

analysis. It is richly documented, informed by other recent scholarship (both traditional Muslim and 'Western'), eirenic and respectful in tone, and a solid and impressive case for the observations advanced. A ten-page bibliography and indexes of Qur'ān manuscripts and authors/subjects complete this commendable study.

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Jonathan Brant, *Paul Tillich and the Possibility of Revelation through Film: A Theoretical Account Grounded by Empirical Research into the Experience of Filmgoers* (Oxford, OUP, 2012), pp. xii+270. £65.00 (hbk).

Jonathan Brant's study promotes and critically develops the dialogue between religion and film. Important for the project is the interaction between Paul Tillich's 'modern' 'theology of culture' and 'postmodern' practices of film making and film viewing. The result is exciting. The study opens up new paths in theological thinking. Brant's empirical research and his theoretical and practical conclusions are especially enriching and compelling for recent creative theology as well as for religious film art today. The author shows that religious revelation through film is, indeed, possible: religious films can testify from God's word. They have the power to create healing and saving experiences in the heart of the believer. Like Tillich, Brant understands revelatory breakthrough and human ecstasy as theoretical terms grounded in religious life-experiences as well as in concrete political and social encounter.

The study contains four parts and seven chapters: part I (chapter 1) presents the research project; part II (chapters 2–3) focuses on Tillich's theological understanding of religion and culture; part III (chapters 4–6) contains a large and detailed empirical research; part IV (chapter 7) rereads the theological theory in the light of the empirical work.

The *theological* impacts of the study are the focus of my analysis now. Brant's intention is to put into dialogue two different topics, interests, and, most importantly, two different theory-languages. On the one hand, Brant has a theological, i.e. a theoretical interest. Tillich's 'modern' 'theology of culture' serves him as a theoretical platform for the encounter between religion and film. On the other hand, the research has an empirical and practical interest. It gives fresh insights into today's methods of film production. Moreover, it illuminates how religious films encounter the viewers. 'Modern' theology meets 'postmodern' movie art! A fascinating project. However, how exactly

does the dialogue between these two different issues work? Finding critical answers to this question is the challenge and the chance of Brant's study.

Another way to put my considerations and remarks might be to ask: Why Tillich? Tillich, one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century, is a thoroughly 'modern' thinker. Ontological categories are more important to him than the living flow of empirical experience and experimental research. Tillich's ontology and christology are, consequently, the product of a strongly organised method of correlation. His phenomenology also arises from this static grip. To be sure, Tillich reworks, he broadens and deepens his ontological framework in the pneumatology, i.e. in his late *Systematic Theology III*. Tillich's pneumatology, however, is only weakly engaged in Brant's work.

Brant's theological key motive is Tillich's revelatory encounter with Sandro Botticelli's painting *Madonna and Singing Angels* in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin at the end of the First World War. This mystic and ecstatic experience is related to Tillich's religious concept of 'breakthrough'.

In his description of the 'Botticelli event', Tillich himself compares his experience with an event happening within a medieval church. The church is illuminated by the light of day that shines through its stained-glass windows. It is not unimportant to note that for Tillich, the 'middle ages' as well as terms like 'medieval' and 'catholic' are more static than dynamic, more uniform than pluralistic categories and motives. To be sure, the 'breakthrough' can open up and transform the static and uniform substance. However, it might be asked if the concept is really strong enough to cooperate fruitfully with a 'pluralistic' setting as Brant rightly envisions today's film practices. The question therefore remains: Why Tillich?

Jonathan Brant is a courageous thinker. He opens up new theological debates and questions, and in this sense, the book is of benefit for every creative theology today.

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Thomas G. Long, *What Shall We Say? Evil, Suffering, and the Crisis of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), pp. 172. \$25.00/£16.99.

In this book, Thomas Long offers preachers encouragement and resources to face the problem of evil and suffering head-on. He analyses the basic issue for Christian and Jewish believers succinctly: how could an all-powerful