "On every page" in Schelling, writes Tillich in the letter, "I discover a new cornerstone of Schmuhl's thought, up to the very last *psychologumena*. I am utterly surprised, that we should rediscover one another here" (EW VI, 76). The engagement with Schelling leads to a new placement of Fichte. It has to do with a question that already surfaces in the seminar paper from 1906, and which does not find a fitting solution in the monism text. I refer to the concept of freedom and the correlative understanding of sin as negation. Tillich's reading of Schelling leads to a deepening of his concept of freedom. The dissertation paper turned it at Breslau, *The Religio-historical Construction in Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, and the series of theses from 1911 indicate the new understanding of the concept of freedom. I would like to discuss this new understanding by reference to the Breslau post-doctoral lecture, "Freedom as a Philosophical Principle in Fichte," from August 22, 1910.

In this lecture from August 1910, Tillich interprets Fichte's philosophy as the completion of Kantian critical philosophy. The theologian, following Fritz Medicus, perceives the pre-condition for this claim in the notion of autonomy, which makes up the foundation of the system.<sup>22</sup> And yet, the completion of critical philosophy means simultaneously "a narrowing of scope" (EW X, 55). The lecture works out this thesis in two lines of argument: first, with reference to Fichte's "consistent implementation of Kantian anti-empiricism," and, second, with reference to "Kantian anti-dogmatism" (EW X, 56). In both sequences of thought, which cannot be considered here, it is the notion of autonomy that bears the whole

weight of explanation. The I is not an object, but an act, inasmuch as it grasps itself in its unconditional validity through its self-positing. Of importance for our line of inquiry is a distinction which Tillich introduces in this context as an aside.<sup>23</sup> “In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the postulate of freedom is posed as the faculty of the arbitrary incorporation of maxims. This—in contrast to the principle of rational autonomy, formally characterized—concept of freedom disappears in Fichte. It has no place in the implemented system of reason” (EW X, 58). The basis of the completed system of reason is a material concept of freedom, namely, freedom in the sense of moral autonomy. Against the background of this concept of freedom, sin can only be conceived of as negation. Herein lies the reductionism of Fichte’s conception. In order to understand sin as positive, the material concept of freedom must be supplemented by a formal concept of freedom.<sup>24</sup> Freedom is only fittingly conceived of when it is understood as the power of self-contradiction, and not merely as submission of the will to the moral law. To have introduced that concept of freedom in continuation of Kantian critical philosophy is the accomplishment of the “second Schelling.”<sup>25</sup>

The young Tillich’s Schelling reception leads him, as we have seen, to the solution of a problem with which he had wrestled in his early studies of Fichte. It is the question as to how sin, as the difference and contradiction of the absolute, is to be construed against the background of a monism of the spirit. The young theologian finds the solution in the later Schelling’s philosophy and his thesis of freedom as the power of self-contradiction. This leads to a new classification of Fichte and a rehabilitation of Kant’s philosophy. Fichte’s significance for theology consists in the formulation of freedom as autonomy. It is wholly in this sense that Tillich interprets the relation of Fichte and Schelling in the previously mentioned ceremonial address from 1954. “While Fichte derived a monism of the moral self-realization of the absolute from the principle of the self-positing of the I as I, Schelling, in his earlier writings, saw the inner conflict of any philosophy of the absolute. He saw that freedom, when equated with the absolute, voids itself and leads to a Spinozist or mystical annihilation of the individual self. He saw—and this brings him close to Kant, to a surprisingly existential element in Kant—that actual freedom is only possible through arbitrary choice (*Willkür*),

i.e., through the ability of the rational will to enter into contradiction with itself” (MW I, 395).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. Tillich, Schelling und die Anfänge des existenzialistischen Protestes, in: id., Main Works/Hauptwerke, Vol. 1: Philosophische Schriften, Berlin/New York 1989, MW I, 391-402. The works of Tillich are cited from the following editions: Ergänzungs- und Nachlassbände zu den Gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich, ed. I. Henel et al., at present 18 Vols., Stuttgart, dann Berlin 1971ff. = EW; Gesammelte Werke, ed. R. Albrecht, 14 Vols., Stuttgart 1959ff. = GW; Main Works/Hauptwerke, ed. C. H. Ratschow, 6 Vols., Berlin/New York 1987ff. = MW.

<sup>2</sup> P. Tillich, Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien, in: id., Frühe Werke, Berlin/New York 1997, EW IX, 156-272; id., Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung, in: id., Frühe Hauptwerke, Stuttgart 1959, GW I, 13-108.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. Neugebauer, Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip – Die Fichte-Interpretation des frühen Tillich, in: Wissen, Freiheit, Geschichte. Die Philosophie Fichtes im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Beiträge des sechsten internationalen Kongresses der Johann-Gottlieb-Fichte-Gesellschaft in Halle (Saale) vom 3. – 7. Oktober 2006. Vol. II (= Fichte-Studien, Vol. 36), ed. J. Stolzenberg/O.-P. Rudolph, Amsterdam/New York 2012, 181-198; C. Danz, Theologischer Neudealismus. Zur Rezeption der Geschichtsphilosophie Fichtes bei Friedrich Gogarten, Paul Tillich und Emanuel Hirsch, in: Wissen, Freiheit, Geschichte. Die Philosophie Fichtes im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Beiträge des sechsten internationalen Kongresses der Johann-Gottlieb-Fichte-Gesellschaft in Halle (Saale) vom 3. – 7. Oktober 2006. Vol. II (= Fichte-Studien, Vol. 36), ed. J. Stolzenberg/O.-P. Rudolph, Amsterdam/New York 2012, 199-215.

<sup>4</sup> P. Tillich, Fichtes Religionsphilosophie in ihrem Verhältnis zum Johannesevangelium, EW IX, 4-19.

<sup>5</sup> P. Tillich, Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte, in: id., Religion, Kultur, Gesellschaft. Unveröffentlichte Texte aus der deutschen Zeit (1908-1933). 1. part, Berlin/New York 1999, EW X, 55-62.

<sup>6</sup> There are two versions of the examination paper. P. Tillich, Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?, EW IX, 28-93. 94-153.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the correspondence between P. Tillich and F. Büchsel, in: P. Tillich, EW VI, 14-27. 62-74. P. Tillich, Wissen und Meinen. Zu Fichtes 150. Geburtstag am 12. Mai 1912, in: Neue Preußische Zeitung, Nr. 232 (1912), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. Medicus, art.: Neufichteanismus, in: RGG<sup>2</sup>, Vol. IV, Tübingen 1930, 498f. On the hitherto unexamined relationship between Medicus and Tillich cf. F.W. Graf/A. Christophersen, Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance. Paul Tillich und sein philosophischer Lehrer Fritz Medicus, in: ZNThG 11 (2004), 52-78.

<sup>9</sup> On this cf. also G. Neugebauer, *Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip*, 184.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. G. Hummel/D. Lax, *Zur Textgeschichte: Fichtes Religionsphilosophie in ihrem Verhältnis zum Johannevangelium*, in: P. Tillich, *Frühe Hauptwerke*, EW IX, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. P. Tillich, *Fichtes Religionsphilosophie*, EW IX, 4: „Als ein Zwiefaches stellt sich das menschliche Geistesleben dar, als Denken und Wollen.“ (“The life of the human spirit presents itself as being twofold, as thought and will.”)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Fichtes Religionsphilosophie*, EW IX, 5: „Gott offenbart sich in Christo als ein Gott der Gnade und Wahrheit.“ (“God reveals himself in Christ as a God of grace and truth.”)

<sup>13</sup> F. Medicus, J.G. Fichte. *Dreizehn Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Halle, Berlin 1905*. On this cf. G. Neugebauer, *Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip*, 185.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Tillich-Nachlass (Posthumous Works)* Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

<sup>15</sup> The extent of the exchange of thought with his teacher, Medicus, is underlined by the comments which Medicus inserted in a copy of the text. Cf. P. Tillich, *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?*, EW IX, 94-153. On this cf. also G. Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie. Eine Untersuchung zu Offenbarung und Geschichte bei Tillich vor dem Hintergrund seiner Schellingrezeption*, Berlin/New York 2007, 146-155.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. P. Tillich, *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?*, EW IX, 54: „Das ist die idealistische Deutung der Wirklichkeit. Sie führt durch einen Dualismus hindurch und endigt im Monismus des Geistes.“ (This is the idealistic interpretation of reality. It moves through a dualism and ends in the monism of the spirit.)

<sup>17</sup> Cf. P. Tillich, *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?*, EW IX, 61: „Fichte, den wir der ganzen folgenden Debatte zugrunde legen.“ (Fichte, who we take as the basis of the entire debate which follows.)

<sup>18</sup> Cf. P. Tillich, *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?*, EW IX, 72: „Der Idealismus hat in Fichte und Schelling noch beide Momente [sc. die intellektuelle und die voluntative Seite des Geisteslebens] in sich, während Hegel schon wieder zum Intellektualismus überschlägt.“ (In Fichte and Schelling, idealism still has both moments [sc. the intellectual and the voluntative side of the life of the spirit] in itself, while Hegel already falls back into intellectualism.”)

<sup>19</sup> Cf. on this P. Tillich, *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz von monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?*, EW IX, 61.

<sup>20</sup> On Schlatter cf. W. Neuer, *Das Verständnis von Geschichte bei Adolf Schlatter*, in: *ThBeitr* 35 (2004), 39-54.

On Lütgert cf. P. Müller, *Alle Gotteserkenntnis entsteht aus Vernunft und Offenbarung. Wilhelm Lütgerts Beitrag zur theologischen Erkenntnistheorie*, Münster 2011.

<sup>21</sup> On Tillich's theological dissertation project, which initially flowed over into the philosophical dissertation, cf. G. Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 155-158. Neugebauer kommt das Verdienst zu, die Akten des Promotionsverfahrens zugänglich gemacht zu haben. Cf. loc. cit., 392-400.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. P. Tillich, *Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip*, EW X, 55: „Daß diesem Vorgang in der Tat eine innere Folgerichtigkeit zukommt, soll uns eine Betrachtung des Princips der Fichteschen Philosophie, des Freiheitsbegriffs bei Fichte lehren. In ihr kommen die Motive des Kriticismus zur vollen Auswirkung.“ (“An observation of the principle of fichtean philosophy, the concept of freedom in Fichte, teaches us that this process, does indeed have an inner congruity. In it, the motifs of critical philosophy take full effect.”) On this cf. also F. Medicus, J.G. Fichte, 57.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. on this C. Danz, *Theologischer Neuidealismus*, 200-204.

<sup>24</sup> On this cf. P. Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie*, EW IX, 174-176.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. P. Tillich, *Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip*, EW X, 62: „Um diese beiden Brennpunkte des doppelten Freiheitsbegriffs läßt sich die idealistische Philosophie wie in eine Ellipse grup[p]ieren. In dem einen Brennpunkt steht Fichte und das Prinzip seines Systems, die Freiheit als Selbstsetzung der Vernunft. Auf der anderen [Seite] Schelling und das Prinzip seiner Religionsphilosophie, die Freiheit als Macht, sich selbst zu widersprechen.“ (“Idealistic philosophy can be grouped around these two focal points of the doubled concept of freedom. In the one focal point, stands Fichte and the principle of his system, freedom as the self-positing of reason. On the other [side], Schelling and the principle of his philosophy of religion, freedom as the power of self-contradiction.”)

<sup>26</sup> I express my thanks to Jason Valdez (Vienna) for translating this paper.

*Editor's Note:*

The editor would like to apologize for the late arrival of this Winter Bulletin. Thank you!  
FJP

## TRINITARIAN SYMBOLISM, MYSTICISM AND THE GOD ABOVE GOD

KEITH CHAN KA-FU

### Mystical heritage of Paul Tillich

Although Paul Tillich never claims himself as a mystical theologian,<sup>1</sup> mysticism or mystical experience is definitely a suitable phrase to describe his personal religious experience and the intellectual heritage of his religious-theological understanding. Tillich's appreciation for nature mysticism was inspired by German literature, e.g., Goethe, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Novalis, and Rilke.<sup>2</sup> Also, German natural landscape and oceans provide resources for Tillich to adopt the aesthetic attitudes instead of scientific-technological approaches towards the nature.<sup>3</sup> Besides, for his intellectual legacy, it is not difficult for us to discover the substantial philosophical-theological mystical heritage behind him. The Lutheran *finitum capax infiniti*,<sup>4</sup> Schelling's philosophy of nature,<sup>5</sup> Martin Kähler's justification through faith by grace,<sup>6</sup> and Nicolaus Cusanus's *coincidentia oppositorum* are all powerful weapons for Tillich to abandon the dualist and hierarchical conception between God, human beings, and nature and they also push him to adapt the principle of immediacy towards the ultimate and Unconditioned. German Romanticism enriches Tillich's adaption of the unity of nature and history.<sup>7</sup> "Participation," as an ontological category, provides Tillich to develop a mystical approach in the understanding of God.<sup>8</sup>

### Dialectical Perspective towards Mysticism

Tillich, however, did not embrace mysticism without reservation. In his discussion on medieval mysticism, Tillich warns us that "do not make the mistake of identifying this (*concrete*) type of mysticism with the absolute or abstract mysticism in which the individual disappears in the abyss of the divine."<sup>9</sup> Actually, this kind of warning occurred in his early thesis on Schelling, when Tillich tried to find out the synthesis between the principle of identity and the guilt-consciousness separation between God and human being: "the principle of mysticism triumphs, but *not in the form of mysticism, not as immediate identity*, but rather as personal communion that overcomes contradiction: it is 'the religion of the Spirit and of free-

cause the centered self of the individual has been dissolved."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it is dangerous for mysticism, for Tillich, to neglect the existential and historical condition of beings without the eschatological criticism.<sup>12</sup>

It is clear that Tillich rejects the so-called absolute or abstract mysticism and holds a dialectical perspective towards mysticism; however, if Carl Braaten has rightly said that "all the labels that have been applied to Tillich's theology, none of them come close to fitting unless they bring out the *mystical ontology* which undergirds his whole way of thinking,"<sup>13</sup> then, how did Tillich avoid the danger of abstract mysticism when he established his whole theology in the fashion of mysticism? Or, what kinds of mysticism did Tillich prefer in order to fit into his own theology of participation?

The immediate awareness of the Unconditioned constitutes the essential element of Tillich's religious experience. In his reflection on his philosophical background, Tillich asserts that the union of infinite and finite was the grounding principle of his doctrine of religious experience, and that is the reason why he appreciated with the Eastern mysticism.<sup>14</sup> Firstly, Tillich articulates the term "mysticism" as a divine immediate presence or manifestation category in which all religions are sharing this focus. That means seeking mystical union between infinite and finite is universally valid in every religions. The dichotomy between subject and object is transcended under a transcendent union.<sup>15</sup> As a religious category, mysticism embodies the element of religious *a priori* in which the ultimate identity is presupposed in epistemological and ontological senses.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, it is well known that Tillich distinguishes three types of religion: sacramental, prophetic, and mystical. The dangerous of the former is mixing the finite with the infinite and identifies the medium of revelation as the revelation itself.<sup>17</sup> In order to avoid the dangerous of demonic tendency, mystical and prophetic criticism are complement with each other, they "criticized the demonically distorted sacramental-priestly substance by devaluing every medium of revelation and by trying to unite the soul directly with the ground of being, to make it enter the mystery of existence without the help of a finite medium."<sup>18</sup>

However, in seeking the immediate awareness of the Unconditioned, the way of mysticism is to liberate human beings from concrete existential situation and makes the situation irrelevant to the actual human situation. Tillich has reservations

standing of the ontological polarity of individuation and participation, either epistemological process or ontic experience is both expressed in the dialectical process of “union-separation-reunion.” This means, for Tillich, a pure and absolute sense of mystical union is impossible and undesirable. This comment was fully enclosed in his comment on Bernard of Clairvaux that

Concrete mysticism, which is mysticism of love and participating in the Savior-God, and abstract mysticism, or transcending mysticism, which goes beyond everything finite to the ultimate ground of everything that is.<sup>19</sup>

The ultimate goal of Christian mysticism is neither neglecting the finite and concrete situation, nor seeking to dissolve oneself into the divine mystery. Rather, it should be a kind of concrete love-dynamic relationship between God and human being. Mystical knowing should be regarded as a participation epistemology in which knowing self and known God are communicated under the *eros-agape* relationship. The “I-Thou” relationship is preserved in the mystical union, as Martin Buber emphasized.<sup>20</sup> Love as the dynamic and driving power is essential in understanding of Tillich’s mystical ontology of participation. Union is regarded as the final goal of love in which separation and distance are assumed.<sup>21</sup> Being is being in communion in Tillich’s articulation of Christian mysticism in which individual centeredness should be maintained although it enters into the abyss of the divine.

However, the above personal relational character of mysticism does not ideally fit into Tillich’s ontological theology in which God is regarded as non-personal ontology of being-itself. How can Tillich maintain the harmonious correlation between divine-human personal mystical experience and God as the ground and abyss of being? It is not the intention of this paper to solve the tension between God as being and personal. This paper is intended to raise critical questions. First, if, according to Tillich, when a human being faces a situation of radical doubt, both concrete and abstract approaches of mysticism cannot overcome the situation of doubt, then, in what sense can Tillich still maintain his mystical ontological theology? Second, in what sense can the idea “God above God” as the solution of radical doubt overcome the difficulty of mysticism? Third, even though Tillich prefers to say that there is no special content of “God above God,” this paper would suggest that his Trinitarian sym-

## The God above God

Tillich thinks that when human beings face radical despair and meaningless, traditional theism is dysfunctional and all forms of this type of theism would be transcended by absolute faith.<sup>22</sup> The object of absolute faith is “God above God” in which, Tillich asserts, no concrete and special content would be articulated in this idea<sup>23</sup> because all concrete ideas and images of the God of theism would be suspended under human radical doubt. In facing this extreme and radically painful situation, Tillich points out two alternatives: mysticism and divine-human personal relation that are grounded by the ontological polarity of individualization and participation.<sup>24</sup> Mysticism embraces mystical courage to overcome non-being through the negation of meaning and being. Through the disclosure of the emptiness of being, radical doubt and meaningless would be negated.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, divine-human personal relationship establishes the courage of “in spite of” to overcome the radical doubt.<sup>26</sup>

However, Tillich asserts that the courage needed in radical doubt points beyond mysticism and a personal God because a personal relationship would be broken in radical doubt and the function of mysticism is also preliminary. Tillich describes that the only solution for human being in radical doubt is to insist on the God above God through absolute faith. However, what is meant by “God above God”? First, Tillich holds that the God above God is beyond the God of theism and the God of mysticism and without concrete and definite content. Because the God above God is the object of all mystical longing, mysticism also must be transcended in order to reach him.<sup>27</sup> And the God above the God of theism is a hidden present in personalism, personalism should be transcended because the subject-object scheme would be transcended in the God above God. Finally, for Tillich, the reason why the God above God can provide courage to be is that the God above God is the power of being itself. Therefore, it seems that the God above God is regarded a being-itself embodies the universal-ontological structure. If there is no concrete content in the God above God, is it a kind of mysticism? If this is a kind of mystical union with the being-itself, would it be a kind of abstract mysticism Tillich rejects?

## Trinitarian Symbolism and the God above

Tillich never identifies the God above God as a triune God; however, this paper argues that his understanding of Trinitarian symbol is the perfect metaphor to grasp the meaning of the God above God. First, as Tillich mentions, traditional theism is being dysfunctional under the threat of radical doubt not because of its error but its one-sidedness.<sup>28</sup> That means we do not need to abandon this concept but to transcend it. Also, the God of mysticism and the God above God is not contradictory. Therefore, the idea of God above God implies that God should embrace the impersonal character of mystical union and personalism of divine-human encounter into itself. Second, though Tillich is not much interested in the doctrine of trinity, it does not imply that God as trinity plays no role in his entire theology. Rather, Tillich's whole theological construction is entirely Trinitarian.<sup>29</sup> Trinitarian dialectical processes within the life of God as being-itself express the dynamic power of overcoming non-being within the being of God. Trinitarian symbolism is the perfect symbol in answering the human existential question<sup>30</sup> and in expressing the divine self-manifestation.<sup>31</sup>

The most important aspect of the correlation of Trinitarian symbolism and the God above God is this: according to Tillich, the two basic and fundamental aspects of human ultimate concern are seeking for concreteness and absoluteness. These two dialectical needs correspond to the polytheistic and monotheistic modes of theism, which are perfectly combined into Trinitarian structure of being-itself.<sup>32</sup> This means that even though human Trinitarian structure of ultimate concern does not prove the validity of Christian triune God, the inner tension within this religious experience will perfectly correspond to the tension within the Godhead.<sup>33</sup> Mysticism is seeking for a kind of *universal and ultimate character* of ultimate concern; personalist religion is seeking for a kind of *concrete and particular character* of ultimate concern. As Tillich emphasizes, one of the functions of Trinitarian symbol is to answer "*ultimate and concrete question within the living God.*"<sup>34</sup> It seems that these two dimensions of the ultimate and concrete in human ultimate concern correspond to the mystical union of the ultimate and the concrete personal relationship of divine-human. In Tillich's understanding, God as being-itself is not a dead identity, but his dynamic life as creatively living expresses itself through the Trinitarian principle inherited in the Godhead.

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<sup>1</sup> Tillich, *Perspectives on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Protestant Theology*. Ed. with an introduction by Carl E. Braaten (NY: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Tillich, *My Search for Absolutes* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Tillich, *My Search for Absolutes* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> For the influence from Martin Kähler, see Wilhelm Pauck, *From Luther to Tillich* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), pp. 170-180.

<sup>7</sup> Tillich, "Autobiographical Reflections," *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, eds. Charles W. Kegley & Robert W. Bretall (New York: MacMillan Co., 1956), 5.

<sup>8</sup> See, "Interrogation of Paul Tillich," conducted by William L. Reese, *Philosophical Interrogations*, ed. Sydney & Beatrice Rome (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winster, 1964), 357.

<sup>9</sup> Tillich, *History of Christian Thought*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), 136.

<sup>10</sup> Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*. Tr. Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), p. 125. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 72.

<sup>12</sup> See James R. Horne, "Tillich's Rejection of Absolute Mysticism," *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 58, No.2 (April 1978), 130-139; Donald F. Dreisbach, "Tillich's Ambiguous Attitude towards Mysticism," *Mystische Erbe in Tillichs philosophischer Theologie*. Eds. Gert Hummel & Doris Lax (Muenster: LIT Verlag, 2000), pp. 402-414.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Braaten, "Paul Tillich and the Classical Christian Tradition," *History of Christian Thought*. Ed. Carl Braaten (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. xxv. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>14</sup> Tillich, "Philosophical Background of My Theology," *Paul Tillich. Main Works/Hauptwerke* Volume 1, ed. Gunter Wenz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 414.

<sup>15</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Volume Three (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 257-258.

<sup>16</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Volume One (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Tillich, *Dynamic of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), 60.

<sup>18</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Volume One (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Tillich, *History of Christian Thought*. Ed. Carl

<sup>20</sup> Tillich, "An Evaluation of Martin Buber: Protestant and Jewish Thought," *Theology of Culture*. Ed. Robert C. Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 194.

<sup>21</sup> Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 25.

<sup>22</sup> Tillich, *Courage to Be* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1952), 185.

<sup>23</sup> Tillich, "God above God," *Paul Tillich. Main Works/Hauptwerke* Volume 6, ed. Gert Hummel (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 418.

<sup>24</sup> Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 156.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-159

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>29</sup> See, Pan-chiu LAI, *Towards a trinitarian theology of religions : A study of Paul Tillich's thought* (Kampen, The Netherlands : Kok Pharos, 1994)

<sup>30</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Volume Three (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 285.

<sup>31</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Volume One (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 157.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>33</sup> Jean Richard, "The Trinity as Object and as the Structure of Religious Experience," *Trinity and/or Quaternity-Tillich's Reopening of the Trinitarian Problem*. Eds. Gert Hummel & Doris Lax (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 19-23.

<sup>34</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Volume One (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 228.

*Anyone who has presented a paper at the meeting of the NAPT'S or the AAR Group on Tillich last November in San Diego:*

*Please send your paper to the editor electronically for publication in subsequent issues of Volume 41 of this Bulletin.*

*Thank you.*  
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