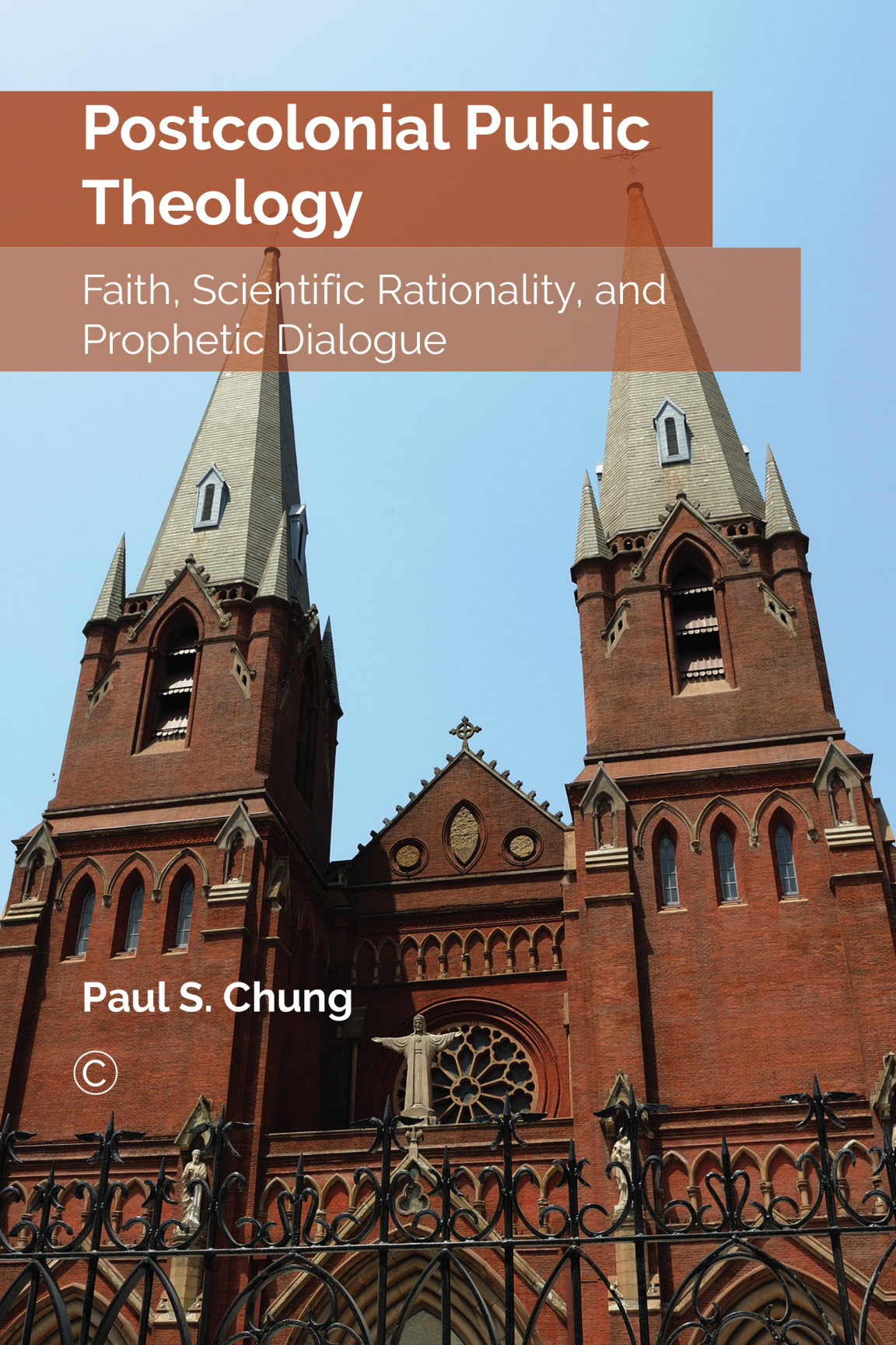


Postcolonial Public Theology

Faith, Scientific Rationality, and
Prophetic Dialogue

Paul S. Chung

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*Faith, Scientific Rationality,
and Prophetic Dialogue*

Paul S. Chung



James Clarke & Co

*Dedicated to my family:
life companion, supporter, and strength, Jane,
and my daughters, Beth and Heidi*

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Foreword

I write this foreword having just returned from China. Thirty-three members of my extended family had attended the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of the Weihsien Internment Camp, where two thousand expatriates—including my mother's missionary family—were interned by the Japanese during the Second World War. As I read the proofs of Paul Chung's *Postcolonial Public Theology* while on the plane coming back to the United States, my mind was fresh with images not only of the camp and the no-longer-existing colonial world it represented but also of the myriad ways in which the Chinese cities we had visited during our trip—Beijing, Yantai, and Weifang—were now clearly being marked by the expansive forces of global capitalism and rapid technological innovation.

Reflecting on these images, I found myself drawing parallels between Chung's postcolonial proposal for public theology and Langdon Gilkey's account of his experience at Weihsien. Gilkey, a young English teacher during his internment, would later become a theology professor who—like Chung—would bring classic Reformation insights about creation, sin, and grace to bear on contemporary analyses of society and history. In addition, he would—again like Chung—attend to the relationship between science and religion, on the one hand, and interreligious and pluralist dialogue, on the other. However, Gilkey is probably best known for his book *Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women under Pressure* (1966), an account of how the prisoners at Weihsien had created a civil society of sorts within the internment camp. Addressing not only the indifference, injustice, prejudice, and even cruelty that can surface when people live together in such close quarters and extreme circumstances, *Shantung Compound* also discusses the resilience of the human spirit and the way the grace and forgiveness of God create a space for healthy relationships and a creative concern for the world around us and for our neighbors.

Like the internees in the Weihshien camp, we too face the question of how we will organize our lives together in a world that is rapidly becoming even more interconnected. And although the colonial world represented by the camp's motley group of expatriates no longer exists, it continues to affect our lives together, emerging in ever new "neo-colonial" and "post-colonial" permutations in which the powerful who have access to knowledge, power, wealth, and technological resources continue to exclude and take advantage of the weak and dispossessed.

Chung is uniquely equipped to address this world in which we find ourselves. A true cultural and intellectual hybrid, Chung has throughout his theological career consistently sought to bring together domains of theory and practice we often keep separate. Yet if his hybridity leads him to be a deeply *analogical* thinker who notes similarities across diverse worlds, then it also leads him to be incorrigibly *dialectical*, identifying points of dissonance and dissimilarity we tend to gloss over or ignore. True to form, his *Postcolonial Public Theology* sets in conversation European, American, and Asian voices from both the past and the present. Linking not only Christian theology, hermeneutics, and ethics, but also issues and themes related to scientific rationality and interreligious dialogue, Chung seeks throughout this book to articulate a truly "public" Christian theology in a world increasingly affected by economic globalization. Nonetheless, he does this from a distinctive "postcolonial" stance: grounded in the subversive memory of Jesus, he stands in solidarity with those who are victimized and marginalized by that world.

Chung's public theology has been deeply influenced by David Tracy, who was a colleague of Gilkey's at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Reinterpreting Christian symbols in relation to philosophical hermeneutics and critical social theory, Tracy's proposal for public theology seeks a mutually critical correlation of the Christian confession of faith and analyses of our contemporary situation; deeply analogical, it seeks similarities in difference even as it appropriates, critiques, and reconstructs worlds of meaning. Although Chung locates his proposal in relation to Tracy's public theology, he revises it by placing more emphasis on difference and dissimilarity. With his focus on what is "irregular" in our shared life together, Chung articulates a distinctive voice that brings together a confluence of Reformation and Asian themes.

At the heart of Chung's theology are two classic Reformation themes: the *viva vox evangelii* (the living voice of the gospel that embodies God's living discourse) and the *theologia crucis* (the theology of the cross). Nonetheless, Chung radicalizes and contextualizes these themes in relation to a Korean minjung theology rooted in Jesus' solidarity with the *massa*

perditionis—the public sinners and tax collectors—which Chung also calls the *ochlos* (meaning “crowd” in Greek) or *minjung* (meaning “masses” in Korean). In his solidarity with the *ochlos-minjung*, Jesus not only suffers with others but also embodies—through his social relations and personal biography—the disclosure of the gospel of God’s coming kingdom of justice and mercy in their midst. For Chung, Jesus is neither merely an exemplar for social change (as in some earlier versions of *minjung* theology) nor merely one whose vicarious death is expunged of its deeply prophetic and social-critical import (as in Kazoh Kitamori’s theology of the cross). Rather, what Chung seeks to highlight is the way Jesus’ embrace of all who are vulnerable, broken, and victimized discloses God’s creative and reconciling discourse—precisely within the radical plurality of our social and natural worlds.

Emmanuel Levinas’ distinction between “saying” (living discourse) and “said” (written text) provides Chung with an important conceptual resource for depicting how God’s infinite “saying” speaks through the “face” that discloses the otherness of the Other. If God’s living Word in Jesus embraces and addresses all suffering, sin, and injustice with a creative and reconciling word, then it is possible to discern how this Word speaks a critical and emancipatory address from, through, and for those who have been victimized by history. In his interpretation of the fusion of multiple horizons that emerges when intra-textual biblical narratives are juxtaposed against the extra-biblical narratives of our social worlds, Chung seeks to incorporate an “irregular” moment into public theology. Focusing on the “irregular” that emerges in this fusion of horizons, Chung attempts an “archeological” rewriting of the “otherness” of the vulnerable, fragile, and victimized because it is precisely there, he argues—in Jesus’ solidarity with the *massa perditionis* or *ochlos-minjung*—that we can perceive and anticipate God’s just and merciful eschatology, the reign of God, in our midst. Thus, even though Chung appropriates Tracy’s “analogical” approach to public theology, he revises it in terms of what he calls an “analectical” method that replaces the “logos” in the word “analogy” with a “dialectics” that seeks to bring to the fore the *dissimilarity* in the social discourse of those on the margins through whose “face” God continues to address.

In this way, Chung’s “analectical” method incorporates into public theology a postcolonial archeological strategy that seeks to unearth the narratives of those marginalized by the double effects of the legacy of colonialism and the rapid expansion of economic globalization. Two thinkers aid him in developing this archeological strategy: Edward Said, who seeks to demystify Western representations of the “Orient” based on binary contrasts between the “superior” West and the “inferior” East, and Michel Foucault, who seeks

to uncover the complex interplay of power and knowledge deeply embedded in religious, political, and cultural institutions.

Yet if Chung seeks to incorporate an irregular (“postcolonial”) moment into public theology, then—true to his own analogical and dialectical method—he also seeks to incorporate a constructive (“public”) moment into postcolonial discourse. Against Said, he argues that victims need not merely remain passive as they rewrite their history of suffering: their archeological rewriting of history can be done in a spirit of *metanoia* (repentance) and responsible agency grounded in God’s creative justice and promise of new creation. Against Foucault, he argues that the critique of *parrhesia* (truth-telling) so identified with his approach need not merely be epistemic, solely rooted in the interplay of language, knowledge, and power: it can be rooted in a social ontology open to the irruption of God’s kingdom in our midst. In this way, Chung seeks to develop a postcolonial public theology grounded in a theological humanism that attends to basic needs, distributive justice, and the integrity of life. Like William Schweiker, who also makes a case for theological humanism in our time, Chung seeks to counter both a post-modern *anti-humanism* that negates the human capacity to make claims about truth and justice and a modern *over-humanization* that fails to grasp, especially in the face of environmental degradation, the limits of human finitude.

Chung, therefore, takes very seriously the need to relate his postcolonial public theology to an account of scientific rationality. Unlike some liberation theologians, who have a primarily negative view of science and technology, Chung seeks to cultivate what he describes as a “transmodern”—as opposed to a “modern”—approach for developing an “integral” rationality that can enter into dialogue with science and technology even as it attends to the poor in both society and nature (what he calls the “new poor”). Such an integral rationality would address the limit questions raised by science and technological progress. These include, on the one hand, ethical questions that emerge in the face of such things as war, poverty, and environmental sustainability and, on the other hand, epistemological questions that emerge once we take seriously the social worlds of those who construct or are affected by scientific and technological development. Although Ted Peters does not explicitly address postcolonial discourse in his work, his proleptic theology provides Chung with a platform for cultivating such a transmodern and integral rationality. Deeply rooted in a Lutheran theology of promise, Peters develops an eschatological theology centered in the promise of new creation embodied in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection that establishes points of contact with contemporary science even as it seeks

to establish the grounds for perceiving and creating a just and sustainable global community in our time.

Finally, Chung locates his proposal for a postcolonial public theology in the practical task of interreligious dialogue where representatives and practitioners of the world's major religions engage one another in conversation about the moral and ethical issues facing our shared world. In order to develop a conceptual framework for approaching this task, Chung rethinks Ernst Troeltsch's relativistic approach to the historical study of religions by critically revising it in view of Hans-Georg Gadamer's ontologically grounded hermeneutics and Jürgen Habermas' critical social theory. Such revision, Chung argues, enables public theology to shift away from a Eurocentric modern rationality that tends to presuppose, in Max Weber's words, the "disenchantment" of nature. Instead, this kind of interreligious dialogue can enable public theology to cultivate a "transmodern" rationality that can enable us to become more aware of our coexistence with other creatures and of our responsibility in that coexistence for sustaining the natural and social worlds in which we find ourselves. As an exemplification of the kind of "transmodern" rationality that can emerge from such dialogue, Chung discusses Christian and Buddhist approaches to economic justice and ecological sustainability, drawing on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's poems on the *theologia crucis* and Buddhist texts on compassion and wisdom.

Given this reframing of the practical task of public theology, Chung critically engages Max Stackhouse's framework for relating a biblical and theological vision of economic stewardship to the forces of economic globalization affecting our shared public life. Although Chung shares much of the theological vision that informs Stackhouse's public theology, he nonetheless seeks to sharpen its critique of global capitalism from a postcolonial perspective. Informed by Ulrich Duchrow's reflections on the church's responsibility to stand for economic justice in the face of economic globalization, Chung seeks to relate God's justifying grace to a prophetic *diakonia* that witnesses to God's economy (i.e., *oikonomia*, which entails both *oikos*, household, and *nomos*, law or management) in the midst of market forces that degrade human dignity and harm the natural world. In a similar vein, he turns in his epilogue to yet another major concern: ecological sustainability. Engaging Confucian and Christian sources he seeks to deepen our sense, from a Christian perspective, of God's presence as the *topos* of the world that sustains our commitment to ecological justice and the healing of creation.

Although we are not interned in a camp (like the prisoners of Weihenstephan), we nonetheless find ourselves in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected. We cannot ignore the reality of economic globalization. We

also cannot be oblivious to the ongoing effects of the history of colonialism, which are often intertwined with the effects of globalization on the most vulnerable in our world. Chung's proposal for a postcolonial public theology addresses these challenges in ways that neither simply acquiesce to market forces nor merely criticize them without inspiring repentance and responsible action. Saturated in the biblical witness to God's creative and reconciling Word in Jesus Christ and the new creation it ushers in amidst our suffering, sin, and injustice, Chung calls us to engage others—especially those with the least power—so that within the fecundity and fullness of God's pluriform creation we can together not only perceive God's merciful solidarity and creative justice in our midst but also embody it in the face of forces and powers that threaten human dignity and the integrity of our natural world.

Lois Malcolm
Luther Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota
August 23, 2015

Acknowledgments

Postcolonial Public Theology is a study to shape a postcolonial approach to public theology. It incorporates scientific insights and prophetic dialogue, while contextualizing Western systematic theology, social ethics, and postmodern hermeneutics. The public sphere in the American context and others becomes more and more multiculturally fused and infiltrated by the dominion of Empire linked to economic globalization. After completing *Postcolonial Imagination: Archeological Hermeneutics and Comparative Religious Theology* (2014), I begin to realize how significant it is to elaborate a postcolonial shaping of rationality in interaction with the scientific theory of evolution and other scientific insights and postmodern holism.

Ted Peters provided valuable comments and guidance for me to incorporate discourse of theistic evolution in interaction with Darwinian evolutionary theory into shaping public scientific rationality in a postcolonial-hermeneutical frame of reference. I thank him for all he has done for me. I seek to advance interreligious dialogue in terms of prophetic dialogue in which inculturation, economic justice, and *diakonia* come into focus. Interreligious dialogue in the aftermath of colonialism requires an archeological reading strategy concerned with deciphering and recovering the prophetic side of religious classics to liberate them from the colonial discourse and scholarship imposed upon them.

This said, I express my gratitude to Ulrich Duchrow, who takes a groundbreaking approach to overcome limitations and setbacks of Western modernity and its neocolonialist economic discourse in terms of the integration of theology, economic justice in a global context, and interreligious study for the sake of a transmodern notion of the Second Axial Age. I also thank Craig L. Nesson for friendship and solidarity during both joyful and difficult times, always encouraging my theological creativity in postcolonial relief. I also appreciate Professor Lois Malcolm, who accompanies my theological journey by way of the foreword. I extend my gratitude to Charlie

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Regarding chapter 5, "Faith, Scientific Rationality, and Evolution," I extend gratitude to the Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, which allowed me to revise my chapter "Postcolonial Imagination, Scientific Rationality, and Evolution," in *Postcolonial Imagination: Archeological Hermeneutics and Comparative Religious Theology*, by Paul S. Chung.

Paul S. Chung
Berkeley, California,
Reformation Day, October 31, 2014

Abbreviations

- BC* *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- LW* American edition of Luther's Works. Philadelphia and St. Louis, 1955-.
- WABr* *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel.* 15 vols. Weimar, 1930-78.
- WATr* *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden.* 6 vols. Weimar, 1912-21.

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.