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# The Tragedy of Southern Religion

By Ernest Kurtz

**B**OTH popular and academic opinion recognize the American South to be uniquely religious.<sup>1</sup> Yet of all the anomalies that checker the intellectual landscape of the region, southern white religion\* poses one of the most profound challenges to historical understanding.<sup>2</sup> Scholars have often probed its puzzles: its theological individualism in a land noted for the sense of community;<sup>3</sup> its pervasiveness in extent yet its narrowness of focus;<sup>4</sup> the established-church qualities that the South's historically dissenting sects developed;<sup>5</sup> the "cultural captivity"<sup>6</sup> ironically inherent in southern religion's key doctrine of "the spirituality of the church"; its concentration on "ordering" in a culture characterized by both hierarchy and violence;<sup>7</sup> the "civil religion" function it serves in a self-styled "rebel" enclave.<sup>8</sup>

The deepest anomaly of southern white religion, however, lay in its strange blindness to tragedy—in the failure of its churches to discern the nature and meaning of the tragic dimension in human experience.<sup>9</sup> "The office which a religion fulfills for a society," a truculent defender of the South has assured us, "is to inform its members of what expectations they can reasonably cherish in this life."<sup>10</sup> Southern life, uniquely in American historical experience, knew the raw materials of tragedy—from the tribulations inherent in its "peculiar institution," to the calamity of defeat in war, to the adversities engendered by its long endemic poverty.<sup>11</sup> Through all these—slavery, defeat, poverty, and more—the southern white Christian churches have remained singularly blind to the nature and meaning of tragedy and thus also to the significance of suffering.<sup>12</sup> To be aware of this is to sense notable anomaly, for in the common understanding one essential function of any religion is precisely to render intelligible and to reconcile to the limitations of human existence especially as revealed by the experience of suffering. As Unamuno put it: "The chiefest sanctity of a temple is that it is a place to which men go to weep

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\*The restriction herein of "southern religion" to southern *white* religion will be commented on directly below, p. 219.

in common.”<sup>13</sup> The white churches of the American South have never been famed for such sanctity.

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This insight and the impulse to explore it derive from research directed at understanding southern religion during the 1930s. Because what follows does not pretend to present the polished product of exhaustive research, but rather offers an introductory proposal to provoke comment, let me begin by simply stating the three observations that inspired this effort of research and interpretation.

(1) During the decade of the 1930s, the American religious mainstream became aware of and developed a “theology of crisis” most commonly known as “neo-orthodoxy.” This theology incorporated an emphasis up to that point absent from American theologies whether conservative or liberal: a focus on human finitude and its implications, and attentiveness to the *limitations* inherent in the human experience.<sup>14</sup>

(2) So profound and far-reaching became the awareness of tragic limitation during the 1930s that it was not confined only to religion and theology. “Wisdom comes first in images,” as William Butler Yeats reminded shortly before that era.<sup>15</sup> Thus it does not surprise to find the vision and variety of human limitation explored not only in philosophy but especially and most deeply in literature.<sup>16</sup> And, as might be expected from even a rudimentary familiarity with American history, that vision and those varieties were best captured by, explored in, and reflected through *southern* American writers. The insight formed, indeed, the nucleus of what we have become accustomed to call, without always advertent to the irony of its name, “the southern renaissance.”<sup>17</sup>

(3) In most of the United States, during the 1930s and after, religious spokesmen heard the neo-orthodox message and in varying degrees heeded its insight. The churches and churchmen of the American South, however, despite the affinity one might expect to find in them for the “conservative” emphasis on limitation, showed no such advertence. They remained rather during that crucial decade (and even after it) completely nescient not only of the

significance and implications of neo-orthodoxy, but of its very content.

Why?

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What follows in the attempt to answer that question will explore each of those points in greater detail. But first it is necessary to specify precisely the problem to be investigated and to define clearly the terms of that problem and its investigation. The puzzle inviting thought seems evident: why did not neo-orthodoxy, the first post-Enlightenment theology directly to confront tragedy, find a more hospitable welcome in the churches of the American South, the region of the United States generally thought to be most resistant to Enlightenment liberalism and most experienced in the reality of tragedy? Four terms that will be used in this exploration invite explanation: *southern religion*, *southern churches*, *theology*, and *tragedy*.

Virtually all scholars agree that there is such a thing as "southern religion," homogeneous and perduring over time.<sup>18</sup> As one southern theologian phrased the point in 1934: "A study of the denominational press of the South and the doctrinal statements of the various denominations reveals a marked accord in the fundamental tenets which they preach. In spite of considerable ecclesiastical differences the theology of the South is the same in its broad essentials among all religious groups."<sup>19</sup> To borrow, as have others, from Kenneth K. Bailey: southern religion involves at least "a preoccupation with individual repentance, a dogged insistence on Biblical inerrancy, and a tendency toward overt expression of intense religious emotions."<sup>20</sup> It is this religion, and its theology, that this paper will examine.

Denominationally, "the southern churches" are dominated by what Samuel S. Hill, Jr., has termed "the remarkable hegemony" of Baptists and Methodists in the South.<sup>21</sup> Our focus, then, will be upon these denominations, although also taking note as appropriate of Southern Presbyterians—not least because this group furnished the most articulate expositors of the theological tradition implicit in southern religion.<sup>22</sup> Explicitly excluded from examination are Roman Catholics, Jews, and most Episcopalians:

in the era under consideration, these groups were numerically miniscule and intellectually irrelevant in southern life.<sup>23</sup> Groups styled "Disciples" or "Christian" will not be treated directly: I invite those familiar with their theology to measure it against the analysis that follows. The so-called "fringe sects" will be considered under only one heading. The focus on Baptists and Methodists, warranted even if only because of their numerical and social dominance of southern life, seems further justified because their essential theology formed also the theological core of virtually all other expressions of southern white Protestantism during our period.<sup>24</sup>

By "theology" and derivatively by "religion," I mean thought, and practice reflecting that thought, about the relationship between the human and the divine. Because it is relational and the work of humans, every theology contains an anthropology—a vision and understanding of *the meaning of being human*. It is upon this, upon southern religion's interpretation of the essential human condition, that the analysis to follow will focus. A chief value of theology to the historian of ideas consists in its revelation of the philosophy of generally unphilosophic and even inarticulate people. For all people, but especially for "ordinary people," to think on God is to ponder the meaning of being human.<sup>25</sup>

Most historical explorations of theology, and especially of southern religion, begin—and end—with the cultural.<sup>26</sup> The cultural approach is justifiable and even necessary: religion is a social phenomenon. Yet religious belief and practice are not *merely* cultural artifacts. This study therefore assumes that religion also has some kind of "independent variable" status, that it can be and has been a force in its own right. What people think and believe about God and about themselves and others in relationship to God does make a difference in their lives, and it is valid and even useful to study these ideas on their own terms.<sup>27</sup>

*Tragedy* is not the same as "pathos"—nor as "irony." Given the scope and focus of this paper, it is worth noting, without belaboring the point, that C. Vann Woodward's usage of these terms has been more precisely accurate than was that of his own inspiration, Reinhold Niebuhr.<sup>28</sup> Other commentators on the South have not fared so well.<sup>29</sup> Because the term "tragedy" is so often used loosely and

incorrectly as a synonym for “misfortune” or to imply some moral fault, specifying exactly “the sense of tragedy” that southern religion lacked becomes critically important.

Diverse literary, philosophical, and historical sources impel to understanding the sense of tragedy, the tragic vision, (1) as arising from the effort to render evil intelligible—and specifically the evil of human suffering; and (2) as consisting essentially and precisely in the perception that to-be-human is to be in a middle position, to exist in a mixed condition.<sup>30</sup> Three modern rehearsals of classic religious statements of this perception of the tragic predicament of humankind may help clarify. Philosophers as diverse as William Barrett and Lucien Goldmann have pointed out that in the vision of Blaise Pascal, “man is a paradoxical being”;<sup>31</sup> he “occupies a middle position in the universe . . . he is an All in relation to Nothingness, a Nothingness in relation to the All.”<sup>32</sup> In Niebuhrian terms, to introduce the vision of neo-orthodox theology, to be human is to stand “at the juncture of nature and spirit” and therefore to be “the subject of both freedom and necessity.” Because involved in the order of nature, humans are bound; yet as spirit they transcend nature and are therefore also free.<sup>33</sup>

The paradox that to-be-human is to be both free and finite contains the core of the tragic vision. The essence of tragedy consists in the realization that to-be-human is to be “both-and” rather than “either-or”: both body and soul, both beast and angel, both essentially limited and craving infinity.<sup>34</sup> Tragedy in the Christian perspective thus transcends both optimism and pessimism; it “never fails to see the Resurrection implied in the Fall and the Fall implied in the Resurrection.”<sup>35</sup> As the same scholar of tragedy emphasized: “*According to the tragic attitude, good and evil necessarily imply one another.*”<sup>36</sup>

The wisdom of the tragic, then, is the wisdom of limits.<sup>37</sup> Tragic wisdom accepts the inevitability of conflict—not as extrinsic but as intrinsic to the human situation, not so much *between* humans as *within* each human individual.<sup>38</sup> The tragic vision is thus “*an attitude of attentiveness to the contingencies and sufferings that it is the lot of man to endure.*”<sup>39</sup> It is especially attentive to what Jaspers and Tillich termed the “boundary situations” of

human existence, to the entailments of the "limited and imperfect creatureliness" that is the human lot.<sup>40</sup> Because of essential limitation, "reality is divided against itself, and so is truth. . . . Tragedy is real because irreconcilable opposition is real."<sup>41</sup> But the tragic vision knows and accepts that this irreconcilable opposition comes not from outside of human nature but from the very essence of the human condition. In the vocabulary of Christian theology, this condition that underlies tragedy is called "original sin."<sup>42</sup>

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Of "sin," more shortly, in context. Here, with our definitions of "southern religion," "southern churches," "theology," and "tragedy" in place, it becomes possible further to specify the tragedy of southern religion. Because southern churches embodied an "either-or" theology, southern religion contributed to blinding its adherents to the both-and-ness of the human situation rather than enabling them to understand it and aiding them in confronting it. Southern religion, that is to say, slipped into the very snare delineated by Karl Jaspers in his study of the religious significance of tragedy: "to take a relative truth for absolute is itself a tragic perversion, a fit object for tragic knowledge. Every truth we think complete will prove itself untruth at the moment of shipwreck."<sup>43</sup>

"The moment of shipwreck" on which this article focuses, for the reasons already indicated and later to be explored, was the decade of the 1930s. Yet if the tragedy of southern religion found fruition in the failure of the southern churches to accept the neo-orthodox insight, that failure had its own history, and investigating that history should clarify both the nature and the cause of the failure. The essential failure, I submit, was theological; and by the 1930s, it had a century-old history.

Scholars, and pre-eminently among them John Boles, have located the core and the source of the theology of southern religion in the Evangelical Revivalism of the Second Great Awakening.<sup>44</sup> Clearly formed by 1805, this tradition became fixed within the southern churches by 1830; it remained their exclusive theology for well over a century.<sup>45</sup> Although itself a style or mode of proclaiming the Christian message rather than a true theology,

Evangelical Revivalism nevertheless imparted a kind of theology. As so often happens in so many areas, in the style of religious expression that was Evangelical Revivalism, the medium became the message. The theology of Evangelical Revivalism that came to dominate southern religion was thus at root a theology of dichotomies. The revivalist approach imparted an essentially dualistic vision that ignored every hint of “both-and” in its insistence on interpreting all reality in exclusive terms of “either-or.”<sup>46</sup>

Two dichotomies proved especially significant, in time coming to mark the limits of, as well as to dominate, all aspects of southern religion. First and foremost, the revivalist approach divided human beings into “the saved” and “the lost.” The most important fact about any person, within the Evangelical worldview, became whether or not he or she had undergone a “conversion experience” and thus “attained salvation.” There could be no middle, no half-way, between being saved and being lost, between having or not having an experience of conversion.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, evangelical theology dichotomized all other reality, and most significantly human knowledge, into the two as mutually exclusive categories, “sacred” and “secular.” Although these two realms were generally assumed to harmonize, they in no way inter-penetrated: “revealed truth” was wholly other than “worldly knowledge.” This second dichotomy underlay Evangelicalism’s insistence on literal scriptural inerrancy as well as the misprizing of intellect and culture that became so characteristic of evangelical adherents.<sup>48</sup>

These two dichotomies of good and evil—the saved and the lost, the sacred and the secular—were of course not born at the time of the Second Great Awakening. Each had a long history, both within and beyond Christianity. Biblical Jews defined themselves as the “Chosen People”; medieval Catholics insisted that *extra ecclesiam, nulla salus*; and both traditions as well as others cherish “sacred books” that impart “revealed truth.” Despite this, or indeed more likely because of it, historically the thrust of monotheistic theologies has been inclusive rather than exclusive—an effort to mitigate those distinctions or at least to caution against human attempts to enforce them.



Reformation Protestantism, indeed, may be understood as a rejection of late medieval Catholicism's claims to determine absolutely the distinctions between saved and lost, between secular and sacred. Within the Reformed tradition out of which grew American theology, John Calvin established theme and tone with his insistence upon the absolute sovereignty of God. Because this vision accented the transcendent otherness of God, it taught the unity in not-God-ness of men. Yet awe is difficult to sustain. Thus, theologians in the Reformed tradition beginning with Calvin himself over time shifted attention to the nature of the unity embodied in communities of men, exploring the implications of human beings as "believing sinners" who were united by both their belief and their sin, by their recognition both of God and of their own alienation from God.<sup>49</sup>

This dual emphasis also proved difficult to preserve. First in seventeenth-century England and then in eighteenth-century America, it broke asunder.<sup>50</sup> By the time of the Second Great Awakening early in the nineteenth century, God had lost His otherness—albeit diversely for "liberals" who discovered His immanence in nature and especially in themselves, and for the "orthodox" who evangelically proclaimed that they alone possessed a "special" relationship with Him.<sup>51</sup> Maintaining the unity of knowledge, liberals distinguished among men: the "intelligent" shared their vision, the "benighted" did not. Yet in an age of self-conscious Enlightenment, such a distinction was not absolute. Charitable liberals indeed reposed their greatest hope in the serene faith that all men would eventually and inevitably come to think as did they.<sup>52</sup>

The orthodox slowly, and the "New School" more dramatically, established their own deeper and truly unbridgeable distinction, counterposing "spiritual experience" to mere created intelligence in a way that dichotomized both knowledge and men. "Believers" shared their experience and consequent understanding; "sinners" did not.<sup>53</sup> In the evangelical vision that came to be enshrined in southern theology, as Donald Mathews has delineated:

The terrible insistence on universal sin and guilt did not dictate a common fate for all men, but cast in bold relief the distinction between those who could not escape their just condemnation and

those who could. The result was a radical cleavage between Evangelicals and worldlings. A person was either saved or not; there could be no middle group or lingering devotion to old ways or friends.<sup>54</sup>

Such "believers," because they shared an experience, formed a type of "community," and a community far more intense than any based on mere shared knowledge. Yet because that experience was essentially private and subjective, it inculcated also an individualistic priority. And because that experience was fundamentally triumphant, the community to which it opened tended to exclude any sense of being founded in or witnessing to shared weakness.

Throughout the era under study, southern theology, even more than American theology in general, ignored ecclesiology.<sup>55</sup> The southern churches thus avoided any exploration of the meaning of "church" or of religious community that would attend to *all* that its members had in common. Yet an implicit ecclesiology did develop. Admitting as the basis for community only experiences of triumph led to interpreting all experiences of community members as triumphs. A theology that dichotomized into "either-or" thus created a community of believers who, despite rhetorical professions to the contrary, de-emphasized and even denied any sense of continuing flawedness. Such a theology had neither place nor basis for a sense of community founded in shared weakness, for an understanding of "church" as comprising believing, hoping, and perhaps even loving *sinner*s.<sup>56</sup>

Theology has always understood sin as the ultimate human limitation, the necessary reflection of essential human finitude. Thus the core and character of any theology can be found in its concept of "sin." Classically, in Christian theology, "sin" referred both to a type of action (or omission) and to a state of being. In classic theology, sin as state of being held priority: one did not become a sinner by committing sins, but rather committed sins because one was a sinner.<sup>57</sup> On one level, southern theology preserved this understanding. The "lost" who had not experienced Christ were "sinners." But on a deeper level, by definitional dichotomy, the "saved" who had experienced and accepted Christ could not be "sinners." They might "backslide," or even "commit

sins”; but as Christians they could not *be* sinners. Accepting Christ, being saved, meant achieving a triumph over sin—a triumph that excluded continuing identification as “sinner.”<sup>58</sup>

Sin as state of being—“original sin”—in classic theology meant more. It bespoke not only separation and alienation from God, but the perduring essential flawedness of the human condition.<sup>59</sup> Medieval Catholic theology spoke of the *fomes peccati*; Luther, of the manure pile that remained under the snowy blanket of Christ’s justification; Calvin and his followers consistently and vigorously emphasized the need to maintain constant wariness of the self-centeredness that ever tended to trespass on the prerogatives of divinity. Theologians over the centuries debated whether it was more accurate to describe human nature as “depraved” or “deprived,” but the abiding depth of human not-God-ness was rarely denied. That even “saved” humans were flawed remained in post-as in pre-Reformation theology the tragic core of the Christian vision.<sup>60</sup>

For complex reasons having to do with the declension of Calvinist insight in English Puritanism, with the Arminianism that crept into American Calvinism after the death of Jonathan Edwards, and especially with the impact of Wesleyan Methodism on a frontier society, the theology of Evangelical Revivalism did not lose that core vision—it never attained it.<sup>61</sup> By the time of the Second Great Awakening, the Reformed “emphasis upon God’s sovereign power” had become narrowed to a reminder to men of “their passive role in the plan of salvation.”<sup>62</sup> But such passivity did not cohere well with the revivalistic style. Although conversion remained, at least rhetorically, “a gracious act of God,” the inherent dualism of Evangelical Revivalist theology moved it more and more to view sin exclusively as “a voluntary transgression of a known law of God”—a definition that restricted the entire concept of sin to a deliberate act of the human will.<sup>63</sup>

Readily, then, Evangelical Revivalist theology succumbed not only to Wesleyan Arminianism but also to an understanding of reality that placed man rather than God at the center of the universe. If sin is purely voluntary, theological emphasis “falls on *man’s response to God.*”<sup>64</sup> Thus, as the same scholar has pointed out, southern religion’s “stated objectives, chosen techniques, and

priority rankings all demonstrate a preoccupation with bringing about *man's decisions* to embrace and to live out the Christian way."<sup>65</sup> The southern churches' emphasis on *doing* was essentially linked with their complacency about *being*—a complacency that resulted from their inculcation of a theology that had been shaped to meet "the needs of people who wanted a religion to save them, rather than one which reaffirmed the ambiguity of human existence."<sup>66</sup> Such complacency, which inevitably flowed from a theology that restricted its understanding of sin to the narrowly voluntary, powerfully reinforced the tendency to dichotomize into "either-or."

The centrality accorded "conversion" and "salvation" by the southern churches further underscored this significance of southern religion's understanding of sin. Conversion and salvation came to be both the entire process and the entire purpose of southern religion as shaped by the implicit theology of Evangelical Revivalism.<sup>67</sup> Thus, a brief examination of those concepts serves to clarify the southern churches' refusal of tragedy, their intolerance of paradox and ambiguity. "Conversion" described the process by which a human being, alienated from God, found that alienation abolished by his or her "acceptance of Christ as Savior" and thus attained vindication from sin and the new state of being that is "salvation." In the Evangelical Revivalist understanding, conversion—like the salvation that it brought—was individual, subjective, sudden, total, and certain. These qualities merit consideration.

Although the experience of conversion could take place among others, as at a Revival, and although that experience enabled membership in the community of "the converted," conversion was fundamentally a *bipolar* reality that occurred between "the morally requiring God over against the morally defective individual soul."<sup>68</sup> Not only was it the individual who was changed, and changed *as* individual, it was also the individual who determined and declared that he had been "changed." The qualities of individualism and subjectivity marked especially the Separate Baptist contribution to evangelical theology: they reflected the key Baptist-Pietist principle of the competence of the individual in matters of religion and that principle's concomitant rejection

of “any notion that Christian life involved little more than observing the outward formalities of religion.”<sup>69</sup> A conversion that was individual and subjectively determined could never become a mere outward formality; nor, of course, could conversion thus understood ever be ambiguous.

The suddenness and totality of Evangelical Revivalism’s conversion experience further highlighted its theology’s intolerance of ambiguity. Within evangelical theology, conversion was an orgasmic experience—not because of the trappings of revivalism, but because of the instantaneous nature of the *release* that it brought.<sup>70</sup> The suddenness of conversion rendered justification a self-contained act that had no organic relation to anything else.<sup>71</sup> The central claim implicit in such conversion, and indeed explicit in Evangelicalism’s “born-again” language, was that the believer underwent profound and total change in a single, definite, datable experience: before it, he was one kind of being (“lost”); from that moment on, he became a “saved” person living a qualitatively “new” life.<sup>72</sup>

Because so total, conversion and the salvation that resulted from it were certain. The vocabulary of this certainty varied: “assurance” signaled usually a Baptist background; “entire sanctification,” a Methodist understanding.<sup>73</sup> Yet, uniformly, all southern Evangelicals maximized the importance of certainty—and not least by “shifting its base from the realm of divine activity to the realm of immediate psychic experience.”<sup>74</sup> The doctrine of assurance became “the touchstone of Southern Evangelicalism.”<sup>75</sup> The compelling power of southern religion sprang largely from this doctrine and the sense of certainty it begot—from, that is, the utter unambiguity of its proud promise of personal, ultimate, eternal, total victory.<sup>76</sup> In time, this confident sense of absolutely certain assurance overflowed to the southern churches themselves. By the opening decades of the twentieth century, the southern churches had moved from a “self-consciousness and immodesty” perhaps culturally understandable in the era of sectional conflict to ever more grandiose “assessments of [their own] superior purity. . . . with the implication or even the assertion that their brand [of religion] was the hope of the world.”<sup>77</sup>

Such claims increasingly excluded any sense of shared weakness,

any awareness of continuing flawedness, in church members. They also brought to culmination southern religion's long history of blindness to the possibility of organic sin, to the inherent imperfection of all human institutions, to the tragic reality that even moral men tended to create immoral societies.<sup>78</sup>

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During the 1930s, all claims to certainty were shaken. An ancient sense, muffled since the Enlightenment, found rebirth: the haunting realization that some kind of essential flawedness lay coiled at the core of all human achievement whether individual or institutional.<sup>79</sup> The national economic shipwreck of the Depression decade brought to Americans reeling under the aftermath of October 1929 glimpses of the human finitude that August 1914 had revealed to the European mind—"the sense that survival alone was an achievement in a world not necessarily designed for the triumph of the human spirit."<sup>80</sup> In and after the 1930s, the undeniable reality of all kinds of human limitation increasingly dawned on a people until then mired in complacency, disclosing the specious treachery of human self-confidence, the dangers of the human self-centeredness that lurked in even noble endeavors. In specifically religious response, that Depression decade saw the rise in America of a new-old theological vision variously termed "the theology of crisis," "realistic theology," or—if not most aptly, certainly most lastingly—"neo-orthodoxy."<sup>81</sup>

Applying their newly found "realism" to their assessment of human nature, a generation of neo-orthodox thinkers began their theologizing by conceding "the moral ambiguity of most human predicaments," even accepting a degree of "relativism . . . as a deterrent to moral pride."<sup>82</sup> As had Reformation thinkers in very different circumstances, neo-orthodox theologians rediscovered the awesome transcendence of God and its corollary of the utter folly of human claims to embrace any absolute. The "finitude of all things human must not be ignored," they proclaimed; "the tragic sense of life must be apprehended."<sup>83</sup>

Especially two key neo-orthodox themes reflected the tragic insight: the perduring reality of sin in all human endeavors, and the necessity of accepting paradox and ambiguity as constitutive

of the human condition. Both themes signaled neo-orthodoxy's response to the events of the 1930s, to a decade that witnessed the chastening of all liberalism and even the philosophical re-discovery of human limitation.<sup>84</sup> Neo-orthodoxy presented a theology suited to the dawning sense of limits. Precisely as a theology rooted in history, moreover, the neo-orthodox vision also offered, as an alternative to the *hubris* of modernity that it diagnosed as underlying the decade's debacles, the ancient wisdom embodied in the tragic insight.<sup>85</sup>

Although some statements of this vision were exaggerated by the sense of economic and political disaster that marked the era, the insight's fundamental wisdom came to appear ever more profound to an ever increasing number of Americans as the events of the thirties and forties unfolded. Most Americans, even many not "religious," heard and recognized in the rediscovery of human finitude ever more patent truth about the stark reality of their own existential situations.<sup>86</sup> Parish churches only rarely led the way in proclaiming the neo-orthodox understanding, but the denominational spokesmen of most non-southern churches soon made available its insight, presenting glimpses of its content in popular periodicals even as they debated its significance in theological journals.<sup>87</sup>

In the American South, the response was different. Three facets of the southern response to the crisis of the 1930s and to the insight represented by neo-orthodoxy merit attention. Southern intellectuals understood the significance of the crisis and reflected, albeit distortedly, the wisdom of the insight; southern writers penetrated the context of the crisis to refine, to develop, and to promulgate the depths of the insight; but the southern churches remained completely unaware of the nature of the crisis and utterly ignorant of the religious significance of the insight.

Menckenesque cynics may scent oxymoron in the term "southern intellectuals," but in the period under consideration the Fugitives-Agrarians certainly deserve such designation.<sup>88</sup> And of that group, at least two merit brief mention here. Allen Tate in his "Remarks on the Southern Religion" in *I'll Take My Stand* and John Crowe Ransom in *God Without Thunder* touched on many themes that abutted neo-orthodox concerns. Tate was interested in "a



fitting religion" that acknowledged "fundamental evil";<sup>89</sup> he perceived the "irrationality" of belief in "omnipotent human rationality"<sup>90</sup> and called for a "religion of the whole" that would be "realistic [concerning] the traditional experience of evil which is the common lot of the race."<sup>91</sup> Ransom embarked on a confused, quasi-mystical search for the inscrutably transcendent God of some oriental Calvin, lamenting ironically over "modern" religion: "When you have mastered the secrets of your God, you will not need him any longer as a God, but you may keep him for a servant."<sup>92</sup> Both certainly reflected aspects of the neo-orthodox animus.

There was of course more to both Tate and Ransom—an almost aberrant quality to their religious insight perhaps best put into perspective by their later personal journeys into Roman Catholicism and Unitarianism.<sup>93</sup> Yet it may be that in that very eccentricity lay the key to their affinity with the neo-orthodox insight. Gustav Krüger had in 1926 introduced "the German crisis theology" to Americans as "a new pietism for which the great enemy [is] the Enlightenment."<sup>94</sup> Precisely as Southerners, the Agrarians took the same anti-Enlightenment stand.<sup>95</sup> The point here, then, is not direct neo-orthodox influence on Tate and Ransom, but the potential affinity of ideas between southern thinkers and neo-orthodox thought. If Tate and Ransom reflected Krutch, is it unreasonable to be surprised that their churchly counterparts remained so totally devoid of Niebuhrian resonances?

Especially when one realizes that of all reflections of the wisdom of limits throughout the whole of American culture, southern writers most strikingly captured the tragic insight represented theologically by neo-orthodoxy, some wonder seems justified. More tellingly than any American artist except perhaps Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren expressed the sense of tragedy implicit in the neo-orthodox vision, and they achieved this precisely by appropriating for that purpose the historical experience of the southern people.<sup>96</sup> They understood, as did Niebuhr, "that those best qualified to interpret [the implicit darkness in 'the children of light'] might very well be those who had suffered most at the hands of history."<sup>97</sup> At the core of the Southern Literary Renaissance lay the exploration of tragic mean-



ing. Its writers presented the tragedies of the southern experience as a paradigm for the tragic meaning of human life itself, suggesting, for example, as had Nathaniel Hawthorne, "that there are other bases for fellow sympathy and democratic process than man's inevitable goodness, that a commonwealth of mutual respect and common constructive effort can be built upon an awareness of our inevitable evil rather than upon the realization of our perfectible selves."<sup>98</sup>

Interpretations of the Southern Literary Renaissance as well as of its individual writers of course abound.<sup>99</sup> Mention of the phenomenon is not intended to stake some new claim upon its significance, but rather to suggest a theme that may unite earlier exegeses. Much of the power of the literature of the Southern Renaissance arose from its writers' sensitivity to the substance and the nature and the meaning of tragedy, and that sensitivity was at least implicitly religious in the sense hinted by Flannery O'Connor:

Whenever I'm asked why Southern writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one. To be able to recognize a freak, you have to have some conception of the whole man, and in the South the general conception of man is still, in the main, theological. . . . While the South is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted. The Southerner . . . is very much afraid that he may have been formed in the image and likeness of God.<sup>100</sup>

O'Connor's own theology, almost needless to point out, was not that of the southern churches or of southern religion as delineated in this paper.

The southern churches themselves, during and even after the 1930s, retained the blindness to tragedy imposed by the theology of Evangelical Revivalism. The intellectuals and writers briefly mentioned above were alienated from southern religion as it existed, and there is no evidence that even the most literate southern churchgoers understood the import of their vision.<sup>101</sup> On the more ordinary level on which the research that this study reports has focused, one searches in vain the periodicals of the southern denominations and other writings of southern churchmen

for any hint of advertence to, much less recognition of, the significance of the neo-orthodox insight for their own religious situation.<sup>102</sup> As late as 1958, the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* blithely concluded its brief treatment of "Neo-Orthodox Theology" with the observation: "The majority of Baptists, little affected by liberalism, have thus paid scant attention to neo-orthodoxy."<sup>103</sup> In the 1930s themselves, the few attentions that did appear were to neo-orthodox thinkers rather than to neo-orthodox thought, and they serve mainly to validate the parenthetical interjection in Sydney Ahlstrom's evaluation of Reinhold Niebuhr's impact: "What did most to impress (and to confuse!) his audience was his dialectical manner of thinking, his insistence on taking the concept of paradox seriously and thus speaking constantly in terms of 'both-and' and 'yes-and-no.'"<sup>104</sup>

Incapable of understanding "both-and," totally ensnared by the simplistic dichotomies of "either-or," southern religion in the 1930s was unable to comprehend either the theological vision of neo-orthodoxy or the sense of tragedy intertwined with it. Any perusal of the denominational journals of the southern churches during that decade will confirm what various scholars have pointed out in diverse contexts: His religious leaders "content to celebrate the moral victories of former generations," the ordinary "average church member [did] not feel free to talk with his minister about problems that [involved] greed and conflict."<sup>105</sup>

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The decade of the thirties was, for the southern churches, a debacle. Despite expectations and even occasional glimmers, no religious revival coursed through the South during the years of the Great Depression.<sup>106</sup> Strikingly, as Robert Coles has noted, James Agee mentioned nothing of the religious life of the people he so sympathetically studied.<sup>107</sup> In the 1930s if ever, the poignant power of churchman James McBride Dabbs's pained indictment of southern religion became all too evident: it had produced neither poets nor saints.<sup>108</sup>

What southern religion did produce in the Depression years was a flood-tide of recruits for the primitivistic fringe-sects. While the main-line southern churches met the crisis of the decade by

withdrawing further into their insistence on “the spirituality of the church,” more and more of their own members as well as of the unchurched sought solace for their “disappointed or sick souls” in a “pre-millenarianism . . . that saw no hope for society except in a cataclysm.”<sup>109</sup> Many became what Francis Butler Simkins termed, not entirely without sympathy, “Holy Rollers.”<sup>110</sup> Primitivism, which had from the beginning of the twentieth century offered itself as a fear-ridden response to the complexities of urban life and industrialization, was more and more turned to throughout the thirties as an escape from the complexities of life itself.<sup>111</sup> Part of the attractiveness of the fringe-sects perhaps lay in the fact that they offered a virtual *reductio ad absurdum* of southern religion. Explicitly “orgiastic” in their “absolute indifference toward the present world,” their members gloried in a ministry “almost wholly uneducated” and at times turned literally to seeking “justification by snake-handling”: each trait flowed logically from dichotomous theology.<sup>112</sup> The sects offered unambiguously the ultimate “either-or” so well described by Wilbur Cash in his delineation of *The Mind of the South*—the satisfaction of belonging to

The One True Church among a host of Byzantine pretenders given over to the worship of idols; poor, humble, despised now, but destined in the end to emerge to dazzling glory while the old haughty ones are cast into outer darkness, presumably to burn in the pit as the faithful look pleasantly on from oriels in the skies.<sup>113</sup>

Cash’s indictment is perhaps overly harsh; at least part of a parallel evaluation by Simkins seems fairer as well as more to the point: “Superficially the dissimilarity between the Holy Rollers and upper-class churchmen was the difference between intense emotionalism and mannered restraint. Nevertheless, both groups were fundamentally Southerners.”<sup>114</sup> Both groups were *most* fundamentally southern, I would revise Simkins’s continuation, because both shared the same southern theology, the same either-or vision of reality that excluded any sense of tragedy and therefore precluded coming to terms with what by the 1930s had become the whole of southern experience.

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The factors that shaped southern religion were multiple and complex. Both cultural and theological developments significantly influenced the transformation of the implicit ideology of Evangelical Revivalism into the perduring theology of the southern churches. Among cultural stimuli, the experiences of the frontier, of slavery, and of defeat proved of lasting consequence. Theologically, the declension of Calvinism, Separate Baptist pietism, and Methodist Arminianism interwove as salient shaping pressure. Deeper exploration of these influences and their interaction lies beyond the scope of this paper. Dare we, nevertheless, hazard conclusions in such an introductory sketch of what is doubtless too embracive a theme? Because this is an introductory sketch, sent forth to provoke comment, I think "Yes." Two tentative points seem warranted: one historiographic, the other cultural.

Historiographically, it is clear that southern religion can be appreciated fully only if, as has not been done herein, account is taken of the religious beliefs and practices of both white and black Southerners. Southern white religion taken in isolation from black experience is too stunted, too obviously one-dimensional: to study it exclusively necessarily results in a warped vision. Recently, Donald Mathews has shown the power of the larger perspective in his careful exploration of *Religion in the Old South*.<sup>115</sup> We need more studies that attempt to be as sensitively embracive as the effort of Professor Mathews. But we also need more. There was, in the post-bellum South, another oppressed group overlapping but also distinct from the former slaves. A new generation of scholars has begun to explore the uniqueness of women and of women's experience. I suspect that any deeper penetration of the anomalies of southern religion must embrace not only the religious experience of Blacks, but the religious actualities of women, both white and black, in a culture that for all its "downright gyneolatry" has been too exclusively studied as masculine. Religious realities have rarely been confined to churches, however much churches may dominate a culture's religious expressions. If a newer historical sensitivity can illumine those realities in the lives of southern women, our knowledge of southern religion will be significantly expanded and deepened.<sup>116</sup>

Culturally, one message cries out from the study of southern religion as from any study of virtually any aspect of the South: especially in American life and culture, growth and richness come from diversity—from a pluralism that accepts differences.<sup>117</sup> Our exploration of southern theology affirms Hill's point in his examination of *Southern Churches in Crisis*: "no single feature of the southern religious picture is more revealing than the absence of pluralism and diversity."<sup>118</sup>

Throughout this paper, I have repetitively used the term "either-or vision" and have carefully eschewed its ready colloquial equivalent, "to see in terms of black and white." The southern fear of difference, the South's absolute embrace of "either-or," were certainly not unrelated to the region's experience with slavery: the dichotomizing world-view dominated both religious and racial thinking.<sup>119</sup> A culture driven to define "one-sixteenth blood" as "black" was not adept at making shaded distinctions. The historian, of course, must tread warily in an area so intertwined with the psychological, especially when faced with the temptation to assign priority. Yet as historian, the student of religious ideas knows that in-group/out-group dichotomizing has a far longer history than American slavery; and he knows further that and how, over long centuries, religious and theological expressions have served both to reinforce and to mitigate that tendency.<sup>120</sup>

The meaning of "difference"—its perception and that perception's transcendence—can provide a heuristic standard for the scholar of religions. The utter failure of southern religion to achieve any transcendence in this area, the cultural solipsism that insisted so successfully on defining all difference as "bad" and "wholly other," thus becomes a primary datum and perhaps *the* primary datum for any student of the American South. To disentangle this mind-set from both black slavery and American exceptionalism is perhaps an impossible task; but if there be a key to this peculiarly dominant southern trait in a nation usually at least aware of the pluralistic possibility, the study of southern religion and its theology may hold that key.<sup>121</sup>

Recently, George B. Tindall optatively offered what could be an epigraph summarizing both the problem and the hope of human as well as of southern life: "If we can remember that all

humans are finite and different, but alike in having limitations. . . ."<sup>122</sup> The tragedy of southern religion lay in its failure to teach—or even to know—that fundamental *religious* truth.

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Two decades ago, in his meditation on the Civil War centennial, Robert Penn Warren opined that precisely because the Confederates themselves offered the lesson that human dignity and grandeur are possible, even amid human weakness and vice, the most unhappily ironic effect of the Civil War upon the South was “the Great Alibi.” The defeat gave white Southerners the chance to excuse all their failings by saying, in effect, that their fathers had lost the war and they had not had a chance since.<sup>123</sup> More recently, the philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre, has noted one of the characteristics of “heroic societies” to be “a conception of the human condition as fragile and vulnerable to destiny and to death, such that to be virtuous is not to avoid vulnerability and death, but rather to accord them their due.”<sup>124</sup>

Not so much “defeat,” but *denial* has shaped the South—denial of the reality of its own tragedy. The tragedy of southern religion is that it contributed to this denial because of the dichotomizing tendency inherent in its theology. That tragedy revealed itself in several ways. Post-Civil War southern religion, as Charles R. Wilson has pointed out, *precisely as religion* “should have paid more attention to human weakness and vice, to the moral ambiguities and uncertainties of life, to the possibility that [southern] society, indeed, any society, might not be virtue incarnate.”<sup>126</sup> The history of the 1930s makes clear how the tendency to interpret all reality in terms of “either-or” underlay southern religion’s ultimate denial—its failure to understand *sin* as opposed to “sins.”<sup>127</sup> Because of its Evangelical Revivalist heritage, southern religion remained blind even in that decade to the tragic understanding that strength comes from weakness—that *all* human reality comprises an inevitable mixture of good and evil, of strength and weakness, simply because it is finite, human reality.

The South’s deepest pain has been not guilt over transgression, but shame over falling short of an ideal—falling short of two

ideals, in fact, the American and the Christian. Effective religion reconciles to the reality of shame even more than it relieves the pangs of guilt.<sup>128</sup> But no religion can be effective if it fosters the denial of reality. Two recent commentators have suggested that the South's deepest historical problem is the villainy not of Simon Legree, but of Adolf Eichmann.<sup>129</sup> If that seems meanly harsh, it also invites the tragic perspective. In the words of Lucien Goldmann: "If the expression 'righteous sinner' is the definition, in theological terms, of tragic man," then to fail to comprehend tragedy, to deny its reality, is to become "the exact opposite: the innocent monster."<sup>130</sup> In that realization and its implications lie the tragedy and the irony and even the pathos of southern religion.

The South, of course, has not lacked for diagnosticians. As one historian put it in a recent paper: "The central theme of Southern historiography during most of the past several decades has been the search for a central theme in Southern history."<sup>131</sup> He then rehearsed some of the verdicts—such as the "Lazy" South, the "Romantic" South—and concluded: "We can find the true South in its literature; no, in its history; perhaps in its mythology. 'Let us begin with the weather.' " To which we would perhaps add today: "or with the Celtic heritage."<sup>132</sup>

Without wishing to add to that list by claiming too much for southern religion, I find it a striking and a most telling comment on what this paper has termed its "tragedy" that of all the virtues—and the vices—ever attributed to the South, there has never appeared in any interpretation of which I know the predication of "humility."

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Carl N. Degler, *Place Over Time* (Baton Rouge, 1977), 23; Samuel S. Hill, Jr., "The South's Two Cultures," in Hill *et al.*, *Religion and the Solid South* (Nashville, 1972), 24-25; John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South* (Lexington, 1972), 57-81; George Brown Tindall, *The Ethnic Southerners* (Baton Rouge, 1976), 76-77; James McBride Dabbs, *Haunted by God* (Richmond, 1972), 177; Flannery O'Connor, "Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction," in *Mystery and Manners* (New York, 1969), 44-45; Walker Percy, "The Failure and the Hope," in Will D. Campbell and James Y. Holloway, eds., *The Failure and the Hope* (Grand Rapids, 1972), 15.

<sup>2</sup>On anomalies, cf. Clyde L. Manschreck, "Religion in the South: Problem and Promise," in Francis B. Simkins, ed., *The South in Perspective* (Farmville, 1959), 85; C. Hugh Holman, "The Southerner as American Writer," in Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., ed., *The Southerner as American* (Chapel Hill, 1960), 180; on the



related point of the South's "fear of abstractions," cf. James McBride Dabbs, *The Southern Heritage* (New York, 1958), 167 ff.; Richard H. King, *A Southern Renaissance* (New York, 1980), 5-6.

<sup>3</sup>John B. Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington, 1972), 125-142, 200; Samuel S. Hill, Jr., *The South and the North in American Religion* (Athens, 1980), 73; F. Garvin Davenport, Jr., *The Myth of Southern History* (Nashville, 1970), 59. That this "individualism" is theological, cf. T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers* (Chicago, 1964), 229-233. Interesting on this point is the debate between David Bertelson, *The Lazy South* (New York, 1967) and Dabbs, *Haunted By God*, 15, 31. Cf. also George E. Mowry, *Another Look at the Twentieth-Century South* (Baton Rouge, 1973), 82; Lewis P. Simpson, "The Southern Recovery of Memory and History," *Sewanee Review* 82 (1974), 25.

<sup>4</sup>Percy, "The Failure and the Hope," 15; cf. Edwin McNeill Poteat, Jr., "Religion in the South," in W. T. Couch, ed., *Culture in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1935), 250-251; for numerical data, cf. Francis Butler Simkins, *A History of the South* (New York, 1965, 3rd ed.), 411 ff., and Reed, *The Enduring South*, 57-81.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel S. Hill, Jr., *Southern Churches in Crisis* (New York, 1966), xv, 18, 152 ff., 201; Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago, 1977), xvii, 81 ff.; cf. Hill, "Introduction," in Hill et al., *Religion and the Solid South*, 22.

<sup>6</sup>John Lee Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity* (Knoxville, 1972); Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers* (New Haven, 1942), 17-18; cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 24-54, 172.

<sup>7</sup>Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood* (Athens, 1980), 102; Dabbs, *Haunted by God*, 184 ff.; Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 42; Poteat, "Religion in the South," 254; Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 202; Davenport, *Myth*, 81; W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York, 1941), 44; Frank E. Vandiver, "The Southerner as Extremist," in Frank E. Vandiver, ed., *The Idea of the South* (Chicago, 1964), 43-55; Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, 54-55; Manschreck, "Religion in the South," 85; John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South* (Cambridge, 1956); Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (Gloucester, 1964), 97.

<sup>8</sup>Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 13, 154, 167; Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 82; Hill, "South's Two Cultures," 43; Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, 44; Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 34; Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause* (Hamden, 1963), 118; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York, 1980), 152, 179.

<sup>9</sup>For the "tragedy" theme, cf. Sellers, "Introduction," in Sellers, ed., *The Southerner as American*, vi ff.; Sellers, "The Travail of Slavery," in eodem, 40-71; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 150, 178; Wilson, *Baptized*, 36; Samuel S. Hill, Jr., "Toward a Charter for a Southern Theology," in Hill et al., *Solid South*, 184; Davenport, *Myth*, 192; King, *Southern Renaissance*, 169-174.

<sup>10</sup>John Crowe Ransom, *God Without Thunder* (Hamden, 1965, orig. 1930), 102.

<sup>11</sup>The theme, of course, is C. Vann Woodward's: cf. especially "The Search for Southern Identity" and "The Irony of Southern History," both reprinted in *The Burden of Southern History* (New York, 1960), 3-25 and 167-191; cf. also Davenport, *Myth*, 4.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 24-25; Wilson, *Baptized*, 7, 58; Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion* (Nashville, 1967), 29.

<sup>13</sup>Miguel de Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life*, tr. J. E. Crawford Fritch of *Del Sentimiento Tragico de la Vida* (New York, 1954, orig. 1921), 17, cf. also 37, 135. For the judgment in the next sentence, cf. Dabbs, *Haunted*, 204 ff., and Hill, *Southern Churches*, 171.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Introduction," in Ahlstrom, ed., *Theology in America*



(Indianapolis, 1967), 79 ff.; also notes # 81-87, below.

<sup>15</sup>Quoted by Dabbs, *Haunted*, 146; cf. also on the point C. Vann Woodward, "The Historical Dimension," in Woodward, *Burden*, 27; William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, 1976), 251.

<sup>16</sup>The most direct philosophical expression is to be found in existentialism: cf. William Barrett, *Irrational Man* (New York, 1958); Karl W. Deutsch, "Introduction," in Karl Jaspers, *Tragedy Is Not Enough*, tr. Harald A. T. Reiche, Harry T. Moore, and Karl W. Deutsch (Boston, 1952).

<sup>17</sup>Cf. C. Vann Woodward, "Why the Southern Renaissance?" *Virginia Quarterly Review* 51 (1975), 222-239; also note # 99, below. The irony is that the Renaissance marked a denial of limitations; this one, their rediscovery.

<sup>18</sup>Cf., e.g., Hill, "Introduction," *Solid South*, 20; Samuel S. Hill, Jr., *The South and The North in American Religion* (Athens, 1980), 50 ff.; Hill, *Southern Churches*, 25-31; Boles, *Great Revival*, 125-128, 193-194; Wilson, *Baptized*, 2-3, 7.

<sup>19</sup>Poteat, "Religion in the South," 261; cf. Hunter Dickinson Farish, *The Circuit Rider Dismounts* (Richmond, 1938), 93.

<sup>20</sup>Kenneth K. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1964), 24.

<sup>21</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, 31-39; cf. Boles, *Great Revival*, xii.

<sup>22</sup>Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3 (Richmond, 1973), 215-216, 358-359; Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 125; for the sociology of the southern denominations in the 1930s, cf. Poteat, "Religion in the South," 258-259.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Poteat, *ut supra*; Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism*, 191.

<sup>24</sup>On "numerical," cf. Hill, *South and North*, 110; also Simkins, *History*, 411; on "social," cf. Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 91; Cash, *Mind*, 58; Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 43.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, eds., *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton, 1961), 234; Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 12; Henry F. May, "The Recovery of American Religious History," *American Historical Review* 70 (1964), 79; Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York, 1976), xiv; Karl Jaspers, *Tragedy Is Not Enough*, 23-25; Walker Percy, "Notes for a Novel About the End of the World," in Campbell and Holloway, eds., *Failure and Hope*, 224.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, xvii; Hill, *South and North*, 8, 70-72. Examples abound, even in writers as sensitive as Hill: cf. *Southern Churches*, 51, 59, 181; also Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism*, 188-191; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 161-162; Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 96; and perhaps the most subtle and influential example, Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1966), 55-142.

<sup>27</sup>Hill, *South and North*, 8.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Woodward as cited above, note # 11; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York, 1952), vii-viii, 157, 167; cf. Degler, *Place Over Time*, 129-130. Of the works that analyze tragedy, this point is clear especially from Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 79, 97; Lucien Goldmann, *Lukacs and Heidegger*, tr. William Q. Boelhower (London, 1977), 45; and Henry Alonzo Myers, *Tragedy: A View of Life* (Ithaca, 1965, orig. 1956), 145-146.

<sup>29</sup>Sellers, "Introduction," vi, and "The Travail of Slavery," 40; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 55, 122; Wilson, *Baptized*, 15, 36; King, *Southern Renaissance*, 174; Sidney E. Mead, "American History as a Tragic Drama," *Journal of Religion* 52 (1972), 351; Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation: 1861-1865* (New York, 1979), 23; Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, x-xi, although he seems more exact on 247.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. especially Myers, *Tragedy*, 40, 154 ff.; Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 98-99; Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God*, tr. Philip Thody (London, 1964), 58, 66ff. I am also conscious of drawing from: T. R. Henn, *The Harvest of Tragedy* (London, 1966);

Geoffrey Bereton, *Principles of Tragedy* (Coral Gables, 1969); Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy* (Princeton, 1968); William R. Brashear, *The Gorgon's Head* (Athens, 1977); and Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, 1981).

<sup>31</sup>Goldmann, *Hidden God*, 283, cf. 296, 305.

<sup>32</sup>Barrett, *Irrational Man*, 117.

<sup>33</sup>Niebuhr's concept is clearest in his Gifford Lectures, published as *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vols. (New York, 1941-1943), cf. especially vol. I, 182. Cf. also H. Shelton Smith, *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin* (New York, 1955), 210.

<sup>34</sup>Myers, *Tragedy*, 8, 101-102, 156-157; Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 55-56; cf. the use of this by Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York, 1973), 25. For a study of another 1930's phenomenon that captured this insight, cf. Ernest Kurtz, *Not-God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Center City, 1979).

<sup>35</sup>Myers, *Tragedy*, 12; on "Christian" tragedy, cf. also Nathan A. Scott, Jr., "Foreword," in Scott, ed., *The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith* (New York, 1957), ix-xvii; and Edmond LaB. Cherbonnier, "Biblical Faith and the Idea of Tragedy," in *idem*, 23-55.

<sup>36</sup>Myers, *Tragedy*, 14; on the practical significance of this, cf. William Barrett, *The Illusion of Technique* (Garden City, 1978), 21.

<sup>37</sup>Goldmann, *Hidden God*, 69, 81; Goldmann, *Lukacs and Heidegger*, 47-49; Niebuhr, *Irony*, 170; Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 17; Unamuno, *Tragic Sense*, 140.

<sup>38</sup>This is a central theme in Myers, *Tragedy*; cf. also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 147-153.

<sup>39</sup>Scott, "Foreword," x (italics Scott's).

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*; cf. Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 74-75.

<sup>41</sup>Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 94-95, cf. 57; also Barrett, *Illusion of Technique*, 149 ff.; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 133-134.

<sup>42</sup>Mary Frances Thelen, *Man as Sinner in Contemporary American Realistic Theology* (New York, 1946), 164-181; Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 103; Barrett, *Irrational Man*, 71-72; Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 220-222.

<sup>43</sup>Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 104, cf., especially re "shipwreck," 95-96; on the "partialness" of southern religion, Hill, *Southern Churches*, 195-199.

<sup>44</sup>Boles, *Great Revival*, especially 183 ff. I am unimpressed by the criticism of Boles by Fred J. Hood, *Reformed America* (University, Alabama, 1980), 204. For a study of Evangelicalism sensitive to North-South differences, cf. Miyakawa, *Protestants*, 159-197. Also supporting Boles, cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 15-16; Percy, "Notes for a Novel," 224; May, *Enlightenment in America*, 327 ff.; Hill, *South and North*, 29.

<sup>45</sup>Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 18; Hill, *Southern Churches*, 15-16; Hill, *South and North*, 50 ff., 70-72; Wilson, *Baptized*, 2-3; Osterweis, *Lost Sause*, 119; May, *Enlightenment in America*, 327.

<sup>46</sup>Herbert Wallace Schneider, *Religion in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, 1952), 14-15; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 224; cf. Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 275. For the southern background and context, cf. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism*, 8 ff.; for a deeper cultural reflection of the dichotomizing tendency, Vandiver, "The Southerner as Extremist," 43-55. On the development of a specific "either-or" in Southern Presbyterianism, cf. E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians* (Durham, 1978), 50 ff.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 65; Hill, *Southern Churches*, 59; Boles, *Great Revival*, 131-138.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Poteat, "Religion in the South," 261-262; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 36; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 239; Hill, "Toward a Charter," 182, 190, 204; Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 47; on "assumed to harmonize," cf. especially Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science* (Chapel Hill, 1977), and as primary, E. Y. Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion* (Philadelphia, 1908), 301-302. Miyakawa,

Protestants, 5-6, also evaluates.

<sup>49</sup>John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York, 1967, orig. 1954), 201-212, 353-373; Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," in *Errand Into the Wilderness* (New York, 1964, orig. 1956), 51-53; Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 239, 257; Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 27; cf. Hill, *South and North*, 37-38; Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 127; the echo of this in Mullins, *Axioms*, 81 ff.; for insight into the declension in the South, cf. Holifield, *Gentlemen Theologians*, 149-154.

<sup>50</sup>Miller, "Marrow," 53-98; Perry Miller, "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth," in *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge, 1967), 14-49; cf. Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 317; Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 23; May, *Enlightenment*, 358; Scavan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, 1975), 21; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 45; for this development in the South, Holifield, *Gentlemen Theologians*, 155-175.

<sup>51</sup>Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 239-240; Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 66; cf. Mathews, *Old South*, 228-229; Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1977), 122 ff.; Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 3-4; Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins*, 185. The classic treatment of the context of this separation remains Sidney E. Mead, "American Protestantism During the Revolutionary Epoch," reprinted in Mead, *The Lively Experiment* (New York, 1963), 38-54.

<sup>52</sup>Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 251-254; Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 38; Mead, *Lively Experiment*, 55-71, 90-102; Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston, 1966, orig. 1955), 252-280; May, *Enlightenment*, 153-176, 278-304.

<sup>53</sup>Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 45; cf. May, *Enlightenment*, 322; Boles, *Great Revival*, 193-194; Mathews, *Old South*, 58-65; Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared* (New Haven, 1966), 209.

<sup>54</sup>Mathews, *Old South*, 21.

<sup>55</sup>Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 306; Boles, *Great Revival*, 125-138; cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 139 ff.; Manschreck, "Problem and Promise," 88; Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 9. The exceptional nature of the "Landmark" Baptists clarifies this point: cf. Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 304, and James E. Tull, *A Study of Southern Baptist Landmarkism in the Light of Historical Baptist Ecclesiology* (New York, 1980, orig. 1960).

<sup>56</sup>Mathews, *Old South*, xvii, 14, 20, 34-35, 39-42, 244; cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 94-95; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 239.

<sup>57</sup>Cf. Barrett, *Irrational Man*, 71-72; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 202.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. Hill, *South and North*, 70-72; Boles, *Great Revival*, 131-136; Mathews, *Old South*, 59-61; and especially Hill's development of "the central theme" in southern religion in *Southern Churches*, 73 ff.

<sup>59</sup>Smith, *Changing Conceptions*, 210; Niebuhr, *Irony*, 17; cf. Thelen, *Man As Sinner*, 13-22, 174-182.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. Scott, "Foreword," in *Tragic Vision*, x-xiii; Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 32-33; Myers, *Tragedy*, 53; Goldmann, *Hidden God*, 48, 66. For an especially appreciative perspective, cf. Phillip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (New York, 1966), 206.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. notes # 49 and 50, above; also, for the South, Cash, *Mind*, 84; Hill, *Southern Churches*, 123 ff.; Hill, *South and North*, 37; Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 93; Osterweis, *Romanticism*, 191. For the specifically Presbyterian point, cf. Holifield, *Gentlemen Theologians*, 138-145, and directly on the Calvinist-Arminian issue, 187-198. For the point, although I disagree with his interpretation, cf. Thomas, *Confederate Nation*, 22.

<sup>62</sup>Mathews, *Old South*, 127.

<sup>63</sup>Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 73; cf. Boles, *Great Revival*, 138; Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 72; Mathews, *Old South*, 60-61; Holifield, *Gentlemen Theologians*, 196-205.

That this is not specific to southern Evangelicals is clear from Miyakawa, *Protestants*, 171 ff., on Finney.

<sup>64</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, 27, cf. 62-63; also Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 73-74; Mathews, *Old South*, 60-61; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 190.

<sup>65</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, 27.

<sup>66</sup>Mathews, *Old South*, 31; cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 95-96; Hill, "South's Two Cultures," 34-35. For background, cf. Cash, *Mind*, 341; Osterweis, *Romanticism*, 189; Elizabeth K. Nottingham, *Methodism on the Frontier* (New York, 1941).

<sup>67</sup>Cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 25, and especially 73 ff. on the "central theme" of southern religion; also Hill, *South and North*, 43; Mathews, *Old South*, 129; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 18; Boles, *Great Revival*, 128, 131 ff. Specifically for Southern Baptists, I draw also on Fisher Humphreys, "A Theology of Salvation," unpublished paper.

<sup>68</sup>Hill, "Toward a Charter," 189-190; cf. Hill, *South and North*, 25; Robert Ellis Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States* (New York, 1895), 36-37. That this individualism was specifically theological, cf. Miyakawa, *Protestants*, 69 ff. on the Quakers; also Boles, *Great Revival*, 125 ff.; Mathews, *Old South*, 19.

<sup>69</sup>C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800* (New Haven, 1962), 208 ff., on the South, 296 ff.; cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 58-60; Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion* (Nashville, 1967), 3, 186; Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 9; Miyakawa, *Protestants*, 90; Mullins, *Axioms*, 51 ff., 280-281.

<sup>70</sup>On the concept, "orgasmic experience," cf. Harry Guntrip, *Psychoanalytic Theory, Therapy, and the Self* (New York, 1973), 120 ff.; for applications: Cash, *Mind*, 296-298; Hill, *Southern Churches*, 106, 145.

<sup>71</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, 103 ff., especially the story recounted and interpreted, 105-106. Concern about this aspect of Evangelicalism dated at least from Francis Wayland: cf. Mead, *Lively Experiment*, 138.

<sup>72</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, 61; *South and North*, 139; "Toward a Charter," 193; Mathews, *Old South*, xvi, 13; Mullins, *Axioms*, 205. On the "hostility to the past" implicit here, cf. Percy, "The Failure and The Hope," 26; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 55; Wilson, *Baptized*, 159; John Hope Franklin, "As Far As Our History. . ." in Sellers, ed., *Southerner as American*, 3 ff.; Lewis P. Simpson, "The Southern Recovery of Memory and History," *Sewanee Review* 82 (1974), 1-32; and especially King, *Southern Renaissance*, who makes it a theme of his interpretation.

<sup>73</sup>Hill, "South's Two Cultures," 42-43; *Southern Churches*, 86; cf. Mathews, *Old South*, 29-30; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 8; Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 69-76.

<sup>74</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, 61.

<sup>75</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, xiii-xiv, 76 ff., 84 ff.

<sup>76</sup>Hill, "South's Two Cultures," 41-43; the beginnings of this can be seen in Mathews, *Old South*, 36.

<sup>77</sup>Hill, "South's Two Cultures," 42-43; cf. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 2, 8, 90-91; Hill, *South and North*, 29, 104; Mathews, *Old South*, 167; Wilson, *Baptized*, 70; William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee* (New York, 1963), xviii; William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform* (Chicago, 1978), 137.

<sup>78</sup>The rejection of any concept of "organic sin" probably began with the southern rejection of Bushnell: cf. Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 77; it was certainly deepened by southern aversion to Rauschenbusch: cf. Smith, *Changing Conceptions*, 199, 204; also Spain, *At Ease*, 17.

<sup>79</sup>Cf. Thelen, *Man As Sinner*; Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 288-311; Kurtz, *Not-God*, 165-171.

<sup>80</sup>Thomas C. Cochran, *The Great Depression and World War II* (Glenview, 1968), 1; on August 1914, cf. Barrett, *Irrational Man*, 32-35.

<sup>81</sup>Cf. Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 79 ff.; Smith, *Changing Conceptions*, 221;

Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 288 ff.; Gustav Krüger, "The 'Theology of Crisis,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 19 (1926), 227-258; Thelen, *Man As Sinner*; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York, 1932).

<sup>82</sup>Ahlstrom, "Introduction," 81; cf. also p. 80, on the rediscovery of "*Homo simul justus et peccator*."

<sup>83</sup>Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New York, 1975), vol. 2, p. 439.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. Thelen, *Man As Sinner*, 178 ff.; Smith, *Changing Conceptions*, 208-209, 214-215, 221; Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 295; Niebuhr, *Irony*, 17; Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 315-316; note #33, above; on "liberalisms," cf. Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 288 ff.; for existentialism, Barrett and Deutsch as cited in note #16, above.

<sup>85</sup>Cf. Walter Lowrie, *Our Concern with the Theology of Crisis* (Boston, 1932), 135; Cherbonnier, "Biblical Faith," in Scott, *Tragic Vision*, 31.

<sup>86</sup>Cf. Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, vol. 2, pp. 431 ff.; also the effect of Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper* (New York, 1929), evaluated by Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 272; Barrett, *Irrational Man*, 64; Robert M. Crunden, *From Self to Society: 1919-1941* (Englewood Cliffs, 1972), 134; Davenport, *Myth*, 136, who sees this as "the legacy of World War II."

<sup>87</sup>Cf. "Appendix C" in Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, also ix.

<sup>88</sup>Cf. Davenport, *Myth*, 44-81; King, *Southern Renaissance*, index listings; Fifteen Southerners, *Why the South Will Survive* (Athens, 1981), *passim*.

<sup>89</sup>Allen Tate, "Remarks on the Southern Religion," in Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand* (New York, 1962, orig. 1930), 165, 168.

<sup>90</sup>Tate, "Remarks," 158-159.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 157, 159.

<sup>92</sup>Ransom, *God Without Thunder*, 38; cf. 4-5, 28-29, 47.

<sup>93</sup>King, *Southern Renaissance*, 54-65, for perhaps the most unsympathetic treatment. Davenport, *Myth*, 65, comes closer to the nub: the Agrarians' ignoring "the existence of the Negro and the Civil War defeat."

<sup>94</sup>Krüger, "The 'Theology of Crisis,'" 233; cf. Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 289-290.

<sup>95</sup>On the "protest against modernity," cf. Simpson, "The Southern Recovery," 1. Davenport, *Myth*, 52, sees Donald Davidson as engaged in the same endeavor. The rejection is clearest in Tate, "Remarks," 173, and Ransom, *God Without Thunder*, 188, but cf. also 135 on "Lucifer and Prometheus."

<sup>96</sup>On O'Neill, cf. Myers, *Tragedy*, 99-100; Davenport parallels Faulkner and Niebuhr in *Myth*, 132—cf. also 105; Simpson, "The Southern Recovery," 5, 13-14; Holman, "Southerner as American Writer," 194; Woodward, "Why the Southern Renaissance?," 236-237.

<sup>97</sup>Davenport, *Myth*, 135; cf. 149.

<sup>98</sup>Holman, "Southerner as American Writer," 196, cf. 191; Simpson, "The Southern Recovery," 10-11; cf. Davenport, *Myth*, 82-84, 116-117, 146; King, *Southern Renaissance*, 279, on Warren.

<sup>99</sup>King, *Southern Renaissance*; Woodward, "Why the Southern Renaissance?"; Hyatt H. Waggoner, *William Faulkner* (Lexington, 1959); Simpson, "The Southern Recovery"; Davenport, *Myth*; cf. Woodward, "Burden"; Wilson, *Baptized*, 179; Louis D. Rubin, Jr. and Robert D. Jacobs, eds., *Southern Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1953). These of course but scratch the surface, but with King's "Notes," they provide a good starting-point.

<sup>100</sup>O'Connor, "Some Aspects," in *Mystery and Manners*, 44-45; cf. Dabbs's use in *Haunted*, 170-171; also an echo in Percy, "Notes for a Novel," in Campbell and Holloway, eds., 224.

<sup>101</sup>Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, ix, quotes Faulkner on Southern Baptists as "an

emotional condition that has nothing to do with God or politics or anything else.”; cf. also 124; the Presbyterian situation may be gleaned from Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3, pp. 491-492.

<sup>102</sup>On the validity of using periodicals, at least for the Baptists, cf. Hill in the “Introduction” to Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, vii. I have consulted especially *The Christian Index* (Macon), cf. Spain, *At Ease*, 215, and the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate* (Macon), cf. Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 62. The content of Presbyterian papers seems well reflected by Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3, pp. 272-273. On the perdurance of Prohibition as a central concern, cf. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 111-112. For representative content, cf. *Christian Index* 112:48 (1 December 1932), 12; O. E. Turner, “The Depression Is Over”; also the series by Rufus W. Weaver, “Our Evangelical Crisis,” beginning in *Christian Index* 113:31 (10 August 1933).

<sup>103</sup>*Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville, 1958), vol. 2, pp. 958-959, signed by Gray Allison.

<sup>104</sup>Ahlstrom, “Historical Survey,” 314; on “yes-and-no,” cf. Goldmann, *Hidden God*, 50, 57. Hutchison, *Modernist Impulse*, 301, seems to misconstrue the *Review and Expositor* notice of Niebuhr’s *Moral Man and Immoral Society*: in context, “redemption and regeneration” reflects the theology outlined in this paper. Cf. E. J. Forrester, “Modernism, Orthodoxy, and Some Other Matters,” *Index* 112:6 (11 February 1932), 13; the book notices of Barth that appear in *Index* 113:12 (23 March 1933), 21, and *Index* 113:43 (9 November 1933), 4. Especially fascinating is the praise of “Editor Alfred E. Smith” of *The New Outlook* in *Index* 113:44 (16 November 1933), 4, by Rev. John R. Gunn, “Religion and Recovery.”

<sup>105</sup>Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 125; Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 182-183. Cf. Bailey, *SWP*, 154 for summary evaluation, and 107-109 for analysis of the southern clergy’s loss of status that reflects Ransom, *God Without Thunder*, 4. Cf. also editorials in *Index* 112:28 (14 July 1932), 7, “Benefits of the Depression”; 112:43 (27 October 1932), 6, “The Other Side”; 113:2 (12 January 1933), 6, “But God.”

<sup>106</sup>Cf. Cash, *Mind*, 378; Poteat, “Religion in the South,” 265-266; Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3, 403-406; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 111; also W. M. Jones, “The Revival That Is Needed,” *Index* 112:41 (13 October 1932), 5, 26-28; “Church Attendance,” *Index* 114:26 (3 July 1934), 1, 8, lamenting its falling off, even as in the same issue S. L. Morgan decries the “Low Standard of Church Membership,” 5, 20-21.

<sup>107</sup>Robert Coles, *Irony in the Mind’s Life* (Charlottesville, 1974), 58.

<sup>108</sup>James McBride Dabbs, *Who Speaks For the South?* (New York, 1964), 117-118. Cf. the use made of this by Percy, “Failure and the Hope,” 22. Related is Boles’s point, *Great Revival*, 195: “It is significant that although the South was perhaps the most ‘religious’ section of the nation, it could boast no great theologians.”

<sup>109</sup>Simkins, *History*, 422; Poteat, “Religion in the South,” 254. Cf. Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 73, 103; Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3, pp. 504 ff., especially on “the spirituality of the church.” That this was not the only alternative in other regions, cf. Schneider, *Religion in Twentieth-Century America*; 197-198: controversial notices of the Oxford Group do appear in the denominational periodicals. Dabbs, *Haunted*, 201-202, 217, offers critical evaluation. Cf. also Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 97; Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 48; Spain, *At Ease*, 182; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 134.

<sup>110</sup>Simkins, *History*, 421 ff.

<sup>111</sup>Cf. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 32; Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 89, 103; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 195-196; and, most vividly, Erskine Caldwell, *Deep South* (Athens, 1980, orig. 1966). Early-century attitudes to the city are captured by Bailey,



*Southern White Protestantism*, 17.

<sup>112</sup>Cash, *Mind*, 298; Pope, *Millhands*, 164, 109; Thomas Merton, "Letter to a Southern Churchman," in Campbell and Holloway, eds., *Failure and Hope*, 85 ff. Cf. Dabbs, *Haunted*, 195-196; and Caldwell, *Deep South*.

<sup>113</sup>Cash, *Mind*, 297. Note the basis for this in Spain, *At Ease*, 210; also Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 58, quoting Bishop Candler.

<sup>114</sup>Simkins, *History*, 425.

<sup>115</sup>Cf. especially Mathews, *Old South*, 185-186, 212-215, 228-229.

<sup>116</sup>Cash, *Mind*, 92. Cf. Farish, *Circuit Rider*, 325; Mathews, *Old South*, 104, 112-114; King, *Southern Renaissance*, 189-190; Ann Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady* (Chicago, 1970); Ann Firor Scott, "Women, Religion, and Social Change in the South, 1830-1930," in Hill, *Solid South*, 92-121. Ann Douglas, *Feminization*, although suggestively brilliant, attempts too much and is disappointing on the South. The information available via Gerda Lerner, *Teaching Women's History* (Washington, 1981), 40-42, is not encouraging about prospects in the near future.

<sup>117</sup>Cf. Ahlstrom, "Historical Survey," 319; Williams, "Tradition and Experience," in Smith and Jamison, eds., *Shaping*, 457; on the South, Cash, *Mind*, 97-98, 138-139; Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 14. The ambivalence toward immigration clarifies: cf. Rowland T. Berthoff, "Southern Attitudes Toward Immigration, 1865-1914," *Journal of Southern History* 17 (1951), 328-360; for evaluation on the specifically religious effect, cf. Hill, *Southern Churches*, 46, 176.

<sup>118</sup>Hill, *Southern Churches*, xvii; cf. also 11, quoting Poteat and Simkins. Cf. also Wilson, *Baptized*, 9; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 3-4; Boles, *Great Revival*, 192-197.

<sup>119</sup>Cf. Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 46, 72; Wilson, *Baptized*, 90-91; Berthoff, "Southern Attitudes," 342-343; Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, 45; Mathews, *Old South*, 178; Clement Eaton, *The Freedom-Of-Thought Struggle in the Old South* (New York, 1964), 36, 312-313; Thomas, *Confederate Nation*, 21; Degler, *Place Over Time*, 60-61.

<sup>120</sup>Cf. Williams, "Tradition and Experience," 493-494; Hill, "Toward a Charter," in *Solid South*, 198-200.

<sup>121</sup>On southern "difference," cf. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, xviii; on "transcendence," cf. Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 40-41.

<sup>122</sup>Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, 21.

<sup>123</sup>Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (New York, 1961), 108-109; cf. Dabbs, *Haunted*, 84; Wilson, *Baptized*, 16-17.

<sup>124</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 121; cf. Myers, *Tragedy*, 151.

<sup>125</sup>Daniel J. Anderson, *The Psychopathology of Denial* (Center City, 1981); cf. Woodward, "Irony," 175; Mathews, *Old South*, 156; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 204; Cash, *Mind*, 135; Spain, *At Ease*, 22; Wilson, *Baptized*, 24, 68-69.

<sup>126</sup>Wilson, *Baptized*, 16-17; cf. Eighmy, *Cultural Captivity*, 77; Spain, *At Ease*, 17, 29; Thompson *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3, p. 218; Hill, "South's Two Cultures," 36.

<sup>127</sup>Dabbs, *Haunted*, 202, 217; this is one facet of the theme of Mathews, *Old South*, cf. xvii; cf. the reflection in Hill, *South and North*, 109; the corollary in Hill, *Southern Churches*, 16-17, and Wilson, *Baptized*, 7. The significance for "the community of tragedy" is clear from Schneider, *Religion in Twentieth-Century America*, 137.

<sup>128</sup>On the distinction between shame and guilt, cf. Ernest Kurtz, *Shame and Guilt: An Historical Perspective* (Center City, 1981); that usage is reflected in Holifield, *Gentlemen Theologians*, 37. Other treatments of "guilt" tend to ignore this important distinction: cf. Hill, "South's Two Cultures" and "Toward a Charter," *Solid South*, 43, 191; Dabbs, *Haunted*, 107 ff.; Thomas, *Confederate Nation*, 21; Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism*, 149; the debate between Genovese and

Takaki as represented in Charles Crowe, ed., *The Age of Civil War and Reconstruction, 1830-1930* (Homewood, 1975, rev. ed.), 51-58 to which add Degler, *Place Over Time*, 80. On the relationship of this point to the theme of tragedy, cf. Jaspers, *Tragedy*, 52; Niebuhr, *Irony*, 147, 161; then: Dabbs, *Haunted*, 150; Mathews, *Old South*, 10; Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, 77; Hill, *South and North*, 90; finally, the interpretation of the parable of the Prodigal Son by Dabbs, *Haunted*, 178.

<sup>129</sup>King, *Southern Renaissance*, 171, accepting the idea from Pat Watters, *The South and the Nation* (New York, 1969), 352.

<sup>130</sup>Goldmann, *Hidden God*, 389; cf. Davenport, *Myth*, 160.

<sup>131</sup>Emory M. Thomas, "The Paradoxes of Confederate Historiography," unpublished paper delivered 10 May 1981 as University of Georgia Award Lecture. Thomas's citation reads: "For these and more interpretations see Frank E. Vandiver, ed., *The Idea of the South* (Chicago, 1969); Monroe L. Billington, *The South: A Central Theme* (New York, 1969); and David Potter, *The South and the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge, 1968)." Cf. the same theme in Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, 59.

<sup>132</sup>Grady McWhiney and Forrest McDonald, "The Celtic Influence in Southern History," paper delivered at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Atlanta, 15 November 1979.