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Capitalism vs. Creation Spirituality Resolve (C.S.R.): A Tete-a-tete of Two Cultural Consciousness

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Abstract

This research work argues that religious conviction is contributory to the making of the culture of Capitalism in the West. This was presented by annotating Max Weber's Sociology of Religion. There, the study presents Capitalism's cultural values influencing the behavior and attitude of the modern man. From here, the paper establishes how the values of Capitalism, in the global extent, became the main culprit in the destruction of the ecological system. To see both sides of the story, the paper examines how capitalists respond to this environmental crisis created mainly by them. At this point, the paper argues why the 'method' of most economic experts, including those of the philanthrocapitalists, fails in resolving the problem of sustainability vis-à-vis environmental wellbeing. After discoursing on what Capitalism has done and the ill-effects it has produced, the paper presents a dialectic between Capitalism and Creation spirituality. There it argues why Creation spirituality, reflected from the different faith traditions, becomes the appropriate cultural consciousness that serves as antidote to the environmental malaise caused by Capitalism. While a synthesis between the two opposing values of each spheres could be made using a dialectical framework, the paper opts instead to take the position of Creation spirituality. The paper points out that the way to counteract the "colonizing" position of Capitalism is for religion to take charge. In the end, the paper argues that only in paradigm-shift where the position of Creation spirituality is taken, that genuine solution can be achieved in this pressing environmental crisis. Lastly, the paper recommends to utilize the principles and values of Creation spirituality via incorporation of it in religious academic curricula. Likewise, the study bids the same in the wider sphere of interreligious relations and communications that religious leaders, preachers and teachers should consider as a course of action to take.

Keywords: Capitalism, Creation spirituality, Environmental destruction, Pantheism, Religion(s)

Introduction

The present economic scheme of globalized mass production and its “colonization of the lifeworld” (Habermas, 1981) agenda run counter to **how nature works**: 1) generates and regenerates (“waste equals food”), 2) thrives in diversity, and 3) lives off solar income (Rasmussen, 2005). These “counter-creative” behaviors are brought about by a particular cultural consciousness present in the modern age – Instrumental-rationalism (Weber, 1905), primarily found in Capitalism. The capitalistic mentality, however, is not anymore just held by those who run companies and businesses, its values and behaviors have already penetrated the personal lifestyle of the mass who were “touched” by it. Two seminal works speak of this.

Max Weber (1905) in *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, justifies that the “methodical conduct of life” influenced by the Protestant religious interpretive systems, is the most important factor in the rise of capitalism.

In *the Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Jurgen Habermas (1981) explicates that the cultural rationalization from which the structures of consciousness typical of modern societies emerge adopts cognitive, aesthetic-expressive, and moral-evaluative elements of religious tradition.

Thus, if a particular cultural consciousness, i.e. Capitalism, is the likely cause for the mass to behave in a specific manner, could this specific behavior be the reason for the detriment of environmental homeostasis? Conversely, could it be then that another cultural consciousness serves as antidote to this malaise?

In Carl Gustav Jung’s (1957, 1958) challenging and provocative work – *The Undiscovered Self*, he argues that civilization’s future depends on the individual’s ability to resist the collective forces of society. Only by gaining an awareness and understanding of one’s unconscious mind and true, inner nature – “the undiscovered self” – can individuals acquire the self-knowledge that is antithetical to ideological fanaticism. But this requires that individuals face their fear and the duality of the human psyche. He argues that only then can individuals begin to cope with the dangers posed by mass society – “the sum total of individuals” – resist the potential threats by those in power.

Matthew Fox (1983) in his book *Original Blessing*, describes people who embrace original blessing as those who love and celebrate life. They reverence God’s creation, whether it be nature or other human beings. There also, he posed (and likewise, answered) the question, “In

our quest for wisdom and survival, does the human race require a new religious paradigm?” “Does creation-centered spiritual tradition offer such a paradigm?”

Yes! According to Matthew Fox (1983), Creation spirituality is that paradigm that is already present in the tradition of Christian faith though not given much attention by many theologians. In his book *Original Blessing*, he presented the “Four Paths of Creation spirituality.” First in the list, is the path of the positive (*via positiva*) where the “tasting” of beauty and cosmic depths of creation happens in forms of affirmation, thanksgiving and ecstasy (pp. 33-34). As the creative energy (*Dabhar*) is always active, imaginative and playful, a creation-centered person should be likewise, sensitive, aware, alive and awake. This affirmation of blessedness, accordingly must always be recalled. Second to this is the path of the negative (*via negativa*). Simply put, it is the stage of befriending darkness, self-emptying and letting go (pp. 175-176). There is no *via negativa* without *via positiva*, entailing here an intricate relationship of the different stages in Creation spirituality. Embracing both pleasure (*via positiva*) and pain (*via negativa*), light and darkness, tension and struggle, the product of polarities is what the third path is all about (*via creativa*). This is the rebirthing of “dabhar,” a product of the dialectical consciousness (p. 210), manifested through arts and other artistic expressions. Nevertheless, genuine creativity cannot remain in a romantic sense, it should lead one towards transformation and emancipation of those around him (her). This is the fourth path, *via transformativa*. It is the renewal of creation towards a renewed-centered life, i.e., in renewing relationships where erotic justice, love, compassion reigns over contemplation (p. 247).

Pope Francis (2015), in *Laudato Si*, strikes a call to conversion for all the people of good will and those in the Church as well to change their ways in relating with the natural environment, reminding them that the earth needs protection and care as it was created by God. To wit,

The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So, what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of

virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience (p. 217).

From all of the abovementioned literature, to lead us out to answer our concern, the following questions and sub-questions were asked:

“Why must one opt for Creation spirituality as the value and course of action to take in radically resolving environmental problems caused by Capitalism?”

1. What is Capitalism according to Adam Smith, Milton Friedman, et.al.? What is its main concern? How did Capitalism bear out from religious conviction?
2. In what manner has Capitalism destroyed the natural environment? What social responsibilities do corporations/businesses have?
3. In what way does the cultural consciousness of Creation spirituality found in religions become the remedy to the problem of the environment?
4. How can theological education contribute to the common project of healing the environment?

Methodology

The research was done in an expositional manner. Archival/library research was the method it utilized.

Conceptual Framework

The study uses an underpinning framework that seeks to understand the phenomenon of Capitalism versus Creation spirituality. The dialectical process of Karl Marx (1867/1990) and the theory and practice of Jurgen Habermas (1984) were used in explaining the seemingly opposing views espoused by Capitalism and Creation spirituality. To be particular, the assertion of Capitalism as an economic system supports a position (thesis) that it destroys the environment, while on the other hand, the assent for Creation spirituality serves as an antithesis of Capitalism as it promotes environmental wellbeing. The narrative on the conflict of these two opposing concepts is resolved by recommending to side with the one protecting the environment, while at

the same time, allowing a new awareness of Capitalism that respects the wellbeing of the environment (synthesis).

The thesis-antithesis-synthesis paradigm is a Hegelian/ Marxist approach in resolving contradictions in society. While at the same time, the Habermasian Critical theory brings about hope for equality via critical theory approach of the Frankfurt School tradition.

Discussion

To jumpstart this exposition, a short account on how the spirit of Capitalism was started is presented.

The Nascent Phase of the Capitalist's Consciousness

The cultural rationalization from which the structures of consciousness typical of modern societies emerge adopts cognitive, aesthetic-expressive, and moral-evaluative elements of religious tradition (Habermas, 1981). This rationalization (Weber, 1905) designates the growing autonomy of law and morality, which made its way within religious interpretive systems. Radicalized salvation prophecies led to a dichotomy – one, between a quest for salvation oriented to inner, spiritually sublimated, sacred values and means of redemption, and the other, the knowledge of objectivated, external world. Weber showed that the beginnings of an ethic of conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*) developed out of this religiosity of conviction (*Gesinnungsreligiousitat*) (Habermas, 1981). Likewise, corresponding to cultural rationalization at the level of the personality system, “methodical conduct of life,” whose motivational bases, is the most important factor in the rise of capitalism, according to Weber (1905). In the value orientations and behavioral dispositions of that style of life, he discovered the correlate in personality of a religiously anchored, principled, universalistic ethic of conviction which had taken hold of the strata that bore Capitalism. In the first place, then, ethical rationalism penetrates from the level of culture to that of the personality system. The concrete form of the Protestant ethic, which is centered on vocational conceptions, means that ethical rationalism provides the foundation for a cognitive-instrumental attitude to inner worldly happenings, in particular to social interactions in the domain of social labor (Habermas, 1981). To elucidate further, the *Sociology of Religion* by Max Weber would be of service.

In Max Weber's exposition from his only published book *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he argues that Western Capitalism was born out of some ethical and religious values and ideas. There he hypothesized that modern capitalism was engendered and legitimized by the theology brought about by the Protestant Reformation.

One of these Protestant theologies was the one propagated by John Calvin (1509-1564,) Calvinism. There he promulgates the idea that grace and sacraments do not secure one to attain salvation, for it is only the inscrutable will of God who will determine who will be saved and who will be eternally damned. However, the question who will be predestined to be saved and who will be predestined to be damned still lingers. Thus, as a kind of provisional answer, the idea of pre-destiny determined by one's actions (i.e., labor) comes about. In Calvinism, the ethics towards work is reconceptualized as a religious calling, making the Calvinist to conscientiously and actively fulfill his calling frequently, all throughout his lifetime. Work becomes his system of life for a Calvinist.

Pietism, another protestant group, founded by the German Lutheran theologian, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), emphasizes the intensified ascetic practices that are aimed at the attainment of a blissful community with God. This gives the asceticism of Pietism a mark of other-worldliness that is so different from Calvinism. Nevertheless, Pietism produced officials, clerks, laborers, domestic workers, and patriarchal employers that are all necessary for the modern capitalist order. Weber, however, argued that Pietism was not as effective in generating the capitalist's spirit as Calvinism does.

Methodism, founded by the English theologian John Wesley (1703-1791), is all about the methodical, and systematic regulation of the members' day to day conduct for the purpose of attaining the certainty of salvation. It has basically two stages. The first stage pertains to the emotional act of methodically inducing conversion. The second stage follows once the emotional feeling of conversion is attained, and thereby pertains to the rational struggle for perfection. In this manner, Methodism is closer to Calvinism, than it is to Pietism.

The several Anabaptists sects, that traces their origins to the two English Separatists, John Smyth (1570-1612) and Thomas Helwys (1550-1616), tries to emulate the early Christian communities of the apostles, and tends to avoid the world and its activities. However, through their idea of the continuous revelation by the spirit, their attitude towards the world and worldly activities has changed. The ongoing revelation of the

spirit created an attitude of silent waiting and listening among the Anabaptist sects. For them, this attitude of silent waiting and listening to the revelations of the spirit, means overcoming everything that is impulsive and irrational. For Weber, this attitude of silent waiting and listening has two possible outcomes: on one hand, it may create ecstatic outbreaks; and on the other hand, it may creep into the everyday workman's world. For the Anabaptist sects, it is the second possible outcome that has materialized. Since the Anabaptists were prohibited from engaging in services for the state, the ethic of careful and deliberate weighing of courses of action first saturated the domestic sphere and then vented out to commerce and industry.

Weber claimed that Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and the several Anabaptists sects brought about a new paradigm of worldly asceticism that has created a whole new system of values that is very different from the traditional model. Protestantism created a mentality where leisure, enjoyment and waste of time are stigmatized as deadly sins; where bodily and mental labors are man's vocation; and where division of labor is emphasized. This new mentality is what caused the emergence, as well as the legitimation, of the spirit of Capitalism.

But what is the nature of Capitalism in the first place?

Capitalism, at its finest (or worst)?

The book of the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790), *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), theorizes the nature of Capitalism. Capitalism, in a nutshell, is a system of social organization by which private money-making (the build-up of capital, of "herds" of money) is its principal end. He defends this way of organizing human affairs on moral sense overturning religious admonitions that one should repudiate selfishness. Free and mutually beneficial trade, according to him, does a better job of assuring the general welfare than either selfless sharing or charity does. Smith (1776) has this to say, viz.,

But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that

which I want, and you shall have this which you want is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages (pp. 30-31).

From this statement, one can have an impression of Smith's view about the necessity and expectancy of human selfishness/ self-love expressed in amassing of profit in the Capitalistic system. Yet, one may also ask, "how about social responsibility by businesses and corporations?" Milton Friedman (1912-2006), in his seminal book *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962/2002), has this to say, viz.,

This view shows a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy. In such an economy, there is one and only one social responsibility of business - to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud (p. 133).

Likewise, a capitalist supports the society in such way, as Friedman quoting on Adam Smith (1776, Bk. IV, chap. ii, p. 421) elaborates,

led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good (p. 133).

Friedman (1962/2002) further justifies the dis-orientation of social responsibility with business enterprise as follows,

Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible. This is a fundamentally subversive doctrine. If businessmen do have a social responsibility other than making maximum profits for stockholders, how are they to know what it is? Can self-selected private individuals decide what the social interest is? Can they decide how great a burden they are justified in placing on themselves or their stockholders to serve that social interest? Is it tolerable that these public functions of taxation, expenditure, and control be exercised by the people who happen at the moment to be in charge of particular enterprises, chosen for those posts by strictly private groups? (pp. 133-134)

In the same way, according to Joel Bakan (2004) in his book *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*,

The corporation is an institution... a legal institution, one whose existence and capacity to operate depend upon the law. The corporation's legally defined mandate is to pursue, relentlessly and without exception, its own self-interest, regardless of the often-harmful consequences it might cause to others. (pp.1-2)

This self-interest for one's gain of profit in business, and conversely, the rejection of the capitalist's social responsibility, will prove to be an oversight from its 'wielders,' as destruction of the environment emanates.

Capitalists' Responsibility to the Natural Environment

The present economic scheme of globalized mass production runs counter to HOW NATURE WORKS: to generate and regenerate ("waste equals food"). It does not care where resources come from, or what roles they play and what roles they are for in the Community of Life in home milieus. Therefore, it does not only contribute to the destruction of social-environmental ecologies, but generates one of the great periods of species extinction in history, the first in human hands (Rasmussen, 2005). For

instance, every time plastic is utilized and “dispose” of, it cannot be expected to go back to the ground and generate life again. They remain to be some oddities of environment, and thus, of life.

The present globalizing economy also amplifies the negative impact of ignoring nature’s essence: DIVERSITY. Life thrives in variations. Diversity will always be the way of nature to continue life in each place. Saint Thomas Aquinas wisely noted that multiplicity and variety “come from the intention of the first agent” who willed that “what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another”, inasmuch as God’s goodness “could not be represented fittingly by any one creature”. “Hence, we need to grasp the variety of things in their multiple relationships (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 63).” The present global economy does not incorporate adaptability and sustainability into the very fabric of locality. It prefers globalized “development,” sustainable or otherwise, rather than complex local and regional sustainable society and community, thereby runs against the grain of nature itself and creation’s integrity (Rasmussen, 2005). Can this be regarded as another form of Neo-colonialism?

Capitalism does not live off solar income. Rather, it extracts from the one-time endowment of the earth in ways that threaten sustainability for present and future generations. It serves a crowded planet that has high consumption rates, particularly in rich quarters, increasing exponentially in population every year. Yet, present economic theory and practice do not have routine ways to measure carrying capacity, mainly because the biological life central to the economy of nature is absent in the equations of Capitalism’s global economy (Rasmussen, 2005). Nature respects balance and moderation. The global economy, on the other hand, thrives on surplus and greed.

This research is not to generalize that all capitalists are evil, but when asked, how to resolve the havoc caused to the environment? This is the offer:

Archie Carroll (2008) gave his four-forms of social responsibilities of businesses, viz.,

*First of these is the **Economic responsibilities**. This is the orientation to produce goods and services that society wants and to sell them at fair prices... Second, as a partial fulfillment of the social contract, it (society) has also laid down the ground rules—the laws—under which business is*

expected to operate. **Legal responsibilities** reflect a view of “codified ethics” in the sense that they embody basic notions of fairness as established by our lawmakers... Third, **Ethical responsibilities** embody the range of norms, standards, and expectations that reflect a concern for what consumers, employees, shareholders, and the community regard as fair, just, or in keeping with the respect for or protection of stakeholders’ moral rights... Fourth, there are business’s **voluntary/discretionary, or philanthropic, responsibilities**. These activities are purely voluntary, guided only by business’s desire to engage in social activities that are not mandated, not required by law, and not generally expected of business in an ethical sense. Such activities might include establishing loaned executive programs in the community, giving to charitable causes, providing day-care centers for working parents, initiating adopt-a-school programs, and conducting in-house programs for drug abusers (pp. 33-34) (Emphasis supplied).

But just as these abovementioned responsibilities are identified, it does not mean, however, that they are being practiced religiously, i.e., unless “something” would prompt them to carry out that “responsibility,” particularly the responsibility of being philanthropic.

David Rieff (2015) studied the philanthrocapitalist Bill Gates to arrive with an answer. Gates mentioned in an entry from his blog (Gates Notes) dated at the end of 2013, that the best books he had read that year, while he enjoyed fiction, “I (He) read mostly nonfiction because I (he) always want to learn more about how the world works”. Rieff (2015) commented that such statement does not seem to occur to Gates that music or culture, in general, also speak of how the world works, which likewise, cannot be learned elsewhere. Furthermore, in the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Annual Letter of 2013*, Gates was heard repeatedly saying, “You can achieve amazing progress if you set a clear goal and find a measure that will drive progress towards that goal.” Or in its longer version, as he once put it, the crucial things in his foundation’s work are setting clear goals, picking the right approach, and then measuring results to get feedback and refine the approach continually (Rieff, 2015).

What is missing from all of these, which philanthrocapitalists have overlooked, like Gates, is the understanding that people make choices that may seem incomprehensible from an econometric point of

view, or irrational from the perspective of those who believe that the state exists in part to mitigate human being's propensity to make choices that are against their long-term interests (Sunstein, 2014). Yet, that makes eminent good sense to them and they are unlikely to be "nudged" into relinquishing (Rieff, 2015). What is undeniable is their contention that the rationalist expectations of the development world (were) founded on the shoals of culture, custom, and human psychology (Rieff, 2015). Thus, whatever the current developmentalist orthodoxy may be, the fundamental problems of the world have always been moral, not technological (Rieff, 2015). Or as Angus Deaton criticized "the 'hydraulic' approach" to development aid, "You cannot develop other people's countries from the outside with a shopping list for Home Depot, no matter how much you spend" (Rieff, 2015). It has to come from within. And indeed, money is not the main problem, nor the solution with the aforesaid methods.

Similarly, if Capitalism had originated from a religious cultural-consciousness (Weber, 1905) resulting to a system, that at the same time brings death to social relations and to the environment, can it be possible then that another cultural-consciousness serves as "antidote" that could change the people's outlook about reality (worldview), the processes of their social relations, and their misinformed eminence over their natural environment?

A Creation-conscious Spirituality

The fall-redemption spirituality, propounded by St. Augustine of Hippo, was given certain stature in the (Catholic) Christian tradition for the longest time now, giving some bearing on the moral outlook of the modern wo/man. While this spirituality gives a moral impetus for practice that reconciles and nurture relationships – with God and with our fellow humans, the issue of human relationships with the environment, however, is side-stepped. It seems, though, this type of spirituality has been falling short in determining the proper way of relating with the natural environment. For instance, the fall-redemption spirituality sees the world to be impure and so one must be freed from it. Likewise, the world is being treated as belonging to the flesh, where it needs to be chastised. Such view of the world (ethic/spirituality) does not just bring about duality in the relationship with the world (physical environment), but even worse, animosity towards it. Thus, the fall-redemption spirituality is

not enough or even appropriate to deal with our environmental problem. A paradigm-shift, therefore, must be considered to bring about real change in viewing the nature of the problem with nature.

Matthew Fox (1983) argues that the creation tradition has been forgotten almost entirely as religion by theologians, and that only artists, poets, scientists, feminists, and political prophets are the only ones keeping it alive. Creation spirituality is a tradition that is historically and biblically rooted. It also claims its communion of Saints. However, it is rather new to culture, that the creation-centered spirituality is barely given attention by the Christian religion, unlike the fall-redemption spirituality. In his book *Original Blessing*, he presented the “Four Paths of Creation spirituality.” First in the list, is the path of the positive (*via positiva*) where the “tasting” of beauty and cosmic depths of creation happens in forms of affirmation, thanksgiving and ecstasy (pp.33-34). As the creative energy (*Dabhar*) is always active, imaginative and playful, a creation-centered person should be likewise, sensitive, aware, alive and awake. This affirmation of blessedness, accordingly, must always be recalled. Second to this is the path of the negative (*via negativa*). Simply put, it is the stage of befriending darkness, self-emptying and letting go (pp. 175-176). There is no *via negativa* without *via positiva*, entailing here an intricate relationship of the different stages in Creation spirituality. Embracing both pleasure (*via positiva*) and pain (*via negativa*), light and darkness, tension and struggle, the product of polarities is what the third path is all about (*via creativa*). This is the rebirthing of “dabhar,” a product of the dialectical consciousness (p. 210), manifested through arts and other artistic expressions. Pope Francis (2015) describes it in the same way, “God in some way sought to limit himself in such a way that many of the things we think of as evils, dangers or sources of suffering, are in reality part of the pains of childbirth which he uses to draw us into the act of cooperation with the Creator” (p. 58). Nevertheless, genuine creativity cannot remain in a romantic sense, it should lead one towards transformation and emancipation of those around him/her. This is the fourth path, *via transformativa*. It is the renewal of creation towards a renewed-centered life, i.e., in renewing relationships where erotic justice, love, compassion reigns over contemplation (p. 247).

Thus, unlike the Augustinian fall-redemption spirituality, the Christian spirituality of creation works on the idea that, humans are **originally blessed**, blessed abundantly by the gifts of nature bestowed by God. Creation spirituality works on the **celebration of the innate human goodness**, on **creative energies** directed by one’s **passion (eros) and**

imagination conferred by the divine. This, consequently, makes humans **co-creators and healers** of this world (universe) – to bring things **whole and new**. This is made possible as creative works become the **embodiment of what is creative and good in each individual**, found in the work of each hands, in words that reflect the truth, in the voice that expresses the deepest selves, but most of all, in the beautiful things people create, reflected in songs, in poems, **in varied forms of art**, and **in the fullest union of each one with the divine, in prayers and rituals**. And since it encourages individual creativity, those who involve themselves in such project can actually work together without forcing on each other's capacity (level of contribution) or capability (talent) to bring about the desired result. By this, the project driven by Creation spirituality becomes **community-building, a liturgy** par excellence! (Fox, 1983).

This necessity for rituals akin to this principle is found in Diarmuid O' Murchu's (2004) *Quantum Theology* 9th Principle, "Because we are primarily beneficiaries of light (and not of darkness) and our final destiny – both here and eternally – is that of enlightenment, we all need those sacred moments ritualistic/sacramental space, serving as heightened encounters with the sustaining mystery that enfolds us." Thus, the essentiality of rituals is ontologically in everyone, which upon practice makes the truest form in each one. Teilhard de Chardin (1975) precisely captured this in a line saying, "We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences." Likewise, it is said that humans are innately spiritual, and that includes all other life forms. And when the proper timing happens (maturation), humans cannot but ritualize their relationship with the divine mystery (O' Murchu, 2004). This is so, because "the ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things" (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 60).

Capitalism versus Creation spirituality

With the abovementioned characteristics of Creation spirituality, it becomes the soul in the too avaricious, materialistic values promoted by Capitalism. Thus, to put this two cultural consciousness vis-à-vis:

Capitalism unlike Creation spirituality does not work on the person's creative imagination or on his/her passion, since it is more concerned with the quantity of products a laborer can produce for the

capitalist to profit. The work of the laborer does not reflect his/her person; instead there is a depersonalization happening to him/her as he/she is just working to “deliver the goods”. His creative energies are relegated to the interests of the capitalist. And so, a commodification of his/her fruit of labor happens (Marx, 1990 [1867]). There the worker becomes alienated to his work, from his nature as a creative being, as co-creator and a healer. He/ She is, likewise, alienated from his own fruits of labor thus, there is no true ownership and sense of responsibility from his/her part, which consequently, there could be no real enjoyment for him/her out of fulfillment, or a celebration out of a rewarding task (Marx, 1990 [1867]). It cannot be ritualized!

As creative energies are stymied in a capitalist-driven environment, there is an absence of variations in people’s products. Like products that are manufactured in factories, where uniformity is reproduced guised as “quality-standard”, culture becomes stultified and ready-made as well. This is expected since art is lost, because the ones who should give soul to it is nowhere to be found. And so, mass and popular culture proliferates. And as products become pop (popular), uniformed, and life-less, their worth becomes valuable only in their utilitarian sense (Critical Theory). While this seems to be innocent at first glance, this in turn influences the valuation of oneself and others because the power of social setting directs thinking and behavior. This is the case with the way one looks at work and spending in the present day. Take for instance the values that most advertisements show. While they seem to uphold some noble values like intimacies in the family, friends, or with special loved ones, in the end, the endorsement of products still takes the center stage, like in the tag-line of a certain advertisement: “Love ko ‘to.” The power of advertisements creates in consumers a very influential illusion – *false needs*, making each one believes that what can fill the longings or void in the individual (which only real intimacy can complete) could be satisfied by the products that the capitalists offer. Another deceptive-approach that sways people to act in their interest is to make them believe that once they patronized certain products, they will become unique, if not a cut above the rest. Sociologists called this modus pseudo-individualization (Critical Theory). It is pseudo because the products in the capitalist’s setting are illusory diverse. And when products seem to be new, unique, or different, a critical outlook will tell consumers that they are just “different packaging” wrapped in jargons and visuals purposely placed to entice or confuse them to purchase. This is expected in capitalist’s products because, again, there is no real art in them. They are not real art because they do not reflect the creativity of their maker,

there is no soul in them; they are pure “matter” manufactured by the bulk by mechanized noesis.

Likewise, it must be noted that workers in the capitalist’s setting do not really co-operate with one another, they compete (Marx, 1990 [1867]). And if ever they work together, they do so because they were told by those who hired them. The most likely reason for this is to prompt them for the on-time delivery of “goods”. Compare this, on the other hand, with the work of volunteers, who really give themselves in the service of others. They put their heart and soul in what they do to contribute for the betterment of the community, or even the larger society. And what drives them to do such is their passion for life, not the wage or fame they gain from doing it. A perfect example of this would be the kind of cooperation present to those who work and live in rural communities where the “bayanihan” spirit still lingers. Contrasting this to the urban milieu where the wage-earners are slaves of their work, such as those found busy dashing in their cubicles dubbed as “work-stations”. There is neither spirituality, nor real passion/creativity in those kinds of work, making the workers self-centered and myopic in their view.

This is the cultural consciousness of the un-critical mass driven mainly by materialism, likened to economic-driven “automatons” serving only the powers that be.

So how does one empower oneself to be liberated from this enslaving, functionalist-control by the capitalistic-system, so one can grow holistically and start the healing? Or probably, the better question to ask is, “How can Creation spirituality, as a cultural consciousness, reflected in religions, become the counterbalance to Capitalist’s value-system, and in turn become the antidote to the socio-environmental sickness?”

Again, if Western Capitalism, according to Max Weber (1905), was borne out of cultural consciousness influenced by the Protestant Reformation theology i.e., Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and some sects of Baptist, how could this be not the case with the Chinese and Indian religions, when compared to the theology, philosophy and spirituality of the Protestant religions? It is apposite, therefore, to examine the reason for the implausibility of the latter religions (Asian) to be the fertile ground for Capitalism to grow. Conversely, as these religions reflect more of the philosophy of Creation spirituality in them.

Nevertheless, in the great task of re-creating a culture, this time in the global extent, truly the help of each one of us can offer is much needed. Since the crisis that looms today is global, they affect all persons equally, whether Christian, Buddhist, or agnostic; whether capitalist or communist; whether black, white, yellow, brown, or red, whether old or young, whether rich or poor; First world or Third world. The crisis of ecology undeniably affects everyone! (Fox, 1983). Again, in the *Original Blessing*, Fox (1983) tried to integrate the wisdom of both Eastern and Western spiritualities, and global indigenous cultures, with the emerging scientific understanding of the universe, and the passion for creativity. Creation spirituality is both a tradition and a movement. It is a tradition, since the historical Jesus himself embraced the wisdom tradition of Israel. It is a movement, since it is being celebrated by mystics and agents of social change from every age and culture. Or as Pope Francis (2015) puts it, “If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it” (pp. 45-46).

The following discussion brings this forth.

Different Divine Perceptions (God in relation to the world)

Theism is the perception and belief of the divine (God) to be immanent in the world, yet transcends it. Believers considered their God to intervene in the affairs of the world though apart from it. Some believed that this God is a single entity as one Supreme Being (monotheism). Others think that the divine is separated into a specific number of separate but interactive entities (polytheism) like in Hinduism. Still, some emphasized that God is personal and actively involved in the created order. This includes Judaism, Christianity, Islam and some sects within Hinduism.

Pantheism (literally means “all is God/ God is all”) is the perception and belief that God and the physical universe as a whole are one. It is as if God is everything, and everything is God. This religious belief is commonly found in primal religions, especially with those that involve nature or animal worship. Today the main pantheistic religions being practiced in the world are Wicca, and some sects within Hinduism. Likewise, most of the indigenous peoples practice traditional religions that are pantheistic in essence.

Panentheism (literally means “all-in-God”) is the perception and belief that the divine pervades and interpenetrates every part of the universe and also extends beyond time and space. This is the kind of divine perception where the principle of Creation spirituality is clearly found. Several Asian religions adhere to this. The most manifest of these is Taoism.

In a nutshell, the TAO is believed to be the eternal, all pervading, inexhaustible, source of all things. It is THE WAY of all things, the way of the Universe, the rhythm, ordering principle behind all life. It is the womb from which all life springs and to which it returns. The ‘Tao’ is the integration of contrast (Yin-yang): active-passive, light-dark, male-female, positive-negative. In the infinite universe, ‘yin and yang’ are eternally fluctuating and that all things partake of varying quantities of each. Nothing is all Yin, nothing is all Yang, everything contains the seed of the opposite (other). They do not really oppose but complement and balance each other. Each of these opposites creates tension between its complementary antagonistic elements. Between them they generate the pulsation and breathing of the universe. Just as the positive and negative poles of battery, creating a flow of electrons, the Yin-yang also produces a current called *chi* or *qi*. According to its philosophy, the universe works harmoniously in its own ways, i.e. when one exerts his/her will against the world which is out of rhythm with the cycles of change, there may be a disruption in harmony. Unintended consequences may more likely result from it rather than the willed outcome. Thus, the consciousness to seek attunement with way of nature is very profound in Taoism.

This panentheistic understanding has also developed in the past two centuries in the Christian tradition responding to scientific thought (Clayton and Peacocke, 2004a). But even in the earlier times one can already refer to Christian mystics supporting the same belief. As St. Thomas Aquinas declared, “Each and every creature exists for the perfection of the entire universe.” “All things are united according to friendship to each other and to God” (1917). Likewise, Meister Eckart stated, “My mouth expresses and reveals God but the existence of a stone does the same” (*Speech 53, DW II, p. 535*). Equally, Hildegard of Bingen proclaimed, “God has composed the world out of its elements for the glory of God’s name. God has strengthened it with winds, bound and illuminated it with stars, and filled it with other creatures” (Fox, 1987).

Other mystics from non-Christian religions, as well as sacred texts, also support the same thought. According to Ibn Al-Arabi (n.d.),

In as much as God's Essence is Independent of the words, the cosmos is not He, but in as much as God freely assumes relationships with the words through attributes such as creativity and generosity the cosmos manifests the He. If we examine anything in the universe, God is independent of that thing and infinitely exalted beyond it. He is "incomparable" (tanzih) with each thing and all things. But at the same time each thing displays one or more of God's attributes, and in this respect the thing must be said to be "similar" (tashbih) in some way to God.

The ancient Hindu scripture *Bhagavad-Gita* expresses this same panentheistic thought poetically, "O Universal form, I see in your body many, many arms, bellies, mouths and eyes, expanded everywhere, without limit" (11.16).

Thich Nhat Hanh (1999), a Buddhist scholar has this to say,

One thing is made up of all things. One thing contains the whole cosmos... A piece of bread contains sunshine... Without a cloud, the wheat cannot grow. So, when you eat the piece of bread, you eat the cloud, the sunshine, you eat the minerals, time, space and everything.

Chief Seattle (1854) of the Suquamish and Duwamish tribes, a Native American mystic has remarked,

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect." "All things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man... the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports.

Creation-conscious Spirituality within Religions

Religions are not their creeds; they are more than their belief-systems. A religion expresses a subjective relationship to a certain metaphysical, extramundane factor. The meaning and purpose of religion lie in the relationship of the individual to God (i.e., Christianity, Judaism and Islam) or to the path of salvation and liberation (i.e., Buddhism). From this basic fact all ethics are derived, which without the individual's

responsibility before God can be called nothing more than conventional morality (Jung, 1957). Coming from this argument, one can deduce that a perception of the divine does not fully comprise a religion, or make one an adherent of it (become religious). Thus, in principle, a theist's and panentheist's view can be both present in one and the same adherent of a certain religion. Applying C. G. Jung's (1957) aforementioned definition of religion, a person who adheres in one, personal, involved God manifesting his divinity in the affairs of the world (theist), can also have confidence that this same God is present in the created world (panentheist). In other words, a Jew, a Christian, and a Moslem although have a perception of the divine in a monotheistic manner, may likewise, adhere to a panentheistic view of the divine. Thus, conformity to a certain religious view, i.e. Panentheist's, would not dissolve another (e.g. Theist's), instead, would enlarge it. Likewise, a Christian who views God as a Redeemer, does not negate nor diminish God's other persona as Sustainer, as Creator, and so on and so forth, when that person experienced God differently in another instance. The tragedy, however, happens when one gives too much attention to one particular view of God, and turn a blind eye to God's other great realities. In fact, if one really respects God's nature, it cannot be assumed that God could only be viewed from one end, or one's end. So, adherents of certain religions cannot be expected to have only one view and experience of the divine. They may always have a plurality of God-experience, more so, if the experience they had was first-hand (personal).

While spirituality would still be seen to be different from religion, what is definitive is that, spirituality is more all-encompassing and holistic, meaning spirituality crosses different religious convictions. However, it is undeniable that spirituality is found more tangibly in religions.

Coming from this thought, Christianity should not only have the Augustinian fall-redemption spirituality. Christianity's rich tradition involves Creation spirituality as well. In fact, this is already present since the inception of the faith (Fox, 1983). Thus, Creation spirituality must be brought to the fore more than ever, that is, if desired to bring about real change in the human consciousness. The Augustinian fall-redemption spirituality falls short in responding and healing the wounded relationship humanity has with the natural world. Therefore, it is only by this that one can truly respond appropriately to the environmental "dis-eases" brought about by humanity's predisposed Capitalist-mentality.

Conclusion

Religious culture to counteract Capitalism's "dis-eases"

If Capitalism brought with it a "massification" and de-personalization of individuals, reflective of the cultural industry, which results to a social consciousness-con-praxis that leads to the destruction of the natural environment, then religion as a personal ascent to the metaphysical and extramundane, would be the cultural-consciousness that will serve as antidote to counter-balance it. It is not ethical principles, however orthodox, that lay the foundations for the freedom and autonomy of the individual, but simply and solely the empirical awareness, and incontrovertible experience of an intensely personal, reciprocal relationship between man and extramundane authority which acts as a counterpoise to the "world" and its "reason" (Jung, 1957, p. 22). The psychological opposition between these two realms of experience is not only vouched for in the New Testament but is still exemplified very plainly today in the negative attitude of the Church to atheism and materialism (Jung, 1957, p. 23). The individual will never find the real justification for his existence, and his own spiritual and moral autonomy, anywhere except in the extramundane principle capable of relativizing the overpowering influence of external factors. The individual who is not anchored in God can offer no resistance on his own resources to the physical and moral blandishment of the world. For this he needs the evidence of inner, transcendent experience which alone can protect him from the otherwise inevitable submission of the mass. Merely intellectual or even moral insight into the stultification and moral irresponsibility of the mass man is a negative recognition only, and amounts to not much more than a wavering on the road to the atomization of the individual. It lacks the driving force of religious conviction, since it is merely rational (Jung, 1957, p. 23).

Pope Francis (2015) in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si*, calls every one of goodwill for a moral and spiritual transformation in their connection to Earth's ecosystems. He says, caring for creation is as old as Genesis, as clear as the Sermon on the Mount, and as transformative as St. Francis of Assisi. This transformative way of St. Francis is what Creation spirituality, in essence, is all about.

Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human. Just as happens when we fall in love with

someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them "to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason". His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. Such a conviction cannot be written off as naive romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behaviour. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously (pp. 10-11).

Further, the Pope expounds: "Ecological culture... needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational programme, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm. Otherwise, even the best ecological initiatives can find themselves caught up in the same globalized logic" (Pope Francis, 2015, pp. 83-84).

Recommendation

A Call to a Renewed Theology

If the cultural consciousness of religion is the answer to the malaise caused by the un-natural relationships and processes caused by misinformed mindsets in life, then only in paradigm-shift can it be holistically and radically heal the waning condition of the Mother Earth.

Education, in my opinion, is still the primary course of action we should have if we want to change the ways of people. A call to **a renewed paradigm in doing theology** is necessary, if religions will be the leading impetus for our change of ways. Theology can no longer belong to Christianity, nor to any formal religion; it has to become an agent for global transformations. We must do theology at the heart of the world,

and not in the confines of church or formal religion. The theological encounter becomes most creative when we engage with the pressing global issues of our time. Likewise, in its global praxis, theology must seek to demolish dualism, i.e., to outgrow all human constructs, and pursue intimacy with the skills and discernment of a multidisciplinary imagination (O' Murchu, 2004).

In the educational milieu for instance, tertiary theological contents do not reflect/ include the concept of Creation spirituality. Catechetical ministry, likewise, concerns itself more with the fall-redemption (sin-salvation) type of spirituality. An inclusion therefore of Creation spirituality (Fox, 1983) is called for. Religious educators and catechists are, likewise, beckoned "to understand" (phenomenologically speaking) Creation spirituality, or better still, to become living witnesses of it.

Second, a review ("see again") of the **deep understanding of the real values of religion** must also take place. While religions would generally have the elements of creed (faith conviction), code (ethic/morals), and cultic acts (rituals), spirituality, however, is just closely found in the elements of morals/ ethics, and in the "linguistification" of sacraments (rituals). The Four Paths of Creation spirituality (Fox, 1983) must be revisited. Contemplation must become a landmark of theology; while the pursuit of justices becomes its dominant praxis. And all the rest becomes a window dressing, useful, but not essential (O' Murchu, 2004). This being said, religions' essence is "felt" in their transformative and creative elements. In this case, the active elements of religion, seen in the quality-kind of relationships their adherents concretized in dealing with their fellow, especially with those who are in need, (this time including the environment "his sister"), must be endorsed the most.

Third, as "Life is sustained by a creative energy, fundamentally benign in nature. With a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm, and pattern. Creation is sustained by a superhuman, pulsating restlessness, a type of resonance vibrating throughout time and eternity" (O' Murchu, 2004). Humans need to co-operate with this God and the divine that are described as a creative energy, which is perceived to include, but also supersede, everything traditional theology attributes to God (O' Murchu, 2004). This **co-operation to care for the earth** should be a priority agenda of the different religions. A common plan of action to respond to the call of healing the environment is a unifying force for religions to dialogue, participate, and work together. The alliance between economy and technology ends up sidelining anything unrelated

to its immediate interests. Consequently, the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment... (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 40). While community-service in many forms are practicable, an integration of the values of Creation spirituality to one's everyday life, however, is still the best way to articulate that common care for the earth. Application of new technology and without any need for ethical considerations or deep change (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 43) can only get us far if not, treacherous. It is here once again, that we should underscore the importance of evangelization/ education to care for the earth. It could, in fact, become more resolute if the primary mandate of every faith tradition now includes Creation spirituality in their preaching and teachings.

In the end, the common project of different religions, the conviction to work for the common good (of the earth) is crucial and urgently needed at this time. Theologians, religious educators, catechists, imams, priests, rabbis, gurus, spiritual masters, religious activists, preachers, teachers, and scholars must do their share and act now. We need urgently to walk the talk, as well as, converse what needs to be traversed!

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THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED

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