

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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doi:10.1017/S0036930614000325

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

and loving God permit innocent suffering? He argues – rightly, I think – that the answer to this question requires that we already be in a faithful relationship with God. The assertion of God’s existence, power and love arises out of our experience and faith. We cannot therefore use the problem of evil as a way to put God’s existence, power and love in the dock, unless we are willing to admit that we are ourselves already in love with God.

Our pathway through the problem of evil is best marked out by lovers of God who have struggled with it. Accordingly, Long turns to Job and Jesus. For Long, the drama of Job shifts attention away from the question of innocence and guilt, to a God whose creative genius matters more than our own need to be vindicated in a court of law. God has ventured greatly in creating a universe, and we are a product of that venture. By implication, our suffering is the unavoidable but ultimately redeemable by-product of God’s world-making.

This is borne out in Long’s searching exegesis of Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the weeds, where the very conditions favouring the reign of God provide an unwittingly friendly environment for exclusion and violence. Why? Here I may be reading into Long’s argument, which becomes somewhat diffuse at this point. The God of Job and Jesus creates and sustains the universe on the principle of more variety, not less. This means God permits the collusion of random forces in the natural order to produce new things (e.g. evolution), and, when intervening in human affairs, does so by non-violent means (e.g. intervention only via spiritual transformation of the human heart, ultimately through God’s Word, incarnate, crucified and risen). This offers no immediate consolation for tragic loss from random natural evil or human wickedness. But for those who have established a personal relationship with this God, it provides a basis for long-term trust. God, who is love, is also ultimately powerful, and will bring all God’s children home.

Long’s account is essentially Augustinian, inasmuch as he insists that God is ultimately powerful but is not in any way the cause of evil. It is therefore confusing when Long says that Augustine blames evil on free will, on the assumption that free will is at its heart the ability to choose between good and evil. If that were the case, evil would be an option from the outset, and God would be its author. But this is not what Augustine means by free will. Free will is simply the ability to love God in return and, by extension, to love one another. The possibility of evil is not included in Augustine’s notion of free will, which is why he describes the fallen will as essentially irrational – a falling away of the will from God and the neighbour, its proper objects, to a falsely constructed, disconnected self. In any case, Long seems

to agree with Augustine in the end. To know God is to recognise evil as a real contrast to God, but one that is 'provisional'. We cannot isolate ourselves from the possibility of random suffering as the result of natural forces, or the suffering which comes as the result of human selfishness. But the cross and resurrection declare both the reality of tragedy and its comedic end.

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doi:10.1017/S0036930614000337

Pamela Cooper-White, *Braided Selves: Collected Essays on Multiplicity, God, and Persons* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), pp. viii+244. \$28.00.

In *Braided Selves*, Cooper-White engages the ongoing conversation of 'what it means to be an "I"' in postmodernity. Writing from the perspective of pastoral theology, and inspired by relational-psychoanalytic theory, she uses the image 'braided selves' to speak of the 'multiplicity of persons', and the formulation 'creative profusion, incarnational desire, and living inspiration' as her pastoral approach to the Trinity (p. 9). Cooper-White explains that both psychological schools and Christian theology have used the language of integration to describe healing and salvation (pp. 100–1). By contrast, Cooper-White speaks of a psychological and theological anthropology which regards 'multiplicity as internally constitutive of each individual mind/self/subject, at both conscious and unconscious levels' (p. 103). Her trinitarian formulation has the purpose of bringing into question the paradigm of integration and, through a kind of 'psycho-spiritual dissent', increase consciousness of the 'dappled, fickle, freckled multiplicity of both of ourselves and the real persons who come to us for care and healing' (p. 119).

Throughout her book, Cooper-White interweaves several images to illustrate the meaning of multiplicity. In chapter 2, speaking of the 'diversity and complexity' of human development, she argues that time is not linear, and thus an appropriate symbol to represent time would be a Moebius strip, a symbol of eternity (p. 42). In chapter 4, the author incorporates Deleuze's and Guattari's image of the rhizome to challenge the 'classical psychoanalytic assertion' that all behaviour comes from a 'deeper route cause, in the past' (p. 111). While she does not dismiss the psychoanalytic significance of tracing associations (roots), she explains that the rhizome image can be helpful in tracing a horizontal 'associational chain of events' which incorporates both present and past conditions (p. 111). In chapter 6, she uses the image of a quilt as metaphor to convey the complexity, messiness