Introduction

The Real Tillich Is the Radical Tillich

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Paul Tillich (1886–1965) is perhaps best known as a liberal theologian of mediation, whose famous method of correlation aims to respond to humanity's existential questions with answers drawn from the Christian message. Key concepts such as ultimate concern, the new being, and the sacred depths of culture have been influential and have powerfully informed the liberal theological agenda of mainstream developments in the second half of the Twentieth Century. Notable instances include theologians associated with Chicago (such as David Tracey and, more recently, William Schweiker), as well as a diverse range of thinkers in the fields of theological engagement with culture (e.g., much recent work in theology and film) and the sciences (including figures such as John Haught and Philip Clayton). Indeed, as Jonathan Z. Smith has recently noted, Tillich's influence (albeit often unacknowledged) lies behind the very enterprise of the *American Academy of Religion*—the world's largest forum for scholarly work in theology and religious studies.

Nearly 50 years after his death in 1965, Tillich has become an establishment thinker, a safe (albeit never entirely uncontroversial!) exemplar of a mid-twentieth-century theological liberalism, untroubled by the social and intellectual developments that have provoked the most recent generation of philosophical theologians to take up increasingly extreme and polarized stances. From the reactionary theo-politics of post-liberalism and Radical Orthodoxy to the radical secular theologies of John D. Caputo and Mark C. Taylor (not forgetting the equally radical anti-theologies of the so-called "new atheism" and the "newer atheisms" of contemporary

continental philosophy), the current theological landscape is dominated by the notion of radicality. Given his reputation, it comes then as no surprise that Paul Tillich is barely present in this new situation.

This collection aims to address the absence of Tillich's thought to contemporary radical philosophical theologies by retrieving the radical Tillich, whose explosive mix of prophetic critical Protestantism, revolutionary religious socialism, ecstatic rational mysticism, and avant-garde cultural progressivism mark him out as a truly radical thinker for today's radical situation.

In this Introduction, I want to set the scene for the retrieval of the radical Tillich by returning to the central concerns of Tillich's own thought and by re-revisiting some of his key works as those of a radical thinker engaged in a series of ambitious and unprecedented revisions and reformulations of the nature and task of Christian theology in the twentieth century. I mark four central moments of Tillich's radical theology: his revolutionary manifesto for the reformulation of theology as theology of culture; his dialectical critical religious socialism (in particular, as he formulated it to confront the quasi-religion of Nazism in the early 1930s); his thoroughgoing overhaul of the idea of faith (in particular, as developed in his important works from the 1950s, *The Courage to Be* and *The Dynamics of Faith*); and his increasingly pressing engagements with non-Christian religions (there are, of course, others, many of which are taken up in the chapters that follow). This Introduction—ranging from some of Tillich's earliest to his final writings—will show forth Tillich as a radical theologian, strongly marked, but never fully determined by, the urgent critical demands of his time. From the crisis of German cultural and religious life in ruins after the horrific defeat of the First World War, to the new realities of religious pluralism, Tillich's theological responses are always profoundly ambivalent, impure, and disruptive, and never merely safely correlative. Far from the dominant image of Tillich as

the lovable avuncular émigré with tremendous charisma and a terrible accent, whose thought collapses everything in to a comfortable liberal accommodation, in its place reemerges the troubled and troubling figure of the radical Tillich.

Theology of Culture Is the Real Radical Theology

In 1919, Paul Tillich delivered a lecture to the *Kant-Gesellschaft* of Berlin, in which he made a revolutionary proposal for a revision of the nature and task of theology.[1] Fresh from the horrors of the First World War, Tillich was struck by the increasingly polarized situation of religion and culture and by what he felt to be the mutually destructive consequences for both parties. In response to the "intolerable gap" between religion and culture, Tillich proposed the reformulation of theology as "theology of culture." In this time of a widespread sense of crisis, Tillich's proposal was a surprising one—and one that differed markedly from that of the self-proclaimed "theology of crisis" that has now come to dominate our historiographies of the development of twentieth-century theology.[2] What marks Tillich's desire for a "solution" to the fractured state of religious-cultural life as unique—and what makes it of such importance to our contemporary situation—was his radical assessment of the true challenge facing the future of theology: not, as we have come to accept, the loss of faith confronted by the challenge of assertive, autonomous, secular philosophy and science, but rather the rise of an excess of faith (in both its religious and cultural guises). Tillich's early, radical project is designed precisely to combat this surging pietistic positivism in defense of a synthetic philosophical theology that blurs the boundaries between disciplines and disrupts the certainties of the tribalism characteristic of the modern world.[3]

Tillich's project of theology of culture, first explicitly stated in its manifesto form in his *Kulturvotrag* and enacted throughout his theological career both before and after 1919, entails

the displacement of theology, which no longer has an object of its own study. Theology, for Tillich, cannot be the study of "God" as this would imply that God were an object in the world amenable to investigation. Here, the importance of Kant's rejection of the possibility of speculative knowledge of God is clear: God cannot be an object of knowledge and as a result, theology does not have God as its subject. At this point in most narratives of the progress of theology after Kant, reference is made to Schleiermacher and what has come to be designated the "liberal" tradition of Protestant theology in the nineteenth century. Schleiermacher, it is suggested, offers the only viable alternative for a genuinely critical post-Kantian theology (i.e., one that wishes to remain faithful to the philosophical developments of Kant's thought while continuing to develop substantive theology) by accepting the rejection of speculative theology and embracing instead the so-called "subjective turn" of modern thought. No longer God, but faith (piety) is the subject of theology; no longer the science of God "in Himself," but God "for us," theology thus becomes equivalent to *Glaubenslehre*, or the teachings of the Christian religion. It is, it is assumed, a short step from Schleiermacher's engagement with the "cultured despisers" of religion in the name of the "feeling of absolute dependence" to Tillich's correlating theology of culture informed by his guiding notion of "ultimate concern." The line from Schleiermacher, via Troeltsch and late nineteenth-century *Kulturprotestantismus*, to Tillich is, it seems intuitive and unavoidable—and clearly distinguishable from the allegedly more radical assertive alternative of theological resistance to its Kantian restrictions, associated with the counter-cultural blasts of those such as Hamman, Kierkegaard, Ritschl, and most notably, of course, Karl Barth.

Here is not the place to develop this argument in full, but my suggestion is that this "liberal *vs* radical" dichotomy that dominates the historiography of the development of

twentieth-century theology is profoundly unhelpful.[4] Yes, of course, there are lines of continuity from Schleiermacher through Troeltsch to Tillich and yes, of course, the assertions of theological independence that characterize the Kierkegaard-Ritschl-Barth line differ markedly from the desire for synthesis typical of the so-called liberals. Yet, the real picture is far more complex that this either-or portrayal allows for and central to this complexity is the vexed question of where the truly radical alternative lies. Part of the answer, I submit, can be found in Tillich's proposal that theology become a theology of culture. Tillichian theology of culture is not the heir to Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*, which in fact finds a more obvious successor in Barth's project of *Church Dogmatics*. For both Barth and Schleiermacher (both interestingly Reformed Protestant theologians), the key to the possibility of theology is faith and the fundamental task of the theologian is one of fidelity to the confessed piety of her church.[5] By sharp contrast, for Tillich, theology of culture has no determinate subject—and certainly not "religion," in any narrow sense. Instead of accepting the Kantian restriction on theological aspiration by turning inward toward the church and its confession, Tillich's is the bold, assertive—radical—move to affirm the universal reach of theology in its relocation from religion to culture. If theology as theology of culture has no particular subject of its own, then everything becomes its subject. By moving it beyond God and beyond piety, Tillich takes theology into new and unchartered waters. Theology of culture is the real radical theological alternative of the twentieth century—and this is Tillich's real theology.

Radical Religious Socialism

In 1929, Tillich was appointed professor of Philosophy and Sociology at the young Goethe University in Frankfurt very much against the wishes of some, including Hans Cornelius, whom he replaced. Cornelius was highly critical of Tillich's major publication to that point, his 1923

book *The System of the Sciences*, in which he had tried (with admittedly limited success) to present a defense of his revisionary account of the nature of theology within a comprehensive account of the scientific endeavor.[6] Cornelius found the book "banal" and "unclear" and it has certainly not been one of Tillich's most widely read works. The same fate, unfortunately, and for very different reasons, befell Tillich's next major publication, written and published during his exceptionally fruitful time at Frankfurt. *The Socialist Decision* was published in 1933 and while its initial impact was significant (most notably in effectively bringing Tillich's career in Germany to an end), it has not had the enduring significance it deserves.[7] Perhaps, however, its time is now at hand. Certainly, *The Socialist Decision* is Tillich's most developed work explicitly in political theology and is a clear testament to the radicality of his theological vision.

What makes Tillich's political theology of interest is, above all, his insistence, stemming directly from his conception of theology as theology of culture, that there can be no clear demarcation between the political and the theological. This is not to say that the two collapse into each other, but rather to affirm that there are, for Tillich, direct and unavoidable commitments entailed by his otherwise somewhat abstract seeming theology. His is a theology that provokes decision. Unlike so many theological ventures into politics, Tillich's is far from an attempt to "baptize" a particular political stance or party with the aura and authority of religion. He does use the term *religious* socialism and, yet here again, the description is meant in the broadest possible sense (as indeed is his use of the term socialism). What makes Tillich's religious socialism radical is neither that he took a left wing stance that synthesized political and theological analysis, nor indeed that he was courageous enough to do so in 1933, although both of these are significant. Rather, Tillich's political theology of the socialist decision is radical—and remains radical for us today in very different circumstances—because it seems to have

transcended the pieties of both the churches and the political parties. Tillich's political theology subverts the certainties of both the political and the theological, showing, for instance, that the roots of the political protest of socialism lie in the prophetic tradition of theology and, at the same time, that the future of theological protest (what he calls the "Protestant principle" of commitment to the First Commandment that "there is no synthesis possible between God and the idols") is to be found in the decision for socialism.[8]

The Crisis of Faith

> There is hardly a word in the religious language, both theological and popular, which is subject to more misunderstandings, distortions, and questionable definitions that the word "faith." It belongs to those terms which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men. Today the term "faith" is more productive of disease than of health. It confuses, misleads, creates alternately scepticism and fanaticism, intellectual resistance and emotional surrender, rejection of genuine religion and subjection to substitutes. Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that the word "faith" should be dropped completely.[9]

Thus, Paul Tillich begins his "Introductory Remarks" to his 1957 book *Dynamics of Faith*. Tillich goes on to aver that it is "hardly possible" to drop the word "desirable as that may be" and that he has no alternative "for the time being" but "to try to reinterpret the word and remove the confusing and distorting connotations."[10] Nonetheless, Tillich was willing to "transcend theism" (and in so doing to prick up the ears of the 1960s generation of radical death of God theologians) and to talk of "absolute faith" as a way of getting beyond to the "genuine meaning" of faith; it is but a short further step to drop the language of faith altogether in pursuit of a more radical (and, thus, arguably more traditional) alternative.[11]

Crucial here is the central Tillichian gesture of philosophical theology as *critique* in response, not to a *positum* of revelation (or faith), but to the ontological shock of being (and the nonbeing that goes with it).[12] By recommending and adopting the critical stance as normative for theology, Tillich stands, to use one of his favorite and recurring images, "on the boundary," which he identifies as "the best place for acquiring knowledge."[13] The boundary lies between two alternative possibilities without being committed to either; thereby provoking anxieties about "sitting on the fence" or more positively of enabling the possibility of a genuine freedom for thought and action. A boundary stance, such as Tillich's, enables the liberal paradigm of dialogue and encounter (and no modern theologian better embodies the conversational model of theology than Tillich); yet it also, and more radically, is the predicament of a lonely thinker, beset by radical doubt and unable to settle for the enforced pieties of convention. It is in this sense that Tillich's position as a boundary thinker is consistent with his passion for the Lutheran paradigm of justification—not by faith, of course, but by doubt. Indeed for Tillich, there is no difference—and certainly no contradiction—between the Kantian affirmation of autonomy and the Lutheran affirmation of justification, a point he makes in his early work in the formula that "autonomy is justification in the realm of thought."[14] It is this that lies behind his famous final sentence of *The Courage To Be*: "The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt."[15]

Tillich thus stands as the polar opposite to his fellow so-called "religious existentialist" Søren Kierkegaard: whereas Kierkegaard sought the absoluteness of faith in the leap for certainty and unflinching commitment premised on the strict separation of true religion from culture, Tillich's quest rests on a decision for and out of doubt and a refusal ever fully to separate faith and reason. Tillich's deliberate blurring of the boundaries between religion and culture, theology

and philosophy, and faith and reason is all apiece with his occupation of the peculiar no-man's land of the boundary. Neither one nor the other, Tillich's thought is constantly, unavoidably always both/and; a synthesis that is as far from a liberal modern accommodationism as it is from the reactionary-revolutionary positivisms that have come to dominate twentieth-century thought and culture. Unlike his neo-orthodox theological contemporaries (and his phenomenological-existentialist philosophical contemporaries), Tillich's theology is temperamentally resistant to ideas of purity, both in disciplinary and conceptual terms. Tillich's instincts, rather, are fundamentally those of post-Kantian German Idealism, and especially the complex, restless thought-world of Schelling. With Schelling, Tillich resists all forms of positivism (theological and philosophical), with their characteristic mode of "positing" or naming the object of their inquiry at the outset (e.g., "God," "Being," or "faith"). For Tillich, this is simply to get things back-to-front for a "spiritual science," such as theology or philosophy, in which the subjectivity of the enquirer is inseparably linked to the object of her enquiry (unless, as it may well be, the intention is to reduce theological or philosophical discourse to the level of an objective science, in which the *positum* attains an almost empirical status).

While Barth and Heidegger seem to want to bracket the doubting human subject out of their understandings of the theological enterprise in their search for disciplinary purity (of *das Wort Gottes* or *die Gläubigkeit selbst* respectively), Tillich instead aims always to include the questing interdisciplinary human subject—with all her uncertainties and confusions. This, of course, introduces a deliberate instability to Tillich's thought that renders it (surprisingly perhaps) thoroughly unsystematic at exactly the same time as it leads him (like Schelling) to create (and recreate) elaborate systems and taxonomic categorizations. In many ways, Tillich's is a radically "multisystematic" theology. Indeed, it is precisely the multiplicity of systems within

Tillich's thought—its endless shaping and re-shaping architectonic—that confirms his indeterminacy. Among the confident assertive hedgehogs of early twentieth-century thought, Tillich stands out as an exception: not so much a fox as a spider—continually spinning and re-spinning his web of concepts and symbols into baroque (and short-lived) constructions.[16]

Theology Against Religions

Tillich's theology is fundamentally apologetic, in as much as he consistently aims to re-enchant the impoverished theological imagination of his contemporaries. This, surprisingly, is Tillich's radical theological agenda. Tillichian apologetics aims not to convert the secular by translating biblical religion into ontological categories acceptable to "modern man"; but rather by exposing the excess of faith in modern society—in both its religious and its cultural (quasi-religious) forms—and by offering in its place a faithless theology of doubt. To understand this paradoxical formulation (which is not Tillich's) better, it is instructive to turn to his seminal and, for his time, path-breaking encounter with non-Christian religions. For instance, late in life, Tillich delivered the Bampton Lectures at Colombia University, taking as his theme "Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions."[17] Striking as it may have been for a leading Christian theologian to attempt to continue his "process of deprovincialization" by addressing the "encounters among the living religions of today," what really stands out in Tillich's text is, in fact, quite how little interested in what he calls the "religions proper" he is.[18] After a cursory acknowledgment of the question of defining "religion" in comparative terms, Tillich rehearses his own extended use of the term:

> Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of

> the meaning of our life. Therefore this concern is unconditionally serious and shows a willingness to sacrifice any finite concern which is in conflict with it.[19]

A clear, if "seemingly paradoxical," consequence follows for Tillich from such a definition of religion in the context of inter-religious encounters:

> The main characteristic of the present encounter of the world religions is their encounter with the quasi-religions of our time. Even the mutual relations of the religions proper are decisively influenced by the encounter of each them with secularism, and one or more of the quasi-religions which are based upon secularism.[20]

In other words, for Tillich, inter-religious encounter gains its "dramatic character" not from the dynamics of the interrelations of the beliefs and practices of the finite forms of the explicit religious traditions, but rather from the indirect presence within the secular autonomous culture of what Robert Scharlemann calls "a *reines Ergriffensein*, a pure being-grasped."[21] Thus, it is that in his final lecture, Tillich turns to the question (an inevitable one given his logic of "faithless critique") of "Christianity judging itself in the light of its encounter with the world religions," both religions proper and quasi-religions. Here, Tillich is unflinching: Christianity must learn from its encounter with the world religions (as well as from its own self-examination) to "struggle against itself as a religion."[22] Tillich laments Christianity's "failure" in becoming a religion at all in the first place "instead of remaining a center of crytalization for all positive religious elements" but, nonetheless, takes some comfort from "the rhythm of criticism, countercriticism and self-criticism throughout the history of Christianity . . . show[ing] that Christianity is not imprisioned in itself and that in all its radical judgments about other religions some degree of acceptance of counter-judgments took place."[23]

What Is Radical about Radical Theology?

Thus far in this Introduction, I have made the case that Tillich's theology might be thought of as "radical" by highlighting four features of his thought that, if taken seriously, give us pause for thought and unsettle our comfortable categorizations. Yet what is it, particularly, that means that these features (and others brought out in the chapters that follow) make Tillich's thought radical, as opposed to simply unique and/or distinctive? The answer, I suggest lies in a consideration of Tillich's legacy and of his importance for contemporary theology that identifies itself as radical. Here I make six brief observations to help to contextualize the chapters that follow and to make sense of the attempt that this volume as a whole represents, namely to retrieve the radical Tillich.

First, and perhaps most obviously, radical theology in its recent formulations is decisively indebted to the iconoclastic work of those theologians of the 1960s now known collectively as death of God theology. Thomas J. J. Altizer, Gabriel Vahanian, Paul van Buren, William Hamilton, Harvey Cox, J. A. T. Robinson, and others should not be thought of as constituting a singular movement, of course, and yet between them they made a decisive contribution to the shape and destiny of radical theology in the latter half of the twentieth century. Two features stand out prominently: the first, of course, is their insistence that the question of the existence or otherwise of God is the least of concerns for theology, which ought above all else to free itself from outmoded falsely literalistic models of God. From this perspective, then theology is far from the kind of descriptive enterprise that looms large in mainstream theological circles dominated by Barthian dogmatics and post-liberal interests in narrative. That theology is not (primarily) about God is, it seems a key lesson that recent radical theology has inherited from the death of God movement; and one that it could (should) have equally learned from Paul Tillich.[24] Second, by invoking Nietzsche and the passionate atheist challenge to theology and all that it

stands for, death of God theology invited radical theologians into dialogue with those "continental" philosophical atheists, for whom the very task of philosophical thinking is equivalent to atheism. Recent radical theology takes as its dialogue partners those philosophers who are equally situated in the shadow of the Nietzschean death of God and who are determined, each in their own way, to find new and radical alternatives to what we might call "theological modernity." From Heidegger and Sartre to Derrida, and more recently Deleuze, Badiou, and Meillassoux, recent radical theology correlates to continental philosophical atheism in ways that are clearly in the spirit of Paul Tillich.

A second observation follows from this directly. One of the most important voices informing contemporary radical thought, and radical theology in particular, is that of F. W. J. von Schelling. Almost uniquely among the major theological thinkers of the early twentieth century, Tillich engaged profoundly with Schelling and sought to rescue him from being sidelined as a brief footnote to Hegel (a fate that nonetheless befell him for much of the twentieth century). For those contemporary radical theologians who find in Schelling an alternative non-Hegelian critical post-Kantian thinker, whose philosophies of time, nature, and revelation are key resources, Tillich could (and should) be an indispensible mediating figure. Tillich can serve as an important case study of the tensions and difficulties inherent in adopting a neo-Schellingian philosophical theology, as well as the opportunities that such an approach offers in contrast, for example, with the predominantly Heideggerian frame of much continental thought.

Furthermore, Tillich offers an intriguing option for contemporary radical theology: a radical Idealism—however, we need to change our standard frame of reference if Tillich is to be recognized as such. Indeed, surely one of the reasons for the relative neglect of Tillich in mainstream theology and philosophy over recent years stems from the widespread

misapprehension that Tillich is a "liberal existentialist" and, thus, beyond the pale of any self-respecting radical.[25] For recent radical thinkers, of any stripe, "liberal" and "existentialist" just do not cut the mustard. In a climate dominated by postmodernisms of all sorts, nothing has been considered more embarrassing than mid-twentieth-century existentialism. Along with Sartre's *Existentialism Is a Humanism* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Tillich's *The Courage to Be* just no longer casts a spell over the formative teenage years of tomorrow's radicals-to-be (who are more likely to be reading Slavoj Žižek or John Milbank). Tillich's use of the question and answer formulation of his method of correlation, as well as his frequent references to existentialism itself, clearly does not help his case here and, indeed, it is probably unfortunate for the portrayal of Tillich as a radical theologian that many students encounter Tillich primarily (only?) through the lens of his *Systematic Theology*, in which he is arguably at his least radical as he addresses himself explicitly to the religious symbols of his own religious tradition. That said, even here it is possible to see how little Tillich really belongs to the school of existentialism, unless it its definition is stretched beyond recognition, as Tillich himself does repeatedly, to become equivalent to the mood of critical protest within thinking itself.

One of the hallmarks of recent radical theology is the fluidity in its language and its willingness to use neologisms to reanimate the staid terminology of establishment theology. In this, Tillich is very much a fellow traveller. True, Tillich's language has little of the lightness and playfulness of, say, John D. Caputo or Mark C. Taylor, but as Harvey Cox puts it:

> There is a quality of daring in Tillich's thinking. He took risks, something a novice scholar in almost any field is rarely encouraged to do. One of the risks he took was to abandon any fetishism of particular words. He knew, both from his keen observation of modern culture and through his own spiritual struggles, that the words "grace" and

> "faith" and even "God" had not only lost much of their original power, but had also been so distorted that they had often been evacuated of meaning. So he boldly experimented with a new vocabulary. If the word "God" no longer speaks to you, he once wrote, say "depth." Instead of "sin," say "separation." Instead of "forgiveness," say "acceptance."[26]

Tillich is a true radical in his willingness to venture against tradition and to betray inherited orthodoxies for the sake of a retrieval of what has been buried under the accretions of conditioned pieties. If radicalism in theology is about returning to the roots, then Tillich's is exemplary in his commitment to the repeated exercise of "shaking the foundations" to return each individual again and again to the originary piety of the shock of (non-)being. To be, for Tillich, is to be ultimately concerned and as much as religion can reveal this it can also conceal it and it is the task of the (radically Tillichian) theologian to unsettle the certainties that distract from our orientation to the unconditioned.

Finally, this brings me to another aspect of recent radical theology that resonates with Tillich's: embodiment. Tillich is sometimes characterized as "the theologian's theologian" or as the "apostle to the intellectuals" and it is undeniable that his tendency to categorization and abstraction can seem arid and impersonal at times. Indeed, it is a commonplace to critique Tillich for the non-personal character of his descriptions of God as "being-itself" or "the ground of meaning and being" and Jesus Christ as "Jesus as the Christ as bearer of new being." Unlike the rich individualism of the names "God" or "Jesus Christ," the thought seems to be, Tillich's formulae are "frosty monsters" (to invoke Barth's description of Tillich's earlier favored term *das Unbedingt*), unable to do justice to the personal and material descriptions so prominent in the Christian tradition. On the one hand, Tillich will concur: any supranaturalism that imagines God as some kind of "super-being" or Jesus as some kind of semi-divine magician simply has no

place in post-mythological theology. Here Tillich is uncompromising; such supranaturalism not only diminishes God by reducing Him to a "supra-finite" object among others, it also contains the roots of what Tillich perceived as one of the most pernicious threats to the theological imagination of his time—namely, the temptation toward religious literalism. This is the basis for Tillich's call to "deliteralisation" (in contrast to what he saw as the mistaken result of Bultmann's call to "demythologisation") and for his lifelong insistence that theology is symbolic. Both are radical moves and both emphasize the embodied and situated nature of religion and religious life. Thus, for Tillich, counter-intuitive though it may seem, it is the name "God" that is impersonal and that impoverishes the religious imagination. By contrast, to talk of—and pray to—God as the ground of meaning and being is to engage with the divine life with the whole of a person's being.

Retrieving the Radical Tillich

This book has been conceived and written in the conviction that Tillich's voice rightly belongs in contemporary radical theological discussions and that the very contours of that discourse cannot be properly understood without reference to Tillich's theology and his legacy. If it is successful, it will provoke further discussion and disagreement; hopefully shaking some more foundations and dislodging fixed pieties—even those of radical theology itself. Tillich's is an unjustly neglected perspective in contemporary theology (radical or otherwise) and if this book makes a contribution to clearing up some of the myths and false assumptions about his theology, then it will not have been in vain. However, the conversation is not all one-sided and it should be clear from the chapters that follow that Tillich's is not a theology easily pigeon-holed. Just as he can—and ought—to be recognized and celebrated as a more radical thinker than is commonly assumed, so too we should be cautious about attempting to co-opt Tillich and his unique

theological perspective for any particular moment of radical theology. It is often remarked that it is Tillich's particular genius to have been able to speak to his contemporaries and that this same strength is precisely the cause for the decline of his influence after his death. As John Clayton puts it, in a telling phrase, in what remains one of the best analyses of Tillich's theological project:

> By incorporating the present cultural situation into his methodology, Tillich gave to his theology a planned obsolescence which precludes his system's having direct relevance for any but the cultural context in which and for which it was constructed.[27]

This contemporaneity equally places limits upon the extent to which it is possible—and even desirable—to recruit Tillich *in toto* as a radical theologian. Yes, the real Tillich may be the radical Tillich; but the really real Tillich is quite simply just Tillich.

To close this Introduction, I draw attention to an important sense in which Tillich's radicality is constrained and in which this book in its attempt to retrieve the radical Tillich is itself limited. In his 1996 "Introduction" to Tillich's 1963 Earl Lectures, delivered at the Pacific School of Religion and published under the typically Tillichian title *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, Durwood Foster echoes Clayton's concern that Tillich's theology speaks to a cultural (and theological) moment that is now past—indeed, that may have already been past even as Tillich was still writing. Citing the two "theological storm fronts that graphically marked the situation of the 1960s— "death of God" and "theology of hope," Foster concedes that Tillich "did not in fact anticipate either their idiom or their vitality" but nonetheless suggests that "far from being obliviously distant from the erupting trends of the sixties, Tillich was . . . profoundly interconnected and critically interactive with their rootage and their import."[28] The same judicious, dialectical judgement is applied to that which Foster

identifies as the major upheaval in theology that Tillich did not foresee, namely "the erupting indictments of economic oppression, sexism, and racism."[29] The challenge is a serious one—especially for an engagement with Tillich that attempts to retrieve the radical Tillich. Forster goes some way to addressing the concerns, but there is clearly more to be said with respect to each of the three *loci* of liberation. Foster writes:

> Few if any Christian thinkers had done more than he to prepare for the erupting indictments of economic oppression, sexism, and racism. Had he been able to keep his appointment with the New School for Social Research to return to New York in the fall of 1965—instead of dying that October—doubtless his critique and encouragement would have thickened the plot of all the new movements. Much of his early initiative had flowed into religious socialism—one of the things that earned him the enmity of the Nazis—and a sense for Realpolitik registers steadily in his subsequent utterances . . . When the gender consciousness of Simone de Beauvoir began to stir Union Seminary in the early 1950s, it was Tillich again that alert women students first turned to, and his struggle against masculine onesidedness in the basic Christian symbols (of the Trinity, for instance) clearly influenced feminist/womanist thought. Moreover, while there is no way to excuse the theological establishment as a whole for compliance with institutional racism, Tillich not only consistently aroused "questioning from below," but linked *power* with justice and love over against the dehumanizing management of persons.[30]

Foster is surely right to draw attention to some of those aspects of Tillich's thought that can be of use in developing theological engagements with the realities of those marginalized by poverty, sexism, and racism and there are those in contemporary radical theology who have a distinct political and liberationist focus and who engage constructively with Tillich in that task

(including, of course, contributors to this volume). However, it must also be admitted that awareness of the realities of economic, sex, and racial oppression was not absent from Tillich's own cultural context and—with the important exception of his pre-emigration engagement with religious socialism—his theological project of a theology of culture is remarkably unaffected by these issues. It is, in the end, hard to escape the thought that Tillich's lauded "deprovincialisation" had its limits and that there were certain boundary situations in which he himself did not (could not?) place himself.[31] This, of course, does not mean that those who follow in the wake of the radical Tillich cannot and should not. However, here again, a certain limitation arises, as is demonstrated by this volume. It is noticeable that all the contributors to this volume are white male academics from the developed world. While there are chapters that engage Tillich's radical politics and his influence on feminist thought, the absence of diversity among the contributors requires comment.

I want to make three brief points. First, it is important to underline the scope and ambition of this volume as an exercise in retrieval. The book stems from a reconsideration of Tillich's comment to Altizer that "the real Tillich is the radical Tillich" and it has developed in the context of the trajectory of radical theology since the Death of God movement. The focus of the book on the *philosophically* radical strands of radical theology was deliberately chosen to highlight a particularly prominent feature of Tillich's radical legacy and, more prosaically to make the project a manageable one. In addition, the overwhelming majority of contemporary work that takes up Tillich's radical legacy or uses Tillich as a resource within contemporary radical theology is orientated toward this more philosophically radical strand. In short, this book aims above all to retrieve the philosophically radical Tillich; the retrieval of the *politically*

radical Tillich would be the work of another volume (and I am pleased to say that discussions about the shape of such a book have already begun).

Secondly, for all its avowed interest in the political concerns of those at the margins of society and the theological correlate of this oppression, there is too little work in radical theology that actually does engage with practical matters such as the realities of economic injustice, sexism, and racism. This is, of course, not to deny that there is such work, but simply to highlight the disjunction between theory and practice in the majority of radical theology.[32] Such a complaint is a perennial one for any so-called radical program of thought, but it is important to recognize that recent and contemporary radical theologies (and the radical philosophies that they are so closely correlated to) cannot be exempted from the charge of ivory tower-dom. While the radical theologians are wont to be more likely than most to have read Marx's famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, they are equally likely to be guilty of falling into the trap of its mischievous paraphrase: "The philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to write books about how to change it." To the extent that this book focuses its attention to matters methodological over above those more practical, it too falls foul of the temptation to this common vice of radical thought.

Thirdly, it must also be admitted that the contributors to this book reflect something of the state of scholarship in both Paul Tillich and radical theology. Both have, ironically, become part of the theological establishment, even if not the dominant voices therein. The story of Tillich's domestication by the academic and ecclesial *status quo* has already been told above, but a similar tale can be told of the history of recent radical theology. For all the scandal it provoked at the time, death of God theology has now been neatly folded into the narrative of the development of twentieth-century theology and its concerns (with *kenosis* and the apocalyptic,

for instance) diverted into the orbits of more conventional, traditional theological styles. Even contemporary radical theology has a certain reassuringly conventional character to it, according to which it repeats a predictable cycle of correlation to whichever fashionable radical philosophy is currently stirring up most interest. From Heidegger to Derrida to Deleuze and now Meillassoux, the radical theological meme replicates without ever really challenging the academic and religious worlds within which it operates—environments that are still dominated by privileged white men. This is not to deny that there are significant exceptions—many of whom play a significant role in this volume—but the reality of the constitution of the scholarly community that the contributors to the chapters in this book represent is a striking one.

To conclude, it is my hope that the essays collected here will not be the last word on the radical Tillich, his legacy, and his contemporary importance, but that they will provoke further work and that both Tillichian and radical theological will continue to develop critically and in mutual interaction. To retrieve the radical Tillich is to be reminded of the risk of theology and to be challenged by the demands of both the message and the situation. Perhaps, the real Tillich *is* the radical Tillich and the radical Tillich is the real Tillich; the Tillich for whom theological apologetics is never safely correlational but in the terms of his early lectures on *Dogmatik*, an attack (*Angriff*).[33] Or, as he puts it in his *Systematic Theology*:

> The answering theologian must discover the false gods in the individual soul and in society . . . He must challenge them through the power of the Divine Logos, which makes him a theologian. Theological polemic is not merely a theoretical discussion, but rather a spiritual judgment against the gods which are not God, against those structures of evil, those distortions of God in thought and action. No compromise or adaptation or theological self-surrender is permitted on this level. For the first Commandment is the

rock upon which theology stands. There is no synthesis possible between God and the idols. In spite of the dangers inherent in so judging, the theologian must become an instrument of the Divine Judgement against a distorted world.[34]

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[1] See Paul Tillich, "Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur" in Paul Tillich, *Main Works / Hauptwerke*. Vol. 2. *Writings in the Philosophy of Culture*, ed. Michael Palmer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 69–86. This text has been translated into English by W. B. Green in Paul Tillich, *What Is Religion?* ed. James Luther Adams (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 155–181. An alternative, improved, translation Victor Nuovo is published as *Visionary Science. A Translation of Tillich's "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture" with an Interpretive Essay* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987).

[2] See the representative texts collected in James M. Robinson, *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968).

[3] See also Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation*, trans. H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1932).

[4] For more on this topic, see Russell Re Manning, *Theology at the End of Culture. Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture and Art* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 5-55.

[5] For a persuasive defense of this contested claim, see Douglas Hedley, "Was Schleiermacher a Christian Platonist?" *Dionysius* 17 (1999), 149–168.

[6] See Paul Tillich, *The System of the Sciences According to Objects and Methods*, trans. Paul Wiebe (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1981). For Cornelius' opposition to Tillich, see Werner Schüßler, "Tillich's Life and Works" in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10.

[7] Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision*, trans. Franklin Sherman (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

[8] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–1963), p. ST 131–132.

[9] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, ix.

[10] Ibid. One might say that a glance at the current swelling body of literature on faith in the philosophy of religion would show that Tillich has not been entirely successful in this attempt. See, for instance, John Bishop's article "Faith" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2010 edn.), ed. E. Zalta (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/faith/.), in which Bishop sets out seven broad categories of views of faith.

[11] For "theism transcended" and "absolute faith" see in particular, Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*. 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 171-177 and 182-186.<<AQ: Please provide page range here>>.

[12] For a typical account of the origin of theology in the response to being shaken or grasped by an awareness (or orientation toward) the unconditioned in the experience of shock, see Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–1963), vol. I, 113: "The threat of non-being, grasping the mind, produces the 'ontological shock' in which the negative side of the mystery of being—its abysmal element—is experienced. 'Shock' points to a state of mind in which the mind is thrown out of its normal balance, shaken in its structure. Reason reaches its boundary line, is thrown back upon itself, and then is driven again to its extreme situation."

[13] Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 13.

[14] The first of these is Thesis 115 from a presentation given by Tillich in 1911 at Kassel, in which he delivered 128 theses and a paper with the title "Die christliche Gewissheit und der historische Jesus". See Paul Tillich, *Main Works/Hauptwerke*. Vol. 6 *Theological Writings/Theologische Schriften*, ed. Gert Hummel (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 33.

[15] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 3rd ed. Introduction by Harvey Cox (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 175.

[16] The reference is to Isaiah Berlin's 1953 characterization of those, the hedgehogs, who know the world through the lens of one single defining "big idea" (including Plato, Dante, Hegel, and Nietzsche) as opposed to those, the foxes, whose perspective cannot be pinned down to a single notion (examples given include Aristotle, Shakespeare, and Goethe). Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox. An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953). This analysis of Tillich's multisystematicity coheres well with his mastery of the essay and lecture format of theology. Indeed, there is something remarkably homiletic about Tillich's style of theology, even when far from any Biblical language.

[17] Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1963). The lectures were delivered in autumn 1961.

[18] Ibid., 1–2, 2, 5.

[19] Ibid., 4–5.

[20] Ibid., 5.

[21] Robert Scharlemann. "Tillich's Religious Writings" in Paul Tillich, *Writings on Religion / Religiöse Schriften*, ed. Robert P. Scharlemann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) = *Main Works / Hauptwerke* 5, 1–12; 5.

[22] Tillich, *Christianity and Encounter*, 84.

[23] Ibid, 84; 89. For a very different theological critique of religion and religions, see Tom Greggs, *Theology Against Religion. Constructive Dialogues with Bonhoeffer and Barth* (London: T & T Clark, 2011).

[24] For an alternative strand of radical theology—as hermeneutic theology—indebted more directly to Bultmann and Heidegger, see Ingolf Dalferth, *Radikale Theologie* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010).

[25] For a comprehensive dismissal of the alleged "existentialist turn" in the development of Tillich's theology, see Marc Boss, *Au commencement la liberté. La religion du Kant réinventée par Fichte, Schelling et Tillich* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014), 513–524, especially 521: "il nous paraît inutile de chercher un tourant existentialiste dans la trajectoire intellectuelle de Tillich" and repeated in Marc Boss, "Paul Tillich and the Twentieth-Century Fichte Renaissance: Neo-Idealist Features in his EarlyAccounts of Freedom and Existence," *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* 36.3 (2010), 8–21, especially 15: "the very notion of an "existential turn" in Tillich's intellectual trajectory seems highly doubtful to me." Boss reaches this conclusion through close analysis of Tillich's writings before and after the First World War notwithstanding Tillich's own subsequent critiques of German Idealism and mythologizing of an embrace of existentialism as a result of the horrors of the War.

[26] Harvey Cox, "Introduction" in Tillich, *Courage*, xxiv.

[27] John Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation. Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 5.

[28] See Durwood Foster, "Introduction" in Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996, 2007), xiii–xiv. Clayton raises a similar concern that "it might be reasonably asserted that the period for which Tillich was writing was already past or at least nearly so by the time he completed his *Systematic Theology*." He continues, "There was perhaps a certain inevitability in this. Philosophical reflection of the sort in which Tillich engaged tends to come, as Hegel was keenly aware, at the end rather than the beginning or the zenith of an age." Clayton, *Correlation*, 6.

[29] Foster, "Introduction", xii.

[30] Foster, "Introduction", xii–xiii.

[31] The feminist critique of Tillich's theology (and ethos) is the most developed. See Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace. Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (New York: University Press of America, 1980), Susan Lichtman, "The Concept of Sin in the Theology of Paul Tillich: A Break from Patriarchy?" *The Journal of Women and Religion* 8 (1989), 49–55, and the judicious assessment by Rachel Sophia Baard as "Tillich and Feminism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 273–287. For a critical engagement with Tillich's failure to engage race, see Elaine A. Robinson, "Paul Tillich." In *Beyond the Pale. Reading Theology from the Margins*, ed. Miguel De la Torre and Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 151–160. After an overview survey of Tillich's central theological themes, Robinson defends the claim that "Tillich was a German-born American theologian who became White in the context and culture of the United States," specifically that "little evidence exists to suggest that Tillich attempted to understand the social and legal construction of race in the United States, despite the immense cultural implications present in the long history of racial injustice and genocide within the American borders. There is little evidence within his theological corpus that the question of racial injustice was taken seriously, despite the fact that elements of his system could provide openings for just such analysis (e.g., experience as a medium or culture as a source)." (156). For a nuanced discussions of Tillich's potential and his limitations within contemporary political theology, see Gregory Walter, "Critique and Promise in Paul Tillich's Political Theology: Engaging Giogio Agamben on Sovereignty and Possibility" *Journal of Religion* 90.3 (2010), 453–474.

[32] Two notable exceptions—both by contributors to this volume—are Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology. Religion and Politics after Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) and Jeffrey W. Robbins, *Radical Democracy and Political Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), as well as their jointly written work in the Palgrave Macmillan "Radical Theologies" series, *Religion, Politics, and the Earth. The New Materialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[33] Paul Tillich *Dogmatik-Vorlesung, (Dresden 1925–27)*, ed. Werrner Schüßler (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 1.

[34] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. I, 131–132.