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God and Political Economy:
A Critical Appraisal of the
Late Twentieth-Century Theological Responses to
Capitalism, Socialism, and Ecology

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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PREFACE
The God Beyond the Prison Wall

Biography is essential for one's doing theology. Like every other theologian, I also have a story to tell, a story that has motivated and driven me to write this dissertation. Indeed, as the late Minjung theologian Suh Nam-Dong said, theology is story-telling.¹

I was born in Korea in 1962 when the country just started full-scale economic development from the ashes of the Korean War (1950-53). The baby had no milk to drink. I still remember the tears of my mother who could not feed me well. I learned what poverty is about, and what it means to our soul and body, when I was very, very young.

Being born and raised in Korea also meant being a citizen of great non-Christian cultures and religious heritages, particularly those of Confucian and Buddhist. Although authoritarian, hierarchical, and discriminative, I learned from Confucianism the moral imperative to become a person of harmony with community, nature, and heaven. I learned from Buddhism the agony of being human existentially in the life circle of *saeng-roh-byung-sah* (birth, old age, sickness, and death).

However, it was Christianity that most took advantage of the rapid socio-economic changes in South Korea. Millions of people escaped their rural hometown and migrated into cities for a "better life." If the growth of the early Christian church could be attributed to an urban phenomenon in the Hellenistic world, the "miracle" of Korean church growth should be attributed to the same urban phenomenon created in the modern capitalist world. And it was Christian fundamentalism in particular that occupied the "spiritual vacuum" created by the failure of traditional religions to respond to the urgent

¹ See Suh Nam-Dong, "Theology as Story-telling: A Counter-theology," in *CTC Bulletin*, Vol. 5 No.3 – Vol. 6 No. 1, December 1984 – April 1985 (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia).

needs of Korean people, people torn apart by savage economic development. Although conservative, fanatic, and other-worldly, Christian fundamentalism touched the weary and pained souls of many Koreans—particularly women. It obviously had popular appeal. And it also strongly appealed to me, as my family was torn apart by my alcoholic father.

I inherited the Christian faith from my mother's mother who had to bear ten children, from age 16, until she finally got a son. She was one of the first generation of Korean Protestant Christians. Deservedly, I was sent to the Sunday school and I liked to go to the church, because, frankly speaking, the church was the only place that I could meet girls --Confucius taught that man and woman should not "sit together" after age 7. Whatever motive I had at first, I rapidly became a fanatic, spirit-filled, puritan-like young Christian teenager, just as my home was changed into a house of hell.

My father was a music-loving and promising student, but his dream of becoming a scholar was shattered by the outbreak of the Korean War. He was forced to join the South Korean army, and he exhausted his golden years there for twenty-five years. He was dismissed from the army, however, for he was too proud of himself to play the game, and butter up others for his own promotion to military general. He then became jobless for another twenty five years and and alcoholic. You know what it means to have an alcoholic father at home. I cannot simply describe fully how much I suffered from him, how much my soul was inflicted by him. I used to dream of patricide even—yes, I did want to kill him so many times. What really tormented me, however, was not the burning hatred within me but the unnamable pity and compassion I felt toward my father when he begged me for a cup of water after his exhaustive overnight drinking binges, merciless

wife-beating, and stormy house-smashing. It was too much for an early teenager to stand. I was too young to understand the root causes of my father's suffering. I never knew a "home sweet home." And, had I not grasped Jesus as my personal savior, comforter, and healer, I may have committed suicide or become a social delinquent. I was too young to understand the "structures of sin" that destroyed my father and changed the young, bright, music-loving man into a demonic patriarch. I still do not obey any patriarchal power that lies beyond my resistance, both spiritually and physically.

The more I suffered from my father, the more I embraced Christianity. The same turn took place with my mother. Losing hope in her husband, she gave up all "worldly" expectations from her first son, me, and, like Hanna, the mother of Samuel, swore to dedicate her first son to God. She wanted me to become a pastor to save broken souls like my father's. I was only thirteen, but I was mature enough to understand my mother's wish. I soon became one of the most passionate young evangelists around. Memorizing more than 300 biblical passages, I was quite able in evangelizing to my classmates, friends, neighbors, and even school teachers. Stunned by my integrity and zeal for Christian ministry, and impressed by my high academic record, my high school, founded by an American missionary to Korea more than a century ago, pledged to grant me a full scholarship until I finish all the preparation for my Christian ministry. I was quite happy, for I found a new sense of life and mission; it seemed to me that everything would go all right. Yes, indeed, everything went all right, until my friend's mother jumped from her apartment on a cold winter night, two days after Christmas, in 1983. It was a sign that, in fact, everything was not all right.

The history of South Korea in the 1980's must be remembered for the brutal human rights violations by military dictatorship and the persistent resistance of the student and Minjung movements. I was "liberated" from the all-black uniforms that I had to wear for six years in middle and high schools; but the university campus was not the romantic setting that I expected. There was no freedom of air; rather, hundreds of strange young men with short hair were all around the campus. They were riot police in plain-clothes pretending to be students, and their purpose was to create a mood of terror, to suppress any anti-government demonstrations at the initial phase, and to arrest the demonstration leaders at once. Any attempt of anti-government action, only a word or a song, was cracked down on immediately, violently, and mercilessly. Policemen's billy fractured students' skulls and bones; sharp pieces of tear gas bombs, thrown "illegally" under the shoulder (safety) line and exploded on the ground, piercing the eyeballs of fellow students. The campus was a bloody battleground between experts of martial arts, Taekwondo, and bear-handed students. Disappearance, arrest, torture, forced military recruitment, and death were my "daily" life at the college.

However, I tried not to see what I saw, not to hear what I heard. Christianity, I believed, had nothing to do with this "secular" turmoil and this-worldly politics. I did my best to turn my face away from the reality, however, the avoidance became impossible for me when a paralyzed woman, the mother of an imprisoned student activist named Ji Tae-Hong, committed suicide in despair over her son's arrest. Her son, at more peaceful times, challenged my Christian faith, arguing that it was irrelevant to the life of Minjung; yet, in our often heated and emotional debates, I never accepted his charge. You can't change the mind of a staunch and determined fundamentalist by debate. However, it was

his mother who opened my heart and led me to a deep “conversion.” Because of his activism, her son was arrested by the National Security Law (anti-communist law), which was very rare at that time and which meant, in practice, a “death sentence” in a society where anti-communism and national security are the priority of national policies. Losing heart and hope, reproaching her physical disability, which kept her from helping her own son, she chose to jump from the fifth-floor of her shabby apartment, set on the small hill of a poor village, one cold winter night. Two days after the celebration of Jesus’ birth. That night, I was there before her dead body, asking myself what on earth my Christian faith had to do with her death, which was immediately prohibited from being reported by the media. What does my faith have to do with the system that has left only suicide, nothing but suicide, as the last means of protest for a paralyzed woman? On that freezing night, before her cold body, the wall between the “sacred” and the “secular” collapsed for me; the covering curtain of the temple was torn in two. I finally crossed the river and began to see the haggard faces of Minjung. Scales fell from my eyes, at last. I cried and cried the whole night.

Thereafter, I became a militant student activist, a revolutionary, deeply committed to social justice, human rights, democracy, and the peace and reunification of North and South Korea. I saw my conversion not as a rupture from my previous evangelical and pastoral concerns, but rather as the continuation and expansion of them. My activism expanded as I graduated from college and joined the national ecumenical movement. Due to my activism, however, I was wanted by the police and became a political refugee in the Philippines for two years. You do not know what it means to be a political refugee until it happens to you.. Being a refugee in a foreign land is a strange form of

imprisonment; you are cut off from your land, “locked out” of your community, and separated from your beloved ones. It is worse than being “locked in” a prison cell. Completely disconnected, completely shunned by force, however, I was connected to different peoples in Asia. With the help of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), I could travel all around the vast Asian continent, encountering so many different peoples and communities: Urban poor in the smoky (garbage) mountain in Tondo in Manila; the hungry sugarcane plantation workers in Negros Island; guerilla fighters in the cities, forests, and mountains; prostitutes in Patpong and Mabini Street; indigenous peoples of Mangyan, Hwa-Rien, and Chiangmai; Dalit people in Kerala; illegal migrant workers in Higashikujo and Hong Kong; land mine victims of Phnom Penh; socialist Christians in Ho Chi Min and Hanoi; East Timor demonstrators in Jakarta, and so on. I was so passionate to meet and to touch Asian Minjung that I was fearless, entering into real war zones and, fortunately, surviving many encounters with air-to-ground missiles and bullet showers. I still remember the sound, smell, and color of the explosions around me. Moving from one grassroots community to another, not as a tourist but as a sojourner, I was connected “emotionally” to those many people who were killed, disappeared, tortured, hungry, thirsty, diseased, humiliated, shamed, worried, sorrowful, desperate, and indignant. In the midst of the land of suffering, before so many cold bodies of innocent death, including babies and children, I wept and wept as bitterly as I wept over the dead body of Ji Tae-Hong’s mother.

On the way home, I was finally arrested at the airport and immediately put into jail. About 30 special agents of sturdy body “warmly” welcomed me on that day. After all, I had to liquidate the damn old “debt” that I owed to the military government from

two years ago. I was fortunate enough not to be treated inhumanely, for I was then one of the newly elected Presidium of the Christian Conference of Asia. Amnesty International immediately identified me as one of the thousands of prisoners of consciousness in South Korea. Now I was “locked in” the prison cell which was only three square yards in size, with a stinking traditional toilet. In a sense, the old prison cell, built during the Japanese colonial era, was perfectly “ecological,” because you lived with what comes out from you. You are what you excrete. The real point of punishment, however, is the sheer isolation felt in a small and closed space, all day. I still suffer from small-space phobia. I was given only 15 minutes a day for the sun outside. I was alone even when I was outside the cell, for political offenders were shunned by other prisoners.

One day when I was walking outside of my prison cell, I realized that from the back yard of the Young-Deung-Po detention center, I could see over the white and tall prison wall the shabby five-floor apartment on the hill, the very building from which the paralyzed mother jumped to commit suicide ten years ago. I could not believe my eyes. It was right there on the hill, looking down tenderly at me. I never expected to see that building again in such a place, in such a moment, in such a way. Shuddering, I stopped there and looked vacantly at the building. All the memories of the years of my sojourning rapidly crossed my mind. Suddenly, the tragic event turned into a powerful image of a God who jumped along with her from that shabby apartment ten years ago, crushed with her old and paralyzed body on that cold cement floor, and lived within me as the driving force and assurance of hope up to that very moment. All of a sudden, the apartment became a pillar of fire and cloud. My body was still confined within the tall and white prison walls, but my eyes saw the epiphany of God with power and awe. I would never

forget that moment of God's revelation, the eye-opening moment and the beginning of my God-talk. My theology is about this God who is always with us and whom we can see when God is beyond our "prison wall," beyond our existential predicament, beyond our historical preconditions, enslavement, and oppressions. My dissertation is about this God-with-us beyond our tragedy, about the assurance of hope beyond our expectations.

Two further historical events have motivated me to talk about such God in relation to our contemporary political economy. I have become keenly interested in the relevance between God-talk and political economy because of two historical events in particular. The first one is the collapse of socialist economies in Eastern Europe in 1989, which marked a serious retreat of all progressive social movements and thought, including liberation theologies in the Third World, with which I identified myself most closely. One can imagine how shocking it was to me personally, for I experienced it while I was a wanted criminal and political refugee because of activism. "Is there still room for a theology of liberation in the light of the conclusion of liberation struggles in various parts of the Third World?" asked Frank Chikane in Nairobi, in 1992, at the third general assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), convened after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.² That question haunted me for many years. Theology after the socialist crisis has become one of my paramount concerns.

The second historical event is the Asian financial crisis of 1997, which also hit Korea and badly affected the lives of millions of people throughout Asia, and which exhibited the fundamental illness of the global capitalist market economy, instituted as

² For more about this EATWOT conference, see K.C. Abraham and Bernadette Mbuy-Beya, eds., *Spirituality of the Third World* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994).

the New World Order since the collapse of socialist economies in Eastern Europe. I experienced it personally because of the bankruptcy of my wife's household. A small photo in a news article succinctly reveals what happened at that time: On December 2, 1997, on a deadly cold street in Seoul, Korea, a bank worker holds a picket, protesting austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.); on his picket, it was written, "I.M.F. = I'M Fired (?)." Koreans felt that event as the most tragic since the Korean War. The country was plunged into a stormy night of company bankruptcies, mass layoffs, bank failures, skyrocketing inflation and interest rates, and endless devaluation of national currency. Unfortunately, a layoff in a household used to mean a death sentence to one's whole family in Korea, because there was no safety net for such victims.³ Indeed, those who could not find the way out of the swamp committed suicide—sometimes a familial suicide. It was simply shocking to see how a whole nation, proud of its economic "miracle," could fall into a bottomless pit overnight. However, what actually shocked me most was not the fall itself but the profound sense of pessimism, the nameless fear and powerlessness prevailing over the hearts of the people. To get out of the swamp, people said, there is no alternative but to give free reign to global market forces, and it is of no use to resist the "dominion" of the market. This *historical fatalism* was shocking to my Christian faith; this *market utopianism*, the belief in the self-fulfillment of market forces, was insulting to my Christian faith; and, this "religious faith" in the inevitability and irresistibility of the "dominion" of the market was a scandal to my Christian faith. How can we speak about the God who is always with us as the power beyond the prison of our historical stagnation, beyond our sense of pessimism, fear, and powerlessness? This dissertation is an effort to address this question

³ Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, *Civil Society*, Issue No. 1, November 1997-January 1998, p.3

in light of the rise and fall of modern political economy, on which the life and death of millions of people depends.

INTRODUCTION

Political economy⁴ is the arena in which the life and death of millions of people is decided structurally, decisively. As such, it has invited great attention from many theologians who consider life to be the most precious gift from God. Latin American liberation theologians have been at the forefront of this arena. However, as the so-called “victory of capitalism” in the 1990s has opened the floodgates for increased debate on the global capitalist market economy, other theologians, too, are becoming aware of the increasing importance of political economy. Indeed, as Sallie McFague professes, Christian “love without economics is empty rhetoric.”⁵

Christian reflection on political economy, however, has not often been satisfactory. Most Christian reflection on political economy has been in terms of social ethics, focusing on issues like economic justice, individualism, and consumerism. These are, of course, very legitimate and important issues for theology; nonetheless, in such an approach to political economy, theology loses its distinctive character and unique context for the sake of a merely superficial relevance with political economy. To put it differently, there is still a great deficit in *theological work* with regard to political economy. I believe that before we attempt to give an exhaustive ethical treatment of various political economic issues, it is imperative that we seriously rethink our faith and theological assertions so that we may better know what we can contribute to the creation of a more just and sustainable world, from our distinctive, Christian perspectives.

⁴ The term used for economics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and revived in recent years to reflect a policy-oriented view of the subject. See Donald Rutherford, *Routledge Dictionary of Economics* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 354.

⁵ Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p.xi.

This research project is a critical appraisal of the late twentieth-century theological reflections on political economy. Indeed, the late twentieth-century, or the past thirty some years, is marked by a proliferation of Christian reflection on political economy; today, there are, literally, tons of books and articles that have dealt with various related issues. In my view, however, what is actually lacking in those literatures is a reflection on the reflection itself, an interpretation of the reflection itself, i.e., a critical assessment of the theological issues that have been raised, discussed, and debated among various theologians, as they attempt to relate theology with political economy in their own contexts. D. Stephen Long offers such an attempt in his *Divine Economy: Theology and the Market*.⁶ Despite his laudable efforts to delineate some commonalities and differences among various theological schools, his analyses of liberation theologians are not accurate,⁷ his omission of the analyses of ecological theologians weakens the credibility of his work,⁸ and his alternative for change “by the *ecclesia* through the corporation without the state” is not convincing at all.⁹ It is fair to say that there has yet to be an adequate interpretive work. It has to be done anew.

⁶ D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy: Theology and the Market* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁷ According to Long, what is common to the liberation theologians he chose to analyze (James H. Cone, Gustavo Gutierrez, John Sobrino, and Rosemary R. Ruether) is “a modernist metanarrative of liberty as self-directed transformation.” He criticizes these liberation theologians for their subordinating of ecclesiology to eschatology. He contends that Marxism is the basic strategy of liberation theologians, particularly of Gutierrez, used to relate theology to economics. I do not think that Cone’s black theology, Gutierrez and Sobrino’s liberation theology, and Ruether’s feminist ecological liberation theology can be generalized in such ways.

⁸ I do not believe that we can capture the big picture of the development of Christian thought in terms of political economy without including the analyses of ecological theologians and economists, such as John B. Cobb, Jr. and Herman E. Daly.

⁹ Long’s basic argument is that theologians in what he calls the “dominant tradition” (Michael Novak, Max L. Stackhouse, Ronald Preston, Philip Wogaman, and Dennis P. McCann) and “emergent tradition” (Cone, Gutierrez, Sobrino, and Ruether) have been commonly infected by the same emancipatory discourses of modernity, and therefore that we need to return to the “residual tradition” (Alasdair MacIntyre, Bernard Dempsey, and John Milbank) which is based on the scholastic economics of Thomas Aquinas. In opposition to both modernity and secularity, Long insists that only the residual notion of “the transcendental predicates of being” can show us a world which already bears goodness, truth, and beauty prior to the emergence of individual choice, and that only Aquinas’ theology of the virtues, in which

The basic intention of this research project is then to map out, interpret, and critically evaluate the theological issues, arguments, and debates that have been raised during the past thirty some years, as theologians in competing schools attempt to respond to capitalism, socialism, and ecology. My intention here is not to give an exhaustive analysis of the present global economic system, nor do I intend to provide a detailed blueprint of what an alternative economic order should be, but I will render a quite detailed analysis of the defining political economic paradigm today (economic neoliberalism) in order to make my own constructive proposal for future theological discussions. Throughout this research project, I will work self-consciously as a systematic theologian.

Three Theological Camps

Since the late 1960s, three distinctive schools of theology have emerged, each with sharply different theological paradigms and competing views on political economy. (1) The first school, also known as “the first theological alternative to capitalism,”¹⁰ is Latin American liberation theology. With regard to political economy, it is a militant

“friendship with God” is seen as our true end, can radically reformulate human desires. I do not disagree with these theological assertions themselves, for they bear good and profound ecological senses close to indigenous spiritualities around the world. However, the problem is that because of the view of the world/creation as already good, true, and beautiful, Long has arrived at the same kind of business ethic of the “dominant tradition” he is critical of. As we will see in chapter 2, the key theological doctrine that supports North American neoconservative theologians’ business ethic for production is the notion that “grace is everywhere,” in which eschatological/utopian passion and Christological assertions are denied. It seems to me not coincident that Long gives primacy to ecclesiology over eschatology (“kingdom”) and Christology, implying that if the church can get a hold of the imagination of the business world and the corporations, it can turn things around. This is exactly the whole argument of Stackhouse and McCann. If there is any difference between Long and neoconservative theologians, the latter speak of the corporation as “worldly ecclesia” unambiguously. With a lack of eschatological and Christological fervor, Long’s theology lost the value that can exceed the innocence preceding the fall. In my opinion, Long has focused too much on the Weberian methodology used in the “dominant tradition” while engaging too little of his theological analyses of it.

¹⁰ Jurgen Moltmann, “Political Theology and Theology of Liberation,” in *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 61.

anticapitalist theology that favors socialism or democratic socialism as an alternative. This theological movement began in the late 1960s with the rise of national liberation movements across Latin America and began to lose its “popularity” after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Major theologians of my concern in this camp are: Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Luis Segundo, Jon Sobrino, Enrique Dussel, Jose Miguez Bonino, Franz J. Hinkelammert, Jose Comblin, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, and Hugo Assmann. (2) In opposition to this liberation theology in the South, a group of North American theologians arose and developed an *antisocialist* theology in favor of liberal or democratic market capitalism. This conservative tide of theology began in the early 1980s, coincident with the rise of economic neoliberalism and the “New Right” political neo-conservatism. Major theologians of concern in this camp are: Michael Novak, Max L. Stackhouse, and Dennis P. McCann. (3) However, as Christian theology began to take nature and ecological concerns as its decisive context, a group of ecological/ecofeminist theologians arose and articulated an *anti-growth* theology that rejects modern industrialism and developmentalism, both capitalist and socialist alike, advocating instead “ecological economy” or “household economy.” This movement actually began in the early 1970s, but its significance has gained wider public attention since the 1990s. Theologians and thinkers in this camp are: John B. Cobb, Jr., Herman E. Daly, Larry L. Rasmussen, Sallie McFague, Rosemary R. Ruether, Maria Mies/Vandana Shiva, and many others.

To provide a panoramic view of the basic commonalities and differences between and within these schools of theology, I offer the following map. It is not exhaustive, however, as each and every theologian will not nicely fit into the outline--in fact, that is

the methodological pitfall of any typology. Still, I believe that some generalizations are useful, and sometimes inevitable, to provide the explanatory/interpretive power to grasp the whole big picture. A more nuanced explanation will follow chapter by chapter.

	<u>Liberation Theology</u>	<u>Neoconservative Theology</u>	<u>Ecological Theology</u>
<u>(a) Political Economic Dimension</u>			
Context	the “decade of development” in Latin America in the 50-60s	neoconservative wave since the 80s	ecological awareness since the 70s
Against	“dependent capitalist developmentalism” (<i>desarrollismo</i>)	socialism, liberation theology, and ecological theology	“growthmania,” capitalist-and-socialist developmentalism
In favor of	socialism or democratic socialism	liberal or democratic capitalism	ecological economy or household economy
Central Theme	liberation	liberty	sustainability
Tools of Analysis	dependence theory Marxist analysis	classical and neo liberalism neoclassical marginalism Weberian sociology	ecological science evolutionary theory process thought
<u>(b) Theological Dimension</u>			
Basic Method	“option for the poor” priority of praxis theology as second-step	Niebuhrian realism or “Protestant principle”	geocentrism + theocentrism + prophetic tradition
Key Doctrine	“kingdom of God” (eschatology)	an anthropology of liberty + a doctrine of creation, or “Protestant principle”	Creation God as Spirit of Life Trinity as relationship
God	liberator of the oppressed immanent in history (still transcendent horizontally)	source of human creativity immanent but not embodied (Novak) absolutely transcendent (Stackhouse)	source of life, of “novelty” immanent in nature (still panentheistic)
Creation	not explicit	unfinished source of wealth	unfinished, evolving finitude emphasized
Anthropology	subject of history anthropocentric	co-creator for production <i>homo economicus</i> anthropocentric	co-participant person-in-community biospheric
Christology	Jesus of Nazareth emphasized	least developed	Cosmic Christ emphasized

Ecclesiology	base Christian community	the corporation as "worldly ecclesia"	not explicit ecumenically-oriented
Soteriology	history as "conquest of freedom" tension between "heavenly" salvation and "earthly" liberation	history as conquest of nature salvation through production global market as salvific institution	"good life" within the limit of ecosystem
Bible	central locus of divine revelation	oppose applying biblical principles to modern economy seen as "fundamentalism"	appeal to the Bible against itself

The basic task of my research is to give a full account of the essential features of each theological camp and to delineate, interpret, and evaluate the commonalities and differences between them in terms of (a) their political economic analyses, prescriptions, and alternatives and (b) their theological concepts, doctrines, and ideas developed, discussed, and debated in relation to their political economy. My research is basically an interpretive work; yet, it is also a constructive work in the sense that I interpret those three theological schools in the light of contemporary political economic challenges and provide some constructive proposals.

Plans of Writing/Synopsis of Arguments

In Chapter 1, recapitulating the origin, context, essential character, and historical significance of Latin American liberation theology, I will analyze its key political economic issues (dependency theory, use of Marxist analysis, and option for socialism) as well as the theological themes and debates centered around the issues of the "kingdom of God" and eschatology. Also investigating how liberation theologians have attempted to reformulate liberation theology since the collapse of socialist economies in Eastern Europe, I will discuss the legacies and crises of liberation theology. The basic arguments of this chapter are : (a) Since the heart of liberation theology is not its political option for

socialism or Marxism but the biblically inspired theological option for the poor, this theology must continue to be the underlying thrust in today's context of "triumphant capitalism," which exacerbates injustice, oppression, and poverty; (b) yet, liberation theologians' unqualified option for socialism must now give way to ecological reflection as "the second critique of political economy"¹¹ to envision a more holistic liberation; (c) for this, liberation theology must liquidate its philosophical debt to the nineteenth-century ideology of history which is mechanistic, triumphalistic, anthropocentric, and androcentric, and must vigorously incorporate ecology, nature, and creation as its decisive context; and (d) however, liberation theology's central affirmation of the God of history must not be sacrificed for the sake of the God of nature, for to do so is only another form of reductionism and history-nature dualism.

In Chapter 2, which explores the origin, context, and essential character of the rise of North American neoconservative theologies, I will analyze their political economic options (namely the business ethic for wealth production and for Corporate America) as well as the theological themes, doctrines, and methodologies they adopt to support them. Focus will be given to the key texts of three major theologians in this camp, Michael Novak, Max L. Stackhouse, and Dennis P. McCann. My basic arguments will be: (a) Michael Novak's democratic capitalism is based on a false creation theology, or a theology of "creativity" largely informed by a philosophic belief in God, which sets apart humanity from the rest of creation as the enemy of the earth; (b) Max L. Stackhouse's public theology, despite its tantamount appeal to the transcendent source of meaning and morality, is faulted because his "transcultural, transhistorical, and transexperiential criteria" never challenges the Establishment, the status quo, or the given; (c) Dennis P.

¹¹ Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995), p. 117.

McCann's attack on liberation theology from the perspective of his own interpretation of Niebuhrian realism is misguided, for he did not rightly understand the genuine implication of liberation theology's utopian impulse; (d) North American neoconservative theologians' ethic for production and wealth creation is unconvincing in the light of finance capitalism today; and finally (d) overall, neoconservative theology subordinates Christian theology to the overarching principle of Western liberalism, namely, individual liberty.

In Chapter 3, recapitulating the origin, context, and historical significance of ecological theologies, I will analyze their political economic alternatives ("ecological economy," "steady state economy," or "home-based economy") and their theological emphases and the ideas developed around them. Focus will be given to the key texts of Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., two figures who have said the most about political economic issues in deep relation to theology. And yet, equal attention will also be given to a group of ecofeminist theologians and thinkers (Sallie McFague, Rosemary R. Ruether, and Maria Mies/Vandana Shiva, etc.), who each offer distinctive proposals for an alternative form of political economy and serious theological renewal. In this chapter, I will basically argue that: (a) ecological/ecofeminist theologies should be careful not to reduce theological language to ecological science when adopting the theories of post-modern sciences; (b) since the ecological crisis is basically a social problem, which affects initially and most particularly the indigenous people, women, and people of color, ecological/ecofeminist theologies must incorporate the issues of race and class in their analyses so that they may offer a more socially and historically responsible eco-centrism; and (c) it is theologically imperative to apprehend creation from a

liberation perspective for a more solid, interpenetrating, and interlocking synthesis of liberation theology and theology of nature.

In Chapter 4, where I introduce the origin, history, and essential features of economic neoliberalism, I will closely investigate F.A. Hayek's moral philosophy and political economy to reveal the implicit and informal theology of this "sage" of neoliberalism. By exploring his socio-intellectual context, basic methodologies, and key ideas, I will show how his liberal ideal of individual liberty and of market utopianism has resulted in a cultural traditionalism characterized by a radical social in-egalitarianism, a profound historical pessimism about the agenda for changing society, and a self-enclosed secularism that forecloses any transcendental principle of historical renewal and hope. In this chapter, I will basically reveal that: (a) The soteriological principle of market fundamentalism today is built on Hayek's thoroughgoing societal/cultural evolutionism in which the explanatory and interpretive power of all notions of transcendence is eliminated; (b) Hayek's evolutionary moral philosophy is identical with what Niebuhr himself vehemently criticized as the "naturalistic utopianism" which regards the world as self-explanatory, thus negating the possibility of self-criticism; and finally (c) what is most denied by Hayek's neoliberalism is what was most affirmed by liberation theologians—the faith that transforms history.

In Conclusion, after recapitulating the essence of challenge from economic neoliberalism, which is the defining paradigm of contemporary global capitalist economy, I will discuss the theological significance of divine transcendence today as the principle of resistance, renewal, and hope, claiming a "strategic theological transcendentalism" as a new paradigm of theological response to our times.

Contribution/Limitation

As Joerg Rieger rightly points out, capitalist market economy is more than just another set of values, worldviews, and theological assumptions.¹² This means that a battle over ideas is necessary but not sufficient and that new morality is necessary but it will not stop the mad machine of global economy. Indeed, a deeper analysis of the power of large economic structures (e.g., the transnational corporations, global finance capital, and global institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization, etc.) in close relation to political, military, cultural, and religious powers is *sine quo non* for any theological reflection on the cause, meaning, and solution of the predicament of millions of people around the globe. Although I offer some of those in this research, I admit that the weakness of this project is that little analysis of such powers at work is given outside of the texts.

Still, in a theological milieu in which not much has been said about the texts themselves either, I believe that a critical appraisal of theological reflections on political economy—a reflection on the reflections themselves—is imperative in order to lay solid ground for deeper Christian reflection on political economy in the twenty-first century. By providing a comprehensive picture, a panoramic view of the three distinctive theological responses in the late twentieth-century to socialism, capitalism, and ecology, and by pointing to some new challenges from contemporary finance capitalism and economic neoliberalism, I hope that I can successfully illustrate the theological legacies we have inherited and lay out the further theological tasks ahead of us. I will be satisfied in my task if I can give readers at least a clear sense of where we are now and of whither

¹² Joerg Rieger, "Theology and Economics," in *Religious Studies Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3/July 2002, p. 218.

we may go from here, even if I cannot provide all the crystal-clear answers to those many questions raised during the past thirty some years, as respectful theologians around the globe have attempted to relate our God-talk with political economy.

Chapter 1
LATIN AMERICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Faith works itself out in love. And love must be efficacious. In today's world there is only one way to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick and imprisoned—as Christ invited us to do: to change the structures of society which create and multiply every day those conditions. This is revolution.

Jose Miguez Bonino¹

Experience shows that within the dependent liberal-capitalist system... there is no salvation for the poor... Therefore we have to abandon this system. The alternative may not be clear, but there is irrefutable evidence that we can expect no solution within the logic of capitalism... Face[d] with this bleak prospect for the poor, we seek liberation.

Leonardo Boff²

The theology of liberation means establishing the relationship that exists between human emancipation—in the social, political, and economic orders—and the kingdom of God.

Gustavo Gutierrez³

Liberation continues to be a challenge, now more than ever. Although it is less popular, theologians have a mission to remind us of this... we stand facing a new situation in which earlier models no longer apply... the times call for invention and creation.

Jose Comblin⁴

¹ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 44.

² Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995), pp. 124-125.

³ Gustavo Gutierrez, "Toward a Theology of Liberation," in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990), p. 69.

⁴ Jose Comblin, *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998), pp. xiii-xix.

Latin American liberation theology is fundamentally an “articulated cry of the oppressed.”⁵ The primary concern of liberation theology is not “the man who does not believe” in “an adult world” but “the man who is not a man” in “a dehumanizing society”;⁶ that is, it is not “the structural *atheism* of modern society and its proclamation of the *death of God*” but the “*exploitation and underdevelopment* which was causing the *death of the human being*”⁷ that most concerns most for Latin American liberation theology. The following inquiry of Gustavo Gutierrez best captures the essence of liberation theology: “How is it possible to tell the poor, who are forced to live in conditions that embody a denial of love, that God loves them?”⁸ This “pastoral, and therefore theological” question for Gutierrez, and many others, is the starting point of liberation theology. This unique point of departure deserves our special attention, for, as we will see in following chapters, North American neoconservative theology and ecological/ecofeminist theologies start from somewhere else. Latin American liberation theology was born “when faith confronted the injustice done to the poor”;⁹ and, as such, it exists “wherever there is oppression.”¹⁰ In this sense, Latin American liberation theology is not a circumstantial theology¹¹ but a *contextual* theology that has *universal* implications.¹² After all, did Jesus not say that “For you always have the poor with you”?

⁵ Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988), p. 88.

⁶ Gutierrez, “Liberation, Theology and Proclamation,” in *Concilium* (1974), p. 69.

⁷ Pablo Richard, *Death of Christendoms, Birth of the Church*, quoted from Hennelly, *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History* (1990), p. 40.

⁸ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973), p. xxxiv.

⁹ Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (1988), p. 3.

¹⁰ Robert McAfee Brown, *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. ix.

¹¹ By “circumstantial theology” Jose Comblin means “a discourse that is valid at particular moment in history, but is ceased to be relevant once that moment has passed.” (See Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, 57.)

¹² As Moltmann assures, liberation theology is “contextual theology, not just for Latin America, but universally so.” (See Moltmann, “Political Theology and Theology of Liberation,” in *Liberating the*

(Mark 14:7) A theology of the poor, by the poor, and for the poor will always be with us, if Jesus' words are true.

“Liberation” in Liberation Theology

Why did Latin American theologians speak of a theology of “liberation” rather than a theology of salvation, redemption, hope, or anything else? Every name has special meaning and a particular history. What was it that gave birth to the theology of *liberation*?

Latin American liberation theology was born in the context of 1950-1960s Latin America. As Gutierrez recalls, Latin America in the 1950s was characterized by great optimism regarding the possibility of achieving self-sustained economic development.¹³ The United Nations proclaimed the “First Decade of Development” in 1950, and John F. Kennedy, in the midst of great expectations, launched the Alliance for Progress in 1961.¹⁴ However, by the time of the Latin American Catholic Bishops’ Conference at Medellin in 1968, it became obvious that this well-meaning attempt was a failure.¹⁵ Capitalist developmentalist policies did not yield the expected results, and emerging pessimism ran deeper than a mere frustration with the failure to reach the expected outcome. According to Jose Miguez Bonino, “*Latin America has discovered the basic fact of its dependence.*”¹⁶ This was the turning point for Latin American consciousness. After more than a decade of the experiment of capitalist developmentalism (*desarrollismo*), Latin

Future: God, Mammon and Theology [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998], pp. 77-79.) Leonardo and Clodovis Boff also assure that liberation theology is “the first theology worked out on the periphery on the basis of questions raised by the periphery but with universal implications.” (See Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, p. 88.)

¹³ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 49.

¹⁴ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁵ Hennelly, *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, p. 41.

¹⁶ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. 14-15.

Americans began to see that, in Gutierrez's words, "underdevelopment is the end result of the process," that, "The dynamics of the capitalist economy lead to the establishment of a center and a periphery," and that, "The Latin American countries are 'from the beginning and constitutively dependent.'"¹⁷ This was a kind of spiritual awakening. This was, in Miguez Bonino's words, "the new Latin American consciousness [and] awareness that our political emancipation from Spain was [only] a step in the Anglo-Saxon colonial and neocolonial expansion."¹⁸

It is significant to recognize that dependency theory,¹⁹ which is often accused of being "victimology" by its critics,²⁰ figured prominently in liberation theology at the very outset. This is not to say that liberation theologians were all unanimously in favor of a revolutionary type of breakaway from the capitalist center: Following Andre Gunder Frank's stronger and simplistic version of dependency theory rather than a more nuanced form of Fernando Henrique Cardoso,²¹ Miguez Bonino saw Latin American

¹⁷ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 51-54.

¹⁸ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁹ Dependency theory was developed as a criticism to the neoclassical theory of international economic relations, as a reaction to the conventional modernization model. The Marxist theory of imperialism, particularly that of Lenin, significantly influenced dependency theory.

²⁰ See Barry Levine's discussion in Michael Novak, ed., *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society* (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1987), p.137.

²¹ Frank, in his *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1967), argued that capitalist countries in the North created and have maintained underdevelopment in Latin America, and thus that development in the North and underdevelopment in the South are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, he concluded that capitalist development in Latin America is impossible, that domestic bourgeoisie are no longer a significant force, and that the only option available to Latin America is socialism or fascism. The strength of this simplistic position is that it is an explanatory model with a very clear line of causation of the poverty in the underdeveloped countries. In contrast with Frank, Cardoso, paying far more attention to internal factors, gave a more nuanced form of dependency analysis. He accepted the detrimental influence of foreign investors as an important factor, but he tried to show the social and political forces within Latin America that shaped its economy and socio-political system. Though socialist in vision, Cardoso is generally classified as a moderate nationalist. The strength of this nuanced thesis is that it allows room for many interplaying variables; its weakness, however, is that it destroys the causal clarity of Frank's simplistic thesis. As Gary Dorrien sums up, the range of dependency theory is represented by the uncausal neo-Marxist economism of Frank at one end and the more culturally-oriented and multicausal analysis of Cardoso at the other end. (See Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Toward an Assessment* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1989], pp. 118-130; McGovern, "Dependency Theory, Marxist

underdevelopment as “the dark side of Northern development”;²² Jose Comblin rejected it as “the easiest way to think liberation”;²³ Leonardo Boff even favored a Canadian form of dependency for a more pragmatic and immediately viable option for Brazil;²⁴ and Gutierrez, following Cardoso’s more nuanced form, tried to add some qualification to dependency theory.²⁵ Despite all these differences, however, dependency theory, by focusing upon the center-periphery dynamic within modern capitalist system, offered liberation theologians a powerful tool of explanation for the fact that not a single Latin American nation has been able to climb the ladder of capitalist development notwithstanding a hundred years of trying.²⁶ By virtue of dependency theory, liberation theologians could see capitalist developmentalism as synonymous with “modernization”

Analysis, and Liberation Theology,” in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutierrez*, eds., Marc H Ellis and Otto Maduro [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1989], pp. 274-275; Dorrien. *Reconstructing the Common Good: Theology and the Social Order* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990], p. 137; and Ashley J. Tellis, in *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society*, pp. 135-137, 162.)

²² “The rise of the Northern countries,” says Miguez Bonino, “took place at a particular moment in history and was built on the possibilities offered by the resources of the dependent countries.” Therefore, “Development and underdevelopment are not two independent realities, nor two stages in continuum but two mutually related processes: Latin American underdevelopment is the dark side of Northern development; Northern development is built on third-world underdevelopment.” (See Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. 14-16.)

²³ For Comblin, “a straightforward rejection of all the structures of, and all connection with, the dominant civilization” is only “the easiest way to think of liberation,” because the result will be “autonomy, but in the midst of a pre-technical age.” (See Comblin, “Freedom and Liberation as Theological Concepts,” in *Concilium* [1974], pp. 101-103.)

²⁴ In fact, Boff was very skeptic about the revolutionary type of breakaway advocated by Frank. He recognized the need for compromise, the need for work for change within international system, for he believed that “More moderate advocates of the theory of dependency showed a greater historical sense.” Thus, for him, a “more pragmatic and immediately viable” option for Brazil, is a “Canadian” form of dependency with its promise of economic growth.

²⁵ Following Cardoso’s more nuanced version of dependency theory, Gutierrez adds some qualifications which will lead him to emphasize class analysis. Since “one can have recourse to the idea of dependence as a way of ‘explaining’ internal processes of the dependent societies by a purely ‘external’ variable... regarded as a cause,” Gutierrez assures that one should not deal with a purely external factor, that the theory of dependence should be put within the framework of the worldwide class struggle. That is, since Latin America is characterized by both external dependence and internal domination, only a class-based analysis, according to Gutierrez, will enable us to grasp the social setup of Latin America as a dependent form of capitalism and hence to figure out the strategy required to escape from that basic situation. (See Gutierrez, “Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith,” in *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, ed., Rosino Gibellini [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979], p. 17.)

²⁶ Dorrien, *Reconstructing the Common Good*, 139.

which is “dictated by the needs and preferences of our overseas masters,”²⁷ and with “reformism” which does not attack “the roots of the evil” and is thus “ineffective in the long run and counterproductive to achieving a real transformation.”²⁸ If this is the case, if capitalist developmentalism (*desarrollismo*) only produces and reproduces Latin American dependence on the capitalist North structurally, what should be done? What alternative is there other than this endless losing game?

It is clear to Miguez Bonino: “In today’s world there is only one way to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick and imprisoned,” which is “revolution.”²⁹ For Gutierrez: “Only a radical break from the status quo, that is, a profound transformation of the private property system, access to power of the exploited class, and a social revolution that would break this dependence would allow for the change to a new society.”³⁰ It was precisely at this point where Latin American theologians began to speak of “liberation.” “In this light,” says Gutierrez, “to speak about the process of *liberation* begins to appear more appropriate and richer in human context,” because it “expresses the inescapable moment of radical change which is foreign to the ordinary use of the term *development*,”³¹ also because, whereas “the word *development*... limits and obscures the theological problems implied in the process designated by this term,” the word “*liberation* allows for another approach leading to the Biblical sources” in which “Christ is presented as the one who brings us liberation.”³² McGovern is right: The very concept of “liberation” arose as a conviction that Latin America could not achieve true

²⁷ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, p. 15.

²⁸ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 16-17.

²⁹ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, p. 44.

³⁰ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 16-17.

³¹ Gutierrez. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

³² Gutierrez. *Ibid.*

development unless it freed itself from dependency on the U.S. and Western Europe.³³ In other words, the original inspiration that gave birth to the term theology of *liberation* in Latin America was the overall conviction that Latin American countries are dependent, periphery nations in a world capitalist system that offers them no hope. Although the fullness of liberation is repeatedly emphasized by Gutierrez as “a free gift from Christ” and any reductionism of the gospel message to a revolutionary ideology is firmly rejected,³⁴ the term “liberation” in liberation theology, as Clodovis Boff assures, originally meant “social liberation” and “the material liberation of the poor.”³⁵ In other words, while also used in a biblical sense, of God acting to liberate the poor, the very term “liberation” gave special importance to social, economic, and political liberation from dependency on an exploitative world capitalist system.³⁶

Intriguingly, however, regardless of the fact that liberation theology has more explicit ties with dependency analysis, critics have sharply focused their criticism on liberation theologians’ use of Marxist analysis.³⁷ To give just one example, Michael Novak accuses liberation theology of “formal attempts to translate Christianity into

³³ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, p. 117.

³⁴ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 24, 271.

³⁵ Clodovis Boff, “Methodology of the Theology of Liberation,” in Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria eds. *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993), pp. 4, 6, 11.

³⁶ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, p. 4. The Boff brothers even assure that “The core and kernel of liberation theology is not theology but liberation.” (See Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, p. 9)

³⁷ The major critics of liberation theologians are: Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, Roger Vekemans, S.J., and Bonaventure Kloppenburg (Latin America); Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Europe); Richard Neuhaus, Michael Novak, and Dennis P. McCann (North America). As McGovern summarizes, their major criticisms are: (1) Liberation theology makes praxis the criterion for truth; (2) it reduces human development to socio-political change; (3) it reduces salvation history to temporal history when it speaks of “only one history”; (4) it reduces faith to politics; (5) it identifies the kingdom of God with human progress and liberation movement; (6) it locates sin in sinful structures, neglecting personal sin; and (7) it equates the biblical poor with one socio-political class. (See McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. 99-101.)

Marxist categories.”³⁸ Still, in my assessment, what is really striking in Latin American liberation theology is not the abundance of Marxist analysis but the *absence* of it. What is especially striking, as Moltmann also observes, is that liberation theologians only quote a few basic concepts of Marx, and they do this in such a general way that one is only privy to “the fruits of the theologians’ reading.”³⁹ I have found it interesting that whereas most critics from the right point at too much Marxist methodology, many in the left, like Alistair Kee and Alfredo Fierro, complain that there is too *little* of it.⁴⁰ Indeed, in terms of Marxist analysis, we find only a chapter or so in Gutierrez,⁴¹ in Jon Sobrino, we find nothing; in Comblin, we find rather a strong critique of Marxism as “antidemocratic ideology identical with national security ideology”;⁴² and only in Franz J. Hinkelammert do we find a fully articulated discourse on Marx’s analysis and critique of capitalist

³⁸ Novak. *Will It Liberate?: Questions about Liberation Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 273. Novak further argues that since none of these liberation theologians show evidence that they have actually studied Marx, they must be “populist Marxists,” using Marxist slogans to ventilate some of the frustrations and aggressions of people. (See Novak, “Liberation Theology and the Pope,” in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, p. 279.)

³⁹ Moltmann, “An Open Letter to Jose Miguez Bonino,” in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, p. 199.

⁴⁰ Alistair Kee, an “orthodox” Marxist, complains that Latin American theology of liberation, which is widely assumed to be too Marxist, is in reality “not Marxist enough.” Kee argues that liberation theology preserves its own theology as “a no-go area which is beyond examination,” that it uses Marxism in a highly selective way, that it pays little attention to Marx’s criticisms of religion, and that it falsely encourages people to believe that it is possible to move from feudalism to a primitive religious socialism, bypassing capitalism, which is an indispensable step towards communism and one which Marx entirely rejected. Thus, for Kee, liberation theology, which seems to be progressive or even leftist, only appears as “strategic enemies of an authentic revolutionary process in the long run.” (See Alistair Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology* [Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990], *passim*.) Alfredo Fierro, a Spanish theologian, working from the intellectual left, is also critical of liberation theology because he feels that there is too little Marxist methodology. Criticizing Gutierrez’s theology for being a combination of “social progressivism with theological conservatism,” Fierro insists on adopting Marxism as our hypothesis and goes on to consider what sort of theology is possible on that basis. (Quoted from Robert McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978], pp. 121-123.)

⁴¹ In his masterwork, *A Theology of Liberation*, only two chapters (chapters 2 and 6) out of 13 chapters deal with political economic issues. They consist of only 20 some pages out of 170 some pages.

⁴² See especially Comblin, *The Church and the National Security State*, pp. 140-142, 220. From within the ranks of liberation theologians, Comblin speaks most openly about the failure of existing Marxist socialist systems. For him, Marxist society is only “the society created by the party... Consequently, in Marxist revolution there is no freedom for the people, only for the party.” (Comblin, *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 220.)

fetishism.⁴³ Probably, Otto Maduro is right that liberation theologians “borrow” from Marxist analysis but criticize too many aspects of Marxism to consider it a guiding force of analysis.⁴⁴

As John B. Cobb, Jr. observes, Marxism was “the major dialogue partner” for Latin American liberation theologians, and they located Christianity on the side of Marxism because it is “against the status quo.”⁴⁵ Comblin assures that “What was borrowed from Marxism was its critique of capitalism—which anyone can borrow without being a Marxist.”⁴⁶ In other words, as McGovern observes, liberation theologians used Marxist ideas because they believed that Marxist analysis serves as “the most prominent instrument of criticism against capitalism,” and that one can use it without succumbing to its atheism and philosophical materialism.⁴⁷ It seems to me then quite fair to conclude that liberation theologians made *critical* use of Marxist ideas. But, why is there the popular misconception that Latin American liberation theology is Marxist theology? Why have critics generated and focused their militant opposition to the use of Marxist analysis in liberation theology when it has more explicit ties with dependency analysis? I find Leonardo Boff’s explanation quite plausible: “They cannot accept the fact that the option of the poor against their poverty springs from the heart of the Christian faith and from the very essence of the biblical concept of God. They would prefer it to

⁴³ See Franz Hinkelammert, *The Ideological Weapons of Death: A Theological Critique of Capitalism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1977).

⁴⁴ See McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. 228, 230.

⁴⁵ Cobb, “Liberation Theology and the Global Economy,” in *Liberating the Future*, p. 34.

⁴⁶ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, p. 214.

⁴⁷ That is, Marxism, while viewed as inadequate especially in its materialist philosophy and critique of religion, liberation theologians believed that it provides important insights into the causes of Latin America’s poverty and dependent situation. (See McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. 145, 149; “Dependency Theory, Marxist Analysis, and Liberation Theology,” pp. 281-283.)

originate in Marxism and the ideologies of the Left.”⁴⁸ According to McGovern’s calm view, it is because dependency theory may prompt various strategies of response, some reformist and some more radical, that it has not led to the creation of political parties and popular movements committed to a specific program of change, whereas Marxist analysis has become linked with concrete tactics, strategies, and goals, as well as realized embodiments of Marxist ideas in many countries of the world.⁴⁹

In my assessment, liberation theologians’ political option for socialism should also be understood in the context of their reaction “against the status quo.” Liberation theologians opted for socialism because of their abhorrence of the prevailing capitalist system. For instance, Miguez Bonino viewed socialism as the only real option, because he was convinced that capitalism cannot be reformed.⁵⁰ Gutierrez spoke of “social revolution, not reform; of liberation, not development; of socialism, not modernization of the prevailing system” for the same reason.⁵¹ *If* capitalism cannot be reformed to meet the basic needs of the poor, *then* socialism seems to be the only real option.⁵² Yet, again, not all liberation theologians were unanimous in their option for socialism. Unlike Gutierrez, Segundo, and Miguez Bonino, who speak unmistakably in favor of socialism, Comblin, Boff, and Hugo Assmann, for example, are very skeptical of it. For Comblin, socialism is only “a system of domination” without technical development; for Assmann, the dichotomy of capitalism versus socialism that conditioned liberation theology is “an original sin” that must be overcome;⁵³ for Boff, notwithstanding his harsh criticism

⁴⁸ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, p. 99.

⁴⁹ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. 99-101.

⁵⁰ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, p. 52.

⁵¹ Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History: Selected Writings* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1983), p. 45.

⁵² McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, p. 178.

⁵³ See Assmann’s discussion in Novak, ed., *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society*, pp. 59-60. Assmann emphasizes here grass-roots democracy rather than anticapitalism, insisting that democracy

against capitalism as “the greatest evil, the rotten root,”⁵⁴ the alternative should be “an alternative to capitalism *and* socialism.”⁵⁵ In fact, even if Gutierrez believed that socialism represents “the most fruitful and far-reaching approach,” he always gave quick qualification that “liberation is not identified with any social form.”⁵⁶ Moreover, when liberation theologians speak of socialism, they always speak of some form of indigenous, self-determining socialism, one which is not based on Marxist dogmas or existing models in Eastern Europe.⁵⁷ Strongly influenced by the legendary Peruvian social theorist Jose Carlos Mariategui who rejected the scientific dogmatism and atheism of the European Marxist parties,⁵⁸ Gutierrez always advocated “indigenous socialist paths,” or the “Indo-American socialism.”⁵⁹ Socialism, for Gutierrez, was meant to be “a heroic creation.”⁶⁰

understood as the participation by all is a radical and revolutionary issue which can bring liberation theology “back to an alliance, or a common base, with the liberal thought.”

⁵⁴ For Boff, “We have to overcome capitalism. It is the greatest evil, the rotten root, the tree that produces those fruits we all know: poverty, hunger, sickness, and death of the majority”; furthermore, “Capitalism can be more or less *immoral*; it can never be more or less *moral*. You do not eliminate the ferocity of a wolf by filing down its teeth”; after all, “It is just as impossible to create a moral market system as it is to build a Christian brothel.” (Quoted from McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. 138-139.)

⁵⁵ Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, p. 93.

⁵⁶ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 54-57.

⁵⁷ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, p. 149.

⁵⁸ According to Gary Dorrien, Mariategui was a Marxist theoretician and precursor to the Christian-Marxist dialogue who played a central role in the formation of the Peruvian Community Party in the 1920s. Though he rejected the institutional church, Mariategui also rejected the scientific dogmatism and atheism of the European Marxist parties, arguing that there was a generative core of truth in the religious traditions of the poor. This contextualist reading of Marxism was highly instructive to Gutierrez, according to Dorrien. His later insistence on the determinative importance of historical context, the value of popular religion, the role of the class struggle, and the usefulness of Marxist theory can be traced to the formative influence of Mariategui’s work upon his thought. (See Dorrien, *Reconstructing the Common Good*, p. 104.)

⁵⁹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 54-57. To compare with Aloysius Pieris’ Asian “religious socialism,” Gutierrez’s “Indo-American socialism” has both similarity and difference. For Pieris, religious socialism, which is “practiced in remote areas of rural Asia where modern technocracy has not yet penetrated,” is “a true Asian inspiration.” It is, for Pieris, the Asian ancient tradition, not European Marxist tradition, which is “a clear path opened before us” that can overcome the shortcomings of both Marxist and capitalist projects. In short, religious socialism, for Pieris, is “a non-Western, non-European way to socialism culturally based on the peasant communes” in which the means of production are owned by a whole community and the fruits of labor are distributed among its members equitably. It then seems to me that Pieris is different from Gutierrez in that he is opposed to an industrial type of socialism. (See particularly Pieris, “Monastic Poverty in the Asian Context,” in *Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism* [New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1988].)

⁶⁰ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 54-57.

Latin American liberation theologians' option for socialism, however, frustrates many, in that they have not developed or articulated what they mean by socialism in concrete, except the single definition of socialism as the elimination of private ownership of the means of production, which can mean anything.⁶¹ In his oft-quoted article, "Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux," Segundo argues that the reason he does not give a more detailed account of the socialist model is that "we cannot foresee or control the universe of the future."⁶² This self-defense is poor at best, evasive at worst. Accordingly, we hear loud criticism from the left and the right alike: Dorrien's critique is that because of liberation theologians' lack of a positive theoretical orientation toward socialism, their socialist alternative "isn't very concrete," is "vague," "cursory at best," and thus identifiable with "bureaucratic authoritarianism," "state collectivism," or the "road to collective slavery";⁶³ Max L. Stackhouse complains that liberationists seldom inquire about what constructive patterns of political and economic life are required to structure complex modern societies;⁶⁴ Novak argues that because of liberation theologians' tendency "to *define* socialism so as to include within the concept their highest ideals, and to *define* capitalism as the absence of all such ideals," their definition

⁶¹ As Dorrien points out, such a definition of socialism ignores the most basic distinctions between large and small enterprises, as well as the differences among the various forms of economic socialization. (See Dorrien, *Constructing a Common Good*, pp. 110-113.)

⁶² His argument is that *therefore* "Today the only thing we can do is to decide whether we are going to leave to individuals and private groups, or take away from them, the right to possess the means of production which exist in our countries." (See *Concilium* [1974], p. 115.)

⁶³ The point of Dorrien's critique, addressed particularly to Gutierrez and Miguez Bonino, is that to insist on the necessity of a socialist alternative without providing a basic explanation of the term is a serious failing. For Dorrien, the missing alternative in Gutierrez's and Segundo's discussions of socialism is modern democratic socialism which advocates decentralized forms of socialization and mixed economic ownership while accepting the necessity of the market system. (See Dorrien, *Constructing the Common Good*, pp. 122-126, 141-147, 157-159.)

⁶⁴ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modern Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), p. 23.

of socialism is “a form of definitional imperialism”;⁶⁵ and Moltmann, in a harsher voice than the others, questions whether there has ever been a peculiarly Latin-American way to socialism or whether Latin American theologians have confused the *necessity* of a socialist revolution with the *possibility* of it.⁶⁶ Having heard all of these critiques, we cannot but agree with Comblin that socialism for liberation theologians was “a utopia with no concrete content.”⁶⁷ In this regard, other liberation theologians concur that, by socialism, they mean neither an economic strategy nor a concrete social program: For Boff, the idea of socialism does not mean a specific concrete program but “a specific attitude”;⁶⁸ for Segundo, it does not mean “a complete, long-term social project, endowed with a particular ideology of philosophy” but “a political regime... whose concern is the common good”;⁶⁹ and for Miguez Bonino, socialism is part of the grand “historical

⁶⁵ Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, 172.

⁶⁶ In fact, Moltmann is very wary of the Latin Americans' revolutionary enthusiasm. Since he strongly believes that the subject of revolutionary liberation is not the intellectuals or students but the oppressed people themselves who have quite a realistic view of liberation, he views liberation theologians' revolutionary temperament as one which sets out “to travel alone into the paradise of the future.” Like Dorrien, Moltmann strongly defends his own version of democratic socialism, one that emphasizes political freedom and democracy. (See his “An Open Letter to Jose Miguez Bonino,” pp. 199-202.) For Gutierrez, however, liberation theology cannot cherish the political tradition of liberalism, because this tradition has promoted the predatory system of capitalism for the past two centuries in the name of freedom. Gutierrez is deeply skeptical of “the sacred principles of bourgeois democracy” and wary of “bourgeois society's lies.” The question of democracy, for Gutierrez, is far more ambiguous from the perspective of the oppressed, because “democratic” rhetoric has often been a smokescreen for economic exploitation and even military intervention, and because, more fundamentally, bourgeois civilization was built on and continues to be sustained by the exploitation of dependent countries. Therefore, what is needed for the poor is nothing less than a complete break from the reformist palliatives of bourgeois politics. (Dorrien, *Reconstructing the Common Good*, pp. 108-9)

⁶⁷ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, pp. 99, 112-113, 207.

⁶⁸ Boff, “Salvation and Liberation,” in *Concilium* (1974), pp. 88-90. For Boff, “Christian faith does not prescribe a specific concrete programme but demands a specific attitude which must be present in any practical action or any position taken... The gospel encourages us to use the creative imagination to elaborate ideologies, both on the basis not of a total *a priori* scheme, but of an analysis the present situation and in the service of a liberating project.”

⁶⁹ Segundo, “Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux,” in *Concilium* (1974), p. 115.

project” through which a “new man” can emerge by the creation of a humanized and participatory society in solidarity.⁷⁰

Certainly, liberation theologians’ lack of a positive theoretical orientation toward socialism was partly a result of the very methodology of liberation theology itself, which is exemplified by Gutierrez who regards the basic task of theology as a way to reflect on the meaning of the historical praxis of liberating commitment in light of faith, not to offer a theory of socialism.⁷¹ In my final assessment, however, socialism in Latin American liberation theology should be viewed fundamentally as rhetoric for a Christian utopianism which, according to Rubem A. Alves, is characterized *not* by “a belief in the possibility of a perfect society” but by “the belief in the nonnecessity of *this* imperfect order.”⁷² For Miguez Bonino, in his later work, socialism is part of his overall Christian utopian vision of society.⁷³ Indeed, socialism for Latin American liberation theologians meant, basically, “something new, something that fits Latin America”⁷⁴ which can represent their ideal, dream, and aspiration. It is, in other words, a rhetoric of resistance, a rhetoric of utopia in the sense of the negation of the status quo, i.e., the regime of capitalist developmentalism that produces and maintains Latin American

⁷⁰ Miguez Bonino, “Love and Social Transformation in Liberation Theology,” in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, p. 124. In concrete, the “historical project” is characterized by a breaking away from domination from the North (though not necessarily an isolation from it); a parallel revolution (transforming the social structure of Latin American societies); the creation of a strong centralized state and nationalizations; the participation by the masses; the forging of a truly authentic “Latin American socialism” (not one based on Marxist dogmas or existing models); and a process that would lead to the emergence of a new humanity. (See Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. 35-40)

⁷¹ Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, p. 101.

⁷² Rubem A. Alves, “Christian Realism: Ideology of the Establishment,” in *Christianity and Crisis*, Sept. 17, 1993, p. 175.

⁷³ Compared to his earlier version of the “historical project” (see note 70), Miguez Bonino’s Christian utopian vision of society is much mitigated: He now envisions a society which is “Socialist in the organization of its economy, democratic in terms of the political participation of the people, and open in the sense of ensuring the conditions for personal realization, cultural freedom and opportunity, and mechanisms of self-correction.” (See Miguez Bonino, *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*, 77)

⁷⁴ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, p. 147.

underdevelopment. As such, it is defined not by what it is for but by what it is against, not by the blue print for the future, but by a firm and big “No” to the present. Probably, this is why, as we will see, socialism as an antithesis still remains strong in liberation theology even after the collapse of socialist economies in Eastern Europe. The following words of Boff, in my view, best capture what the Latin American political option for socialism was all about:

Liberation theology has been concerned with socialism only as a form of mediation to advance the cause of the poor, as a historical alternative to the capitalism... And socialism was never been put forward as a model to be followed... Socialism was seen purely as an historical reference point that could not be ignored. The real roots of liberation theology lie elsewhere.⁷⁵

That “elsewhere,” I believe, is what constitutes the “theology” in liberation theology, to which we now turn.

“Theology” in Liberation Theology

Today, many believe (or want to believe) that liberation theology is dead because socialism is dead. However, I agree with Boff that liberation theology lives by its original insight, i.e., “the discovery of the intimate relationship between the God of life, the poor, and liberation.”⁷⁶ As we have seen, Marx was neither the father nor the godfather of liberation theology;⁷⁷ and as we will see, the heart of liberation theology is the option for the poor. As I will eventually argue, *this* theology of liberation is now more urgent than

⁷⁵ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 96-98.

⁷⁶ Boff, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁷⁷ See Boff, *Ibid.*, pp. 96f., 98, 120.

ever, as the so-called “triumphant capitalism” aggravates poverty, oppression, and suffering around the globe.

There are many distinctive characteristics that separate liberation theology from traditional theologies.⁷⁸ For the purpose of this research, however, we can isolate three distinctive characteristics of liberation theology. First, as Gutierrez ascertains, liberation theology introduced not so much a new theme but a *new way* to do theology.⁷⁹ Like any other theologies, liberation theology talks about all the topics of theology (e.g., God, Trinity, Christ, the Spirit, grace, sin, and the church, etc.), but the radical originality of liberation theology is its methodology in that it talks about all these topics from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed.⁸⁰ Indeed, the most original and truly creative insight of liberation theology, as Gutierrez stresses incessantly, is to see the world from “the underside of history,” from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed, “the losers in history.”⁸¹ This theological methodology of the option for the poor is the key to liberation theology, which even foes of liberation theology cannot oppose ipso facto.⁸² Indeed, to pretend to discuss liberation theology without seeing the poor is to miss the whole point.⁸³

⁷⁸ Robert McAfee Brown identifies six overlapping emphases of liberation theology: (1) a different starting point: the poor; (2) a different interlocutor: the nonperson; (3) a different set of tools: the social science; (4) a different analysis: the reality of conflict; (5) a different mode of engagement: praxis; and (6) a different theology: the second “act.” (See Brown, *Theology in a New Key*, 60-74.)

⁷⁹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 15.

⁸⁰ Boff, “The Originality of the Theology of Liberation,” in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, pp. 41-43.

⁸¹ Quoted from Hennelly, *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, p. xvi.

⁸² As we will see in next chapter, Novak admits that the “option for the poor” is the correct option, although he argues that the real option for the poor is to improve the lot of the poor by means of superb wealth production under the institution of democratic capitalism. (Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, 164, 192.) Max L. Stackhouse also admits that liberationism is based on a profound and valid insight that the only God worth worshipping is biased in favor of the oppressed, although he quickly adds that this valid insight needs to be placed in “a more sustainable and less ideological context.” (Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 21, 24)

⁸³ Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 9.

Secondly, liberation theology has “a strong biblical coloring.”⁸⁴ People used to lose sight of this, but as we will see in the following chapters, compared to liberation theology, neoconservative and ecological theologies are much less biblical in their theological reflections.⁸⁵ Liberation theology is an effort to find a way of talking about God amid suffering and oppression, i.e., a way of “thinking the faith in the face of oppression”;⁸⁶ in other words, liberation theology seeks to see the process of oppression and liberation in light of the faith “concretely found in holy scripture.”⁸⁷ Notice that here “the light of faith” and “the light of the word of God” are the same thing.⁸⁸ Indeed, the answer to Gutierrez’s question, “How is it possible to tell the poor, who are forced to live in conditions that embody a denial of love, that God loves them?,” is possible only from “a fundamental datum of Christian faith”⁸⁹ that God has been revealed in the Bible as the God of the poor. As Gutierrez says, “The God whom we know *in the Bible* is a liberating God... a God who intervenes in history in order to break down the structures of injustice.”⁹⁰ Some Westerners may take this biblical God of the poor and oppressed for granted; but, let me emphasize, from my Asian religious experiences, that one cannot find in any other religion, teachings that parallel the perspective of the Lukan beatitudes, for

⁸⁴ Boff, “The Originality of the Theology of Liberation,” in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, pp. 41-43.

⁸⁵ Neoconservative theologians are actually critical to liberation theologians’ use of the Bible. Stackhouse, for instance, insists that liberationists selectively use Scripture in a proof-texting way, that they select the Exodus as the paradigm of the Bible to govern interpretation but ignore the biblical witness about the economic failures in Israel. (See Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 22.)

⁸⁶ Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 3.

⁸⁷ Clodovis Boff, “Methodology of the Theology of Liberation,” in *Systematic Theology*, p. 15.

⁸⁸ Clodovis Boff. *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Victorio Araya, *God of the Poor: The Mystery of God in Latin American Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1987), p. 130.

⁹⁰ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 116. Emphasis added. As Robert McAfee Brown also shows, the God in liberation theology is the God who takes sides (Exodus 1:8-14; 2:23-25; 3:7-10ff.); to know this God is to do justice (Jeremiah 22:13-16); and this God brings liberty to the oppressed. (See Brown, *Theology in a New Key*, pp. 88-97.)

example, that God has a special concern for the poor simply because they are poor.⁹¹ As Aloysius Pieris affirms, the biblical revelation, which has no explicit doctrinal parallel in other religions and thus connotes a Christian specificity, is “the irrevocable covenant between God and the poor.”⁹² Indeed, literally hundreds of verses in the scriptures talk about God as “the God of the poor”; about the duty of all people to have a special concern for widows and orphans; about the warnings of the prophets to the rich who misuse their wealth; and about the duty of all people toward the economically deprived.⁹³ It would be a great mystery if serious Bible readers failed to catch this basic biblical thrust. Presumably, if there is one reason why Novak avoids any serious engagement with the Bible, it could be that he knows that the Bible is his losing ground.⁹⁴ The second most important characteristic and specific contribution of liberation theology is that it rediscovered and recovered the perennial Christian themes of God’s salvific activity in

⁹¹ One good example is Buddhism. We must remember that the fundamental problem of existence for the young Prince Siddhartha was, and as for the later Buddhist tradition is, “the unnecessary suffering caused by ignorance and illusion.” It is not about the innocent suffering caused by exploitation, manipulation, or oppression. Thus, it is not surprising to hear from Thich Nhat Hanh, the originator of “engaged Buddhism,” that we should not take sides, for it is epistemologically impossible in a world of dependent co-arising. (See Leo D. Lefebure. *The Buddha and the Christ: Explorations in Buddhist and Christian Dialogue* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993], pp. 35, 187.) This sharply contrasts with Gutierrez who says: “Neutrality is impossible. It is not a question of admitting or denying a fact which confronts us: rather it is a question of which side we are on.” (Quoted from James H. Cone, “Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?” in *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1999], p. 145.)

⁹² Pieris, “Monastic Poverty in the Asian Context,” in *Love Meets Wisdom*, p. 90. He argues that there are “two radical convictions derived from [biblical] revelation: (1) The irreconcilable antinomy between *God and mammon*; and (2) the irrevocable covenant between *God and the poor*.” The former finds a corresponding doctrine in non-Christian religions.

⁹³ See Brown, *Liberation Theology*, 33.

⁹⁴ As we will see in next chapter, Novak persistently shuns engaging with the Bible. His excuse is that “To move from the myth of Exodus to Marxist theories of exploitation and liberation... is mere [biblical] fundamentalism” (Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* [New York: A Touchstone Book, 1992], p. 21); that “God exists outside the Bible” as “general revelation” (Michael Novak and Jana Novak, *Tell Me Why: A Father Answers His Daughter’s Questions About God* [New York: Pocket Book, 1998], p. 65); and that since “the texts of the Bible have powerful meaning under any and every system of political economy,” “no one can deduce a system of political economy from the texts of the Bible alone.” (Novak, “Political Economy in Our Time,” in *Three In One: Essays on Democratic Capitalism, 1976-2000—Michael Novak* [New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001], p. 182)

history as recorded in the *biblia pauperum* (the Bible of the poor),⁹⁵ which have “often been hidden by the ideologies of Christendom.”⁹⁶ The option for the poor is not a new theory introduced by radical economists but the clear thrust of the biblical message.

Thirdly, liberation theology is characterized by its theistic hermeneutics of history inherited from Judeo-Christian tradition, understood as exclusive from cosmic/nature or mystic religions.⁹⁷ The God of the poor in liberation theology is also the God of history; history is understood as the locus of and the road to God. This history-centric hermeneutics, in which the realm of creation/nature is excluded or neglected, is in fact a point of convergence between liberation theology and neoconservative theology (although they sharply differ from each other in the desired form of historical transformation),⁹⁸ while it is the point of fundamental disagreement with ecological theologies. What demands our special attention here is that liberation theologians perceived the process of human liberation not as simply accidental but somehow *inevitable*, from a certain perspective of history, and this notion is held in addition to the

⁹⁵ As Jan Lochman points out, “There are, in fact, different Bibles. There is the *biblia pauperum* (the Bible of the poor), the revolutionary book, but so also there is the Bible of the lords and priests... these different Bibles are interwoven with each other.” (See Brown, *Theology in a New Key*, p. 97).

⁹⁶ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, p. 57.

⁹⁷ According to Xabier Pikaza there are three types of religions: (1) Historico-prophetic religions which are based on the conviction that history is the mediation of God’s revelation. (Judeo-Christian religion is such a religion); (2) Cosmic or nature religions which interpret the world as the locus of the divine. (Since they discover the presence of mystery through the cosmic order, history here is dissolved in the rhythm of the eternal return of things); and (3) Mystic religions or religions of interiority which interpret the interior life as locus of the divine. (They seek Mystery in a process of purification, depth, and interior equilibrium.) (See Victorio Araya, *God of the Poor*, pp. 40–42, 45.) Araya contends that the religion of Israel is supported by two pillars: First, there is a *transcending break with the cosmic sacrality and piety* proper to the “epiphany religion” of the fertility cults of Canaan, which interpret God as the numinous backdrop of the cosmos, sacralizing the vital order and divinizing the whole of nature. In this break, God is not something “here”; God is independent of the rhythm of nature. The cosmos is de-divinized and appears as the creation of a transcendent God. The earth is to be dominated and transformed, not adored; Second, there is a *theistic hermeneutics of history*—that is, the conviction that history is *theo-phanic*. (Araya, *Ibid.*)

⁹⁸ As we will see in Novak, Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly Judaism, plays a significant role in his “theology of economics,” for he sees that Judaism, through its introduction of the God of history, “shattered [the] cyclical view of time” and thus “gave history and human destiny a point... a conception of progress.” (Novak, “What the World Owes Judaism,” in *Morals and Markets*, ed., Jonathan Sacks, *Morals and Markets* [London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1990], p. 44.)

theistic hermeneutics of history inherited from Judeo-Christian tradition. "Liberation" for liberation theologians always meant something more than socio-economic and political liberation.⁹⁹ "The liberation of our continent," says Gutierrez, "means more than overcoming economic, social, and political dependence. It means, in a deeper sense, to see the becoming of humankind as a process of human emancipation in history."¹⁰⁰ What does he mean by "the becoming of humankind as a process of human emancipation in history"? For Gutierrez, what is actually at stake, not only in the South, in the East, and on the periphery but also in the North, in the West, and in the center, is "the possibility of enjoying a truly human existence, a free life, a dynamic liberty which is related to *history as a conquest*"; therefore, "To conceive of history as a process of human liberation is to consider freedom as a historical conquest" which is characterized by its "dynamic and historical conception of the human person" as "the agent of his or her own destiny and the one responsible for his or her own development in history."¹⁰¹

This particular notion of history, which emphasizes human creativity toward the future, is nothing but the nineteenth-century philosophy of history developed, according to Gutierrez, in the lineage of Descartes, Kant, and Hegel.¹⁰² Hegel wrote in his

⁹⁹ According to Boff, "Liberation is not just one item on the theologians' list. It is a horizon against which everything is illuminated, a plane in which everything has a position and acquires new meaning. In other words, liberation is not just an entry in an encyclopedia alongside other entries. It is a perspective from which all the other terms are understood, analyzed, and explained." (Boff, "Originality of the Theology of Liberation," in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, p. 38.)

¹⁰⁰ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 17-19, 21-22, 24-25, 56. In this sense, for Gutierrez, the theology of liberation means to see the meaning of human "self-liberation" from the perspective of Christian faith. Since, liberation meant for him "more than overcoming economic, social, and political dependence" but "becoming of humankind as a process of human emancipation in history," and since theology meant "knowing the meaning of [this] human liberation in the perspective of faith," his theology of liberation, put them together, meant to reflect the meaning of the process of human emancipation in history in the perspective of faith.

¹⁰¹ Gutierrez. *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

¹⁰² This view of history, according to Gutierrez, was later taken up by Marx within an economic framework and by Teilhard de Chardin within an evolutionary social philosophy. (Gutierrez, "Toward a Theology of Liberation," in Hennelly, ed., *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, pp. 67-69.) The human being

Philosophy of History (1837): “The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom,” and freedom is “the nature of Spirit, and the absolute goal of history.”¹⁰³ Indeed, no one tried more self-consciously to offer a comprehensive interpretation of historical change than did Hegel. For Hegel, “the Nature of God’s Will” itself is “the Idea of Freedom”; this Freedom involves the spontaneous flow of “Spirit” in history, that is, “Spirit” (*Geist*) enters into material reality and re-creates reality in a dynamic process constantly forming and breaking conventions, and this process of concrete embodiment of the “Spirit” is the clue to all historical development.¹⁰⁴ Referring to this view of history, Gutierrez speaks of history as “the process of human liberation,” “the progression of the awareness of freedom,” and the “conquest of freedom,” i.e., “the conquest of new, which is qualitatively different ways of being a human person.”¹⁰⁵ This is why Gutierrez says that the goal of history is not only “better living conditions, a radical change of structures, a social revolution” but more “the continuous creation... of a new way to be human, a *permanent cultural revolution*” and “the building up of a *new humanity*.”¹⁰⁶ Miguez Bonino asserts the same: “Liberation is the process through which and in which a ‘new man’ must emerge, a man shaped by solidarity and creativity over against the individualistic, distorted humanity of the present system.”¹⁰⁷ To a great extent,

in this nineteenth-century philosophy is understood as “oriented definitely and creatively toward the future, acting in the present for the sake of tomorrow.” As we will see, this is exactly the view of Michael Novak.

¹⁰³ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 225.

¹⁰⁴ Hegel, *Ibid.*, 231.

¹⁰⁵ The final quotation is actually the view of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. For Chardin: “History, contrary to essentialist and static thinking, is not the development of potentialities preexistent in human nature; it is rather [as quoted] the conquest of new, which is qualitatively different ways of being a human person.” (See Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 17-19, 21-22, 24-25, 56.)

¹⁰⁶ Gutierrez, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, p. 40. This idea of *hombre Nuevo* (new man) is actually what the government of Cuba has tried since the revolution in 1965. According to Louis A. Perez, Jr.: “Mobilization strategies after 1965 were based on appeals to selflessness and sacrifice. Cubans were exhorted to subscribe to a new code, nothing less than a new morality. Emphasis was given to *conciencia*, the creation of a new consciousness that would lead to a new revolutionary ethic. The goal was

then, humanity creates history by “self-liberation” for Gutierrez.¹⁰⁸ The notion of the poor as a collective and active subject or agent actually comes right from this idea of history.

Latin American liberation theology is epistemologically indebted to the nineteenth-century philosophy of history. In this way, Latin American liberation theology can be seen as a kind of dialectic between the Hegelian notion of history as “conquest of freedom,” which emphasizes the creativity of humanity as the subject of history, and the theistic hermeneutics of history inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition, which emphasizes history as the locus of and the road to God. And, as we will see in the next chapter, it is Dennis P. McCann’s central argument that there is, in this dialectic, “the existential problem of reconciling ‘a liberating God’ with the project of ‘man’s’ becoming the Subject of history.”¹⁰⁹ For liberation theologians, however, this dialectic became not the source of an existential question but of the *eschatological* question in terms of the relationship between history as “conquest of freedom” (earthly liberation) and God’s epiphany in history (heavenly salvation).

Now, because “It is not merely a matter of knowing the meaning of earthly action, but of knowing the meaning of human liberation in the perspective of faith,” and since

the making of a new man (*hombre nuevo*), motivated not by expectation of personal gain but by the prospects of collective advancement. The *hombre nuevo* was disciplined, highly motivated, and hard-working.” (See Louis A. Perez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform & Revolution* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1995], p. 340.)

¹⁰⁸ Gutierrez, “Toward a Theology of Liberation,” in Hennelly, ed., *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, pp. 67-69.

¹⁰⁹ As we will see, McCann asks if God is a liberating God who intervenes in history, and if liberation is a gift of God, in what sense liberation must be won in human struggle. For McCann, the tension between Gutierrez’s “epiphanic vision,” that makes God the primary agent or “subject” in human history, and Paulo Freire’s dialectical vision, that emphasizes human subjectivity in history through “conscientization,” is only ambiguous. If “history is one,” argues McCann, the former must be regarded only as myth or a symbol of human hope for liberation in the dialectical process of historical becoming, inspired by the philosophy of Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. McCann’s argument, however, depends on questionable interpretations that any theism that confesses God as really acting in history necessarily defines limits to human thinking and doing, and that liberation theology rests on Freire’s method which rules out any theistic reflection. (See McCann, *Christian Realism & Liberation Theology: Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001], pp. 184-185, 194, 197.)

“theology faces the signs of the times, which is human liberation, and scrutinizes it profoundly,” the central theological question of Gutierrez is finally posed: “What relationship exists between the kingdom of God and human emancipation?”¹¹⁰ Indeed, as Comblin recollects, the central question of liberation theology, since its earliest works, has become: “How to connect eternal salvation to temporal liberation, and salvation in heaven to liberation on earth?”¹¹¹ Liberation theologians found the connection in the perennial Christian doctrine of the “kingdom of God”; therefore, for Gutierrez, “The theology of liberation means establishing the relationship that exists between human emancipation... and the kingdom of God.”¹¹² As Jon Sobrino points out, the kingdom of God became not only “the central object” but also “the organizing principle” of the whole of liberation theology.¹¹³ Eschatology plays a central role in liberation theology; and this is what separates the theology of liberation theology most clearly from North American neoconservative theology’s strategic emphasis on incarnation (“grace is everywhere”) as a reaction to utopian impulses, and also from ecological theologies’ strong emphasis on the limits of human creativity and freedom within creation’s integrity. Thus, without understanding the eschatology (“kingdom”) in Latin American liberation theology, we will miss the heart of “theology” in the theology of liberation.

¹¹⁰ Gutierrez, “Toward a Theology of Liberation,” in Hennelly, ed., *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, pp. 67-69.

¹¹¹ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, 50.

¹¹² Gutierrez, “Toward a Theology of Liberation,” in Hennelly, ed., *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, pp. 67-69.

¹¹³ Jon Sobrino, “Central Position of the Reign of God in Liberation Theology,” in *Systematic Theology*, p. 72. Ignacio Ellacuria also assures: “The kingdom of God is what should be the unifying object of all Christian theology, moral teaching and pastoral practice.” (Quoted from Sobrino, “The Kingdom of God in Present-day Christologies,” in *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998], p. 105.)

Eschatology in Liberation Theology

There are five distinct affirmations in Latin American liberation theology's eschatology (the "kingdom"). First, liberation theologians emphasize the *historical* dimension of the "kingdom." That is, eschatology in Latin American liberation theology is characterized by its shift of focus from the other-worldly future to the down-to-earth historical transformation of the material conditions of life. "The Kingdom of God," says Boff, "is not the other world, but *this* world transformed and made new."¹¹⁴ This this-worldly eschatology does not negate the future but gives more weight to the present. Gutierrez opposes Albert Schweitzer's "consequent eschatology," for it *solely* refers to the end of history and does not provide "a sufficiently sound basis for an understanding of the attitude of Jesus regarding political life."¹¹⁵ Eschatology, for Gutierrez, must give "clear-sighted attention to the present and to the historical changes."¹¹⁶ This implies that the "kingdom," for Gutierrez, refers to an event that is already present but has not yet attained its full form; that is, it is not located at the chronological end of the historical process, but is "something that is 'kairologically' at hand and in process of being brought to completion."¹¹⁷ Sobrino emphasizes the futurity of the "kingdom"; and yet, he too combines a hope in the future with "faith here and now."¹¹⁸ In a word, "Liberation theology takes the essentially *historical* dimension of the Kingdom of God most seriously" and "it does not leave its appearance to the end of history (though its fullness will appear only at the end) but insists on its actual realization in the present of

¹¹⁴ Boff, "Salvation and Liberation," in *Concilium* (1974), pp. 80-82, 87.

¹¹⁵ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 133.

¹¹⁶ Gutierrez, *The God of Life* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998), p. 92.

¹¹⁷ Gutierrez, *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹⁸ Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1985), pp.121-122.

history.”¹¹⁹ Stackhouse wonders whether “all that has come and is coming out of modern revolutionary movements is ‘the Kingdom,’” and “God’s Kingdom is to be fulfilled entirely on earth or in history.”¹²⁰

Secondly, liberation theology emphasizes that the “kingdom” uniquely belongs to the poor. There are, in fact, many striking resemblances between the eschatology operative in liberation theology and that of Walter Rauschenbusch’s Social Gospel;¹²¹ however, what separates the former from the latter is that, whereas Rauschenbusch tried to combine the “kingdom” with “the modern comprehension of the organic development of human society,”¹²² liberation theologians tried to combine it with the reality of the poor.¹²³ Indeed, the fact that liberation theology takes most seriously the poor as the addressees of the “kingdom” is probably liberation theology’s most distinctive contribution to the doctrine of “kingdom.” Sobrino states very clearly: “The Reign of God is the Reign of the poor”; it is “a strictly partial kingdom and one whose minimum, but basic, content is the life and dignity of the poor.”¹²⁴

Thirdly, liberation theologians’ understanding of the “kingdom” is quite “realistic” in the sense that they are fully aware of the reality of “anti-kingdom” and of “sin.” Like Rauschenbusch, for whom the social reality of the “kingdom of evil” was a profound truth, Sobrino emphasizes that the “kingdom” will not arrive “from a *tabula*

¹¹⁹ Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, pp. 99, 129.

¹²⁰ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, 24.

¹²¹ For a quick review of Rauschenbusch’s understanding of the “kingdom,” see *A Rauschenbusch Reader: The Kingdom of God and the Social Gospel*, compiled by Benson Y. Landis (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957).

¹²² Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, in *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²³ C.S. Song emphasizes the same assertion. For Song also, the poor are the addressees of the “kingdom,” Still, Song goes one step further: Unlike Latin American liberation theologians, who deny the identification of the historical, temporal progress with the “kingdom,” Song radically identifies the poor with the “kingdom” itself. (See Song, *Jesus & the Reign of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993], *passim*.)

¹²⁴ Sobrino, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 62, 67, 79-80, 82.

rasa, but from and against the anti-Kingdom that is formally and actively opposed to it.”¹²⁵ Thus, the “kingdom,” for Sobrino, is “a dialectical and conflictual reality, excluding and opposing the anti-Kingdom,” standing in “combative relation to the anti-Kingdom.”¹²⁶ And, since it is never realized in all its fullness, and even its partial realizations are provisional, “Christians must build it again and again,” and it is precisely in this unending construction of the reign of God that Christians encounter the profound meaning of their lives.¹²⁷ For Sobrino, the “kingdom,” which cannot ever be fully realized in history,¹²⁸ could even be receding, as poverty and injustice increase in our world;¹²⁹ and “the reality of the poor makes it abundantly clear that current history is not the Reign of God.”¹³⁰ In the same vein, Gutierrez also states that the growth of the “kingdom” is not reducible to temporal progress, for the fundamental obstacle to the Kingdom, which is “sin,” remains.¹³¹ Therefore, “There is close relationship but no identification”;¹³² there is close relationship between temporal progress and the growth of the kingdom, yet, these two processes are distinct, and the growth of the kingdom goes beyond temporal progress.¹³³ The completion of it will come “beyond history,”¹³⁴ and the faith does not permit “a reduction of the kingdom to any historical embodiment.”¹³⁵

Fourth, therefore, liberation theologians understood the “kingdom” as fundamentally “a gift of God.” For Sobrino, the “kingdom” is “purely God’s initiative,

¹²⁵ Sobrino, “Jesus and the Kingdom of God,” p. 72.

¹²⁶ Sobrino, *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 126.

¹²⁷ Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, p. 131. This view seems consistent with that of Rauschenbusch who said that even though there is at best always but an approximation to a perfect social order, every approximation is worthwhile. (See *A Rauschenbusch Reader*, p. 28.)

¹²⁸ Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, pp. 99, 129.

¹²⁹ Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, p. 125.

¹³⁰ Sobrino, “Central Position of the Reign of God in Liberation Theology,” in *Systematic Theology*, p. 68.

¹³¹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 103.

¹³² Gutierrez, *The God of Life*, p. 99.

¹³³ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 99.

¹³⁴ Gutierrez, *The God of Life*, p. 107.

¹³⁵ Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991), p. 146.

gift and grace.”¹³⁶ For Gutierrez, the process of liberation will not have conquered the very roots of human oppression and exploitation without the coming of the Kingdom, which is above all a “gift.”¹³⁷ The proclamation of the kingdom is, therefore, “a revelation about God,” it is a message about “God’s free and unmerited love,” which does not depend on “the moral and religious dispositions of its addressees.”¹³⁸ Gutierrez particularly emphasizes God’s initiative: Since God comes forth in search of the human being, “the initiative belongs to God” and God is not reducible to human history but is revealed in it.¹³⁹ So far, there is nothing too controversial. Indeed, if liberation theologians stopped here, merely acknowledging the “kingdom” as God’s gift and initiative, there would have been no severe dispute with German political theologians.

Nonetheless, fifth and finally, liberation theologians *also* emphasized the human *causality* in the growth and realization of the “kingdom.” For Sobrino, the “kingdom” is a utopia but it requires us to make it present through historical mediations and to bring it about at all levels of historical reality; that is, “utopia becomes a source of ideologies functioning to configure history.”¹⁴⁰ For Gutierrez as well, the “kingdom” is surely a utopia, but it has already begun to become a reality, though not yet attained its full form.¹⁴¹ Therefore, without liberating historical events, there would be no “growth of the Kingdom”; hence, “the historical, political liberating event *is* the growth of the Kingdom

¹³⁶ Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, p. 7.

¹³⁷ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 104.

¹³⁸ Gutierrez, *The God of Life*, p. 115.

¹³⁹ Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 144. Rauschenbusch also affirms that the “kingdom” is “miraculous all the way, and is the continuous revelation of the power, the righteousness, and the love of God.” (Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 117.)

¹⁴⁰ Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, pp. 99, 129.

¹⁴¹ Gutierrez, *The God of Life*, p. 107.

and *is* a salvific event,” which proclaims its fullness, though “it is not *the* coming of the Kingdom, not *all* of salvation.”¹⁴² In short:

The kingdom is a gift but also a demand. It is a freely given gift of God and it calls for conformity to God’s will to life. This is what is asked of disciples, that they live a life situated between gratuitousness and demand... we cause the kingdom to come; we cause the *Kairos* to arrive, not as something fated but as the result of the free acceptance of God’s gift.¹⁴³

I think that this is the answer to McCann’s question: “If liberation is ‘a gift of God,’ in what sense must it be won in a struggle?”¹⁴⁴ By situating human life between gratuitousness and demand, by affirming the human causality of the “kingdom” by our free acceptance of God’s gift, Gutierrez, in my view, is actually reiterating the classic Pauline view of salvation articulated in Romans 3 in which we “are now justified by [God’s] grace as a gift” and do not “overthrow the law [but] uphold the law” (vv. 24, 31). Interestingly, however, the real battle around this issue of human causality vs. God’s free initiative in terms of the “kingdom” did not take place with Christian realists but with German political theologians who saw themselves as the “kindred to Latin American liberation theology,”¹⁴⁵ particularly Moltmann who was recognized by Miguez Bonino as “the theologian to whom liberation theology is most indebted and with whom it has the closest affinity.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 104.

¹⁴³ Gutierrez, *The God of Life*, p. 118. Here again, we see a striking resemblance with Rauschenbusch who assured that the “kingdom” is for each of us “the supreme task” as well as “the supreme gift of God,” and “By accepting it as a task, we experience it as a gift.” (See Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 117.)

¹⁴⁴ McCann, *Christian Realism & Liberation Theology*, pp. 157, 194.

¹⁴⁵ Moltmann, “Political Theology and Theology of Liberation,” in *Liberating the Future*, p. 60.

¹⁴⁶ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, p. 144.

The battle between liberation theologians and political theologians can be summarized as the dispute regarding the “relation between God’s eschatological order and man’s political action in history.”¹⁴⁷ On the part of liberation theologians, the problem with German political theology is that it rejects *every* idea of the causality of the eschatological order, and, consequently, that its supposed neutrality, on the pretext of affirming the relativity of all political order, only offers an ideological justification of the established system of the capitalist West.¹⁴⁸ Thus, for Segundo, political theology is “revolutionary only in name,” for, in the context of the coexistence of two regimes of capitalist and socialist order, its “eschatological” criticisms of *all* kinds of absolutism only converge towards “a common relativization.”¹⁴⁹ For Segundo, however, the eschatological aspect of all Christian theology, far from relativizing the present, binds it to the absolute, and a liberating event, no matter how ambiguous and provisional, has “a genuine causal character with respect to the definitive Kingdom of God,” although this causality is “partial, fragile, often erroneous and having to be remade.”¹⁵⁰

This theological dispute was not generated for “pure” theological reasons; it was derived from the political economic issues regarding the Latin American option for socialism and its use of Marxist analysis. For Moltmann, in order to avoid sacralizing a particular ideology or power structure, it is important to refuse to “materialize” God’s presence in history and keep “critical freedom” in theology.¹⁵¹ For Miguez Bonino, however, this conception of critical freedom, which is allegedly “above right and left,

¹⁴⁷ Miguez Bonino, *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁴⁸ Cluade Geffre, “Editorial: A Prophetic Theology,” in *Concilium* (1974), p. 9f.

¹⁴⁹ Segundo, “Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113, 117.

¹⁵⁰ Segundo. *Ibid.*, 121-123.

¹⁵¹ Moltmann, “An Open Letter to Jose Miguez Bonino,” in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, pp. 197-200.

ideologically neutral,” only meant opting for *another* particular ideology, which is liberalism or one form of the liberal social-democratic project.¹⁵² He acknowledges that Moltmann and other Europeans could be totally justified in this choice; however, his argument is that “it should not be camouflaged as ‘the critical freedom of the gospel.’”¹⁵³ For Miguez Bonino, “There is no *divine* politics of economics. But this means that we must resolutely use the best *human* politics and economics at our disposal”¹⁵⁴—the best of which, of course, is Marxist analysis. Therefore, Moltmann’s “promise” of hope only looked “too vague, a tantalizing mirage unable to inspire concrete historical action,” unable to give concrete content to the identification with the oppressed.¹⁵⁵ Gutierrez also faults Moltmann for being caught in a “European liberal syndrome” which accepts the present socioeconomic order, engages in “reformism from within,” and seeks to move by gradualism to a more just social order, which is a luxury Latin Americans can no longer afford.¹⁵⁶

On the part of Moltmann, however, the Latin American effort to reflect on the praxis of liberation is only to “limp after reality.” Moltmann’s “theology of hope” was in fact developed in the context of the twentieth-century renaissance of eschatology in Christian theology, initiated and promoted by Schweitzer, Barth, and Bultmann in reaction to the effort to conform Christianity to modern trends and ideas.¹⁵⁷ Influenced by

¹⁵² Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. 144-150.

¹⁵³ Miguez Bonino, *Ibid.*.

¹⁵⁴ Miguez Bonino, *Ibid.*, pp. 146-148.

¹⁵⁵ Miguez Bonino, *Ibid.*, pp. 144-147. Miguez Bonino sees that Moltmann fails to grasp the basic challenge of Latin American theological thought and to remain, therefore, within the circle of European political theology. The point of critique is whether it is possible to claim a solidarity with the poor and not to choose one ideology if that ideology is chosen by the poor themselves.

¹⁵⁶ Gutierrez, *Teologia Desde el Reverso de la Historia*, 59, quoted from Robert McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key*, p. 130.

¹⁵⁷ To review, Schweitzer’s “thoroughgoing/consistent eschatology” first came as a shock to Protestant theology, which was intent on conforming Christianity to modern trends and ideas. Then, Karl Barth,

Paul Tillich, who criticized both “conservative ecclesiasticism” and “revolutionary utopianism” as idolatry,¹⁵⁸ Moltmann criticizes both the “conservative syndrome” and “progressive syndrome” of modern eschatological paradigms, and assures instead the “God of hope” as the power of the future, as a “new paradigm of transcendence,” *qualitatively* different from the progress of the world developing out of the present.¹⁵⁹ The key to Moltmann’s theology of hope is that “The future must be redeemed from the power of history.”¹⁶⁰ This means that “the Christian ethic of lived hope must first of all ‘free’ God’s future from these modern syndromes” so that “history is once more thrown open and the Christian ethic of hope is again made possible.”¹⁶¹ Therefore, the subject of Moltmann’s eschatology is not chronological “future time,” in which the future

building on Schweitzer’s eschatological reading of the New Testament, inaugurated the eschatological renaissance in Christian theology with his striking claim that “Christianity that is not entirely and altogether eschatology has entirely and altogether nothing to do with Christ.” In his “theology of crisis,” Barth’s eschatology became a doctrine revealing the unbridgeable gap between human history here and now and the totally other world of God in heaven and eternity. Then Bultmann, appropriating the existentialist categories of Martin Heidegger, affirmed an essentially eschatological New Testament Christianity, contending that “Jesus Christ is the eschatological event” which is “not to be understood as a dramatic cosmic catastrophe but as happening within history,” but “not as the kind of historical development which can be confirmed by any historian.” (See Carl E. Braaten, “The Kingdom of God and Life Everlasting,” in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, eds., Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994], pp. 329, 343, 344; Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, eds. *Readings in Christian Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985], pp. 338f.)

¹⁵⁸ Tillich interpreted the “kingdom” through his “philosophy of history,” through which he sees a permanent crisis going on and the *Kairos* (“the right time”) is always given. Since he sees history as a movement in which “the new is created, in which unique and unrepeatable events occur, yet which runs toward a future goal,” Tillich asked Christian faith to interpret the past and act in the present in light of the future goal toward which history runs. It is this philosophy of history, in which the “new being” is expected predominantly in a horizontal direction rather than a vertical one, that became a precedent for Moltmann and Pannenberg who have criticized an eschatology in which the horizon of the future is swallowed up by the eternal blitzing in the “from above.” (See Hodgson and King, *Readings in Christian Theology*, p. 345; Braaten, “The Kingdom of God and Life Everlasting,” pp. 345-6.)

¹⁵⁹ Moltmann’s strong futuristic orientation, which emphasizes the “inexhaustible added value” of the future, derives from his own critique of the trend of Protestant theology that has become customary to interpret the “kingdom” solely as the present rule of God, which can be all too easily reduced to moralistic terms. What Moltmann specifically critiques is “two modern eschatological paradigms of religious and secular millenarianism”: The first is “religious millenarianism,” or “conservative syndrome,” identical with the religious apocalyptic of the impending and menacing end of the world; the second one is “secular millenarianism,” or “progressive syndrome,” which expects the impending dawn of a golden age. (See Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], p. 98; Moltmann, “Liberating and Anticipating the Future,” in *Liberating Eschatology*, pp. 190-196.)

¹⁶⁰ Moltmann, “Liberating and Anticipating the Future,” in *Liberating Eschatology*, p. 190.

¹⁶¹ Moltmann. *Ibid.*

“develops,” but “God’s future” in which God’s Advent is “expected” (thus “anticipation”).¹⁶² “God is on the move and coming towards the world”; therefore, only by virtue of the hope (anticipation) for this coming of God on our part, does the expected future (the establishment of God’s eternal kingdom in history) acquire “an inexhaustible added value over and against present and past.”¹⁶³ Central to Moltmann’s theology of hope is the affirmation that only a redeeming and fulfilling future can give consolation and meaning to suffering and acting in history, and that it is only this kind of future that can be “the new paradigm of transcendence.”¹⁶⁴

On the part of liberation theologians, however, hope is not coming from the future but pregnant in the present. Outside Latin America, C.S. Song and Rosemary R. Ruether share this stance.¹⁶⁵ For Boff, the Kingdom is therefore “the presence of the future within the present.”¹⁶⁶ For Segundo, since Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven has already arrived and is in your midst, and since Jesus’ theology discounts totally any

¹⁶² Moltmann, *Ibid.*, p. 189.

¹⁶³ See Moltmann, *Ibid.*, p. 189; Hodgson and King, *Readings in Christian Theology*, pp. 349-350; and Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, pp. x-xi, 22-24, 27-29, 276.

¹⁶⁴ Moltmann, *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁶⁵ For Song, “The future has to be the growth out of the present, fulfilling it, changing it, and carrying it forward. The future is not the negation of the present but the fulfillment of it and then the transformation of it. The future is the fulfilled and transformed present. It is only in this way that we perceive the vital connection between the coming of God’s reign and the doing of God’s will on earth.” (Song, *Jesus & the Reign of God*, p. 157.) Rosemary R. Ruether shares the same stance: Admitting that the idea of eschatology as a transcendent end point beyond history is a useful and important myth for keeping history itself open, Ruether however rejects the idea of *eschaton* itself, for it is fundamentally based on “a model of endless stretching forward into the future and on an understanding of God who exists only in the unrealized future.” For Ruether, “to subject ourselves to the tyranny of impossible expectation of final perfection means to neglect to do what can and must be done for our time.” In fact, she is fundamentally critical of eschatological hope, for it has been related to an alienation from and disappointment with bodily life and tended to despise its processes of seasonal and generational renewal. For these reasons, for Ruether, Jesus’ vision of the “kingdom” has more to do with the Jubilee pattern than with the apocalyptic doctrine of the end point of history later incorporated into the Gospel; accordingly, she proposes a reverse model of historical hope, i.e., “conversion” to the “starting point” or the “roots in an ontology of creation and in God/ess as ground of creation.” (See Ruether, *Womanguides: Reading Toward a Feminist Theology* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1985], pp. 219-224; Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1983], pp. 238, 244-245, 253-256.)

¹⁶⁶ Boff, “Salvation and Liberation,” in *Concilium* (1974), pp. 80-82, 87.

theological criterion applied to history, which is not “the direct and present evaluation of the event” here and now, Moltmann’s denial of *human causality* in the partial construction of the “kingdom” on earth is problematic.¹⁶⁷ Even though “the causality is partial, fragile, often distorted and in need of reworking,” it is “a far cry from being nothing more than an anticipation, outline, or analogy of the kingdom,” argues Segundo.¹⁶⁸ Gutierrez accepts Moltmann’s critique that to reflect on the praxis of liberation could be to “limp after reality”; yet, the present in the praxis of liberation, in its deepest dimension, is “pregnant with the future,” therefore, hope must be “an inherent part of our present commitment in history.”¹⁶⁹ This, in fact, describes Gutierrez’s exact theological methodology which “does not initiate [the] future which exists in the present,” and “does not create the vital attitude of hope out of nothing,” but instead “interprets and explains these as the true underpinnings of history.”¹⁷⁰ Consequently, for Gutierrez, there is in Moltmann’s theology of hope the danger of docetism, since the “Promise” is not related to any specific situation and God here resembles the Aristotelian *primum movens* who is “pulling history to its future, but without being involved in history.”¹⁷¹ After all, for Gutierrez:

¹⁶⁷ Segundo, “Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 121.

¹⁶⁸ This oft-quoted interpretation of “Jesus’ theology” is actually Segundo’s response to the criticism of political theology that Latin Americans should put forward a project for a socialist society which will guarantee in advance that the evident defects of known socialist systems will be avoided. However, according to Segundo, “the theology of Jesus” refused to seek in history for “signs from heaven” but “signs of the times.” That is, to the eschatological question of the disciples of John the Baptist regarding “he who is to come,” Jesus only replied with signs that are historical, relative, and extremely ambiguous. This means that Jesus discounted totally any theological criterion applied to history, which is not the direct and present evaluation of the event. Thus, for Segundo, to require Latin Americans to put forward a project for a socialist society that can guarantee in advance that the evident defects of known socialist society systems could be avoided is just like to demand Jesus to guarantee to a sick person whom he has cured that cure will not be followed by even graver illnesses. (See Segundo. *Ibid.*)

¹⁶⁹ See Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 11-12, 124-135.

¹⁷⁰ See Gutierrez. *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Gutierrez. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Despite all his efforts, Moltmann has difficulty finding a vocabulary both sufficiently rooted in human concrete historical experience, in an oppressed and exploited present, and yet abounding in potentialities. The hope... must be rooted in the heart of historical praxis; if this hope does not take shape in the present to lead it forward, it will be only an evasion, a futuristic illusion. One must be extremely careful not to replace a Christianity of the Beyond with a Christianity of the Future; if the former tended to forget the world, the latter runs the risk of neglecting a miserable and unjust present and the struggle for liberation.¹⁷²

In my assessment, Gutierrez's criticism of Moltmann is persuasive and convincing. Indeed, I agree with Enrique Dussel that an historical liberation movement is "a true sign of eschatological advance," and that "without this concrete mediation Christian hope only reaffirms the *status quo* and constitutes a false dream."¹⁷³ Still, I do not agree with Gutierrez that Moltmann's theology is only a futuristic illusion that runs the risk of neglecting the miserable and unjust present. In its own right, political theology, as Moltmann defends it, is "a theology related to the expectations and experiences of praxis group and protest movements of the populace of European countries."¹⁷⁴ Both liberation theology and political theology are based on their own historical experiences and expectations; but what drove these two "natural allies" into a fierce dispute thirty years ago, in my assessment, was the difference in the nature and depth of their historical experiences. "In Latin America," Gutierrez perceives, "we are in the midst of a full-blown process of revolutionary ferment."¹⁷⁵ "Even a blind person," Miguez Bonino perceives, "can see that Latin America moves irreversibly toward some form of socialism," as the Cuban revolution marks "a sign that change is possible"; more importantly, underneath the "sadness in front of so much unnecessary suffering" and

¹⁷² Gutierrez. *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Dussel, "Domination-Liberation: A New Approach," in *Concilium* (1974), pp. 51-53, 56.

¹⁷⁴ Moltmann, "Political Theology and Theology of Liberation," p. 69.

¹⁷⁵ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 54-57.

“anger in the face of so much stupid hardness and deliberate wickedness,” assures Miguez Bonino, “there was the deep joy and alert confidence of people who knew that they were not ‘beating the air’ but fighting ‘a good battle.’”¹⁷⁶ Indeed, in the 1960s, Latin America and entire Third World countries were in the midst of such an inferno of hope, dream, and aspiration. In such a context, where else could you ground your theological reflection other than the very “human concrete historical experience, in an oppressed and exploited present, *and yet abounding in potentialities*”?¹⁷⁷ In such a context, with such an experience, I believe that the “kingdom” for liberation theologians was no longer a “utopia, the object of anxious expectation but topia, the object of happiness for all people.”¹⁷⁸ I think that this was why liberation theologians spoke of the “kingdom” as both gift *and* demand, as something which we *cause* to come and arrive as the result of the free acceptance of God’s gift.¹⁷⁹ Thus, if we put McCann’s “existential problem” of reconciling “a liberating God” with the project of “mans’ becoming the Subject of history” in the context of Latin America in the 1960s, not on our table, the dialectic between “God’s gift” and “human cause” appears not as a philosophical riddle but as a theological necessity and particularity. Then, the eschatology operative in Latin American liberation theology cannot be identified with what Moltmann calls the “progressive syndrome,”¹⁸⁰ for its fundamental impulse is what Segundo calls the “left-

¹⁷⁶ Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, pp. xxiii, 38, 195.

¹⁷⁷ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 124. Emphases added.

¹⁷⁸ Boff, “Salvation and Liberation,” in *Concilium* (1974), pp. 80-82, 87.

¹⁷⁹ Gutierrez, *The God of Life*, 118.

¹⁸⁰ By “progressive syndrome,” or “secular millenarianism,” Moltmann means the modern millenarian belief in the progress of humanity and the perfectibility of history. It is based on positive anthropology, derived from the millenarian positivist Auguste Comte. It believes that science and technology will spread unhindered; education and prosperity for all will be attained; morality and humanity will grow. What Moltmann feels uneasy with regarding this belief is that there is in it no further “qualitative revolutions in history.” Thus, the people who live in such a worldview do not see ahead of them an alternative future, but

wing radicalism,” namely “the conquest of that which is still without form, of that which is still unrealized, of that which is still in a state of utopia.”¹⁸¹ Nor could it be identified with what Niebuhr called “soft utopianism,” defined as “the creed of those who do not claim to embody perfection, but *expect* perfection to emerge out of the ongoing process of history,”¹⁸² for, unlike Rauschenbusch, who tried to combine the “kingdom” with “the modern comprehension of the organic development of human society”¹⁸³ with the expectation of the “growth toward perfection,”¹⁸⁴ liberation theologians tried to combine it with “the reality of the poor” and the “liberating historical events” with a kind of sober “kingdom realism” that the “kingdom” could even be receding as poverty and injustice increase in our world.¹⁸⁵

1989 and Thereafter

The revolutionary excitement of the 1960s, however, dimmed, and after the *Wende* (the German term that refers to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989), liberation theology could not remain the same as it was before. Interpretations of the historical meaning of the *Wende* are widely varied,¹⁸⁶ however, whatever it might mean, the fall of the “really

merely a prolongation of the present—i.e., progress in every direction and improvements wherever possible—but without any alternative. (See Moltmann, “Liberating and Anticipating the Future,” 191-196.)

¹⁸¹ Segundo, “Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux,” in *Concilium* (1974), pp. 121-123.

¹⁸² Niebuhr, “Two Forms of Utopianism,” in *Christianity and Society*, Vol. 12 (Autumn 1947), quoted from Charles C. Brown, ed., *A Reinhold Niebuhr Reader* [Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992], p. 44. It was Thomas G. Sanders who charged liberation theology as “soft utopianism.” (See Sanders, “The Theology of Liberation: Christian Utopianism,” in *Christianity and Crisis*, September 17, 1973, p. 169.)

¹⁸³ Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, in *A Rauschenbusch Reader*, p. 14.

¹⁸⁴ Rauschenbusch. *Ibid.*, pp. 27f.

¹⁸⁵ Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, p. 125.

¹⁸⁶ In my assessment, there are four types of interpretation regarding the meaning of the *Wende*. First, a pessimistic one that sees 1989 as the year of the “death of revolution”: For instance, Arrighi sees 1989 as the moment of the ideological collapse of all the strategies for efficacious action in the transformation of the world, “not only Leninism, but national liberation movements, social-democracy, and all the other heirs of post-1789 revolutionary ‘liberalism.’” (See George Katsiaficas, ed., *After the Fall: 1989 and the Future of Freedom* [New York: Routledge, 2001], pp. 35, 48, 49.) Rosemary R. Ruether could belong here. She grieves that after the fall, “even the very possibility of articulating an alternative vision was cut off,” that

existing socialism” was conceived by critics of liberation theology as the omen of the fall of liberation theology. Comblin admits that the mistake of liberation theology was not to have stated *publicly* the criticism of the “really existing” socialist economies: “Silence seemed to indicate approval,” and “this silence helped create the impression that the fall of communism included the fall of liberation theology.”¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, Latin American liberation theologians remain basically optimistic about the future of liberation theology. In response to the claim that the fall of socialism would lead to a breakdown in liberation theology, Comblin reasserts that socialism was never a basic component of it, and since “Our commitment was never to Marxism but to the poor, and today’s triumphant neoliberalism is aggravating poverty,” liberation theology is now more urgently needed

“alternative visions and movements of victimized people seem to have been effectively silenced,” and that what we are seeing instead is “a triumph of idolatry in which victorious empire presents itself as the victory of God, the triumph of light against darkness in a way largely accepted by those who benefit from this system.” (Ruether and Douglas John Hall, *God and Nation* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995], pp. 100, 102.) Secondly, an optimistic interpretation that sees 1989 as the manifestation of “people power”: For instance, Daniel Singer contends that if 1989 suggests anything, it suggests that “ultimately, people make their history and, therefore, every social formation, including our own, is transient.” (See Katsiaficas, ed., *After the Fall*, pp. 11, 19.) Moltmann, who emphasizes “freedom” in his prescription of democratic socialism, seems to belong here. He says, “In November 1989 we experienced in East Germany that a people that had been dominated and humiliated for 40 years rose up and brought down not only a government but an entire system with the confident cry: ‘We are the people,’ for ‘all powers comes from the people.’ This experience of liberty is what we wish also for people who live under the tyranny of a ‘free market’ economy.” For Moltmann, the socialist alternative was “condemned to fail because of its constantly increasing violations against human dignity, against life on this earth, and against its own future.” (Moltmann, “Political Theology and Theology of Liberation,” in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 62, 71, 78.) Leonardo Boff also seems to belong here. For Boff, “the fall of socialism represents a victory for capitalism and the market economy only in appearance. In reality, it is much more of a triumph for the longing for freedom of the peoples in the socialist camp.” The problem of Eastern European socialism was that “It was built without the participation of the people.” Therefore, it was not capitalism that has triumphed; rather, “What has proved victorious is the will to participate and live together democratically.” (Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 93-96, 113.) Thirdly, a “prophetic” interpretation that sees the collapse of socialist economies not as a victory by the West over one of its enemies but as the ruin of the previous century’s most ambitious westernizing regime. For John Gray, for example, the disintegration of Marxian socialism in Russia and China represents a defeat for *all* western models of modernization. For him, the breakdown of central planning in the Soviet Union and its dismantlement in China marked the end of an experiment in forced-march modernization in which the model of modernity was the nineteenth century capitalist factory. (John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusion of Global Capitalism* [New York: The New Press, 1998], p. 215.) And fourthly, probably the most popular one that sees the *Wende* as the complete ideological victory of capitalism over against Marxism.

¹⁸⁷ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, p. 214.

than ever.¹⁸⁸ Gutierrez expresses the same conviction: Although the collapse of socialism has really changed the global scene, theology of liberation is still needed, because “the crisis of Marxism has not eliminated injustice and age-old oppression in the world.”¹⁸⁹ To refer to one more voice, Leonardo Boff is also optimistic, because “liberation theology, from the beginnings, has never placed socialism at the heart of its practice and theorizing,” and it lives by its original insight, i.e., “the discovery of the intimate relationship between the God of life, the poor, and liberation.”¹⁹⁰

Indeed, as McGovern observes, socialism no longer remains an unqualified paradigm for liberation aspirations, and few Latin Americans today anticipate any soon-to-come, radical break with existing structures, and, to a significant degree, liberation theologians have become more pragmatic and critical in discussing the goals of liberation.¹⁹¹ Interestingly, however, Marxism has not lost its value for liberation theologians, for they see that it still offers a valuable critique of capitalism.¹⁹² Moreover, the end of the socialist experiment did not necessarily mean to liberation theologians that socialism has no future, because, although there is definitely no socialist alternative in sight for the immediate future, “actual socialist tendencies are,” according to Comblin, “so deeply rooted in humankind,” that, “Socialism certainly remains, and will remain, in the form of utopia, dream, and aspiration.”¹⁹³ In the same vein, Boff says that the crisis of a particular type of socialism is never enough to stifle “the noble and humanitarian socialist aspirations” which are rooted in the deepest strata of the political beings, and,

¹⁸⁸ Comblin. *Ibid.*, pp. vii, 203.

¹⁸⁹ Gutierrez, “New Things Today,” in *The Density of the Present*, pp. 45, 47.

¹⁹⁰ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 96f., 98, 120.

¹⁹¹ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. xviii, 60, 230.

¹⁹² Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, p. 214.

¹⁹³ Comblin, *Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi, 99, 112-113, 207.

thus, if “Stripped of hegemonic power and purified from the vices of its historical embodiment,” believes Boff, “democratic socialism will surely find its natural place in the peripheral and oppressed nations of the Third and Fourth Worlds.”¹⁹⁴

Liberation theologians hold fast; however, in terms of the goal and method of liberation, we can clearly observe two different trajectories of development among liberation theologians. That is, while Jose Comblin, Pablo Richard, and Hugo Assmann, for example, move unabashedly towards reformism, Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff retain revolutionary temperament despite their serious renewal. Assuming that the current worldwide context is not favorable to large changes, Comblin contends that reformism should no longer be regarded as a bad word; also, assuming that today the market economy is unavoidable and “Even in the framework of current international relations, Latin American nations can win a degree of autonomy and define their own model of a market economy,” Comblin proposes to move toward “a welfare reform within the market economy” that does not require “structural socialism” as a way of liberation.¹⁹⁵ Interestingly, Comblin insists that by following the model of Asian tiger economies, Latin American countries can also achieve economic success by shifting their economy to an export-oriented industrialization.¹⁹⁶ Along with this serious renewal of political

¹⁹⁴ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 93-96, 113-114. Boff is quite positive in his assessment of socialism: For him, “from the perspective of the Third World, socialism initiated a revolution that capitalism, as a whole, has still not achieved today.” Moreover, socialism is fundamentally an “ideal,” “vision,” and one of “the most ancient dreams of the human race,” because, “by its nature,” it “puts the collective whole at the foundations of its thinking, can stand for the great alternative of a naturalized humanity, determined to survive in a sphere of togetherness.” Indeed, as McGovern observes, liberation theologians are generally in favor of socialism because (1) socialist ideals fit closely with Christian ideals, (2) socialism offers a utopian vision as does the “kingdom of God,” and (3) socialism stresses important, basic-needs priorities. (McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, pp. 180ff.)

¹⁹⁵ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, pp. 113-118.

¹⁹⁶ Comblin. *Ibid.* For Comblin: “Today, it is inconceivable that an economy in a Latin American country could withdraw from the market economy mode”; “Industrialization is necessary,” because “only industry adds values to goods”; furthermore, “Industry must produce for export. That is what the Asians have done,” and “Producing for export means acquiring technologies.”

economic stance, Comblin then moves toward the modern language of “freedom” and proposes to reformulate the whole paradigm of Latin American liberation theology under that rubric of freedom. Presupposing that it makes no sense today to reject the freedoms of the democratic system, Comblin proposes to situate the Christian message of the call to freedom, which derives from the New Testament’s message of freedom, within modern liberalism’s language of freedom.¹⁹⁷ According to him, this shift from the *theology of liberation* to a *theology of freedom* is imperative in order to prevent the former from being regarded as a circumstantial theology lasting only for a generation as long as a particular set of social issues lasts.¹⁹⁸ For another reason, the shift is necessary, because, according to Comblin, indigenous, black, or feminist theologies are *not* part of liberation theology (for they cannot replace the struggles of the previous decade to transform society), and thus can converge with one another only under the common language of freedom, not the particular language of liberation.¹⁹⁹ In the same vein, Pablo Richard also argues that since the radical transformation of society is no longer possible, liberation theology should move from political theology to civil theology, from marginalized liberation theology to a theology that can work inside the church, beyond a strategic context of confrontation to a consensus and reconciliation.²⁰⁰ Hugo Assmann also moves away from a militant anticapitalism toward “an alliance, or a common base, with the liberal thought,” arguing that the dichotomy of capitalism versus socialism in early works of liberation theology is an original sin that must be overcome, and that “the

¹⁹⁷ Comblin. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

¹⁹⁸ Comblin. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.

¹⁹⁹ Comblin. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

²⁰⁰ Pablo Richard, “Liberation Theology in Latin America in Dialogue with Theologies from Africa, Asia and the Minorities in the United States: A Historical Perspective,” in *Voices From the Third World*, Vol. XVIII No. 2, December 1995, pp. 38-43.

participation by all is a radical, revolutionary issue.”²⁰¹ This first line of self-renewal, in my view, can be summarized as a call for compromise with the language and values of liberalism, such as freedom and democracy.

Gutierrez and Boff, however, retain revolutionary fervor, although they also work for serious self-renewal. Gutierrez admits that the theory of dependence, which overemphasized the external causes of underdevelopment, is now “an inadequate tool to respond adequately to the complexity of reality or to the changes that have occurred in that reality.”²⁰² Largely drawing from the Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Centesimus Annus*,²⁰³ he even accepts, though conditionally, the private ownership of the means of production and a market economy based on freedom of work, on enterprise and participation, and appropriately controlled by social forces and by the State.²⁰⁴ Still, he remains deeply skeptical about the neoliberal economy considering it to be “the idolatry of the market” and as the contemporary form of “the worship of Mammon.”²⁰⁵ Although Gutierrez does not develop any further idea as to what an alternative to the neoliberal economy should be, he states clearly that he no longer sees a socialist system, which

²⁰¹ Assmann, “The Improvement of Democracy in Latin America and the Debt Crisis,” in *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society*, pp. 59-60.

²⁰² Gutierrez, “Liberation and Development,” in *The Density of the Present*, pp. 130f.

²⁰³ On May 1, 1991, the Pope John Paul II published his encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* (“The Hundredth Year”) on the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. We will deal with this document more closely in next chapter, for Michael Novak also draws extensively from this document to support his democratic capitalism. The reason why both Gutierrez and Novak draw from the same document is that it is, as Novak acknowledges, “so balanced a document that, even while neoconservatives such as myself took it up with enthusiasm.” Indeed, *Centesimus Annus* gave encouragement to the left, the middle, and the right altogether. (See Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [New York: The Free Press, 1993], pp. 136-138)

²⁰⁴ Gutierrez, “New Things Today,” in *The Density of the Present*, pp. 50-52, 54. He says, “God has given to all humanity what is needed for sustenance. The goods of the earth do not belong exclusively to some people... they have a universal purpose. Only in that context can we accept the private appropriation of what is needed for existence and for a better social order... Private ownership is not an absolute right... The ownership of the means of production... is just and legitimate when it is employed for a useful purpose.”

²⁰⁵ Gutierrez, “Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor,” in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 15-6, 108, 116f.

presents itself as “state capitalism,” as an alternative.²⁰⁶ “The socialist alternative,” admits Gutierrez, “turns out no real alternative at all”;²⁰⁷ however, he stresses that the previous vision of “a new historical era” characterized by “a radical aspiration for integral liberation” is still valid, and that the new phase of history continues to be our vital context.²⁰⁸

In Boff, we can still sense the original anti-dependent and anti-capitalist thrust of liberation theology. Since within the dependent liberal-capitalist system, there is no salvation for the poor, Boff contends that we have to abandon this system and we seek liberation.²⁰⁹ For Boff, liberation theologians must continue speaking of revolution, not of reform, as “the way out of the wretchedness of the vast majorities,” even though the idea of revolution has lost its prestige.²¹⁰ Although Boff suggests a kind of third way that can converge the “bourgeois modernity” and the “proletarian modernity,”²¹¹ his anti-developmental thrust remains strong, and, as we will see, he develops one of the most articulated voices of a Latin American ecological-liberation theology that goes beyond the idea of development itself. In comparison with Comblin, Richard, and Assmann, this second line of self-renewal for Gutierrez and Boff can be characterized by its preservation of the uncompromising and revolutionary spirit against liberalism.

²⁰⁶ Gutierrez, “New Things Today,” in *The Density of the Present*, p. 54.

²⁰⁷ Gutierrez. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁰⁸ Gutierrez, “Expanding the View,” *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. xvii, xx.

²⁰⁹ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 124-125.

²¹⁰ Boff. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-104. He says: “... we need a new world revolution... The idea of revolution has been consigned to the archaeological museum of politics. Yet, though it has lost its prestige, we must talk of revolution as the way out of the wretchedness of the vast majorities.”

²¹¹ Boff. *Ibid.* He says: “I am not against modernity as seen in its two embodiments in history, bourgeois modernity and the proletarian modernity. These two forms of modernity were opposed to one another for decades. Now we have to construct a convergence between them. I am postulating an alternative and integral modernity that will conjoin the vast patrimony of science and technology (the fruit of bourgeois modernity) with social democracy, for the good of all humanity (the meaning of proletarian modernity).”

Then, what theological changes, modifications, and renewals have followed after the *Wende*? As “important aspects of the time that birthed and developed the reflection of what we call liberation theology since the late 1960s, have come to an end” and therefore “many of the statements and discussions of that period of time do not respond to today’s challenges,”²¹² Latin American liberation theologians have worked hard to renew their theological reflections themselves. I have identified three eye-catching trends within this Latin American theological renewal. First, although liberation theologians still believe that the socio-economic aspect of poverty is the basic one,²¹³ they began to give new attention to the racial and cultural world, and the discrimination against women.²¹⁴ Secondly, they began to speak of the human complexity and ambiguity warning against even the “idealization of the poor.” According to Gutierrez, the poor are also human beings and as such they participate in grace and sin.²¹⁵ This is indeed a provocative statement, for it is Gutierrez himself who has insisted persistently that liberation theology must emerge *directly* from the experience of the oppressed so that Segundo was forced to

²¹² Gutierrez, “Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor,” in *Liberating the Future*, p. 97.

²¹³ Although Gutierrez now admits that “The socio-economic aspect [of poverty] is basic but not all-inclusive,” (“Expanding the View,” *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. xxi, xxiii.) liberation theologians’ emphasis on the primacy of “the socio-economically poor” has not changed even after 1989. Leonardo and Clodovis Boffs are the exemplars: They affirm that “the socio-economically oppressed (the poor) do not simply exist *alongside* other oppressed groups, such as blacks, indigenous peoples, women,”; rather “the ‘class-oppressed’... are the infrastructural expression of the process of oppression” and “The other groups represent ‘super-structural’ expressions of oppression.” However, their argument sounds unreasonable when they insist that whereas “blacks can be reconciled with whites, indigenes with nonindigenes, and women with men,” “exploiting bosses and exploited workers can never finally be reconciled.” (See Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, pp. 29-30; Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 132ff.)

²¹⁴ Gutierrez, “Liberation and Development,” in *The Density of the Present*, pp. 130f.

²¹⁵ Gutierrez, “Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor,” in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 117-118, 123. According to Gutierrez, the poor could be an idol “when we idealize them, considering them *always good*, generous, profoundly religious, thinking that everything that comes from the poor is true and in a certain manner sacred.” This idealization of the poor is not conducive to their liberation, according to Gutierrez, for “a Christian the ultimate reason for solidarity with the poor is not based on their moral and religious qualification... but rather in the goodness of God that must inspire our own conduct.”

critique Gutierrez's theology for its lack of criticism toward popular phenomena.²¹⁶ Strikingly, Comblin even questions whether there has ever been an "irruption" of the poor in the sense of achieving power and insists that the meaning of the "irruption of the poor" was essentially theological rather than sociological.²¹⁷ This leads him to criticize the notion of the poor as subject of history. Thirdly, liberation theologians began to see the significance of ecology in theological reflections on liberation. For instance, broadening the perspective on social solidarity to include "a respectful relationship with nature," Gutierrez states, "A theology of creation and of life can give much oxygen to the struggle for justice," and this is "a task that without doubt provides fertile ground for theological reflection on liberation."²¹⁸ This statement, in my view, has a significant implication for the future of liberation theology, although Gutierrez himself does not develop a fuller articulation of an ecological-liberation theology. It is instead Leonardo Boff who, among many other liberation theologians in Latin America, has firmly endeavored to develop an ecological theology from the perspective of liberation theology.

²¹⁶ See Segundo, "Two Theologies of Liberation," in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, p. 353.

²¹⁷ See Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, pp. 77-81. He argues that: "Left movements have... had the illusion of a people's power... This strength never existed... a number of pastoral agents have become discouraged over what they call a lack of drive, a lack of commitment or lack of combative spirit among the popular masses. Once they exaggerated the power of the poor, and now they complain of its weakness. The poor have nothing to do with this. The fact is that when the vanguards were counting on the support of the people, the people were somewhere else... They were busy with immediate problems that seemed more pressing to them... The poor... are very active, but their activity is absorbed by immediate needs. Changing society will have to wait: it is a very abstract objective in comparison with the pressing demands of immediate need."

²¹⁸ Gutierrez, "Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor," in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 121-122. In fact, Gutierrez has already developed the seed of this ecological awareness in his "theology of life" which connects the option for the poorest with an option for life. As he began to see that the ecological issue affects not only industrial countries but all of humanity, he is now convinced that "we should reaffirm our faith in the God of life, above all among those people who have always held the earth sacred." For this, he reclaims the corrections of the abusive interpretations of the "dominion over the earth" that the modern Western world has put forth through instrumental reasoning, because "it is not the human being but rather God's gratuitous love that is the center and reason of all that is created." In the new task of theology of creation and of life, however, Gutierrez emphasizes that "we should be attentive to how it [ecological issue] affects the weakest members of humanity."

Drawing extensively from the vision that understands Earth as a living superorganism, Boff tries to extend the basic intuitions of liberation theology (the option for the poor) to an option for the most threatened of other beings and species by connecting “the cry of the oppressed” with “the cry of the Earth.”²¹⁹ What is noteworthy here is that Boff takes ecological reflection as “a second critique of political economy” that can check capitalist developmentalism and correct the Marxist optimism on the development of the forces of production.²²⁰ By taking ecology as “a radical critique of the kind of civilization that we are building, which is energy-devouring and tends to demolish all ecosystems,” Boff criticizes *all* modernity, both free-market-capitalist and Marxist-socialist variants, that lives on the common assumption that unlimited economic growth is possible.²²¹ Also criticizing that economics, which is supposed to be the rational management of scarcity but has become “the science of unlimited growth,” Boff urges that instead of speaking of development, we must speak of sustainability.²²² Needless to say, Boff’s shift from growth to sustainability sharply contrasts with Comblin’s call for an export-oriented industrialization as the way toward economic liberation for Latin American countries. Indeed, Boff and Comblin represent two

²¹⁹ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, p. 89; *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, pp. xi-xii. Like Gutierrez, Boff emphasizes that we should begin with the poorest human beings.

²²⁰ Boff believes that ecological reflection can enrich certain aspects of the Marxist paradigm by incorporating nature not as extrinsic but intrinsic to the whole production process and as part of the forces of production. This of course means to opt for renewable rather than nonrenewable energy sources, while simultaneously renouncing growth beyond certain limits. “Marxism, enriched by cultural, ecological, and feminist analysis,” he believes, “is still an instrument in the hands of the oppressed for overturning the mechanisms that produce their poverty.” (See Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 115, 117)

²²¹ Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, pp. 3, 4, 11.

²²² Boff, *Ibid.*, 68, 101. In fact, Hugo Assmann commends this development as “an innovative form” that can overcome both capitalism and traditional Marxism. “Since the beginning of capitalism,” says Assmann, “there was only one alternative proposal, the radically anticapitalist, Marxist one. Now capitalism is attacked a second time by liberation theology, but in an innovative form that challenges at the same time the socialist models on crucial points... Liberation theology challenges capitalism in a new and profound way, in aspects in which traditional Marxism is weak.” (See Assmann, “The Improvement of Democracy in Latin America and the Debt Crisis.” in *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society*, p. 39.)

different trajectories of Latin American theological renewal since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In my assessment, Boff has turned toward the right direction, for I believe that there are many doubtful assumptions in Comblin's economic prescriptions. For instance, Comblin argues that industry must produce for export, and producing for export means acquiring technologies.²²³ Yet, anyone who knows even some of the international agreements such as the TRIPs (Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights) would shake his/her head. And, as critics of economic globalization insist, one of the most traumatic impacts of globalization policies is the forced shift of local economies away from small-scale diversified agricultural models to an industrial export model, which is directed by global corporations, in which people who once fed themselves become landless, jobless, cashless, homeless, dependent and hungry.²²⁴ Comblin further argues that while intellectuals were seeking revolutionary means of social transformation, the people were migrating into the city (thus "irruption" into the city) to build freedom in the city, and, thus, the city must now be "the site of liberation."²²⁵ The problem is that, as Helena Norberg-Hodge contends, the majority of the world's people today—mostly in the Third World—already *are* on the land, and "we are too many to move to the city."²²⁶ It is precisely because there are so many people in the rural area that we must abandon the city-centered global economic model which can feed, house, and clothe only a small minority.²²⁷ Finally, Comblin argues that through export-oriented industrialization, Latin

²²³ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, pp. 113-118.

²²⁴ See International Forum on Globalization. *IFG Bulletin: Special Poverty Issue*, 2001, vol. 1, issue 3, 4.

²²⁵ See Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, 91-96.

²²⁶ Helena Norberg-Hodge. *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991), p. 396.

²²⁷ Helena Norberg-Hodge. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

America could be as successful as Asian tiger economies. I am just amazed by this naïve assumption, for, as Larry L. Rasmussen attests, development does not eliminate poverty and history reveals that catch-up development is not working.²²⁸ Unfortunately, it is obvious that Latin America can neither develop industrially as Europe did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,²²⁹ nor can it follow the Asian model, since, as Walden Bello reveals, the comprehensive and tightened present regime of the WTO (World Trade Organization), unlike the previous loose system of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) which allowed some space for development initiatives of the Third World, no longer allows catching-up development.²³⁰ Critics of economic globalization have convincingly argued that the expansionist global economic model has meant a “race to the bottom” for Third World countries, and therefore, we have to shift

²²⁸ Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998), p. 150. William Greider attests the same: The poor states have an illusion that sees the economic order as a ladder—a vertical line on which some are high up on the top and others are struggling to climb up. With this illusion, says Greider, they hope to start on an upward track toward higher levels of industrialization and an escape from general poverty. (Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* [Simon & Schuster, 1997], p. 81.) Yet, as the former World Bank president Robert McNamara admits it: “Even if the growth rate of the poor countries doubled, only seven would close to gap with the rich nations in 100 years. Only another nine would reach our [the U.S.] level in 1,000 years.” (Quoted from Rasmussen, *Ibid.*, p. 150.)

²²⁹ As Alistair Kee sees it, Latin America cannot develop industrially as Europe did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, because unlike Europe at that time, it is developing in a world in which powerful industrial economies already exist. (Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology*, p. 263.)

²³⁰ According to Bello, the so-called Asian four tiger economies, or NICs (Newly Industrializing Countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) are the beneficiaries of the previous loose GATT system. Bello says that a key factor in the industrial take-off of the developed and fast developing countries was their relatively easy access to cutting-edge technology. For instance, the U.S. industrialized, to a great extent by using but paying very little for British manufacturing innovations, as did the Germans. Japan industrialized by liberally borrowing U.S. technological innovations, but barely compensating the Americans for this. And South Korea industrialized by copying quite liberally and with little payment U.S. and Japanese product and process technologies. However, under the present regime of WTO, Uruguay Round, and some international agreements such as the TRIM (Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures) and the TRIPs (Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights), the process of industrialization by imitation has become much more difficult from here on, and the way that the NICs made it to industrial status, via the policy of import substitution, is now effectively removed as a route to industrialization. (Bello, “Why Reform of the WTO is the Wrong Agenda,” *DAGA Info.*, Jan. 20, 2000, 4.)

our economic direction “from global dependence to local interdependence.”²³¹ From these historical and global perspectives and facts, Comblin’s alternative path for Latin American economic liberation is not convincing. The future of Latin America seems to lie elsewhere. I cannot offer an economic alternative for Latin America here; but what I can clearly state is that Comblin’s alternative is no alternative at all, for it is merely the other form of dependent capitalist developmentalism (*desarrollismo*) that he and others had rejected thirty years ago for its obvious failure.

Conclusion: The Legacy and Crisis of Liberation Theology

Latin American theologians spoke of liberation, not of reform, because they believed that Latin America was a dependent and periphery continent in a global capitalist system which offers no hope for the poor. And they believed that Latin American countries must liberate themselves through some form of their own self-determining socialism. In many ways, their *politico-economic* option for socialism (paralleled with their *theological* option for the poor) was inevitable in the context of the 1960s in Latin America where there was a radical dichotomization of social thought in which one had to choose to be either socialist or capitalist,²³² and when pro-socialism was popular in the intellectual climate of the times. *Today*, however, their politico-economic option for socialism must be questioned for its naiveté. Liberation theologians criticized the supporters of capitalist development for they did not attack “the roots of the evil”; still, in my view, liberation

²³¹ Norberg-Hodge, “Shifting Direction: From Global Dependence to Local Interdependence,” in *The Case Against Global Economy*, 393. According to Edward Goldsmith, local interdependence can be envisaged as “a diversity of loosely linked, community-based economies managed by much smaller companies and catering above all (though not exclusively) to local or regional markets.” (Goldsmith, “The Last Word: Family, Community, Democracy,” in *The Case Against Global Economy: And For a Turn Toward the Local* [San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996], pp. 502, 508.)

²³² See Paul Sigmund’s discussion in *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society*, pp. 58-59.

theologians *too* did not attack the roots of the evil. Liberation theologians rejected capitalist developmentalism (*desarrollismo*), but we should not be misled in thinking that liberation theologians were opposed to developmentalism itself. They rejected *capitalist* developmentalism, for it “would never be able to achieve development for Latin America.”²³³ Development was taken for granted; the only difference was that they tried to find its true place in “the more universal, profound, and radical perspective of liberation.”²³⁴ This means that they believed that, if it is within the framework of socialist revolution, development can find “its true meaning and possibilities of accomplishing something worthwhile.”²³⁵ To repeat, liberation theologians did not reject developmentalism itself; they rejected “the liberal-modernistic project,” as Miguez Bonino terms it;²³⁶ instead, they opted for a “socialist-modernistic project” as its alternative.

As John Gray points out, however, Marxian socialism is “a prototypically western ideology” to which the model of modernity is “the nineteenth century capitalist factory,” and therefore the clash between capitalist developmentalism and socialist developmentalism can be seen as “a family quarrel among western ideologies.”²³⁷ In other words, they are only variants of the Enlightenment project of supplanting the historic diversity of human cultures with “a single, universal civilization.”²³⁸ Thus, Moltmann was not wrong to charge that liberation in liberation theology is “not Latin

²³³ Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, pp. 98-99.

²³⁴ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 24-25.

²³⁵ Gutierrez. *Ibid.*

²³⁶ Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, p. 15.

²³⁷ Gray, *False Dawn*, pp. 102, 215.

²³⁸ Gray. *Ibid.*, p. 215. Helena Norberg-Hodge also attests that the Western notion of development is the process of reducing all the diverse cultures of the world to a single monoculture which is based on the assumption that needs are everywhere the same, that everyone needs to eat the same food, to live in the same type of house, and to wear the same clothes. (Norberg-Hodge, *Ancient Futures*, p. 152.)

American enough” but “too European.”²³⁹ Deservedly, “even in the light of [this] gospel of liberation,” as George Tinker criticizes, “indigenous peoples are yet non-persons,” for to put the means of production into the hands of the poor eventually makes the poor exploiters of indigenous peoples and their natural resources.²⁴⁰ Accordingly, liberation theology is viewed by Vine Deloria, Jr., as merely “the latest gimmick to keep minority groups circling the wagons with the vain hope that they can eliminate the oppression that surrounds them,” without seeking to destroy “the roots of oppression” but merely to change “the manner of oppression.”²⁴¹ Latin American liberation theology, in short, was not free from its captivity to “the liberal establishment,” and, by reducing liberation to a socialist-modernistic project which is only the step child of Western liberalism, it made liberation revolutionary only in name. Indeed, Ivone Gebara was not wrong to reprimand liberation theology for being only a revolutionary theology “inside the Western patriarchal tradition.”²⁴²

The problem is that, as Tinker points out, both capitalism and Marxism are deeply rooted in the spiritual and theological imagination of the west, and they are wholly

²³⁹ Moltmann, “An Open Letter to Jose Miguez Bonino,” pp. 196, 200. Moltmann sees that Latin American liberation theology “is all worked through independently and offers many new insights—but precisely only in the framework of Europe’s history.” Reprimanding that “We hear severe criticism of Western theology and of theology in general—and then we are told something about Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as if they were Latin American discoveries,” he asks, “Where is Latin America in it all?” In his public reply to Miguez Bonino, Moltmann even uses a very strong language, “oedipal reactions,” to describe Miguez Bonino’s critique.

²⁴⁰ George Tinker, “The Full Circle of Liberation,” in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, David G. Hallman, ed. (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications & Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1994), p. 220. Tinker shows how colonial, neo-colonial and Marxist regimes have inflicted spiritual genocide on Fourth World peoples in the name of development, modernization or even solidarity. (See Tinker. *Ibid.*, 218-220)

²⁴¹ Deloria, “A Native American Perspective on Liberation,” in *Mission Trends*, No. 4, p. 262.

²⁴² Ivone Gebara, “The Face of Transcendence as a Challenge to the Reading of the Bible in Latin America,” in *Searching the Scriptures: Vol. 1, A Feminist Introduction*, ed. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1993), p. 178. Gebara agrees that liberation theology has surely introduced novelties, especially in the effort to reread theology on the basis of love of the impoverished in Latin America, and to derive practical consequences from it. But, she criticizes this effort for being carried out within patriarchal “orthodoxy” and still retaining the same tradition and the same field of religious imagination that have been present for centuries in Latin American culture.

developmental in their economic and political commitments.²⁴³ No doubt, they are adversaries; but, they do share one fundamental belief—the belief in the possibility of unlimited economic growth; as a result, they legitimate the endless pressing forward of “progress” with the presupposition that the material precondition for the liberation of humanity is liberation from natural necessity. Indeed, what is most common to both is their “Promethean attitude to nature.”²⁴⁴ Thus, it is not surprising for us to hear from Gutierrez who takes such an attitude for granted:

Human relationship with nature changed substantially with the emergence of experimental science and the techniques of manipulation derived from it... Descartes is one of the great names of the new physics which altered human relationship to nature. He laid the cornerstone of a philosophical reflection which... highlighted the creative aspects of human subjectivity. Kant... strengthened and systematized this point of view... Hegel followed this approach, introducing with vitality and urgency the theme of history... *Through the dialectical process, humankind... liberates itself in the acquisition of genuine freedom which through work transforms the world [nature]... Marx deepened and renewed this line of thought... For Marx, to know was something indissolubly linked to the transformation of the world [nature] through work... The door was opened for science to help humankind take one more step on the road of critical thinking... These initiatives ought to assure the change from the capitalistic mode of production to the socialistic mode, that is to say, to one oriented towards a society in which persons can begin to live freely and humanly. They will have controlled nature, created the conditions for a socialized production of wealth, done away with private acquisition of excessive wealth, and established socialism.*²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Tinker, “Liberation and Sustainability: Prolegomena to an American Indian Theology,” in *Ecojustice Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Winter 1994-1995, p. 19. For Tinker, Marxism is no different to American Indians, because, though it may have tried to break the hold of individualism, “it is wholly consistent with western temporality, evident in its evolutionary, linear paradigm.” Tinker’s argument has much to do with the notion of time and space. For him, “In Euro-American (and European) philosophical and theological history it is more common to see intellectual reflections on the meaning of time; it is far less common to see intellectual reflections on space. Hence, progress, history, development, evolution, and process become key notion that invade all academic discourse in the West, from science and economics to philosophy and theology. Thus the Western worldview has an inherent blind spot that prevents any comprehensive or deep understanding of the scope of ecological devastation.” (Tinker, “An American Indian Theological Response to Ecojustice,” in *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice*, ed., Jace Weaver [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996], p. 162.)

²⁴⁴ Gray, *False Dawn*, 215.

²⁴⁵ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 17-20. Emphases are added.

What we hear from him is actually a description of the lineage of the development of nineteenth-century philosophy of history as “conquest of human freedom,” in which “conquest of nature” is taken for granted. In this view, humankind liberates itself in the acquisition of genuine freedom which through work transforms the world/nature. However, as ecofeminists will immediately point out, such a notion of freedom is typically the idea of “man’s freedom” which depends on an ongoing process of “emancipation from nature by the power of reason and rationality.”²⁴⁶ Such a freedom, as Boff points out, understands human activity as transformation of nature for the sake of unlimited progress without any consideration for the internal logic of nature.²⁴⁷ Needless to say, this freedom is the freedom of Enlightenment, which is common to both liberalism and socialism. Then again, Moltmann was not wrong to criticize Gutierrez who presents the process of liberation in Latin America as “the continuation and culmination of the European history of freedom.”²⁴⁸ Indeed, as Boff assures, all modernity, in both free-market-capitalist or Marxist-socialist variants, lives on this common assumption and both models of society have broken with the Earth.²⁴⁹ For the future of liberation theology, I believe, liberation theologians must liquidate their deep intellectual debt to the nineteenth-century ideology of history, which is mechanistic, triumphalistic, anthropocentric, and androcentric.

Latin American liberation theology must discard its politico-economic option for a socialist developmentalism which can no longer be our alternative today. Therefore, I contend, Marxist socialism, which was once embraced as the primary tool for critique of

²⁴⁶ Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (New Jersey: Fernwood Publications, 1993), p. 6.

²⁴⁷ Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, p. 196.

²⁴⁸ Moltmann, “An Open Letter to Jose Miguez Bonino,” pp. 197-198.

²⁴⁹ Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, p. 68.

that which causes injustice, oppression, and poverty in Latin America, must now give way to ecological reflection as “the second critique of political economy” so that liberation theology may seek to destroy the roots of oppression, not merely change the manner of oppression. That is, liberation theology must vigorously incorporate ecology, nature, and creation for serious self-renewal.

However, as I will argue further in chapter 3, we should not, in our attempt to renew the theology of liberation, replace the God of history with the God of nature; that is, liberation theology’s affirmation of God’s salvific activity in history must not be sacrificed for the sake of God’s immanence in nature/creation. As we have seen, one of the specific contributions of liberation theology is that it rediscovered and recovered the perennial Christian themes of God’s salvific activity in history as recorded in the *biblia pauperum* (the Bible of the poor), which have often been hidden by the ideologies of Christendom. And, as Gutierrez assures, one of the specific contributions of liberation theology is that it made a shift “from a theology that concentrated excessively on a God located outside this world to a theology of a God who is present in this world... in history and... in the midst of human beings.”²⁵⁰ The problem was that it did not take equally the very biblical affirmation of the God of history *and* of nature/creation. As Robert McAfee Brown assures, the biblical memory of liberation includes not just oppressed people, but also oppressed lands; that is, the redemption of humanity and the redemption of the entire created order will be one intertwined story rather than two separate ones.²⁵¹ For this reason, we can say that Latin American liberation theology is a theology of “liberation

²⁵⁰ Gutierrez, “Toward a Theology of Liberation,” pp. 67-69.

²⁵¹ One example is the Jubilee that required the liberation of the poor *and* land. For Brown, ecology is not the discovery of a new fact, but repossession of an old fact that goes back to the biblical themes. (Brown, *Speaking of Christianity: Practical Compassion, Social Justice, and Other Wonders* [Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997], pp. 129-131, 133.)

without creation.” Still, I believe that we should not explain away God’s salvific activity in history, even if we see today an eclipse of the hope in such a liberating presence of God for the poor majority,²⁵² because to abandon the God of history for the sake of the God in nature is only another form of reductionism and history-nature dualism. After all, I agree with Rosemary R. Ruether that nature is the product not only of natural evolution but also of human historical engagement.²⁵³

Liberation theology lives by its *theological* option for the poor, not by its *politico-economic* option for socialism. This is my concluding thesis in this chapter. This implies that, by no longer committing itself to a socialist modernist project, liberation theology can remain as the basic theological thrust of our times when the poor still live in chronic poverty and destitution. Today, many believe (or want to believe) that liberation theology is dead because socialism is dead, and that the fall of socialist economies (the “end of history”) is the fall of liberation theology (the “end of liberation”). However, as we have seen in this chapter, Marx was neither the father nor the godfather of liberation theology, and liberation theology, which is the articulated cry of the oppressed, is born whenever faith confronted the injustice done to the poor. As long as the poor are with us, as long as oppression remains with them, we need such a theology whose pounding heart is the pastoral, and *therefore* theological question, “How is it possible to tell the poor, who are forced to live in conditions that embody a denial of love, that God loves them?” and whose foundational insight is the biblical inspiration of the intimate relationship between the God of life, the poor, and liberation. As I will argue again in the Conclusion, *this*

²⁵² Ruether and Hall, *God and the Nations*, pp. 100-102.

²⁵³ Ruether, “Toward an Ecological-Feminist Theology of Nature,” in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, ed. Mary Heather MacKinnon and Moni McIntyre (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995), pp. 89, 93.

theology is now more urgent than ever and a radical aspiration for integral liberation of the poor still remains a valid vision and daunting task in light of the contemporary challenges from finance capitalism and economic neoliberalism.

Let me conclude this chapter by quoting Gutierrez who here, in my view, best captures what Latin American liberation theology was, is, and shall be:

I have to confess that I am less preoccupied with the interest or the survival of liberation theology than with the suffering and hopes of the people to whom I belong, and especially with the communication of the experience and the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. The latter is the substance of our love and our faith. Theology, no matter how relevant, is nothing but a medium for deepening those things. Theology is a hermeneutic of hope that is lived as a gift of God. In effect, that is what it means to proclaim liberating hope to the world.²⁵⁴

Gutierrez even warns against the possibility of “idolization of liberation theology,” which happens when the theology itself becomes more important than the faith which illuminates it and the reality it tries to express.²⁵⁵ Indeed, the revolutionary excitement of the 1960s has dimmed; still, we find a profound faith-oriented hope in Gutierrez, the hope that gave birth to Latin America liberation theology, the hope that will give birth to many more liberation theologies. These theologies, as Gutierrez acknowledges, “will not sound nice... will not smell good” to many;²⁵⁶ these theologies, whose basic inspiration is “a faith that transforms history,”²⁵⁷ will not be acceptable by all. In fact, as Alfred T. Hennelly points out: “This approach to theology from the viewpoint of the poor and suffering of the world, its condemnation of their suffering as totally opposed to the kingdom of God preached by Jesus Christ, and its unambiguous call for bold and

²⁵⁴ Gutierrez, “Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor,” in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 117-118, 123.

²⁵⁵ Gutierrez, *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁵⁶ See Dorrien, *Constructing the Common Good*, p. 123.

²⁵⁷ Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, p. 14.

profound changes in the political and socio-economic structures of sin that perpetuate that suffering, was *destined* from the beginning to generate opposition and conflict from other sectors of society that seek to maintain the status quo or even to increase their share of economic and political powers.²⁵⁸ We now turn to these oppositions and conflicts.

²⁵⁸ Hennelly, ed., *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, p. xxv.

Chapter 2 NORTH AMERICAN NEOCONSERVATIVE THEOLOGIES

[T]he Statue of Liberty... has been the proper symbol of the liberal society of North America. "Send me your tired, your poor," that Statue says, as if to underline the preferential option of this system for the poor... Generation after generation, the poor have streamed to America and been lifted out of poverty. *This* "liberation theology" actually does liberate.

Michael Novak¹

After five millennia of blundering, human beings finally figured out how wealth may be produced in a sustained, systematic way... The world as Adam faced it after the Garden of Eden left humankind in misery and hunger for millennia. Now that the secrets of sustained material progress have been decoded, the responsibility for reducing misery and hunger is no longer God's but ours.

Michael Novak²

The protestant Social Gospel, early Christian realism, much neo-orthodoxy, many forms of Catholic modernism, the modern ecumenical drive for racial and social inclusiveness, and contemporary liberation theories all held that democracy, human rights and socialism were the marks of the coming kingdom. For all their prophetic witness in many areas, they were wrong about socialism.

Max L. Stackhouse and Dennis P. McCann³

Theologically... it is hard to justify the view that God is one thing, mammon another, and that we can best serve them both by keeping them entirely separate. And sociologically, it is doubtful whether any civilization has kept them separate. There is something about all profound religious and social understandings of reality that is dissatisfied with such a dualism. To be sure, the divine is not the world, and distinctions have to be made. Yet any transcendent reality worth attending to has implications for what we think and do on earth.

Max L. Stackhouse⁴

¹ Michael Novak, *Will It Liberate?: Questions about Liberation Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 35.

² Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: A Touchstone Book, 1992), pp. 17, 28.

³ Max L. Stackhouse, Dennis P. McCann, and Shirley J. Roels, eds., *On Moral Business: Classical and Contemporary Resources for Ethics in Economic Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), pp. 949, 954.

⁴ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modern Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), p. x-xi.

The Origin, Context, and Common Themes

In contrast to liberation theology in South America, North American neoconservative theology is characterized by its attempt for “a *constructive* religious engagement with capitalism.”⁵ In other words, what is common to theologians in this camp is a *negative* assessment of socialism and a *positive* assessment of the expansion of the market, the role of corporations, economic growth, and wealth production. In its politico-economic option then, North American neoconservative theology stands exactly opposite South American liberation theology; and, as we will see, North American neoconservative theology also stands firmly against ecological theologies.

North American neoconservative theology is fundamentally an *antisocialist* theology. For Michael Novak, socialism is only “the road to serfdom,”⁶ or “a mystification”;⁷ for Max L. Stackhouse, socialism is “capitalism without God,”⁸ “a tendency toward the totalization of bureaucracy,” which creates only an “iron cage for a culture.”⁹ Although “All too many religious leaders still cling to the belief that capitalism is greedy, individualistic, exploitative and failing; that socialism is generous, community-affirming, equitable and coming,” the truth for Stackhouse and Dennis P. McCann is that “no system has a monopoly on greed.”¹⁰

In terms of poverty, North American neoconservative theologians’ analysis is characterized by its “liberal/bourgeois interpretation of poverty,” which sees poverty as

⁵ Dennis P. McCann, “Reforming Wisdom from the East,” in *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 97. Emphasis is mine.

⁶ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1970), p. 127.

⁷ Novak, ed., *The Denigration of Capitalism: Six Points of View* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), p. 4.

⁸ Stackhouse. *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights: A Study in Three Cultures* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), p. 129, note 73.

⁹ Stackhouse, “The Hindu Ethic and Development: Western Views,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 381.

¹⁰ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 950.

“non-conflictive backwardness that can be remedied by reform.”¹¹ For McCann, the cause of poverty is not the result of “capitalist exploitation” but rather the lack of basic access to “capitalist development”;¹² for Novak, the cause of poverty is the lack of “the institution of liberty” that can help the poor.¹³ From this perspective of poverty, what becomes naturally important is an “ethic for production” not an “ethic for distribution.” For Novak, a distributive ethics of socialism is wrong, because, under the condition of scarcity, “what is not produced cannot be distributed”;¹⁴ accordingly, capitalist development and wealth production is now viewed as a “moral obligation,” a “moral imperative,” or “a theological imperative to imitate the Creator.”¹⁵ Stackhouse and McCann also insist that the whole point of economic activity must be wealth creation.¹⁶

As the focus shifts from distributive justice to wealth production, social inequality is no longer viewed as scandal and social justice is no longer considered a crucial theological issue. For Novak, “liberty inevitably leads to inequality,”¹⁷ because human beings are equal in dignity but unequal in talent;¹⁸ hence, the passion for absolute equality is only wicked and self-destructive,¹⁹ “equality-as-uniformity” is not

¹¹ See Clodovis and Leonardo Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, p. 27. They distinguish three ways of explaining poverty: the empirical, the functional, and the dialectical. Unlike the former two, the dialectical explanation—i.e., the position of liberation theology—sees poverty as a collective and also conflictive phenomenon, which can be overcome only by replacing the present social system with an alternative system.

¹² McCann, “Where Do We Go from Here?: Some Thoughts on Geoeconomics,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 960.

¹³ Novak, *The spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 293f.; *This Hemisphere of Liberty: A Philosophy of the Americas* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1990), p. 237.

¹⁴ Novak, *Toward a Theology for the Corporation* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1981), p. 24f.

¹⁵ Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, *passim*.

¹⁶ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 952.

¹⁷ Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, *passim*.

¹⁸ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 84.

¹⁹ Novak, *Business As a Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 11.

egalitarianism but “equalityranny” which only destroys “equality-as-uniqueness”,²⁰ moreover, the demand for social justice is only an expression of envy which is “the *most* destructive social vice” hiding itself behind the noble name of compassion;²¹ then, social justice, “rightly understood,” must be an attribute and virtue of individual citizens, not of states.²² In a similar vein, Stackhouse and McCann also argue that the route to social justice and prosperity should no longer lie in the political control of the marketplace and the means of production.²³

For the justification of their ethic for production, Novak, Stackhouse, and McCann unanimously reject Aristotle’s moral skepticism about commerce as being archaic and irrelevant to modern political economy. For Novak, commerce is “the fulfillment of a vocation from God” and “a way of cooperating in the completion of Creation as God intended it”;²⁴ and, since commerce is “the most solid, material sign of unmistakable human solidarity,” it is a material sign of the “mystical Body of Christ.”²⁵ As commerce is viewed as natural, profit is also viewed as natural. For Stackhouse, profit is not to be equated with the motivation of greed or the impulse of acquisition but with “the *constraint* of greed,” because it is used as capital for new efforts to create wealth;²⁶ for McCann, there is nothing inherently unnatural about profiting from the productivity

²⁰ Novak, *On Corporate Governance: The Corporation As It Ought To Be* (Washington D.C.: The AEI Press, 1997), p. 22.

²¹ See Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 184; *On Corporate Governance*, p. 26; and *Business As a Calling*, p. 57.

²² Novak, “Hayek: Practitioner of Social Justice—‘social Justice Properly Understood,’” in *Three In One: Essays on Democratic Capitalism, 1976-2000—Michael Novak* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), p. 132.

²³ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 949.

²⁴ Novak, *Toward a Theology for the Corporation*, p. 29.

²⁵ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, pp. 47-48.

²⁶ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 127, 128.

of money.²⁷ Quite naturally then, working in the marketplace is now viewed as “a holy vocation in and for the salvation of the world” (Stackhouse and McCann),²⁸ or “a way to fulfill the vocation of the universe” (Novak).²⁹ Accordingly, the global market is now viewed as salvific and therefore the contention to rail against the process of globalization of the market is condemned as false prophecy (Stackhouse).³⁰

However, what is most common and distinctive to North American neoconservative theologians is their paramount concern for business corporations. For Novak, the corporations are not simply “the primary moral agents [of] the global economy” but the “agency of God’s grace,” “instruments of redemption,” “incarnation of God’s presence in the world,” or “the poor’s best friend”;³¹ for Stackhouse, the corporations are “worldly ecclesia,” “instruments of preservation and creativity,” or “occasions of grace”;³² and, for McCann, “Whether we like it or not, the original template for Western business corporations remains biblical and covenantal.”³³ In fact, Novak is the most articulate voice for this “theology of corporations”; he even insists that the corporation is a more illuminating metaphor for the “body of Christ” than the human body,³⁴ and thus “the best secular analogue to the church.”³⁵ Since their primary concern is *American* corporations, what is also common to North American neoconservative

²⁷ McCann and M.L. Brownsberger, “Management as a Social Practice,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 513.

²⁸ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 952.

²⁹ Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1978), p. 109.

³⁰ Stackhouse, *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era*, p. 32.

³¹ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, *passim*; *On Corporate Governance*, p. 31. Novak even applies Isaiah 53:2-3, which has been traditionally interpreted as the prediction of Jesus as suffering servant, to the modern business corporation, imagining it as “a much despised incarnation of God’s presence in this world.” (*Ibid.*, p. 33.)

³² Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, *passim*.

³³ McCann, “Reforming Wisdom from the East,” in *Christian Social Ethic in a Global Era*, p. 110.

³⁴ Novak, ed., *Democracy and Mediating Structures: A Theological Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1980), p. 199.

³⁵ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, p. 2.

theologians is their strong belief in “Americanism,” namely, according to McCann, “the experimental ‘new order of the ages,’ to which the American revolution had given birth,” and, according to Stackhouse, “the revolutionary American principle of ‘self-governing association’ and its extension to all the institutional sectors of society.”³⁶

Methodologically, North American neoconservative theologians vigorously adopt Weberian sociology, for they all find Max Weber’s work compatible with their Christian theology and ethics. For Stackhouse, although he sees Weber as being in error on some points, he agrees with Weber in his identifying “the power of the Puritan heritage as a major catalyst in economic life”;³⁷ for McCann, although he does not find Weber fully satisfying, he agrees that his assumption that all systems of political economy are rooted in the distinct histories of various religions is basically sound;³⁸ and for Novak, though he believes Weber was wrong in calling the “novel *Geist*” Protestant, he supports his identification of a moral and cultural dimension internal to capitalism.³⁹ As Weberian, they all believe that “the ideal modifies the material,”⁴⁰ that “Belief shapes culture more than culture shapes belief”;⁴¹ and hence that the primary task of theology and ethics is to find the “religious sources for business ethics.”⁴²

Theologically, North American neoconservative theologians, particularly McCann and Novak, passionately adopt Niebuhrian realism. Novak learned from Reinhold Niebuhr, whom he adores as “the man of practical wisdom,” how to place his theology

³⁶ See McCann, *New Experiment in Democracy: The Challenge for American Catholicism* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1987), p. 13.

³⁷ Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights*, p. 111. Stackhouse’s critique to Weber is that he did not see the “covenantal” notions as of equal importance in church, family, or political life, or the ways in which these affect economic developments.

³⁸ McCann, “Reforming Wisdom from the East,” in *Christian Social Ethic in a Global Era*, p. 96.

³⁹ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 7f.

⁴⁰ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. x.

⁴¹ Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” in *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era*, p. 43.

⁴² McCann, “Reforming Wisdom from the East,” in *Christian Social Ethic in a Global Era*, p. 109.

“on the lowly track of realism”⁴³ in order to “penetrate the utopianism, perfectionism, and moralistic passions sweeping through our highly educated and religious classes.”⁴⁴ For McCann, Christian realism is indispensable for exorcising “political religion,” such as liberation theology, which is indistinguishable from religious “fanaticism.”⁴⁵

North American neoconservative theology is also characterized by its non-biblical and non-confessional theology. In contrast to liberation theology, which has a strong biblical coloring, and in contrast to ecological theologies, which appeal to the Bible against itself, North American neoconservative theology appeals to Scripture the least. It is because, for Novak, “To accumulate biblical texts, written for a pre-democratic, pre-capitalist, pre-growth period of history, and then to leap from *that* context to today is a kind of fundamentalism.”⁴⁶ The point of his argument is that since Scripture has words of universal power, so it is a mistake to try to bind the cogency of Scripture to merely one system; hence, unlike liberation theologians who “err in binding Scripture to a socialist political economy,”⁴⁷ Novak refuses “to indulge in a parallel mistake of deducing a system of political economy from the texts of the Bible alone.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, Stackhouse’s public theology, in sharp contrast with liberation theology, is fundamentally a non-confessional theology, for he believes that in order to deal with worldly issues such as power and wealth in a political economy, theology must be a public discourse beyond a rationalization of private and particular faith, which is “confession.”⁴⁹ For Stackhouse,

⁴³ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 314.

⁴⁴ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁴⁵ McCann, *Christian Realism & Liberation Theology: Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), pp. 200, 201, 206, 228.

⁴⁶ Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, p. 37.

⁴⁷ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 335.

⁴⁸ Novak, “Political Economy in Our Time,” in *Three In One*, p. 182; *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 335.

⁴⁹ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. xi, 75, 94.

religion is primarily a “meaning system,”⁵⁰ and Christianity is basically a “metaphysical-moral vision.”⁵¹

The central theses of North American neoconservative theologians are: Capitalism is compatible with Catholicism “rightly understood” (Novak), or with the Calvinist-Puritan tradition of classical Protestantism (Stackhouse), or with an Americanist understanding of the Trinitarian vision of God (McCann). Needless to say, they do not agree with each other in every detail. For instance, one of Novak’s strong arguments is that Catholic theology is superior to the Protestant ethic in illuminating the essence of capitalism,⁵² in other words, the Catholic tradition, “freshly considered,” carries within itself a more powerful, fuller, and deeper ethic of capitalism than that of the first Puritans.⁵³ Moreover, the theological approaches supporting a capitalist political economy are very different: For Novak, the primary source for theological reflection on capitalism lies profoundly “within us,” within the creative intelligence of human beings; for Stackhouse, however, it is an absolutely transcendent “out there,” as “transcultural, transhistorical, and transexperiential criteria.” This is why Novak emphasizes moral-cultural systems, institutions, and habits that can help the human creativity “within us” to blossom, whereas Stackhouse emphasizes the incarnation of “trans-contextual norms” into the ethos of global civilization.⁵⁴

With this overview, let us now examine Novak, Stackhouse, and McCann respectively. I will focus on their theologies as much as possible. My basic task here is to

⁵⁰ Stackhouse, “The Hindu Ethic and Development: Western Views,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 376. This notion of religion as “meaning system” is in fact that of Weber, according to Stackhouse.

⁵¹ Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights*, p. 111.

⁵² Novak, “The Silent Artillery of Communism,” in *Three In One*, p. 291.

⁵³ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 232.

⁵⁴ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 213.

disclose their fundamental theological assumptions, presuppositions, and methodologies which stand behind their preferential option for capitalism, an ethic for production, and business corporations.

Michael Novak and Theology of “Creativity”

Novak defines his “theology of economics” as “creation theology” presenting it as the alternative to Latin American liberation theology. Unlike Stackhouse and McCann, however, Novak does not engage in a serious theological critique of liberation theology; rather, his criticism is primarily focused on the political economy of liberation theology. Briefly, the problem with liberation theology for Novak is that it says too much about theology but too little about “the institutions of liberty that will survive the revolution,”⁵⁵ and it says too much about poverty but too little about the causes of wealth.⁵⁶ Novak sees that liberation theologians rightly called attention to the problem but did not offer any answer.⁵⁷ Liberation theologians’ option for the poor *is* the correct option, but the real option for the poor is not just to cry “The poor! The poor!” but to substantially improve the lot of the poor through “all the creativity we possess,”⁵⁸ through the practical institutions that can really help the poor.⁵⁹ For Novak, the poor can be liberated not through socialist liberation from capitalist exploitation but through capitalistic revolution from traditional exploitation.⁶⁰ And, since God made the poor creative, the liberation of

⁵⁵ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, pp. 293f

⁵⁶ Novak. *Ibid.*, pp. 293f.

⁵⁷ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 155.

⁵⁸ Novak, *Freedom with Justice: Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), p. 164.

⁵⁹ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 237.

⁶⁰ Novak does not consider Latin American countries as capitalist nations proper; rather, the economic system of Latin America, because of its retaining of the aristocratic traditions of Europe, is “mercantilist”

the poor, insists Novak, is best achieved through empowering the poor to use their vast economic creativity.⁶¹ Notice that the term creativity is central to Novak.

Novak's alternative political economy is what he calls "democratic capitalism." By democratic capitalism, Novak means three systems (the political, the economic, and the cultural) in one—a polity respectful of the rights of the individual to life (the political), a predominantly market economy (the economic), and a system of cultural institutions moved by ideals of liberty and justice for all (the cultural).⁶² In other words, democratic capitalism is a "trinitarian" system that stands against the "monistic" system of socialism.⁶³ However, Novak refuses to identify democratic capitalism with *laissez faire* capitalism,⁶⁴ consciously distancing himself from the "radical capitalist ideology,"⁶⁵ or "libertarianism," which emphasizes total reliance on market mechanisms and economic reasoning alone.⁶⁶ The strength of Novak is that he consistently refuses to stand at one extreme. Novak is critical of both "radical individualism on the right" and

or, in Weber's phrase, "patrimonial." State controls and family heritage govern it; there are hardly any free markets or industry; there is not much of a middle class, little tradition of widespread home ownership, and only a little small, independent farming. (See Novak, ed., *Liberation South, Liberation North* [Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1981], p. 2.) In fact, Novak's argument resembles that of Reinhold Niebuhr who also argued that the poverty in Asia is not due to "capitalistic exploitation" but to "pre-capitalistic injustice" and "traditional exploitation." (See Niebuhr, "The Poverty of Asia and Communism," in *Christianity and Society*, Vol. 16, Winter 1950-51, quoted from Charles C. Brown, ed., *A Reinhold Niebuhr Reader*, pp. 80-82.)

⁶¹ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, pp. 47, 95. This is why Novak argues that it is wrong to believe that wealth trickles down but it percolates up. For Novak, the creation of wealth starts from below, and proceeds by way of invention. (Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 216.)

⁶² Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 14.

⁶³ Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, pp. 112-113.

⁶⁴ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, p. 52.

⁶⁵ In fact, the phrase, "radical capitalist ideology," is that of the Pope John Paul II's. In his social encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II notes three moral limits of the free market: (1) many human needs are not met by the market but lie beyond it; (2) some goods "cannot and must not be bought and sold"; and (3) whole groups of people are without the resources to enter the market and need nonmarket assistance. (See Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 135.)

⁶⁶ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 134. For Novak, "libertarians" are only the other extreme of democratic socialists: Just as democratic socialists argue for more substantive political controls upon economic activities, so libertarians argue for the maximum possible economic liberty, believing that the market is the best, most reliable, and most creative servant of the common good. While resisting both, Novak puts less faith in political activism, and more faith in economic activism. He admits that the fear of the state places him on the "neo-conservative" side of the debate. (Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, p. 177.)

“collectivism on the left”; he is also critical of both the Kantian sense of self as independent and autonomous individual and the Protestant reformers’ sense of self as conscientious individual who is the direct locus of divine grace without institutional mediation;⁶⁷ hence, somewhere in between the right and the left, in between individualism and collectivism, Novak looks for a third way characterized by “a rich pattern of association,” or “a community of collegueship, task-oriented, goal-directed, freely entered into and freely left.”⁶⁸ Needless to say, the best of such an association or community is the private business corporation, for Novak, for it is “a mediating structure” between the individual and the state.⁶⁹ Novak is not for a “self-enclosed, self-centered individualism” but for “the common good”;⁷⁰ and he is convinced that the common good can be best achieved through the business corporation, “the critical institution of civil society.”⁷¹

Novak is confident that capitalism is a superior economic system, but the problem is that it enormously suffers from “an insufficient moral vision,”⁷² and, as a consequence, American corporations suffer from “a lack of ideological self-consciousness.”⁷³ Accordingly, Max Weber is significant for Novak, because he was the one who detected “a novel *Geist* or spirit or cultural inspiration” in capitalism.⁷⁴ Then, as a Catholic theologian, Novak’s sense of mission is clear: To reveal that capitalism needs “the Catholic sense of community, of transcendence, of realism” and Catholicism needs, vice

⁶⁷ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. xix, 51-52.

⁶⁸ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, pp. 135, 137.

⁶⁹ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, pp. 127, 136.

⁷⁰ This is the basic argument of Novak’s *Free Persons and the Common Good* (New York: Madison Books, 1989) in particular.

⁷¹ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, p. 136.

⁷² Novak, ed., *Democracy and Mediating Structures: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 204.

⁷³ Novak, *The Future of the Corporation* (Washington D.C.: The AEI Press, 1996), p. 3.

⁷⁴ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 7.

versa, “the institutions of liberalism for the incarnation in society of its own vision of the dignity of the human person”⁷⁵--in short, “a marriage between the liberal tradition and the Catholic tradition.”⁷⁶ Indeed, he has become one of the most articulate advocates for this marriage among Catholic theologians.

To understand the theological core of Novak, however, we must revisit the younger, radical Novak, before his conversion to democratic capitalism. As it is well known, Novak began his theological career as a self-professed radical. Before his conversion to capitalism, Novak was one of the most pungent critics of the American way of life and its system: He viewed, for example, the American system as “racist, counterrevolutionary, and militarist,”⁷⁷ and the American Myth of progress, which aims at acquiring power over nature, as “a nightmare for the entire planet.”⁷⁸ This radical Novak even spoke of sexual intercourse as the “awe, joy, and holiness” through which religious language becomes meaningful again.⁷⁹ And since he was deeply sympathetic with and supportive of the student movement in the 1960s in America, in his *A Theology for Radical Politics* (1969) he tried to introduce “a radical Christian theology” to support such student movements and the “New Left.”⁸⁰ However, as he describes it, “so many things that seemed real and immediate in 1968 have withered away like grass,”⁸¹ and in the midst of what he calls “the experience of nothingness,” he began to see that “radical” was a phony term for moral privilege.⁸² Finally, in 1979, he violated “an important

⁷⁵ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 33.

⁷⁶ Novak, *Free Persons and the Common Good*, p. xi.

⁷⁷ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), p. 69.

⁷⁸ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, pp. 104, 105; *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove: An Invitation to Religious Studies* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), p. 203.

⁷⁹ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 104.

⁸⁰ Novak's *A Theology for Radical Politics* (1969) is the outcome of this effort.

⁸¹ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, p. xii.

⁸² Novak, *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

Catholic taboo” by giving the first public defense of capitalism, speaking of “the need to transform our approach by grasping capitalism’s *religious* possibilities.”⁸³ He then excommunicated himself from “the Catholic left”⁸⁴ and converted from democratic socialism to democratic capitalism. Novak thereafter preferred his self-designation as “neoliberal,” meaning “a revision of the liberal tradition, enlarging it to include *conservative* ideas like community, tradition, faith, and realism about society and its mediating structures.”⁸⁵

Indeed, Novak has dramatically altered his politico-economic views; still, in my assessment, his theological views, for the most part, have remained, and there is a fundamental theological continuity between the radical and moderate Novak.⁸⁶ This means that the radical Novak was “predestined” to become a moderate conservative *because of*, not in spite of, his theology. Novak supports my point: As he proclaims, his previous attachment to the radical left was only “a matter of intellectual conviction, *against my own conservative temperament.*”⁸⁷ This conservative temperament, as I will show, is the main body of the iceberg underneath his politico-economic options. “Most of my many and vocal critics,” says Novak, “do not fault me for theological deviation; they

⁸³ Novak, “Controversial Engagements,” in *Three In One*, p. 317.

⁸⁴ Novak, *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 117. Emphasis added.

⁸⁶ Novak himself admits that he has not altered “the fundamentals of my religious faith.” (Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 11.) According to him, there are six permanent themes in his work: (1) “The death of humanism under the onslaught of the Enlightenment”; (2) God’s love as *caritas* understood as “a dark and terrible form of realism”; (3) the human “unlimited, unquenchable drive to ask question[s], the eros of inquiry”; and (4) emphasis on incarnation rather than on eschatology; (5) the importance of “the body, the flesh, the senses”; and (6) human beings as “intelligent subjectivity.” (See Novak, “Controversial Engagements,” in *Three In One*, *passim*.)

⁸⁷ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 321. Emphases added.

fault me for breaking ranks on politics.”⁸⁸ Yet, let me attempt, in this section, to clearly illustrate Novak’s “theological deviation,” from my own perspective.

The starting point of Novak’s entire theological quest is what he calls the “crisis of unbelief.”⁸⁹ “In our generation,” says Novak, “there appears to be a crisis of unbelief, as years ago there was a crisis of belief.”⁹⁰ By crisis of unbelief, Novak means “the death of humanism under the onslaught of the Enlightenment”;⁹¹ by death of humanism, he means what the French philosopher Albert Camus called “the central ethical problem of our century,” which is “the problem of meaninglessness: of nihilism.”⁹² See to it that his fundamental problem was neither “the death of God”⁹³ (as of traditional theologies) nor “the death of human beings” (as of liberation theology), but *nihilism*. Against this problem of meaninglessness in his times, Novak proclaims: “we have a civilization to build” and “*now* is the time to build” and “to create.”⁹⁴ “To create” is the key and the most original clue to Novak’s creation theology. D. Stephen Long is wrong to view Novak’s passionate defense of capitalism as undertaken by drawing upon the doctrine of creation.⁹⁵ As I will demonstrate, Novak’s consistent defense of capitalism is not based on any Christian doctrine of creation but fundamentally on a “philosophic belief” in God and on an anthropology that strictly emphasizes human creativity and intelligence. In this regard, McCann is right to call Novak’s creation theology “a theology of ‘creativity.’”⁹⁶

⁸⁸ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 11.

⁸⁹ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief: A Philosophy of Self-Knowledge* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 20, 164.

⁹⁰ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹¹ Novak, “Controversial Engagements,” in *Three In One*, p. 314.

⁹² Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, p. x.

⁹³ For Novak, “He [God] is not dead; we have been dead.” (Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 156.)

⁹⁴ Novak, *A Time to Build* (New York, Macmillan, 1967), pp. 3, 4.

⁹⁵ D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy: Theology and the Market* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 36.

⁹⁶ McCann and Charles R. Strain, *Polity and Praxis: A Program for American Practical Theology* (New York: Winston Press, 1985), p. 170.

Since the fundamental problem for Novak is not the death of God but the death of humanism, Novak's primary concern is not religious faith but *philosophic belief*.⁹⁷ Never satisfied with the notion that God can be known only by faith, or by revelation, Novak strongly emphasizes that God can be and must be known apart from faith. Clearly, Novak refuses to separate reason and faith;⁹⁸ yet, when he speaks of faith, he means primarily neither religious faith nor biblical faith but philosophic belief defined as "a way to the living God through the use of human intelligence, through reflection upon one's own experience and identity."⁹⁹ Why did Novak oppose religious or biblical faith so strongly? He believed that the religious idea of God can be easily used as "an instrument of worldly ambition," and that biblical faith can only illuminate the experience of the biblical community.¹⁰⁰ As we will also see, Novak does not appeal to Jesus either, for he is convinced that Christology is too particular for a universal morality which aims to include non-Christians. Therefore, for Novak, the locus of theological inquiry must begin not with a God of religion, but with the God of philosophy, who, unlike the religious God, "remains hidden, and does not reveal himself."¹⁰¹ But then, how do we know such a hidden God without divine revelation? How can we reach such a non-revealing God? This is a fundamental intellectual problem for Novak in his quest for a philosophic God. And Novak has found the locus for such a God as not far "out there" but right here

⁹⁷ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 44.

⁹⁸ Novak and Jana Novak, *Tell Me Why: A Father Answers His Daughter's Questions About God* (New York: Pocket Book, 1998), p. 179.

⁹⁹ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 44, 52. For Novak, there are two roads toward God: One goes by way of a narrative, taking a Bible in hand and telling the story exemplifying who God is; the other is philosophical, through thinking about our experiences of life. (Novak, *Tell Me Why*, p. 68.)

¹⁰⁰ Novak, "Truth and Liberty: The Present Crisis in Our Culture," in *A Free Society Reader: Principles for the New Millennium* (New York: Lexington Books, 2000), p. 280. In fact, Novak does not believe that "belief in God is a necessary prerequisite for the defense of the free society." He does not believe that only a theist can justify his/her commitment to the cause of a free society, although he sees that a whole society over several generations can hardly find a sustainable intellectual basis for the free society on an atheistic premise.

¹⁰¹ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 39, 53.

“within us” in the human being him/herself who he sees as “the interpretive key to the universe and to the presence and activity of God.”¹⁰²

Anthropology is the key to Novak’s entire theology. For Novak, human beings are “the most complicated form of life found on earth” and thus they are “the most compelling analogies for God.”¹⁰³ That is, the human person is “a sign of God in history,” or *Theophanous*, i.e., “a shining-through of God’s life in history.”¹⁰⁴ Accordingly:

The best guide we have for thinking about *what God is like*... is the most accurate notion we have of *what man is like*; in all this universe, the human phenomenon is the most significant... Knowledge of self and the knowledge of God mount, one after the other, in an ascending, alternating spiral; and in proportion as we discover who we are, we are made ready to discover who God is... In order to know God, where better can man begin than with a more accurate knowledge of himself? ... Reflection upon my own identity draws me toward belief... In discovering one’s own identity, one discovers God.¹⁰⁵

Here, the possibility of belief in God is predicated on the human identity question, “Who Am I?” Actually, the context of this identity question goes back to Mississippi in 1964 when hundreds of young Americans arrived (and later journeyed into Harlem and Chicago’s Uptown) and met “an underdeveloped country in the midst of our own country.”¹⁰⁶ There, they experienced an identity crisis and question, “Who Am I?” Indeed, the human identity question became so crucial to Novak that he even defines theology as “a vision of man and his ultimate commitments,”¹⁰⁷ or as a “critical concern with alternative images of human identity, human community, and the relation of man to

¹⁰² Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 189.

¹⁰³ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁴ Novak, “Free Persons and the Common Good,” in *Three in One*, p. 85.

¹⁰⁵ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 81, 122, 158, 182.

¹⁰⁶ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 34.

¹⁰⁷ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

his world.”¹⁰⁸ The primary focus and subject of Novak’s theology is not God but the human being. This is a unique view of theology, and a view that begs the question: what “sign of God” does Novak concretely identify in human beings?

For Novak, nothing can be more godlike than “the human capacity for insight and choice.”¹⁰⁹ That is, by virtue of these two capacities, “to reflect and to choose,” human beings are most fittingly called “created in the image of God,”¹¹⁰ because those two capacities imply that we are free and responsible—which is Aquinas’ attribute to God.¹¹¹ What Novak specifically emphasizes here is that these fundamental human acts of inquiring and choosing are “intelligent decisions,”¹¹² and that human beings are fundamentally “intelligent subjectivity”¹¹³ who always inquires.¹¹⁴ In other words, fundamental to human beings is “the drive to understand,”¹¹⁵ namely “the radical, unstructured *why* at the heart of our conscious life,”¹¹⁶ the “instinct of the spirit deeper

¹⁰⁸ Novak, *American Philosophy and the Future: Essays for a New Generation* (New York: Scribner, 1968), p. 17. Elsewhere, theology is “a systematic articulation of a sense of reality, stories, and symbols.” As I will show in the next chapter, this concept of theology influenced the Goddess thea-logian Carol P. Christ. (Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove*, p. 181.)

¹⁰⁹ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 109.

¹¹⁰ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 115.

¹¹¹ Novak, “Free Persons and the Common Good,” in *Three In One*, p. 85.

¹¹² Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 26.

¹¹³ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 16. By “intelligent,” Novak does not mean in the utilitarian sense of skill or technique; rather, his primary concern is “knowledge by connaturality” and “wisdom.” (See Novak, “Controversial Engagement,” in *Three In One*, p. 319.)

¹¹⁴ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 109.

¹¹⁵ Novak learned this term and the idea of “the drive to question” from his mentor, Bernard Lonergan. Furthermore, in using the language of “story,” “symbol,” “myth,” and “the drive of inquiry,” Novak is thoroughly indebted to Aristotle’s notion of “*phronesis*” (practical wisdom), John Henry Newman’s “illative sense,” Jacques Maritain’s “knowledge by connaturality” and “creative intuition,” Maurice Blondel’s conception of “action,” Bernard Lonergan’s “insight, judgment, unrestricted desire to know, self-appropriation, and conversion of consciousness,” Joseph Marechal’s point of departure for metaphysics, and Reinhold Niebuhr’s “self” and “the dramas of a history,” and so forth. (Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove*, p. 215.)

¹¹⁶ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 102.

than any other instinct, the source of all our restlessness, [and] the seed of our transcendence.”¹¹⁷ Novak discovers God deep in that drive to understand:

Truth is the light of God within us. For us its humble mode is inquiry, seeking, restlessness. Innermost at the core of us, even as children, is an irrepressible drive to ask questions. That unlimited drive is God’s dynamic presence in us, the seed of our dissatisfaction with everything less than infinite.¹¹⁸

Then, God is not “alien ourselves, ‘out there,’ like a ghostly object far in space”;¹¹⁹ for Novak, that notion of God was Modernity’s mistake and its failure both of intellect and of imagination (thus, the crisis of unbelief).¹²⁰ To our surprise, however, Novak denies that God can be reached by our bodies, emotions, imaginations, or even feeling, because, according to Novak, “God is not embodied”;¹²¹ instead, we have the capacity to know God, to reach God only by our “unlimited hunger to understand, to raise questions, to inquire,”¹²² because God is nothing but “the prompter of the drive to understand, and its fulfillment,”¹²³ and because faith is nothing but the “force of questioning itself.”¹²⁴ This is quite a novel statement indeed. Novak here says that God is not “out there” rather profoundly immanent “within us,” but still not embodied in our bodily emotions, imaginations, or feelings. I do not know how to interpret this, but what is clear, as we will see, is that this notion of an immanent but disembodied God is the seed for Novak’s discontent with feminist and ecological theologies.

¹¹⁷ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 27.

¹¹⁸ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, p. 129.

¹¹⁹ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Novak, *Tell My Why*, p. 70.

¹²² Novak, *Ibid.*

¹²³ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 109.

¹²⁴ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 27.

Because of his emphasis on immanence, the possibilities of ethical action for Novak do not come through intuition into some transcendental or abstract realm, but through reflection upon our own immanent nature.¹²⁵ In that matter, Novak follows Aristotle who refused to appeal to “obligation,” “duty,” or “a commanding God” for ethical action; thus, refusing to examine “rules of laws,” “imperatives,” or “obligations” for ethical action,¹²⁶ Novak rejects the prescriptive ethic of Kant and the Protestant ethic of duty.¹²⁷ Therefore, unlike Stackhouse who, as we will see, appeals to the transcendental norms according to Protestant-Puritan tradition, Novak contends that the criterion of ethical action should be the judgment of what Aristotle called the *phronimos*, namely “the good, wise man,” or “the sensitive and intelligent agent.”¹²⁸ In Aristotelian ethics, according to Novak, a person must invent his/her own identity; therefore, the ethics must be “an ethic of self-liberation,” “an ethic of self-mastery.”¹²⁹ As the guiding metaphors of this kind of ethic are “craftsmanship,” “artistic skill,” and “athletic excellence,” Novak emphasizes that the source of ethical action must be the “hidden, inner springs of [one’s] own spontaneities,” “invention,” “creation,” and “possibility.”¹³⁰ So, it is not coincidence that for Novak the spirit of democratic capitalism is the spirit of “development, risk, experiment, and adventure”;¹³¹ capitalism, for Novak, is that it is the best system for human creativity, spontaneity, and invention.

So far, we have heard from Novak positive terms like creativity, spontaneity, and invention, etc. However, that is only half the story. What is *equally* important for Novak

¹²⁵ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, p. 71.

¹²⁶ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 73; *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 39.

¹²⁸ Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, pp. 75, 77.

¹²⁹ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹³⁰ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹³¹ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 48.

is that the God we find in human creativity and intelligence is not the God of “the fanciful, the logical, [and] the sentimental” but of “the real evil-ridden world,”¹³² of “storms, disease, unrealized possibilities, dashed expectations, cruel deaths, and surds which mark *a world of probabilities* such as ours.”¹³³ That is, the God of human creativity is also the God of the world of probabilities. Here, we have another keyword for Novak’s entire theology, i.e., “probabilities,” which he has adopted from his mentor Bernard Lonergan. Following Lonergan, Novak views our world as a world of “emergent probability,” in which “human history is open to new futures, *yet* the sequences of any one future depend[s] upon the fulfillment of prior conditions in preceding sequences”; that is, it is a world “open, uncertain, not perfectly stable, subject both to progress *and* to decline,”¹³⁴ a world which does not guarantee automatic progress, because, “Sin is a factoring human history.”¹³⁵ To clarify this worldview, Novak asserts that the world of emergent probability is inconsistent with the idea of Moltmann’s “future,” because the idea of emergent probability is not guaranteeing that the future will be better than the present--though it is not ruling out all hope of some improvement.¹³⁶ In contrast to Moltmann, Novak emphasizes the pessimistic, realistic side.¹³⁷

What is the significance of the notion of the world as emergent probability? In my close reading of Novak, it is this notion of the world as emergent probability, not the

¹³² Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 164.

¹³³ Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 130f. My emphases.

¹³⁴ Novak, “On the Governability of Democracies,” in *Three In One*, p. 36. Emphases added.

¹³⁵ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 80. Still, Novak does not accept that human beings are totally deprived.

¹³⁶ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, p. 22.

¹³⁷ Also distinguishing it from the God of classical rationalism, Novak argues that the God of “a world of probabilities, risk, striving, and failure,” is congruent with the Hebrew God who is “a God of particulars, contingents and singulars, not solely the God of unchanging universe.” (See Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 130-131, 170; “What the World Owes Judaism,” in *Morals and Markets*, Jonathan Sacks [London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1999], p. 45.)

creation stories in Genesis chapter 1 or 2, which plays the central role in Novak's creation theology and his democratic capitalism. According to this worldview of emergent probability, "Creation is unfinished" and "Nature is *not* regarded as achieved, complete, [or] finished."¹³⁸ This notion of unfinished creation, according to Novak, is "a moral [and] theological breakthrough," since the quiet stability of the medieval vision of order has been broken through it.¹³⁹ By unfinished creation, of course, Novak is not implying an evolutionary sense of creation/nature. Creation, for Novak, means "all the possibilities of wealth in the world the Creator designed," but it is unfinished, because, "The Creator locked great riches in nature, riches to be discovered only gradually through human effort,"¹⁴⁰ and because, "This potential was hidden for thousands of years until human discovery began to release portions of it for human benefit."¹⁴¹ How is this related to capitalist economic order? According to Novak:

[T]he capitalist order was a value-conferring order. Under the aegis of capitalism, tremendous value was conferred upon parts of nature which had never been valued before. Black liquid [oil]... any number of metals, minerals, sound waves, light rays: humble elements of nature, which never were valued before, were made objects of value, and objects of human betterment. It is as though creation was left in an unfinished state, as though human beings were called forth to be co-creators and to discover values in what nature itself wasted, polluted, destroyed, and abandoned recklessly.¹⁴²

This idea is indeed provocative. Is creation, if left to itself, incomplete *until* and *unless* human beings bring forth its hidden potentialities, which are waiting to be discovered by

¹³⁸ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 73.

¹³⁹ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁰ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, p. 37.

¹⁴¹ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 118f.

human intelligence?¹⁴³ Is this not a notion that subordinates God's creation to human will and subjectivity? However, more surprisingly, Novak does not shy away from the following answer: "The way God works in history [is] now to be thought of as progressive, open, *subject to human liberty and diligence*."¹⁴⁴ This is indeed a shocking claim. Novak says that God is subject to human liberty, that creation is subject to human beings who are at *full* liberty to fashion God's creation for their own benefit and purpose. Novak sometimes uses the word "co-creation" and gives some qualification in that humans are not creators in the same sense as God is, for we do not make things out of nothing;¹⁴⁵ still, what is consistently and emphatically stressed in all of Novak's writing is a fundamental anthropological claim that the human being is "Man the maker" (*homo faber*),¹⁴⁶ "Man the discoverer,"¹⁴⁷ and "Man the creator" (*homo creator*).¹⁴⁸ What is also thoroughly emphasized is that every human being is "an original source of creativity,"¹⁴⁹ in that each human being acts in a self-planned, creative, intelligent way.¹⁵⁰ In my reading of Novak, this fundamental anthropological claim precedes Novak's reference to the biblical creation story that human beings are made in the image of God; this *a priori* anthropological claim is then complemented by a Jewish-Christian anthropology which, according to Novak, stresses the creative subjectivity of the human person.¹⁵¹

In Novak's anthropological claim, human creativity represented by human intelligence is everything. And this is why Novak's definition of capitalism is all about

¹⁴³ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁴ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, p. 177.

¹⁴⁶ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 161.

¹⁴⁷ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, p. 124.

¹⁴⁸ Novak, "The Love That Moves the Sun," in *A Free Society Reader*, p. 101.

¹⁴⁹ Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, pp. 77, 78.

¹⁵⁰ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 161.

¹⁵¹ See Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. xvi.

creativity and nothing but creativity, which comes from the human head. For Novak, what is new about capitalism is that it is “the first mind-centered system,” constituted by social institutions that support human creativity, invention, discovery, and enterprise.¹⁵² Accordingly, human labor, nature, or any other economic factors are only secondary.¹⁵³ Defining capitalism by the etymology of the term “capital” (i.e., *caput* in Latin which means “head”), Novak emphasizes that the primary form of capital is idea,¹⁵⁴ and thus that capitalism depends on the “Don Quixote factor[s]” such as discovery, invention, serendipity, and surprise,¹⁵⁵ and others like intelligence, invention, and imagination.¹⁵⁶ In such capitalism, the chief cause of wealth is not material things material but knowledge, skill, and know-how.¹⁵⁷ Here, in this understanding of capitalism, there is indeed no room for the use of terms like “class,” “exploitation,” “colonization,” or “slavery” to explain the cause of wealth. Novak’s Don Quixote capitalism may be true for some successful individuals; but will it also be true for those who have historically been subjugated?

Creation is unfinished, incomplete, and waiting to be touched by human beings for its completion, according to Novak; however, what actually puzzles us most is that Novak assures at the same time the basic goodness of creation and the “already good, already gracious, [and] already redeemed” world.¹⁵⁸ Incomplete but already redeemed creation? How can one make sense out of it? Is there not a contradiction between the

¹⁵² Novak, “The Love That Moves the Sun,” in *A Free Society Reader*, pp. 102f. For Novak, capitalism is not a term defined by Marx as (a) private property, (b) market exchange, and (c) private accumulation or profits. Novak’s argument is that this definition can be applied to virtually every economic system in history, even in biblical times.

¹⁵³ Novak argues that labor is not the source of economic value; instead, the source of economic value is human intellect. Thus, the labor theory of value, for Novak, is only a fundamental and serious error in Marx.

¹⁵⁴ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, p. 41.

¹⁵⁵ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁶ Novak, ed., *Democracy and Mediating Structures: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 197.

¹⁵⁷ Novak, “Solidarity in a Time of Globalization,” in *Three In One*, p. 298.

¹⁵⁸ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 118.

world as emergent probability and the world as already redeemed? In my view, this contradiction has to do with Novak's Christology, doctrine of grace, and notion of God as Providence and Caritas.

Christology plays no affirmative role in Novak's theology, because Novak believes that Christology is too particular for a universal morality.¹⁵⁹ Jesus is not attractive to Novak because, "too many innocents died on account of him, too many horrors have been for centuries committed in his name,"¹⁶⁰ and because the historical Jesus has been used as "a mysteriously attractive model for ethical action,"¹⁶¹ in a manner that overlooks the omnipresence of Jesus.¹⁶² For Novak, God exists outside the Bible and is revealed through the work of creation ("general revelation").¹⁶³ And since *all* things were made through Jesus according to the prologue of John, Jesus is present in "every person, thing, and event in history," even when he is not named.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, "Christians do not 'bring' Jesus to the world [because] he is already there."¹⁶⁵ In short, by virtue of the omnipresence of Jesus, "All things are graced," "Grace is everywhere," "all of creation had been redeemed," and "the fact that anything is, it is already good, already gracious, already redeemed."¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, questionably, Novak insists at the same time that the *concrete* world of grace is "a world of contingency, dishonesty, betrayal, irrationality, tragedy, absurdity,"¹⁶⁷ and thus that redemption must not bring "escape from

¹⁵⁹ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁶⁰ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Novak, *A Time to Build*, p. 287.

¹⁶² Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 108.

¹⁶³ Novak, *Tell My Why*, p. 65. Novak does not deny that Jesus is "a privileged revelation" but his emphasis is that "the Christ is not his only revelation." (Novak, *A Time to Build*, pp. 6, 7.)

¹⁶⁴ Novak, *A Time to Build*, p. 6; *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 108.

¹⁶⁵ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 120.

¹⁶⁶ Novak, *A Time to Build*, pp. 6, 7; *A Theology for Radical Politics*, pp. 108, 118.

¹⁶⁷ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 115.

absurdity, but reconciliation.”¹⁶⁸ How can we explain the contradiction between the ubiquity of grace and the contingency of grace? Is Novak applying double standards? Nowhere does Novak recognize or solve this tension. Instead, Novak draws two important conclusions from the Christological assertion and the doctrine of grace: “Creation must not be subordinated to redemption,”¹⁶⁹ and Christianity is not a religion of salvation but “a religion of hard and painful reality.”¹⁷⁰

Novak’s Christology emphasizes “the presence of Christ in daily physical life” and “the incarnation of Christ in culture”¹⁷¹ rather than eschatology. The reason for his emphasis on the incarnational and rejection of the eschatological is that “the real world itself is no utopia.”¹⁷² Novak argues that the incarnation is a doctrine of hope but not of utopia, and the point of incarnation is “to respect the world as it is, to acknowledge its limits, [and] to disbelieve any promises that the world is now or ever will be transformed into the City of God.”¹⁷³ But then, is there not the danger of sacralizing the world as it is? This seems not to be Novak’s primary concern, and he has rather a good theological reason for despising any utopian dream: “If God did not send legions of angels to change the world for Him [Jesus on the cross], why should we idly dream of sudden change for us?”; “If Jesus could not effect [the transformation of the world], how shall we?”¹⁷⁴ If God resisted such “perfectionist impulse,”¹⁷⁵ we must imitate such God:

God did not make the world perfect, but shot through with contingency, failure, error, evil, and malice... The Creator, making the world, saw that

¹⁶⁸ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁶⁹ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁷¹ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 168, 215.

¹⁷² Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 215.

¹⁷³ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 341.

¹⁷⁴ Novak, *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 32.

it was good, not perfect... That is, ironically, the way God is perfect. So when we are told, "Be ye perfect, as God is perfect," we must imitate God. The Lord God could have created a perfect world, but did not; He allowed for the disobedience of Adam and Eve and all the rest of us. It is our vocation to bring the good things of creation, which are never perfect, to fruition.¹⁷⁶

For Novak, the perfect is "the enemy of the good";¹⁷⁷ accordingly, Christianity should be "a religion of wisdom, not rage; of realism, not perfectionism."¹⁷⁸ For Novak, God is the God of Providence (the wise and knowing—provident—Creator),¹⁷⁹ of *Phronimos* (the practical provident intelligence),¹⁸⁰ of Prudence (practical wisdom),¹⁸¹ and of *Caritas* which is "a dark and terrible form of realism, best symbolized by the Cross."¹⁸² After all, God's love, for Novak, is realistic love.¹⁸³

In my view, there is a fundamental discontinuity between Novak's doctrine of ubiquitous grace and his worldview of contingency and imperfectness. Nevertheless, these notions of the ubiquity of grace, of incarnation, and of God have important implications for Novak's political economy and understanding of social change. Since grace is everywhere, Novak asserts that grace also works in economics and there are "signs of grace in the corporation."¹⁸⁴ Since the point of incarnation is to respect the world as it is, Novak affirms that there is "a greater hope in a more realistic effort to reform and reconstruct society through the unique combination of capitalism and

¹⁷⁶ Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 32.

¹⁷⁷ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁸ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 10.

¹⁷⁹ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 208.

¹⁸⁰ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 112.

¹⁸¹ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁸² Novak, "Controversial Engagements," in *Three In One*, p. 316.

¹⁸³ Novak, *Ibid.*; *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 353; "The Love That Moves the Sun," in *Three In One*, pp. 99, 100.

¹⁸⁴ Novak, *Toward a Theology for the Corporation*, p. 37.

democracy that we have been lucky enough to inherit in America.”¹⁸⁵ Since God is God of *caritas*, we must build “an economy of *caritas*,” which respects the human person as *homo creator*.¹⁸⁶ Since God is God of *Phronimos* (the practical provident intelligence), not of *Nous* (the all-seeing, commanding intelligence) which is the image of God in socialist thought, we must opt for the free market and democratic capitalism in which practical insights are the primary source of wealth.¹⁸⁷

In all of these arguments, we can sense the definite influence of Niebuhr on Novak’s thought. However, from the outset, Novak was more attracted to Albert Camus than Niebuhr. Camus, according to Novak, was the number one hero for young Americans in the 1960s,¹⁸⁸ and it was Camus who inspired Novak to question the whole American system, including its values and ideals.¹⁸⁹ Most importantly, Camus taught Novak to deeply appreciate nature. Camus saw the human being as “an organic fruit of nature, a child of earth,” and felt we were intoxicated by too much history and have repressed nature.¹⁹⁰ Following Camus, Novak became skeptical of the German secular discovery of historical consciousness, with its emphasis on the future,¹⁹¹ and of Moltmann’s eschatology.¹⁹² He believed that Christians must refuse to surrender the present moment to the future and that visions of the future must be part of our total experience of the senses and emotions.¹⁹³ Like Camus, the chief task of Novak was to

¹⁸⁵ Novak, “Controversial Engagements,” in *Three In One*, p. 318.

¹⁸⁶ Novak, “The Love That Moves the Sun,” in *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁸⁷ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 112.

¹⁸⁸ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 34. Along with Camus, Novak says that he had found “spiritual kinship” in Bertrand Russell, Walter Kaufmann, Sidney Hook, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Gerhard Szczesny as well. (See *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.)

¹⁸⁹ See Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove*, pp. 202-205.

¹⁹⁰ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 94.

¹⁹¹ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁹² Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹⁹³ Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 110f.

reconcile history with nature¹⁹⁴ and to make Christianity more open to nature.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, Novak once had a profound ecological sense of the existence of human beings: Citing Alan Watts' poetic phrase, "As an apple tree *apples*, so the universe *peoples*," Novak assured that the human is "a part of nature, brought forth from the universe like fruit from a tree."¹⁹⁶

However, this potential for an eco-friendly theology did not take root in Novak; rather, Novak's emerging theology took a 180-degree turn to a creation theology that gives full sanction to an unlimited exploitation of nature. This radical turn, in my view, has to do with Niebuhr—specifically, Novak's own interpretation and appropriation of Niebuhr. While the younger and radical Novak was speaking of the need to turn to nature,¹⁹⁷ he was already under the influence of Bernard Lonergan's idea of the world as emergent probability. As we have seen, Lonergan's notion of the world as emergent probability has two sides: The world is open to new and uncertain futures (the utopian side), *yet* automatic progress is not guaranteed, because the real, concrete world is a world of evil (realistic side).¹⁹⁸ In my view, it was from Niebuhr that Novak found the courage to grasp the latter notion and got out of the orbit of Camus' influence.

Once out of Camus' eco-friendly philosophy, Novak's view on nature radically changed. Although the Judeo-Christian sense of history was already playing a large role in the views of the younger and radical Novak,¹⁹⁹ after his conversion to capitalism, Novak expressed very antagonistic views on nature and ecological theologies:

¹⁹⁴ Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove*, p. 211.

¹⁹⁵ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 96, 98, 100.

¹⁹⁷ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁹⁸ Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 326.

¹⁹⁹ It should be noted that while Novak was greatly attracted to Camus, he was also attracted at the same time to the Judeo-Christian sense of time, which gave history and human destiny "a point, and thus a

[E]cological consciousness today displays all the hallmarks of a gnostic religion. As if we had witnessed the death of the real God, Mother Nature herself has now been set up as an idol... Before her, the poor of this world are expected to grovel, since economic growth must be sacrificed at her altars. Moreover, this Mother Nature is now prettified with cosmetics. It is forgotten that down through history she has exercised, in earthquake and hurricane, plague and drought, pestilential wind and poisonous water, a bitter threat to human survival. This goddess of the new fundamentalism has taken millions of infants in childbirth, wiped out whole cities with smallpox, infiltrated consuming tapeworms into the bellies of children in the jungles, and for most of human history has cut down with her scythe so many so recklessly as to keep the average age of human death below eighteen.²⁰⁰

Here, nature is viewed as the enemy of human survival. And the implication of this biting view of nature for political economy is quite obvious. Since "Nature was raw and cruel to nature [itself] long before human beings intervened," Novak argues that it is wrong to believe that environmental degradation was brought about by human intervention or by industrialization.²⁰¹ Accordingly, any limit-to-growth argument makes no sense to Novak. In opposition to Moltmann, who denounced the idol of growth, expansion, and exploitation, Novak insists that the limits of the earth are not yet known, because they are only "a frame of reference bounded by one time" and, in the light of another time, today's limit marks a frontier.²⁰² For the same reason, the Club of Rome, insists Novak, made an elementary mistake by drastically exaggerating the scarcity of material resources, while

conception of progress." (Novak, "What the World Owes Judaism," in *Morals and Markets*, p. 44.) In his *A Time to Build* (1964), he was already referring largely to the Judeo tradition insisting upon human responsibility in history. For him, "To be good is to be creative, to do more than conventions insist, to risk one's present security" and "To create is to make something which did not exist before." (p. 324.) In his *A Theology for Radical Politics* (1969), Novak also spoke of the Jewish understating of time that requires "the expectation of a future different from the present." (p. 20.) In his *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove* (1971), Novak's words become even stronger: "There is no more subtle and illusory tyranny than the tyranny of the present." (p. 198.) How then can we explain this co-existence of Camus' call to return to a Greek sense of nature and a Judeo-Christian sense of history? I can only say that in the Novak before conversion, everything is mixed up, ideas struggling with one another to be the first, just like Esau and Jacob.

²⁰⁰ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 123.

²⁰¹ Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 119.

²⁰² Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, pp. 71, 265.

overlooking the fact that human knowledge, not natural resources, are a more important source of wealth and that the earth is “a place in which to exercise human powers of inquiry, creativity, and invention.”²⁰³ For Novak, economy is essentially the transformation of natural forces and natural goods into forces and goods that serve humanity.²⁰⁴ Accordingly, for Novak, the idea of “subsistence living” or a “philosophy of basic needs” is infantile, because “human beings are not cattle.”²⁰⁵ Therefore, Novak emphasizes that throughout history, nature has needed to be tamed.²⁰⁶ This view of nature radically reshapes Novak’s understanding of salvation: For Novak, salvation should mean “victories over harsh nature” or “the humanizing of the earth, making what was perceived to be a hostile planet into a planet friendly to the human race.”²⁰⁷ One can hardly believe this is the same Novak who once bitterly criticized the American myth of progress as a way to bring the entire planet to the level of New Jersey -- not a dream but a nightmare.²⁰⁸

As he radically reshaped his view of nature and developed a creation theology accordingly, Novak was excited to see that Pope John Paul II followed suit, shifting the point of view of Catholic social thought away from liberation theology to a creation theology such as his. In his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (“The Hundredth Year”), from which Gutierrez largely draws when he accepts the concepts of private ownership of the means of production and a market economy,²⁰⁹ the Pope, according to Novak, expressed

²⁰³ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, pp. 123-124.

²⁰⁴ Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, p. 41.

²⁰⁵ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 163,173; *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. xiv.

²⁰⁶ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 269.

²⁰⁷ Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 110.

²⁰⁸ Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove*, p. 203.

²⁰⁹ See the footnotes 203-204 of the previous chapter on liberation theology.

“a remarkably ‘American’ way of approaching the nature and the destiny of man.”²¹⁰ In this encyclical, the Pope said: “All nature—the whole world, material, moral, and intellectual—is mine,” and “the destiny of Adam’s race” is “to develop, by discoveries, inventions, and improvements, the hidden treasures of this mine.”²¹¹ In Novak’s interpretation:

By choosing the biblical category of creation as his fundamental metaphor for the social order, Pope John Paul II goes beyond “liberation theology.” The Creator, in Pope John Paul II’s vision, has hidden within creation untold riches, resources, and possibilities which it is the vocation of humans to discover and to realize, for the common good of all... Max Weber saw the roots of capitalism in the negative attitude held by Protestants toward creation: in their sense of self-denial, their asceticism, and their sense of the depravity of natural man. By contrast, Pope John Paul II sets these ordinary, kitchen-variety virtues in the context of the basic goodness of creation as it springs from the hands of the Creator, and in the light of the *imago Dei* impressed upon man’s nature.²¹²

Indeed, the Pope’s words strikingly resemble Novak’s version of creation theology. But, as we now know, Novak, unlike the Pope, does not actually need the biblical category of creation for his own version of creation theology, which is built on an anthropology of human creativity in which God and creation are subject to human liberty.

Indeed, Novak has dramatically changed—from socialism to capitalism, from an eco-friendly philosophy to an eco-cide economics. And, it was Niebuhr who was the guardian of this radical transformation of Novak’s. As a matter of fact, the younger, radical Novak already had two mixed and mutually conflicting assessments of pragmatism. On the one hand, he saw pragmatism as compromise and adjustment,

²¹⁰ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. 150.

²¹¹ Novak, *The Fire of Invention: Civil Society and the Future of the Corporation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), p. 61.

²¹² Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, pp. 227-228; “Two Moral Ideals for Business,” in *Thee In One*, p. 229.

operating from *within* a system of values and thus unable to call the whole system into question;²¹³ on the other hand, he viewed it as a policy of fidelity to intelligence, one that can make a difference in the world.²¹⁴ However, as he began to see that in America “many men do not, will not, rebel,” and that “the moment has clearly not arrived for armed revolution,”²¹⁵ he gave up his dream to convert the world all at once, and began to concern himself with how to create the kinds of institutions that can promote “the liberation of a few more men every minute of every day.”²¹⁶ Thus, Niebuhr was crucial for Novak, because he was the authority needed to disqualify the utopian, perfectionist, and moralistic passions of revolutionaries. Above all, Novak learned from Niebuhr that Christians are “a community of sinners,”²¹⁷ and that “Realism means particularly one thing that you establish the common good not purely by unselfishness but by the restraint of selfishness.”²¹⁸ Indeed, this definition of Christian realism by Niebuhr himself was greatly inspiring to Novak when he attempted to bridge the gap between Christianity and capitalism:

[T]he capitalist ideology... emphasize[s] the humbleness of the human race... we are a community of sinners... It follows the paradox of Isaiah and of Christ, that redemption should come in the most unlikely spot, through the weakest and the poorest of persons, as in the carpenter from a very poor and undeveloped part of the Roman Empire. In a related way, capitalist thinkers discovered the dynamic energy to change the face of history not where it might be expected, in human nobility, grandeur, and moral consciousness, but in human self-interest... [S]elf-interest can be redeemed, not by trying to repress it or deny it, but by trying to give it expression in a system of checks and balances... At the heart of

²¹³ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, p. 21.

²¹⁴ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 137.

²¹⁵ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, pp. 60, 81.

²¹⁶ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 60. Novak consistently emphasizes institutions, for he believes that realism means to focus on institutions rather than ideology. (Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. xiv.)

²¹⁷ Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 117.

²¹⁸ Novak, “Reinhold Niebuhr: Model for Neoconservatives,” in *The Christian Century*, Jan. 22, 1986, p. 70.

Christianity... lies the sinner. At the heart of capitalist creativity lies self-interest.²¹⁹

As a matter of fact, Novak was very encouraged when Niebuhr made, according to Novak, a decisive conversion from socialism at the end of the 1950s.²²⁰

After taking on Niebuhr's stance, and re-identifying himself as a "realistic revolutionary," Novak attacked Latin American liberation theologians as "utopian revolutionaries." For Novak, the great heresy of our own times is the utopian revolutionaries belief that evil in this world is caused by "sinful structures."²²¹ For Novak, however, evil flows from the human heart, and there are no such things as sinless structures; therefore, even in working for a revolution, we must give highest priority to that which comes *after* the revolution.²²² Actually, Novak has good theological reasons not to believe utopian revolutionaries, namely, from the life, death, resurrection, and second coming of Jesus:

The liberation He came to bring does not liberate us from the structures of oppression... God Himself would not remove such evil from the life of His Son. If He would not spare His Son, why would He more gently favor us? ... [Jesus] was not liberated from sinful structures. Neither shall we be... [P]assion of death are not eliminated by the resurrection... Our resurrection... does not alter the power of evil and absurdity in this world... It does not promise a happy ending... He came but He did not transform the world... He did not make all things new... "He will come again" because once was not enough.²²³

²¹⁹ Novak, ed., *Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, pp. 117-118, 122.

²²⁰ Novak, ed. *Democracy and Mediating Structures*, p. 193.

²²¹ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 43.

²²² Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²²³ Novak, *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 62-64.

In a word, for Novak, to believe in Jesus Christ is to disbelieve every false utopia.²²⁴ For Novak, Jesus is no liberator of the social order, and no social order will ever be free of our freedom.²²⁵ After all, “even the God of Israel and Christianity revealed himself *very slowly* in history,” tolerating a lot of ambiguity;²²⁶ above all, people do not ask for utopia but only “the possibility of solid economic progress for their families over the next three or four years.”²²⁷ Therefore, for Novak, Christianity must be “a realistic faith” through and through.

Before we assess Novak’s appropriation of Niebuhr, we need to examine one more figure who has exercised great influence on Novak. Critics of Novak seldom recognize that F.A. Hayek also played a significant role in the formation of Novak’s thought. If Niebuhr made Novak humble, moderate, and realistic, Hayek made him confident that he could be both realistic and not conservative at the same time. After his revolutionary zeal withered away in 1968, the radical Novak was paralyzed by “the experience of nothingness.” Through Michael Harrington’s *Twilight of Capitalism*, Novak found “the emptiness of Marxist categories and sympathies in which [he] had been educated.”²²⁸ Still, is there any *moral* justification for his conversion to capitalism or a sense of continuity to his radical conversion? In my view, it was Hayek who rescued him from this moral predicament.

Novak was profoundly inspired by Hayek’s widely-read article, “Why I Am Not a Conservative,” published in *The Constitution of Liberty* (1974) as its postscript. What Hayek basically argued here is that he can hardly be called a conservative, because the

²²⁴ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²²⁵ Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²²⁶ Novak, *Tell Me Why*, p. 60.

²²⁷ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, p. 89.

²²⁸ Novak, ed., *The Denigration of Capitalism*, pp. 1, 3.

economic and political system he favors (i.e., capitalist free market economy) is fundamentally inventive, creative, and regularly concerned with the new. This statement of Hayek's was a "gospel" to Novak and made him confident that "true conservatives are anticapitalist and, often, antidemocratic."²²⁹ Besides that, Novak was greatly attracted to Hayek, because, unlike many other utilitarian and positivist economists, Hayek restored the study of economics within the disciplines of moral philosophy and liberal arts, making them worthy of investigation by religious thinkers like him.²³⁰ Most importantly, however, Novak discovered via Hayek the English "Whig" tradition, "the party of liberty, tradition, and modest progress."²³¹ As we will see in chapter 4, "Whiggism" is the common tradition of the Anglo-Saxon countries, which sharply contrasts with "the crude and militant rationalism of the French Revolution" into which "the overrationalistic, nationalistic, and socialistic influences have intruded."²³² The Whigs were those figures like Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, Lord Action, Alexis de Tocqueville, and many others,²³³ and they emphasized the need to base government upon commerce and to base democracy upon a capitalist, growing economy.²³⁴ Novak was excited to learn that Thomas Aquinas had been recognized as "the first Whig" because of the centrality he gave to human liberty in nature and history.²³⁵ He was also excited to realize that the

²²⁹ Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 115.

²³⁰ See Novak, "Economics as Humanism," in *Three In One*, p. 202; "Truth and Liberty: The Present Crisis in Our Culture," in *A Free Society Reader*, p. 282.

²³¹ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 112. This is Hayek's definition.

²³² Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 177, 409.

²³³ See Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 8; *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 116. Novak includes here other names such as John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson, etc.

²³⁴ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 11.

²³⁵ Novak, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), p. 120.

Whig tradition could be harmonious with Niebuhr's realism in that it advocated modest progress. So, at last, Novak found his answer to his old identity question, "Who Am I?":

Many call an approach such as mine "neo-conservative." The proper designation for it... is "neo-liberal" [Hayek] or "realist" [Niebuhr]. I prefer to call the approach, as a whole, "biblical realism."²³⁶

Because of Hayek, Novak began to see the U.S. as the "proudest boast of the young Whig republic";²³⁷ following Hayek, who rejected social constructivism as "fatal conceit" and social justice as "the mark of demagoguery or cheap journalism,"²³⁸ Novak began to reprimand the ambition to construct a just social order as "the ambition to do what God had designed to."²³⁹ Although Novak does not fully agree with Hayek in terms of the role of the market,²⁴⁰ Novak adopts Hayek's notion of "spontaneous order"²⁴¹ and identifies his democratic capitalism as one of spontaneous orders superior to any planned, directed, or enforced economies.²⁴²

²³⁶ Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, p. xiv. The biblical realism, according to Novak, is the alternative to "the triad of liberal, traditionalist, and radical (socialist) positions." He includes Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Henry Newman, G.K. Chesterton, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jacques Maritain, and F.A. Hayek in this "biblical realism." (Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 117)

²³⁷ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 117.

²³⁸ Hayek. *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 97.

²³⁹ Novak, "Hayek: Practitioner of Social Justice," in *Three In One*, p. 124. Novak insists: "The birth of the concept of social justice 150 years ago coincided with... the 'death' of God and the rise of the ideal of the command economy... When God 'died,' men began to trust a conceit of reason and its inflated ambition to do what God had not to do: construct a just social order. The divinization of reason met its mate in the ideal of the command economy."

²⁴⁰ Whereas for Hayek the market is itself the agent, for Novak creative and intellectual individuals are the agent, not the market. (See Novak, *The Future of the Corporation*, p. 11.) As we have already seen, Novak's democratic capitalism is not identical with the *laissez faire* capitalism, and he consciously distances himself from the "radical capitalist ideology," or the "libertarianism," which emphasizes total reliance on market mechanisms and economic reasoning alone.

²⁴¹ In chapter 4, we will closely examine Hayek's "spontaneous order," or, precisely, the "spontaneous extended human order created by a competitive market." For Novak's understanding of this notion of "spontaneous order," see Novak, "Two Moral Ideals for Business," in *Three In One*, p. 220.

²⁴² Novak, "The Great Convergence," in *Three In One*, p. 192.

In my opinion, however, Hayek is not the “savior” for Novak, for he brings back Novak to his original problem of nihilism which he worked to overcome for years. As we have seen, Hayek identifies individual liberty, tradition, and modest progress as the three pillars of the Anglo-Saxon Whig tradition. However, as critical-minded readers would have already detected, there is a deep-seated tension between individual liberty and tradition. Are they not mutually exclusive terms? This tension, in my view, threatens Novak’s overarching principle of liberty and creativity. Liberty, for Novak, is not only the “innermost secret of democratic capitalism”²⁴³ but also “the axis of the universe.”²⁴⁴ As such, and as we have seen, Hayek even subordinates God’s work in history to human liberty. Nevertheless, as he learned from Hayek that capitalism is a fragile economic system largely dependent upon an appropriate political system, a strong supportive moral-cultural system, and traditions,²⁴⁵ Novak began to emphasize “*ordered* liberty,”²⁴⁶ or “liberty *under* law” not “liberty *from* law,” and “the liberty to do what we *ought* to do” not “the liberty to do what we *wish* to do.”²⁴⁷ Aside from the explicit self-contradiction between this new emphasis on “liberty *under* law” and his original allegiance to the Aristotelian ethic, which denies rules of laws for the sake of inner spontaneities and creativity, Novak seems ignorant that Hayek’s idea actually contains an intellectual pitfall, bringing him back to the problem of nihilism. As I will fully show in chapter 4,

²⁴³ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 248.

²⁴⁴ Novak, *On Two Wings*, p. 10. Here, further examples of how important liberty is for Novak: “The principle of history is liberty” (*Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Inquiry*, p. 110); “The God who gave us life gave us liberty”; (*Will It Liberate?*, p. 50); “God does not *force* us by the power of His radiance to be fixed in Him” and “This humility, this abjectness, this total respect for our liberty (in which we are most in His image) is His most remarkable characteristic” (*Confession of a Catholic*, p. 95); “By its liberty, the human person transcends the stars and all the world of nature” (*This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 123); and thus, “Maximizing the efficacy of that liberty is essential to human liberation. It is also the secret to economic creativity” (Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, p. 217.)

²⁴⁵ Novak, *Business As a Calling*, p. 81.

²⁴⁶ Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, pp. 3, 35.

²⁴⁷ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 65, 95, 235.

Hayek, despite his passionate commitment to the liberal ideal of individual liberty, ends up as a strong defender of old and conservative values. Although Hayek made a firm effort to prove that his moral philosophy was not a politics of status quo but of change, his final message is that we must submit ourselves to inherited traditions and market forces.²⁴⁸ Hayek's moral philosophy actually gives no room for individual freedom, since "all progress must be based on tradition."²⁴⁹ In short, Hayek's moral philosophy, despite its boisterous advocacy for a radical liberal Utopia, is a form of nihilism in terms of its agenda for changing society. With *this* Hayek, in my view, Novak returns to his original problem of meaninglessness, the nihilism against which he has developed a theology of creativity. Novak did not take the whole Hayek, or he simply misinterpreted him.

Finally, what can we say about Novak's interpretation of Niebuhr? Greatly inspired by Niebuhr, Novak has persistently insisted that Christianity is a religion of realism, not of perfectionism, that we must imitate God, who refused to make the world perfect, and that God's love is the realistic love of *caritas*. Yet, Novak's appropriation of Niebuhr, as Robert McAfee Brown points out, is one of the "attempts to make Niebuhr into the guru of neoconservatism," which "betray both the man and his thought, particularly on [his] crucial point of the need for self-criticism."²⁵⁰ As we have seen, Novak focused one particular sentence of Niebuhr's own definition of Christian realism (i.e., "Realism means particularly one thing that you establish the common good not purely by unselfishness but by the restraint of selfishness") and appropriated it to justify the capitalist system of checks and balances of self-interest. Niebuhr, however, *also* said:

²⁴⁸ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 399-400.

²⁴⁹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 167.

²⁵⁰ Brown, "Reinhold Niebuhr: His Theology in the 1980s," in *The Christian Century*, Jan. 22, 1986, p. 68.

“a realist conception of human nature should not be made into a bastion of conservatism, particularly a conservatism which defends unjust privileges.”²⁵¹ In this light, Niebuhr is “the troubler of our consciousness,” rather than the “composer of *Te Deums* in praise of capitalism.”²⁵² Probably, Novak did not follow what Brown calls the “Rule Number One” in reading Niebuhr: When you find yourself agreeing with a paragraph beginning, “On the one hand,” do not stop reading until you have read another paragraph, perhaps several pages later, beginning, “On the other hand...”²⁵³

Overall, central to Novak are the anti-utopian, anti-eschatological, and anti-perfectionist impulses. The essential message of Novak can be summarized as a warning against a hasty dream to convert the world all at once, and as a call for a down-to-earth scrutiny of ways to create conditions, circumstances, and institutions for slow but substantial advance. That is the strength of his message that deserves adequate attention from all those zealots around the world. Still, in his effort to put out the fire of utopian and moralist passions sweeping around highly educated and venerable religious people, Novak threw away the baby with bath water. In his opposition to the illusion of utopian impulse, Novak lost his belief in the nonnecessity of the imperfect order of his own society. Novak’s American democratic capitalism²⁵⁴ is not the City of God; neither is the Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberalism, nor is Corporate America. Nevertheless, despite his intermittent acknowledgment that the American economic system is not applicable in every sort of society,²⁵⁵ the underlying message of Novak’s American democratic

²⁵¹ Niebuhr, *Man's Nature and His Communities*, 24-25, quoted from Brown, *Ibid.*

²⁵² Brown, *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Brown, *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ D. Stephen Long is rights to call Novak’s democratic capitalism as “American democratic capitalism.” (Long, *Divine Economy*, p. 48.) After all, Novak himself says that democratic capitalism is the social system of the U.S., West Germany, and Japan. (Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 14.)

²⁵⁵ Novak, “A Challenge to Business,” in *Three In One*, p. 211.

capitalism is that the world, especially Latin America and its theologians, should learn from America, which “taught the world that ‘the social question’ that wracked the nineteenth century could be dissolved by universal upward mobility.”²⁵⁶ He presents and forges an American way of life into “the procrustean bed of civilization.” However, as McGovern points out:

Novak presents an idealized picture of capitalism with little recognition of the injustices it has created in practice. To ask liberation theologians to accept capitalism and to emulate the United States would be the equivalent of calling on Novak or Ronald Reagan to adopt Cuba or the Soviet Union as a model. Novak also seems to suggest that Latin Americans could achieve development if they would simply “choose” to move in new directions. Changes and reforms, however, have not occurred because power elites have resisted them. Often with the active support of the United States.²⁵⁷

Now then, the question to Novak is whether he can be faithful to one of Niebuhr’s central messages: that we should “fight the falsehood within our truth” as we “fight their falsehood with our truth.”²⁵⁸ Unfortunately, it does not seem to be the case. The more recent Novak is becoming more and more of a passionate defender of America. One of his best sellers, *The Fire of Invention: Civil Society and the Future of the Corporation*, has been applauded by the CEO of Coca-Cola Corporation as “A must-read book for every CEO” and “a wake-up call to Corporate America.”²⁵⁹ His most recent book, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding*, is one of the finest patriotic eulogies to America’s system, tradition, and way of life. In a lecture held

²⁵⁶ Novak, *The Fire of Invention*, p. 17.

²⁵⁷ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, p. 154.

²⁵⁸ Brown, “Reinhold Niebuhr: His Theology in the 1980s,” p. 68.

²⁵⁹ See the cover pages of Novak’s *The Fire of Invention* (1997).

at the Vatican, he even supported the American war with Iraq.²⁶⁰ Holding to his doctrine of ubiquitous grace, and, in turn, seeing signs of grace in American corporations, is it possible Novak is blind to the falsehood within American “truth”? If grace is everywhere, in every person and event in history, why can it not be, for example, in the struggle of Latin American people against Corporate America, or in the struggle for women’s ordination in his Catholic Church? Novak declares that we must keep masculine language for “God the Father” and that women should not be ordained as priests because Jesus came as one sex, not the other.²⁶¹ We might ask Novak: Who decides? What is the criterion? Is God’s grace really everywhere, in every person, and in every event?

Max L. Stackhouse and Public Theology

Whereas, for Novak, the primary source of theological reflection is immanent or “within us” in human creativity and intelligence, it is profoundly “out there” for Stackhouse. Novak and Stackhouse’s theological approaches are just the opposite; still, they arrive at the same conclusion, one that supports a capitalist economy, business corporations, and an ethic for production.

From the very beginning, Stackhouse’s focus of concern has been “the moral foundations of large-scale institutions,”²⁶² or “macro-ethical structures.”²⁶³ That is, the primary and distinctive task of Stackhouse’s Christian theology and ethic has been to identify, evaluate, and arrange or rearrange the “ethos” of such institutions or

²⁶⁰ The BBC on Feb. 11, 2003.

²⁶¹ For this discussion see Novak, *Confession of a Catholic*, pp. 35, 38, 49, 57; *Tell Me Why*, pp. 246-247.

²⁶² Stackhouse, *The Ethics of Necropolis: An Essay on the Military-Industrial Complex and the Quest for a Just Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. x.

²⁶³ Stackhouse, *Ethics and the Urban Ethos: An Essay in Social Theory and Theological Reconstruction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 22.

structures.²⁶⁴ The fundamental presupposition of Stackhouse is that every urban center²⁶⁵ and every historical form of political economy has a theological principle at the core of its ethos, therefore we should identify and evaluate it in order to transform “the inner logic,” “the inner metaphysical-moral foundations” of their structures.²⁶⁶ Since he believes that religion has been and may again be historically decisive for political economies, he is convinced that it is possible to recover, refine, and recast the “spiritual foundations” of political economies.²⁶⁷ For this reason, Stackhouse is critical of American economics, for he sees that it has separated itself from the moral theology and philosophy from which it was born.²⁶⁸ However, unlike Novak, who is more willing to embrace utilitarianism, Stackhouse believes that only “a recovery of Puritan frugality coupled with an ecumenical concern for the poor and hungry” can overcome the dominion of utilitarian liberalism and consumerism.²⁶⁹

Stackhouse calls his theological alternative “public theology,” which is defined as a theology “able to guide the church, to shape the structures of civilization, and to call persons to participation in the ongoing institutions that sustain the common life.”²⁷⁰ A public theology of political economy is his vision for modern life, a life in the midst of transitioning to a postindustrial, high-tech, and increasingly global and professionalized society.²⁷¹ (Note that his primary concern is the cutting-edge issue of contemporary

²⁶⁴ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 5. He defines ethos as “the subtle web of values, meanings, purposes, expectations, obligations, and legitimizations that constitutes the operating norms of a culture.”

²⁶⁵ Stackhouse’s major area of study has been urban problems. (Stackhouse, *The Ethics of Necropolis*, p. x.) Thus, his focus is the problem of “urban man” (neither “non-believer,” nor “non-person,” nor “nihilism”). (See Stackhouse, *Ethics and the Urban Ethos*, p. 142.)

²⁶⁶ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁶⁷ See Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 90-95.

²⁶⁸ Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights*, p. 116.

²⁶⁹ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 280.

²⁷⁰ Stackhouse, *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era*, p. 13.

²⁷¹ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 34, 94.

capitalism.) It is called “public” theology, because he believes that “salvation is not esoteric, privileged, irrational, or inaccessible,” and because only such a theology will give guidance to the structures and policies of public life.²⁷² For Stackhouse, the separation of church and state should not mean the segregation of theology from public life and from the attempt to guide political and economic life.²⁷³ According to Stackhouse, such a public theology is the inheritor of the modern theology of economic life developed notably by Shailer Mathews and Walter Rauschenbusch, which can be put under the general heading of “Christian sociology.”²⁷⁴

What then are the essential features of Stackhouse’s public theology? First, it is a non-confessional Christian theology. Stackhouse is very critical of the fact that most theologies remain confessional and denominational, focusing only on individual, otherworldly, and/or ecclesiastical matters.²⁷⁵ However, in order to deal with “worldly” matters such as power and wealth in a political economy, Stackhouse is convinced that theology should not be a rationalization of private and particular faith, i.e., “confession,” nor should it be merely another special-interest voice, but something that can address public issues and can make sense in public discourse as a norm or guide beyond the privileged insights of confessional communions.²⁷⁶ Accordingly, for Stackhouse, religion

²⁷² Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. x-xi.

²⁷³ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 30. “For all their faults and foibles,” contends Stackhouse, “organized religion, the church, ecumenical institutions, and transcultural, interfaith centers of dialogue and encounter are the living witnesses to those human attempts to clarify godly meanings that give life structure and purpose beyond our ‘interests.’” (*Ibid.*, p. 31.)

²⁷⁴ See Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 75, 95. According to him, decisive in “Christian sociology” is a set of relative consensus that the gospel of Jesus Christ demands that we become “persons in community,” heeding our vocations in covenant with others under God’s law and living toward the “kingdom,” and that we must attend to the material as well as the spiritual dimensions of life, the social as well as the individual dynamics of existence.

²⁷⁵ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. xi, 75, 94.

²⁷⁶ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*

means primarily a “meaning system,”²⁷⁷ and Christianity is basically a “metaphysical-moral vision.”²⁷⁸ In contrast to Novak, Stackhouse inherits from the Continental liberal (Kantian) tradition in which ethics is fundamentally about obligation and therefore disinterestedness; accordingly, his non-confessional theology recognizes value, but not substantive and particular goods.²⁷⁹

Secondly, Stackhouse’s public theology is a non-contextual theology. In order to provide the “transcendent source of meaning and morality” to guide the modern common life, Stackhouse strongly believes that we need context-transcending sources or norms.²⁸⁰ Thus, along with the Reformed-Puritan tradition, Stackhouse emphasizes that God is not the world and cannot be reduced to the world, that the Word transcends the context and thereby unveils the latent meanings in the material contexts of life, and that only Absolutes external to the contexts provide the leverage to judge them.²⁸¹ Is this not, however, implying a dualism between the Word and the world, the Absolute and the relative? Stackhouse contends that a “Christian dualism,” “ultimate dualism,” or “basic dualism,” is necessary, if we are to assure “a reality beyond this world, beyond positivism.”²⁸² This is why, as we will see, Stackhouse rejects the current anti-dualist thrust in process and ecofeminist theologies as a “monism” because it lacks any real “otherness.”²⁸³

²⁷⁷ Stackhouse, “The Hindu Ethic and Development: Western Views,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 376.

²⁷⁸ Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights*, p. 111.

²⁷⁹ Long, *Divine Economy*, pp. 21, 24, 27, 55.

²⁸⁰ Stackhouse, *God and Globalization Volume 2: The Spirit and the Modern Authorities* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2001), pp. 14, 36.

²⁸¹ Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” in *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era*, pp. 42, 45, 65.

²⁸² Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁸³ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 45f.

Thirdly, however, Stackhouse's public theology, just like Novak's creation theology, emphasizes grace and "holiness in the midst of the world," repudiating the radical demands for freedom which are detached from a sense of holiness.²⁸⁴ This is why Stackhouse is critical of Latin American liberation theology, for he believes that it subordinates the laws and purposes and callings of God to human freedom.²⁸⁵ For Stackhouse, God's grace is manifest not only in the experience of freedom from the tyrannies *but also* in the experience of a demand to live by a divine righteousness, i.e., the demand "to use the talents that are given us to participate responsibly in the formation and sustaining of the common life."²⁸⁶ This means that for Stackhouse, protest on behalf of freedom is only a half of story, and thus that only in obedience to holiness, the laws, purposes, and callings of God, we can find the real meaning behind the reality of freedom.²⁸⁷ Thus, claiming them to be the deepest convictions of the Protestant Reformation, Stackhouse urges we submit our quest for freedom under the judgment of "a holiness that is beyond the freedom," under God's laws, purposes, and callings—in short, "freedom *under law*."²⁸⁸ Here, Stackhouse perfectly shares with Novak an emphasis on "liberty *under law*," even though by "law" they mean two different things—for Novak, it is the law of liberty in the Anglo-Saxon (Whig) sense; for Stackhouse it is God's laws, purposes, and callings in the classical Protestant sense. The law of God is so important for Stackhouse, because it is "a principle of order that prevents chaos and

²⁸⁴ Stackhouse, "Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era," pp. 22-24, 41. Stackhouse is critical of Protestantism in general, for he sees that it has often become closely tied to radical demands for liberty (Renaissance, Enlightenment, Romanticism, liberalism, and liberation movements) that celebrate the human self, itself being detached from a sense of holiness.

²⁸⁵ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 25, 37.

²⁸⁶ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁸⁷ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 25, 37, 58.

offers to freedom a framework of justice and truth-telling.”²⁸⁹ But, why is order more important than freedom? Stackhouse believes we are free at last, and thus that the central question today is not how to get more freedom, but what to do morally, spiritually, socially, and economically with the freedom at hand.²⁹⁰ Since we live in a post-freedom era, according to Stackhouse, what is crucial is no longer the issues of the left or the right but “the power of the Word, with its freedom *and order*.”²⁹¹ Would African-Americans, for example, agree with this sense of times? Sometimes, a big theological difference starts from a “small” and different assessment of the factual situation of life.

Fourth, because of his quest for a non-contextual theology in a manner that requires a metaphysical dualism between God and the world, Stackhouse’s public theology is firmly opposed to what he calls “natural materialism.” For Stackhouse, both “the theological right,” who depend on Adam Smith, and “the theological left,” who turn to Marx,²⁹² are equally wrong, because of their common rejection of “metaphysical idealism” in favor of a “natural materialism.”²⁹³ The former, according to Stackhouse (and McCann), is the “libertarian neoconservatives” who deny the necessity of social justice, and Stackhouse disagrees because questions of social justice are still a necessary part of modern economics.²⁹⁴ The latter, of course, is liberation theologians whose theology is “wed to a single philosophy of history that is indistinguishable from Marxist

²⁸⁹ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁹⁰ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁹¹ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 43. Emphasis added.

²⁹² Stackhouse argues that Smith’s “laissez-faire ideology” is wrong, because it brooks no connection between political economic sectors and thus falsifies the actual relationship between politics and economics; Marxist economy is wrong, because, on the contrary, it fully integrates political and economic institutions. (See Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 100.)

²⁹³ Stackhouse, “What Then Shall We Do? On Using Scripture in Economic Ethics,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 110.

²⁹⁴ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 950.

dialectics.”²⁹⁵ In fact, compared with Novak, Stackhouse is more sympathetic to liberation theology, because he believes that the preferential option for the poor is a valid insight, saying that “the only God worth worshiping is biased in favor of the oppressed”;²⁹⁶ nonetheless, the problem of liberation theology is that it neglects the *reconstructive* visions of a social and institutional order that can constantly renew itself. In other words, liberation theologians are too pessimistic to believe in the possibility of gradual reform. Thus, for Stackhouse, the valid insights of liberation theology need to be replaced in “a more sustainable and less ideological context,”²⁹⁷ by which he means Weberian, not Marxist, perspective. Stackhouse believes that Weber’s work, though limited because it only offers *descriptive* analyses of the religious and ethical values in political economy, can be a way to avoid the traps of both Smith and Marx and to develop a public theology which is interested primarily in *normative* questions and thus can offer reliable, warranted guidance to political economy.²⁹⁸ The difference between Stackhouse and liberation theologians is that whereas liberation theologians do not believe that there is hope in a dependent capitalist economy, Stackhouse (and McCann) believes that there is the possibility of a reformed capitalism which uses theology and ethics to constrain the temptations to exploitation and greed everywhere.²⁹⁹ According to D. Stephen Long, however, Stackhouse misunderstood the heart of Weber’s argument: Long argues that nowhere does Weber suggest that the continuation of modern economic life presupposes a religious heritage; that is to say, Weber did not say that modern social

²⁹⁵ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 21, 22.

²⁹⁶ He also recognizes liberation theology as “an important corrective to all religious orientations that use the claims of faith to exploit the poor.” (Stackhouse, “Protestantism and Poverty,” in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, ed., Richard J. Neuhaus [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988], p. 32-33.)

²⁹⁷ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 23.

²⁹⁸ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 91f.

²⁹⁹ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 951.

realities are dependent on the metaphysical-moral vision; rather, Weber demonstrated that the depersonalization of the capitalist system turns against faith and destroys it.³⁰⁰ Whatever the truth may be, Stackhouse firmly believes that the legitimate insight of liberation theology should be resituated in the less ideological context of Weber.

Fifth, not only natural materialism of Smith and Marx, but also is Stackhouse's own public theology opposed to what Stackhouse calls the "monistic naturalism" of ecological thinking. Stackhouse is critical of ecological theologies, because he believes that they identify nature's becoming with the divine, and that in an attempt to avoid a transcendence that becomes dualistic, it results in "a naturalistic, geocentric, or evolutionary monism" that loses theological and thus human amplitude.³⁰¹ According to Stackhouse, implicit in much ecofeminist and process thought is a purely immanent worldview³⁰² or a monistic naturalism that cannot stand with Reformed theological tradition.³⁰³ (We will see in the next chapter that this is not true for process and ecofeminist theologians.) For Stackhouse, nature, or precisely the "biophysical universe," is only a temporal reality subject to norms and ends beyond it, a subordinate reality to be distinguished from creation, and, above all, a "fallen" reality waiting to be changed by human technology.³⁰⁴ Therefore, we cannot rely on it but have to transform it by technology to transform it into what God intends it to be.³⁰⁵ For Stackhouse the modern ecological movement is totally unacceptable, because it is anti-technological,³⁰⁶ rooted in

³⁰⁰ Long, *Divine Economy*, p. 25.

³⁰¹ Stackhouse, "Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era," pp. 52-53.

³⁰² Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 145.

³⁰³ Stackhouse, "Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era," p. 54.

³⁰⁴ Stackhouse, *Ibid.* Nature is fallen, for Stackhouse, not because its finitude is by itself evil but because its finite reality has betrayed its original design, goal, and function.

³⁰⁵ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

³⁰⁶ "Technology," for Stackhouse, "may preserve creation, build new possibilities of community" when an ethos is guided by a metaphysical-moral vision beyond technology itself. Technology is neither angelic nor

“an ontological propensity” (i.e., the view that we ought to live according to the natural logic of how things work),³⁰⁷ and we are not bound by the way things are but we can change things.³⁰⁸ Instead, for Stackhouse, it is only by the knowledge of “something other than nature” that we may know that the *status quo* is not as it should be; it is only by grasping “what is beyond nature” that we may resist either reverting to “the *status quo ante* of organicism or plunging into the *fluxus quo* of process.”³⁰⁹ Therefore, a metaphysical-moral vision other than nature is required for Stackhouse in order, as he says, “to ‘cook’ nature” into something that it is not originally.³¹⁰ Thus, against classical Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and the ecological movement, which all share a metaphysical-moral vision of a great chain of being, Stackhouse argues that only the Reformed-Puritan tradition, in which each person has his/her own calling from the *transcendent* God, not from the pregiven orders of nature or society, can enhance the work ethic necessary for vigorous economic activity.³¹¹

Indeed, Stackhouse sharply distinguishes his public theology from many others: From the “immanent historicism” (liberation theology), for it undercuts the possibilities of transcultural, transhistorical, and transexperiential criteria; from the “naturalistic, geocentric, or evolutionary monism” (ecological theology), for it loses the metaphysical-

demonic, but it is “a new form of evangelism,” “a kind of veiled angel,” although “instead of placing our confidence in technique, we need to return to absolute reliance on the free will of God, known by revelation alone.” (Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 50, 146.)

³⁰⁷ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁰⁸ Similar to Novak, Stackhouse also views human beings as not merely passive but positive as we participate in God’s creativity (Stackhouse, “The Ten Commandments,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 60); still, he does not put human creativity at the center of his argument like Novak. Similar to Novak, Stackhouse understands human vocation as “the actualization of the purposes of which we were created”; still the actualization is not understood as the actualization of the built-in creativity like in Novak; instead, it means much more social—i.e., women be permitted to be ordained, workers be supported to find jobs, and so on. (Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 24, 25.)

³⁰⁹ Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” p. 52.

³¹⁰ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 142.

³¹¹ Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights*, p. 112.

moral vision beyond nature itself; from “neoliberalism,” for its understanding of human beings as *homo economicus*, a reductionistic abstraction; and from “neoconservatism,” for its reaction against change.³¹² Stackhouse presents his public theology as the alternative to all these, calling for “participation in the ongoing institutions that sustain the common life.”³¹³ Since Stackhouse believes that much of modern Protestantism has wrongly tried to be relevant to the world by adopting socialist, liberationist, “Third World,” left/right, or “Green” analyses,³¹⁴ his public theology aims to reclaim Protestantism’s constructive willingness to engage complex civilization at all levels in the midst of the emergence of a global civilization.³¹⁵ For such an engagement, Stackhouse’s public theology emphasizes the obedience to grace, to holiness in the midst of the world, and to the laws, purposes, and calling of God who demands of us that we use the talents that are given to us to participate *responsibly* in the formation and sustaining of the common life.

Unlike Novak, however, Stackhouse (and McCann) does not speak of a specific form of capitalist political economy. Stackhouse only speaks of “social democracy” as “*the way* Christians might best think about political and economic issues.”³¹⁶ Rather than elaborating a specific form of capitalist political economy, Stackhouse illustrates quite ardently the notion of “stewardship” as the connecting term between his public theology and social democracy, between the Word and the world, and between ecumenical

³¹² Stackhouse, “Protestantism and Poverty,” in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, p. 32.

³¹³ Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” p. 13.

³¹⁴ Stackhouse opposes the use of the terms “First, Second, and Third Worlds,” or the “developed, developing, and underdeveloped,” because this typology, he believes, shows no interest in anything transcendent. (Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” p. 47.)

³¹⁵ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 38f, 54, 58. .

³¹⁶ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. xii. Emphasis added.

theology and political economics.³¹⁷ However, because of his particular understanding of stewardship, Stackhouse's public theology will eventually arrive at the same place where Novak's creation theology has ended up—with a theological ethic for business corporations.

“A responsible stewardship of modern society,” says Stackhouse, “*demands that we wrestle anew with ‘the corporation.’*”³¹⁸ Certainly, he does not deny that we have a spiritual and moral obligation to care for poor people; yet, the important problem for Stackhouse is that we have given very little theological attention to “the decisive center of production: the corporation.”³¹⁹ Stackhouse, like Novak, also experienced a kind of “conversion” from focusing on the problems of inequities of distribution to the problem of production, or from, in his words, the “Modern spiritualities [that] have stressed the importance of identifying with the poor and reading the gospel through their eyes” to “the modern social center of technology and of the professions,” i.e., the corporation.³²⁰ “I found that I was substantially in error,” says Stackhouse, because something happened between the earlier days of agrarian *oikos* and contemporary economies.³²¹ In the former, in which agriculture was the primary mode of production, the problems of distribution were the central ones; trade, commerce, and finance were morally suspect, and business was considered at best a necessary evil.³²² But, “something happened,” says Stackhouse, and that something was the development of corporations³²³ which have become “the chief

³¹⁷ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

³¹⁸ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 114.

³¹⁹ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 118.

³²⁰ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 120-122.

³²¹ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³²² Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³²³ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 122.

operating unit of modern economic life.”³²⁴ (As we will see, this something-already-happened argument is actually one of the ways Hayek defends free trade and denounces Christian ethics for “love-thy-neighbor-as-thyself” and liberation theology as primitive ethics incompatible with the vast and complex civilized world such as ours.)³²⁵

Something happened. And in light of that “something,” Stackhouse found, theology must open itself to the experiences of modern business corporations.³²⁶ Corporations should no longer remain “the enemy of the most spiritually, ethically, and socially concerned people,”³²⁷ and, thus, theology should move from the classical ethic of distribution to a modern ethic of production.³²⁸ But, is this not, as he asks himself, a sanctification of “Yankee corporate capitalism”?³²⁹ Indeed, for Stackhouse, it is not, for, after all, it was Calvin himself who moved beyond an ethic of and for distribution to the ethic of and for production by de-sacralizing poverty and re-sacralizing work, commerce, trade, manufacture, and banking as redemptive.³³⁰ More importantly, Stackhouse contends that the roots of the phenomenon of corporation are decidedly religious, because Christianity has been linked from its inception to urbanized peoples involved in

³²⁴ Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” p. 70.

³²⁵ Hayek argues that Aristotle’s vision of “oikonomia,” which is a self-sufficient and deliberately arranged economy for a small number of people in the primitive time, must be abandoned in the vast and complex “civilized world” such as ours; instead, “at some point... Most people... must engage... in a long chain of activities which will eventually lead to the satisfaction of an unknown need at some remote time and place.” (Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* [Routledge: The University of Chicago Press, 1988], p. 96.) That is the way Hayek argues that trading and markets are not something better than nothing but *sine quo non* for the very existence and continuance of human life in the “civilized world.” Thus, “Once we have left the primitive group,” insists Hayek, “we must leave these inborn morals [of “love-thy-neighbor-as-thyself”] behind, and except for our relations with our immediate circle—what is now called the “nuclear family”—observe what I have called the “commercial morals.” (See Alan Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek: A Biography* [New York: Palgrave for St. Martin’s Press, 2001], p. 314.)

³²⁶ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 953.

³²⁷ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 124.

³²⁸ Stackhouse, “Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era,” p. 63.

³²⁹ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 130.

³³⁰ Stackhouse, “Protestantism and Poverty,” in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, pp. 14, 15.

producing and trading,³³¹ and, in this sense, the early church was “the first ‘trans-ethnic’ and ‘trans-national’ corporation.”³³² But, is it not true, as Stackhouse admits, that core aspects of every great religion always accent sacrifice, not gain; obedience, not control; sharing, not producing?³³³ Stackhouse says that his whole point is simply to overcome a blind spot in modern theology and ethics so that we may grapple with the nature and character of the corporation as “a potentially moral and spiritual reality.”³³⁴

I do not think Stackhouse’s concern is illegitimate, although I believe that his concern, as I will show in the conclusion of this research project, is misplaced, because the corporation is no longer the chief operating unit of modern economic life under finance capitalism of today. At this point, I doubt whether he is too optimistic about the moral and spiritual potentiality of corporations. Stackhouse views the business corporation as “a *persona ficta*, an artifact with its own internal ‘spirit’ or ‘character’ and with legal standing as an agent”; therefore, he suggests that it is possible for the corporation to have an inner quality that can be reformed and renewed.³³⁵ He admits that there may be a vacuous or demonic core in the midst of corporate life; still, he believes that that core may also be filled and transformed by “a theologically vertebrate spirituality,” if theologians attempt to cultivate for corporate life with a renewed sense of moral vocation which is proactive, not reactive.³³⁶ Therefore, only if the sense of vocation were to be reborn in modern corporations among stockholders, management,

³³¹ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, pp. 115, 126.

³³² Stackhouse, “What Then Shall We Do? On Using Scripture in Economic Ethics,” in *On Moral Business*, p. 113.

³³³ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 115.

³³⁴ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 133.

³³⁵ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 132.

³³⁶ Stackhouse suggests five theological and spiritual resources: Vocation, Moral Law, Liberation (from poverty), Sin, and Covenant. Out of these, he specifically emphasizes vocation. (See Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, pp. 132-135.)

and labor, Stackhouse believes that the shape of corporate economies will change.³³⁷ Indeed, this belief is consistent with the central claim of Stackhouse's public theology in that only a set of common guidelines, which are "theological and ethical in nature, Christian in root, public in character, and universal in implication,"³³⁸ can solve the problem of the technocratic presumption of Western society.³³⁹ Still, as Joerg Rieger points out,³⁴⁰ implicit in this argument is that there is nothing wrong with the role of the corporation in the global expansion of the capitalist market economy, as long as it does not forget its task of "shaping a worldwide civilization,"³⁴¹ and that all we need is simply a more "conscious moral rudder."³⁴² Indeed, since the primary concern of Stackhouse's public theology is the spiritual revitalization of worldwide civilization, many other aspects of global capitalism, such as power differentials and the growing gap between the rich and the poor, are not seriously questioned.³⁴³ Probably, it never occurred to Stackhouse that capitalism and its corporate culture could pose fundamental problems to Christianity.³⁴⁴ It seems that Stackhouse believes that moral issues are enough to relate theology with economics. However, I think that Rieger makes an important point that the capitalist market economy is more than just another set of values, and that powerful economic interests at work cannot easily be tamed.³⁴⁵ In my view, a Niebuhrian sense of power (power can be checked only by power) may work better.

³³⁷ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³³⁸ Stackhouse, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³³⁹ Stackhouse, *God and Globalization (Volume 2): The Spirit and the Modern Authorities*, p. 22.

³⁴⁰ Joerg Rieger, "Theology and Economics," in *Religious Studies Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3 / July 2002, p. 217.

³⁴¹ Stackhouse, *God and Globalization (Volume 2): The Spirit and the Modern Authorities*, p. 29.

³⁴² Stackhouse, *Ibid.*

³⁴³ Joerg Rieger, "Theology and Economics," p. 217.

³⁴⁴ Long, *Divine Economy*, p. 24.

³⁴⁵ Joerg Rieger, "Theology and Economics," p. 218.

Stackhouse's "soft" approach to the corporation and global capitalist economy, in my view, is derived from his conflicting commitment to the transcendental and the incarnational. As we have seen, Stackhouse thoroughly emphasizes the metaphysical-moral vision, context-transcending norms, or transcultural, transhistorical, and transexperiential criteria. At the same time, however, he emphasizes the incarnation of such transcendental into "the foundations of modern, pluralist, interdependent, and cosmopolitan, productive society."³⁴⁶ Clearly, he affirms the Lordship of Christ over all the powers, principalities, authorities, and regencies in a global civilization;³⁴⁷ still, he also assures that the Christ event should be incarnated in our civilizational structures,³⁴⁸ in the ethos of civilization.³⁴⁹ However, what is presupposed for the incarnation is that "civilization[']s order is something to be preserved," that neither a apocalyptic nor utopian solution is promising for the preservation of civilization, and that we have to pursue "continuous, methodical reformation" for the preservation of civilization.³⁵⁰ I do not think that a apocalyptic and utopian solution is the only answer; still, I doubt whether Stackhouse is not limiting, predicating, or dictating the way the status of the incarnation of Christ event. When we talk about the transcendental, I believe that we are saying we are absolutely open to the unexpected, to the unthinkable from God. Just as the incarnation event two thousand years ago was not for the preservation of the worldwide (Roman) civilization, I do not believe that it is meant to preserve the worldwide (American) civilization today. As long as Stackhouse dictates the purpose of divine incarnation, his context-transcending norms become transcendental only in name. And

³⁴⁶ Stackhouse, "What Then Shall We Do?," in *On Moral Business*, p. 113.

³⁴⁷ Stackhouse, *God and Globalization (Volume 2): The Spirit and the Modern Authorities*, p. 36.

³⁴⁸ Stackhouse, "Protestantism and Poverty," in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, p. 27.

³⁴⁹ Stackhouse, "Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era," p. 43.

³⁵⁰ Stackhouse, "Protestantism and Poverty," p. 28; *Ethics and Urban Ethos*, p. 142.

then, incarnation in his public theology becomes virtually identical with that of Novak who argues that the point of divine incarnation is to respect the world as it is, and to disbelieve any utopian solutions. What is worse, Stackhouse's transcendent God is a God captive to Western Christianity, as he further argues that any other religions or spiritualities except Christianity should not be allowed to shape the future by default,³⁵¹ and that only Christian religion possesses a universalistic ethic for this-worldly activities.³⁵²

Overall, it seems fair to conclude that Stackhouse's non-contextual theology has ended up with a context-bound theology that lacks the very power of the transcendental which it meant to have. Stackhouse argues that Christian theology and ethics have the spiritual power and moral insight to comprehend, modulate, and guide earthly powers, authorities, and regencies;³⁵³ still, we have to ask him whether his transcendent has the power to *resist* those powers, authorities, and regencies, if things go bad. Stackhouse criticizes liberation theology for its consideration of the divine transcendent only insofar as it is a potentiality of the utopian future, as it cannot preserve us from "normlessness of the fluxus quo."³⁵⁴ That was why he urged us to try and discern the tracks of the divine in the midst of life, and to witness God's grace as already manifested in the formation of the common life. That was why he turned to the corporation, understood as the chief operating unit of modern economic life, theologizing it as "worldly ecclesia" and

³⁵¹ Stackhouse and McCann, "A Postcommunist Manifesto," in *On Moral Business*, pp. 951, 952. In fact, Stackhouse rejects not only the "materialist, rationalistic, anti-transcendental" perspective on humanity of Marxism-Leninism, but also the "holistic," "spiritualistic," and "gnostic" understanding of humanity Eastern religions. (Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights*, p. 3.)

³⁵² Stackhouse, "The Hindu Ethic and Development," in *On Moral Business*, p. 38.

³⁵³ Stackhouse, *God and Globalization (Volume 2): The Spirit and the Modern Authorities*, p. 30.

³⁵⁴ Stackhouse, "Protestantism and Poverty," in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, p. 32.

“occasions of grace.”³⁵⁵ In all these arguments, he argues that his transcultural, transhistorical, and transexperiential criteria should not be treated as a “unhistorical abstractions.”³⁵⁶ For sure, his transcendental is not to be rejected as an unhistorical abstraction, for it is to be incarnated in the ethos of civilization, however, only to preserve it. Then, like that of Novak’s creation theology, the basic thrust of Stackhouse’s public theology, despite its different theological approach and its dissimilar source of theological claims, is characterized by the same anti-utopian, anti-eschatological, and anti-perfectionist impulses. As such, Stackhouse’s public theology suffers the same problem as Novak’s—the lack of belief in the nonnecessity of a particular civilizational order. What is missing in Stackhouse’s public theology, as well as in Novak’s creation theology, is indeed “the God who presents the ‘heavenly’ possibilities as a challenge to go beyond our conditioning and habits.”³⁵⁷

Dennis P. McCann and Americanist Understanding of Trinitarian Vision of God

McCann is a Catholic theologian but a strong ally of Stackhouse, even though he abhors popular Calvinism’s “suicidal doctrine of total depravity” and its exclusive reliance on the Bible.³⁵⁸ Like Novak, McCann is one of the important inner critics of Catholic social teaching, even though he is more sympathetic with the Catholic tradition of prophetic protest as “an important protest against the social costs of modern industrial

³⁵⁵ Stackhouse and McCann, “A Postcommunist Manifesto,” in *On Moral Business*, *passim*.

³⁵⁶ Stackhouse, “Protestantism and Poverty,” in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, p. 32.

³⁵⁷ Walter Wink, *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of the Man* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), p. 37.

³⁵⁸ McCann, *New Experiment in Democracy*, p. 14.

development.”³⁵⁹ In fact, McCann distances himself from Novak in many ways: Following Peter Berger’s analysis of capitalism, which distinguishes capitalism as an economic system from modernization as the larger anthropological process, McCann disagrees with Novak’s analysis of capitalism;³⁶⁰ from the principle of “subsidiarity,” which sets certain limits on the role of government, McCann opposes not only Soviet-style communism and laissez-faire capitalism but also Novak’s democratic capitalism.³⁶¹ After all, from the perspective of McCann, Novak’s American pragmatism is basically identical with liberation theologians’ Marxism in the sense that although Novak eschews use of the term *praxis*, it is already implicit in his advocacy of “the Anglo-American sense of *practice*.”³⁶²

Nevertheless, McCann is a strong ally of Novak in his staunch criticism of Latin American liberation theology. Although he does not totally reject the option for the poor, McCann attacks liberation theology, arguing that its use of Marxist analysis only leads to a reductionist reading of the Bible, a legitimization of modern class struggle, and a politicization of the gospel.³⁶³ As we have already examined in the previous chapter McCann’s critique of liberation theology, which is thoroughly based on Niebuhr’s

³⁵⁹ McCann, “The Church and Wall Street,” in *On Moral Business*, pp. 621, 625.

³⁶⁰ McCann, “Option for the Poor: Rethinking a Catholic Tradition,” in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, p. 50.

³⁶¹ McCann, *New Experiment in Democracy*, pp. 136, 151. By the principle of “subsidiarity,” McCann means the principle that can promote “self-governing association” of civil society. For him, the principle of subsidiarity is to promote participatory democracy, within whatever social system the church finds itself. Still, McCann’s critique is ambiguous, for Novak strongly advocates setting limits to the role of government for his democratic capitalism.

³⁶² McCann and Charles R. Strain, *Polity and Praxis: A Program for American Practical Theology* (New York: Winston Press, 1985), p. 170. McCann and Strain believe that Gutierrez and Novak are doing essentially the same thing: Formulating a middle axiom for Christian social praxis, which is, in John C. Bennett’s words, “more concrete than a universal ethical principle and less specific than a program that includes legislation and political strategy.” For McCann, there is a clear affinity between Marxism and American pragmatism in that matter. (*Ibid.*, p. 173.)

³⁶³ McCann, “Option for the Poor: Rethinking a Catholic Tradition,” in *The Preferential Option for the Poor*, p. 39.

Christian realism, and, indeed, no one else has developed a critique more thoroughly than has McCann. Since I have already introduced and criticized McCann's argument against liberation theology in the previous chapter, let me here briefly revisit McCann's basic argument.

McCann's point of critique of liberation theology is that, despite its rhetorical impressiveness, liberation theology is only an ambiguous reflection, for it tries to synthesize the "epiphanic vision" with the "dialectical vision," concepts which are existentially incompatible with each other.³⁶⁴ That is, for McCann, Gutierrez's definition of liberation theology as a "reflection on praxis in the light of the Word of God" is only an ambiguous one, because, here, praxis becomes the ultimate criterion and the Word of God is reduced to merely a theological justification for that praxis. Therefore, McCann contends that only Christian realism (in which God acts in a hidden manner through human agents who have opened their hearts to God) is more consistent with Christian faith than liberation theology (in which God's relation to history is not hidden but is directly manifested in the struggles of the oppressed), and that Niebuhr's "vertical" transcendence, which is recognizable as a sort of "religious disinterestedness," is indispensable for exorcising the enthusiasm or fanaticism implicit in Gutierrez's horizontal transcendence.³⁶⁵ However, central to the Christian claim, as Brown also points out, is that a God so often "hidden" from us was manifestly present in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and thus that the same God was/is/will be present in the lives of the poor, only if we have the eyes and the courage to look there.³⁶⁶ McCann argues that

³⁶⁴ McCann, *Christian Realism & Liberation Theology*, p. 236.

³⁶⁵ McCann, *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 201, 206, 228.

³⁶⁶ Robert McAfee Brown, *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), pp. 24, 30f.

Christian faith “is not an open-ended commitment to the future, but an apprehension of the paradoxical relationship of Eternity and history.” As we have seen in the previous chapter, however, Gutierrez does not define Christian faith as such; rather, talking about the “kingdom,” he situates human existence between God’s gratuitousness and ethical demand, apprehending the paradoxical relationship between eternal salvation and historical praxis.³⁶⁷ In his opposition to “enthusiasm” or “fanaticism,” McCann shares with Novak and Stackhouse anti-utopian, anti-eschatological, and anti-perfectionist impulses.

What then is McCann’s own constructive theological proposal? McCann is strongly influenced by Isaac Hecker’s “Americanist perspective” which views the original American experiment in democracy as a work of the Holy Spirit, and believes that the church, in principle, is the community in which the Holy Spirit’s presence could most fully be experienced.³⁶⁸ Americanism means, for McCann, a newly emerging style of religious praxis by Catholic people in America,³⁶⁹ characterized by the principle of “self-governing association.”³⁷⁰ McCann combines this Americanist perspective with the doctrine of traditional Trinitarian theology, using the notion of “divine indwelling” as the point of their convergence.³⁷¹ The purpose of this “Americanist understanding of the Trinitarian vision of God” is to give a living discernment of the working of the Holy Spirit in America, one whose ideals are solidarity, participation, and subsidiarity.³⁷²

³⁶⁷ See page 42 of the previous chapter and footnote 143.

³⁶⁸ McCann, *New Experiment in Democracy*, p. 130. According to McCann, Hecker repudiated both the transcendentalists and popular Calvinism in defense of “personal religious experience.” Hecker’s emphasis was the “experimental approach to Catholic faith” and “the presence of the Holy Spirit within the community.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.)

³⁶⁹ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷⁰ McCann, *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 131.

³⁷² McCann, *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 131.

In elaboration of this vision, McCann argues against Larry L. Rasmussen, Mary Daly, and even Michael Novak, contending that his Trinitarian vision of God is better than “the radically biblical alternatives proposed by Rasmussen,” “the categorical rejection of all [Christian] models advocated by Daly,” and Novak’s “neo-orthodoxy.”³⁷³ Against Rasmussen, who argues that only the Exodus-Sinai event can be taken as constitutive of Jewish and Christian faith,³⁷⁴ McCann counter-argues that what is constitutive to Jewish and Christian faith is the unceasing activity of the Holy Spirit within authentically Christian communities of faith.³⁷⁵ Against both Daly and Novak, McCann argues that they made the common error of not reflecting the Trinity from the “personal religious experience of the divine indwelling,” and thus that any Trinitarian vision should base itself on the ongoing life of Catholic religious praxis.³⁷⁶ Indeed, what is strongly emphasized by McCann is the presence of the Holy Spirit within the church and the experience of divine indwelling among Christians. In my assessment, this emphasis is continuous with Novak’s emphasis on the ubiquity of grace and Stackhouse’s emphasis on the holiness in the midst of the world upon which both Novak and Stackhouse argue against the eschatological faith in liberation theology. Accordingly, McCann also suffers from the lack of an eschatological faith. However, McCann argues that his Trinitarian vision of God is already a form of eschatological faith, since its major task is to build the “kingdom” on earth, which transcends any form of social organization; nonetheless, he quickly gives qualification that the path to the “kingdom”

³⁷³ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁷⁴ Rasmussen, “Economic Policy: Creation, Covenant and Community,” in *America*, Vol. 152, No. 14, May 4, 1985, pp. 356-7.

³⁷⁵ McCann, *New Experiment in Democracy*, pp. 128f.

³⁷⁶ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 152.

should be covenantal, for the tasks can only be accomplished in fellowship with God.³⁷⁷ Therefore, again, McCann emphasizes that the work of the building of the eschatological “kingdom” must stem from the church’s experience of the divine indwelling.³⁷⁸ Ecclesia is indeed the primary point of reference for McCann. I do not devalue the significance of the church experience; neither do I disbelieve in divine indwelling in the church. Still, I also believe that the “kingdom” is something greater than the church, something beyond church experience, and something that is not subject to the criteria of church experience. Interestingly, what is missing in McCann is the very idea held by liberation theologians that the “kingdom” is fundamentally God’s gift, initiative, and grace, independent of the moral and religious dispositions of its addressees.

As McCann emphasizes divine indwelling, what naturally follows is an emphasis on “participation.” For McCann, “to know God is to participate in the community created by the Persons of the Trinity.”³⁷⁹ Thus, the primary role of the church is to promote participatory democracy.³⁸⁰ In the society, participation is itself justice, and injustice is marginalization.³⁸¹ McCann does not elaborate on what a specific form of political economy should be. Rather he emphasizes, “Whatever is good is good ultimately in virtue of its participation in the perfection of God.”³⁸² However, what seems lacking in this bustling emphasis on participation is a sense of eschatological alienation from the Establishment necessary to reflect the way our participation is organized and

³⁷⁷ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³⁷⁸ McCann, *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141. His further argument is that “if subsidiarity is itself a reflection of the dynamism of the Trinitarian mystery, its ultimate meaning is eschatological; and any community that would seriously try to institutionalize this principle must become eschatological”—which is unconvincing.

³⁷⁹ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³⁸⁰ McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 151. As we will see in chapter 4, however, this notion of justice as participation is consistent with Hayek’s (thus Novak’s) idea of “procedural justice” (meaning to give equal chances) opposed to social justice (meaning to attempt equal results).

³⁸¹ McCann, *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 135.

³⁸² McCann, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

predetermined. What does it mean by participation if the way society is organized is unjust and unacceptable? There is no genuine participation without a just rule of participation. Indeed, what is lacking in McCann's Americanist vision is a deep sense of eschatological tension, or what Rasmussen calls the "eschatological communities" which require some degree of alienation from the institutional arrangements of the larger society and deep involvement dedicated to developing qualitatively distinct alternatives to those arrangements.³⁸³ As a Catholic theologian, McCann has vehemently criticized the Vatican's social teaching, calling it reactionary, medieval, and unable, unwilling to transcend "a bias inherent in the feudal, agrarian society of medieval Europe."³⁸⁴ Still, is he able and willing to transcend a bias inherent in his capitalist, urban society of modern America? Once again, the question to McCann is whether he has a belief in the nonnecessity of our imperfect order.

**Conclusion:
The Lack of an Eschatological Faith**

Whereas eschatology (the "kingdom") is the heart of Latin American liberation theology, what is most lacking in North American neoconservative theology is such an eschatological faith. Despite their many differences, Novak, Stackhouse, and McCann share one basic theological thrust—anti-utopian, anti-eschatological impulses. If the problem of Latin American liberation theologians thirty years ago was too much eschatology, the problem of North American neoconservative theologians today seems to be too little eschatology. In my view, it was probably hard not to be eschatological and utopian in the revolutionary context of Latin America in the 1960s; for the same reason, I

³⁸³ Rasmussen, "Economic Policy: Creation, Covenant and Community," pp. 356-357.

³⁸⁴ McCann, "The Church and Wall Street," in *On Moral Business*, pp. 621, 625.

believe that it is hard not to be realist in the prosperous context of North America today. The former wanted change, the latter preservation; the former was naturally attracted to Christian utopianism, the latter to Christian realism. In fact, this gap between theologians in the South and in the North is a mirror of the painstaking division between the poor and the rich in the whole world. I do not think that North American neoconservative theologians' concern with business corporations and wealth production is an illegitimate concern. That concern reflects their own context, one they have to wrestle with. Yet, the problem of our world is that it is not simply divided, but also deeply interconnected, so that without changing America, we cannot change the world, and vice versa. North American neoconservative theologians' ethic for production and business corporations must be seen from that broader perspective. From that "global" perspective, it seems to me that North American neoconservative theology is too submissive and too easily relevant to a capitalist political economy. From that worldwide perspective, the God in North American neoconservative theology is subordinated to the capitalist spirit (Novak), an ethos of civilization (Stackhouse), and Americanism (McCann). From the larger perspective of history, no empire, no civilization, no political economy continues forever. From God's perspective, American civilization, American democratic capitalism, and the American way of life are nothing but ephemera. Is this not what God-talk is all about? Is this not what Christian utopianism is all about? Novak changed himself when what seemed real and immediate withered away in 1968. But, think about the indigenous people in Chiapas, Mexico, for example, who have endured the weight of historical oppression for 500 years, withstanding generation after generation. There are so many examples in this world. Novak's conversion, from this larger perspective, seems too

quick, too cunning. Indeed, to believe in God is not to believe everything.³⁸⁵ To believe in God, to do theology, is to disbelieve in the necessity of our ephemeral and imperfect order. I believe that North American neoconservative theologians should recover such a belief in God.

Despite their differences, Novak, Stackhouse, and McCann also share a conviction in terms of political economy—the need for theological reflection on the moral potentiality of modern business corporations and wealth production. I appreciate their effort to extend our theological reflection to that “forbidden” area. But, I wonder why they attend to only *big* and *transnational* corporations. Is it because, as Stackhouse suggests, “the profits derived [from the big corporations] make possible churches, schools, hospitals, the arts, welfare services, and various research institutes” in America?³⁸⁶ I do not think their theological focus on the corporation and wealth production is illegitimate. But I believe that their focus is *misplaced*, for, as I will reveal in the general conclusion of this research project, under contemporary finance capitalism, business corporations are no longer the decisive centers of production (Stackhouse), the primary moral agents of the global economy (Novak), or the poor’s best friend (Novak). North American neoconservative theologians must seriously rethink their theological focus on the corporation and wealth production in light of contemporary change and challenge.

The postwar world economy has passed through two phases: (1) the Bretton Woods period from the end of the World War II till the early 1970s (usually referred by economists as the golden age of “industrial capitalism”); (2) the period after the collapse

³⁸⁵ Christopher Morse, *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1994), p. 3.

³⁸⁶ Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, p. 127.

of the Bretton Woods system of regulated exchange rates and controls on movement of capital (referred to as “finance capitalism”).³⁸⁷ For sure, transnational corporations are still the “sinews and bones” of global economy.³⁸⁸ Nonetheless, the single biggest and most dangerous change in the global economy for the past thirty years took place in the area of global finance.³⁸⁹ Finance capital has defeated not only the traditional power blocs of laborers and national governments but also transnational corporations themselves which are heavily pressured to adapt to the imperatives of reducing costs and improving rates of return.³⁹⁰ What concerns us is that finance capital, which is the main engine of our global economy today, is no longer the harbinger of prosperity, wealth creation, or production, but of wealth concentration and speculation.

Today, the price at which money is bought and sold through the foreign exchange (“forex”) market *dictates* the economic policies of national governments, transnational corporations, and the lives of billions of people. We have witnessed it in so many tragic financial crises around the world over recent decades. Today, the world’s single largest market is the “forex” market which is much, much bigger than all the other markets put together: Its size is about US\$ 1.5 trillion per *day*, meaning that only three or four days of

³⁸⁷ Noam Chomsky, “Why the World Social Forum?”, Presentation paper given to the World Social Forum 2001.

³⁸⁸ The number of transnational corporations has increased explosively from 7,000 in 1970 to 40,000 in 1990, and these transnational corporations are managing the world through their 270,000 some affiliates all around the world. (See UN Division of Transnational Corporations. *World Investment Report 1996*.) They are becoming ever more powerful and bigger (sometimes bigger than nations) eroding the regulatory powers of nation-states. Indeed, they are even shaping nearly every detail of our daily lives—what we eat, how we work, how our children are raised, and even what we hold sacred. Furthermore, they have even redefined their identity as full constitutional “persons” who, like individual citizens, enjoy the constitutional and “human” rights. (In terms of this, see Kevin Danaher, *10 Reasons to Abolish the IMF & World Bank* [New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001], pp. 42-43; Bill Moyer’s report, “Trading Democracy: NAFTA’s Chapter 11,” broadcasted by the PBS on February 5, 2002.)

³⁸⁹ Ellwood, *No Non-sense Guide to Globalization*, p. 89.

³⁹⁰ William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not*, pp. 24-25.

this foreign-exchange trading equals the *annual* output of the entire U.S. economy.³⁹¹ However, what really concerns us is not its sheer size but the nature of its activity. Today, the single-largest component in the flow of international investment is short-term speculation.³⁹² In *all* industrialized countries, investments are now shifting from the productive area to that of pure money, as investment in the deregulated transnational financial markets brings the owner of financial assets more profit.³⁹³ As a result, only 2.5% of total foreign exchange trading a day is used for payments in the real economy; 97.5% of it is traded for short-term speculation,³⁹⁴ most of which is managed in the form of hedge funds, known as the harbinger of “plunder capitalism.” Needless to say, rarely does this speculators’ activity contribute to the creation of new wealth;³⁹⁵ no jobs are created, no services provided, no factories built, and even no widgets produced.³⁹⁶ Finance capital, which is supposed to serve real production and exchange processes, has now largely de-coupled from the “bricks and mortar” of real economies. As a result,

³⁹¹ The volume of worldwide foreign exchange transactions has exploded since the collapse of the Bretton Woods system as country after country has lowered barriers to foreign investment; investors then have played the bond and currency markets profiting from the minute-to-minute, hourly or daily fluctuations in prices around the world. (See Ellwood, *The No Non-sense Guide to Globalization*, pp. 72, 125.)

³⁹² Ellwood, *Ibid.*, p. 73. Edward Chancellor powerfully demonstrates that speculation in fact has been in the vanguard of the capitalist process from the seventeenth-century onward, and there is actually only a thin line between gambler, speculator, and banker in a capitalist economy. (See this interesting research: Chancellor, *Devil Take the Hindmost: A History of Financial Speculation* [New York: A Plume Book, 1999].)

³⁹³ Duchrow, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism*, p. 85. This trend of a shift from long-term investment to short-term, immediate gain is clearly showed in the shift from FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), in which foreigners buy equity in local companies, buyout existing companies, or start up a new factory or business, to FPI (Foreign Portfolio Investment), in which foreigners buy shares in the local stock market where liberalized financial markets are the norm. In the FPI, investors are only attracted by the prospect of immediate gain, and thus they are prone to “herd behavior” which can lead to massive financial withdrawals in time of crisis. (See Ellwood, *The No Non-sense Guide to Globalization*, pp. 75-76.)

³⁹⁴ Citizen’s Coalition for Economic Justice, *Civil Society*, Issue No. 1, October 1999-January 2000, p. 8.

³⁹⁵ David Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (A Copublication of Kumarian Press, Inc., and Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1995), p. 196.

³⁹⁶ Marion Kim, “The Taegu Round: Civil Society Seeks New Financial Order,” in *Civil Society*, Issue No. 1, October 1999-January 2000, p. 8.

global capitalist economy has become a “paper economy,”³⁹⁷ or a “casino economy,”³⁹⁸ to which the world’s poor have no access. Along with the de-coupling of financial markets from real economies, political power has been transferred from the majority population to a few experts in the banking and brokerage industry,³⁹⁹ from, in Cobb’s words, an institution that *can* be directly affected by public opinion about the common good to one that *cannot*.⁴⁰⁰ Many celebrate “globalization.” But, globalization is nothing but the triumph of finance capital and its ubiquitous presence throughout the world.⁴⁰¹ In this world of globalization, freedom means primarily the freedom of finance capital, the freedom of “an elephant dancing on a chicken shouting ‘freedom.’”⁴⁰² The extreme concentration of wealth today, the fast growing gap between the rich and the poor, is mostly the outcome of this “freedom” of finance capital across borders. In our times of

³⁹⁷ According to Daly and Cobb, paper economy is the one characterized by the direct conversion of money into more money without reference to commodities even as an intermediate step. They symbolize this “paper economy” as M-M*. (M = money) The simplest and oldest method of exchange was C-C* (C = commodity); then C-M-C* (the use of money as a medium of exchange, or what Marx called as simple commodity production); and then M-C-M* (what Marx called capitalist circulation whose object is no longer the increase of use value, but the expansion of exchange value in money.) (See Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 410.)

³⁹⁸ The size of casino economy outside the real economy amounts to US\$ 60 trillion, i.e., ten times the annual GDP of the U.S. This money outside the real economy is deposited mostly in big international banks and investment houses in the form of personal savings, corporate savings, pension funds, government bonds, etc. This money, which is not funneled into currency markets, zips straight into overseas “tax havens,” such as the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Liberia, and Bermuda, where both rich individuals and globe-trotting multinationals have been squirreling away their cash for decades. These “offshore financial centers” are the destinations for “dirty money” closely lined with corruption and crime. It is estimated that through these “tax havens” up to \$500 billion from the global narcotics trade passes annually. (See Ellwood, *The No Non-sense Guide to Globalization*, pp. 100-102.)

³⁹⁹ Those top global banks gambling in foreign exchange markets are (in 1999 by rank and estimated market share): 1. Citigroup (7.75%), 2. Deutsche Bank (7.12%), 3. Chase Manhattan (7.09%), 4. Warburg Dillon Read (6.44%), 5. Goldman Sachs (4.86%); 6. Bank of America (4.39%), 7. J.P. Morgan (4.00%), 8. HSBC (Midland Bank, 3.75%), 9. ABN Amro (3.37%), and 10. Merrill Lynch (3.27%). (See Ellwood, *The No Non-sense Guide to Globalization*, p. 82.) This is possible because of the new communication technology today. Thanks to it, a small and professional group of international finance traders can play an electronic money game at lighting speed on computer monitors 24 hours a day. (See Greider, *One World, Ready or Not*, pp. 23, 247.)

⁴⁰⁰ Cobb, “Can a Globalized Society be Sustainable?” in *Dialogue: A Journal of Theology*, Vol. 36, Winter 1997, p. 11.

⁴⁰¹ C.T. Kurien, “Globalization—What Is It About?,” in *Voices from the Third World*, Vol. XX, No. 2, December 1997, pp. 20, 23.

⁴⁰² John S. Pobee, “Theology in the Context of Globalization,” in *Ibid.*, p. 71.

finance capitalism, the lives of billions of people depend on where money flows, at what speed, and at what price. Indeed, as Franz Hinkelammert has already pointed out, money has become not only a god but, “the Antichrist of the Apocalypse, the beast that has caused humankind to lose its freedom.”⁴⁰³ If there is one more reason why we cannot endorse Novak, Stackhouse, and McCann’s ethic for production, wealth creation, and business corporations, it is because they are not relevant to our new context of finance capitalism.

Let us now turn to another significant theological school, one that has challenged the fundamental assumptions of economic growth itself, assumptions that lie behind North American neoconservative theologians’ ethic for production and wealth creation and which, by virtue of their sanction on unlimited exploitation of nature, sets apart all of humanity as the enemy of the earth, or “Earth’s Satan.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ Hinkelammert, *The Ideological Weapons of Death: A Theological Critique of Capitalism*, p. 19.

⁴⁰⁴ Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, p. xi.

Chapter 3 ECOLOGICAL/ECOFEMINIST THEOLOGIES

We are reminded of the South Indian monkey trap, in which a hollowed-out coconut is fastened to a stake by a chain and filled with rice. There is a hole in the coconut just large enough for the monkey to put his extended hand through but not large enough to withdraw his fist full of rice. The monkey is trapped only by his inability to reorder his values, to recognize that freedom is worth more than the handful of rice. We seem to be in a similar position. The value of growth is rigidly held in first place, and we are trapped into a system of increasing environmental disruption and gross injustices by our inability to reorder values, to open our fist and let go of the growth paradigm.

Herman E. Daly¹

The whole biosphere today would in fact be much healthier if evolution had not led to the appearance of human beings.

John B. Cobb, Jr.²

The growth paradigm has outlived its usefulness. It is a senile ideology that should be unceremoniously retired into the history of economic doctrines... Political economy must enter a period of revolutionary science to establish a new paradigm to guide a new period of normal science. Just as mercantilism gave way to physiocracy, physiocracy to classical laissez-faire, laissez-faire to Keynesianism, Keynesianism to the neoclassical growth synthesis—so the current neoclassical growthmania must give way to a new paradigm.

Herman E. Daly³

God is not controlling from without but is calling, ordering, liberating, and comforting from within... The divine reality, God, does not... exist in some external sphere unaffected by the world. God interacts with the cosmos. God participates in forming the being and life of each creature. The life of each creature then participates in forming the divine Reality as well. By weakening the life system on this planet, human creatures are impoverishing the life of God... In short, God is in the world and the world is in God. There is no God apart from the cosmos. There is no cosmos apart from God.

John B. Cobb, Jr.⁴

¹ Daly, *Steady-State Economics: The Economics of Biophysical Equilibrium and Moral Growth* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1997), p. 153.

² Cobb, "Ecology, Science, and Religion: Toward a Postmodern Worldview," in *Reading in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, ed., Mary Heather MacKinnon and Moni McIntyre (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995), p. 244.

³ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy* (San Francisco, W.H. Freeman, 1973), p. 152.

⁴ Cobb, "The Cosmos and God: The Dependence of Science on Faith," in *God, Cosmos, Nature and Creativity* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1995), pp. 46, 49.

The Shift of Analysis

Central to ecological theologies in general is neither the eradication of private ownership of the means of production (liberation theology) nor the eradication of poverty by means of superb wealth production (neoconservative theology). As “A world which once seemed open to almost infinite expansion of human population and economic activity now appears as a world of limits,”⁵ what becomes crucial instead is the *impossibility* of economic growth itself beyond certain limits, and of the industrial nonrenewing extractive economy itself, both capitalist and socialist alike. For John B. Cobb, Jr., the assumption that economic growth can continue indefinitely is simply a “fundamental error” and “profound illusion.”⁶ For Herman E. Daly, “Long before we have reached ultimate biophysical limits to growth in the scale of our economy.”⁷ Therefore, a big U-turn is called for, and the change must begin with the reconnection of economics and ecology, in which economics becomes the rule for ordering “the whole household” (*oikoumene*) so that humanity can flourish alongside other species in a sustainable way.⁸ These new principles of political economy, popularly known as “ecological economics,” emphasizes the traditionally ignored principles of right scale, sustainability, sufficiency, equity, and efficiency.⁹

As the world is now seen as physically limited, we witness in this theological camp an exodus from the anthropocentric understanding of creation toward a new emphasis on the limit of human creativity and freedom within creation’s integrity. This

⁵ Cobb, *Sustainability: Economics, Ecology and Justice* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 7.

⁶ Cobb, “Liberation Theology and the Global Economy,” in *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon and Theology*, ed., Rieger, Joerg (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 39.

⁷ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 215.

⁸ Cobb, “Christianity, Economics, and Ecology,” in *Christianity and Ecology*, eds., Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary R. Ruether (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 507.

⁹ Daly, “Sustainable Growth? No Thank You,” in *The Case Against the Global Economy, passim*.

contrasts sharply with Michael Novak's emphasis on human creativity, and also opposes liberation theologians' emphasis on the faith that transforms history. For Daly, human beings are more creatures than creators "endowed with creativity *but also subject to limits*";¹⁰ for Cobb, "we are not masters of history";¹¹ for Larry L. Rasmussen, "we are not exactly cocreators [but] coparticipants" and therefore "freedom and the good life [must be sought] *within* the realm of necessity in accord with creation's integrity";¹² and for Sallie McFague, "we are not [earth's] creator, its center, or its means of continuation or transformation [but] recipients of a gift."¹³

Before we discuss theological issues in this camp, we need to first closely examine the unique political economy of Herman E. Daly, who is known as "the dean of ecological economics," the "most far-seeing and heretical of economists," or "a voice crying in the wilderness."¹⁴ Daly is not a theologian proper; yet, as we will see, he offers his own biblical view on political economy, and, along with Cobb, he provides his own religious vision worthy of our attention.

Herman E. Daly and the "Steady-State Economy"

Daly is one of the most articulate voices of the "steady state," "stationary state," or "no-growth" economy. Just like many other orthodox economists, Daly once held a strong belief in free trade and comparative advantage; however, after being influenced by the pioneers in ecological or environmental economics, such as Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen

¹⁰ Daly, *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), p. 224.

¹¹ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 111.

¹² Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998), p. 292.

¹³ McFague, *Life Abundant*, p. 138.

¹⁴ See Daly, "The Steady-State Economy," in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 158.

and Kenneth Boulding, he became the key proponent for a “reverse Copernican revolution in economics.” Daly defines his “Steady-State Economy” (SSE) as “an economy in which the total population and the total stock of physical wealth are maintained constant at some desired levels by a ‘minimal’ rate of maintenance throughput [equal to both the input and the output].”¹⁵ Its key argument is pretty simple: Beyond a certain point, economic growth is both physically and economically *unsustainable*, as well as morally *undesirable*.¹⁶ It is unsustainable, because, long before, humanity has reached ultimate biophysical limits to growth in the scale of our economy;¹⁷ it is undesirable, because humanity has already passed the “optimal scale,” i.e., a point beyond which further growth costs more than it is worth.¹⁸ Therefore, the solution is that the rate of throughput must be as low as possible (meaning low production and equally low consumption),¹⁹ and population growth and production growth must not push us beyond the sustainable environmental capacities or resource regeneration and waste absorption.²⁰ In short, Daly’s steady-state economy is a call to revise the whole paradigm of economic thinking to conform with the finite energy and resource limits of the earth,²¹ and to conform with the earth’s ecosystem which “develops (evolves), but does not grow.”²² It is fundamentally a “limit-to-growth” argument that

¹⁵ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁶ Daly and Kenneth N. Townsend, *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, Ethics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), preface (no page numbers).

¹⁷ Daly, “Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 269. According to Daly, the human economy currently preempts one-fourth of the global “net primary product of photosynthesis” (NPP), which we cannot go beyond 100 percent.

¹⁸ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, pp. 215, 223; “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 151.

¹⁹ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 14.

²⁰ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 3.

²¹ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. vii.

²² Daly, “Sustainable Growth,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 268. Cobb fundamentally agrees with this point: “Accept limits and seek a decent life for all within them; live in balance with other species and primarily on

challenges the prescription of continued economic growth as a panacea for underdevelopment and maldistribution of wealth.²³ The rationale of this economics is that science and technology have given us such power that the scale of human economy has come to a point where we now must consciously face “the fundamental finitude of our planet,” “the fundamental limits of our creaturehood,” and “ecological dependence.”²⁴

What then is the source of Daly’s limit-to-growth argument? It is important to recognize that Daly’s steady-state economy is not much informed by the economic theories of Adam Smith or Karl Marx, but profoundly by contemporary *biophysical sciences*. The term “steady state” itself is adopted from the physical and biological sciences.²⁵ One of the most remarkable claims of modern biophysical sciences is that, as biologist E.O. Wilson comments on God’s famous question to Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” (Job 38-39), we *do* know at least “the physical basis of life” itself.²⁶ (As we will see, Daly’s key argument against orthodox economics is that it is *unscientific* because it does not take seriously the most basic laws of modern physical and biological sciences.)²⁷ For Daly, economics is fundamentally a “Life Science” whose ultimate subject matter is the life process itself; accordingly, economics

the renewable resources of the planet; and use nonrenewable resources only at a rate that is agreed upon in light of technological progress.” (Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 7.)

²³ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, preface (no page numbers), 3.

²⁴ Daly and Townsend, *Ibid.*, p. 214.

²⁵ Daly, “Postscript,” in *Ibid.*, p. 366. Previously, following John Stuart Mill, Daly used the term “stationary state.” Mill, in his *Principles of Political Economy* (1857), discussed this idea of “stationary state” by which he meant “a condition of zero growth in population and physical capital stock, but with continued improvement in technology and ethics.” (Daly, *Beyond Growth*, 3.) Daly uses this term exactly in this classical sense. However, as neoclassicals have redefined its meaning for their own use, Daly began to adopt the term “steady state” from the physical and biological sciences to avoid confusion.

²⁶ Quoted from Cobb and Charles Birch, *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 9.

²⁷ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 214.

must be the part of ecology and a human being's destiny must be tied to nature's destiny.²⁸ How then do biophysical sciences understand the life process?

From the perspective of biophysical sciences, the life process is a “steady-state thermodynamic disequilibrium that maintains its constant distance from equilibrium (death) by feeding on low entropy from its environment—that is, by exchanging high-entropy outputs for low-entropy inputs.”²⁹ What is significant here is not only the first law of thermodynamics (i.e., the law of conservation of matter-energy that affirms a balanced equation of the life process in physical units) but also the second law of thermodynamics (i.e., the law that it is impossible to recycle energy, and that eventually all energy will be converted into waste heat by the one-way, noncircular, irreversible nature of the flow of matter-energy through all divisions of the life process).³⁰ According to this second law of thermodynamics, it becomes particularly obvious that the economy, in its physical dimension, cannot continue to grow forever, or even for very long.³¹ For Daly, this scientific statement must be applied to the physical description of the economic process;³² for Daly, this “biophysical foundations of economics,” which have long been neglected by all economists, must be the foundation for economics;³³ in a word, the “steady state,” or the “biophysical first principles,” are not simply a moral choice but fundamentally a physical necessity and the norm for any economics.³⁴

From this scientific perspective, Daly reverts to the traditional definition of economy and economics. Standard textbooks of economics describe the economic

²⁸ Daly, “On Economics as a Life Science,” in *Valuing the Earth*, pp. 249, 256f.

²⁹ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 253.

³⁰ Daly, *Ibid.*

³¹ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 214.

³² Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 153.

³³ Daly, “On Economics as a Life Science,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 256.

³⁴ Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” pp. 153, 154; *Valuing the Earth*, p. 366.

process as a mechanistic flow of commodities, as “a pendulum movement between production and consumption within a completely closed system.”³⁵ However, for Daly, the problem of this orthodox (neoclassical) view of economics, with its subjectivist theory of value, is that it pushes physical factors too far behind, thus shifting our attention away from resources and labor onto topics like utility, exchange, and efficiency.³⁶ In this neoclassical view, the economy contains the ecosystem. However, “In its physical dimensions,” contends Daly, “the economy is an open subsystem of the earth ecosystem, which is finite, nongrowing, and materially closed.”³⁷ In this view, the ecosystem contains the economy.³⁸ Accordingly, what becomes important in this view is the problem of “scale” (i.e., the physical size of the human presence in the ecosystem),³⁹ an issue which was avoided in the past, because as long as scale was small it was possible for economic growth to be a central organizing principle of society.⁴⁰

In this reversed view of economics, continual growth then appears to be fundamentally impossible in a finite world.⁴¹ Neoclassicals cover up this truth, says Daly, by “running to hide in thickets of Algebra.”⁴² Needless to say, the result of such an economic paradigm is an addiction to unlimited growth, or what Daly calls “growthmania,” i.e., the mind-set that always puts growth in the first place, the attitude that there is no such thing as enough, or the view that does not see growth as a temporary means of attaining some optimum level of stocks, but as an end itself.⁴³ Behind such

³⁵ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 51.

³⁶ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 4.

³⁷ Daly, “Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 267.

³⁸ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 3.

³⁹ Daly and Townsend, *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 223.

⁴¹ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 5.

⁴² Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, pp. 3-4.

⁴³ Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, pp.149-151.

growthmania, according to Daly, there lies an anthropological assumption that the desires of *homo economicus* are insatiable and also a theological assumption that “the original sin of infinite wants” can be redeemed by human technology, and that God’s first commandment is to produce more and more goods for more and more people.⁴⁴ This theological assumption, in my view, is the basic assumption of North American neoconservative theologians’ ethic for production and wealth creation. According to Daly, however, real people, unlike *homo economicus*, are not insatiable,⁴⁵ and whereas the relative needs may be insatiable, it is not true for the absolute needs.⁴⁶ Humanity has been corrupted, says Daly, by the temptation of Satan to turn stones into bread, to satisfy an insatiable hunger in the material realm; yet, the proper object of economic activity, contends Daly, is to have *enough* bread, not infinite bread.⁴⁷ More importantly, Daly argues that the growth in the orthodox paradigm is actually an “antieconomic growth,” because it impoverishes the quality of life of the poor and depletes nature;⁴⁸ such a growth, therefore, is not the cure for the many ills of today; it is, in fact, the cause of many of them.⁴⁹

Thus, Daly proposes what he calls the “impossibility theorem” which says that it is impossible for the world economy to grow its way out of poverty and environmental

⁴⁴ Daly, *Ibid.*, pp. 149-151.

⁴⁵ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 5, 85-87.

⁴⁶ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, pp. 24, 26. This is originally John Maynard Keynes’ argument.

⁴⁷ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 155.

⁴⁸ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 101. For Daly, environmental degradation is an iatrogenic disease induced by the economic physicians who attempt to treat the basic sickness of unlimited wants by prescribing unlimited production. He argues that we should not cure a treatment-induced disease by increasing the treatment dosage.

⁴⁹ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 368. Cobb also argues that growth is incidental to the relief of poverty and it eliminates poverty only when it is accompanied by governmental policies designed to benefit the poor. (See Cobb, “Christianity, Economics, and Ecology,” in *Christianity and Ecology*, p. 505; “Liberation Theology and the Global Economy,” in *Liberating the Future*, p. 38.)

degradation,⁵⁰ or simply that a U.S.-style high-resource-consumption standard for a world of 6.5 billion people is impossible.⁵¹ Just as no library can continue to buy books indefinitely and never discard any, argues Daly, the growth of economy must stop at some point.⁵² These impossibility theorems imply that even “sustainable growth,” or “green growth,” is impossible.⁵³ For Daly, the term sustainable growth is only “a bad oxymoron,” because it only deludes us into believing that growth is still possible and desirable only if we label it sustainable or color it green, thereby just delaying the inevitable transition and making it more painful.⁵⁴ Therefore, for Daly, the alternative to growth is not sustainable growth or green growth but “sustainable development” which means the “development without growth,” or the “qualitative improvement of a physical economic base.”⁵⁵ Daly makes a clear distinction between growth (namely, a quantitative increase in size resulting from the accretion or assimilation of materials) and development (namely, the qualitative evolution to a fuller, better, or different state).⁵⁶ The point of his argument is that the economic subsystem must not grow beyond the scale at which it can be permanently sustained or supported by the containing ecosystem;⁵⁷ in other words, the economy as the subsystem of the earth’s ecosystem must eventually stop growing, but can continue to develop.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ Daly, “Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 267.

⁵¹ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 369.

⁵² Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 105.

⁵³ Daly, “Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 267.

⁵⁴ Daly, *Ibid.*, 268.

⁵⁵ Daly, *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Daly, “Free Trade: The Perils of Deregulation,” in *The Case Against Global Economy*, p. 237. Daly points out that the verb “to grow” originally means “to spring up and develop to maturity.” (Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 99.)

⁵⁷ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, pp. 27f.

⁵⁸ Daly, “Sustainable Growth,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 268.

Understandably, many would ask whether it is possible to eradicate poverty by such sustainable development. However, as one who lived in Northeast Brazil in the late 1960s, Daly became convinced that there are two social factors that generate poverty: First, nonownership of the means of production (according to Marx), and, second, nonownership of the means of limiting reproduction (according to Malthus).⁵⁹ Thus, along with Marxians, Daly insists that there must be limits to inequality; and, along with Malthusians, Daly stresses that without population control, all social reforms will be cancelled by the growing burden of absolute scarcity.⁶⁰ Thus, the key to sustainable development is both wealth distribution and population control. Daly, however, is not proposing a revolutionary means of change. Although Daly implies some confiscation of wealth above a certain limit, he bases his distributive policy on private property and the free market in opposition to welfare bureaucracies and central control.⁶¹ Rather, referring to the Jubilee year of the Old Testament, which presupposed the legitimacy of private property and of some inequality in its distribution,⁶² Daly emphasizes that the point of his distributive policy is to keep inequality of wealth within some tolerable limits upon the basis of the recognition of private ownership of wealth.⁶³ The point is to change from unlimited to limited inequality; the purpose is to avoid the extreme of “too poor, too rich” by instituting maximum and minimum limits on income.⁶⁴ In a word, Daly believes that

⁵⁹ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 119.

⁶⁰ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, pp. 168-169.

⁶¹ Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, pp. 168-169. Following Mill, Daly argues that this distributist policy is actually to defend private property, for it prevents private property from becoming an instrument of exploitation but a guarantee against it.

⁶² Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 206.

⁶³ Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 169.

⁶⁴ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, pp. 210-212.

absolute equality is neither a fact nor a goal,⁶⁵ and that his distributive policy is neither capitalist nor socialist but “the Distributive State.”⁶⁶

Daly is in fact very critical of socialist economies as he sees that they have shown signs of ecological collapse worse than the growth-oriented economies in the West.⁶⁷ Daly criticizes both capitalism and socialism, for what is common to both of them is their equal commitment to large-scale, factory-style, and energy-capital-intensive modes of production heavily dependent upon nonrenewable resources.⁶⁸ (For this reason, Daly would disagree with liberation theologians’ option for socialism). Therefore, for Daly, it would be simpleminded to blurt out socialism as the alternative to capitalist economy, since socialist states are as badly afflicted with growthmania as capitalist states; equally, it would be far too simpleminded to believe that the present big capital, big labor, big government, big military type of private profit capitalism is the answer.⁶⁹ Daly perceives his steady-state economy as “new wine” and as a third way, which might form a future synthesis of socialism and capitalism.⁷⁰

I have found Daly’s argument persuasive in principle. There are, however, serious objections to Daly’s concept of a steady-state economy. To evaluate its probability and applicability, we need to examine those objections. Critics argue, first of all, that a steady state is unrealistic, utopian, and idealistic. Daly admits that it is, suggesting that it could be so partly because of the lack of goodwill internationally and the existence of class conflicts.⁷¹ Yet, Daly’s counterargument is that it is the present economy which is

⁶⁵ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶⁶ Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 169.

⁶⁷ Daly, “Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 246.

⁶⁸ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 13.

⁶⁹ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 23.

⁷⁰ Daly, “Postscript,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 376.

⁷¹ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 152.

literally unrealistic because it disregards natural laws and that his proposal is less radical than attempting the impossible, i.e., growth forever.⁷² For Daly, a steady state is the only realistic possibility.⁷³ I think that his proposal is both radical and realistic: It is radical, because it demands a fundamental paradigm shift from the axiom of “more is better” to the axiom of “enough is best”;⁷⁴ it is realistic, however, because it pursues nonrevolutionary and institutional reforms within the existing system.⁷⁵ After all, Daly’s suggestion is to impose limit to inequality, not to create a communist society. Still, it is radical seen from the perspective of growth-first economics.

Opponents also attack the advocates of steady-state economy for being “upper-class social climbers, who having gotten theirs, now want to kick the ladder down behind them and leave the poor forever on the ground floor.”⁷⁶ However, Daly counter-argues that not only is subjective poverty never overcome by growth, but also absolute poverty is increased by it,⁷⁷ and therefore that we can alleviate poverty by development without growth, i.e., by population control and wealth redistribution.⁷⁸ Indeed, the traditional solution to unemployment is growth, and more growth, through production, which means a larger scale; however, Daly argues that full employment will be easier to attain in a steady-state economy by virtue of its policy of limiting inequality in the form of a

⁷² Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 163.

⁷³ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁷⁴ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Daly, *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁷⁷ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁷⁸ Daly, “Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 270. Cobb echoes to Daly: Giving the examples of Cuba and the Kerala state in India, he argues that the elimination of the most degrading consequences of poverty can be in fact attained with little growth. (See Cobb, “Liberation Theology and the Global Economy,” in *Liberating the Future*, p. 38.)

minimum and a maximum income.⁷⁹ In light of the fast-growing inequalities and the exacerbation of poverty despite the intense experiment and expansion of the growth-oriented economies around the world (as I will show in the general conclusion of this project), I find Daly's argument convincing.

Finally, there are legitimate concerns and objections from the perspective of the Third World. Does steady-state economy mean to stop all economic growth even in the underdeveloped countries which badly need an elevation of the standard of living for the poor majority? Daly assures that further economic growth *is* necessary in the Third World poor countries in light of the present state of massive poverty,⁸⁰ and that growth in GNP is still a good thing for the poor.⁸¹ The steady-state paradigm, Daly emphasizes, must be *first* adopted and applied in the overdeveloped countries,⁸² especially in rich, affluent-effluent economies such as the U.S.⁸³ However, this does not mean for Daly that the undeveloped countries can be left out of consideration for the steady state for good; rather it means that both undeveloped and overdeveloped together must move toward a steady state by means of limiting consumption (and population) growth in the overdeveloped countries and limiting population growth in the underdeveloped

⁷⁹ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 375. Furthermore, Daly argues that the policy of limiting the matter-energy throughput would raise the price of energy and resources relative to the price of labor, and this would lead to the reversing the historical trend of replacing labor with machines and inanimate energy; in addition to all these, Daly argues that another policy of the steady-state economy, i.e., zero population growth, would also ease unemployment by lowering the number of job seekers.

⁸⁰ Daly, "Postscript," in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 368.

⁸¹ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 12.

⁸² While he was working for the World Bank (1988-1994), Daly was surprised to see that a very similar idea, now called "sustainable development," has become the dominant ideal for the less developed countries (the South), but not for nature and the developed countries (the North). (See Daly, *Beyond Growth*, 3.) Daly's concrete policy suggestion for the industrialized countries is "taxing resource extraction, especially energy, very heavily" and seeking "to raise most public revenue from such resource severance taxes, and compensate (achieve revenue neutrality) by reducing the income tax, especially on the lower end of the income distribution, perhaps even financing a negative income tax at the very low end." (Daly, "Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem," in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 271.)

⁸³ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 12.

countries.⁸⁴ Yet, a question remains: Does not the steady-state, which limits developed countries' growth, mean a hardship on the many underdeveloped countries who export their raw materials to developed countries? Daly points out the fact that Northern growth has rather increased inequality in terms of global income and has preempted the remaining resources necessary to support economic growth in the South up to a sufficient level.⁸⁵

After all, Daly emphasizes that the steady state is not an end in itself but only a means; that is, it is only "a constraint imposed by the ends of justice, sustainability, and participation."⁸⁶ Daly warns that the steady state should not be taken as the panacea for all the problems of injustice and sustainability but as a framework of economic life that at least allows these problems to be taken more seriously.⁸⁷ In the very strict sense, Daly maintains, any steady-state process is impossible, for at some point in the past it had to have a beginning, and at some point in the future it will eventually have to have an end.⁸⁸ That is, as economic values and human technology evolve, we may find that a different level of growth is both possible and desirable. Still, Daly re-emphasizes that we must perceive the growth or decline as only a temporary adjustment process, not the norm; in short, growth should always be seen as a temporary passage from one steady state to another.⁸⁹ In my overall assessment, Daly is quite realistic and practical; after all, unlike deep ecologists, he is not advocating a return to a state like primitive societies.

⁸⁴ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, pp. 148-149, 152.

⁸⁵ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 8.

⁸⁶ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 368.

⁸⁷ Daly, "Postscript," in *Valuing the Earth*, 381.

⁸⁸ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁸⁹ Daly, "The Steady-State Economy," in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 154.

Daly is not a theologian proper. However, as he realizes that the growth debate is not simply a technical one but involves, to a large extent, a fundamental paradigm shift, “a gestalt switch,” or “a change in the preanalytic vision,”⁹⁰ Daly develops quite extensively a moral and religious vision for his debate. Self-interest, Daly admits, is stronger and more abundant than brotherhood; therefore what is imperative is not economic growth but “moral growth,”⁹¹ a deep philosophical clarification, even religious renewal,⁹² in short, “a change of heart, a renewal of the mind, and a healthy dose of repentance.”⁹³ Deeply convinced that a steady state economy is not a matter of finding a technical solution but a moral solution, that the decisive arguments against growthmania are religious and ethical ones,⁹⁴ and that, as a matter of fact, economics began as a branch of moral philosophy,⁹⁵ Daly offers his own proposals for a change of heart, the change of our preanalytic vision.

First, Daly proposes a change to our anthropological understanding. Novak presents the human being as “Man the creator.”⁹⁶ However, the laws of thermodynamics upon which Daly bases his steady state economics invite us to view the human being differently: Matter and energy cannot be created, nor can they be destroyed;⁹⁷ from this perspective, considering the fundamental law of nature, economic terms like production and consumption are not correct, because we can neither produce nor destroy matter and energy but only transform them from one stage to another, i.e., from raw materials into

⁹⁰ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 126. For Daly, belief in the efficacy of exponential growth of both the human population and human economy doubtless is grounded in the preanalytic vision of nature as a generous benefactor. (Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 7.)

⁹¹ Daly, “The Steady-State Economy,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, pp. 2. 172.

⁹² Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 1.

⁹³ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁹⁴ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 155.

⁹⁵ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 2f.

⁹⁶ Novak, “The Love That Moves the Sun,” in *A Free Society Reader*, p. 101.

⁹⁷ Daly, *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, pp. 14f.

commodities and commodities into garbage, and also because we cannot convert waste back into raw materials except by expending energy that inevitably degrades into waste heat, which cannot be recycled.⁹⁸ From this perspective, we have a completely different picture of human beings not as creators but rather waste producers. Stackhouse presents human nature as “fallen,” waiting to be transformed by human technology to become what God intended it to be. However, pointing to the idea that technology is “the rock upon which the growthmen built their church,”⁹⁹ Daly invites us to see that, regardless of future technologies that may be applied to transforming energy and matter, “no perfect recycling is permitted in our ecosystem,”¹⁰⁰ thus the widespread belief that technology can in any fundamental way raise humanity from the status of *creature* to that of *creator* is a false illusion.¹⁰¹ Daly urges us to see that modern idolatry is the belief that “accidental man, through economic growth based on science and technology, is the true creator, and that the natural world is just a pile of instrumental, accidental stuff to be used up in the arbitrary projects of one purposeless species.”¹⁰² Therefore, for Daly, any religious persons animated by a belief in the Creator God, yet happily participating in the destruction of Creation, constitutes an interesting subject for study.¹⁰³ This reproach, I believe, is most applicable to the views of neoconservative theologians. Daly emphasizes that we must overcome our addiction to growth as the favored way to assert our creative power, the idolatrous belief that our *derived* creative power is autonomous and

⁹⁸ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, pp. 7-8.

⁹⁹ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁰ Daly and Townsend, *Valuing the Earth*, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ Daly, “Postscript,” in *Valuing the Earth*, p. 380.

¹⁰² Daly, *Beyond Growth*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁰³ Daly, *Ibid.*

unlimited.¹⁰⁴ Thus, for Daly, the change of heart must begin with a new anthropological understanding that we are creatures endowed with creativity but also subject to limits.

Secondly, Daly proposes that a reinterpretation and creative application of the Bible is *sine quo non* for a change of heart. Unlike Novak who refuses to deduce any desirable political economic system from the Bible, calling it biblical fundamentalism,¹⁰⁵ .Daly draws extensively from the Bible and affirms that the agrarian economies of biblical Palestine and the Roman Empire should be translated creatively for the modern industrial economies of today.¹⁰⁶ Specifically, he urges us to give far more attention to the Yahwist creation myth in Genesis 2-3, which gives value to creation independently from human beings, rather than the Priestly narrative in Genesis 1, which recognizes the value of creation only with reference to human beings.¹⁰⁷ For Daly, however, one biblical economic principle, which is most basic and is most in need of a better institutionalization today, is the Old Testament principle of limited inequality, which can be stated in the form of an eleventh commandment: "Thou shall not allow unlimited inequality in the distribution of private property."¹⁰⁸ Daly does not believe that the Jubilee year itself could be revived in our time;¹⁰⁹ however, he does believe that its

¹⁰⁴ Daly, *Ibid.*, pp. 218, 221, 224.

¹⁰⁵ Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, 37

¹⁰⁶ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 205.

¹⁰⁷ Daly, "The Steady-State Economy," in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 172. Theodore Hiebert also proposes that the Eden narrative of Genesis 2-3, which presents "the human as farmer," is more compatible to modern ecological views of the human than the Priestly narrative of Genesis 1, which presents "the human as priest" created alone in God's image. (See Hiebert, "The Human Vocation: Origins and Transformations in Christian Traditions," in *Christianity and Ecology*, pp. 135-144.)

¹⁰⁸ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, pp. 206, 209. As New Testament evidence, Daly suggests 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, which says: "This does not mean that to give relief to others you ought to make things difficult for yourselves: it is a question of balancing what happens to be your surplus now against their present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need. That is how we strike a balance: as scripture says: 'The man who gathered much had none too much, the man who gathered little did not go short' [referring the gathering of manna in Exodus 16:18]."

¹⁰⁹ See Daly. *Ibid.*, p. 209. The reason for this is that the Jubilee presupposes an initial just distribution of land among particular families that was established by God's authority within historical memory but this is

principle of limited inequality could be institutionalized with a policy of certain maximum and minimum limits on wealth and income.

Finally, Daly proposes to overcome the cosmology of scientific materialism for the “change of heart.” Scientific materialism, according to Daly, is a cosmology that regards the cosmos as an absurd accident and life within it as no more than another accident, denying the reality of purpose, mind, and value in human beings as well as in the external world.¹¹⁰ As the main alternative to this scientific materialism, Daly has found the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead most convincing, for it gives the humans an inner sense of purpose.¹¹¹ Also convinced that a group of process theologians, particularly John B. Cobb, Jr., John F. Haught, and Charles Birch, could offer a solid base for loving nature,¹¹² Daly worked with Cobb to publish *For the Common Good* (1989) through which he and Cobb proposed a “biospheric vision” as a refined religious/theological vision for a change of heart.¹¹³ This conjunction of Daly and Cobb’s naturally leads us to examine process theology and Cobb’s “Earthism” to deepen our understanding of the theology in this ecological camp.

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not the case now; furthermore, most wealth today is not in the form of land, but rather in the form of capital and thus the imposition of a zero interest rate would be unrealistic; also, the Jubilee system seems to assume a sustainable economy, which we emphatically do not have now.

¹¹⁰ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹¹ Daly, *Ibid.*

¹¹² Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹¹³ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 143. While Daly and Cobb were working together for this book, Daly says that he was awakened by Cobb from a dogmatic slumber on the trade issue. Rereading Ricardo, Daly then realized that he ignored Ricardo’s very restrictive assumption that capital is immobile between nations, without which the principle of comparative advantage collapses.

Process theology is one of many ecological theologies, but its presence and influence across the entire spectrum of ecological theologies is significant. As we will see, ecofeminist theologians like Rosemary R. Ruether and Sallie McFague have been strongly influenced by process theology, built upon the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. Also known as the “philosophy of organism,” process philosophy, first and above all, rejects the dualism of history and nature, of mind and matter, since its fundamental insight is the interrelatedness of each and every event¹¹⁴ and the continuity between human beings and the rest of the natural world.¹¹⁵ Process thought gives primacy to interdependence over independence, not simply as an ideal but as an ontologically given characteristic.¹¹⁶

The primary concern (and thus the point of departure) for process theology is “life.” Cobb shares the faith of “liberation” in that oppressive forces should be removed; however, he argues that if the meaning of the life is not clarified, liberation can be romantic in the sense of failing to recognize our capacities for evil.¹¹⁷ Cobb distances himself from the “rhetoric of liberation,” because what is most needed is “a deep spiritual transformation that will lead human beings to experience themselves simply as a part of the whole web and *not as agents of purposive change.*”¹¹⁸ The reason for this objection to the agenda of liberation is, of course, different from that of neoconservative theologians. Cobb opposes it, because in the context of “the overdeveloped world today,” the idea that human beings have the unlimited capacity to overcome poverty or even to prevent

¹¹⁴ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 2f.

¹¹⁵ Cobb and Birch, *The Liberation of Life*, p. 282.

¹¹⁶ Cobb and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 21, 24.

¹¹⁷ Cobb and Birch, *The Liberation of Life*, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁸ Cobb and Birch, *Ibid.*, p. 65.

starvation should be discarded.¹¹⁹ For Cobb, what is presupposed in the notion of human beings as subject of purposive change is the assumption that human beings are able to fashion the world according to their rational purposes; and that is problematic, since it is such an assumption of human omnipotence that brings about the expression of “progress,” “human responsibility,” and the like.¹²⁰ Cobb does not deny that human beings are both responsible and, *in principle*, free to change; still, he emphasizes that human beings are not masters of history, and that we need to recognize “the physical limits of our context,” and thus of our own capacities to envision needed change.¹²¹ However, interestingly, Cobb equally emphasizes the openness of the future and the unlimited power of transformation, understood as the grace of God.¹²² This seemingly self-contradictory claim, in my view, has to do with Cobb’s understanding of “the open-ended commitment of the evolutionary process.”¹²³

For Cobb, life is neither self-made nor the product of human society alone but fundamentally “a gift of the total evolutionary process.”¹²⁴ And, what is basic to the evolutionary process is “the urge for survival itself,” “an urge for life, for continued life, for more and better life,”¹²⁵ “the natural drive to enjoy life,” or “the enjoyment of life.”¹²⁶ God’s fundamental aim is the promotion of the creatures’ own enjoyment.¹²⁷ Compare Cobb’s “drive to enjoy life” with Novak’s “drive to understand.” What is common to

¹¹⁹ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 9.

¹²⁰ Cobb, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹²¹ Cobb, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹²² Cobb, *Ibid.*

¹²³ Cobb and Birch, *The Liberation of Life*, p. 4. Cobb is critical of the French visionary scientist Teilhard de Chardin, whose influence we can feel in Gutierrez, because his account of evolutionary process as a *single* goal and *inevitable* destiny for the whole is insufficiently sensitive to the open-endedness of the evolutionary process.

¹²⁴ Cobb, “Ecology, Ethics, and Theology,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 317.

¹²⁵ Cobb, *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, pp. 54-55.

¹²⁷ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 56.

them is that they are both immanent, and thus for both Cobb and Novak, the source of our ethical action lies not “out there” but “in us.”¹²⁸ However, whereas Novak denies that God can be reached by our bodies, emotions, or feelings, apart from our human intelligence, Cobb emphasizes that *only feeling* is the locus of intrinsic value,¹²⁹ without which God’s “sympathetic compassion,” “sympathetic responsiveness” is impossible.

Process theology takes the evolution process as its decisive context; however, in opposition to a nature/history dualism, it takes “evolutionary history” seriously in order to understand human history.¹³⁰ Cobb emphasizes that far from being endlessly repetitive and cyclical, life on the planet, and even the cosmos as a whole, has been in constant nonrepetitive movement and the changes of nature and of history have been intimately interconnected; hence, we have to learn to read the story of the human past in terms of the decisive role of nature in order to break out of dualistic habits and to interpret our present actions.¹³¹ In its refusal of a nature/history dualism, process theology is a form of critique of both liberation theology and neoconservative theology which take the nature/history dualism for granted. Cobb does not deny that human history *is* the locus of the most important events on this planet; and yet, his point is that history has been built too much on the denial of bodily reality.¹³²

How is God then viewed in process theology? How is the God of process theology different from the God of liberation theology or of neoconservative theology? We must recognize that process theology operates on two sides--one side from the

¹²⁸ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, 57. As we have seen, influenced by Aristotle, the possibility of ethical action for Novak is not derived from obligation, duty, or a commanding God but from the “hidden, inner springs of own spontaneities”; in a similar vein, Cobb assures that the moral is only “a derivative concern, secondary to the primary value, which is enjoyment itself” immanent in the life process.

¹²⁹ Cobb, “Ecology, Ethics, and Theology,” in *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, p. 308.

¹³⁰ Cobb and Birch, *The Liberation of Life*, p. 3.

¹³¹ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 149.

¹³² Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 148.

perspective of Christian faith and on the other in the metaphysical context provided by process philosophy and its doctrine of God.¹³³ We need to first examine the latter, for it is this process philosophy's doctrine of God that makes process theology distinctive from others.

The God in process philosophy is understood as "the power in reality that calls life forth and forward and strives against the forces of inertia and death," which works, however, "very slowly and quietly, by persuasion, not calling attention to it."¹³⁴

According to Cobb:

It does not present itself for observation by biologist or psychologist, yet it is presupposed in both the organisms they study and in their own faithful pursuit of truth. It is not to be found somewhere outside the organisms in which it is at work, but it is not to be identified with them either. We can conceive it best as Spirit... the giver of life and love, that is the ground of hope... The Spirit of Life is at work in ever new and unforeseeable ways.¹³⁵

Cobb finds the best analogy of this Spirit of Life in *Tao*, namely the "power that works slowly and undramatically, but is finally the most effective agency in reality."¹³⁶

Compared to Kwok Pui-lan's description of the *Tao* as "silent and non-intrusive,"¹³⁷

Cobb emphasizes the agency and final effectiveness of the God in process philosophy.

Needless to say, this God of process philosophy rejects the traditional God of Christian deism which presents God as external to the world and the world as external to God;¹³⁸

¹³³ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹³⁴ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 125.

¹³⁵ Cobb, *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 62.

¹³⁷ Kwok, Pui-lan, "Ecology and the Recycling of Christianity," in *Ecology: Voices from the South and North*, ed., David G. Hallman (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications & Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), p. 110.

¹³⁸ Cobb, *Sustaining the Common Good: A Christian Perspective on the Global Economy* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1994), p. 21.

nor is this God harmonious with Aristotelian *primum movens* who is pulling history to its future, but without being involved in history. The God of process philosophy is not another agent alongside the creatures but acts only in them and through them;¹³⁹ that is, it is not controlling “from without” but is calling, ordering, liberating, and comforting “from within.”¹⁴⁰

The essential characteristics of this God of process philosophy, according to Cobb and David R. Griffin, are, first of all, “sympathetic compassion” and “sympathetic responsiveness.” For sure, God is love; yet what is specifically emphasized is that this love must involve a sympathetic response to the loved one in the fullest sense.¹⁴¹ The key is mutual-interaction, a mutual-participation between God and cosmos: According to Cobb, “God interacts with the cosmos. God participates in forming the being and life of each creature. The life of each creature then participates in forming the divine Reality as well.”¹⁴² This notion of mutual-participation between God and the world is of course a clear objection to the traditional notion of God as an “Impassive Absolute” who has no element of responsiveness to the world.¹⁴³ For Cobb and Griffin, what makes God true God is “responsiveness” and it is the essential nature of God’s “perfection.”¹⁴⁴ Deservedly, this notion of divine perfection implies “dependence” or “relativity” on the

¹³⁹ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 157.

¹⁴⁰ Cobb, “The Cosmos and God: The Dependence of Science on Faith,” in *God, Cosmos, Nature and Creativity*, p. 46.

¹⁴¹ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 44.

¹⁴² Cobb, “The Cosmos and God: The Dependence of Science on Faith,” in *God, Cosmos, Nature and Creativity*, p. 49.

¹⁴³ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 46. Accordingly, the term charity, which is derived from *caritas* (which Novak understands as God’s realistic love or as “a dark and terrible form of realism”), is only viewed as a “perverted view of love,” a love that is devoid of genuine sensitivity to the deepest needs of the loved ones.

¹⁴⁴ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 48.

part of the divine.¹⁴⁵ Compare this with Novak's sense of God's perfection. For Novak, God is perfect by virtue of God's refusal to make the world perfect and God's allowance of total freedom on the part of humanity. However, for Cobb and Griffin, just as God is "dependent" upon the world, there is no such thing as absolute human freedom.¹⁴⁶ In this vein, Cobb (and Daly) is deeply suspicious of Calvinism (thus would disagree with Stackhouse), for it led to a claim of personal autonomy upon which modern economic theory thrives.¹⁴⁷ The foremost characteristic of the God in process philosophy is God's compassionate, sympathetic, and responsive love; and, first and above all, process philosophy is about this "emotional bond" between God, humanity, and the world.¹⁴⁸

Secondly, the God in process philosophy is characterized by God's "creative activity" and "novelty" derived from God's responsiveness described above. The God of process philosophy is active in the world, working directly to overcome evil and to create new things and just conditions.¹⁴⁹ For sure, this sounds like the God of liberation theology, although the God of process philosophy does not act in history alone and on behalf of the poor either. However, what is emphasized in God's creative activity is the introduction of novelty. By virtue of this God, process philosophy emphasizes not only the interrelatedness of all events and things but also the possibility of renewal and transformation. This possibility is well expressed by Cobb and Daly when they affirm

¹⁴⁵ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁶ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 74. In fact, unlike Novak for whom Aquinas is important because of the centrality he gave to human liberty in nature and history, Cobb finds that although Aquinas affirmed the doctrine of human freedom in order to mute the traditional understanding of God the Controlling Power, he gave more credence to socially concerned, community-building aspects of human activity. (See *Ibid.*, p. 52; Cobb and Daly, *For the Common Good*, p. 5.)

¹⁴⁷ Cobb and Daly, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁸ Indeed, this emotional bond is crucial for an ecological awareness and political economy, for, as Gould puts it, "We cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well—for we will not fight to save what we do not love." (Quoted from Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 20.)

¹⁴⁹ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, pp. 48f.

that the central insight of process thought is that “all events are largely the outcome of antecedent events, *but* none are wholly determined by the past but something happens afresh in each event.”¹⁵⁰ Compare this with Novak’s view of the world as “emergent probability.” As we have seen in the previous chapter, Novak’s world as emergent probability is a world in which “human history is open to new futures, *yet* the sequences of any one future depend upon the fulfillment of prior conditions in preceding sequences.” This does not deny that history is open *but* it emphasizes that the future depends on preceding sequences; in contrast, process thought admits that all events depend on antecedent events *but* it emphasizes that the future is not determined by preceding events because of the introduction of divine novelty. Accordingly, in the former, one had better be realistic, because the world is subject to both progress *and* to decline, and because there is no guarantee for automatic progress because of “sin”; in the latter, however, despite the relatedness to the antecedent events, one must be open to the future because something happens afresh in each event due to the introduction of divine novelty. A simple difference in the sequence of sentence implies a huge difference in terms of the worldview indeed! In my view, because of the notion of divine creativity and novelty, process thought, despite its emphasis on the relatedness to the past, escapes from the pitfall of socio-historical conservatism.

Then, it is not surprising to see that while Novak rejects Moltmann’s idea of “future” as *Novum* (the new thing), Cobb and Griffin emphasize, like Moltmann, that creative transformation is not simply about “adding” but about introducing the *Novum* (the qualitatively new or the creative novelty) which is the essence of the open future.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 399. Emphasis added.

¹⁵¹ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 83.

Unlike in Moltmann, however, in process thought the *Novum* is “pregnant” in the present as all events are largely the outcome of antecedent events. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Moltmann refuses to identify the “future” with the progress of the world developing out of the present, emphasizing the inexhaustible added value of the future over against present and past. Gutierrez criticized it as the danger of docetism or futuristic illusion. By virtue of its emphasis on the ontological relatedness between the past, present, and future, process thought escapes from such criticism. However, process thought differs from liberation theology in that it does not see the *Novum* in the historical praxis of liberation or in the signs of eschatological advance. In that sense, process thought does not “limp after reality,” for it retains some sense of Moltmann’s “anticipation” as God “lures” the “unrealized possibilities.” In my view, process philosophy (thus theology) stands somewhere in between Moltmann’s theology of hope and Latin American liberation theology in terms of the worldview.

Thirdly, the God in process philosophy is “the basic source of unrest in the universe,” who “takes risks.”¹⁵² God’s creative love, according to Cobb and Griffin, is a love that takes risks.¹⁵³ No doubt, this notion of God as creative love differs from that of Novak’s God as realistic love, since it identifies God not with “the Sanctioner of the Status Quo” but with “the source of some of the chaos in the world.”¹⁵⁴ For Cobb and Griffin, God is surely the source of order, but the order is derivative from divine novelty and is only instrumental to the one intrinsic good, which is the enjoyment of life.¹⁵⁵ This understanding of order is quite the opposite of Novak’s idea of “ordered liberty,” for it

¹⁵² Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 59.

¹⁵³ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁵⁴ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁵⁵ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

emphasizes a changing, developing, and new order.¹⁵⁶ The difference between process philosophy and North American neoconservative theology is well evidenced in Cobb's understanding of Niebuhr's Christian realism. For Cobb, Christian realism should not be the reason to relax our efforts to maintain our constant struggle, because, to live with the spirit of Christian realism may turn out in the long run to be less realistic than to shape our lives from visions of a hopeful future.¹⁵⁷ Certainly, Niebuhr's God "afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted," and "makes our virtue questionable and assures us in our sinfulness"; however, for Cobb and Griffin, Niebuhr's God, in the final analysis, is the one who opens us to creative transformation by "reversing our self-evaluation."¹⁵⁸ This view, in my opinion, is identical with that of Brown who sees Niebuhr as "the troubler of our consciousness." And yet, the God of creative love in process philosophy is not identical with the God of liberation theology either in that the former does not "take sides" but only "take risks."

Fourthly, the God of process philosophy is not controlling, coercive power but *persuasive* power. Cobb and Griffin have a better term for such power--"divine creative influence."¹⁵⁹ This notion of divine power is derived from the notion of God as compassionate, sympathetic, and responsive love that, by definition, does not seek to control the loved ones by coercion.¹⁶⁰ For critics of process philosophy, however, such God who is not able to "guarantee" a favorable outcome is considered not to have the sort of power that is essential to a deity, therefore they accuse process philosophy/theology of

¹⁵⁶ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁵⁷ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁸ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁹ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁰ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*

being a form of atheism.¹⁶¹ Cobb and Griffin's defense is that, unlike atheists who see the power of human beings to shape their own destiny as arising out of their own given being or antecedent nature, process philosophy/theology sees the power of human beings as arising out of the persuasive power of God.¹⁶² For Cobb and Griffin, the concrete actuality is relative, dependent, and constantly changing; therefore, in each moment of God's life, there are always new and unforeseen happenings in the world; hence, God's concrete knowledge is dependent upon the decisions made by the worldly actualities.¹⁶³ In this sense, God does not know what the result will be, for what will happen depends upon what human beings will do;¹⁶⁴ therefore, "God lures, urges, and persuades. We decide" and "insofar as we allow God to do so, God makes all things new."¹⁶⁵ Is this notion, however, not identical with Novak's anthropological claim that God's work in history is subject to human liberty? In my view, it is not, because God's power and knowledge is limited in process philosophy/theology not because it is subject to human liberty, but because there is "ontological mutuality" between God and the world. As we have seen, what is fundamentally rejected in process philosophy is divine immutability, and what is fundamentally embraced by it is the assertion that all that happens in the created order "enters" fully into the divine life. Accordingly, "God rejoices with us in our joy and suffers with us in our pain," and, in this sense, "Our decisions affect the life of God."¹⁶⁶ The notion of divine power as persuasion, I think, is the logical outcome of process philosophy's rejection of the divine immutability. In the final analysis, the God

¹⁶¹ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁶² Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 57, 119.

¹⁶⁴ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

¹⁶⁶ Cobb, *Sustaining the Common Good*, p. 21.

of persuasive power seems not as powerless as the God of Novak's theology of human creativity, in which human beings are at *full* liberty to fashion God's creation. In fact, Cobb criticizes Bonhoeffer, claiming that while he was right to move away from a controlling deity in speaking of the divine suffering, he was dangerously misleading when he spoke of the divine as powerless.¹⁶⁷

Still, the God of persuasive power seems to be less powerful than the God of Hebrews. As Larry L. Rasmussen points out, unlike many others in the god-rich world of the ancient near East, the Hebrew God was not recognized as simply a power or force in the universe which suffused all nature with its energy; rather, this sacred power was a *moral force* that rejected the inevitability of oppression and injustice.¹⁶⁸ Rasmussen accepts that "God is the uncreated energy of the created, energy-suffused universe"; and yet, this God is "a power-sharing God" and the *raison d'être* of the sacred itself is nothing less than "marking, evoking and channeling extraordinary power."¹⁶⁹ Rasmussen's point is that whatever else theology of life, nature, or cosmos might mean, it must invoke *moral responsibility* on the part of human beings.¹⁷⁰ Cobb and Griffin would not deny this, for they believe that although there is no divine assurance of the future (because "the future is *truly* open"), we can invoke the sense of moral responsibility by "trusting" a God who lures, urges, and persuades the unrealized possibilities and by "sensitizing" ourselves to this call giving up our present security.¹⁷¹ However, in my view, Rasmussen's point is still relevant, because, after all, the ultimate problem or "the final evil" for process

¹⁶⁷ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁸ Rasmussen, "Theology of Life and Ecumenical Ethics," in *Ecology: Voices from South and North*, p. 113.

¹⁶⁹ Rasmussen, *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹⁷⁰ Rasmussen, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁷¹ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, pp. 157-158.

philosophy/theology is not injustice or physical suffering but temporality or the “perpetual perishing” in the full ecological sense.¹⁷² Since the final evil is not injustice but temporality, the “kingdom of heaven,” for Cobb and Griffin, is viewed as the “everlasting reality of the divine life.”¹⁷³ Actually, due to this understanding of the final evil, Cobb and Griffin arrive at a theodicy that is quite puzzling for those who are concerned with the trauma of historical evil:

Much that we regard as evil is not genuinely so. We complain about our poverty or our failure to succeed in competition, whereas with spiritual maturity we can sometimes discover either that our poverty and failure have enriched our lives or that they have driven us to seek more important goods. What seems evil but ceases to be so when the Christian transvaluation of values occurs is not the evil that God must overcome in order to be worshiped as God.¹⁷⁴

This “evangelical” interpretation of evil, however, shocks many when Cobb and Griffin go on to say that the God who “permitted” Auschwitz will permit anything the creatures choose to do.¹⁷⁵ In my view, the problem involved in this statement of early Cobb and Griffin¹⁷⁶ is that the seriousness of “moral evil” is hidden by the ground cover of “natural evil.” The following description of evil by Cobb and Griffin tells us what they basically mean by evil:

[T]here is much evil that is made possible by the risk taken by divine creative love in order to overcome triviality. The possibility of this sin and suffering is necessarily entailed in the creation of beings capable of high grades of enjoyment. God neither prevents this evil, nor guarantees compensation for it, although the divine creative love does encourage us to avoid unnecessary discord and to transform situations creatively so as to

¹⁷² Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

¹⁷³ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁷⁴ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁵ Cobb and Griffin, *Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁷⁶ Cobb and Griffin's co-authored *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* was written in 1976.

bring good out of evil. Rebellng against the universe because of this kind of evil reflects a misunderstanding not only of what perfect power can and cannot do, but also of the nature of evil, i.e., of the fact that triviality is as much to be avoided as discord.¹⁷⁷

In Ivone Gebara's term, what Cobb and Griffin mean by evil is the "creative-destructive process" inherent in evolution itself, distinguishable from the moral evil worked by human beings.¹⁷⁸ This process is indeed "the constitutive reality of the universe," both positive and negative, which is inseparable in all the life processes.¹⁷⁹ And from the ecological point of view, there is no such thing as "sin" in life's destructive process, indeed no such thing as ultimate justice or ultimate injustice. This ecological view, however, is not new to Asian great religions, particularly to Buddhism. As the Buddhist scholar Leo D. Lefebure says, human beings are not born and do not die in the ultimate sense, because we existed in all the elements of the universe before our birth, we now exist with all the elements of the universe during our life, and we will exist with all the elements of the universe after our death.¹⁸⁰ In this view, there is no such thing as evil, for even death itself means life for the whole.¹⁸¹ Accordingly, another Buddhist scholar Masao Abe argues that if we do not project human feeling and human interest upon natural phenomena—such as lion attacking rabbit and snake swallowing frog--, physical and biological phenomena in the natural world take place entirely naturally and

¹⁷⁷ Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, pp. 119f.

¹⁷⁸ Gebara, "The Trinity and Human Experience: An Ecofeminist Approach," in *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion*, ed., Rosemary R. Ruether (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 19.

¹⁷⁹ Gebara, *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁸⁰ Leo D. Lefebure, *The Buddha and the Christ: Explorations in Buddhist and Christian Dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), p. 184.

¹⁸¹ Julia Esquivel Velasquez, "Spirituality of the Earth," in *The Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 337.

spontaneously in their “suchness.”¹⁸² Buddhism teaches us to view our world, society, and life from the perspective of such “suchness.” Thus, the Buddhist sage Thich Nhat Hanh teaches us that the ground for historical hope is the experience of awakening to the Buddhist core doctrine of “dependent co-arising,” that is, to the realization that nothing comes into being and nothing goes out of being, that no one can ultimately kill anyone, and that the dead still live.¹⁸³ Accordingly, he admonishes: “Do not take sides. If you take sides, you are trying to eliminate half of reality, which is impossible.”¹⁸⁴ In this vein, Abe also urges us not to take sides, for the distinction between good and evil in the ethical dimension is ultimately relative and not absolute.¹⁸⁵ For him, the standpoint of justice, humanistic or divine, cannot be a proper basis for our life, because then we may fall into endless conflict and struggle between the judge and the judges; instead, the standpoint of wisdom and compassion can provide a more proper basis to cope with human suffering without getting involved in an endless conflict.¹⁸⁶ Thus, according to Lefebure, Buddhism has the final solution to the Christian problem of evil:

[T]he universe of interbeing is itself marked by a nondiscriminating acceptance of good and evil alike; for in the perspective of dependent co-arising, roses and garbage are interdependent, as are wealthy and poor, oppressors and oppressed... [T]here is nothing pure or defiled. This is the central Buddhist resolution of what Christians name the problem of evil.¹⁸⁷

From this perspective, the problem of the problem of evil is the vain effort to project human feeling and interest upon the creative-destructive process inherent in the evolution

¹⁸² Masao Abe, “Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata,” in *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation*, eds., John B. Cobb, Jr. and Christopher Ives (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), p. 190.

¹⁸³ Lefebure, *The Buddha and the Christ*, p. 190.

¹⁸⁴ Lefebure, *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹⁸⁵ Abe, “Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata,” in *The Emptying God*, p. 46.

¹⁸⁶ Abe, *Ibid.*, p. 51f.

¹⁸⁷ Lefebure, *The Buddha and the Christ*, p. 181.

itself. I accept this point. I oppose the projection of human moral interest upon natural phenomena. By the same token, however, I *equally* oppose projecting natural phenomena upon society. I believe that injustice is not a thing that can be explained away in the name of ecological “suchness.” I believe that “what is” (the natural) should not be the excuse to give up “what ought to be” (the moral). I believe so, because, as we will see in the next chapter, that is exactly how F.A. Hayek argues against the agenda for changing society. Let me postpone further explication of this argument, for, interestingly, that issue will reappear in the feminist inner debates which we will discuss soon. For now, we need to continue to examine Cobb’s theology, particularly the later Cobb’s “Earthism” (the name for his creation theology or “creationism”) developed by vigorous incorporation of Christian and biblical faith (theocentric and prophetic tradition) into his process theology. This examination is important, for, as Cobb and Griffin already said, process theology operates not only from the perspective of process philosophy and its doctrine of God but also from the perspective of Christian faith. We need to see how the Christian and biblical side has helped Cobb to distinguish his process theology from many other forms of eco-, geo-, and bio-centrism.

Unlike neoconservative theologians who do not often appeal to the Bible, Cobb does appeal to the Bible, but *against* the Bible itself.¹⁸⁸ Cobb admits that he once underestimated the potential of the Bible; yet, he has realized that, far less dualistic and anthropocentric than its standard interpretations, and despite its strong tendency to focus on human beings, the Bible does not separate human beings from the remainder of creation and does not support strict anthropocentrism but calls for theocentrism.¹⁸⁹ From

¹⁸⁸ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 83.

¹⁸⁹ Cobb, *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 92-93.

this perspective of biblical theocentrism, Cobb and Daly, in their *For the Common Good*, distinguish their religious vision not only from that of deep ecologists (i.e., those who have broken most dramatically from anthropocentrism, or “speciesism,” by emphasizing the interdependent and unified character of the ecosystem as a whole) but also from that of the Gaia hypothesis (i.e., the view that sees the earth worthy of ultimate veneration).

For Daly, neither pantheism nor “biophilia” can withstand much philosophical criticism, even though they are welcome first steps away from pure scientific materialism.¹⁹⁰ Thus, he rejects not only the Mammon of property but also the goddess of fertility, calling them “the twin sacred cows.”¹⁹¹ For Cobb, deep ecologists’ denial of human specialness is unacceptable, for human beings are not simply one species among others but created in the image of God and thus assigned a particular privilege and responsibility.¹⁹² Against deep ecologists’ urge to return to the state of innocence (i.e., before the “fall” of nature generated by human domestication of plants and animals), Cobb also contends that there is no turning back, that the salvation mediated by Christ exceeds in value the innocence that preceded the fall, and that in Christ we find something greater than what was originally lost.¹⁹³ Cobb’s point is that human beings *do* have dominion and we are responsible, and thus that anthropocentricity should not be

¹⁹⁰ Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 23.

¹⁹¹ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, pp. 160, 169.

¹⁹² Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 110.

¹⁹³ Cobb, *Ibid.*, pp. 109-111. Cobb has his point, since, as Mary Judith Ress reports from her intensive study of Latin American *mestizo* identity, indigenous societies, while certainly more ecologically sensitive and egalitarian than Western society, are certainly not the “paradise lost”; according to her, such as the Aztec and Inca empires, had degenerated into a period of warfare, expansion and rigid hierarchy by the time of the Spaniards’ arrival; furthermore, although women were revered and deities were both masculine and feminine, men were still the rulers, according to Ress. Diego Irarrazaval also reports that although the key spirituality of Aymara indigenous people in the Andean highlands is the interconnectedness of all life, there is still a certain hierarchical ordering that places men first. (See Ress, “After Five Centuries of Mixings, Who Are We?: Walking with Our Dark Grandmother’s Feet,” in *Women Healing Earth*, p. 53.)

rejected along with anthropocentrism.¹⁹⁴ Cobb agrees with deep ecologists' rejection of the Newtonian God; however, following Charles Hartshorne's assertion of panentheism, Cobb distinguishes his view from deep ecologists' pantheism.¹⁹⁵ For Cobb, God is working through human efforts *and* the transcending perspective that guides those efforts,¹⁹⁶ for Cobb, there must be a privileged perspective for the guidance of human efforts, and God is that perspective, for God's perspective includes all others.¹⁹⁷ From these perspectives and critiques, Cobb and Daly propose "the biospheric vision" as the alternative to eco-, geo-, and bio-centrism.

The biospheric vision, according to Cobb and Daly, is basically one of the organismic views of human beings and of their communities, which oppose anthropocentrism.¹⁹⁸ However, they argue that this organismic view should be integrated into and grounded upon theocentrism in a way that does not neglect justice, and that, for this purpose, the biblical prophetic tradition, characterized by its warning against idolatry, should be taken seriously.¹⁹⁹ For Cobb and Daly, theocentrism is required, if not confessed, since only such a view can provide the transcendental source of value that can provide a check against the idolatry of both anthropocentrism, which shows no concern for nature, and biocentrism, which makes no claim on human concern as exemplified in James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis.²⁰⁰ Theocentrism is required, since it can also check

¹⁹⁴ Cobb, *Sustainability*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁹⁵ Cobb, "Ecology, Science, and Religion: Toward a Postmodern Worldview," in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, p. 246.

¹⁹⁶ Cobb and Daly, *For the Common Good*, p. 396.

¹⁹⁷ Cobb, *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁹⁸ Cobb and Daly, *For the Common Good*, p. 383.

¹⁹⁹ Cobb and Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 391.

²⁰⁰ Cobb and Daly, *Ibid.*, pp. 402-403. For Cobb and Daly, the Gaia hypothesis, for all the attractiveness, only leads to distortion, for it does not do justice to the intrinsic value of each living thing or of the biosphere as a whole. The problem for them is that in the Gaia hypothesis, the value is located primarily in the entire biosphere so that its rich diversity and complex patterns, which contribute a rich beauty to the

against the scientific materialism which denies the reality of purpose, value, and all claims of truth.²⁰¹ Without such a transcendental source of value, without an everlasting God, Cobb and Daly argue, we cannot provide a basis for understanding our relation to the future and to the yet unborn.²⁰²

Cobb and Daly's biospheric vision then cancels out Stackhouse's assertion that ecological theology is only a form of monistic naturalism, which identifies nature's becoming with the divine. Stackhouse argued that it is only by the knowledge of something other than nature that we may know that the *status quo* is not as it should be, and that only by grasping what is beyond nature are we able to resist reverting to the *status quo ante* of organicism or plunging into the *fluxus quo* of process. I do not see why Daly and Cobb would not agree with him. Still, the difference is that while Stackhouse's metaphysical-moral vision allows human beings to "cook" the "fallen" nature by human technology, Daly and Cobb's transcendental source of value is nothing but the check against such an "anthropocentric vandalism," so to speak. Stackhouse argued that only the Reformed-Puritan tradition, in which each person has his/her own calling from God, not from the pre-given orders of nature or society, can enhance the work ethic necessary for vigorous economic activities; yet, for Daly and Cobb, such a work ethic is the

divine life, is neglected. In the similar vein, Cobb and Daly's "biospheric vision" is further distinguished from Eastern spirituality, which, according to Cobb, directs attention away from history, and identified with much of the Western tradition of a world-affirming spirit. (See Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism: A Theological Critique of the World Bank* [New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999], p. 177.)

²⁰¹ Cobb and Daly, *For the Common Good*, p. 398; Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 20.

²⁰² Cobb and Daly, *For the Common Good*, p. 404. On account of political economic reason alone, Daly cannot accept biocentrism or geocentrism, because they imply a form of "ecological reductionism" in which the human economy, which is a subsystem of the earth ecosystem, is simply shrunk to nothing so that everything is ecosystem. By the same token, Daly opposes "economic imperialism" in which the subsystem of human economy expands until everything is included. (Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 11.) Aloysius Pieris also distinguishes "cosmic worldview" from "cosmocentric view." For Pieris, cosmocentric view results from the expulsion of the human from the center of the cosmos, and thus it is only "a euphemism for downright secularism" and "a closed world without transcendental horizon." (See Pieris, "The Feminist Critique and the New Religious Vision," in *Fire & Water*, p. 52.)

expression of growthmania which is totally ignorant of the physical limit of Earth's ecosystem. Daly has his point: "God's world is lovable, and scientists often fall in love with it much more deeply than theologians!"²⁰³

As we have seen, from the perspective of Christian faith, Cobb has distinguished himself from deep ecologists. And yet, Cobb has not totally abandoned the possibility of the Earth as "a more inclusive object of *penultimate* devotion" than Christianity, nation, or economic growth; instead, Cobb proposes that we consider Earthism as the possibility of new religion and spirituality.²⁰⁴ Regretting that Protestants have for too long subordinated the doctrine of creation to idolatrous anthropocentrism, Cobb urges that Christians should promote "creationism" as the new religion and spirituality.²⁰⁵ However, as creationism is too narrowly Christian to work together with others, Cobb replaces it with the term Earthism.²⁰⁶ Earthism then is an inclusive term for his creation-centered theology. Cobb denies that the Earth is worthy of our *supreme* devotion and loyalty, because the Earth is not God, and God is not the Earth; nevertheless, he firmly believes that the Earth is far more inclusive and a more suitable object of our devotion than Christianity, a nation, or economic growth.²⁰⁷ If in his biospheric vision, Cobb advocated together with Daly Christian theistic and prophetic perspectives in opposition to biocentric visions of deep ecologists or of Gaia hypothesis, in his Earthism, Cobb is rejuvenating the need for our veneration and penultimate devotion to the Earth. More importantly, such Earthism is Cobb's theological alternative to "economism" which he defines as the belief that society should be organized for the sake of economic growth

²⁰³ Daly, *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁰⁴ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, p. 8. Emphasis is mine.

²⁰⁵ Cobb, *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰⁶ Cobb, *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Cobb, *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

and that our primary devotion should be directed to the expansion of the economy.²⁰⁸ By Earthism then, Cobb is proposing to change our object of devotion from economic growth to the sustainability and wholeness of all the creation. In a strict sense, however, Cobb's Earthism differs from Daly's steady state economy in that it is more willing to accept the positive contributions of modernity. Regretting the fact that economism has persuaded hundreds of millions of the poor by offering a false hope that they will one day share in the affluence they see on television, and that the Earthist message, on the contrary, consists chiefly in warnings and alarmist predictions which seem to require the abandonment of hope by the poor,²⁰⁹ Cobb proposes that in order to gain wide acceptance, Earthism must appraise and use the positive contributions of all developments, such as science, technology, computerization, and even industrialization.²¹⁰

To sum, despite this difference, Cobb's Earthism and Daly's steady state economy are fundamentally a form of creation-centered economy that challenges the prevailing economic paradigm characterized by its strict anthropocentrism. Overall, I am persuaded by this alternative creation-centered economy, because, as Cobb puts it bluntly, there is simply no possibility of unlimited economic growth based on fossil fuels.²¹¹ We have to seriously rethink our whole economy in light of the sheer fact that since 1950 global economic output has jumped from \$3.8 trillion to \$18.9 trillion--a nearly five-fold increase--, meaning that our generation has consumed more of the world's natural capital in this brief period than during the *entire* human history to that

²⁰⁸ Cobb, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

²⁰⁹ Cobb, *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²¹⁰ Cobb, *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 176-177.

²¹¹ Cobb and Birch, *The Liberation of Life*, p. 253.

point.²¹² As the human economy continues to expand globally, nearly half of the world's forests, which once covered the Earth, have already been lost.²¹³ Surely, the Earth does not have an infinite capacity to supply the resources necessary for production and to absorb the resulting wastes from us; nonetheless, we are blindly exploiting our natural resource base and generating waste at a rate which exceeds the capacity of the natural world to regenerate and heal itself. We have to confess that we are now borrowing and plundering from our future generations who will inherit from us only a depleted and degraded Earth. Indeed, as the ecologist Robert Ayres warns, we may well be on the way to our own extinction.²¹⁴ In this light, we should take seriously Daly and Cobb's assertion that even the human capacity to overcome poverty or to prevent starvation should be limited.²¹⁵ For this reason, liberation theology and neoconservative theology alike are invited to rethink their assertion about human creativity.

As Cobb and Daly see the world as fundamentally limited in a physical sense, they have made firm efforts to shift our focus away from the anthropocentric understanding of the creation toward a fresh, new awareness of the fundamental limit of human freedom and creativity within creation's integrity. This movement away from anthropocentrism is their biggest contribution. However, a group of women arose and began to claim that overcoming anthropocentrism is not enough, for such a view is typically *men's* view and the roots of the problem run much deeper than that. This is the claim of the group of women, known as ecofeminists, whose central insight is that the domination of men over women (patriarchy) is the basic prototype for the domination of

²¹² Wayne Ellwood, *The No-nonsense Guide to Globalization* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 92.

²¹³ Hilary French, *Vanishing Borders: Protecting the Planet in the Age of Globalization* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), p. 35.

²¹⁴ Quoted from Ellwood, *The No Non-sense Guide to Globalization*, pp. 93.

²¹⁵ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 9.

human beings over nature,²¹⁶ and that there are deep structural resonances between men's violence toward nature and men's violence toward women.²¹⁷ Therefore, without considering these distinctive voices of women, our examination of the ecological theological camp will be incomplete. Indeed, no theology today can evade the litmus test of the ignored half of humanity. What are the distinctive voices of women? What are their distinctive contributions to political economy and theological renewal? We now turn to an examination of the origin, historical development, inner debates, and distinctive political economic proposals of ecofeminist theologians and thinkers.

***Ecofeminisme* and Ecofeminist Theologies**

Ecofeminisme, the term coined by the French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne,²¹⁸ is a relatively new movement which sees the nature/culture dualism and the domination of men over women as one identical root of oppression. Accordingly, central to the ecofeminist project is to unpack the connections between "the twin oppressions of women and nature"²¹⁹ through an analysis of the interrelated dominations of nature and the historic position of women in relation to those forms of domination.²²⁰

Ecofeminism distinguishes itself not only from "shallow ecology" (i.e., the anthropocentric and instrumentalist view that nature exists solely to serve human ends

²¹⁶ Ynestra King, "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and the Nature/Culture Dualism," in *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, eds., Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), p. 109.

²¹⁷ Yaakov Jerome Garb, "Perspective or Escape? Ecofeminist Musings on Contemporary Earth Imagery," in *Ibid.*, p. 269.

²¹⁸ Mary Ann Hinsdale, "Ecology, Feminism, and Theology," in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, p. 198.

²¹⁹ Karen J. Warren, "Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections," in *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²²⁰ King, "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and the Nature/Culture Dualism," p. 117.

and purposes)²²¹ but even from “deep ecology” (i.e., the anti-anthropocentric and anti-instrumentalist view of the universe that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all beings).²²² Ecofeminists are in this regard allies of Cobb and Daly; however, the reason for ecofeminists’ objection to deep ecology is different. For deep ecologists, it is the *anthropocentric* worldview that is foremost to blame; for ecofeminists, it is the *androcentric* worldview that deserves primary blame;²²³ that is, whereas the former speaks of the drawbacks of *human*-centeredness, the latter speaks of the drawbacks of *man*-centeredness.²²⁴ For ecofeminists, the real deep source of the domination of nature is not human beings in general (anthropocentrism) but *men* in particular (patriarchy). In this sense, ecofeminism is deeper than deep ecology. According to Marti Kheel:

Whereas the anthropocentric worldview perceives humans as the center or apex of the natural world, the androcentric analysis suggests that this worldview is *unique to men*. Feminists have argued that women’s identities, unlike men’s, have not been established through their elevation over the natural world. On the contrary, under patriarchal society, women have been identified with the devalued natural world.²²⁵

In other words, ecofeminists view the deepest causes of oppression against women and nature in the “patriarchal quest to total autonomy and independence,” rooted in “the male quest to conquer death and limitation by dominating his environment, his own body (through military and scientific ‘discipline’), his women, and all other ‘subhuman’ (that

²²¹ Hinsdale, “Ecology, Feminism, and Theology,” p. 197.

²²² Michael E. Zimmerman, “Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism,” in *Reweaving the World*, p. 140.

²²³ Marti Kheel, “Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology,” in *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²²⁴ Zimmerman, “Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism,” p. 142.

²²⁵ Kheel, “Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology,” in *Reweaving the World*, p. 129.

is, nonruling-class) type.”²²⁶ Note that patriarchy is the key to understanding the essence of the ecofeminist challenge.

Historically, ecofeminism has been most often associated with radical or cultural feminism. Mary Daly, Susan Griffin, Starhawk, Carol P. Christ, and others, who are also known as nature or Goddess feminists, are leading figures in this trend of feminism. They set them apart from both “liberal feminism” and “Marxist feminism” by rooting women’s oppression in reproductive biology and a sex gender system,²²⁷ by celebrating the life experience of the “female ghetto,” and by emphasizing the “women’s way of knowing,” characterized by intuition, caring, feelings, spiritual or mystical experiences.²²⁸ In other words, “the primordial realm of women and nature” is the primary source of politics of resistance in this feminism, and this is why “the personal is political” here.²²⁹ This means that radical/cultural/nature/Goddess feminism recognizes the connection between women and nature as potentially *emancipatory*.²³⁰ (As we will see, this is the bleeding ground for inner debate among ecofeminist thinkers.)

Radical feminists are also post-biblical feminists who reject the Bible, Christianity, and Judaism as inherently incompatible with women’s achievement of full personhood.²³¹ Therefore, they promote instead a strong ritualism and intuitionism of the Goddess movement characterized by its valorizing and finding divinity in the natural

²²⁶ Zimmerman, “Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism,” pp. 145, 148.

²²⁷ Warren, “Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections,” p. 114. Liberal feminism, which is sometimes called “equal rights” feminism, is basically a white middle class movement which views human beings as individual rational agents who maximize their own self-interest, and which views capitalism as the optimal economic structure for human progress. Traditional Marxist feminism, according to Warren, generally fails to take seriously gender as a constitutive category to social reality.

²²⁸ Hinsdale, “Ecology, Feminism, and Theology,” 200.

²²⁹ Warren, “Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections,” p. 114.

²³⁰ Hinsdale, “Ecology, Feminism, and Theology,” p. 200.

²³¹ Hinsdale, *Ibid.*, p. 198.

world, in the “profane” cycles of human life, and in the female body itself.²³² In this sense, radical/Goddess feminism is characterized by “a positive understanding of matter, senses, body, and the world in general, and of the woman herself, in particular.”²³³ This means that the central impulses of radical feminism are to break down the division between a transcendent holy realm and the rest of all existences²³⁴ by seeking for “a genuinely antidualistic theory and praxis.”²³⁵ Accordingly, radical feminists move unhesitatingly away from a hierarchical model to an ecological model, from anthropocentrism to biocentrism, and from theocentrism to cosmocentrism. However, just as Cobb and Herman Daly have distanced themselves from bio-, geo-, or eco-centrism by incorporating Christian theistic vision, a group of *Christian* feminists also arose and began to challenge the radical feminists.

Rosemary R. Ruether and Sallie McFague are two prominent Christian ecofeminist thinkers whose basic argument is that it is crucial to maintain the transcendental dimension in ecofeminist thought. This does not mean that Ruether and McFague’s understanding of God is less ecological than radical feminists by any means. Ruether’s “God/ess,” for example, is as thoroughly ecological as the “Goddess” of radical/cultural feminists. For Ruether, God/ess is the “cosmic matrix of matter/energy,”²³⁶ the “primal Matrix, the ground of being-new being,”²³⁷ or “the font from which the variety of plants and animals well up in each new generation and the

²³² Garb, “Perspective or Escape?,” p. 275.

²³³ Aloysius Pieris, “The Eve-Mary Polarity in Scripture and Tradition,” in *Fire & Water: Basic Issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 32.

²³⁴ Garb, *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Hinsdale, “Ecology, Feminism, and Theology,” p. 201.

²³⁶ Like Herman Daly, Ruether is deeply attracted to contemporary physics which affirms, in opposition to the classical (Newtonian) distinction between matter and energy, that “matter is energy moving in defined patterns of relationality.” (See Ruether, *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* [HarperSanFrancisco, 1992], p. 248.)

²³⁷ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p. 85.

matrix that sustains their life-giving interdependency with one another.”²³⁸ This description of God is perfectly consonant with the God of the creative-destructive process intrinsic in the evolution of life itself. Accordingly, Ruether’s God/ess is not a “being” outside the creation but “the source of being that underlies creation and grounds its nature and future potential for continual transformative renewal in biophilic mutuality.”²³⁹ This God/ess resembles the God of process philosophy understood as the power in reality that calls life forth and forward and strives against the forces of inertia and death.²⁴⁰ In fact, Ruether admits that she agrees with the process notion of God’s power as persuasion in the sense that her God/ess will not intervene to save us but can only call us to our better selves and give us the ongoing basis for it without forcing this conversion upon us.²⁴¹ Therefore, for Ruether, failure is possible, although not fated, and, although the deep ontological structures that dictate biophilic mutuality give us the potential for making a new future, there are chances that we could miss it through our greed, hatred, and delusions.²⁴²

Nevertheless, while affirming God’s profound immanence in nature and evolutionary process as such, Ruether and McFague strive to maintain the transcendental principle of divine reality. For this purpose, Ruether and McFague have found Charles Hartshorne’s panentheism, which is in fact a negotiating view that attempts to reconcile the pantheism and traditional Christian theism,²⁴³ promising as a way to affirm “neither

²³⁸ Ruether, “Ecofeminism: Symbolic and Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination of Nature,” in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, ed., Carol Adams (New York: Continuum, 1993), p. 21.

²³⁹ Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp. 223-224.

²⁴⁰ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p.125.

²⁴¹ Ruether, *Women and Redemption*, pp. 223-224.

²⁴² Ruether, *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Collier Books, 1964), p. 172.

stifling immanence nor rootless transcendence.”²⁴⁴ In the same vein, McFague affirms, as opposed to identifying God with natural processes, that God is a radicalization of both divine transcendence and immanence.²⁴⁵ The uniqueness of McFague’s solution is that she consciously and purposively combines the “organic model” of God (the world as the body of God) and the “agential model” of God (God as the spirit of that body as the source and empowerment of the universe and the breath that enlivens and energizes it).²⁴⁶

Nevertheless, for the Goddess “theologian” Carol P. Christ, one must question the whole ideas of transcendence, monotheism, and perfection, because, after all, the biblical God is only a male war God, who surely liberated the chosen people but made “holy” war on their “enemies”; such God surely took sides with the rural poor but at the same time threatened against the worshipers of other deities--the threat that would have targeted women especially who retained important religious powers within Goddess worship.²⁴⁷ Therefore, for Christ, Christianity has only contributed to the problem of the loss of reverence for nature; hence, the hybrid “God-She” and other symbolic revisions are not sufficient; instead, one must question the ideas of transcendence, monotheism, and perfection and must seek a Goddess within nature, who would be truer to women’s experience and better for the planet and its creatures.²⁴⁸ Nonetheless, for Ruether, merely replacing a male transcendent deity with an immanent female one is not a sufficient

²⁴⁴ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, p. 85.

²⁴⁵ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 133, 149, 150.

²⁴⁶ For McFague, creation is not an intellectual or artistic act but a *physical* event through which the universe is “bodied” from the “womb” of God, formed through “gestation”—the process symbolizing the long evolutionary history of the universe. For McFague, the universe is “properly body (as well as spirit) because in some sense God is physical (as well as beyond the physical).” (See McFague, “Mother God,” in *The Power of Naming*, p. 328.)

²⁴⁷ Quoted from Kathleen M. Sands. *Escape from Paradise: Evil and Tragedy in Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 76, 126.

²⁴⁸ Sands, *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

answer to the “god-problem.” Ruether argues against Christ that *all* traditions are ambiguous: That is, the biblical God could lift up the poor *while* exacerbating male dominance; ancient polytheism could affirm the sacrality of femaleness *while* blessing slavery and class hierarchy.²⁴⁹ For Ruether, a belief in transcendent God is vital, since a healthy moral consciousness could not be sustained when the divine is reduced to pure immanence; accordingly, she rejects any unqualified identification of the divine with the given in order to preserve the transcendent dimension of the divine reality.²⁵⁰

Indeed, what is most unique and distinctive in Ruether’s ecofeminist theology is that despite her deep appreciation of God/ess in a profound ecological sense and her recognition of the ephemeral sense of our personal life, she reinforces, quite consciously and purposively, a moral dualism for the sake of justice. Kathleen M. Sands offers a valuable interpretation of Ruether in this regard. According to Sands, it is Ruether’s abiding moral and rational interests and her theological focus on injustice that require God as the ground of moral transcendence; in other words, it is not because of any vestigial antinaturalism in her ecofeminism but because of her abiding moral, theological focus on justice that she is forced to defend the transcendental principle.²⁵¹ According to Sands, the strength of Ruether’s moral dualism is that she authorizes it *without* reference to an essentialist distinction between spirit and matter—i.e., theological dualism.²⁵² Since the dynamics of social evil call for rational analysis and realistic politics, Ruether finds little in the ritualism and intuitionism of the Goddess movement; instead, for Ruether, God must be the principle of justice and an Ideal that remains transcendent for ethical

²⁴⁹ Sands, *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁵⁰ Sands, *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 75.

²⁵¹ Sands, *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²⁵² Sands, *Ibid.*, p. 89.

struggle.²⁵³ Therefore, for Ruether, the biblical prophetic traditions demanding justice must be integrated into the whole ecological spirituality.²⁵⁴ Since faith has to be at every moment a mandate for moral action, Ruether wants the clearest possible boundary between the good and evil so that injustice can not be hidden by the ground cover of natural suffering.²⁵⁵

I believe that Ruether is right, although I am not fully convinced by Sands that a moral dualism is possible without authorizing a theological dualism, and vice versa. If such a distinction is impossible for the President of the U.S., whose clearest moral boundary between “us” and the “the axis of evil” derives directly from his “evangelical” theology, how will it be possible for us? If Sands’ interpretation is right, it then seems to me that Ruether’s choice is more a political one rather than epistemological one. Still, I believe that Ruether is right, for it is obvious to me that the opposite choice of Goddess feminism is unconvincing both politically and epistemologically.

The fundamental *intellectual* problem of radical/Goddess feminism is that it is heavily shadowed by the very dualistic thinking it is meant to overcome. This is quite a striking statement indeed, for the trademark of radical/Goddess feminism is about holism and nothing but a genuinely antidualistic theory and praxis. However, as Carolyn Merchant also points out, radical/Goddess feminism, in its emphases on the female, body, and natural components of the dualities of male/female, mind/body, and culture/nature, runs the risk of perpetuating the very hierarchies and dualities it seeks to overthrow.²⁵⁶ In other words, it inadvertently perpetuates dualistic and hierarchical thinking, for it comes

²⁵³ Sands, *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76, 80.

²⁵⁴ Ruether and Douglas John Hall, *God and the Nations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 90f.

²⁵⁵ Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 99.

²⁵⁶ Merchant, “Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory,” in *Reweaving the World*, p. 102.

down in favor of *one side* of the male/female, mind/body, and history/nature dualism.²⁵⁷ As we have seen, the grounds for moral authority in the Goddess movement are “nature” and “women,” which function as immanent ideals, immediately available in women’s sensual, creative, and mystical experiences; and yet, this holism, though immanent, remains dualistic insofar as it can only be established by separating from the world of patriarchal division,²⁵⁸ that is, by maintaining the patriarchal trap. Thus, as Sands points out, the main shortcomings of the response to evil within Goddess feminism is that when moral language is applied in reference to patriarchy, it becomes simplistically moralistic, whereas when moralism is not applied, there is no adequate vehicle for self-critique.²⁵⁹ This is why radical/Goddess feminism has been criticized for its lack of an adequate critique of racism and classism among women.²⁶⁰ Radical/Goddess feminism, in this light, is problematic intellectually *and* politically.

Indeed, Goddess feminism, because of its idealization of women as natural saviors of nature, tends to ignore specific ethnic, class, and economical factors of oppression.²⁶¹ This implies that the assumption of believed-in goodness, believed-in equality, or believed-in objectivity can easily discredit the policies and values that would actually promote economic and political equality for the marginalized.²⁶² One of the best examples of this case is Novak’s theology of human creativity in which the locus of God lies in the believed-in goodness of human beings understood as the interpretive key to the

²⁵⁷ Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 200.

²⁵⁸ Sands, *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁵⁹ Sands, *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁶⁰ Sands, *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ Rosi Braidotti et al., *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis* (London: Zed Books, 1994), p. 71.

²⁶² Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 47.

universe,²⁶³ or as the most compelling analogies for God.²⁶⁴ This was why, for Novak, the best guide we have for thinking about “what God is like” is the most accurate notion we have of “what man is like.” In short, in Novak’s theology of built-in goodness of human beings, we discover God within our own identity.²⁶⁵ The path towards God is profoundly immanent “within us,” intrinsic to the believed-in goodness of human beings. Note that the legitimacy of his democratic capitalism flows from this belief that all individuals can better their condition, that everybody has built-in capacity for competition in the market.²⁶⁶ There is then a close affinity between Novak and Carol P. Christ who takes the built-in goodness of women and nature as the ground for reflection. Interestingly, Christ was actually a student of Novak and learned from him the basic theological methodology as a systematic articulation of a sense of reality, stories, and symbols.²⁶⁷ Although she eventually departed from Novak because of his conservative view on women and nature, Christ fundamentally shares Novak’s basic philosophical and theological methodology.²⁶⁸ Merchant points out that any analysis that renders women’s essence and qualities as special ties to a biological destiny can thwart the possibility of liberation, and a politics grounded in women’s culture, experience, and values can even be reactionary.²⁶⁹ Radical/Goddess feminism is not convincing to me both philosophically and politically.

For practical reasons as well, I disagree with radical/Goddess feminists. As Ynestra King points out, the domination of nature originates in society and therefore it

²⁶³ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 189.

²⁶⁴ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 109.

²⁶⁵ Novak, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 81, 122, 158, 182.

²⁶⁶ Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 15.

²⁶⁷ Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove*, p. 181.

²⁶⁸ Sands also reports that Christ has raised women’s voice as midrashim on the biblical story drawing upon the story theology of Novak. (Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 125.)

²⁶⁹ Merchant, “Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory,” in *Reweaving the World*, p. 102.

must be resolved in society.²⁷⁰ As Ruether also points out, the ecological crisis is basically a crisis resulting from the way in which a particular exploitative relationship between classes, races and nations uses natural resources.²⁷¹ Indeed, nature is the product not only of natural evolution but also of human development.²⁷² This means that the domination of the earth is not unrelated to social domination,²⁷³ that environmental problems are ultimately societal problems,²⁷⁴ and thus that the only *practical* way to address environmental issues is to tackle unjust social relations. Therefore, an ecological ethic, as Ruether affirms, must be an ethic of *ecojustice* that recognizes the interconnection of social domination and domination of nature.²⁷⁵ In other words, the ecological spirituality should be accompanied by the *prophetic demand* that all God's creatures have their rightful share in the flourishing of life.²⁷⁶ Indeed, what we need is not simply an ecological rhetoric of restoring and deepening connection but a socially and historically responsible eco-centrism.²⁷⁷ As Chung Hyun Kyung puts it, the envisioning of right relationship among God, human beings, and nature should not just remain at the

²⁷⁰ Thus, she argues that the embodied woman as social historical agent, rather than product of natural law, is the subject of ecofeminism.

²⁷¹ Ruether, "The Biblical Vision of the Ecological Crisis," in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, p. 77f.

²⁷² Ruether, "Toward an Ecological-Feminist Theology of Nature," in *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 93.

²⁷³ Ruether, *Gaia and God*, pp. 2f.

²⁷⁴ Catharine Halkes, "The Rape of Mother Earth: Ecology and Patriarchy," in *The Power of Naming*, p. 139.

²⁷⁵ Ruether, "Toward an Ecological-Feminist Theology of Nature," p. 93.

²⁷⁶ Ruether and Hall, *God and the Nations*, p. 91. Herman Daly also points out that social justice is a precondition for ecological balance. (Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, p. 169.) According to him, "The principle of justice as limited inequality, when extended into the future, implies sustainability—justice extended to future people." (Daly, *Beyond Growth*, p. 213.) Cobb also contends that ecological theologies should not become another form of fanaticism by measuring everything by its contribution to the sustainability of the Earth. (Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, p. 178.)

²⁷⁷ Catherine Keller, "Women against Wasting the World," in *Reweaving the World*, p. 262.

level of an empowering image in a world of poverty, but it should be incarnated in people's struggle for survival and liberation, empowering their life and movement.²⁷⁸

Therefore, it is of paramount importance for ecofeminist theologies to incorporate the voices of women of color, who have emphasized persistently the need to include the issues of *race* and *class* in ecofeminist discourse. According to Shamara S. Riley, while Afrocentric ecowomanism also articulates the links between patriarchy and environmental degradation, it lays far more stress on other distinctive features such as race and class.²⁷⁹ She criticizes many ecofeminists who, when analyzing the links between human relations and ecological degradation, give too much primacy to gender and thus fail to thoroughly incorporate (as opposed to mere tokenism) the historical links between classism, white supremacy, and environmental degradation in their perspectives.²⁸⁰ Indeed, as James H. Cone points out, the logic that led to slavery and segregation in the Americas, colonization and apartheid in Africa, and the rule of white supremacy throughout the world, is the same one that leads to the exploitation of animals and the ravaging of nature.²⁸¹ In this regard, even Ruether and McFague are not exempt from our criticism. From the Native American point of view, Andrea Smith believes they only peripherally analyze environmentalism in relation to colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.²⁸² According to Smith, even though McFague states that the nuclear issue and issues of political and social oppression are intrinsically related, she seems unaware of

²⁷⁸ Chung, "Ecology, Feminism and African and Asian Spirituality: Towards a Spirituality of Eco-Feminism," in *Ecology: Voices from South and North*, pp. 177f.

²⁷⁹ Shamara Shantu Riley, "Ecology is Sistah's Issue Too: The Politics of Emergent Afrocentric Ecowomanism," in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, p. 220.

²⁸⁰ Riley, *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Cone, "Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?," in *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), p. 138.

²⁸² Andrea Smith, "Walking in Balance," in *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, ed., Jace Weaver (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998), p. 192.

environmental racism when she considers the nuclear issue as a threat rather than a reality.²⁸³ Smith reveals that Native people are *now* living with the reality of nuclear doom, as *all* uranium mining and nuclear testing takes place on or near Indian land.²⁸⁴ She also criticizes Ruether for assuming that *all* contribute equally to ecological disaster and for ignoring the fact that Native people are generally the *first* to be affected by the environmental destruction caused by resource extraction.²⁸⁵ George Tinker also reveals the painful truth that ecological devastation, while it eventually affects the well-being of everyone, *initially and most particularly* affects American Indians and people of color in the U.S. and the Third World and *more directly and adversely* than it affects White Americans, especially those of the middle and upper classes.²⁸⁶ Indeed, these critiques from people of color suggest the basic difference between ecofeminism in the North and that in the South. As Ruether recognizes, women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are, unlike Northern women, much less likely to forget that the base line for domination of women and of nature is *impoverishment*—the impoverishment of the majority of their people, particularly women and children, and the impoverishment of land.²⁸⁷ The issues of race (environmental racism) and class (impoverishment) should be thoroughly incorporated in ecological theologies so that they may offer a more socially and historically responsible eco-centrism.

As we have seen, there are, on the one hand, women who view the need for a new culture or spirituality as primary, and therefore start with the need for a new women's

²⁸³ Smith, *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁸⁴ Smith, *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Smith, *Ibid.*, p. 193.

²⁸⁶ Tinker, "An American Indian Theological Responses to Ecojustice," in *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice*, ed., Jace Weaver (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 153.

²⁸⁷ Ruether, ed., *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 6.

religion and, on the other hand, there are women who are mainly concerned with a new social order and who assess the negative or positive role of religion in relation to this social agenda.²⁸⁸ The former celebrates the relationship between women and nature through the revival of ancient rituals centered on Goddess worship.²⁸⁹ Evoking the tradition of believing in? an essentially good nature, it has, in a unique way, made women's mystical experience and aesthetic sensibilities the stuff of religious reflection.²⁹⁰ This is indeed a different model of the sacred, a different view of authority, and a different stance toward change.²⁹¹ The strength of this radical/cultural feminism is that it is centered more on what it is *for* than on what it is *against*.²⁹² This is important, for one cannot simply stand for what he/she is against but what he/she is for. Notwithstanding, because of what little attention is paid to the historical and material features of women's oppression (including the relevance of race, class, ethnic, and national background), radical/cultural feminism insufficiently articulates the extent to which women's oppression is grounded in concrete and diverse social structures.²⁹³ As a consequence, it becomes in many ways impotent to provide an adequate and deeper analysis of capitalism in order to explain why it dominates nature and to deal with the problems of poverty and racism experienced by millions of women around the world, especially in the Third and Fourth Worlds.²⁹⁴ This weakness is not trivial in light of this research project that concerns the relevance of our theology with political economy.

²⁸⁸ Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 91.

²⁸⁹ Merchant, "Feminism and Feminist Theory," p. 101.

²⁹⁰ Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 167.

²⁹¹ Sands, *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 117.

²⁹² Sands, *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁹³ Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory," p. 115.

²⁹⁴ Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 190-194.

On the contrary, those women who are mainly concerned with a new social order are strongly influenced by socialist feminism. Socialist feminism, according to Mary A. Hinsdale, is the attempt to integrate the insights of traditional Marxist feminism with those of radical feminism by making domination by class and gender fundamental to women's oppression.²⁹⁵ Accordingly, for those socialist feminists, the liberation of women requires the end of both capitalism *and* patriarchy,²⁹⁶ i.e., "capitalist patriarchy,"²⁹⁷ which refers to the complex social patterns in which productivity is only measured by the production of commodities and profit, not of life.²⁹⁸ Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies offer a valuable analysis of it.²⁹⁹ From the perspective of new forms of socialist ecology, Mies' critique is that there is, in both capitalist and socialist systems, a fundamental contradiction between production and consumption, which is the separation between the sphere of production of commodities and that of consumption of produced goods. In this "schizophrenia of commodity-producing societies," the objective of the whole economic enterprise is not the sensuous, direct satisfaction of needs but the transformation of work into money. According to Mies, it is this fundamental contradiction between production and consumption, between exchange and use values, that is ultimately responsible for the destruction of nature in industrial society. Thus, Shiva proposes that the feminist perspective should locate production and consumption within the context of regeneration. Criticizing development as an extension of modern Western patriarchy's economic vision, she contends that the recovery of the feminine

²⁹⁵ Hinsdale, "Ecology, Feminism, and Theology," p. 200.

²⁹⁶ Warren, "Feminism and Ecology," p. 116.

²⁹⁷ Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory," p. 105.

²⁹⁸ Vandana Shiva, "Development and Western Patriarchy," in *Reweaving the World*, p. 192.

²⁹⁹ All these descriptions of Mies and Shiva are from Mies and Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (New Jersey: Fernwood Publications, 1993), pp. 8, 34, 298, 319; Shiva, "Development and Western Patriarchy," in *Reweaving the World*, p. 200.

principle of “survival based on the assumption of the sanctity of life” must allow a transcendence and transformation of the patriarchal foundations of maldevelopment. Shiva and Mies then offer the “subsistence perspective” as the alternative to capitalist patriarchy. The subsistence perspective focuses on the development of a vision of good life within the limits of necessity and of nature; it makes the aim of economic activity not as production of an ever-growing mountain of commodities and money for an anonymous market but the creation and re-creation of life. Novak argued that we cannot adopt the idea of subsistence living because human beings are not cattle. Still, according to Shiva, subsistence does not mean a low physical quality of life, and satisfying all basic needs through self-provisioning is not “poor” in the sense of being deprived.

McFague and Ruether also offer their own political economic alternatives. However, since McFague’s “ecological economic model,” offered as an alternative to the neoclassical economic model,³⁰⁰ is basically a reiteration of Daly and Cobb’s economics for the common good, we need to see more closely Ruether’s distinctive proposal for a political economy, namely a “home-based economy.” Instead of liberal feminism, which focuses on access to and equal rights in the traditional male public sphere, Ruether believes that only socialist feminism can envision a new system.³⁰¹ However, Ruether is also critical of socialism, for, although it has ameliorated some of the handicaps of women in industrial society, it maintains the same liberal agenda to integrate women into the work force.³⁰² For Ruether, both liberalism and socialism are identical in that they commonly assume that women are liberated insofar as they are enabled to function like

³⁰⁰ See her *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (2001).

³⁰¹ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, pp. 216, 221.

³⁰² Ruether, *Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.

men in the public realm.³⁰³ Ruether views the root causes of the continuing inequality of women as patriarchy and industrialism, i.e., the double work burden of unpaid domestic labor (patriarchy) and the collectivization of work outside the home (industrialism).³⁰⁴ And, from the larger historical perspective, the domination of women has depended on the freeing of males for cultural control by filling women's days with most of the tasks of domestic production and reproduction.³⁰⁵ Accordingly, what becomes crucial for Ruether is a fundamentally different model for socialization, i.e., the model that can take back to communalized households work functions that have been taken over by capitalist or state party managers.³⁰⁶ The key is to create and sustain human life as the center and to reintegrate alienated maleness.³⁰⁷ Thus, for Ruether, the work functions of women in the home appear as the remnants of a preindustrial world of "home-based economy."³⁰⁸ Ruether is convinced that this vision can be best realized not in state socialism but in communitarian or utopian socialism characterized by the communalization of work on the basis of a communal family.³⁰⁹ In short, Ruether's alternative political economy is a democratic socialist society in which, unlike many other male descriptions, the processes of childraising, of education, of work, and of culture are integrated to allow both men and women to share child nurturing, homemaking, and also creative activity and decision making in the larger society.³¹⁰ Indeed, for Ruether, the household is redefined as the locus of resistance; therefore, as Long puts it, her work can best be understood as the

³⁰³ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 226.

³⁰⁴ Ruether, *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 227.

³⁰⁵ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³⁰⁶ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 227.

³⁰⁷ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 228.

³⁰⁸ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 227.

³⁰⁹ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 227.

³¹⁰ Ruether, *Ibid.*, p. 232.

protest of the *oikos*, of a pre-industrial world of home-based economy, against both capitalism and state socialism.³¹¹

In my assessment, the strength of socialist feminism is that it can explicitly deal with environmental issues that affect working-class women especially, Third World women, and women of color.³¹² This is possible, because socialist feminism bases itself on a strong socioeconomic analysis that treats nature and humans as socially constructed as well as on a deeper analysis of race, class, and gender; as such, it has the great potential for a deeper analysis of domination and for a more working view for liberating social justice.³¹³ Nevertheless, since the Marxist side of its politics often makes it suspicious of radical feminism's grounding of ecological concerns in women's spiritual connection with nature,³¹⁴ socialist feminism easily tends to be less explicit in terms of the systematic oppression of nature, and thus, as Karen J. Warren points out, it often fails to give an account of one of the four interlocking pillars upon which the structure of patriarchy rests—sexism, racism, classism, *and* naturalism.³¹⁵ Ruether exhibits some weakness in this regard. According to her, just, peaceful societies in which people are not

³¹¹ Long, *The Divine Economy*, pp. 109-111. In fact, Ruether is not alone in advocating a household economy as the alternative. Helena Norberg-Hodge, the Swedish anthropologist who stayed in the Tibetan community of Ladakh, also demonstrates how a pre-industrial world of "informal economy" of women can play a significant role in protesting against the titanic global market today. According to her: "Most significant of all for the status of women in Ladakh is the fact that the 'informal' sector, with women at the center, plays a much larger role than the 'formal' one. The focus of the economy is the household; almost all important decisions to do with basic needs are settled at this level. So women are never forced to choose between being with their children and playing an active part in social and economic life." (Norberg-Hodge, *Ancient Futures*, 69.) In a similar vein, Ulrich Duchrow views the upgrading of housework to a form of paid employment as one component in the renewal of the economy, and an important step towards eliminating discrimination against women. He proposes that we have to protect the informal economy of women and the poor, while using this system as a testing ground for an alternative, life-sustaining economy. (Duchrow, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action* [Utrecht, The Netherlands: International Books with Kairos Europa, 1995], p. 251.)

³¹² Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory," p. 105.

³¹³ Merchant. *Radical Ecology*, pp. 184, 194.

³¹⁴ Warren, "Feminism and Ecology," p. 116.

³¹⁵ Warren, *Ibid.*, p. 117.

exploited can *also* create peaceful, harmonious, and beautiful natural environments.³¹⁶ However, this assertion sounds as “romantic” as the counter-assertions of Ruether’s opponents who claim that restoring and deepening relationship with all things is the key to heal society. I do not think that social justice is the final solution to the environmental problem. Even the indigenous and poor people can exploit nature, although their exploitation is often negligible because of its small scale. Indeed, environmental degradation, to some extent, does not make a distinction between oppressors and the oppressed.³¹⁷ In other words, human beings alone and *altogether* can “sin” against nature. This implies that an exclusive ethical judgment on the part of the rich in terms of the exploitation of natural resources, while maintaining ignorance of responsibility on the part of the poor, is not complete; sexism, racism, classism, *and* naturalism of all human beings must be addressed at the same time. For this reason, I believe that we should not completely reject the insight of radical/Goddess feminism, though I basically support the Christian/socialist feminist perspectives. Without the former, the latter becomes, in my view, a feminist apologia for Christian religion or a mere extension of the Marxist framework for ecological issues.

Indeed, no single systemic analysis can disclose all forms of multilayered oppression; attachment to a single framework of analysis will only prevent us from moving toward a more holistic theory and praxis, which is what ecofeminism is intended to be and become. Thus, as Ruether acknowledges, feminism should remain open-ended, for each of the liberal, socialist, and radical traditions are insufficient.³¹⁸ Fortunately, Ynestra King informs us that ecofeminists are now geared to move in a more holistic

³¹⁶ Ruether, “The Biblical Vision of the Ecological Crisis,” p. 80. Emphasis added.

³¹⁷ Riley, “Ecology is a Sistah’s Issue Too,” p. 216.

³¹⁸ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, p. 232.

direction, by sharing with radical/cultural feminism the necessity of “a politics with heart,” and with socialist feminism a powerful critique to understand and transform history.³¹⁹ Together, and by vigorously incorporating the perspectives of women of color, I believe that ecofeminism/ecowomanism can provide us with a holistic and historically responsible eco-centrism that is deeper than deep ecology, deeper than Cobb and Daly’s critique of anthropocentrism. After all, the “ethical” in socialist feminism and the “aesthetic” in radical/Goddess feminism are not necessarily exclusive to each other. And, in my view, Asian ecofeminism is one of the living examples of such convergence.

Vandana Shiva shows how Indian women’s political power of resistance emerges from *shakti*, the dynamic feminine principle of a holistic cosmology. Introducing the Chipko (“Tree Hugger”) movement in the Himalayan region of India, Shiva shows us the hidden source of Chipko’s strength (*shakti*) in an interview with Itwari Devi, one of the movement leaders, who affirms:

Shakti comes to us from these forests and grasslands, we watch them grow, year in and year out through their internal *shakti* and we derive our strength from it. We watch our streams renew themselves and we drink their clear, sparkling water, that gives us *shakti*. We drink fresh milk, we eat ghee, we eat food from our own fields. All this gives us not just nourishment for the body but a moral strength, that we are our own masters, we control and produce our own wealth. That is why it is ‘primitive,’ ‘backward’ women who do not buy their needs from the market but produce for themselves, who are leading Chipko. Our power is nature’s power. Our power... comes from these inner sources.³²⁰

³¹⁹ Quoted from Mies and Shiva, *Ecofeminism*, p. 117.

³²⁰ Mies and Shiva, *Ecofeminism*, p. 250.

Shakti, which is a Hindu concept of a female-identified principle of cosmic life,³²¹ is the basis for Chipko women's powerful struggle and alternative to capitalist patriarchy. Indian women have worshipped Aranyani (the Goddess of the Forest), Vana Durga (the Earth Mother or the Tree Goddess), and other forest deities, and Shiva also reveals how the forest as the feminine principle has empowered Indian women's struggle.³²² What Shiva demonstrates to us is that Indian women's survival is based on the assumption of the sanctity of life, and that the recovery of the feminine principle would allow for a transcendence and transformation of the patriarchal foundation of maldevelopment, redefining growth and productivity from the perspective of production, not the destruction, of life.³²³ The grassroots movement of Chipko tells us that social feminism and Goddess feminism are not necessarily mutually exclusive.³²⁴ Indeed, as Ruether has rightly affirmed, the biblical God of liberation, who is the "critic of this society, a champion of the social victim," and the Gaia of nature, who is the "immanent divinity," are ultimately not at odds each other but "rightly understood, they are on terms of amity, if not commingling."³²⁵ Indeed, the God of creation is after all the God who is "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) We meet through what seems to be the extremes of each other. Probably, this is the way toward which ecofeminism, born to be a genuinely antidualistic theory and praxis, must proceed.

³²¹ *Shakti* is dynamic and primordial energy which is the substance of everything, pervading everything. The manifestation of this power, or energy, is called nature (*Prakriti*); that is, nature is an expression of *Shakti*, the feminine and creative principle of the cosmos. According to Indian cosmology, this feminine principle creates the world in conjunction with the masculine principle of *Purusha*. (See Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* [London: Zed Books, 1989], p. 38.)

³²² Shiva, *Ibid.*, pp.55-56.

³²³ Shiva, "Development and Western Patriarchy," in *Reweaving the World*, p. 200.

³²⁴ For such possibility in Korean ecofeminism, See Chung Hyun Kyung, *Goddess-spell According to Hyun Kyung* (Seoul: Yolimwon, 2002), pp. 236-240.

³²⁵ Ruether. *Sexism and God-talk* (1983) and *Gaia & God* (1992), *passim*.

Conclusion: Creation in the light of Liberation

Not only social feminism and Goddess feminism, but also liberation theology and ecological theology in general have moved toward a point of convergence. As we have seen in chapter 1, Gutierrez made a crucial statement regarding the future of liberation theology. Recognizing the need to broaden our perspective on social solidarity to include a respectful relationship with nature, Gutierrez assured that a theology of creation and of life can provide fertile ground for theological reflection on liberation.³²⁶ Cone affirms the same insight, saying that the fight for justice cannot be segregated but must be integrated with the fight for life in all its forms.³²⁷ Among Latin American liberation theologians, Leonardo Boff has made an extensive effort to connect the cry of the oppressed with the cry of the Earth. Indeed, liberation theologians have opened themselves and begun to incorporate ecological consciousness as one of their vital concerns. Ecological theologians too have made vigorous efforts to incorporate the perspective of justice in their reflection on sustainability. Cobb accepts that there cannot be a reversal of patterns of destroying the Earth that does not involve the liberation and empowerment of oppressed people everywhere as much as there cannot be liberation and empowerment of oppressed people without restoration of the Earth.³²⁸ Needless to say, Ruether has perceived clearly and articulated forcefully the interconnections between liberation theology and theology of nature since the late 1960s,³²⁹ affirming that the ecological ethic must always be the ethic of ecojustice that can interconnect the social domination and the

³²⁶ Gutierrez, "Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor," in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 121-122.

³²⁷ Cone, "Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?," in *Risks of Faith*, p. 138.

³²⁸ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, p. 179.

³²⁹ Steven Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology*, p. 12.

domination of nature. Indeed, liberation theology and ecological theology have already taken steps toward a point of convergence.

Nonetheless, a question remains. As Paul G. King and David O. Woodyard ask: “Can a theology that is primarily focused on social transformation by infusing the historical order with a Liberative God address ecological disaster *with the same force*?”³³⁰ I would like to add another question: Can a theology that is primarily focused on ecological sustainability by infusing the evolutionary order with a God/ess of cosmic matrix of matter/energy address social injustice *with the same force* as well? Nobody denies the necessity to connect the cry of the poor with the cry of the Earth. Nobody denies the theological imperative to link the earth’s crisis with the crisis of humanity. Still, to paraphrase Novak’s words, we should not just cry “Connection! Connection!” but provide a substantial way to make that connection happen. The remaining question is *how*. How can we ensure the interlocking and interpenetrating connection between liberation theology and ecological theology without diminishing the original forces in each? What could be the principle or method to facilitate such a connection? Christian ecological theologies we have examined in this chapter are already a form of solution to this question in that they have combined biocentrism with biblical theocentric-prophetic traditions.

Nevertheless, I am not *fully* satisfied. What concerns me most in ecological theologies in the West in general is that ecological sciences play such a large role that there is a strong tendency toward reductionism of theological language for that of the ecological sciences. Cobb’s Earthism, for example, as he stresses, relies extensively on

³³⁰ King and Woodyard. *Liberating Nature: Theology and Economics in a New Order* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1999), p. 11. Emphases added.

modern and post-modern science;³³¹ McFague's new model of human life is fundamentally informed by what she calls "the best science of our day," i.e., the Big Bang theory;³³² even in Boff's recent works, readers often find themselves lost in his dazzling explication of the Cosmogogenesis, Big Bang hypothesis, and quantum physics.³³³ But, I wonder whether they see in the theories of ecological sciences only what they want to see. For instance, what would they make of another version of the Big Bang theory, claiming that billions of years later the universe will die after cosmic expansion has wasted all of its energy? In fact, Herman Daly admits that his steady state economy is based on the scientific assumption that creation will eventually have an end because of the entropy law.³³⁴ What do we make of this pessimistic view of creation? Probably, while they are too fascinated by "new" discoveries of modern sciences, which are in fact not new to Asian great religions, ecological theologians in the West in general, despite their commendable effort not to overlook the issue of justice, tend to lose the sight of the fact that in a profound sense nature and history are drawn together in the reality of the poor.³³⁵ As Ruether has already pointed out, there is a basic difference between ecofeminism in the North and that in the South, and, unlike Northern women, women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are much less likely to forget that the base line for domination of women and of nature is impoverishment. Then, how can we secure and safeguard the fundamental insight of Third World women, eco-womanists, Native Americans, and people of color who emphasize the historical link between environmental degradation, impoverishment, and white supremacy when we integrate ecological

³³¹ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, p. 37.

³³² McFague, *Life Abundant*, p. 208.

³³³ See particularly Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (1997).

³³⁴ Daly, "Postscript," in *Valuing the Earth*, pp. 378, 380.

³³⁵ King and Woodyard, *Liberating Nature*, p. 86.

sustainability in our theological reflection? How can we safeguard the principle of justice to offer a more socially and historically responsible eco-centrism? How can we prevent the danger of reductionism of theological language to that of the ecological sciences, when we vigorously take creation and life as our fertile ground for theological reflection?

I do not think that creation/sustainability and liberation/justice are two separate things. They are in dynamic unity, for, as Ruether affirms, the God/ess who underlies creation and redemption is one and indivisible.³³⁶ In such God/ess, creation and redemption are in dynamic, or, if you will, dialectic relationship. However, to secure and reinforce the perspectives of Third World women and people of color, I propose with the late Dorothy Soelle that we interpret creation in light of liberation, that we apprehend the creation tradition from a liberation perspective. This way of dialectic has a good biblical ground, as Soelle herself explicated:

Biblical faith originated from a historical event of liberation, not from belief in creation. For the people of Israel, the Exodus... was... a "root experience"... In Gerhard von Rad's opinion, faith in creation was a comparatively late development and decidedly an ancillary and secondary belief... In the words of Croatto, "Genesis is an 'interpretation' of Exodus." ... If liberation precedes creation, then soteriology precedes cosmology... It is not creation that grants us our freedom; rather, we are enabled to understand creation in light of our memory and experience of liberation.³³⁷

Today, creation is no longer an ancillary and secondary belief. Rather, in the context of our new and profound awareness of "the fundamental finitude of our planet," "the fundamental limits of our creaturehood," and "ecological dependence," Cobb is not wrong to say that we should take creation as the context within which

³³⁶ Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, p. 215.

³³⁷ Soelle, *To Work and To Love: A Theology of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 7-11.

redemption/liberation occurs.³³⁸ However, in the light of the neoconservative challenge we have seen in the previous chapter, namely that creation must not be subordinated to redemption and that Christianity is not a religion of salvation,³³⁹ and in the light of the neoliberal challenge we will examine in next chapter that denies any possibility of human redemption/liberation in history, we are led to reemphasize liberation as the basic instinct and underlying thrust through which creation is understood as the power and source for our survival and resistance. My argument is not to reinstitute a dichotomy between liberation and creation; rather, it is to rehabilitate liberation as the due dialectical partner of creation in today's context where liberation is denied contemptuously by its critics or belittled silently as the old rhetoric by its friendly partners. I reemphasizes liberation, for, as Aloysius Pieris has already affirmed, the fundamental concern of every religion is soteria, i.e., liberation, and every Asian culture has grown round "a soteriological nucleus," or the "primordial liberative core."³⁴⁰ Indeed, soteriology is the foundation of theology.³⁴¹

In my view, what the late Soelle wanted to say was that creation faith *alone* is susceptible to the danger of "cheap reconciliation," whereby we are asked to live as if we did not require freeing from present, unjust orders, as if the God of creation/nature had triumphed over the God of liberation/history.³⁴² She proposed we apprehend the creation

³³⁸ Cobb, *Sustainability*, p. 83.

³³⁹ Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, pp. 115, 120.

³⁴⁰ See Pieris, "Toward an Asian Theology of Liberation" (1979) in *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988), pp. 50f; "The One Path of Liberation and the Many Religions" in *Dialogue* (1986), p. 4.

³⁴¹ Pieris, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology," in *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, p. 107. Pieris affirms that the common thrust of religiousness in Asia, whether metatheistic or nontheistic, remains *soteriological*. (*Ibid.*) He stresses the "primordial liberative core," for he sees that there is also a sinful and enslaving dimension to Asian religion. ("Speaking of the Son of God in Non-Christian Cultures," in *Ibid.*, p. 60.)

³⁴² Soelle, *To Work and To Love*, pp. 7-11.

tradition from a liberation perspective, for she believed that a synthesis of creation and liberation traditions should not devalue the liberation tradition.³⁴³ Although we should take seriously Robert A. Warrior's critique that "Yahweh the liberator" was "Yahweh the conqueror" in the Exodus narratives,³⁴⁴ I believe that it is only possible to understand creation as the context, source, and power of our redemption when we see it in light of our subversive memory of liberation and of our survival instinct for life, fuller life. If the theological problem of liberation theology was "liberation without creation," the theological problem of many ecological theologies today is "creation without liberation." We need a true synthesis of the two; and I think that a truly dialectic synthesis of the two can be made by apprehending creation from the perspective of liberation. This way of theological synthesis is imperative today in light of the nature of the challenge from neoliberalism we will examine in the next chapter.

We must move beyond a mere ecological rhetoric of "interconnectedness," because the problem is not that we are disconnected, but that, after all, we are *badly* connected. As Sands affirms, "bodies never become *unrelated* to minds, nor people to each other; nor culture to the ground beneath it—we just become *badly* related."³⁴⁵ What we need, therefore, is not the recovering or restoring of relationships per se, but, as a group of women from Asia and Africa cried, we need a "liberated and liberating relationship,"³⁴⁶ i.e., a just relationship among all beings.

³⁴³ Soelle, *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ See Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," in *Christianity and Crisis*, September 11, 1989, pp. 261-265.

³⁴⁵ Sands, *Escape from Paradise*, p. 48.

³⁴⁶ Call for Jubilee Year 1998, *African and Asian Spirituality Cosmic and Indigenous: New Awareness and Orientation* (Quezon City, The Philippines: Milcar Enterprises, 1992), p. 22.

Chapter 4 NEOLIBERALISM & F.A. HAYEK

If in the first attempt to create a world of free men we have failed, we must try again. The guiding principle that a policy of freedom for the individual is the only truly progressive policy remains as true today as it was in the nineteenth century.

F.A. Hayek¹

The tide is turning. The climate of opinion... was shifting away from a belief in collectivism and toward a belief in individualism and private markets. We did not dream that the tide would turn as dramatically as it has—on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Milton and Rose Friedman²

Neoliberalism is the chaotic theory of economic chaos, the stupid exaltation of social stupidity, and the catastrophic political management of catastrophe.

Don Durito of the Lacandon Jungle, Chiapas, Mexico³

We live in a time that is more and more dominated by the liberal economy, or neoliberal, if you prefer. It is a market without restrictions, called to regulate itself by its own means... [I]n the neoliberal context, the market and the profit are objects of idolatrous worship... “[T]he idolatry of the market” ... is the contemporary form of the worship of Mammon.

Gustavo Gutierrez⁴

Neoliberalism has fallen faster than it rose; at least the horizons have now been made more clear: a smokescreen has been blown away.

Jose Comblin⁵

¹ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 262.

² Milton and Rose Friedman, *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1980), p. ix.

³ Don (the title of respect in Spanish) Durito is the name of a beetle that the Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico, uses to fashion his tales to express Zapatistas' revolutionary project. (<http://www.ma.utexas.edu/users/guilfoyl/chiapas/dur1,2.html>.)

⁴ Gutierrez, “Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor,” in *Liberating the Future*, pp. 108, 116f.

⁵ Jose Comblin, *Called for Freedom*, p. 205.

Having investigated the three theological camps that have attempted to relate God with political economy for the past thirty years, I have realized one very interesting thing that is common to them all--their lack of serious attention to and correct knowledge of economic neoliberalism that has reshaped the fundamental structure of global economy during *the same* past thirty years. Ever since the beginning of capitalism, there has been a steady theological critique of liberalism; however, not much has been said about the new form of contemporary liberalism, namely *neoliberalism*, which combines the nineteenth-century classical liberalism with social conservatism, free market with conservative morality. Soon after Gutierrez published his masterwork *A Theology of Liberation* in Spanish in 1971, neoliberalism had already become the defining paradigm of political economy along with the collapse of the postwar Bretton Woods system in 1971. Gutierrez says in his 1996 Edition to *A Theology of Liberation* that the period when Latin American theological reflection was born is now coming to an end, and that an emerging new situation is beginning. The emerging new situation, however, had already begun around the time of his original publication of *A Theology of Liberation*. According to Cobb, neoliberalism arose with the demise of Communism and the decline of socialist thinking;⁶ however, the fact is that neoliberalism arose well before the event in 1989, competing with socialism in the East and replacing Keynesianism in the West. For me, it is simply a great mystery as to how there has yet to be a serious scholarly and theological analysis of economic neoliberalism by those theologians who are deeply concerned with political economy.

Overall, I am persuaded by Daly and Cobb's ecological economics. However, I am not fully satisfied with it, for they focus too much on neoclassical economics and

⁶ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, p. 6.

offer too little analysis of the philosophical foundation of economic neoliberalism. Daly and Cobb have no hesitation in opting for the market as the basic institution of resource allocation and on this issue they side unequivocally with capitalism.⁷ Although they warn that the market should not be the ends of society, not even the right instrument for that ends, Daly and Cobb, following “the heart of classical and neoclassical theory alike,” are convinced of the general soundness of the account of markets.⁸ What surprises me, however, is that Daly and Cobb appeal their case to F.A. Hayek and his notion of the market as “spontaneous order”:

The most important insight that economists have to convey about the market is how independent, decentralized decisions give rise, not to chaos, but to a spontaneous order. This is a truth that is not immediately grasped by common sense... No one designed a language... Yet language has an order and logic that would appear to have been the product of rational planning... The market also has its grammar... It is not as rich and sophisticated as a language, but it is quite marvelous in its ability to collect, communicate, and use masses of scattered, piecemeal information... This ability of the market to make use of scattered, fragmentary knowledge is its most remarkable feature, as emphasized by F.A. Hayek.⁹

For me, it is surprising to hear that anti-growth proponents like Daly and Cobb appeal to Hayek who taught that all future improvement depends on the continuance of the growth of wealth by blindly following the spontaneous order of market.¹⁰ As I will discuss in this

⁷ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 14. Their position is that centralized economic planning is insufficient, that allocations are better effected in the market than by bureaucratic planning, and that the role of government is to set the overall size (scale) and fair conditions within which the market can operate.

⁸ Daly and Cobb, *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 19. They say that they are for the market with a little “m,” which existed in feudalism and even in communism, not for the Market with a big “M,” which was created by what Polanyi calls the “Great Transformation” (from feudalism to capitalism) as the basic organizing principle of society that requires the transformation of nature into land, life into labor, and patrimony into capital. (*Ibid.*, 61.)

⁹ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 44.

¹⁰ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 305.

chapter, it is factually wrong that the market is a spontaneous order.¹¹ More importantly, as I will also demonstrate in this chapter, Hayek's idea of spontaneous order is built on a naturalistic societal/cultural evolutionism which implies a profound historical pessimism about the agenda for changing society (which is against the very principle of process thought that the future is truly open) as well as a self-enclosed secularism that forecloses any transcendental principle of renewal and hope in history (which is against the very notion of the God in process philosophy as creative love and source of novelty). Certainly, I do not think that Cobb and Daly's understanding of spontaneous order is the same as Hayek's. Indeed, market's ability to create order by making use of scattered, fragmentary knowledge is one of its most remarkable features. My point is that we should be very cautious not to fall into Hayek's pitfall when we adopt his idea of spontaneous order built upon, on the one hand, a "humble" and very persuasive claim of the limits of human reason and knowledge and, on the other hand, a thoroughgoing naturalistic and evolutionary epistemology in negation of the "beyond" or the transcendental.

For sure, neoliberal theories rest upon the microeconomic basis of neoclassical theory, developed in the legacy of Adam Smith, Leo Walras, and Alfred Marshall.¹² And Daly and Cobb are surely right to criticize the neoclassical economics as "disciplinolatry" (discipline + idolatry),¹³ for, indeed, neoclassical economists, particularly Marshall and the marginalists, set out to make economics as much like a science as possible—just like

¹¹ As we will see in next chapter, to isolate and analyze something called the market is a highly misleading abstraction and confusion. As David L. Prychitko assures, the market is neither a coherent, self-regulating system in itself nor the primary vehicle that allocates scarce goods and resources; rather, it is *power structures* that play an even greater role in the allocation of resources. In terms of "free" market, Karl Polanyi reveals that the road to it was opened and kept open by an enormous increase in continuous, centrally organized and controlled state interventionism. John Gray also reveals that the free market was created by state coercion and depended at every point in its workings on the powers of government.

¹² George DeMartino, *Global Economy, Global Justice: Theoretical Objections and Policy Alternative to Neoliberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 2.

¹³ See Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, pp. 121-131.

Newtonian mechanics—concentrating on mathematics,¹⁴ running to hide in thickets of Algebra.¹⁵ Still, not all neoclassicals are mathematicians or technicians; some of them have worked hard to restore economics as a branch of moral philosophy. In my view, if the neoclassical is the *theoretical* side of capitalism, the neoliberal is the *philosophical* foundation of contemporary capitalism. We must pay a close attention to the latter, and the task of this chapter is to disclose nothing but the philosophical foundation of contemporary economic neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism

In a meeting of the Catholics held in Brussels, Mr. Michael Camdessus, the director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said that the market is spontaneous, self-governed, and self-regulated, which provides its members the best chances to fulfill their goals, and thus that the market in its essence is the best empirical explanation of the Utopia.¹⁶ Whether we agree with him or not, we are very curious to know: Where did he get such a deep-seated faith in the market?

The market has divided the people into two traditional groups--defenders of the "free market" and defenders of "state interventionism."¹⁷ The former refers to those who believe that the market provides the *natural* form of exchange among people; the latter to those who see the capitalist free market only as one *historical*--thus *temporary*--means of exchanging goods and services. The former, known as "liberalism," dominated the

¹⁴ Rebecca T. Peters, *In Search of the Good Life: A Feminist Critical Theo-ethical Reading of the Globalization Debates*, Doctoral Dissertation at UTS, 2001, p. 52.

¹⁵ Daly, *Steady-State Economics*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶ Quoted from M.P. Joseph, "A New Language for Divinity: Critique of the Ideology of Market," in *DAGA Info*, No. 119, March 29, 2001.

¹⁷ F. Gomez Camacho, "The Market: The History and Anthropology of a Socio-Economic Institution," in *Outside the Market No Salvation?* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), pp. 1, 4, 6.

modern world until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914; however, as social, political, and economic conflicts intensified during the period between the two World Wars, the latter, known as “Keynesianism,” gained currency and peaked during the postwar decades until the 1960s. But, the collapse of the postwar Bretton Woods system in 1971, which was largely Keynes’ significant achievement before his death,¹⁸ marked a decisive shift back to and the resurgence of the classical liberal vision. Thus, Milton and Rose Friedman’s metaphor of “tide” can well be taken. According to them, there have been three tides in modern economic history: First, “the rise of *laissez-faire* (Adam Smith tide),” second, “the rise of the welfare state (the Fabian tide),” and third, “the resurgence of free markets (the Hayek tide).”¹⁹ It is the third from which Mr. Camdessus gets the conviction that the market is spontaneous and the best empirical explanation of the Utopia. And it is this Hayekian tide that is the primary concern and the focus of our analysis in this chapter. Before we engage with Hayek, let us engage in a brief view of what economic neoliberalism is and what it means for us today.

Simply put, neoliberalism refers to the resurgence and the revival of the nineteenth-century classical liberal vision, since the early 1970s, in reaction to both Keynesian state interventionism and Marxian socialist economies. By classical liberalism, we refer to the movement of economic thought that lasted for two hundred years in Europe from the seventeenth century to nineteenth century--from John Locke

¹⁸ John Maynard Keynes died four months after the Bretton Woods conference in 1946. His proposal for an International Clearing Union to overcome the economic conflicts of the 1930s framed the debate that ultimately led to Bretton Woods and the creation of the IMF and the World Bank. (*The New York Times Book Review*, January 20, 2002, p. 8.) Hayek, the fierce enemy of Keynes, was opposed to Keynes’ idea of postwar world structure and instead supported the idea that a superior political power would hold the economic interests in check. (Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 254.)

¹⁹ Alan Ebenstein. *Friedrich Hayek: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave for St. Marin’s Press, 2001), p. 275.

(1632-1704) to John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). What did the liberals believe?²⁰ They believed in: (1) The individual as a rights-bearer prior to the existence of any state, community, or society; (2) the right of property in a free-market system; and (3) a limited constitutional government to protect individuals' rights.²¹ Neoliberalism shares these three "sacred articles of faith" with classical liberalism, and thus its doctrinal core is that once minimal guidelines and standards are established, market forces can provide a variety of regulatory services with greater efficiency than nation-states.²² There are, of course, various and competing schools of thought within neoliberalism;²³ however, neoliberals commonly recommend free markets with a minimum of government regulation in the form of tax or control.

Neoliberalism is the defining political economic paradigm of our times. That is, it is the moral, philosophical, and ideological basis that buttresses "market fundamentalism" today. What is "market fundamentalism"? Joseph E. Stiglitz, the co-winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics, reveals that while he was working at the White House and at the World Bank, he saw that decisions were often made on the basis

²⁰ We will use the term "liberal" in this original nineteenth-century sense, bearing in mind that in the U.S. it has acquired almost the opposite meaning. Hayek complained about this confusion: "In current American usage, it often means very nearly the opposite of this. It has been part of the camouflage of leftist movements in this country, helped by the muddleheadedness of many who really believe in liberty, the 'liberal' has come to mean the advocacy of almost every kind of government control." (Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. xxxv) The original sense of "liberal" is retained in the term "libertarian" in the U.S.

²¹ Sturgis, "The Rise, Decline, and Reemergence of Classical Liberalism" (www.belmont.edu/lockesmith/essay.html), p. 2.

²² Ethan B. Kapstein, *Governing the Global Economy, International Finance and State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 194.

²³ Neoliberalism is not a monolithic movement of thought. There are at least five diverse schools: (1) The Austrian School (1871-present) is the longest duration in the classical liberal tradition. Prominent scholars of this school are: Carl Menger (1840-1921), Friedrich von Wieser (1851-1926), Eugen Bohm-Bawerk (1851-1914), Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973), and Friedrich August von Hayek (1899-1992). (2) The Chicago School (1927-present) is represented by Milton Friedman (1912-present) who received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1976. Interestingly his son David Friedman is a leading anarcho-capitalist thinker. (3) The Public Choice School (1959-present) is represented by James Buchanan (1919-present) who also received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1986. Besides these schools, (4) Ayn Rand (1905-1982) and Objectivism (1943-1976) and (5) Robert Nozick (1938-present) also form their own schools of thought in neoliberalism. (See Sturgis, "The Rise, Decline, and Reemergence of Classical Liberalism," *passim*.)

of “a curious blend of ideology and bad economics”--the ideology that serves the narrow interests of the financial community in the U. S, or the ideology of “market supremacy” in the IMF policies, and the ideology of “Washington Consensus” which is also referred to as “neo-liberal.”²⁴ He calls this ideology market fundamentalism. George Soros, the Hungarian-American billionaire who is infamous for his global speculative activities through his Quantum Fund, admits that it is neoliberalism that has put financial capital into the driver’s seat of the current global economy.²⁵ Neoliberalism, in a word, is today’s “religious belief” in the infallibility of the “free” market.²⁶ It is, in other words, a religion that teaches that the human is made to serve the market, not the market to serve the human. Indeed, as M.P. Joseph points out, today, the market has become the soteriological principle, a new religion which has its own dogmas, rituals, and liturgies, and sends out missionaries in the thousands to the less industrialized countries in order to integrate them fully into the saving sphere of the market.²⁷

It is therefore imperative to investigate the “theology” of this new religion, the deepest assumptions behind its soteriological principle. It is for this reason that I am forced to investigate the moral/social philosophy of F.A. Hayek, known as the “founding father” of neoliberalism, and called the “man who intellectually changed the world,”²⁸ whom I see as the single best window into the world of economic neoliberalism.

²⁴ Joseph E. Stiglitz. *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), pp. x, xiii, 15, 36, 73, 134.

²⁵ George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), p. xx.

²⁶ Robert W. McChesney, “Introduction to Noam Chomsky,” in *Profit Over People*, 8-9.

²⁷ M.P. Joseph, “A New Language for Divinity: Critique of the Ideology of Market,” in *DAGA Info*.

²⁸ Daniel Yergin in his PBS series, “The Commanding Heights,” which is based on his (co-authored with Joseph Stanislaw) *The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy* (New York: A Touchstone Book, 2002).

Whitehead said that whatever suggests a cosmology, suggests a religion.²⁹ Hayek is not a theologian proper; yet, his cosmology of the market, or what he called “the cosmos of the market,” does suggest a religion requiring theologians’ close investigation. Indeed, Hayek is relevant to this research project in many ways, for he was the one who exerted a great influence on Novak, and who persuaded Pope John Paul II to accept an element of the capitalist sense of ethic for production in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*,³⁰ upon which Gutierrez accepts, though conditionally, the concept of private ownership of the means of production and a market economy.³¹ After all, neoliberals are largely Christian-inspired, as Hayek himself recognized that a belief in a moral justification of individual success received strong support from Calvinist teaching.³²

Who Is Hayek?

Friedrich August von Hayek was born in 1899 in Vienna, Austria, and died in 1992. He spent about half of his adult life in his native Austria and the other half in the U.S. and England. Hayek, the “arch-right-winger,”³³ was a staunch opponent of Marx; however, just like Marx, he was once an émigré from the German-speaking world, living in London, doing much research in the British Museum, and whose major work in

²⁹ Quoted from Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology*, p. 13.

³⁰ Novak identifies that *Centesimus Annus* employs unmistakably Hayekian insight in sections 31 and 32 in particular. (See Novak, “Two Moral Ideals for Business,” in *Three In One*, p. 220.)

³¹ See Gutierrez, “New Things Today,” in *The Density of the Present*, p. 54.

³² Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 74. According to Daly and Cobb, “Modern economic theory originated and developed in the context of Calvinism. Both were bids for personal freedom against the interference of earthly authority. They based their bids on the conviction that beyond a very narrow sphere, motives of self-interest are overwhelmingly dominant [in human nature]. Economic theory differed from Calvinism only in celebrating as rational what Calvinist confessed as sinful.” (Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 5.)

³³ Hilary Wainwright, *Arguments for a New Left: Answering the Free Market Right* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), p. 4

economics was a treatise on capital.³⁴ Intriguingly, the only difference between them was that while Marx was deaf in his right ear (thus unable to hear from the “right”), Hayek was deaf in his left ear (thus unable to listen to the “left”).³⁵ Hayek was a “blessed” man, because he lived long enough, longer than his fierce enemy John Maynard Keynes, to see his ideas triumph—the “momentous” collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Hayek has been attributed as being “the greatest philosopher of capitalism since Adam Smith,”³⁶ but he was once the cry of a voice in the wilderness. During the 1930s and 40s, Hayek was the second most famous economist on the planet, next to Keynes, standing against Keynes’ state interventionism in favor of unregulated market.³⁷ However, Hayek was soon considered as something of a political oddity and treated as somewhat eccentric during the heydays of the Keynesian dominance during the 1950s and 1960s.³⁸ But, history always changes and the bizarre happens all the time. The postwar prosperity ignited into an inflationary spiral in the countries that had embraced Keynesianism,³⁹ however, as the traditional therapy of Keynesianism was no longer working, countries began to turn away from Keynesianism, instead embracing the old

³⁴ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 81

³⁵ Ebenstein, *Ibid.*, 252, 303

³⁶ Thomas W. Hazlett, “The Road from Serfdom: F.A. Hayek interviewed by Thomas W. Hazlett,” in *Reason Magazine*, trans., The Korea Center for Free Enterprise (cfe) (Seoul: cfe, 1997), p. 7. Hayek has also been attributed as “the greatest philosopher of liberty during the twentieth century,” “a distinguished libertarian theorist and agitator,” “a virtual prophet who saw and defined the consequences of socialism for a longer period of time than anyone else” (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. xi, 4, 287), “the ‘pope’ of neoliberalism” (Rebecca Todd Peters, *In Search of the Good Life*, p. 83), and “the greatest twentieth-century ideologist of laissez faire economics,” (Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism*, p. xxii.) etc. Hayek is not well known to the American public and academia until recently because of the brighter presence of Milton Friedman of the Chicago School of economics.

³⁷ Thomas W. Hazlett, “The Road from Serfdom: F.A. Hayek interviewed by Thomas W. Hazlett,” p. 30. As for Keynes, Hayek seemed only an extremist. On Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*, Keynes wrote: “You will not expect me to accept quite all the economic dicta in it. But morally and philosophically I find myself in agreement with virtually the whole of it; and not only in agreement with it, but in a deeply moved agreement... [However] you greatly underestimate the practicability of the middle course... you [will] admit that the extreme is not possible...” (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 130)

³⁸ Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, 45

³⁹ Thomas W. Hazlett, “The Road from Serfdom: F.A. Hayek interviewed by Thomas W. Hazlett,” p. 31

classical values that they had previously abandoned.⁴⁰ In these general trends away from Keynesianism in the West, Hayek, once regarded as an academic outcast, was surprisingly awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1974 as the *first* thorough-going free market economist.⁴¹ Hayek himself was surprised by this prize.⁴² Indeed, the award to a “heterodox” thinker at that time was a watershed in modern economic development.⁴³ Following that event, Hayek the “goofball” was quickly elevated to a “guru.”⁴⁴

As guru, Hayek exerted a great influence upon conservative political and economic leaders all around the world. The alleged four leading conservative political leaders in the Anglo-Saxon world—Winston Churchill, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher—have all been strongly influenced by him.⁴⁵ Hayek also

⁴⁰ The traditional therapy of Keynesianism—the prescription for government spending as the magical elixir—was no longer working; rather, economists saw quite a bizarre phenomenon of “stagflation”—the unhappy combination of high price inflation, high unemployment, and low economic growth. Then, anything that could be labeled “socialization” began to be suspected, and instead the values of competitiveness, private initiative, and individual freedom were extolled as a counterpart.

⁴¹ Hayek shared the Nobel Prize with Gunnar Myrdal, a socialist and member of the Swedish Academy. Later, in reaction to the prize to Hayek and Milton Friedman, Myrdal advocated the abolition of the Nobel Prize for economics. Probably, as Hayek says, the Royal Swedish Academy was very anxious to keep a certain balance between different economic views. Following Hayek, foremost supporters of free market economics received the Nobel Prize. They are: Milton Friedman (1976), George J. Stigler (1982), James M. Buchanan (1986), Ronald H. Coase (1991), and Gary S. Becker (1992).

⁴² Hayek said: “That came as an entire surprise because I did not think Keynesianism had already lost its reputation in intellectual and professional circles.” (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 263)

⁴³ Ebenstein, *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁴⁴ Thomas W. Hazlett, “The Road from Serfdom: F.A. Hayek interviewed by Thomas W. Hazlett,” pp. 31-33.

⁴⁵ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 209. During Britain’s July 1945 parliamentary election campaign, Churchill cited Hayek in his dramatic campaign speeches to show that a Labor Party win would mean tyranny. (www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3abd1d3d45fc.htm.) Barry Goldwater, the 1964 Republican presidential nominee against Lyndon Johnson, was significantly influenced by Hayek. Ronald Reagan, in response to the interview question, “What philosophical thinkers most influenced your conduct as a leader?” said that “I’ve always been a voracious reader—I’ve read the economic views of von Mises and Hayek.” Reagan awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Hayek in 1991; and of seventy-four economists employed in six task forces during the Reagan administration, twenty were members of the Mont Pelerin Society which was organized by Hayek. (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. 207-208; John Rabould, *Hayek: A Commemorative Album* [London: Adam Smith Research Institute; Seoul: The Korea Center for Free Enterprise, 1999], p. 108) Hayek was identified in popular British media as Thatcher’s “behind-the-scenes guru,” “Mrs. Thatcher’s Godfather,” “The Priest and the Premier,” and “spiritual tutor

exercised a significant influence in the Second and Third Worlds: He was called the “guru of General Pinochet’s Chile,”⁴⁶ and was applauded as “the intellectual torchlight for the libertarians in Latin America”;⁴⁷ after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Hayek’s themes became the rationale to justify all harsh economic policies for the transition of socialist economies in Eastern Europe.⁴⁸ In fact, as Milton Friedman indicates, Hayek’s writings, particularly his *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), played a significant role in the disintegration of socialist economies in Eastern Europe.⁴⁹ The real world dynamics, I agree, are far more complex than the sphere of Hayek’s influence; however, his political economy, particularly his unique idea of the market as “spontaneous order,” has been used by “reform”-minded political and economic leaders as *the* fulcrum to explain, justify, and enforce all neoliberal economic policies around the world.

Hayek is important not merely because of his worldwide influences but because of the fact that he was not a technical academic economist but a deep moral philosopher who transfigured classical liberalism’s mere free-market theories into a powerful moral vision and ideological weapon for conservative leaders around the world.⁵⁰ In fact, in sharp contrast with Milton Friedman who insists on keeping economics as a positive science, Hayek was deeply convinced that many of the pressing social questions are to be

to Margaret Thatcher.” (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. 291-292; Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, p. 4.)

⁴⁶ Wainwright, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 211.

⁴⁸ In particular, the following themes of Hayek were attractive to the post-socialist Eastern European economies: (1) socialism is a dangerous disruption of the “spontaneous order” of market; (2) market is essentially haphazard outcome of individual activity; and (3) a strong economic individualism. Thus, Tomas Jezek, the Czech Minister of Privatization, said that “Hayek is a guarantee that we are going the right way.” (Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, pp. 42-44.)

⁴⁹ Milton Friedman’s Introduction to the fiftieth anniversary edition of Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. xix.

⁵⁰ Hayek was influenced by many of his predecessors and contemporaries: From Carl Menger (1840-1921), the founder of the Austrian School of economics, Hayek inherited an essentially individualistic and subjective methodology; from Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) of the same school, the keen interest in socialism and the understanding of the market as process; from Karl Popper, the significance of empirical and fragmented knowledge; and from Ernst Mach (1836-1916), the limitations of individual knowledge.

found ultimately outside the scope of technical economics.⁵¹ Indeed, unlike many other utilitarian and positivist economists, Hayek and his Austrian School have restored economics as a branch of moral philosophy as well as the liberal arts. In this light, Hayek escapes from what Daly and Cobb call “the cardinal sin of standard economics,” “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” or the “disciplinolatry” that disregards moral and philosophical questions in economics.⁵² Hayek was not a hermit scholar but a passionate agitator who believed in the power of ideas; and his life-long mission was to lay the “philosophic foundations of a free society.”⁵³ For this mission, he organized the Mont Pelerin Society with a group of prominent scholars for free market to raise and train “an army of fighters for freedom.”⁵⁴ Probably, the following words of Hayek best express who Hayek was and what he stood for:

We must make the building of a free society once more an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage. What we lack is a liberal Utopia, a program

⁵¹ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 3. Hayek’s basic concern was moral and political theory, and his greatest contribution was made in social philosophy. After all, just as Adam Smith was a professor of moral philosophy, Hayek was the professor of the Committee on Social Thought during his teaching years in Chicago. Therefore, Hayek put himself outside the scope of technical economics, even criticizing Friedman as “an arch-positivist” in economics. For Friedman, economics is a positive science. In his famous article, “The Methodology of Positive Economics,” Friedman argues that as in the natural sciences, only by the correspondence of the predictions of a theory with the facts should theories provisionally be accepted or rejected. (Charles K. Rowley, “The Nobel Laureates,” in *The Age of Economists: From Adam Smith to Milton Friedman*, ed., Richard M. Ebeling [Hillsdale, Michigan: Hillsdale College Press, 1999], p. 125.) Hayek criticizes Friedman and other Chicago economists for being “logical positivists.” (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 271.) To the question, “What is the most important way in which the Austrians differ with Milton Friedman and the Chicago School?”, Hayek answers: “... it is really on methodological issues, ultimately, that we differ. Friedman is an arch-positivist who believes nothing must enter scientific argument except what is empirically proven. My argument is that we know so much detail about economics, our task is to put knowledge in order. We hardly need any new information. Our great difficulty is digesting what we already know.” (Hazlett, “The Road from Serfdom: F.A. Hayek interviewed by Thomas W. Hazlett,” pp. 46-47.)

⁵² Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, pp. 31, 41, 43. In fact, citing Whitehead’s phrase of the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” the same phrase that Daly and Cobb borrow and use to critique neoclassical economics, Hayek attacks the “collectivist approach” as the fallacy of “conceptual realism.” (See Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse on Reason* [Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1979], p. 95.)

⁵³ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 143.

⁵⁴ The Mont Pelerin Society, or The Acton-Tocqueville Society, was organized in 1947 on Mont Pelerin, near Vevey, Switzerland. (See John Rabould, *Hayek*, pp. 50, 64, 68f., 73, 94)

which seems neither a mere defense of things as they are nor a diluted kind of socialism, but a truly liberal radicalism. The main lesson which the true liberal must learn from the success of the socialist is that it was their courage to be Utopian which gained them the support of the intellectuals and thereby an influence on public opinion which is daily making possible what only recently seemed utterly remote.⁵⁵

We will see how this vision of a liberal Utopia has ended up with a cultural traditionalism and a radical social conservatism that actually provides no room to a truly liberal radicalism.

Hayek's Moral Philosophy

It is no surprise to see that many of the courageous and prominent liberal thinkers were Germans and Austrians who had experienced Hitler's Third Reich. Hayek experienced it as "the totalitarian horror" and "a profound shock to this generation," and learned from it the significance of protection of individuals against the "monster state."⁵⁶ In his formative years, Hayek lived in a world where the outbreak of two World Wars and the rise of socialism commonly caused great increases in government activity and power. In such a context where "The greatest crimes of our time have been committed by governments,"⁵⁷ Hayek realized that the effective limitation of power is the most pressing issue for social order,⁵⁸ and thus that "the chief need is once more to free the process of spontaneous growth from the obstacles and encumbrances that human folly has erected."⁵⁹ Interestingly, the following words of a theologian, who was a contemporary of

⁵⁵ Hayek's speech in 1949.

⁵⁶ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, pp. 16, 238.

⁵⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 134.

⁵⁸ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 128.

⁵⁹ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 205. Also see Hayek. *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 132.

Hayek, best illustrate Hayek's sense of mission in his times. While reading them, one can only guess who the author might be:

The whole development of modern society has tended mightily toward the limitation of the realm of freedom for the individual man. The tendency is most clearly seen in socialism; a socialistic state would mean the reduction to a minimum of the sphere of individual choice... But the same tendency exhibits itself to-day even in those communities where the name of socialism is most abhorred... It never seems to occur to modern legislatures that although "welfare" is good, forced welfare may be bad. In other words, utilitarianism is being carried out to its logical conclusions; in the interests of physical well-being the great principles of liberty are being thrown ruthlessly to the winds... God grant that there may come a reaction, and that the great principles of Anglo-Saxon liberty may be rediscovered before it is too late!⁶⁰

The author is J. Gresham Machen, the "orthodox" Christian thinker who stood against Christian liberalism; and, as he wished, there later came a reaction by a man who held Anglo-Saxon liberty as the central principle of his moral philosophy.

The central task of Hayek was to re-instate Anglo-Saxon principles of the primacy of individual liberty in the context of the modern trend toward socialism, toward forced welfare. By invoking the classical liberal principle of individual liberty, Hayek wanted to demonstrate that "one of the most influential political movements of our time, socialism, is based on demonstrably false premises, and despite being inspired by good intentions and led by some of the most intelligent representatives of our time, endangers the standard of living and the life itself of a large proportion of our existing population."⁶¹

⁶⁰ J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity & Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1923), pp. 10-11, 15.

⁶¹ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* (Routledge: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 9.

For Hayek, socialism (even democratic socialism or the welfare state for that matter)⁶² is simply incompatible, irreconcilable with individual liberty;⁶³ it only means a “new despotism,” “new feudalism,” “supreme myth,” and “an entire abandonment of the individualist tradition which has created Western civilization.”⁶⁴ Then, what went wrong? What was it that allowed socialism to prevail? As the following words of Hayek articulate, he holds it is the superstition of *human reason*:

I believe men will look back on our age as an age of superstition... I believe people will discover that the most widely held ideas which dominated the twentieth century, those of a planned economy with a just distribution [socialism], a freeing ourselves from repressions and conventional morals [liberationism], of permissive education as a way to freedom, and the replacement of the market by a rational arrangement of a body with coercive powers [welfare statism], were all based on superstitions... Ironically, these superstitions are largely an effect of our inheritance from the Age of Reason, that great enemy of all that *it* regarded as superstitions. If the Enlightenment has discovered that the role assigned to human reason in intelligent construction had been too small in the past, we are discovering that the task which our age is assigning to the rational construction of new institutions is far too big... *Man is not and never will be the master of his fate: his very reason always progresses by leading him into the unknown and unforeseen where he learns new things.*⁶⁵

As a child of Enlightenment, Hayek did not deny the role of reason but was deeply skeptical of any notions of “rational,” “scientific” progress. Thus, he did not accept all

⁶² For Hayek, the “welfare state” is identical with the socialist state in that it also desires “to use the powers of government to insure a more even or more just distribution of good.” (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 255.)

⁶³ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 255, 259. Crucial to his argument against socialism was that it is “factually impossible,” “logically impossible,” and thus bound to fail as an economic system, because only free markets could generate the information necessary to intelligently coordinate social behavior. Even the democratic socialism, which is “the great utopia of the last few generations,” is unachievable for Hayek, because democracy is “an essentially individualist institution” standing “in an irreconcilable conflict with socialism” and it is only possible within “a competitive system based on free disposal over private property.” (See Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 6; *The Road to Serfdom*, pp. 29, 36, 77.)

⁶⁴ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 16, 24, 253.

⁶⁵ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, pp. 173-176.

liberal tradition; instead, claiming himself to be an heir of the English Whig tradition,⁶⁶ he distinguished between “true individualism” (or “evolutionary rationalism”) and “false individualism” (or “constructivist rationalism”) according to the role allotted to the use of reason.⁶⁷ The former stems from England and Scotland and emphasizes the *insignificance* of individual reason (reason here is only critical and exploratory); the latter has its roots in Cartesian rationalism in the Continent and it stresses the *importance* of individual reason (reason here has a constructive role).⁶⁸ According to Hayek, true individualism believes that “if left free, men will often achieve more than individual human reason could design or foresee,”⁶⁹ whereas false individualism is an erroneous constructivistic interpretation of the order of society, which is the origin of “constructivism” or “scientism” that brought about all forms of collectivism and socialism.⁷⁰ For Hayek, constructivism is only a false conception which assumes that all social institutions are, and ought to be, the product of deliberate design, and this erroneous conception is

⁶⁶ For Hayek, “Whiggism is historically the correct name for the ideas in which I believe.” Whiggism is the common tradition of the Anglo-Saxon countries, whose basic principle is “the notion of a higher law above municipal codes”; it is, according to Hayek, in sharp contrast with “the crude and militant rationalism of the French Revolution” into which “the overrationalistic, nationalistic, and socialistic influences” have intruded. Following English Whig tradition, Hayek believed that no power should be arbitrary and that all power should be limited by higher law. (See Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 177, 409)

⁶⁷ In *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (1952), which is a study on “the history of the abuse and decline of reason in modern times,” Hayek insisted that socialism is “the progressive abuse of reason” whereas totalitarianism is “the decay of reason.” (pp. 9-12.) For Hayek, “Human reason can neither predict nor deliberately shape its own future”; it is “insufficient to master the full detail of complex reality”; that is, it is “merely a discipline, an insight into the limitations of the possibilities of successful action, which often will tell us only what not to do.” (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 41, 66.) Therefore, for Hayek, “we must completely discard the conception that man was able to develop culture because he was endowed with reason. What apparently distinguished him was the capacity to imitate and to pass on that he had learned.” (Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, pp. 156f.)

⁶⁸ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 107. The former, or “British tradition,” was made explicit mainly by a group of Scottish moral philosophers led by David Hume, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson, seconded by their English contemporaries Josiah Tucker, Edmund Burke, and William Paley; the latter, or the tradition of “French Enlightenment,” deeply imbued with Cartesian rationalism, represented by Encyclopedists, Rousseau, Physiocrats, and Condorcet. Hayek sees the former as “empiricist” and the latter as “rationalist.” (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 55-57.)

⁶⁹ Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 11.

⁷⁰ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 129.

connected with another false conception, that of the human mind as an entity standing outside nature and society, rather than being itself the product of the societal/cultural evolution.⁷¹ For Hayek, reason is as much the result of an evolutionary selection process as is our morality, therefore, one should not suppose that our reason is in the higher critical position.⁷² Hayek believed that this antirationalist individualism is compatible with the Christian doctrine of sin, while rationalist perfectionism is irreconcilable with it.⁷³ (This is why Novak is excited to find the continuity between Hayek and Niebuhr.)⁷⁴ Hayek believed that all demands for “liberation” stem chiefly from the tradition of such rationalist perfectionism or constructivism.

In a word, Hayek was a strong anti-rationalist⁷⁵ who argued persistently that reason is not all-powerful.⁷⁶ In fact, Hayek’s whole work, conducted for over sixty years, is an effort to demonstrate that rational/scientific constructivism is a false theory of science and rationality in which reason is abused.⁷⁷ For Hayek, social order is the result

⁷¹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 5.

⁷² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 21.

⁷³ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 61, 407. For Hayek, the religious view that “morals were determined by processes incomprehensible to us” is rather preferable to the rationalist view that “human beings, by exercising their intelligence, invented morals that gave them the power to achieve more than they could ever foresee.” (Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 137)

⁷⁴ See Novak, *This Hemisphere of Liberty*, p. 8; *Confession of a Catholic*, p. 117.

⁷⁵ Hayek says that “if the desire to make reason as effective as possible is what is meant by rationalism, I am myself a rationalist. If, however, the term means that conscious reason ought to determine every particular action, I am not a rationalist, and such rationalism seems to me to be very unreasonable.” (Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 29.)

⁷⁶ Hayek argues it this way: “Reason undoubtedly is man’s most precious possession. Our argument is intended to show merely that it is not all-powerful and that the belief that it can become its own master and control its own development may yet destroy it.” Hayek understands his effort as “a defense of reason against its abuse.” Therefore, Hayek insists, “We must use our reason intelligently,” and “in order to do so, we must preserve that indispensable matrix of the uncontrolled and non-rational which is the only environment wherein reason can row and operate effectively.” (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 69.)

⁷⁷ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 48. By “scientism” or “constructivism,” Hayek meant a particular form of rationalism that claims to be able to “foresee the future progress of the human race, accelerate and direct it”; it meant only a misapplication of positivist, natural sciences approaches to the social sciences. (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 162.)

of human action *but* not of human design;⁷⁸ therefore, the constructivist notion that human beings are able to shape the world around themselves according to their wishes is simply the “fatal conceit.”⁷⁹ This anti-rationalism, this anti-constructivism is the fundamental thrust of Hayek’s entire moral philosophy. To say it differently, Hayek was a staunch critic of the divinization of human reason.

What then are the sources of Hayek’s case against rational constructivism? How is it supported philosophically, sociologically, and epistemologically? I have found three sources that Hayek relies on-- a Kantian worldview, a societal/cultural evolutionism, and a sociology of knowledge.

As John Gray reveals, Hayek was an uncompromising Kantian in his denial of any speculative metaphysics.⁸⁰ For Hayek, the traditional aspiration of Western philosophy for a speculative metaphysics by means of which human thought is justified and reformed is ill-founded, for it is impossible to attain any external or transcendental standpoint on human thought wholly uncontaminated by human experiences, interests, and sensory orders. Thus, along with Kant who, in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), made the case against the possibility of such speculative metaphysics, Hayek rejected the construction of any metaphysical belief in the ultimate reality.⁸¹ Hayek was a philosophical skeptic who saw nothing in the “ultimate,” or the “beyond,” for he believes that all meaning resides in the mind and there is no such thing as an external world apart from what the mind perceives.⁸² Accordingly, the basic task of philosophy for Hayek, as

⁷⁸ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 21.

⁷⁹ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 27.

⁸⁰ For this description of Kantian influence, See John Gray, *Hayek On Liberty* (New York: Routledge, 1984), p. 4-8.

⁸¹ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 245.

⁸² For Hayek, we are philosophically and epistemologically unable to provide a full explanation of the phenomenal world, because such a complete explanation of the external world presupposes a complete

for Kant, is not the construction of any metaphysical system, but the investigation of the limits of reason itself--thus against rational constructivism.

Secondly, Hayek's objection to rational constructivism is supported by his thoroughgoing societal/cultural evolutionism. Strongly influenced by his father, August Hayek, who was a botanist, Hayek was deeply interested in biology and he applied the idea of biological evolution to societal/cultural order.⁸³ So central is the idea of societal/cultural evolution that without it we cannot understand Hayek's vital notion of spontaneous order, or, precisely, the "spontaneous extended human order created by a competitive market."⁸⁴ For Hayek, all societal/cultural order is absolutely the result of the evolution of an increasingly complex order of spontaneous and voluntary cooperation.⁸⁵

Nobody has destined it, and therefore no one knows whither it will or should go;

explanation of the working of our senses and mind, which is impossible. For Hayek, the whole idea of the mind explaining itself is a logical contradiction, because it is impossible to bridge the gap between "the realm of the mental" and "the realm of the physical." That is, there is a permanent cleavage between our knowledge of the physical world and our knowledge of mental events. This does not mean that we are not able to explain particular mental events; but it does mean that the type of explanation at which we aim in the physical sciences is not applicable to mental events. That is, we are not able to deal with mental events in the same manner as we deal with physical events. Therefore, for Hayek, the devices developed by the natural sciences for the special purpose of replacing a description of the world in sensory or phenomenal terms by one in physical terms lose their *raison d'être* in the study of intelligible human action. (See Hayek, *The Sensory Order: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Theoretical Psychology* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952], pp. 191-194.)

⁸³ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 151. Hayek believed that Darwin got the basic idea of evolution from economics, and that modern biology has borrowed the concept of evolution from studies of culture of older lineage. (See Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 24; *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 59.) Interestingly, Hayek was opposed to the idea of Social Darwinism, arguing that it only concentrates on the selection of individuals rather than on that of institutions and practices, and on the selection of innate rather than on culturally transmitted capacities. "In social evolution," argues Hayek, "the decisive factor is not the selection of the physical and inheritable properties of the individuals but the selection by imitation of successful institutions and habits." Although this operates also through the success of individuals and groups, what emerges is not an inheritable attribute of individuals, but the whole "cultural inheritance" which is passed on by learning and imitation. (See Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 59.) As Gray points out, this explanation brings about the suspicion whether it is consistent with his methodological individualism. (See Gray, *Hayek on Liberty*, pp. 55-59.)

⁸⁴ In fact, the idea of "spontaneous order" is not original to Hayek, as he himself traced it back to Adam Smith and Carl Menger. According to Hayek, Smith's conception of an "invisible hand," whereby "man is led to promote an end which was no part of his intention," is the central contention of the concept of spontaneous order. Still, as Ebenstein evaluates it, it was Hayek who gave great currency to the idea that material progress can occur and societal organization can develop, even when the details of a specific societal order are not determined by an orderer. (Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. 250, 237, 319.)

⁸⁵ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 32.

accordingly, it is only counterproductive to attempt to build human societies,⁸⁶ because even absent an orderer, human society can achieve great orderliness, not chaos, by virtue of the evolution of societal/cultural order.⁸⁷ For Hayek:

[A]ll evolution, cultural as well as biological, is a process of continuous adaptation to unforeseeable events, to contingent circumstances which could not have been forecast. This is [the] reason why evolutionary theory can never put us in the position of rationally predicting and controlling future evolution. All it can do is to show how complex structures carry within themselves a means of correction that leads to further evolutionary developments which are, however, in accordance with their very nature, themselves unavoidably unpredictable.⁸⁸

Accordingly, in Hayek's moral philosophy, human beings are seen as only the product of the biological and cultural evolution, not as the creator of civilization;⁸⁹ and, in the evolution of society, human economy "blindly follows the route of maximum resource use just as within biology evolutionary change tends towards a maximum economy in the use of resources."⁹⁰ Neither a conscious or teleological force, nor supernatural deity autonomous from the natural order sets evolution in motion;⁹¹ therefore, the notion of agency, either human or divine, is infantile and the notion of the inevitability of progress is only exuberant and naïve.⁹² Such notions are only an intellectual retrogression to the "anthropomorphic tendencies of all primitive thinking."⁹³ For Hayek, all progress must be understood in the sense of cultural evolution which is characterized by the discovery

⁸⁶ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 108.

⁸⁷ Ebenstein, *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁸⁸ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 25.

⁸⁹ Hayek says: "The whole conception of man already endowed with a mind capable of conceiving civilization setting out to create it is fundamentally false. Man did not simply impose upon the world a pattern created by his mind. His mind is itself a system that constantly changes as a result of his endeavor to adapt himself to his surroundings." (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 23.)

⁹⁰ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 20.

⁹¹ Graham Walker. *The Ethics of F.A. Hayek* (New York: University Press of America, 1986), p. 10.

⁹² Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 39.

⁹³ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, pp. 9, 26.

of the unknown, and whose consequences are therefore unpredictable.⁹⁴ Hayek argues that human civilization has a life of its own, and therefore our attitude to it ought to be similar to that of the physician toward a living organism.⁹⁵ This fascinating analogy leads us to speculate whether there is any connection between Hayek's moral philosophy and Whitehead's philosophy of organism. The truth is that Hayek refers to Whitehead to disqualify the belief that consciously directed social processes are necessarily superior to any spontaneous process as "an unfounded superstition."⁹⁶

Thirdly, Hayek bases his case against rational constructivism on a sociology of knowledge that emphasizes the limits of human knowledge. "Only fools believe," says Hayek, "that they know all, but there are many."⁹⁷ According to Hayek, knowledge exists only as the knowledge of individuals, and the sum of such individually fragmented knowledge never exists as an integrated whole.⁹⁸ Instead, too many unforeseen contingencies enter into human life;⁹⁹ therefore, the totality of resources that one could employ in a plan is not simply knowable to anyone and can hardly be centrally controlled.¹⁰⁰ In short, "what cannot be known cannot be planned."¹⁰¹ The point of this "humble" theory in terms of knowledge, of course, is to disarm the all-knowing state,¹⁰² to illegitimatize all forms of socialist state engineering,¹⁰³ and, conversely, to justify the

⁹⁴ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 40.

⁹⁵ Hayek, *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁹⁶ Hayek cites from Whitehead who said that "civilization advances by extending the number of important operations we can perform without thinking about them." (See Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, pp. 153-154.)

⁹⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 130.

⁹⁸ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 24f.

⁹⁹ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 85.

¹⁰¹ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁰² Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Hayek recognized that a very significant quantity of economic knowledge was by its very nature ephemeral, practical and often tacit. Such knowledge, unlike scientific knowledge, could not even in principle be centralized, although it is nevertheless no less valid and vital as a result. (Wainwright.

inevitability and superiority of competitive free market economy. In any event, due to the fundamental limits of human knowledge, individuals enter the world “socially blindfolded” and they can never know the social consequences of their own action.¹⁰⁴ This implies that we create social order entirely unintentionally, and that social order is only a haphazard outcome of individual activities. We have here the prototype of the “scientific” defense for the “free” market:

[T]he conflict between... advocates of the spontaneous extended human order created by a competitive market, and... those who demand a deliberate arrangement of human interaction by central authority based on collective command over available resources is due to a *factual error* by the latter about how knowledge of these resources is and can be generated and utilized. As a question of fact, this conflict must be settled by *scientific* study. Such study shows that, by following the spontaneously generated moral traditions underlying the competitive market order..., we generate and garner greater knowledge and wealth than would ever be obtained or utilized in a centrally-directed economy whose adherents claim to proceed strictly in accordance with “reason.”¹⁰⁵

But, Hayek has created a problem of his own because of this thoroughly individualist approach to human knowledge. How then is it possible that the socially blindfolded individuals, who possess only fragmented knowledge, can communicate with each other? How could there be social cohesion if no knowledge exists as an integrated whole? Hayek’s answer is that prices and profits are the guide or signals that can bring about social coordination and communication.¹⁰⁶ That is, profits and prices are information- or knowledge-bestowing tools that can overcome the division of knowledge.¹⁰⁷ If profits and

Argument for a New Left, pp. 4, 5) Instead of “scientific” knowledge, Hayek counted the “unorganized knowledge of the particular circumstances of time and place,” or everyday practical knowledge. (Kurt R. Leube, “F.A. Hayek and the Many Roads to Serfdom,” in *The Age of Economists*, p. 58.)

¹⁰⁴ Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 10. Emphases added.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted from Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. 306-307.

¹⁰⁷ Ebenstein, *Ibid.*, p. 96.

prices are such crucial instruments, then the disdain of profit, “which we find from Aristotle to Archbishop Camara in Brazil,” is only due to their “blinded indignation” and simple ignorance of the fact that by pursuing profit we are as altruistic as we can be, because we extend our concern to people who are beyond the range of our individual knowledge.¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, Daly and Cobb adopt this idea of profit, insisting that profit provides information as well as incentive, and thus we must accept the market and the profit motive.¹⁰⁹ What seems ironic to me here is that Hayek’s idea of prices and profits as the only means of social communication is a derivative problem of his own thoroughgoing individualist approach to society, the problem which never exists for Daly and Cobb from the outset. In Hayek’s social philosophy, individualism is not only the ideal but also the basic method to approach social phenomena.¹¹⁰ As long as society is viewed as a simple aggregate of fragmented individuals, the problem of social communication necessarily follows. However, as Hilary Wainwright points out, the problem of Hayek’s notion of the profit and price as the means of social communication is that it presupposes that the information that the individuals need is only the comparative cost of a commodity and nothing more.¹¹¹ Is this presupposition not contradictory to Daly and Cobb’s basic assertion that a real human being is not *Homo*

¹⁰⁸ Hayek complains that “The high-minded socialist slogan, ‘Production for use, not for profit,’ which we find in one form or another from Aristotle to Bertrand Russell, from Albert Einstein to Archbishop Camara of Brazil” only “betrays ignorance of how productive capacity is multiplied” by concerns for profit. “These intellectuals,” blames Hayek, “are blinded by indignation” and “do not know how to go about finding out how particular results are to be achieved at the least sacrifice of other ends.” They are like “the ascetic who has chosen to be content with a small share of the riches of this world, but which, when actualized in the form of restrictions on profits of others, is selfish to the extent that it imposes asceticism, and indeed deprivations of all sorts, on others.” (Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 105.)

¹⁰⁹ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, pp. 46, 49.

¹¹⁰ Hayek uses “individualism” as the opposite to “socialism” and all other forms of “collectivism.” For Hayek, individualism recognizes “the individual as the ultimate judge of his ends”; it is “the belief that as far as possible his own views ought to govern his actions.” (Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 66.)

¹¹¹ Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, p. 53.

economicus but person-in-community?¹¹² If knowledge is understood as a social product rather than an individual attribute, the foundation of Hayek's anti-constructivism crumbles, for, as Wainwright also points out, if knowledge is a social product then it can be socially transformed through cooperating, sharing, and combining individually fragmented knowledge.¹¹³

To sum, because of the Kantian view that denies the "ultimate," because of a strict societal/cultural evolutionism that denies any human constructive role, and because of a sociology of knowledge that denies the possibility of social cooperation among individuals, Hayek rejects rationalist social constructivism. Interestingly, however, this is only half the story. We would be seriously misled if we had the impression that Hayek objected to any deliberate organization of societal order. In fact, he himself cautioned his readers not to have such an impression.¹¹⁴ Hayek was neither an anarchist nor a *laissez faire*,¹¹⁵ and, despite his liberal point of departure that places fundamental values on individual liberty, he strongly emphasized at the same time the need for deliberate social organization. This is interesting indeed, for Hayek was fundamentally a liberal thinker whose main concern was individual liberty. For Hayek, the supreme ideal is the freedom and happiness of the individual;¹¹⁶ and individual liberty is not merely one particular value but the source and condition of most moral values.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless (and this is the

¹¹² Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, pp. 95, 159.

¹¹³ Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, p. 58.

¹¹⁴ See Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 37.

¹¹⁵ For Hayek, the term "*laissez faire*" is a highly ambiguous and misleading description of the principles on which a liberal policy is based. The question whether the state should or should not "act" or "interfere" poses an altogether false alternative, for every state must act and every action of the state interferes with something or other. However, "The important question," for Hayek, "is whether the individual can foresee the action of the state and make use of this knowledge as a datum in forming his own plans." (Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 89.)

¹¹⁶ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 238.

¹¹⁷ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 13-15.

second half of the story), he was deeply concerned with the conception of “liberty under the law,”¹¹⁸ and he stressed all the way through that there should be certain limitations on individual freedom through legal and moral rules.¹¹⁹ “We must purchase the freedom,” says Hayek, “enabling us to form an extended order at the cost of submitting to certain rules of conduct.”¹²⁰ It is of paramount significance for us to recognize that Hayek never dreamt of “a lawless society” but “a lawful one,”¹²¹ insisting that a successful free society will always in a large measure be “a tradition-bound society.”¹²² Following John Locke, Hayek insisted that there is no liberty without law, that liberty never means absence of law but its supremacy, and that “right law” (orthonomos) is itself liberty.¹²³ Novak was right to view that Hayek, believing that capitalism depends upon the evolution of law and tacit customs, passionately committed himself to defend the laws and institutions which he thought indispensable to human liberty.¹²⁴

We need to further examine Hayek’s concept of law, for it is crucial to grapple with the fundamental message of Hayek’s entire moral philosophy. By law, Hayek does not mean the coercion or specific commands enforced by government; rather, it means “the general rules” that apply equally to everybody, irrespective of the particular case.¹²⁵ To clarify, Hayek distinguishes “the law of liberty” (“nomos”) from modern legislation (“thesis”): The former is not a law in the same sense as the law passed by the legislator; it is not a rule of the law but “a rule concerning what the law ought to be,” i.e., “a meta-

¹¹⁸ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 62.

¹¹⁹ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 65.

¹²⁰ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹²¹ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 124.

¹²² Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 61.

¹²³ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. 26, 196.

¹²⁴ Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 65, 95, 235.

¹²⁵ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 153.

legal doctrine or a political ideal,”¹²⁶ which, importantly, is never invented by legislation but only discovered.¹²⁷ In contrast to the specific rules of government, which, like the Highway Code, order people where to go, the rule of law is general rules, which, like the mere signposts on a highway, do not aim at the wants and needs of particular people.¹²⁸ The point is that “the rule of law” must replace “the rule of men.”¹²⁹ (As we will see, Hayek’s striking anti-social egalitarianism is largely indebted to this notion of the rule of law, for it opposes any deliberate government activity, particularly its activity aimed at material equality of people, i.e., distributive justice.)¹³⁰ In the final analysis, Hayek’s rule of law is the rule of customs and morals. Since he believes that the error of constructivist rationalism is to deceive itself by directing its concern to master all the particulars over the general, the concrete over the abstract, Hayek emphasized the generality and abstractness of law, which we can easily identify in inherited customs and morals.¹³¹ Customs and morals are vital for Hayek, because they are those general and abstract rules that can hardly be attributed as the invention of the “savage state” in which each individual is coerced to obey the commands of a headman.¹³²

Interestingly, this notion of Hayek’s rule of law rules out not only the rule of men but also the idea of liberation. Hayek attacks Latin American liberation theology as an ever more severe threat to political liberty, because he believes that the notion of

¹²⁶ Hayek, *Ibid.*, pp. 205-206.

¹²⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, pp. 72, 83. In fact, for Hayek, the sovereignty of the law and the sovereignty of an unlimited Parliament are mutually exclusive; that is, an almighty Parliament means the death of the freedom of the individual for Hayek. (Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 102.)

¹²⁸ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, pp. 81-82.

¹²⁹ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 93. For Hayek, government must not coerce an individual except in the enforcement of a known rule, of general abstract rules equally applicable to all.

¹³⁰ Hayek, *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

¹³¹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 33.

¹³² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 65.

liberation is archaic in its demand for release from traditional morals and customs without which civilization collapses.¹³³ For Hayek, those who espouse such liberation will only destroy the basis of freedom and the conditions necessary for civilization; unfortunately, however, “they do not *rationaly* see, according to their lights, how certain limitations on individual freedom through legal and moral rules make possible a greater—and freer!—order than can be attained through centralized control.”¹³⁴ For sure, liberty is our most precious inheritance, says Hayek,¹³⁵ still, true liberty is far from being inconsistent with law but dependent on it, because it can be realized only by adhering to abstract rules like customs and morals.¹³⁶ In short, freedom *from* restraint (liberation) is not enough; we must proceed to freedom *to* the “rule of law”; and this type of liberty, concludes Hayek, is “the mother, not the daughter, of order.”¹³⁷ However, as I will discuss later, because of this attachment to the rule of law, Hayek has ended up being a strong defender of old values contradictory to his advocacy for a truly liberal radicalism for individual liberty. As we will see, Hayek’s overall moral philosophy, despite its high banner of a liberal Utopia, sounds nihilistic about the role of humanity in society.

Hayek’s Political Economy

We need to examine Hayek’s political economy as well, for it is the concrete embodiment of Hayek’s moral/social philosophy. For Hayek, political economy is fundamentally “catallactics” or “catallaxy.”¹³⁸ Hayek favored this term, for its Greek root

¹³³ Hayek, *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹³⁵ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 59.

¹³⁶ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 64.

¹³⁷ Hayek, *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 112. This notion of economy was originally suggested in 1838 by Archbishop Whately as a name for the theoretical science explaining the market order.

verve, *katalattein* or *katalassein*, means “to exchange,” “to receive into the community,” and/or “to turn from enemy into friend”; that is, it can mean that through exchange and trade, people of different places can accept each other as new friends. For Hayek, the catallactics/catallaxy is an order of peace, for he believes that it is a wealth-creating game, not a zero-sum game.¹³⁹ What is specifically important here is that Hayek presents the catallactics/catallaxy as a special kind of spontaneous order created by the market,¹⁴⁰ which can serve the multiplicity of separate ends of all its separate members.¹⁴¹ Note that a case for free trade is deeply rooted in his moral philosophy. To illustrate its characteristics, Hayek argues that the catallactics/catallaxy is the antithesis to Aristotle’s “oikonomia” whose ideal is self-sufficiency.¹⁴² For Hayek, the problem of Aristotle was that though he was acclaimed as a biologist, he could not perceive the difference between *kosmos* (a spontaneously grown order) and *taxis* (a deliberately arranged order as that of an army), and that his oikonomia is only applicable to “a place small enough for everyone to hear the herald’s cry.”¹⁴³ Hayek complains that the anti-commercial attitude of the mediaeval early modern Church, condemnation of interest as usury, its teaching of the just price, and its contemptuous treatment of gain is Aristotelian through and through.¹⁴⁴ Hayek rejects this Aristotelian moral skepticism about commerce. North American neoconservative theologians fundamentally share this conviction of Hayek’s.

¹³⁹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, pp. 110, 115.

¹⁴⁰ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁴¹ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁴² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 45.

¹⁴³ Hayek, *Ibid.* For Hayek, there are two types of order—the “made” order (*taxis*) and “grown” order (*kosmos*). The former is an “organization” whereas the latter is “spontaneous order” like “organism” and “cybernetics.” The latter is the “orderly structures which are the product of the action of many men but are not the result of human design.” Thus, it is not “invented” but “the outcome of a process of evolution,” “an order that is of nobody’s deliberate making.” (Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 37.)

¹⁴⁴ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 47.

Against Aristotle, Hayek argues for the indispensability of trading and markets for coordinating the productive efforts of large number of people.¹⁴⁵ For Hayek, Aristotle's vision of *oikonomia* must now be abandoned in the vast and complex "civilized world" such as ours, because at some point most people must engage in a long chain of activities for the satisfaction of unknown needs at a remote time and place.¹⁴⁶ The argument is that trading and markets are not something better than nothing, but *sine quo non* for the very existence and continuance of human life in today's civilized world. In fact, Hayek's belief in the inevitability of trading and markets is almost religious, when he views that "Whatever men live *for*, today most live only *because* of the market order."¹⁴⁷ Trading and markets are, in other words, the soteriological principle for entire humanity according to Hayek. Nevertheless, why is there still the persistent dislike of commercial dealing? Why do so many people, asks Hayek, still not like the "mere change of hands" that leads to "a gain in value to all participants" not "at the expense of the others (or what has come to be called exploitation)"?¹⁴⁸ For Hayek:

Perhaps the main force behind the persistent dislike of commercial dealings is then no more than plain ignorance and conceptual difficulty. This is however compounded with preexisting fear of the unfamiliar: a fear of sorcery and the unnatural, and also a fear of knowledge itself harking back to our origins and indelibly memorialized in the first few chapters of the book of Genesis, in the story of man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. All superstitions... feed on such fear.¹⁴⁹

Hayek seems quite emotional; but, as we will see in the general conclusion, many arguments against the commercial dealings in today's global economy are not due to

¹⁴⁵ Hayek, *Ibid.*, pp. 99.

¹⁴⁶ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁴⁷ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁴⁸ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁴⁹ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 94.

plain ignorance or conceptual difficulty on the part of discontents. In any event, I think it is important to recognize that Hayek's catallactics/catallaxy nicely fits in with the essential characteristics of finance capitalism today, which, in my view, can be best defined as what Aristotle criticized as "chrematistics," i.e., the branch of political economy relating to the manipulation of property and wealth so as to maximize short-term monetary exchange value to the owner.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, it is not surprising to hear from Hayek that we should privatize and denationalize money, i.e., to abolish government monopoly of money and to promote a "complete freedom of all movement of currency and capital across frontiers."¹⁵¹

Furthermore, Hayek's political economy stands as the exact opposite of Herman E. Daly's steady-state economy in that it opposes population control and wealth distribution (social justice). For Hayek, the idea that population growth threatens worldwide pauperization is simply a mistake, for infinite population increase is a prerequisite for any advance in both material and spiritual civilization.¹⁵² Hayek insists that the much-dreaded population explosion is not going to occur, because the peripheries of developed economies, in which most population growth has taken place, are disappearing. Hayek sees the idea of population explosion as largely a consequence of oversimplifying the Malthusian theory of population, which is based on the assumption of the homogeneity of labor. However, what counts for Hayek is not simply "more men" but "more different men" who will bring an increase in productivity by division of labor,

¹⁵⁰ Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 139.

¹⁵¹ See Hayek *Denationalisation of Money—The Argument Refined: An Analysis of the Theory and Practice of Concurrent Currencies* (London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1990). Although these monetary ideas had little influence in academia, this revolutionary case for "a Free Money Movement comparable to the Free Trade Movement of the 19th century" at least describes what is going on in the process of economic globalization—the free movement of finance capital all across the border.

¹⁵² See the following discussion in Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, pp. 80, 121-124.

diversification, differentiation, and specialization of production. Hayek's basic assumption is that human beings have become powerful because they have become different, and that civilization is based on rich human diversity. Thus, when labour ceases to be a homogeneous factor of production, argues Hayek, Malthus's conclusions cease to apply.

However, nowhere can we find the originality of Hayek's political economy other than in his blatant, unabashed, and complete rejection of social/distributive justice. If we can summarize Hayek's entire message in a phrase, it is that social justice is incompatible with individual liberty. For Hayek, the notion of social justice is simply a "mirage," "superstition," "cult," "quasi-religious belief," and "the gravest threat a free civilization."¹⁵³ "The greatest service," says Hayek, "I can still render to my fellow men would be if it were in my power to make them ashamed of ever again using that hollow incantation [of social justice]."¹⁵⁴ Indeed, so blatant, so straightforward was Hayek's rejection of social justice that one can hardly find it possible to include him in the mainstream of liberal political thought that tried to find a balance between liberty and equality.¹⁵⁵ Needless to say, Hayek's complete rejection of social justice is based on his moral philosophy.

¹⁵³ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁴ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. xii.

¹⁵⁵ According to Raul Pont, there are two forms of liberalism: (1) "Possessive liberalism" found in the thought of Locke that emphasizes the natural law of the right to liberty that supports the right to property which the state has an obligation to defend; (2) "Egalitarian liberalism" found in the thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) that holds not only the idea of a natural law of liberty but also equality as a human condition. (See Raul Pont, "Representative democracy and participatory democracy," a speech originally given at the International Seminar on Representative Democracy held in Porto Alegre on November 11, 1999, *passim*.) The former, according to John Peeler, has been dominant and led the modern democratic theory into one that emphasizes limited government, representation, and rights, rather than directly exercised popular sovereignty, while the latter sought to approximate the ideal of direct democracy under conditions of perfect equality.

First, Hayek argues that the concept of social justice is meaningless in the context of spontaneous order, because in such order, inequality is not determined by any deliberate moral judgment; that is, in a free society, as Novak nicely describes it, the differences in reward cannot be described as just or unjust, because different positions of individuals or groups are not the result of anybody's design.¹⁵⁶ For Hayek, no human agency is responsible and we do not simply know anyone who is to blame,¹⁵⁷ because we cannot say just or unjust to a mere state of affairs. Therefore, to apply the term just or unjust to such a circumstance is only "a category mistake" in a spontaneously working "impersonal" market;¹⁵⁸ social justice, instead, can only be given meaning in a directed or command economy in which the individuals are ordered what to do.¹⁵⁹ Admittedly,

[O]ur personal sense of justice so frequently revolts against the impersonal decisions of the market. Yet, if the individual is to be free to choose, it is inevitable that he should bear the risk attaching to that choice and that in consequence he be rewarded, not according to the goodness or badness of his intentions, but solely on the basis of the value of the results to others. We must face the fact that the preservation of individual freedom is incompatible with a full satisfaction of our views of distributive justice.¹⁶⁰

So, what Hayek says is clear: Work out your own salvation at your own risk! Of course, individuals may abhor this, but there cannot be materially productive human societies in any other way,¹⁶¹ because, truthfully, the rapid economic advance is actually the result of inequality and humankind could neither have reached nor could now maintain its present numbers without an inequality.¹⁶² Hayek is quite straightforward: "The Rule of Law

¹⁵⁶ Novak, "Hayek: Practitioner of Social Justice--'Social Justice Properly Understood,'" p. 127.

¹⁵⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 69.

¹⁵⁸ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁶⁰ Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, pp. 21f.

¹⁶¹ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 88.

¹⁶² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 118.

produces economic inequality” and “True individualism is not equalitarian.”¹⁶³ But, what about poverty? Is he simply ignoring that issue? For Hayek, the solution of poverty is simple: It must be cured not by redistribution but by rapid material progress.¹⁶⁴

Secondly, Hayek argues that justice should mean “procedural justice” (meaning equality before the law or equal opportunity) not social justice (meaning material equality or equal results).¹⁶⁵ According to him:

From the fact that people are very different it follows that, if we treat them equally, the result must be inequality in their actual position, and that the only way to place them in an equal position would be to treat them differently. Equality before the law and material equality are therefore not only different but are in conflict with each other; and we can achieve either the one or the other, but not both at the same time. The equality before the law which freedom requires leads to material inequality.¹⁶⁶

Again, the logic of his argument is that we should not arbitrarily attempt to make equal what is actually unequal “by nature.” Then, most of the egalitarian demands are not only against the natural state of affairs but also based on nothing but envy.¹⁶⁷ If so, social justice is not an innocent expression of good will towards the less fortunate but only “the mark of demagogy or cheap journalism which responsible thinkers ought to be ashamed to use.”¹⁶⁸ For Hayek, justice should mean “impartial justice” which considers only the conformity of individual actions to end-independent rules,¹⁶⁹ not those unintended

¹⁶³ Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, p. 30.

¹⁶⁴ For Hayek, redistribution only slows down “the rate of advance of those in the lead”; furthermore, it “must bring about a situation in which even more of the next improvement will have to come from redistribution,” since “less will be provided by economic growth.” For Hayek, the peace of the world and civilization itself depend on “continued progress at a fast rate.” (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 52.)

¹⁶⁵ Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, p. 5; *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 33.

¹⁶⁶ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 87.

¹⁶⁷ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁸ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 97.

¹⁶⁹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 121.

consequences of a spontaneous order.¹⁷⁰ Novak absolutely follows Hayek: According to Novak, human beings are “by nature and by nature” unique (unequal); therefore, it is natural that such inequalities could lead to economic inequalities; hence, the passion for absolute equality is only the expression of wicked and self-destructive “equalityranny” or envy which is the most destructive social vice.¹⁷¹

Thirdly, in Hayek’s moral philosophy, social justice is epistemologically impossible, for there is no such thing as “social” after all. Just like the boy in Hans C. Andersen’s story, who saw that the Emperor had no clothes on, Hayek says that he could not see anything, because the term social justice is entirely empty and meaningless.¹⁷² For Hayek, society is not an acting person but only an orderly structure of actions resulting from the observation of certain abstract rules by its members;¹⁷³ therefore, to conceive society as “acting” or “willing” anything is only an erroneous anthropomorphism.¹⁷⁴ Hayek’s discontent with anthropomorphism is important, for, as we will see, that is exactly how Hayek explains away the possibility of divine agency. For Hayek, anthropomorphism is the tendency in human thought that understands all processes, both natural and social, in terms of human agency. Hayek particularly disliked John Stuart Mill, because, according to him, it was Mill who popularized the term social justice by giving an anthropomorphic approach to social questions and thereby leading more intellectuals into socialism than any other single person.¹⁷⁵ For Hayek, society cannot

¹⁷⁰ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 33.

¹⁷¹ See Novak, *Will It Liberate?*, pp. 188-189; *Business As a Calling*, pp. 11, 57; *On Corporate Governance*, pp. 22, 26; *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 184; “Hayek: Practitioner of Social Justice,” p. 132.

¹⁷² Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. xi.

¹⁷³ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁷⁴ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 141.

¹⁷⁵ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, pp. 187-189. In *Utilitarianism* (1861), Mill wrote: “Society should treat all equally well who have deserved equally well of it, that is, who have deserved equally well absolutely. This

think, act, value, or treat anybody;¹⁷⁶ nevertheless, society has become “the new deity to which we complain and clamour for redress if it does not fulfill the expectations it has created”;¹⁷⁷ therefore, for Hayek, the term “social” has become “the most confusing expression in our entire moral and political vocabulary.”¹⁷⁸

The fourth and final argument of Hayek is that humanity has moved from the “face-to-face society” to the “abstract society,” from small group society to “Great or Open Society,” and from the “end-connected tribal society” (*teleocracy*) to the “rule-connected open society” (*nomocracy*). In the rule-connected open society, argues Hayek, the conception of justice should be understood as the principle of treating all under the same rules.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, the demand for social justice is now only “an atavism, a vain attempt to impose upon the Open Society the morals of the tribal society.”¹⁸⁰ Therefore, for Hayek, “Religious prophets and ethical philosophers” from “Moses to Plato and St. Augustine, from Rousseau to Marx and Freud,” who have proposed a return to the older rules of conduct, are only reactionaries in defense of the old against the new principles.¹⁸¹ This leads Hayek to attack the Christian ethic of “love-thy-neighbor-as-thyself” as unfit and unworkable in modern societies, for such an ethic is only a tribal, anti-commercial, and anti-capitalist ethic that poses a grave threat to civilization.¹⁸² For Hayek:

is the highest abstract standard of social and distributive justice; towards which all institutions, and the efforts of all virtuous citizens, should be made in the utmost degree to converge.” (Quoted from Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 63.) In fact, originally Hayek was a great admirer of Mill. That was why he even intended his book *The Constitution of Liberty* (1962) to commemorate the centenary of John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty*. However, Hayek began to display a predominantly negative attitude toward Mill in his later work *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*. His point of critique to Mill was that Mill popularized the term “social justice.”

¹⁷⁶ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 103.

¹⁷⁷ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁷⁸ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 114.

¹⁷⁹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 39.

¹⁸⁰ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁸¹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 165.

¹⁸² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 119.

[W]e have to restrict the concept of neighbor much more than was possible in the past. In fact, the phrase in the Bible is “neighbor” and it has to be taken very literally—those people for whom we work in concrete knowledge of their persons. It is no longer applicable once we have to work for people whose very existences we do [not] know... These [religious] rules were developed as guides for action toward a small group of personally known people. Once we have left the primitive group, we must leave these inborn morals behind, and except for our relations with our immediate circle—what is now called the “nuclear family”—observe what I have called the “commercial morals.”¹⁸³

What Hayek denies in this striking attack on the fundamental Christian ethic is the notion of “solidarity” in the sense of unitedness in the pursuit of known common goals.¹⁸⁴ His argument against such notion of solidarity is that no matter how much we may be moved by the accounts of the misery of the millions of people around the world, we cannot make our “abstract knowledge” of their fate as the guide for our everyday action.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, as Niebuhr said, sacrificial love is too pure to be a guide for the ordering of society; nevertheless, it is necessary to preserve it as the ultimate norm for the moral life of humanity, not as a simple possibility or as a “counsel of perfection,” but as a symbol of the indeterminate possibilities of love in which human freedom stands and of the transcendent or “eschatological” pinnacle of the ethical life of humanity.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, an imaginative concern for the neighbor’s interests transcends all ordinary conceptions of equity; indeed, morality is fed by a realm of transcendent possibilities.¹⁸⁷ What is striking is that Hayek’s “realistic” account for neighbor-love, so to speak, is based on his striking moral conviction and paternalism which holds that the poor, the proletariat, and the

¹⁸³ Hayek, *A Conversation with Friedrich A. von Hayek: Science and Socialism*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1979, pp. 17-18. Quoted from Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 314.

¹⁸⁴ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 111.

¹⁸⁵ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 84.

¹⁸⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Pious and Secular America* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), pp. 140-141.

¹⁸⁷ Niebuhr, “The Truth in Myths,” in *Faith and Politics: A Commentary on Religious, Social and Political Thought in a Technological Age*, ed., Ronald H. Stone (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. 31.

developing world actually owe their very lives to the rich, the capitalist, and the advanced countries. He says:

[W]ithout the rich—without those who accumulated capital—those poor who could exist at all would be very much poorer indeed, scratching a livelihood from marginal lands on which every drought would kill most of the children they would be trying to raise... If we ask what men most owe to the moral practices of those who are called capitalists the answer is: their very lives... Most individuals who now make up the proletariat could not have existed before others provide them with means to subsist. Although these folk may *feel* exploited, and politicians may arouse and play on these feelings to gain power, most of the Western proletariat, and most of the millions of the developing world, owe their existence to opportunities that advanced countries have created for them.¹⁸⁸

For Hayek, there is no such thing as a “clash of interests,”¹⁸⁹ for the wealthy are simply ahead of the rest in the material advantages and they are simply living in “a phase of evolution that the others have not yet reached.”¹⁹⁰ There is no such thing as exploitation, for Hayek, because it is only that some must lead, and the rest must follow in the evolution of society.¹⁹¹ Note that again, the basic line of argument is that it is natural state of affairs, it simply is what it is. Still, if all these explanations do not make sense, Hayek admonishes us to accept that a certain percentage of the population *must* find itself in the

¹⁸⁸ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, pp. 14, 130, 131. For Hayek, the deterioration of the position of the working classes in consequence of the rise of capitalism is only “legend,” “old myth,” and “historical fiction.” Instead: “The proletariat which capitalism can be said to have ‘created’ was... not a proportion of the population which would have existed without it and which it had degraded to a lower level; it was an additional population which was enabled to grow up by the new opportunities for employment which capitalism provided.” (See Hayek, ed. *Capitalism and the Historians* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954], pp. 15-17, 27.)

¹⁸⁹ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 111.

¹⁹⁰ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 44.

¹⁹¹ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 130. For Hayek, wealth is “neither taken from the rest nor withheld from them”; rather, it is “the first sign of a new way of living begun by the advance guard.” Therefore, the playful explorations of those who can indulge in them for the short span of a human life--such as golf or tennis professionals or museum curators--would have not existed if wealthy amateurs had not preceded them. Accordingly, “to prevent some from enjoying certain advantages may well prevent the rest of us from ever enjoying them. If through envy we make certain exceptional kinds of life impossible, we shall all in the end suffer material and spiritual impoverishment.”

bottom of the scale, for that is how it has always been.¹⁹² Indeed, so blatant, so straightforward was Hayek's extreme message of social in-egalitarianism that even many of his closest friends were gravely shocked.¹⁹³ We are also shocked but not terrified because we now know how fragile the philosophical basis of such a message is, as we will evaluate it soon. Before we give an overall assessment of Hayek's moral philosophy, however, we need to examine one last crucial topic necessary to give the full picture of Hayek's entire system of thought—Hayek's own understanding of God.

Hayek was a self-professed agnostic who thought it meaningless to assert a belief in God or a disbelief in God.¹⁹⁴ Ever since he lost his interest in the God-question at the age of thirteen or fourteen, he never talked about God until the very last pages of his final publication, *The Fatal Conceit* (1988), even though he showed some interest in the relationship between liberalism and the role of Christianity.¹⁹⁵ Hayek did not simply know what the term God is supposed to mean, but he did know very clearly what he was against in terms of God--"every anthropomorphic, personal, or animistic interpretation of the term [God]," i.e., the conception of "a man-like or mind-like acting being" who is only the product of "an arrogant overestimation of the capacities of a man-like mind."¹⁹⁶ In fact, his rejection of a "man-like" God is consistent with his rejection of a "man-like"

¹⁹² Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 131.

¹⁹³ In his interview with Thomas W. Hazlett, Hayek admits: "I'm afraid I have shocked my closest friends by denying that the concept of social justice has any meaning whatever. But I haven't been persuaded that I was wrong." (Hazlett, "The Road from Serfdom: F.A. Hayek interviewed by Thomas W. Hazlett," p. 50)

¹⁹⁴ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 13.

¹⁹⁵ Hayek believed that unlike the rationalism of the French Revolution, "true liberalism" has no quarrel with a particular religious (Christian) belief. (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 407.) Well, the issue is: Which Christian belief?

¹⁹⁶ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 139.

society. For Hayek, just as there is no society that can think or act like the human being,¹⁹⁷ there is no God who can do so. Then, what do people mean by God?

Perhaps what many people mean in speaking of God is just a personification of tradition of morals or values that keeps their community alive. The source of order that religion ascribes to the human-like divinity—the map or guide that will show a part successfully how to move within the whole—we now learn to see to be not outside the physical world but one of its characteristics, one far too complex for any of its parts possibly to form an “image” or “picture” of it. Thus religious prohibitions against idolatry, against the making of such images, are well taken.¹⁹⁸

This notion of God is coherent with his Kantian worldview that refuses any speculative metaphysics, any belief in the “ultimate,” or the “beyond”; this notion of God is also consistent with Hayek’s epistemology of human sensory order in which all meaning fully resides in the mind; and this notion of God is also congruent with Hayek’s thoroughgoing societal/cultural evolutionism in which human civilization is understood as a living organism which has a life of its own, which has “a self-maintaining whole kept going by impersonal forces,” and which carries “within [itself] a means of correction that leads to further evolutionary developments.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, Hayek’s God, if any, never exists outside our physical world but exists in it as its characteristics, however misconceivingly ascribed in anthropomorphic terms as a personification of human tradition of morals and values. Hayek’s God is fully immanent, fully of this world, and fully the result of cultural/moral evolution. Would it be wrong then, to find the closest analogy of such a God in Ivone Gebera’s notion of Mystery? In her rejection of “the God of reason, who governs the world from a throne of glory,” the “god beyond the earth and the cosmos,” or

¹⁹⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 103.

¹⁹⁸ Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, pp. 139f.

¹⁹⁹ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 69-70.

the “god beyond humans and at the same time very much like humans,” Gebara presents that:

We dwell in Mystery larger than ourselves. We are part of this Mystery, which, like us, is evolving. This Mystery is what we call the Divine. But this Mystery is not a being, not a person.²⁰⁰

This Mystery, of course, is not completely identical with Hayek’s God, for it is informed by a profound ecological sense, which Hayek lacks. For Gebara, the Mystery is real God; for Hayek, it is only anthropomorphic projection. However, in its denial of the “otherness” of God, it resembles Hayek’s God of thoroughgoing naturalism applied to societal/cultural evolution. Indeed, Hayek was a thoroughgoing naturalist who saw nothing in the transcendent or the “beyond.” He was also a thoroughgoing anti-rationalist who refused to replace the God who governs the world from a throne of glory with the divinization of human reason.²⁰¹ He truly believed that we must follow the evolving, self-generating, and self-correcting spontaneous order in which we are a mere part of.

Yet perhaps most people can conceive of abstract tradition only as a personal Will. If so, will they not be inclined to find this will in “society” in an age in which more overt supernaturalisms are ruled out as superstitions? On that question may rest the survival of our civilization.²⁰²

These words are the very last words of Hayek’s entire writing. As he was finishing his sixty-year long writing career, Hayek was deeply anxious about the die-hard

²⁰⁰ Ivone Gebara, “Cosmic Theology: Ecofeminism and Panentheism,” in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, p. 211.

²⁰¹ Novak nicely illustrates Hayek’s double negation of God and reason: “When God ‘died,’ men began to trust a conceit of reason and its inflated ambition to do what God has not designed to do: construct a just social order. The divinization of reason met its mate in the ideal of the command economy... The death of God, the rise of science, and the command economy yielded ‘scientific socialism.’ Where reason would rule, the intellectuals would rule (or so some thought); actually, the lovers of power would rule.” (Novak, “Hayek: Practitioner of Social Justice--‘Social Justice Properly Understood,’” p. 127.)

²⁰² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 140.

“superstitions” of anthropomorphic habits and tendencies which can mislead people at any time to dare plan, direct, design, and construct society in the name of the “society,” or in the name of “God.” But, why not simply let the spontaneous order accomplish itself by itself, for itself, and of itself? On that question, concludes Hayek, the survival of our civilization may rest.

Critique of Hayek’s Moral Philosophy

In many respects, Hayek’s defense of individual freedom in opposition to all forms of totalitarianism and collectivism deserves our appreciation. As he points out, “Collectivist must create power—power over men wielded by other men” and “their success will depend on the extent to which they achieve such power.”²⁰³ It is true for all ages and countries that “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Lord Acton). As a person who experienced the tyranny of military dictatorship in South Korea, I deeply appreciate Hayek’s uncompromising opposition to coercion, violence, and oppression of repressive governments. As Hayek points out:

Once you admit that the individual is merely a means to serve the ends of the higher entity called society or the nation, most of those features of totalitarian regimes which horrify us follow of necessity. From the collectivist standpoint intolerance and brutal suppression of dissent, the complete disregard of the life and happiness of the individual, are essential and unavoidable consequences of this basic premise.²⁰⁴

Referring to Reinhold Niebuhr who warned of the “increasing tendency among modern men to imagine themselves ethical because they have delegated their vices to larger and larger groups,” Hayek urges us to see that the desire of the individual to identify with a

²⁰³ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 159.

²⁰⁴ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 164.

group derives very frequently from the result of a feeling of inferiority and therefore his/her want will be satisfied only if membership in the group confers some superiority over outsiders.²⁰⁵ He speaks from his horrible experience of Hitler's Third Reich, yet his warning has universal implications. Nevertheless, Hayek's liberal philosophy is ultimately unsatisfying for the following reasons.

First, Hayek's individualism as supreme ideal is not satisfying, for, because of its extremity, it has resulted in what it opposes. If Francis Fukuyama is right that individualism is a belief in which people are evaluated based in their achievement rather than in terms of an inherited status,²⁰⁶ it does have liberating potential. Still, the problem is that Hayek's thoroughgoing individualism has arrived at a kind of "totalitarianism of the self" to the extent that it negates the necessity of social cohesion, bond, and solidarity. We have seen in history that individual liberty without social solidarity easily becomes the liberty of the strongest few and the serfdom for the weakest many.²⁰⁷

Second, Hayek's individualism as a theory of society is not satisfying either. For Hayek, individualism is the only method through which we can understand society, the only means to approach social phenomena. According to him, there is no other way toward an understanding of social phenomena but this approach.²⁰⁸ However, as Samir Amin points out, real society is not constituted as a sum of individuals but constructed

²⁰⁵ Hayek, *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

²⁰⁶ Francis Fukuyama, "Economic Globalization and Culture," (www.ml.com/woml/forum/global.htm).

²⁰⁷ We have seen this from the very beginning of the emergence of capitalist economy. Elois Leclerc describes what happened in Europe in the time of Francis of Assisi: "The ideal of liberty and of free association was what attracted to the cities so many poor people from the countryside, eager to escape from serfdom and the lords' arbitrary rule. But... [t]hese men and women soon perceived that they had merely exchanged masters... [I]n the communes the real master was money... Despite all the egalitarian oaths and the protestations of fraternity, wealth had soon created in the midst of the new society new lines of social cleavage. The commune was soon divided into two categories... the '*popolo grosso*' or the 'great ones'... and the '*popolo minuto*,' the vast throng of the 'little ones.'" (Elois Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel* [Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983], p. 32.)

²⁰⁸ Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, p. 6.

from distinct social classes and conflicting interest groups.²⁰⁹ As Marxist theory holds, I believe that human nature is neither exogenously given nor reduced to some unchanged natural constraints; it is socially shaped and therefore ever changing.²¹⁰ As Institutional theory also holds,²¹¹ I believe that the individual is first and foremost a social product, rather than an autonomous agent who participates in society so as to fulfill his/her pre-existing needs.²¹²

Thirdly, Hayek's claim of the market as spontaneous order of societal evolution is factually flawed. As Karl Polanyi reveals, it is a pure fiction to assume that the self-regulating capitalist market economy is somehow by nature essential, grew out of historical necessity, or even occurred anywhere in pure form;²¹³ instead, he shows that the road to the free market was opened and kept open by an enormous increase in continuous, centrally organized and controlled state interventionism.²¹⁴ That is, as John Gray also reveals:

The free market is not—as today's economic philosophy supposes—a natural state of affairs which comes about when political interference with market exchange has been removed. In any long and broad historical

²⁰⁹ Amin, "The Destructive Dimension of the Accumulation of Capital," presentation paper for the World Social Forum 2001. This is obviously a Marxist point of view. However, I concur with George DeMartino that, despite the current intellectual swing to the disadvantage of Marxism, Marxist critique still constitutes a very important challenge to neoliberalism. For Marx himself and Marxists, society—in particular, the class process—is the point of return and departure of social analysis, not the individual. (See DeMartino, *Global Economy, Global Justice*, p. 12) Thus, for them, economics is the study of class, which concerns who produces the social surplus, who claims it, and how this surplus is distributed throughout society. (Andriana Vlachous and Georgios K. Christou, "Contemporary Economic Theory: Some Critical Issues," in *Contemporary Economic Theory: Radical Critiques of Neoliberalism* [New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999], p. 42.)

²¹⁰ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 12.

²¹¹ Institutionalism was developed as a uniquely American variant of economics, particularly with the writings of Thorstein Veblen.

²¹² Vlachous and Christou, "Contemporary Economic Theory," p. 84.

²¹³ Quoted from Ulrich Duchrow, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism*, p. 59.

²¹⁴ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 35, 140. Originally, the "free market" was created by the landlords in England through the politically coerced arrangement of *enclosure* also known as "a revolution of the rich against the poor."

perspective the free market is a rare, short-lived aberration. Regulated markets are the norm, arising spontaneously in the life of every society. The free market is a construction of state power. The idea that free markets and minimum government go together... is an inversion of the truth. Since the natural tendency of society is to curb markets, free markets can only be created by the power of a centralized state. Free markets are creatures of strong government and cannot exist without them.²¹⁵

According to Gray, the historical reference point of all neoliberal policies is the mid-Victorian times of the 1840s to 1870s in England, characterized by the rupture in England's economic life produced by the creation of the free market.²¹⁶ His point is that the establishment of this free market in nineteenth-century England was only "an Anglo-Saxon singularity."²¹⁷ Hayek's grand theory of a slow evolution of free market is modeled from this *single* historical case. However, in subsequent history, it was not the emergence of the nineteenth-century free market but its *disappearance* that actually occurred as a slow historical evolution.²¹⁸ Joseph E. Stiglitz supports this view, indicating

²¹⁵ Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (New York: The New Press, 1998), p. 212.

²¹⁶ Gray, *Ibid.*, p. 8. Gray reveals how the free market in mid-Victorian England was engineered in exceptionally propitious circumstances. Unlike other European countries, England had long traditions of individualism. For centuries, yeoman farmers were the basis of its economy. But, only by Parliament using its power to amend or destroy old property rights and create new ones—through Enclosure Acts in which much of the country's common land was privatized—did an agrarian capitalism of large landed estates come into being. Laissez-faire came about in England through a conjunction of favourable historical circumstances with the unchecked power of a Parliament in which most English people were unrepresented. By the middle of the nineteenth century, through the Enclosures, the Poor Laws and the repeal of the Corn Law, labor and bread became commodities like any other—the free market had become the central institution in the economy. In other words, the removal of agricultural protection and the establishment of free trade, the reform of the Poor Laws with the aim of constraining the poor to take work, and the removal of any remaining controls on wages were the three decisive steps in the construction of the free market in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. Furthermore, in the mid-nineteenth century, free trade was adopted by Britain for several reasons, including the comparative advantage Britain still possessed in world markets as the first industrialized country. Thus, the power of laissez-faire ideas in Britain reflected that advantage. (See Gray, *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 15, 212.)

²¹⁷ Gray, *Ibid.*, p. 13. Gray says: "The free market was—and remains—an Anglo-Saxon singularity. It was constructed in a context not found in any other European society: it existed in full-blown form for only about a generation. It could never have been created at all if ownership and economic life had not long been thoroughly individualist in nineteenth-century England. It was an experiment in social engineering undertaken in exceptionally propitious circumstances."

²¹⁸ Gray, *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 17. This implies that in the absence of a strong state dedicated to a liberal economic program, markets will inevitably be encumbered by a myriad of constraints and regulations and these will arise *spontaneously*, in response to specific social problems, not as elements in any grand design.

that many government activities arise *because* markets have failed to provide essential services.²¹⁹ Hayek saw all monopolies or attempts to concentrate power as a threat to spontaneous order; however, as Wainwright points out, monopolies have “evolved” out of the capitalist market, and, in this sense, corporate monopolies or oligopolies can be understood as *spontaneous* developments of capitalist competition.²²⁰ Indeed, if everything is the consequence of societal evolution, there is no reason not to consider the emergence of even socialist planning economy as another step in the process of cultural evolution.²²¹ Thus, Gray concludes:

Encumbered markets are the norm in every society, whereas free markets are a product of artifice, design and political coercion. *Laissez-faire* must be centrally planned; regulated markets just happen. The free market is not, as New Right thinkers have imagined or claimed, a gift of social evolution. It is an end-product of social engineering and unyielding political will. It was feasible in nineteenth-century England only because, and for so long as, functioning democratic institutions were lacking.²²²

If Gray is right, Hayek’s political economy for a free market based on his social philosophy of cultural evolutionism collapses. If free market was a moment in history, not its endpoint, and was only one local way of organizing a market economy, then the whole neoliberal case to give free reign to market forces collapses too. Unfortunately, the problem of Hayek was that he was not simply a naturalistic social scientist but a

²¹⁹ Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, p.55.

²²⁰ Wainwright, *Argument for a New Left*, p. 54. As for Hayek, the decline of competition and the growth of monopoly were not the necessary product of the evolution of capitalism but were the product of the “scientific planning” and “conscious organization of industry” of the government. For this matter, Hayek put his fingers on the German socialist theoreticians, particularly Sombart, who generalized from the experience of their country and insisted the inevitable development of the competitive system into “monopoly capitalism.” (Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 52.) In fact, a monopoly that rests entirely on superior performance is wholly praiseworthy for Hayek. While all labor monopoly is due to the coercive suppression of competition, enterprise monopoly is the result of better performance according to him. (Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 83.)

²²¹ Walker, *The Ethics of F.A. Hayek*, p. 116.

²²² Gray, *False Dawn*, p. 17.

passionate agitator who prescribed one particular Anglo-Saxon experience as the model for all of humanity. We used to call this kind of work the “white men’s burden.”

Fourth, there is a fundamental inconsistency between Hayek’s point of departure as a liberal, whose supreme ideal is individual liberty, and his point of arrival as conservative, whose message is a radical conservatism that gives no room for individual liberty. Hayek strongly argued in his famous article, “Why I Am Not a Conservative” (the one that gave deep moral courage to Novak), that whereas “one of the fundamental traits of the conservative attitude is a fear of change, the liberal position is based on courage and confidence, on a preparedness to let change run its course even if we cannot predict where it will lead.”²²³ That is, for Hayek, true liberalism is not a politics of status quo but of change,²²⁴ and it is distinct from social conservatism.²²⁵ Thus, Novak believed that Hayek held that the free persons are self-governing, able to live by internalized rules (i.e., good habits), and for this reason, they need only a fair and open system of rules in order to act more creatively and productively than in any other form of society.²²⁶ However, he is not telling the whole story. For Hayek: “What has made men good is neither nature nor reason but tradition”;²²⁷ “a successful free society will always in a large measure be a tradition-bound society”;²²⁸ hence, “all progress must be based on

²²³ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 400.

²²⁴ Hayek, *Ibid.*, p. 399.

²²⁵ For instance, Hayek argues in his 1956 Preface to *The Road to Serfdom* that true liberalism is distinct from conservatism, saying: “A conservative movement, by its very nature, is bound to be a defender of established privilege and to lean on the power of government for the protection of privilege. The essence of liberal position, however, is the denial of all privilege.” (*The Road to Serfdom*, p. xxxvi.) Elsewhere, he also argues: The liberal and the conservative share only “a distrust of reason”; but, the liberal differs from the conservative by not claiming the authority of supernatural sources of knowledge and by not confusing the spiritual and the temporal spheres. (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 406-407.)

²²⁶ Novak, “Solidarity in a Time of Globalization,” in *Three In One*, p.126.

²²⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 160.

²²⁸ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 61.

tradition.”²²⁹ Hayek did not hold that free persons are self-governing, able to live by internalized rules, but that human individuality is the result of cultural inheritance, the fruit of tradition. For that reason, it cannot stand in opposition to tradition’s claims.²³⁰ This means that, as Gray points out, Hayek’s moral philosophy embodies conflicting commitments to “liberal individualism” and “cultural traditionalism”; that is, Hayek seeks to combine classical liberalism, in which the individual is sovereign and conceived as the bearer of weighty moral claims against society, and traditional conservatism, for which human individuality is itself a cultural and social achievement.²³¹ This is indeed the innermost contradiction in Hayek’s entire system of thought.²³² As a consequence, human beings in Hayek’s philosophy are reduced to rule-following animals whose purposeless rule-following becomes a mark of rationality rather than an inherent blemish.²³³ Because of this underlying tone of human passivity, Hayek’s entire moral philosophy, despite its boisterous advocacy for a radical liberal Utopia, sounds deeply nihilistic.²³⁴ In short, despite his basic claim of the dignity and freedom of the individual,²³⁵ Hayek arrived at a “scientific” defence of tradition against rational reform, at “adaptive, group-survival-centered ethics.” As Graham Walker points out:

It is ironic that, for all Hayek’s concern for the freedom and status of the individual, the ultimate referent in his ethics is not that autonomous, free individual; rather, it is the “abstract” social order which is the functional purpose of “end” of the evolved rules of conduct. In thus moving the ground of ethics from the level of the individual to that of the group, Hayek’s approach is parallel to that of the collectivist thinkers who are his sworn ideological enemies... Hayek has in this respect moved very far

²²⁹ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 167.

²³⁰ Gray, *False Dawn*, p. 130.

²³¹ Gray, *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²³² Gray, *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²³³ Gray, *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²³⁴ Gray, *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²³⁵ Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 195.

from longstanding emphases in the western conception of individual liberty, which placed the accent on the free moral conscience of the individual and resisted all attempts to construe the requirements of the group as being of primary importance.²³⁶

Fifth and finally, because of his thoroughgoing societal/cultural evolutionism, Hayek's social philosophy fundamentally implies a highly conservative politics of the status quo. As we have seen, the primary way that Hayek argues against rationalist constructivism and social justice is to insist the "suchness" of societal order and the "sacredness" of such evolved spontaneous order. In Hayek's moral philosophy, an evolutionary ethical theory has strong tendency to identify the good with what already is or what already prevails. For Hayek, evolution counts what is present as natural; therefore, applied to society, it counts what is present as the best. But who will like this account of social theory? As Wainwright points out, only "mature wise male members of the human race protected from the vulgar pressures of the people" will embrace such trends of evolution.²³⁷ Indeed, it is no coincidence that Hayek's moral philosophy became the intellectual and political hard core of the "New Right" and found its practical embodiment in the free market conservatism today.

Conclusion: Hayek's Challenge to Theology

Hayek's challenge, however, goes beyond the scope of political economy. His moral philosophy has many implications to theology as well. In my view, there is, at the heart of Hayek's moral philosophy, a profound crisis of the deeper meaning of life which

²³⁶ Walker, *The Ethics of F.A. Hayek*, p. 45.

²³⁷ Wainwright. *Argument for a New Left*, 56.

ultimately revolves around three concepts, or “the metaphysical trinity” of God, humanity, and the world.²³⁸

Hayek is not an easy “enemy,” for his moral philosophy of a radical social inequality and a sophisticated market fatalism is based on a “humble” and very persuasive claim of the limits of human reason and knowledge. But what makes us ultimately to disagree with him is that such philosophy is built upon a thoroughgoing naturalistic and evolutionary epistemology that outlaws any notion of the “beyond,” the “ultimate,” or the transcendental. We cannot agree with him theologically. In Hayek’s spontaneous order, “life has no purpose but itself”; its purpose is to be “flourishing, abundant, diverse, and joyous.”²³⁹ What is ultimate for Hayek is the survival and highest material standard of living for human species; therefore, what is essential to his moral philosophy is how to create “rules” that can allow for continued material progress, and how to “preserve” and “restore” the spontaneous order which has a life of its own.²⁴⁰ Since “spontaneous order” is not designed, commanded, or created by anybody, neither human nor divine, there is no need to appeal to a God outside the spontaneous order, who gives meaning and purpose from beyond. Although Hayek believed that his antirationalist constructivism is compatible with the Christian doctrine of sin,²⁴¹ he did not apply the idea of “fallibility” or “sinfulness” to his societal/cultural evolutionism. Hayek envisioned an open-ended society where it is no longer necessary for people to strive for a unitary purpose,²⁴² yet, this society is actually a closed society in which the chances of

²³⁸ N. Max Wildiers, *The Theologian and His Universe: Theology and Cosmology from the Middle Ages to the Present* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p. 1.

²³⁹ Ebenstein, *Friedrich Hayek*, p. 132.

²⁴⁰ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 39.

²⁴¹ Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 61, 407.

²⁴² Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, p. 20.

questioning and renewing the whole system are ruled out by the principle of “immanent criticism.” According to Hayek:

Since any established system of rules of conduct will be based on experiences which we only partly know, and will serve an order of action in a manner which we only partly understand, we cannot hope to improve it by reconstructing anew the whole of it. If we are to make full use of all the experience which has been transmitted only in the form of traditional rule, all criticism and efforts at improvement of particular rules must proceed within a framework of given values... We shall call “immanent criticism” this sort of criticism that moves within a given system of rules.²⁴³

Hayek’s social conservatism and cultural traditionalism are safeguarded by this rule of immanent criticism which is closed to any transcendental viewpoints. In this immanent criticism, a culture or a society can only be critically examined within the boundary of that culture or that society, and we are only allowed to amend parts of a given whole but never entirely redesign it, redirect it, or reconstruct it.²⁴⁴

However, as Wilhelm Roepke points out, the fundamental error of all liberal immanentism is the presupposition that market and competition generate their own moral prerequisites autonomously.²⁴⁵ To tell the truth, Hayek did not realize that the market is in fact a highly anti-traditional force that destroys the very virtues and morals on which it depends in the long run; in other words, it is the very power of the market itself that undermines traditions. Hayek believed that socialism, liberationism, and welfare-statism are the chief threats to traditions. However, as Jonathan Sacks pinpoints, Hayek did not

²⁴³ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 24. Emphases added.

²⁴⁴ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: The Political Order of a Free People*, p. 25.

²⁴⁵ Quoted from Walker, *The Ethics of F.A. Hayek*, pp. 73f.

realize that the market is the enemy of itself.²⁴⁶ Indeed, Hayek envisioned a historical process by which the self-evolving market order spontaneously and simultaneously generates the moral rules on which it depends. In other words, Hayek has approached the realm of ethics within the context of spontaneous order, and thereby understood morals as the outcome of the process of evolution whose results nobody foresaw or designed.²⁴⁷ However, the problem of this kind of morals in liberal immanentism is that there is no such thing as normative or oughtness, i.e., there is no “ethics beyond morals.”²⁴⁸ As a result of this lack of normative standards, Hayek’s moral philosophy, in my view, is full of “moral emptiness.” In Hayek, we are led to think that everything is so natural that we do not have to worry what to do. Indeed, what is genuinely lacking in Hayek’s worldview is the explanatory and interpretive power of transcendence,²⁴⁹ the transcendent principle of renewal and hope,²⁵⁰ or the very God who presents the “heavenly” for us. In the final analysis, therefore, Hayek’s world of spontaneous order can be defined as a world of self-

²⁴⁶ Jonathan Sacks, *Morals and Markets*, pp. 12, 24. In a similar vein, D. Stephen Long asserts that the market system is threatened because the culture is thoroughly capitalist (whereas for Novak the market system is threatened because the culture is insufficiently capitalist.) (Long, *Divine Economy*, p. 17.) Gray also reveals that unfettered markets can weaken social cohesion, subvert traditions, and become new tyranny. (Gray, *False Dawn*, p. 147.)

²⁴⁷ Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty: Rules and Order*, p. 37.

²⁴⁸ Leonardo Boff assures that whereas morality has to do with customs or the knowledge of customs, which are always circumscribed by the habit, values, and choices within a specific culture and groups that form within it, and by their specific interests, conflicts, and historical privileges, ethics must go beyond morals to express appropriate behavior and the right way for human beings to relate to one another by respecting the specific and intrinsic dynamics, the essential thrust in the nature of all things. (Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, p. 29.) In a similar vein, Robert McAfee Brown assures that what counts is not “what it descriptively is” but “what it ideally ought to be”—and the ideal ought to be not “liberty and justice for some” but “liberty and justice for all.” (Brown, *Liberation Theology*, p. x.)

²⁴⁹ Walker, *The Ethics of F.A. Hayek*, pp. 32, 35. Naturalism, according to Walker, began to be introduced into western consciousness in the Cartesian rationalism of Hobbes, in the decidedly materialistic assertions of Spinoza, and in the Enlightenment doctrines of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Hume. It was nurtured by Joseph Priestly and Auguste Comte, and ushered triumphantly into the modern age within the naturalistic evolutionism of Darwin, Spencer, and others.

²⁵⁰ Langdon Gilkey, “Events, Meanings and the Current Task of Theology,” in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LIII/3, Vol. 53 (December 1985), p. 720.

enclosed secularism characterized by “the loss of the sense of the Holy and the loss of the sense of the Transcendent.”²⁵¹

It should be clear to readers by now that the essence of Hayek’s moral philosophy can be identified with what Reinhold Niebuhr vehemently criticized as the “naturalistic utopianism” which regards the world as self-explanatory because every event can be derived from a previous one.²⁵² In fact, Niebuhr was aware of the influence of Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), and in his book review, Niebuhr criticized Hayek’s analysis as inadequate, because it deals with only one of two contrasting modern perils, namely, only the perils of political power (collectivism) without even the slightest regard for the perils of inordinate economic power (the centralization of power in economic society).²⁵³ This is a valid point, indeed. Yet, Niebuhr did not realize that the fundamental nature of Hayek’s moral philosophy opposes the very heart of Niebuhr’s quest for “the transcendent sources of meaning in the flux of the temporal and phenomenal reality.”²⁵⁴

In light of Hayek’s naturalistic utopianism which regards the world as self-explanatory, the chief challenge to theology today is again whether theology can be the powerful witness and discourse of what Tillich called the “Protestant principle,” i.e., the belief that nothing immanent can fully possess, represent, or be identified exhaustively with the transcendent reality of God. God’s immanence has been the subject of theological conversation for more than thirty years; but now I would reclaim that the chief theological task for us today is once again the right place of divine transcendence as

²⁵¹ Aloysius Pieris, *Fire & Water*, pp. 52-53.

²⁵² Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 7.

²⁵³ Niebuhr, “Book Review: Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*,” in *A Reinhold Niebuhr Reader*, ed., Charles C. Brown (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), pp. 141-142.

²⁵⁴ Niebuhr, “Faith as the Sense of Meaning in Human Existence,” in *Faith and Politics: A Commentary on Religious, Social and Political Thought in a Technological Age*, ed., Ronald H. Stone (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. 12.

the source and power to critique the belief that history redeems by itself, that the market redeems by itself. This is so, for the challenge today does not come solely from Cartesian dualism or Newtonian mechanism but also, and chiefly, from anti-Cartesian, anti-Newtonian liberal evolutionism--what Hayek calls "true individualism." Hayek is evidence that an evolutionary epistemology that denies or belittles any transcendental viewpoint is not the cure for Christianity's chronic disease of dualistic thinking. Hayek is evidence that an evolutionary epistemology without a transcendental point of view can easily fall into the trap of naturalistic utopianism. Indeed, Hayek challenges us to seriously rethink the meaning of divine transcendence. Hayek challenges us to deeply rethink how we can reclaim God's transcendence in a way that does not negate the physical world, in a way that a transcendental God is neither understood as the "wholly other" nor as the "ultimate ground of being" but as the "intimate ground of being"²⁵⁵ that sustains, enlivens, and redeems the whole creation *and* as the "heavenly" possibilities that shake the foundations of the earth, that shakes the belief in the necessity of our imperfect order. Divine indwelling is necessary but not sufficient. The God-with-us is the God-beyond-us, the God beyond the "prison wall" of our historical fatalism, naturalistic utopianism, and existential nihilism.

Is resistance still possible? Is there still room for humanity to resist the "dominion" of market forces? Is there God in "heaven" other than natural state of affairs on earth? This is the question posed by economic neoliberalism today. Hayek taught that resistance is futile, because the mechanisms of the free market are "natural," the power of constructive human reason is limited, and there is no God transcendent over what that

²⁵⁵ Karen Baker-Fletcher, *My Sister, My Brother: Womanist and Xodus God-talk* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1997), p. 84.

simply “is.” What can we say about that? What would the theologians in the three camp say?

CONCLUSION

Toward a Strategic Theological Transcendentalism

For all times and places, every generation breeds illusion. For many modern generations, it was the illusion of science, reason, and infinite human progress that captured the heart of people. Theologians rose from time to time to offer a check against the naivete of such illusion. What is the illusion of our times? What is it that our generation takes for granted? One of the great illusions of our times is that the market is an infallible, irresistible, and all-mighty soteriological principle for all of humanity, regardless of their history, culture, skin color, gender, and so on. Deservedly, this market fundamentalist belief raises the eyebrows of sane critics of political economy—Keynesians, Institutionalists, and Marxists alike. That belief, however, also irritates the nerves of theologians, as it is based upon a naturalistic philosophy that sees the world as self-fulfilling, regards history as self-generating in negation of the “beyond” or the ultimate, which makes the novel the source of transcendental, purposeful meaning. Making the market a quasi-idol and the soteriological principle for all, economic neoliberalism has become one of the great illusions of our times, and one of the least examined assumptions of our generation.

Theologically speaking, the people of this generation are possessed by the evil spirit of “TINA” (There Is No Alternative). We play the flute and wail in the marketplace but they do not dance and weep anymore (Luke 7:31-32), because they are terrified by “intellectual terrorism”¹ of the inevitability and irresistibility of the “dominion” of the market as self-generating, self-fulfilling, and self-redeeming. As I witnessed and

¹ Maude Barlow, “Globalization and the Dismantling of Canadian Democracy, Values, and Society,” quoted from David C. Korten, *The Post-Corporate World*, p. 241.

experienced in the Asian financial crisis that drove so many people to the last option of suicide, sometime familial suicide, it is this sense of profound pessimism, this nameless fear and powerlessness, that possesses the heart of this generation. The heart of the “socialist crisis” is nothing but this cultural, rather than politico-economical, meaning of our existence and purpose. Is change possible? Are we fated to remain just as we are? Is society a fixed creation of God or nature? Is “another world” possible? Is there God in “heaven”? The people of this generation weep in their heart asking these questions. In a world colonized, terrified, and debilitated by the market, our theological task is to take an axe to the root of the evil spirit that denies that “another world” is possible.

This awareness invites us to reconsider and reclaim the theological significance of divine transcendence as the source, power, critique, and principle of alternative hope for our generation. Our generation needs a kind of “Barthian” reaction to the naturalistic market utopianism, although by “Barthian” we no longer mean a dichotomy between God and the world. Following process-ecological theologians, I believe in an ontological interdependence, not independence, between God and the world. Indeed, the whole universe is “bodied” from the “womb” of God,² and therefore we are not only spiritually but also physically connected with God. However, as I confessed in the Preface, I have experienced the God-with-us, this God-within-me, as the God-beyond-us, the God transcendent in our historical preconditions and predicaments, introducing the novelty in history, “alluring” us to the “heavenly” possibilities, revealing her/himself as the pillar of fire and cloud ahead of us. I do not see any dichotomy between the God-with-us and the God-beyond-us. If God is not with us, we cannot know the God beyond us; if God is not beyond us, we do not know the profound meaning of why God is with us. God is revealed

² McFague, “Mother God,” in *The Power of Naming*, p. 328.

because s/he is beyond, in our midst; God is revealed because s/he is with us, as our beyond. In the milieu where the “heaven,” “another world,” or “other reality” is contemptuously denied by the hegemonic liberal immanentism, I am claiming a strategic transcendentalism, if you will, to check the stubborn belief in the self-fulfillment of human, particularly Western civilization, to shake the foundation of the sense of innocence of the American Empire that divides the world between “with us” and “the axis of evil” in order to reshape the world in its own image. Nowhere else needs a “Barthian” reaction more than America; no other time needs a “Barthian” break more than our times, defined by a naturalistic market utopianism. I do not see a strategic theological transcendentalism as being incongruent with a strategic essentialism of the feminine principle, for example. As Vandana Shiva shows us, the survival of Chipko women is based on the assumption of the sanctity of life, and “the recovery of the feminine principle [of *shakti*] would allow a *transcendence* of the patriarchal foundation of maldevelopment.”³ A strategic essentialism of the feminine principle is a way to relativize (transcend) capitalist patriarchy, not to perpetuate the dualities of male/female by taking one side; a strategic theological transcendentalism is another way alternative. The femaleness, blackness, Asianness, and all cultural self-affirmation of “the wretched of the earth” is the source of our transcendence; the “beyond,” the “heaven,” and “another world” is what sustains our “ness,” what makes our “ness” as the power beyond the power that makes our “ness” trivial. My God is deeply “within me” and profoundly “out there.” My God was crushed with the body of the paralyzed mother but was always there beyond the prison wall as the pillar of fire and cloud.

³ Shiva, “Development and Western Patriarchy,” in *Reweaving the World*, p. 200. My emphasis.

In the mist of our “daily,” in the midst of our “ordinary” experiences of oppression, depression, suffering, and struggle, we think of the unthinkable, we talk about the unspeakable, and we dream of the unrealizable, foretasting in faith the “beyond” in our midst, the sacred in our mundane, and the “another world” amidst our tragedy. The Bible is nothing but the story and stories of the relationship between these two worlds—the world of our ordinary experiences and the world of “another reality.” As Marcus J. Borg reveals, central to biblical tradition is the “primordial tradition” in which people had vivid experiences of “another world,” or the world of “spirit,” which is not visible and yet actual, “more real” than the visible, and profoundly connected to the visible as its source, power, and critique.⁴ As Borg further explains, Jesus was the “Spirit person” for whom the sacred, the “another world,” and the “heaven” was a firsthand experience rather than a secondhand belief; central, therefore, to Jesus’ gospel of the “kingdom of God” was this “other reality” immediately available as the source, ground, power, and critique of “this world.”⁵ Jesus said “another world” is possible, it is already “at hand” (Mark 1:15b) and already “among you” (Luke 17:21b). Christian faith is about nothing but this “kingdom of heaven”; Christian theology is nothing but an articulate illustration and challenge posed to the world of the power of such “kingdom,” presented to a self-enclosed world that refuses to open itself to the divine, “heavenly” possibilities. Among modern theologians, Reinhold Niebuhr and Aloysius Pieris have wrestled hard to capture the mystery of this faith.

⁴ Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1994), p. 128.

⁵ Borg, *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Faith, according to Niebuhr, looks to an ultimate order beyond the incoherencies and incongruities.⁶ Despite the discredit it suffers, this religious faith is permanently valid, because it trusts that the incoherencies of nature and history are finally overcome in a transcendent order.⁷ Thus, we religious people and theologians, speak many “little lies” however in the interest of the “great truth” that life and history have meaning, and that the source and the fulfillment of that meaning lie beyond history.⁸ On the contrary, the “great lie” spoken in the interest of many “little truths” is that our spatio-temporal realities are self-contained and self-explanatory.⁹ However, religious faith is the acceptance of the “momentous possibility”;¹⁰ we speak in faith the symbols, metaphors, and myths that point to the transcendent sources of meaning and purpose of life.¹¹ Indeed, “The human story is too grand and awful to be told without reverence for the mystery and the majesty that transcend all human knowledge.”¹²

From this perspective of Niebuhr, Hayek was too rational to accept the mystery of life. Hayek was too monistic to realize that all life suggests not only sources but possibilities beyond itself.¹³ Unlike Niebuhr, Hayek could not see that “a profound insight into any process or reality yields a glimpse of the reality which is beyond it.”¹⁴ He was too sane to realize that this reality beyond itself can only be revealed and expressed in mythical terms, and that the reality not only transcends our immediate experience, but also finally transcends the rational forms and categories by which we seek to apprehend

⁶ Niebuhr, “Faith as the Sense of Meaning in Human Existence,” in *Faith and Politics*, 8.

⁷ Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

⁸ Niebuhr, “The Truth in Myths,” in *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁹ Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Niebuhr, “Faith as the Sense of Meaning in Human Existence,” p. 12.

¹¹ Niebuhr, “The Truth in Myths,” p. 19.

¹² Niebuhr, “Faith as the Sense of Meaning in Human Existence,” p. 13.

¹³ Niebuhr, “The Truth in Myths,” p. 19.

¹⁴ Niebuhr, *Ibid.*, p. 31.

and describe it.¹⁵ Indeed, there is “a penumbra of mystery” around us, even if the streams of historical or natural events are analyzed with empirical rigor.¹⁶ From Niebuhr’s perspective, Hayek’s naturalistic philosophy is then “a unified account of the world without metaphysical presuppositions.”¹⁷ Intriguingly, as Niebuhr succinctly points out, modern naturalism is an even more uncritical rationalism than philosophical idealism, whose fruits are either despair in a meaningless world (thus Hayek’s nihilistic undertone) or sentimentality in a world too simply meaningful (Hayek’s radical utopianism).¹⁸ In other words, the particular weakness of naturalism is its unconscious ascription of transcendence to the processes of nature and therefore to an introduction of ethical meaning into the process.¹⁹ We have already seen this problem in Hayek’s liberal immanentism. In short, in its disavowal of the eternal ground of history, in its imagining that the course of temporal events is self-explanatory and self-containing, naturalism, concludes Niebuhr, hopes for, curiously and inconsistently, the appearance of an unconditioned good in history.²⁰ Therefore, Niebuhr proclaims that Christianity must speak both a “yes” and a “no” to all modern naturalistic philosophies: It affirms them insofar as they insist on the meaningfulness of historical existence; it refutes them insofar as they believe that the temporal process explains and fulfils itself.²¹ Niebuhr presents the “kingdom of God” as the proper symbol of the end of history against all naturalistic utopianism.²² This “eschatological” understanding of the “kingdom,” in my view, is basically consistent with Borg’s presentation of Jesus’ “kingdom” as the source, ground,

¹⁵ Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Niebuhr, “Faith as the Sense of Meaning in Human Existence,” p. 6.

¹⁷ Niebuhr, “The Truth in Myths,” p. 21.

¹⁸ Niebuhr, *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹ Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

²⁰ Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 191.

²¹ Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy*, p. ix.

²² Niebuhr, *Ibid.*, p. 191.

power, and critique of “this world.” Among modern Western theologians, Niebuhr appears to be most relevant to our further theological inquiry into divine transcendence.

Among Asian theologians, Aloysius Pieris deserves similar attention. It is Pieris who advocated persistently the need for liberation from secularism, or secularist ideology, defined as a worldview “without an absolute future or metacosmic horizon.”²³ Having devoted his entire life and theological reflection to struggle against “Western capitalistic technocracy” that has brought about “the loss of the sense of the Holy and the loss of the sense of the Transcendent,” Pieris has urged us to perceive liberation not simply as emancipation from material poverty but as a “cosmic-human-metacosmic continuum.”²⁴ According to Pieris, the “cosmic” refers to “the womanly, the earthly, and the bodily,” which is identical with the “popular religiousness/religiosity” and is the seed of “the flexibility essential for social change”; the “metacosmic,” equivalent to the so-called great religions which posit the “existence” of an immanently transcendental horizon, refers to the “hidden future of the present moment,” the “beyond” which acts as the “within” of the cosmos.²⁵ (For Pieris, the “cosmic” is not the negation to the “metacosmic” but the context in which the “metacosmic” can be realized.) Then, the “human” is “the conscious link between the cosmos and the metacosmic,” or “the openness of the cosmos to the metacosmic,” who has the capacity to carry the cosmos to its ultimate perfection, called “humanum.”²⁶ In other words, the “human” is the “self-

²³ Pieris, “The Feminist Critique and the New Religious Vision,” in *Fire & Water*, p. 59. What Pieris opposes is not secularity per se but secularism or the secularist ideology advanced by Western capitalistic techniculture. (See Pieris, “Some Christian Reflexions on Buddhism & Secularization in Ceylon” (1972); “The Cosmic in Feminism” (1992), in *Fire & Water*, p. 15f.)

²⁴ Pieris, *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁵ See Pieris, “The Feminist Critique and the New Religious Vision” (1992); “The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology” (1981); and “Does Christ Have a Place in Asia?” (1993), etc.

²⁶ Pieris, “The Feminist Critique and the New Religious Vision,” in *Fire & Water*, p. 52.

transcendent capacity immanent in the cosmos,” or “the power to unfold within itself *the Other*,” which is ever present from the first moment of cosmic evolution.²⁷ From this cosmological and anthropological perspective, Pieris affirms that human liberation must be understood as “liberation from secularism,” from “the world without an absolute future of a metacosmic horizon,” in which the self is isolated as an independent knowing subject and the cosmos is reduced to a mechanical knowable object, and all beings are diminished to the state of things at the service of the human self seeking to gain access to mammon.²⁸ For Pieris, the experience of the metacosmic (the transcendental) is not “a liberation from the cosmic” but “a liberation from secularism.”²⁹ Religion, for Pieris, is the “memory of an Absolute Future” or a “memory of a Total Liberation.”³⁰ Pieris’ “theology of religions,” which has risen in the context of the invasion of the global market forces to the “Land of Righteousness” (Sri Lanka) since the 1970s,³¹ is not only a “cultural” correction to the former Latin American liberation theology that relied too much upon a rigid Marxist class analysis,³² but also offers great theological potential to check against naturalistic utopianism today.

²⁷ Pieris, *Ibid.*, 60f. This understanding of the human is consistent with that of Ruether. Ruether presents the universe as “God’s sacramental body” and the humanity as the self-conscious “thinking dimension” or the “mind” of this universe, who “intercommunes with the whole cosmic body.” (See Ruether, “Eco-Justice at the Center of the Church’s Mission,” in *Christianity and Ecology*, p. 610; *Gaia & God*, *passim*.)

²⁸ Pieris, *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁹ Pieris, *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁰ Pieris, “Faith Communities and Communalism” (1989) in *Fire & Water*, p. 100.

³¹ Adopting Open Economy policy in 1977, Sri Lanka became one of first Asian countries that opened its gate to the forces of current economic globalization that has begun since the collapse of the post-War Bretton Woods system in 1971. Since the Open policy, states Pieris, “everything started becoming a marketable commodity” and “the erosion of Asian religious values began to alarm.” (Pieris, “Dialogue and Distrust Between Buddhists and Christians” (1995), p. 115.)

³² At the EATWOT sponsored Asian Theological Conference (ATC) in 1979, in New Delhi, Pieris criticized Latin American liberation theology’s “methodological continuity with Western Marxism and a cultural continuity with European theology.” Instead, Pieris affirmed the “coalescence of religiosity and poverty” as the Asian context to “forge a common front against mammon,” against “secularism” advanced by “Western capitalistic technocracy.” See Pieris, “Toward an Asian Theology of Liberation” (1979); “Some Christian Reflexions on Buddhism & Secularization in Ceylon” (1972); and “The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology” (1981), etc.)

Only we human beings breed illusion and we become captive to our own created illusion. Only we human beings build our own prison—the prison of thought, habits, and stubborn disbelief in the new heavens and earths. We must be liberated from our own bondage, and God is the power of our liberation. God is our transcendental principle of hope upon which we become free to live toward the “heavenly” possibilities. When neoliberalism rules the world, preaching the false “gospel” of the self-redemption of all-knowing, all-mighty market forces, we are all “dead” like the dry bones in the middle of a valley, surrounded by our bottomless fear, deep sense of powerlessness, and cynicism about our future. Today, in this situation, the task of theology is to “prophesy to the breath” that will “come from the four winds” so that the dry bones in the middle of a valley may live again and stand on their own feet (Ezekiel 37:1-14). Today, our God-talk must be a joyful invocation of such a subversive Spirit who enlivens, energizes, and transforms the dead into life, who “lures” the unrealized possibilities. This research project is nothing but a call for an earnest invocation of such Breath, a passionate psalm to “awake the dawn” (Psalm 108:2) in the middle of the night, in the middle of a valley. We must play the flute and wail in today’s marketplace so that the people of this generation can dance and weep again, knowing that change is possible, “another world” is at hand, already among us. Let the people, our generation, see God’s powerful epiphany standing beyond the white and tall prison wall of our historical cynicism, market fundamentalism, and naturalistic utopianism.

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Precis

This research is about three theological camps in the late twentieth-century that have attempted to relate theology with political economy. The author analyzes Latin American liberation theology, North American neoconservative theology, and ecological/ecofeminist theologies, tracing the theological doctrines, concepts, and notions that have been developed, discussed, and debated in relation to their politico-economic options for socialism (liberation theology), capitalism (neoconservative theology), and ecological economics (ecological/ecofeminist theologies). Then, the author also attempts to disclose the epistemological, philosophical, and “theological” foundation of economic neoliberalism, which is the defining paradigm for contemporary global capitalist economy, through a close analysis of the moral philosophy of F.A. Hayek, the winner of the 1974 Nobel Prize in Economics, popularly known as the “founding father” of neoliberalism. The author reveals how Hayek’s cosmology of the market is built on a “humble” and very persuasive claim about the limits of human reason and knowledge, and also on a thoroughgoing naturalistic utopianism and societal/cultural evolutionism in negation of the “beyond,” the ultimate, and the transcendental. In light of this challenge from contemporary political economy, the author suggests a way to reconsider the theological significance of divine transcendence, claiming a “strategic theological transcendentalism” as a new paradigm for theological response in our times.

Author's Vitae

Yoon-Jae Chang holds a doctoral degree in Systematic Theology from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. He was born and raised in Seoul, Korea. He has served as the Presidium of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), as the Executive Secretary of the National Council of Church in Korea (NCCCK) for the North-South Korean peace and reunification initiative, and as a pastor of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Dr. Yoon-Jae Chang holds a B.A. degree in history from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea; a Master of Divinity and a Master of Philosophy degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York City. He is the translator of Donald W. Shriver's *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (Oxford University Press), published in Korean by Ewha Womans University Press. He is married and has two sons.