

Introduction

This book will advance a threefold project in order to articulate a public theology for postcolonial people: Christian confession, the relationship between science and religion, and comparative religious study. In an attempt to integrate a postcolonial perspective with public theology, I undertake a hermeneutical-constructive endeavor to articulate public, religious, and cultural issues ensuing in the aftermath of colonialism. Colonialism marks the historical process for the West to systematically exclude the cultural uniqueness and value of the non-West. The aftermath of colonialism generates cultural hybridity grounded in the double relation between the colonial past and the postcolonial present. In the age of global capitalism, the public sphere is embedded with nationalism, social movement of global civil society, and the neocolonial reality of domination.

Public theology is a theological-philosophical endeavor to provide a broader frame of reference to facilitate the responsibility of the church and theological ethics for social, political, economic, and cultural issues. It investigates public issues, developing conceptual clarity and providing social-ethical guidance of religious conviction and response for them. The biblical notion of *oikonomia*, which implies the whole inhabited world, propels Christian theology to articulate its public dimension and ethical responsibility as it participates in social discourse of the political, economic structure of the world.

Seen in light of God's Future, a biblical notion of God's *oikonomia* helps us to renew a modernist reduction of religion, ethics, and moral values into the private, personal, and subjective sphere of life and to renew a public theology in terms of a social holistic view on politics, economics, and culture. Having said this, public theology is required to enforce a reformulation of forms of knowledge and social structure authorized by colonialism, because colonial legacies remain unquestioned until recently.

Public Theology in Postcolonial Reorientation

Public theology needs to incorporate a postcolonial critique and Christian eschatology of God's Future, combined with social sciences and natural scientific findings, in an ecumenical, global, interreligious, and pluralistic context.¹ Furthermore, public theology is conceptualized in terms of the correlation between Christian theology and philosophical reflection. Seen in the correlational revisionist frame of reference, eschatological theology of hope or prolepsis can be incorporated into a public theology that advocates critical social theory in the fashion of Jürgen Habermas in commitment to the struggle for social justice and agapeic love.²

For this task, David Tracy draws upon our anticipation of God's future kingdom of justice for our commitment to justice in the present. In the prophetic and apocalyptic hope, we commit ourselves to the reality of God's reign for the struggle for justice now. The radical self-sacrificial love is disclosed in the cross of the Crucified One, who expresses the gospel as agapeic gift, commanding us to live in radical equality with every human being.³

Public theology in this regard integrates scientific empirical data, critical social analyses of colonialist modernity, and ethical responsibility in protest to the colonization of lifeworld. The *postcolonial* continues to exist as an aftermath infiltrated into the life of the world, generated by the previous dominion of colonialism.

Such an integrative perspective is hermeneutically informed and practically driven in the reinterpretation of Christian symbols through a creative alliance between critical social theory and philosophical hermeneutics. It also seeks to make the arguments in society, the academy, and the church relevant to all rational people. Public theology is best conceptualized as a mutually critical correlation and dialogue that brings the interpretation and praxis of the Christian faith into conversation with the interpretation and praxis of the contemporary cultural situation and with non-theological disciplines.

Given this, public theology is characterized as fundamental, systematic, hermeneutical, and practical, taking seriously the language of analogical imagination. Interpretation, envisioned in the process of an ever new and ongoing process, allows the present horizon of the reader to be vexed, provoked, and challenged by the claim of the text, generating a surplus of

1. Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy*, 1–15.

2. Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 245.

3. Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*, 434–35.

meaning.⁴ Interpretation mediates past with present and translates what is performed within the effective history of a tradition in order to retrieve meaning through a fusion of horizons. This perspective also facilitates critical distance from the ideologically distorted system of language or colonialist discourse and also from excessively privileged modernist reason. At the heart of an analogical imagination is our participatory act in the ongoing meaning event and self-distancing from the limitations of tradition and history through the self-constituting claim of critical reflection in a post-colonial direction. It also provides the profound similarities-in-difference in all reality of public discourses imbued with history, society, and culture. This repudiates the modernist notion of metanarrative, by resisting all homogenization of the difference of the colonized Other into binary opposites.

I find it helpful to advance a linguistic notion of analogical imagination based on the similarity-in-difference by which to articulate a post-colonial notion of hermeneutics with more emphasis on the difference or dissimilarity in terms of analectical method and social discourse. I coin the term “analectical” by replacing logos with dialectics for integration between analogy and social discourse, such that I cut through scholastic and hierarchical notions of analogy, with attention to social location and dissimilarity of language and discourse in the life of those on the margins, through whose face God continues to address.

Analectical Method, Eschatology, and Postcolonial Epistemology

Analectical method begins with the social discourse of the Other, discovering the analogical character of the Other. Theologically, *dabar* in a Hebrew manner qualifies the analogy to take an attitude of trust toward the Other. Emmanuel Levinas’s distinction of the said from the saying is helpful for us to conceptualize God’s saying through the world and in the otherness of the Other.⁵ This strengthens postcolonial epistemology in repudiation of the post-Enlightenment metanarrative through the fashion of God’s Infinite Saying through the face of the Other and the innocent victims in the natural and historical world. This characterizes analectical method in public ethical orientation toward God’s act of speech in the life of those subalternized.

Furthermore, *dabar* means a speaking event in self-revelation (or self-showing) in relation to the God of promise, transcendence, hope, and future. God in the biblical context is defined in terms of the promise of the

4. Ibid., 105.

5. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 6, 46–47.

eschatological kingdom of God, because God is a word of promise, hope, and indwelling with people on the promised new creation, a new Heaven and a new Earth (Rev 21:3; Isa 65:17–19).

Creation, seen in light of *dabar*, implies goodness and emancipation, which reflects the historical experience of Israel from the Babylonian captivity (Gen 1:1—2:4), in which the biblical narrative of creation in the Elohist fashion shows itself as emancipation from the Babylonian mythical power structure.⁶ As an articulation of ontological dependence of the world upon God, *creatio ex nihilo* is historically mediated toward God's act of emancipation through the resurrection of Jesus, whose coming future inspires and awakens us to challenge the reality of powers and principalities in the present neocolonial reality.

The creation in the biblical context reflects an imperative toward respect for the integrity of life, regard for the enemy, and emancipation from sin (forgiveness of sin). It grounds our commitment to enhance life in distributive and restorative justice and responsible politics which transcends the logic of retribution. God's grace of reconciliation in Christ does not eradicate the right of the creation in the classic sense of the first function of the law, but bolsters it through God's act of speech to the reconciled world in anticipation of the coming of God's kingdom.

In the integrative metaphor of creation and reconciliation, it is important to take into account a proleptic theology in "provolutionary" character, which seeks to embody God's will for the consummate future proleptically in the present.⁷ In the proleptic vision of God's Future, the human being as *imago Dei* is inseparably connected with Jesus Christ, because the human being becomes a new creature in Christ through the grace of justification and reconciliation. God's promise of new creatures in Christ, who is the prototype and ground of humanity as *imago Dei*, encourages us to develop a theological humanism in striving for justice, equality, and emancipation. This perspective counters the problem of overhumanization in the modernist project (causing ecological devastation) as well as the postmodern malnutrition of anti-humanism.

The metaphor of creation as grace implies that self and other exist under God's blessing for an account of abundance and fecundity. This is such that the pluralistic character of creation becomes manifest in Jesus's life and ministry engaged with the social discourse of *massa perditionis* (public sinners and tax collectors), analectically witnessing to the kingdom of God.

6. Küng, *Beginning of All Things*, 115.

7. Peters, *God—the World's Future*, 378–79.

Given this, it is substantial to consider the analectical horizon and discursive dimension of biblical language and symbols. Analogy is a language for talking about God, helping to eschew idolatry and upholding people's experience of God in a social, concrete way (Hos 12:10). Analogy in Jesus's language of the parables stands in his socio-biographical solidarity with *massa perditionis*, as explicit in his gospel about the coming kingdom of God. The analectical aspect in disclosure of the analogical discourse and social life of the Other recognizes that differences decipher a history for a privileging of the standpoint of history's forgotten and foreclosed Other. Jesus utilizes secular parables and discourses of those on the margins to bear witness to the in-breaking kingdom of God, entailing a protest of all forms of idolatry, religious self-justification, and absolutism. Analectical method considers the social discourse of the dissimilarity of the life of those who are vulnerable, fragile, and victimized through whose face God continues to address the church in our midst, awakening the church's responsibility for the Other. Jesus as the anticipatory-analectical embodiment of God's Future is the Lamb of God, a victimized scapegoat in the religious mechanism of self-justification and violence.⁸ The church (or people) has an imperative to break through the inherited system of violence and sacrifice, just as the cross also annihilates it. We realize and anticipate God's eschatology in our midst through the life of Jesus in solidarity with the public sinners and tax collectors and his promise about his Future.

To develop a thick description of history and society in terms of similarity-in-difference, our current history and society, seen in light of *similarity*, must be comprehended in an archeological rewriting of the *dissimilarity* of the silenced and marginalized history. A postcolonial strategy of archaeology is an interpretation of history by unearthing the marginalized narratives of those victimized in the aftermath of colonialism.

The *postcolonial* describes a form of social critique addressing the unequal and uneven process of representation that is framed in Western scholarship and politics regarding the once-colonized countries. It does not direct our attention away from present inequalities and dominion in the global system of the Empire in matters of political, cultural, economic, and discursive structure. The umbrella term *postcolonial* signifies changes in power structures in the aftermath of colonialism, while unraveling the continuing effects of colonialism related to political rhetoric of self-justification and social cultural mechanism of scapegoating the Other and the different.

Given this, I use the term *postcolonial* as a critical and analytical epistemology that enables us to overcome limitations of the Western project of

8. Girard, *Things Hidden*, 159–64.

Enlightenment embedded within the nexus between knowledge and power,⁹ while framing the public theology in terms of analectical method and social discourse in reference to the in-breaking reality of God's eschatology in the life of those subalterized.

Social Discourse and Archeological Hermeneutics

To present social discourse in connection with archeological hermeneutics, first of all, I pay attention to the reality of globalization, which causes a de-territorialization of culture, enabling a hybrid, relational complex embedded within cultures. Through the transnationalization of production the process of production is globalized, crossing over the barriers of nation-states. Challenging the distinction between the First and Third Worlds, it leads to multiple ethnic cultures in pluralistic society, thus creating hybridity in a networked world.

The global reality of the Empire affects and infiltrates public dimensions of religion and social cultural issues in an interconnected manner, generating the new imperial order that controls its subjects and creates a global imaginary and reality in the suppression of the subaltern. In confrontation with the Western discourse of Orientalism in its representation of the non-Western, postcolonial theory advances a methodology of refusal, deconstruction, and difference as it comes to the arguments about the truth that is entrapped with a colonialist discourse of representation, hegemony, and binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized. A poignant question—"can the subaltern speak?"—is an attempt to create a larger space for the subaltern to speak for themselves.¹⁰

Along these lines, a new geography of Christianity is of polycentric character. Christianity became contextualized in a different direction from the Christian center of early Christianity, which was commingled with Greco-Roman civilization and then with Germanic traditions.¹¹ In a shift from Eurocentric historiography toward a polycentric historiography, a postcolonial public theology takes interest in archeological hermeneutics in deciphering and reinterpreting the forgotten and irregular side of church history to emphasize *metanoia* toward the kingdom of God. It also undertakes a creative dialogue with the past for the problem of the present and in projection of the future in light of God's eschatology.

9. Mongia, *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, 2.

10. See Westhelle, *After Heresy*.

11. González, *Changing Shape of Church History*, 12–16.

In matters of archeological hermeneutics, a social critical theory of language helps us better understand the mutual dependence of culture and language. Contextual issues, such as ethnic stratification, gender, race, social inequality, and political representation, are related to social judgments of language and language contacts. As social discourse, language can critique misrepresentations of the dominant group, characterizing an idea of postcolonial hermeneutics of intertextuality in historical effectiveness and social location, as well.

In inquiry of the global reality under the spell of Empire, a linguistic dimension of a postcolonial reality integrates a critical-dialectical notion of analogy with social discourse that is imbued with the power-knowledge interplay (social cultural formation) and with economic material formation (labor, capital, reification, and market).¹²

Postcolonial critical methodologies are delineated by interpolation, mimicry, archeology, magical realism, palimpsest, and re-presentation.¹³ Notions of interpolation, archeology, and re-presentation retain a strong demand for rewriting and re-presenting the lost and buried history. This perspective helps us to correct the shortcomings of Edward Said's logic of Orientalism in his wholesale rejection of discourse of representation,¹⁴ underlying a constructive horizon of postcolonial public theology. Postcolonial public theology entails a renewed interest in investigating history, culture, and traditional religious resources, because such an investigation does not necessarily mean nostalgia for the previously colonized past or as a self-Orientalizing exercise, as postcolonial deconstructionists argue.¹⁵

Postcolonial public theology assuming transformative ethical activity is future-oriented, sharpening its ethical direction in the spirit of *metanoia* from the wrongdoing in the past toward God's promised new activity in our midst. History is open for the God of promise to bring new saving activity through Jesus's prophetic anamnesis. This is retrospectively connected with God's activity of exodus and refers also to God's promised future of a new exodus, resurrection, and a new Heaven and a new Earth whose temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb in the shining glory of the Holy Spirit (Rev 21:22). God as the source of the whole of time has the promised new *topos* that inspires us to make the public sphere, life arrangements, and ecological world a better place in analectical and social praxis in anticipation of God's Future.

12. Chung, *Hermeneutical Theology*, 288.

13. *Ibid.*, 48–59.

14. Said, *Orientalism*.

15. Nakashima Brock et al., *Off the Menu*, 16.

A notion of interpolation backs up Lamin Sanneh's model of mission as translation, which is an antidote to Western theological hegemony. At issue here is an articulation of the indigenous discovery of the Christian religion by critically uncovering the missionary-colonial gospel implanted in a previous era.¹⁶ Indigenizing the faith calls for the decolonization of Western Christianity and theology toward the project of inculturation and emancipation. The metaphor "taking off one's shoes" is raised when approaching the cultural-religious place of the Other. Honoring the place of the Other as a holy place shows a new appreciation of others.¹⁷

Furthermore, archeology performed with a palimpsest is undertaken to unearth indigenous forms of culture buried by the colonial experience. A palimpsest is originally a piece of manuscript on which the previous entry has been rubbed out and replaced by another. No inscription is indelible. A place may be re-appropriated and given new meaning by the people who continue to live.¹⁸ Through an archeological work, magical or extraordinary elements can be derived from the traditional past for the sake of making the present world better.

Hence, postcolonial hermeneutics is of an archeological-transformative character, entailing a substantial moment of decentering the centered narrative and knowledge-power system and critically analyzing economic material formation. This perspective renews Foucault's strategy of archeology in terms of a hermeneutical notion of preunderstanding, history of effect, and transformative praxis in orientation to God's Future. Foucault's archeology, which is unilaterally based on discursive statement as social *episteme*, needs to be clarified in connection with social ontology embedded with history, society, and praxis of a better life for the present in light of God's Future.

For this direction, Walter Benjamin remains an inspiration for the emancipatory project of engaging in the lost side of history with an emphasis on an archeological-anamnestic reasoning of not-forgetting the mass suffering of innocent victims.¹⁹ A hermeneutical archeologist abides in a conviction for the spark of hope, because "*even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious."²⁰ In the history of the victors the historical process appears to be unitary. However, the vanquished cannot see the historical process in the

16. Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?*, 10.

17. Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 259.

18. Ingleby, *Beyond Empire*, 54.

19. *Ibid.*, 57.

20. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 255.

same fashion, because their own affairs and struggles have been violently cancelled and erased from the collective memory. Given this, I sharpen an archeological-anamnestic reasoning in light of God's promised indwelling with God's people, the innocent victims from whose eyes God will wipe every tear. "Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away" (Rev 21:4).

This perspective corrects limitations of the psychological notion of mimicry, because it tends to suppress the politics of difference as hybridity in an emancipatory-prophetic relief. Postcolonial intellectuals refer to the politics of mimicry or hybridity uniformly regarding their relation to the First World, generating constitution of the world according to their self-image and justification. However, they are beneficiaries rather than victims in the context of global capitalism.²¹

Public Theology and Scientific Rationality

Faith seeks understanding. In other words, faith and understanding are driven and refined in a hermeneutical circle, which qualifies a scientific and critical investigation of the biblical narrative. This perspective is applied in the science-religion dialogue. A theology of nature engages with natural scientific findings and argument in a critical-constructive framework, while attending to the contribution of other religious perspectives on scientific and environmental issues. In such interaction, a classic epistemology, such as faith in search of understanding, can be pursued in a broader context embedded within science and religion. Public theology in this regard appreciates a model of interaction underlying the critical and revisionist relationship between science and theology, such that mutual questioning and enrichment can be undertaken for the sake of enhancing integrity of life in humanity and nature.²²

The first stage of the scientific-technological project was engaging and fascinating. Then, wars have come in which science and technology revealed their unimaginable capacity for destruction. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons have become a great potential for apocalypse in the history of the world. We have to find alternatives to unlimited scientific-technological progress initiated since the Enlightenment project. It is certain that scientific rationality and discourse are shaped by their social, historical, political,

21. Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura," in Mongia, *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, 304–5, 313.

22. Küng, *Beginning of All Things*, 41.

and cultural contexts, which interact with the biological ground of human rationality.

In the tradition of Galileo, Descartes, and Isaac Newton, the scientific conceptual framework pictured the world as a perfect machine governed by exact mathematical laws—thereby linked to values of competition, expansion, and domination generally associated with Western men.²³ In the political development of the theory of evolution, the name of Darwin is ideologically connected with the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton (the eugenics movement), who incorporated the “white man’s burden” (Rudyard Kipling’s phrase) into the developmental model of racism and colonialism. This fatal ramification found a historical climax in the unimaginable horrors of the Holocaust.²⁴

Limit questions in scientific progress emerge in the face of poverty, hunger, armament, war, and ecological sustainability, suspicious of credulity in absolutizing science and technology. The limit questions cannot be answered by scientific method per se, because they transcend it. Correlated with science, religious questions arise at the horizons or limit situations of human experience. Two kinds of limit questions in science may be seen in ethical issues in the use of science for the integrity and enhancement of life in the aftermath of colonialism and also in epistemological conditions for the possibility of scientific inquiry.

Political independence has not brought economic emancipation and freedom to the previously colonized countries, such that these countries entail a right to speak out against the neocolonial reality in the aftermath of colonialism.

The recovery of the religious and mystical dimensions of political inspiration can be found in view of the crisis of the paradigm of modernity, which is spurred by the knowledge of domination for the sake of wealth by exploitation and colonialism. Religion has the voice of a consciousness and conscience in taking issue with scientific description of the world that sacralizes the established order of things. The religious-utopian project of liberation theology is to critically transcend the status quo for emancipation.²⁵

Insofar as scientific research and facts arise out of an entire constellation of human perception, values, and interest, scientists are accountable for their research both at the intellectual level as well as the ethical level. All scientific concepts and theories are limited and approximate in dealing with the universe as a dynamic web of interrelationship, because the truth cannot

23. Capra, *Web of Life*, 10.

24. Peters and Hewlett, *Evolution from Creation*, 52–58.

25. Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, 60.

be pursued in terms of a precise and literal correspondence between reality and description. Theological critical realists acknowledge the metaphorical dimension of human language in theological and scientific inquiries, assuming non-literal and referential correspondence of truth with reality. Models and theories of symbol system are taken seriously in a metaphorical sense.²⁶

However, I am interested in breaking through such epistemology of critical realism by way of historical effectiveness and social discourse to avoid its representational way of thinking in the correspondence theory of truth. Scientific research and method are conducted in a social historical life connection, which shapes and influences the position of the researcher. Scientific knowledge is a historically constituted system that is imbued with institutional support and power structure in a social context. Socio-historical relations need to be considered in the production of a knowledge system to reinforce epistemological dynamism in interaction with scientific reasoning.

This perspective finds a postfoundational rationality helpful, which is driven by a fusion of epistemological and hermeneutical concern.²⁷ It facilitates a postcolonial approach to scientific rationality for the sake of an alternative transmodernity concerned with the life of the poor and nature (new poor), which upholds a postcolonial form of integral rationality in transcending the limitation of modernity. A notion of integral transmodernity seeks to de-center the subject as the epistemological foundation, in recognition of the social and contextual resources of shaping rationality. It challenges a totalizing metanarrative of scientism, based on representational knowledge, atomic individualism, and technical control and domination.

In Ian Barbour's project of theology of nature, some traditional doctrines need to be reformulated in light of current scientific advancement. Barbour endorses the process thought of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) who extends the idea of interdependence into what may be called a social ecological view of reality. It implies a highly integrated and dynamic pattern of interdependent events in interaction with every event within a given context.²⁸ This train of thought finds parallel systems of thought which maintain that the living system emerges out of the interaction and relationship among the parts. In other words, it is comprehended only within the context of the larger whole, in the framework of the parts and the whole.²⁹

26. Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 38.

27. Van Huyssteen, *Shaping of Rationality*, 33.

28. Barbour, *Religion and Science*, 284–93.

29. Capra, *Web of Life*, 9–10.

But a question remains to whether God in process identifies Godself as a creative movement forward, but without a goal or a climax—thereby a lack of metaphysics of God’s Future. The God of process theology fails to provide sufficient grounds for hope regarding God who raised Jesus from the dead.³⁰

Ted Peters presents a notion of proleptic theology in terms of provolution creating advent shock. It seeks to project future visions of a just and sustainable global community and then uses present resources to actualize that vision for posterity. Our present reality proleptically anticipates the new creation yet to come from God’s Future, grounding the liberation process of the oppressed and victims of injustice and poverty through faith in God’s Future (Rev 21:1).³¹

Engaged in science-religion dialogue, we need to conceptualize public ethics for transformative activity in an endeavor to make the world a better place. We advocate for the Judeo-Christian notion of the promised new creation that has already occurred ahead of time in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, an embodiment of God’s promised new creation. We must develop an ethically responsible project of internal solidarity and internal modernity to restrict the harm done by science and technology and to guarantee the dignity of people and ecological sustainability.

Science and technology are seen as forms of human capital accumulated over generations, therefore as essentially social and political in character. Consequently, they are the main weapons for upholding political dependence and ensuring economic dominance over nations and their populations.

This said, science and technology should be set within the triangle formed by the satisfaction of basic needs, distributive justice for society, and integrity of life. This perspective challenges the technological utopianism (the gospel of technocracy) of the ruling system, which purports to give everyone more than abundant food, housing, medical care, and leisure. Against this technological dream, a new paradigm in the context of liberation theology is proposed in the holistic, ecological, and spiritual framework.³²

To be sure, the liberation perspective is future oriented in the transformation of the present system of structural violence. However, focusing excessively on mysticism and the environment tends to romanticize nature, disparaging science and technology, refusing to analyze the potential of science and technology to move us toward overcoming environmental threats.

30. Polkinghorne, *Faith of a Physicist*, 68.

31. Peters, *God—the World’s Future*, 388–89.

32. Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, 76.

Third-world liberation theologies, for the most part driven by a deep ecological movement, tend to conflate science with technology, which is condemned as the weapon for destroying the environment as well as exploiting the third world.

Cutting through such antipathy, it is important to adopt a critical constructive approach to the roles of science and technology, placing them in the service of social, political, and ecological action for the sake of God's Shalom and life-enhancing emancipation. This perspective aims at overcoming divisions due to race, ethnicity, gender, nation, or any other divisive identity caused by the legacies of colonialism, pursuing a harmony between civilization and the ecosphere. Such a vision postulates an alternative modernity as integral transmodernity for the good of all humanity and ecological life in an enhanced awareness of a common destiny and benefit. This seeks to transcend the global reality of binary opposition, constructing the present and future better in analectical accordance with God's reign on earth. Theological visions of the future new creation based upon God's promise and reconciliation contribute to postcolonial imagination in overcoming the reality of binary contradiction in terms of an integral transmodernity, in collaboration with science and technology for peace, social justice, political freedom, and a sustainable ecological web of life. Thus, postcolonial public theology is driven by the endless approximation of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will [the promised new creation] be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Comparative Religious Study and Prophetic Dialogue

Foucault's strategy of bio-power becomes a guiding principle for understanding political, cultural, and institutionalized discourse in the analysis of the interplay between knowledge and power in the colonist discourse of Orientalism. Said's Orientalism becomes the watershed of postcolonial theory in an attempt to demystify the cultural representation of the Orient which was undertaken by the Western authorities in the colonial period. The orientalists have disregarded the views of those who they actually study, imposing their own intellectual superiority and dominion over them. Associated with ideological and financial support for institutionalizing power and dominion over the colonized, Western depiction of the Orient has constructed an inferior world, a place of backwardness, irrationality, and wildness, while the West is identified with the opposite characteristics—progressive, rational, and civil.

However, Said's limitation lies in his excessive emphasis on the passivity of the colonized. He does not discuss the ways in which Indigenous people of the East have constructed their critical response to colonialism in interpretation of their own religious classics. When studying non-Western religious, ethical, and philosophical materials, it is substantial to transcend the limitations of Foucault's relativistic anti-representationalism tied to Said's logic of Orientalism.³³

As previously noted, the integrative model of creation and reconciliation, imbued with God's act of speech in light of God's Future, becomes a theological metaphor advocating the comparative study of religions in the framework of interreligious dialogue. A theological notion of pluralism, oriented toward respecting and enhancing the integrity of life, receives its impulse from creation in which God provides the bounty of life even to the enemy and the ungrateful. Creation as a pluralistic reality is connected with the concept of *creatio continua*, which refers to God's creative activity in sustaining and enhancing life in creation. Seen in light of *creatio continua*, creation is the world with which God is reconciled in Christ. God's act of speech in the fashion of Infinite Saying assumes plural and multiple horizons in the reconciled world through the world of other religions.

Sociologists have studied religion as a central theoretical problem in the understanding of social action, as they deal with the relation between religion and other areas of social life, such as economics, politics, and social class, including religious roles, organizations, and movement. Max Weber's thesis on the influence of the Protestant ethic on modern society remains a classic example of the relationship between religious factors and ethical disposition and behavior.³⁴

Comparative work in the field of religions has been much criticized for the attempt to typify whole religious traditions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, and then to compare them with each other in broad terms, which results in gross simplifications. Otherwise, such comparative study has been undertaken in an apologetic manner.

Aware of these limitations, I seek a public religious theology in critical-constructive correlation of one religious tradition with another religion. Public religious theology is undertaken as a normative, constructive, and revisionist procedure, while appreciating the methods of comparison, the findings, and results emerging out of the philosophical and sociological study of religion. A revisionist and constructive procedure facilitates a viable lens for the public religious theology to develop a reading strategy in

33. King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 95.

34. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

interpreting the meaning and truth claims of one tradition in critical correlation with other religious traditions and their text resources.³⁵

For this task, I find it important to critically explore and revise Ernst Troeltsch's insight into the historical-critical approach and the study of religions for public religious theology. It is significant to utilize the history of religions methods to comprehend the holistic webs of belief and practice in rich historical and cultural context. More than that, I am interested in incorporating the hermeneutical-dialogical approach, which uses intercultural moral theorizing and praxis involving the quest for cross-cultural understanding and the fusion of diverse moral and religious horizons.³⁶ This perspective critically revises Troeltsch's triadic method based on analogy, critique, and correlation, incorporating its critical insight into public religious theology in postcolonial relief.

In interreligious dialogue we observe that representatives of the world's major religious traditions have pursued dialogue about substantial moral issues of general concern to the peoples of the world. Interreligious dialogue offers to public religious theology a more persuasive rationale, agenda of issues, and practical orientation. By the same token, public religious theology offers to interreligious dialogue a number of critical tools and methods that could enhance the sophistication and effectiveness of its practical work.

A narrative approach undertakes comparative storytelling and comparative spirituality. This is founded on the assumption that our understanding of good and evil is primarily shaped by the kind of story we tell. Ethical insights occur and are communicated within religious traditions through story, community biographies, and ritual rather than theory. We live in an interconnected world where people are often deeply shaped not only by their own traditions but also by those of others. For example, Gandhi's ethical views were shaped not only by his own Hinduism but also by Tolstoy's writings on the Sermon on the Mount, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s ethical views were deeply shaped by Gandhi's insights into the *Bhagavad Gita*. A narrative approach advocates passing over into the religions and cultures of others in order to finally come back with new insight into one's own.³⁷

A religious tradition, and also every human life, is more complex than one root metaphor: "Many metaphors are necessary and actually exist in a moral lexicon, while none alone exhausts the meaning of life and its worth."³⁸ This aspect provides a larger framework for undertaking a multid-

35. Clooney, *New Comparative Theology*, x–xiii.

36. Twiss and Grelle, *Explorations in Global Ethics*, 1.

37. Fasching and deChant, *Comparative Religious Ethics*, 1–10.

38. Schweiker, *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics*, 214.

mensional theological-ethical analysis and response to global dynamics for public religious theology. This comparative religious perspective improves on the inadequacy and poverty of ethics caused by the modern banishment of religion from the public sphere.

Human existence is thoroughly historical or linguistically grounded in the world. We can never escape our historical context, or lifeworld, because of our *situatedness* in the world, tradition, and language. In a hermeneutical conversation with the Other, we can anticipate experiencing a new meaning that emerges, helping dialogue partners to understand their own traditions better. In an encounter of different horizons a new meaning can be acquired, so that interpretation is driven in an open-ended and dynamic manner.³⁹

This perspective incorporates a historical-critical method and postcolonial theory of religion and moral teaching into hermeneutical epistemology underlying the practice of appreciation, deconstructive critique, and reconstruction, which characterizes public religious theology. Interreligious moral dialogue has a reasonably persuasive rationale and postcolonial reasoning which calls the world to shared responsibility for the alleviation of suffering and oppression. Thus, contextual-constructive interpretation of Christian narrative and symbols remains a substantial task in shaping *postcolonial* public theology within the framework of comparative religious study and prophetic dialogue.

Given the postcolonial reframing of public theology, part I articulates the impulses of Reformation theology for public theology by undertaking a contextual-constructive interpretation of Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Part I, chapters 1 and 2). I approach Luther and Bonhoeffer through the postcolonial lens, inter-religious dialogue, and public ethics. My theological and hermeneutical exploration of contemporary issues for Lutheran theological inquiry finds its impetus in the reformation imperative of gospel as the *viva vox evangelii*, the living voice of God. Reformation theology finds its voice not with insular or pedantic approaches to other faiths. Rather it emphasizes its confessional-prophetic contribution toward contemporary issues through a fusion of horizons with religious, socioeconomic, and cultural others, deepening the universal dimension of the gospel.

Then chapter 3 explores Karl Barth's analogical theology and public witness regarding the theology-science dialogue, including his major theological achievements such as theological-critical epistemology, divine action, creation, and eschatology. Barth's hermeneutic cannot be separated from Luther's notion of gospel as the *viva vox evangelii*. Barth's analogical imagination finds a dialogue with the theory of critical realism, such that I

39. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 306–7.

shall look into the implication of Barth for natural science, divine action, and postcolonial theology.

Part II deals with postcolonial imagination, postmodernity, and recognition of the Other, critically examining the unfinished project of the Enlightenment. I seek postcolonial imagination in terms of postmodern constructive theory and the issue of inculturation tied to recognition of the Other. In so doing I pursue a postcolonial contour of rationality in the sense of integral transmodernity (chapter 4). Then we will pursue theological dialogue with scientific rationality in light of faith seeking understanding. An appraisal of the relationship between creation and evolution comes to focus, developing the hermeneutical dimension of the theology-science dialogue, which includes Buddhist perspectives on scientific rationality and ecology (chapter 5). Finally, I shall take Ted Peters' proleptic theology as the platform for advancing public theology in a postcolonial scientific frame of reference. The proleptic theology, framed within postmodern holism, shall be assessed in dialogue with public theology (chapter 6).

Part III is a study of dealing with public theology in the framework of comparative religious study and interreligious dialogue. Ernst Troeltsch shall be taken as an important example of a public theologian in regard to his historical critical inquiry and comparative religious study (chapter 7). Then we shall undertake a study of conceptualizing public religious theology from Buddhist-Christian dialogue, in which sociological study about religious ethos and economic justice is articulated and explored (chapter 8). Finally, Stackhouse's public theology and political economy will be critically examined for the sake of conceptualizing a biblical-prophetic notion of *diakonia* and economic justice in critically analyzing the reality of Empire. This study presents a postcolonial horizon of public theology in terms of interaction between prophetic *diakonia* and economic justice in the ecumenical and global context (chapter 9). The epilogue is an outline of what has been investigated and argued in the integration between postcolonial theory and public theology, clarifying and advancing what postcolonial public theology means in terms of confession, scientific rationality, and prophetic dialogue.

The Afterword is a reflection of articulating public theology in a social ecological frame of reference, undertaking comparative studies of Confucian moral ecology. This Afterword finds its interest in complementing the ecological horizon of public theology, which strengthens the study of postcolonial public theology.