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Yale Divinity School

“Thy Brother's Blood Crieth Unto Me from the Ground”:

The White Body and “Its Land”

Toward An Anglican Sacramental and Eco-Liberation Theology

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Sacred Theology
at Yale Divinity School

5/4/2023

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Rev. Dr. Justin Crisp

by Ryan Felder

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I. Introduction

This project seeks to realize an Anglican soteriological subject through the intersecting lens of white supremacy, capitalist social relations, colonial and extractivist eschatology, and ecological crisis within the framework of racial colonial modernity. I intend to describe the soteriological horizons of the white liberal subjectivity formed by the concomitant emergence of land enclosure, racial capitalism, and colonialism in 17th-century Anglican thought. In doing so, I hope to articulate a 17th-century white Anglican subject whose soteriological horizon – that is, the embodied and politically-applied feeling of salvation directed towards reconciliation and absolution – is materially constituted by the acquisition of and maintenance of private property. In doing so, I hope to construct an alternative consociate, an ecological Anglican soteriological subject not bound to the possessive colonial and white supremacist logics.

In determining, the Anglican soteriological subject as it relates to the possession of private property, my thesis construes a timeline of the emergence of private property beginning in the early 1600s with the emergence of the phenomenon of land enclosure. As a historical conjuncture between feudalism and early liberal modernity, the transition from the feudal system of manorial land ownership to land enclosure is generally considered a significant transition to what would become English agrarian capitalism. Crystallizing in the labor theory of property in John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, I contend that Locke's appropriation of Richard Hooker's natural law theory represents the usurpation of divine authority away from the monarchy and established church to the emerging propertied, mercantilist class. Whereas Hooker

is held up as a hinge between medieval and early modern thought, I construe Locke's use of Hooker's natural law as a usurpation of divine right from the monarchical state to a state that perpetuates the emerging institutions of private property.

As its focus, my thesis explores notions of divine authority nested in the body and land: from the body of the King to the body of the nation as a union of Church and State to the individual bodies of white liberal property owners. This is accomplished primarily by outlining a political theology of the authoritative body: from the hypostatic union of the monarch's body politic and mortal body to Hooker's grace-linked body, which participates in the body of the Church, to the property-bound white body, which participates in the "improvement" and possession of land as private property. With the genealogy of divine authority outlined, I seek to establish a soteriological subject whose inheritance is a legacy of violence, dispossession, and colonization. Alternatively, through investigating forms of theological and political resistance to land enclosure, I seek to recover and establish an Anglican soteriological subject capable of participating in eco-liberation. This entails, as I will argue, a return to Richard Hooker's notions of natural law and the conceptions of ecological subjectivity that 17th-century dissenter Gerard Winstanley espoused in his political and theological writings.

Historical Method

Throughout this paper, I utilize both a historical and political theological methodological approach for contesting the epistemology of white liberal subjectivity formed by racial colonial modernity. As delineated by Tiainen, Leiviska, and Brunila, these principled methodologies

encompass three key dimensions: (1) engaging with history as a realm of possibility, (2) promoting a liberative ethic of intervention, and (3) facilitating processes of democratization.

Firstly, the conceptualization and practice of history as a realm of possibility encourages the challenging of deterministic interpretations of historical events and instead considers history as a stage for potential alternative outcomes. This approach entails recognizing historical situations as existing within systemic constraints that must be identified and acted upon. The development of such understanding is facilitated by exposing limit-situations, a concept derived from Freirean thought, which refers to an individual's simultaneous awareness of their separation from conditioning structures, the limitations imposed by these structures on humanization, and the potential for their transformation.¹ In the present historical context, Tiainen, Leiviska, and Brunila identify the teleological assumptions of racial colonial modernity as an impediment to recognizing limit-situations.²

For this paper, 17th-century land enclosure and accompanying theo-ideologies are understood as both limit-situations and realms of possibilities from which history crystallized around the accumulation of power in private property and white liberal subjectivity. This historical trajectory and outcome are discernible through examining past political and liberation struggles, exploring the history of political decisions and historical developments that have shaped the world's current configuration, and emphasizing humans' presence in the world as conditioned beings and decision-makers. This process highlights the contingent nature of social organization, which is grounded in concrete human decision-making rather than autonomous, law-like processes.

¹ Katariina Tiainen, Anniina Leiviskä, Kristiina Brunila (2019), "Democratic Education for Hope: Contesting the Neoliberal Common Sense." *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, v 38, n 6, p 648.

² Ibid, p. 649.

Furthermore, I contend that employing both non-contemporaneous and contemporaneous currents in historical thinking refines the approach to developing history as a realm of possibility within racial colonial modernity. That is, I recognize that promises and desired objects within historical narratives are both unfulfilled and continuously desired in contemporary contexts despite contemporaneous conditions no longer necessarily matching the circumstances in which non-contemporaneous desires were formed.³ In this paper, the multi-temporality of 17th-century England and contemporary apprehensions of racial colonial modernity are held by retrieving, examining, and appropriating the non-contemporaneous narratives of salvation and liberation present in historical examinations of the period as they contend with relationality with Creation, the body, and land.

Secondly, borrowing from Tiainen, Leiviska, and Brunila, I seek to retrieve and advocate for a liberative ethic of intervention, which is intrinsically linked to the perception and practice of history as a realm of possibility. This ethical imperative calls for individuals to assume responsibility for their actions, actively engage in shaping the present historical moment, and intervene in the world.⁴ A crucial aspect of this approach is the interruption of white liberal subjectivity as it is formed in racial colonial modernity. Within racial colonial modernity, I contend in this paper that white liberal subjectivity seeks self-actualization, salvation, and reconciliation with God through possessing and mastery over private property. To disrupt the

³The objective and subjective non-contemporaneous concept is a concept developed by Ernst Bloch in *The Heritage of Our Times* (1935). Opposite of what he terms the subjective and objective contemporaneous, the objective non-contemporaneous is a form of temporal alienation in which the circumstances and hopes of older forms of production and superstructures continue to influence analysis of the present. The objective non-contemporaneous actively embraces “declining remnants and above all an unrefurbished past which is not yet resolved in capitalist terms” (109). Subjectively, this is experienced as resentment, alienation, and accumulated rage (112). Conversely, the subjective and objective contemporaneous is experienced as the prevented future contained in the Now, the present technological blessing, the prevented new society with which the old is pregnant in its forces of production (112). Due to a present historical situation composed of a multi-layered, multi-temporal dialectic in which differing segments of populations exist subjectively and objectively in varying states of non-contemporaneity and contemporaneity, non-contemporaneous solutions to current problem should not be dismissed as mere nostalgia or

⁴ Ibid, pp. 649-650.

reproduction of individual private property regimes and the greater racial regimes of ownership constitutive of racial colonial modernity, I provide critical distance from the soteriologies of racial colonial modernity by elaborating their historical production within the hegemonic crises and context of 17th-century land enclosure. In doing so, I isolate the emerging white liberal subjectivity in its historical context, thus, providing a framework for alternative soteriological subjectivities capable of intervening in historical and contemporary contexts.

Thirdly, democratization entails a continuous, collective, and transformative endeavor to construct concrete historical alternatives or "blueprints" that diverge from racial colonial modernity. Tiainen, Leiviska, and Brunila perceive democratization as a process of creation, re-creation, and re-making that holds normative value while remaining fundamentally uncertain and open-ended.⁵ In order to undermine entrenched teleological and theo-ideological visions, I concur with Tiainen, Leiviska, and Brunila that democratization endeavors to connect utopian visions to concrete, realistic, and pursuable political alternatives that are collectively and historically formed.⁶ This process of concretization can be achieved by revealing history as a realm of possibility through non-contemporaneous and contemporaneous analysis and practice, cultivating an alternative soteriological subjectivity, and collectively retrieving tangible, alternative objects of hope that are not dictated by logics of racial colonial modernity. Engaging in dialogical negotiation on how to work toward these objects is intrinsic to this process.

In the context of this paper, the retrieval of an alternative soteriological subjectivity and the collective articulation of alternatives to racial colonial modernity is formulated through a return to Richard Hooker's sacramental ontology and an embrace of Gerard Winstanely's theo-political critique of private property. Democratization, in this way, becomes what I will

⁵ Ibid, pp. 649-650.

⁶ Ibid.

elaborate on as a soteriological subjectivity of creaturely consociation or an ecclesial intersubjectivity in which "everyone has the opportunity to be subject, in which everyone has the opportunity to act and, through their actions, bring their beginnings and initiatives into the world of difference and plurality."⁷ This is accomplished by providing a return to a human consociation grounded in a natural law that communicates God's intention in Creation through the intersecting realities of ecological crisis and human oppression as the beginning of salvific history.

Theological and Sacramental Method

In retrieving a soteriological subjectivity from Richard Hooker from the Lockean emergence of the liberal individual in the 17th-century context of land enclosure, I seek to counter the secularization and automatization of the white liberal subject – or at least provide an alternative latent subjectivity in the historical development of racial colonial modernity. Theologically, it is vital to note that my thesis and methodology flow from John Milbank's well-known assertion that secularism is a Protestant heresy. That is, as Milbank contends, "the institution of the 'secular' is related to a shift *within* theology and not an emancipation from theology."⁸ Put differently, despite claims of either fulfilling Christianity or departing entirely from it, the secular ideologies of emerging modernity are theologies elaborated outside of ecclesial authority. Consequently, rather than the typical sociological understanding of secular modernity as "the theological transformation at the inception of modernity as a genuine 'reformation' which fulfills the destiny of Christianity to the spiritual be spiritual, without public interference, and the public be secular, without private prejudice," Milbank maintains that the

⁷ Gert Biesta. (2007). "Education and the Democratic Person: Towards a Political Conception of the Democratic Person" in *Teachers College Record* (2007), v 109, n 3, p 754.

⁸ John Milbank (2006). *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, p. 28.

processes of secularization constructed notions of the ‘the political and ‘the State’ in a wholly new “economy of power and knowledge.”⁹

Within this economy of power, Milbank argues that a new autonomous object of pure power as “the political” usurped divine and eternal understandings of sovereignty within the realm of natural law.¹⁰ Rather than the “transcendental equity” of a grace-linked natural law found in Aquinas, modernity represents for Milbank a “sealed-off totality of nature, where eternal justice consists in the most invariable rules.”¹¹ Within this sealed-off totality of nature, Milbank proposes the emergence of creaturely subjectivity and sovereignty derived through and from self-knowledge, self-construction, and self-preservation.¹² This destructive object of self-sufficiency – the liberal self– I understand Milbank’s notion of creaturely subjectivity and sovereignty to be constitutive of what I term “white liberal subjectivity.” However, notably absent from Milbank’s thesis on the new autonomous object of modernity is the racial lens of whiteness and its co-articulation with class, colonialism, and capitalism. Indeed, Milbank is seemingly hostile towards critical categories of race, class, and other identities in a manner not uncommon amongst reactionary conservative critiques of modernity, liberalism, and capitalism. Wary that the ruling classes have co-opted identity, Milbank writes that: “The liberal state already exhibits a certain totalitarian drift and may always become really totalitarian at the point where its empty heart is besieged by an irrational cult of race, class, science, style or belief.”¹³ At stake for Milbank, then, is the “uneasy oscillation between promotion of one’s own freedom for any goal whatsoever, and absolute sacrifice to the to the freedom of the other, again without any conditions to the goals that others should pursue.”¹⁴ This is a keen observation of how individual

⁹ Ibid, 10.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ John Milbank (2003). *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon*. Routledge: London, p. 25.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 24.

rights within racial colonial modernity reify and make operative social domination hierarchies. However, as noted above, Milbank's analysis severely lacks the nuances, categories, and lived, intersectional modalities of this domination like race and gender. As an intentional dismissal or epistemological oversight, I believe this is a critical deficiency in Milbank's critique of secular modernity.

Therefore, it is essential to note that while this paper shares Milbank's fundamental theo-political critiques of modernity, my analysis diverges significantly when considering both the causes of modern crises and the alternatives Milbank proposes – in particular, his seemingly wholesale rejection of liberal subjectivity in favor of communitarian and ecclesial harmony centered in what Insole terms as a “participatory-analogical universe” found in the Eucharist.¹⁵ Otherwise and alternatively referred to in this paper as sacramental ontology, sacramental materialist universe, or the sacrament of Creation, a participatory-analogical universe is one in which human beings belong to:

A participatory and analogical bodies (physically and socially) which are a part of a hierarchical, teleological and analogically inter-related universe, and that there are ways of living – socially, politically and liturgically – which can bring us out of our forgetfulness about this peaceful and harmonious reality.¹⁶

For Milbank and other adherents to radical orthodoxy, the participatory-analogical universe is fundamentally found in and expressed by the Eucharist, which is the Church's foundation as a supernatural alternative to the state. Milbank writes that:

So in the Incarnation, God as God was able perfectly to fulfill the worship of God which is nevertheless, as worship, only possible for the creature. This descent is repeated and perpetuated in the eucharist which gives rise to the *ecclesia*, that always ‘other-governed’ rather than autonomous human community, which yet is the beginning of universal community as such, since it is nothing other than the lived project of universal reconciliation. Not reducible to its institutional failures and yet not to be seen as a utopia

¹⁵ Christopher Insole (2004). “Against Radical Orthodoxy: The Dangers of Overcoming Political Liberalism” in *Modern Theology*, v. 20, i. 2, p. 235

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 215.

either, since the reality of reconciliation, of restored unity-in-disparity, must presuppose itself if it is to be realizable (always in some very small degree) in time and so must be always already begun. The Incarnation was the ‘impossible’ arrival of that always-already and for that reason involved the coincidence of a finite personality with an infinite *hypostasis*.¹⁷

In other words, in response to secular nihilism, modernity, and the liberal subjectivities formed therein, Milbank proposes a subjectivity formed by sacramental participation via the eucharist in which gives rise to the communality of ecclesia as an alternative to the state and modernity. Distinct from modernity in that its teleology is premised on reconciliation and universal salvation, I generously understand Milbank’s alternative to modernity as a type of intersubjectivity formed by sacramental participation.

Likewise following Milbank’s epistemology of the emergence of the secular state and liberal self, William Cavanaugh derides the secular state as a “parody” of the Body of Christ and a source of an “alternative soteriology” and moves to counter it with a Eucharist-centered participatory-analogical universe.¹⁸ Moving beyond Milbank’s polemics against political liberal theory and its associated liberal subjectivity, Cavanaugh directly engages the state itself by claiming that, in the state’s alternative soteriology, “as in Christian soteriology, salvation from the violence of conflicting individuals comes enacting of a social body.”¹⁹ Foundational to the “false body” of the secular state is a state of nature defined by individuality in which “individuals come together based on a social contract, each individual entering society to protect person and property.”²⁰ Within this logic of social contract, Cavanaugh posits the emergence of an alternative soteriology at the historical intersection of Christian mythos and an emerging secular

¹⁷ Milbank (2006), *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 20.

¹⁸ William Cavanaugh (1999). “The City: Beyond Secular Parodies” in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, edited by John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock & Graham Ward. Routledge: London, p. 182.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 188.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 187.

mythos. At this historical juncture, the individual's ability, particularly with the purpose of wrestling authority away from absolute monarchy to appropriate goods and property, becomes a means of alternative salvation. Cavanaugh writes:

Individuals appropriate goods from the as-yet-unclaimed abundance of nature and mix their labor or 'person' with it, giving them an exclusive property right to it. According to Locke, God's command to subdue the earth and have dominion over it necessitates the development of private property rights, since it is human labor which both makes nature beneficial to humanity and establishes property as one's own.²¹

Salvation, then, is construed as a logic of acquiring the means of protecting one's individual self from the authority of others and the potential that other individuals might perpetuate violence. In this participatory-analogical universe, obtaining salvation means participating in the sacrament of the liberal state, which is the maintenance of personhood through the acquisition of property. Regardless of claims to empiricism and immanence, within the paradoxical claims of racial colonial modernity of a simultaneously abundant Creation and scarce market, the alternative soteriology of the liberal state is a form of a participatory-analogical universe. This argument is premised on the understanding that claims to private property are indeed limited by market forces and ecological realities. Still, aspirations towards this type of participation exist as pure ideals in which individuals participate in primarily through the experience of identity. As will be elaborated in the following section, historically, this experience of identity as a sacrament is wrapped up in whiteness and white supremacy.

Therefore, while maintaining the fundamental assumptions of radical orthodoxy in critiquing racial colonial modernity through a participatory-analogical ontology, my sacramental critique departs from Milbank with the understanding of the concomitant emergence of private property rights and whiteness as constitutive factors in the crises of modernity. Following

²¹ Ibid.

Insole's critique of Milbank's radical orthodox critique of political liberalism, I contend that Milbank's dismissal of political liberalism as the primary cause of modern alienation, injustice, secular nihilism, and sinfulness fails to take into generous consideration the beneficial ideals of liberalism. As Insole writes:

The individual is made the ultimate political unit not necessarily because of a confidence in the hubristic self-sufficiency of the individual, but because of a sense of frailty of individuals who need to be protected from the enthusiasms of others, whether those others are acting individually or collectively.²²

Instead of the alienation, anxiety, and sinfulness Milbank finds inherent to an epidemic in modernity and secular nihilism, Insole equally attributes the loneliness, excitement, and anxiety that pervades liberal culture as a consequence of the freedom of choice given to individuals.²³ Wary of reactionary, post-liberal nostalgia for social formations buttressed by ecclesial authority like monarchism, aristocracy, and theocracy, Insole distances himself from the participatory-analogical ontology of radical orthodoxy. I intend to hold both Insole's defense of liberal subjectivity against nostalgia and reactionary yearnings *and* the sacramental critiques of racial colonial modernity espoused by radical orthodoxy to develop an alternative Anglican soteriology of eco-liberation. Thus, with the understanding that secularization usurped ecclesial authority through the political immanentization and disruption of its objects, this paper employs both a historical and sacramental methodological approach in retrieving and articulating an Anglican soteriological subject through the liberative method outlined in the previous two sections.

²² Ibid, p. 237.

²³ Insoles, "Against Radical Orthodoxy", p. 231.

II. Race, Property, and Making Modernity

The acquisition, maintenance, and proliferation of private property through dispossession and colonization is a sacramental act of participation through which white liberal subjectivity attains salvation and reconciles itself to God. As a constitutive element of racial colonial modernity, I contend that white liberal subjectivity maintains its ontological and epistemological supremacy through an enmeshed, falsely divine certainty in the possession of property and the subjectivity generated from the maintenance and proliferation of private property regimes. Similarly, Lisa Lowe maintains the political philosophy projects of liberal thinkers like Locke are inextricably bound to those of settler colonialism, slavery, and indentured servitude.²⁴ Noting the seemingly contradictory but generative tension between the formation of liberal subjectivity and dispossession, she writes:

Locke's state of nature prior to government serves as the means to outline the definition of liberal rights and against tyranny. The mythical state of nature alludes to the settling of the "new world" of the Americas, whose fictional "newness" would have been apparent for Locke, who was a member of the English company that settled the Carolina colony and the presumed author of its *Fundamental Constitutions*, and who served as Treasurer for the English Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations.²⁵

Thus, for Lowe, the development of liberal subjectivity is inextricably bound to the processes of dispossession, settler colonialism, and enslavement. In a Gramscian sense, Locke and other liberal thinkers engaged in articulating liberal subjectivity as it relates to the emergence of racial colonial modernity can be considered organic intellectuals of an emerging bourgeoisie and mercantilist class. Gramsci holds that "every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself,

²⁴ Lisa Lowe (2015). *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Duke University Press: Durham, p. 9.

²⁵ Ibid.

organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.”²⁶ These intellectuals carry with them the technical knowledge and political elaborations of their class endeavors. They are not a class in themselves but representative of the hegemonic endeavor of their particular class. In the case of Locke and his contemporaries, white liberal subjectivity is the product of a class articulating its own subjective formation as it relates to the possession and accumulation of private property.

Likewise conceived as racial regimes of ownership by Brenna Bhandar, white liberal subjectivity and private property evolved concomitantly in the development of capitalism and colonialism. Adding an awareness of whiteness as an articulation of class formation as it relates to the accumulation of private property and through colonialism, Bhandar writes:

The multitude of rationales for the colonial appropriation of indigenous land (upon which slavery in the Americas was contingent), and the concomitant development of liberal democracy in the settler colony required legal and political narratives that equated English common law concepts of property with civilized life, and were coupled with a belief in the inherent superiority of people whose cultural and economic practices bore resemblance to a burgeoning agrarian capitalism in England. Colonialism took root on the grounds of this juridical formation, twinning the production of racial subjects with an economy of private property ownership that continues to prevail over indigenous and alternative modalities of relating to and using land and its resources.²⁷

Thus, racial regimes of ownership refer to the “political ideologies, economic rationales, and colonial imaginaries that gave life to juridical forms of property and a concept of human subjectivity that is embedded in a racial order.”²⁸

This racial order is both a real, immanent economic and political reality and a transcendental institution in which one participates through the ownership of property and the

²⁶Antonio Gramsci, (1989). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. International Publishers. p. 4.

²⁷ Brenna Bhandar (2018). *Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership*. Duke University Press: Durham, p. 7.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 22.

participatory-analogical ontology of whiteness. Charles Mills challenges the moral authority of the canon of Western moral philosophy and ethics. He reveals and defines a Racial Contract that has created, upheld, and reinforced white global supremacy. As a methodology, he focuses on a historical survey of concrete conditions alongside analysis and review of prevailing ethical theory. To quote Mills, the Racial Contract as a theory is the result of a methodology that “recognizes the actuality of the world we live in, relates the construction of ideals, and the nonrealization of these ideals, to the character of this world, to group interests and institutionalized structures, and points to what would be necessary for achieving them. Thus it unites description and prescription, fact and norm.”²⁹ In following through with this project, Mills demonstrates the complacency of white social contractarians in the moral and ethical justification of the oppression, enslavement, and genocide of people of color throughout the past 500 years. Central to Mills’ thesis is his commitment to describing reality, not ideal political systems, but how White moral philosophers’ lofty, often otherworldly ambitions have existed alongside and cooperated with White global supremacy. The effect of this complacency is best summed up in Mill’s quotation of James Baldwin: “ [white supremacy] forced [white] Americans into rationalization so fantastic that they approached the pathological.”³⁰ Therefore, for Mills, conceptualizing the social contract as a Racial Contract becomes a more historically accurate depiction of the ideal grounded in the legacy of racial colonial modernity. This is because the social contract, as an intangible, transcendental institution and practical approach, never included black and brown people. The Social Contract holds that members of a society cooperate with each other to ensure mutual benefits while sacrificing personal freedoms for the protection of the state. However, Mills reveals that the social contract, in practice, has always been a racial project

²⁹ Charles Mills (1999). *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, p. 130.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 97.

that imbues white people with personhood while delegating black and brown people to sub-personhood. Mills uses the language of the original contractarians to show how “whiteness” became the central defining characteristic of civilization, personhood, justice, and freedom. Construed as a liberal modernity in which white individuals participate in the social body through a social and racial contract, the intersecting soteriological horizons of whiteness and property ownership become the foundational nexus for the generation of the alternative soteriological subjectivities so problematized by the adherents of radical orthodoxy as a source of secular nihilism and contemporary sinfulness.

This process of concomitant self-making and accumulation-through-dispossession is the means through which white liberal subjectivity attains salvation in an ever-secularizing racial colonial modernity. Property and its associated physical and juridical violence is the material means of participation in salvation as the experience of white liberal subjectivity. In the Anglican tradition and Anglo-sphere of colonization and property acquisition, private property's soteriological and teleological nature has deep theological roots.

Consequently, I argue that the theological origins of private property and white liberal subjectivity have wrought a violent and insidious legacy of white supremacy and domination that continues into the present day. The theological nature of white supremacy and its relation to property is noted in Kelly Brown Douglas's *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*. Throughout her writing, Douglas proposes the assertion of an ontological difference between white people and black people through the “co-mingling of the Anglo-Saxon myth with natural law theory,” which created a “theo-ideology that excluded black people not only from the category of citizens but also from the category of humans.”³¹ Central to Douglas's thesis is her

³¹ Kelly Brown Douglas (2015) *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*. Orbis Books: New York, ebook, p. 109.

notion of “cherished white property” or the fusion of natural law theo-ideology with the ontology of whiteness bolstered and reinforced by the institutions of private property.³² Douglas writes:

Just as America’s narrative of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism produced an ideological framework, cherished white property/white supremacy, to sustain the super-ordination of the white body, it generated a theo-ideological framework to sustain the subordination of the black one. Both radicalized paradigms provide a protective cover for the grand narrative of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism that actually shapes American identity. As it pertains to the black body, America’s grand narrative spawned its own theory of natural law. This Anglo-Saxonist version is the theo-ideological underpinning in the ultimate construction of the guilty black body. This theo-ideology serves to exonerate white people from their brutal and sometimes fatal assaults upon black bodies... this racialized version of natural law bolsters that narrative by providing a sacred canopy for white mistreatment of black bodies. In other words, this theo-ideology makes it appear that the ideology of cherished white property is not an ethnocentric construct but instead reflects an ontological truth.³³

Clearly, for Douglas, racial regimes of ownership, here construed as “cherished white property,” represent a salvific apparatus and participatory-analogical means through which white liberal subjectivity is capable of absolving itself of its transgressions through participation in the ontological and juridical truths of the inverted natural law theo-ideology of racial capitalist modernity.

The use of violence against racialized others is justified under the assumption that protecting both the white body and its property is means of participating in the sacred. For Douglas, the assertion of cherished white property into natural law follows the trajectory of secularization not unlike that delineated by Milbank and the radical orthodox school. Except for Douglas, whiteness is the primary modality through which the theo-ideology of cherished white property becomes the generic and hegemonic ontological truth of modernity. In her understanding, this natural theo-ideology became the dominant understanding of natural law as it relates to eternal law. As eternal law is “the way in which God creates and orders the world”

³² Ibid, p. 106.

³³ Ibid.

towards a common good, natural law is the “human response to eternal law” or the “living in accordance with the ‘inclinations’ of the nature that God has ‘imprinted on them’.”³⁴ As synonymous with natural law and thus eternal law, racial regimes of ownership usurp ecclesial authority in racial colonial modernity and become the means through which white liberal subjectivities obtain salvation. Dissenters, outliers, the dispossessed, and the racialized other, on the other hand, represent a sharp contradiction to natural and eternal law. To quote Douglas: “The wicked, on the other hand, act contrary to eternal law. They are essentially embodiments of evil since they have turned away from good; hence living against their God-given essence.”³⁵

Thus, the purpose of the following section is to describe the sacramental, theological, and historical origins of private property not only for conceptual and historical clarity but also to undermine racial colonial modernity as a limit-situation with alternative soteriological subjectivities generated from historical possibilities present in the 17th century.

IV. Divine Authority, Participation, and Possession

Sacramental Participation Through Human Governance

In Ernst H. Kantorowicz’s highly influential *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Kantorowicz posits a political Christology in which the Elizabethan conception of monarchy and state power is conceived in terms of a hypostatic union between the monarch’s body politic and body natural. Political authority in early modern England is understood as two co-abiding realities: the mortal and individual life of the monarch subject to illness and death and the abstract, deathless body of the monarch from which political authority is derived. Kantorowicz grounds this distinction between and union of the two bodies by citing

³⁴ Ibid, p. 107.

³⁵ Ibid.

Edmund Plowden's 16th-century account of a dispute over whether or not King Edward VI's possession of the duchy of Lancaster constituted private property or property of the crown.

Plowden writes:

the king has in him two Bodies, viz., a Body natural, and a Body politic. His Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age ... But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities, which the Body natural is subject to, and for this Cause, what the King does in his Body politic, cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any Disability in his natural Body.³⁶

In other words, as an individual who abides both in his body natural and body politic, the king's actions and possessions taken in his body political are not reducible to his body natural, but rather always exist within the realm of the state. With this foundation, Kantorowicz plots a historical trajectory in which the immortal body of the king is transferred from one individual to another, theological concepts are transferred to jurisprudence, liturgy is transferred to political ritual, the Church's mystical body becomes the body politic, and Christendom becomes a humanistic commonwealth.³⁷ However, maintained in this historical transfer from ecclesial-divine authority to those of secular jurisprudence and modernity is the hypostatic union between natural law and eternal law, between the mortal body imbued with political authority and the salvific means that ontologically justify the mortal body's actions.

As an intellectual at the juncture of medieval and early modern political theological thought, Richard Hooker's *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* should be understood primarily as

³⁶ Ernst Kantorowicz (2016). *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. 3rd Edition. Princeton University Press: Princeton, p. 7.

³⁷ Brett Edward Whalen (2020). "Political Theology and the Metamorphoses of *The King's Two Bodies* The King's *Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, by Ernst H. Kantorowicz", in *The American Historical Review*, Volume 125, Issue 1, February 2020, Pages 132–145.

an apology for the Elizabethan Church and the royal supremacy therein. In his laws, Hooker carefully outlines and determines the applicability of various laws concerning the legitimacy of the visible church as it relates to Presbyterian dissenters and Romanist critics. The main argument Hooker responds to with his *Laws* lies in the application of Protestant rationales for reformation to the Church of England, which simultaneously served to justify ecclesiastical severance from the Roman Catholic Church. This dialectical interplay reveals the complexities and intricacies of employing similar lines of argumentation for both reformation within the Anglican context and emancipation from the broader Catholic institution.³⁸ At stake in this historical juncture is the question of authority as it relates to the interpretation of scripture and the ontological truth claims ecclesiastical and political can make in regard to their own authority. Hooker's argument is primarily constructed by appealing to the uniformity of the church – which he maintains is determined and constituted by laws pertaining to natural law. Hooker argues for an understanding of ecclesiastical law determined by a dialectic between various forms of political society. At stake for Hooker is the efficacy of the mystical body of Christ as a vehicle communicating God's grace and salvation. As Eppley explains: “As a society of people brought together in the name of God of peace and harmony, the visible Church needs structure and guidance so that internal order can be maintained and so that it can serve as an effective vehicle of salvation.”³⁹ Therefore, in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Hooker argues for a dialectical understanding of what laws determine authority in the Church. By understanding that political society is within the realm of natural law, Hooker defends both royal supremacy and episcopal authority from the standpoint that they belong to the prelapsarian order of natural law as Creation and through the consent of the governed.

³⁸Daniel Eppley (2007). “Chapter Five: Richard Hooker: Royal Supremacy over the Definition of Doctrine Reaffirmed” in *Defending Royal Supremacy and Discerning God's Will in Tudor England*. Routledge, pp. 216 -217.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 173.

Law, understood by Hooker, is derived from God in the emanation of eternal, natural, celestial, divine, and human laws. In its most expansive conception, Simon Kennedy writes that Hooker understands law to be a “rule directing or limiting something in order to guide it to its *telos*.”⁴⁰ For Kennedy, Hooker’s conception of law has Thomistic contours: it is non-coercive and possesses virtue which allows one to apply the idea to God.⁴¹ In Hooker’s words,

a *Law* as that which determines what kind of work each thing should do, how its power should be restrained, and what forms its work should take. No end could ever be reached unless the means by which it was reached were regular; that is to say, unless the means were suitable, fitting, and appropriate to their end according to a principle, rule or law. This is true in the first place even for the workings of God Himself.⁴²

Therefore, Hooker holds that “all things work, in their own way, according to law.”⁴³ God Himself is subject to law because God Himself is Law. He writes: “The very being of God is a sort of law to His working, for the perfection that God is, gives perfection to what God does.” Here, Hooker establishes the first form of law in his laws of ecclesiastical polity: eternal law.

Axiomatically expressed as “God is Law,” Hooker’s eternal law refers to how God governs God’s self and how laws derived from eternal law interact with God. This is described by Hooker when he writes: “God therefore is a law both to Himself and to everything else. To Himself He is a law in all those things which our Savior speaks of saying, ‘My Father worketh even until now, and I work.’”⁴⁴ He describes a bifurcation in eternal law between God’s self-governance and those laws derived hierarchically from the first mode of eternal law. Hooker writes:

One might ask why, even though God has infinite power, the effects of that power are limited as we see they are. This is because He works toward a certain end and by a certain law which constrains the effects of His power so that it does not work infinitely

⁴⁰ Simon Kennedy (2019). “Richard Hooker as Political Naturalist” in *The Historic Journal*, 62, 2, p. 338.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

⁴² LEP 1.2.1.

⁴³ LEP 1.2.2.

⁴⁴ LEP 1.2.3.

but only as necessary to reach that end: “all thing well” (Wisd. 8:1), all in a decent and comely manner, all “by measure and number and weight (Wisd. 11:20).⁴⁵

Put differently, W.J. Kirby summarizes the first and second modes of Hooker’s eternal law as 1) the eternal law that governs the internal operations of divine life; and 2) “the external works of creation and redemption in the world.”⁴⁶ In this relationship between God’s internal operations and God’s external works, Hooker describes a general, discernable *telos* of God’s law as God working in all “things in time is the exercise of His most glorious and abundance.”⁴⁷

Hooker holds that rational creatures relate to God’s eternal law by participating in the second mode of eternal law through reason; eternal law is thus knowable through participation in God’s excellent abundance through reason. Eternal law is consequently experienced by rational creatures derivatively in a cascade of God’s self-governance similar to the Neoplatonic concept of emanation. The second mode of eternal law applied to and experienced by natural agents is natural law; to heavenly agents is celestial law; to reasonable creatures is the law of reason; to special revelation is divine law; and to “those laws which are derived from both reason and revelation as prudential judgments, we call in human law.”⁴⁸

Thus, natural law becomes, for Hooker, a means through which humanity can participate in God’s self-governance from the standpoint of creatures. Of course, as outlined above, this is attempted in a mediated way. Derived from natural law, divine law, and human law are positive laws, or laws enacted by humans, made accessible to humans through the law of reason. Human laws are laws made by human beings and divine laws “are those revealed by God through special revelation” or those revealed by scripture.⁴⁹ Subject to human sin and derived from natural law,

⁴⁵ LEP 1.2.3.

⁴⁶ W.J. Torrance Kirby (2005). *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist*. Ashgate Publishing Company: Aldershot.

⁴⁷ LEP 1.2.4.

⁴⁸ LEP 1.3.1.

⁴⁹ Kennedy (2019). “Richard Hooker as Political Naturalist”, p. 340.

human law, along with divine law, becomes a means through which postlapsarian disorder can be alleviated.⁵⁰ However, Hooker attributes political society and ecclesiastical authority to the realm of natural law instead of human law. This is because according to Hooker:

as solitary individuals we cannot provide ourselves with all the things we need to make a life fit for the dignity of man. Therefore, we naturally seek communion and fellowship with others to supply whatever we lack as individuals. This is why men first banded together and formed political societies.⁵¹

In other words, human beings are naturally and necessarily interdependent creatures.

Consequently, created within the realm of natural law, human consociation, both as political society and as ecclesia, are forms of participation in the second mode of eternal law experienced as natural law.

Therefore, humanity's mode of being with another in political society and ecclesia belongs to the realm of natural law as it is naturally derived from the second mode of eternal law. In this way, as Kennedy explains: "If the commonwealth must precede the existence of positive human law, then human government must be formed apart from human law."⁵² Rather than human laws generating political society, political society is necessitated by natural law, and this political society becomes the basis for the generation of positive human laws.⁵³ Subsequently, forms of political society, like the Crown and Parliament, also are a source of legitimacy when determining what is reasonable within the second mode of God's eternal law. Belonging to the realm of natural law, human forms of association emanate from God's self-governance. Moreover, Hooker contends that this authority through natural law by reason is derived from the very consent of those governed. As Eppley summarizes:

⁵⁰ Kirby (2005). *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist*, p. 4.

⁵¹ LEP 1.10.1.

⁵² Kennedy (2019), "Richard Hooker as Political Naturalist", p. 343.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

English Church laws receive their binding force ‘from power which the whole body of this Realme being naturally possessed with hath by free and deliberate assent derived unto him that ruleth over them’. Consequently, ‘our [human] lawes made concerning religion do take originallie their essence from the power of the whole Realme and Church of England then which nothing can be more consonant unto the lawe of nature and the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Because it speaks for the Church of England as well as the realm, ‘The Parliament is a Court not so meerly temporall as if it might meddle with nothing but only leather and wooll.’⁵⁴

In other words, human political society and its consociation is in itself a form of participation in God’s self-governance and self-regulation. With no real distinction between the whole Realme and the Church of England, reason becomes the means through which God’s self-governance is known through participation in human political society. Positive laws derived from this consociation are not to be considered as equal to eternal law. Rather, the very means of consociation and conformity— its institutional traditions and scripture – are human participation in God’s self-governance as the visible church. Therefore, in Hooker’s thought, it is through the laws and customs of the visible Church that humanity is guided towards its concomitant participation in the invisible Church, the first mode of God’s eternal law, or the understanding of God’s will as the Logos inherent in Creation.

This governing structure inherently espouses a participatory-analogical or sacramental ontology. Though not readily apparent in Hooker, Paul Dominiak maintains and attempts to retrieve Hooker’s *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* as a model or architecture for sacramental participation in eternal law. Dominiak writes:

At first sight, the presence of participatory language in Hooker’s thought seems incontestable but unpromising land. Indeed within the *Laws*, the idea of participation only explicitly occurs in Books One and Five. In Book One, Hooker refers to participation directly only twice, and both times in relation to the pursuit of the Good within a legal ontology. First, when he considers ‘the law wherby man is in his actions directed to the imitation of God,’ Hooker appeals to two scholastic ideas with roots in Aristotle and Neoplatonism: that God is perfect actuality (‘conteyned under the name of Goodnesse’) while creatures are a mixture of potentiality and actuality; and that effects

⁵⁴Eppley (2007). “Chapter Five: Richard Hooker,” p. 178.

contain something of (and desire to become like) their causes. Hooker concludes that ‘every effect doth after a sort conteine, at least wise resemble the cause from which it proceedeth: all things in the world are said in some sort to seek the highest, and to covet more or lesse participation of God himself.’ Second, Hooker casts goodness in more Platonic terms later on in Book One as he discusses the human pursuit of perfection: ‘No good is infinite but only God: therefore he our felicitie and blisse. Moreover desire tendeth unto union with that it desireth. If then in him we be blessed, it is by force of participation and conjunction with him.’ Both of these references to participation in Book One stand clearly within the Thomistic tradition of participation (*participare*, *methexis*) which combintes Aristotelian causality with Neoplatonic metaphysics. The remaining direct uses of participation happen in Book Five from the fiftieth chapter onwards. Here, Hooker discusses sacramental participation and union with God, considering ‘how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and how the sacramentes doe serve to make us pertakers of Christ.’⁵⁵

In defining Hooker’s sacramental participation, Dominiak points to Hooker’s most explicit definition: “that mutall inward hold which Christ hath of us and wee of Him, in such sort that ech possesseth other by waie of special interest property and inherent copulation.”⁵⁶ Subsequently, Dominiak understands Hooker’s architecture of sacramental participation as “a participatory chain from Christ to the Trinity where ‘wee are therefore adopted sonnes of God to eternall life by participation of the onlie begotten Son of God, whose life is the wellspring and cause of oures’.”⁵⁷ In other words, the Church participates in Christ through the sacraments as “all things participate in God through God’s creation of all things and God’s act resides in his effects as the First Cause.”⁵⁸

As the body which administers the sacraments, ecclesiastical authority, and governance is a form of participation in eternal law as a response in the realm of natural law. All laws espoused by Hooker are therefore participatory and analogical in the sacramental ontological sense.

Dominiak writes that:

⁵⁵ Paul Anthony Dominiak (2020). *Richard Hooker: The Architecture of Participation*. T&T Clark: Oxford, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Eternal law acts as the monistic ground (the ‘highest wellspring and fountaine’) from which springs variety, the derivation of the many from the one, or created hierarchy from the ‘first original cause.’ It also frames the dispositive goal of creation (telos) for transcendent (re)union. Since ‘law’ acts as an analogical term, Hooker views eternal law from two very different standpoints: either as a consubstantial quality of God’s nature (*the opera Dei ad intra*) or from the perspective of creation as it participates in God (*the opera Dei ad extra*).⁵⁹

All incursions into the realm of natural law which attempt to define and stake claim to ontological truth are, therefore, usurpations of what it means to participate in eternal law; the fulcrum of this participation – whether it be the Eucharist, whiteness, or private property – is the sacrament through which this participation unfolds. Following the logic of Milbank and the adherents of radical orthodoxy, all means through which this participation unfolds not grounded in ecclesial authority and the traditions of the Church are constitutive of a “false body” and the alternative salvation exemplified in the secular state in racial colonial modernity. The following section investigates and argues that Locke’s appropriation of Hooker and establishment of private property rights within the realm of natural law is precisely this type of usurpation.

A Social Ecology of Land Enclosure and Salvation

John Locke’s appropriation of Richard Hooker should be considered in the context of his placement within an emergent 17th-century landed gentry and bourgeois class staking its political liberties to processes of land enclosure and agrarian capitalism. Opposed to absolute monarchy and advocates for the development of liberal rights, possessing land as private property for further economic improvement is the fundamental facet that drove the assertion of white liberal subjectivity. Beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries, the primary mechanism of the sacramental ontology espoused by Locke and his contemporaries is the process of land

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 43.

enclosure – or, the gradual dispossession of common lands away from common use and towards racial regimes of ownership and economic productivity. This political and economic activity represented a critical disruption in the social ecology of 17th-century England which would also manifest itself in growing colonial and capitalist schemes internally and abroad. By social ecology, I'm referring to the theory put forth by theorist and organizer Murray Bookchin, which understands the root of the ecological crisis to be the domination of human beings over other human beings.⁶⁰ Specifically, Bookchin argues that nearly all ecological problems are social in nature and derive from human hierarchies. Therefore, it is because humans elevate themselves over other humans that the conditions of subjugating the land are also possible. In this schema, oppressed human beings are not reduced to the land, nor is nature disregarded as being solely instrumental matter. Rather, human beings elevate themselves over others through the mediation of and control over land and resources. Alienation from the land fundamentally implies the oppression of human beings and social stratification. Consequently, the target of much of Bookchin's theory is the emergence of hierarchy and the speculation of types of social organization that could exist without hierarchical relationships. Bookchin defines hierarchy as: "the cultural, traditional and psychological systems of obedience and command, not merely the economic and political systems to which the terms class and State most appropriately refer."⁶¹ Furthermore, Bookchin argues that hierarchy has established itself in the objective real world as coercive and hegemonic apparatuses, but also in the subjective, individual unconscious through historical processes of domination.⁶² To construct a social ecology, then, is to consider historical and contemporary patterns of hierarchical human domination as mediated by relations with and

⁶⁰ Carlos A Sintados (2010). "Social Ecology: A Hermeneutical Framework for Reading Biblical Tests? A Latin American Perspective" in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol 63 issue 1, p. 98.

⁶¹ Murray Bookchin (1982). *The Ecology of Freedom :The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*. Cheshire Books, p. 4.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 85.

through the land and how these patterns of human domination are expressed as ideology, institutions, economic activity, and by individuals. In the case of the trajectory of ontological truth claims in the realm of natural law, I understand land ownership and control as the material justifications that reinforce claims of sacramental participation in the analogical realms of natural and eternal law.

The process of land enclosure in early modern England is generally acknowledged in the literature as a constitutive factor in the development of capitalist modernity. Famously, Marx attributes the enclosure of common land in England and the subsequent invention of the “free worker” as the primitive accumulation of capital upon which capitalist class relations are generated.⁶³ However, as noted by Silvia Federici, the privatization of land, the production of scarcity, and the immiseration of working classes, both waged-based and enslaved workers, was an international phenomenon marked by layered oppressive and repressive structures and ideologies. Consequently, Federici's argument to expand Marx's notion of primitive accumulation is threefold. She writes that:

- 1) The expropriation of European workers from their means of subsistence, and the enslavement of Native Americans and Africans to the mines and plantations of the “New World,” were not the only means by which a world proletariat was formed and “accumulated.”
- 2) This process required the transformation of the body into a work-machine, and the subjugation of women to the reproduction of the workforce.
- 3) Primitive accumulation, then, was not simply an accumulation and concentration of exploitable workers and capital. It was also an accumulation of differences and divisions within the working class, whereby hierarchies built upon gender, as well as “race” and age, became constitutive of class rule and the formation of the modern proletariat.⁶⁴

⁶³ Karl Marx (1976). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1*. Penguin Books: London, pp. 886-887.

⁶⁴ Silvia Federici (2004). *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body, and Primitive Accumulation*. Autonomedia: Brooklyn, p. 63.

Thus, any investigation into the history of land enclosure must be aware of both its scope and depth. The process of enclosure does not merely relate to the construction of hedges and fences that set land aside for increasingly efficient production that yields more desirable profits but also the construction of limitations of what is and what is not possible for human life and the body. Because of its subsequent claim to physical land, the body, and associated ontological truths via natural law, this expanded notion of enclosure defines how human lives are articulated via gender, ethnic, racial identity, the sources from which a human person can claim and maintain dignity, and even the boundaries of what is considered a human life and what is not. However, with this established and considered, throughout this section, I maintain an emphasis on the juridical, legislative, and other coercive means through which the peasant caste was transformed into the English working class via a concerted effort of the English ruling class to consolidate land holdings and increase the profitability of agricultural production. This emphasis is demonstrated by establishing the general social ecological landscape of the transitory period in which late medieval England became early modern England.

The discourse on land enclosures commonly refers to the process by which feudal land ownership, peasant relationships with the land, and land-based production were transformed and gave way to agrarian capitalism. At the center of this discourse is the end of the open-field system and the loss of the “common land” on which villein tenure peasants subsisted agriculturally. In the open-field system, “a medieval village would normally have three large fields throughout which each farmer's land was distributed in scattered strips, separated by raised ridges of land called balks, while another area was set aside for common grazing.”⁶⁵ In this system, common land was land on which more than one party had rights of common use –

⁶⁵ open-field system. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Helicon. Credo Reference: https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/heliconhe/open_field_system/0?institutionId=1032

grazing was the most important, but other common use rights included estovers, turbary, and piscary.⁶⁶ Common land was also culturally and politically important. Federici writes that “the commons were the sites of popular festivals and other collective activities, like sports, games, and meetings.”⁶⁷ Moreover, though it should not be idealized as a type of proto-communalism, land held in common facilitated collaboration between peasants, and the self-reliance this engendered carried with it political and ideological possibilities.⁶⁸

Assumed in this historical narrative of English land enclosure is a caste-based, hierarchical system of land ownership in which land was parceled out into proprietary units through a manorial system to feudal lords who had jurisprudence in those units and most directly benefited from the land’s productive yield. By the middle of the 15th century, it is estimated that feudal lords with hereditary titles held 20% of English land, the Church and Crown held 33%, the gentry held 25%, and peasants held the remaining 20%.⁶⁹ According to Geoff Kennedy, feudal lordship of land was composed of “two distinct yet mutually reinforcing forms of social privilege and power.”⁷⁰ These are proprietary lordship and domestic lordship. Proprietary lordship refers to the juridical “ownership of land which forms the basis of feudal lordship.”⁷¹ Domestic lordship concerned “the control and domination of the persons on the manor of a particular lord, subordinating those persons to the jurisdiction of the lord of that particular manor.”⁷² In the English feudal system, proprietary and domestic lordship combined as the

⁶⁶ Common land. (2008). In J. Davies, N. Jenkins, M. Baines, & et. al., *The Welsh academy encyclopedia of wales. Literature Wales*. Credo Reference:

https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/waencywales/common_land/0?institutionId=1032

⁶⁷ Federici. *Caliban and the Witch*, p. 123.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 23.

⁶⁹ Mark Bailey (1996). “Population and Economic Resources” in *An Illustrated History of Late Medieval England*. Manchester ; New York : Manchester University Press, p. 41.

⁷⁰ Geoff Kennedy (2008). *Diggers, Levellers, and Agrarian Capitalism: Radical Political Thought in 17th Century England*. Lexington Books, p. 70.

⁷¹ *Ibid*.

⁷² *Ibid*.

manor lord's arbitrary power, expressed culturally and through the force, respectively, over peasants holding villein tenure on their respective manors.⁷³ Skewing towards domestic domination, feudal lords thus only had immediate power over their property-bound peasants. Thus, there were two broad categories of peasants in feudal England: 1) villein tenure peasants, or those falling within the direct exploitative sphere of the proprietary manor and thus subject to solely to the manor's jurisprudence; 2) and freehold peasants who engaged in agricultural labor outside of the manor, had some title to their land and were primarily under the jurisdiction of the Crown and Church.⁷⁴

The historical process in which enclosure progressed was complex – land enclosures unfolded through various domestic and juridical modalities across multiple centuries in response to various internal and external socioeconomic factors. Broadly defined as the consolidation of common land as private property that both pre-figured and precipitated agrarian capitalism, English land enclosures began in the mid-to-late 15th century. Previous to this period, there certainly were emergent factors and precedents that later enabled more rapid enclosure. In 1235, the Statute of Merton, which was a compromise between the Crown and Lords allowing Lords to enclose common land for their own private use, is arguably the juridical foundation for what later crystallizes as “enclosure.”⁷⁵

Enclosure, as a precursor of agrarian capitalism and herald of the end of feudalism, is identified in two waves: the consolidation of peasant holdings in the 16th century and the loss of the customary right to land through common law in the 17th. The former began with landlords erecting enclosures or consolidating their estates by “hedging and fencing in their holdings and

⁷³ Ibid, p. 72.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 73.

⁷⁵ Great Britain House of Commons (1803). *Journals of the House of Commons, Volume 27*. Retrieved from: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=cAIDAAAACAAJ&pg=PP11&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false

enjoying them in severalty”⁷⁶ However, even with the erection of enclosures, peasants often remained in communal relation to the land with customary rights.⁷⁷ As Kennedy notes: “Enclosure by consent amongst the peasantry did not result in depopulation, unemployment, vagabondage, in short, social dislocation.”⁷⁸ However, the enclosing of land through the stripping of customary rights as custom law became the means through which peasants were dislocated socially. This process rapidly accelerated in the 16th and 17th centuries amidst the political turmoil and structural disruptions of the Tudor and Stuart periods. Enclosure as a political and economic project of the landed classes became increasingly reliant on common law as it progressed into the 16th and 17th centuries. Faced with multiple crises in the waning feudal system that affected revenue and social stability, common law became the juridical and coercive apparatus with which landowners stripped peasants of customary rights for the purposes of improving their lands for profitable agricultural enterprises.⁷⁹

Commonly cited consequences of land enclosures are the loss of common land, the displacement of peasant workers and their subsequent proletarianization, and the primitive accumulation of capital by an emerging capitalist consensus composed of a restructuring peerage, landed gentry, and urban industrialists.⁸⁰ By 1700, gentry land ownership increased from 25% to 50%.⁸¹ Concomitantly, Kennedy cites that “the number of landless peasants had increased from roughly 11% of the peasant population in the mid-16th century to approximately 40% in 1640.”⁸² The resultant mass evictions and transformation of social relations significantly disrupted peasant farm workers' lives. Federici writes:

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 76.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 77.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 53.

⁸¹ Zo Schneider (2022). "Landholding ." *In Europe, 1450 to 1789: Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World*. Retrieved from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/landholding>

⁸²Kennedy (2008). *Diggers, Levellers, and Agrarian Capitalism*, p.

in all its forms [enclosure] was a violent process, causing a profound polarization in what had previously been communities structured by reciprocal bonds. That it was not only the lords but the well-to-do peasants who raised the edges (the common form of boundary making) intensified the hostilities the enclosures produced, as the enclosure and the enclosed knew each other, walked the same paths, and were connected by multiple relations, and the fear that consumed them was fueled by their lives and the possibility of retaliation.⁸³

In Federici's analysis, enclosure is how landlords extracted greater yields and profit from their land and how they exercised greater control over the bodies of peasants – particularly women. Federici maintains that it was women who were the main target of social persecution in the wake of enclosure because they “were most severely impoverished by the capitalization of economic life, and because the regulation of women's sexuality and reproductive capacity was a condition for the construction of more stringent forms of social control.”⁸⁴ In particular, older women and widows who had once been provided for by the social relations of the manorial system and sustained themselves with rights to estovers, were forced into deeper poverty and immiseration by the loss of customer rights to common lands.⁸⁵ Federici goes on to note that: “not surprisingly, many so-called witches were poor women, who survived on begging from door to door or lived off the ‘poor rates,’ as the first system of welfare in England was called.”⁸⁶

As a result, it can be surmised that before and perhaps concomitantly with the emergence of whiteness and the racialized other, land ownership and enclosure are not only a means of asserting the primacy of whiteness but also the means of harmatologically categorizing types of bodies. Thus, the enclosure of common land is also a seizure and harms the bodies that rely on those lands. Improvement of that land for the purpose of profit also determines which bodies and social relations serve that improvement. Enclosures, then, under the jurisdiction of a regime of

⁸³ Silvia Federici (2018). *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women*. Oakland: PM Press, p. 22.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 10.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 35.

production, are a strategy to criminalize the common use of the land. By giving the land the status of private property, it justifies eviction and undermines the social relations facilitated by the land as commons. In the 17th century, to not relate to the land in these narrow enclosures or to continue to disregard the legal and social legitimacy of the regime of enclosure, is both a criminal act and an act of resistance to enclosure. As a social ecology, land enclosure is a means of maintaining social hierarchy amidst changing class composition and social relations through the hegemonic crises of the English Civil War. As a sacramental and soteriological schema, land enclosure and the acquisition of private property emerges as the primary sacramental means through which the burgeoning white liberal subjectivity creates for itself a salvific horizon reinforced by property and violence.

Private Property, Possession, and Participation

In a Gramscian sense, whereas I consider Hooker a traditional intellectual in his theological and polemical defense of royal supremacy and the Elizabethan Settlement, Locke is an organic intellectual of landed classes contending ideologically with traditional intellectuals during the historical and hegemonic crises of the 17th century. Instead of apologizing for royal supremacy with natural law, Locke is articulating the self-transformation of the landed aristocracy within the shell of landed property.⁸⁷ Locke's position as an organic intellectual of agrarian capitalism is primarily revealed by his anti-Monarchism, emphasis on expanded political liberty, and his anchoring of this liberty in property rights. Moreover, it should be understood that Locke is not simply articulating his standpoint from a view that includes a class consensus between landed aristocrats and the urban bourgeoisie. Instead, as Geoff Kennedy

⁸⁷ Geoff Kennedy (2008). *Diggers, Levellers, and Agrarian Capitalism*, p. 53.

contends, Locke is articulating his theories amidst a “pattern of political conflict that can be best understood in relation to the ways in which capitalist social property relations altered the nature of the economic activity and interests of fractions of both the landed aristocracy and the urban bourgeoisie.”⁸⁸ Ultimately, these patterns of political conflict coalesced in the ascendancy of agrarian capitalism and the formation of a capitalist and colonial state.⁸⁹

Accordingly, this section investigates the specific ways Locke articulated his theory of private property through his appropriation of Hooker’s ecclesiology and concept of natural law. Whereas Hooker is held up as a hinge between medieval and early modern thought, I construe Locke’s use of Hooker’s natural law as a usurpation of divine right from the monarchical state to a state that perpetuates the emerging institutions of private property. Geoff Kennedy argues the significance of Locke’s theory of property was that it was embedded within natural rights discourse.⁹⁰ He writes:

Beginning from a state of nature characterized by the equality of man and the existence of common property granted by God for the fulfillment of man’s needs, Locke proceeds to make the case for private property based upon the appropriating power of individual labor: anything that one mixes his labor with can be legitimately appropriated from the commons. Limitations on this private appropriation, such as sufficiency for the needs of others and the famous “spoilage” clause, which limits appropriation to that which can be appropriated without spoiling, are overcome by the introduction of money and insistence on productivity.⁹¹

As outlined above, Locke, in his *Two Treatises on Government*, grounds private property within natural law as a form of natural sociality akin to Richard Hooker’s extension of natural law through human interconnectedness. On the state of nature, Locke describes a “state of perfect freedom” in which men “order their actions, and dispose of their possessions, and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Kennedy (2008). *Diggers, Levellers, and Agrarian Capitalism*, p. 131.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 132.

the will of any other man.”⁹² Therefore, for Locke, the state of nature is also a state of equality “wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another.”⁹³

However, Locke subsequently observes that this equality is disrupted by “declarations of will” that set one above the other and “confer on him by an evident and clear appointment an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty.”⁹⁴ Subsequently, a possessive logic emerges within Locke that ties individual liberty and natural law to empiricism and the possession of property. It is within this possessive logic that John Locke constructs a divine authority of the individual as derived from their natural ability to consociate within a social contract by and through acquiring property.

Characterized as possessive individualism by C.B. MacPherson, Locke’s property-bound liberal rights of the individual are a significant constituent of the foundation of liberal democracy and capitalist modernity. According to MacPherson, liberal possessive individualism is characterized by the following propositions:

- 1) What makes a man human is freedom from dependence on the wills of others.
- 2) Freedom from dependence on others means freedom from any relations with others except those relations which the individual enters voluntarily with a view to his own interest.
- 3) The individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society.
- 4) Although the individual cannot alienate the whole of his property in his own person, he may alienate his capacity to labor.
- 5) Human society consists of a series of market relations.
- 6) Since freedom from the wills of others is what makes a man human, each individual's freedom can rightfully be limited only by such obligations and rules as are necessary to secure the same freedom for others.
- 7) Political society is a human contrivance for the protection of the individual's property in his person and goods, and (therefore) for the maintenance of orderly relations of exchange between individuals regarded as proprietors of themselves.⁹⁵

⁹² John Locke (1999). *Two Treatises of Government*. Hamilton: McMaster University Archive of the History of Economic Thought. Accessed May 1, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central, p. 106.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ C.B. MacPherson (1962). *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 262-265.

Bhandar problematizes MacPherson's possessive individualism as "reductively economic."⁹⁶ She highlights and draws out the deficient explanation of the relationship between the interiority of Locke's subject as it relates to agricultural improvement, mercantile imperialism, and emerging racial regimes of ownership.⁹⁷ Filling in the interiority of the Lockean subject, Bhandar explains:

First, identity and property for Locke are formed through appropriation, which is a temporal concept, and takes place through memory, over time. Second, the connection between identity and property ownership is relational, encompassing both an interiority of the self and the exteriority of the world (and social relations) outside of it. The relational aspect of the self in Locke's thought mirrors the relational nature of property itself. In the settle colonial context, the attributes of this identity-property nexus are harnessed to push forward the civilizational imperative of colonial authorities.

Temporality and duration, two hallmarks of property form, characterize the nature of appropriation that defines Lockean self-consciousness. Appropriation takes place through a process of identification, wherein the individual "practically identifies himself with that property which forms his essence, . . . he recognizes his identity in the actual process of appropriation and acquisition" of reflection, or thought.⁹⁸

Therefore, I readily content that appropriation as property as self is a means of sacramental participation for the Lockean subject or the white liberal subjectivity. As the very interior framework for interfacing with the exterior world, the self-owning subjectivity of Locke only obtains that ownership (salvation) through the acquisition and appropriation (participation) of the external world: both land and body. The sacramental ontology of this process becomes more readily apparent when Locke's appropriation of Hooker's architecture of participation is considered.

Locke's possessive individualism as derived from Hooker's natural law, faces its greatest contradiction in Locke's usurpation of the right of natural law previously assigned to the Church

⁹⁶ Bhandar (2018). *Colonial Lives of Propety*, p. 164.

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 164 - 165.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 165.

and State in England. MacPherson notes that Locke's main theoretical weaknesses might be traced to his attempt to combine these two [market and natural law] sources of morality and obligation."⁹⁹ Locke reads Hooker's natural law understanding of human interdependence into his property-mediated vision of a society of independent individuals regulated by market relations. Locke writes: "This equality of men by nature the judicious Hooker looks upon as so evident in itself, and beyond all question, that he makes it the foundation of that obligation so mutual love amongst men, on which he builds the duties we owe one another, and from whence he derives the great maxims of justice and charity."¹⁰⁰

Locke goes on to ground the impetus for this "mutual love" in his own state of nature.

He writes:

The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one : and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions : for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker ; all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not another's pleasure: and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us that may authorize us to destroy another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours.¹⁰¹

Understanding Hooker's political society established in the prior section as his own state of nature in which human persons consociate by engaging in property acquisition and land improvement, Locke establishes property-based liberal rights as a type of political society that is before human positive law and exists in the realm of natural law. The state of owning property and using it towards the end of self-preservation *is* the state of natural law within Locke's appropriation of Hooker. It is in this appropriation that Locke usurps the divine right of royal

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 269.

¹⁰⁰ Locke (1999). *Two Treatises on Government*, p. 102.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

supremacy and ecclesial authority with the property-bound rights of liberalism. In this way, Waldron contends that Locke, “reads Hooker’s argument as a way of getting from basic equality of authority to what we call a principle of equal concern.”¹⁰² Under the principle of equal concern, all men have the same equality of rights but the equality of authority is upended by the ability to enact those equal rights. In this subversion of Hooker, Locke paves a path for the divine right of property to have an increasingly weighty moral and juridical authority. Whereas Hooker translated the feudal sense that the monarch’s body is the state into a sense that the state and monarchy were the Church’s body, Locke is parceling up the monarch’s body into enclosures and deriving the authority of the state from the individuals that possess it. Subsequently, Locke’s God becomes separate from state authority “for the express purpose of distancing and disparaging the power and influence of religious figures and structures from the economic, social, and political life of the citizenry.”¹⁰³

Locke’s sacramental participation, rather than the Christ-centered ecclesially-mediated participation in natural law, becomes the empirical self-improvement and self-preservation of the individual person in pursuit of maximization of their rights in consociation with others pursuing those same ends. Read generously, Locke’s sacramental usurpation of Hooker is the genesis of a liberal subjectivity which upholds individual freedom and liberty as constitutive of the natural fabric of Creation against theocratic and monarchist historical forces. This achievement should not be readily dismissed in favor of nostalgia for the participatory-analogical universe attributed to prior theo-political formations. However, the historical reality and contemporary consequences of dispossession, racialization, and oppression deriving from the proliferated sense

¹⁰²Jeremy Waldron (2002). *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke’s Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 155.

¹⁰³Nathan Guy (2020). *Finding Locke’s God: The Theological Basis of John Locke’s Political Thought*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, p. 15.

of sacramental ontologically reinforced, racialized, gendered, secularized, and “democratized” sense of participation and salvation in natural law via the formulation of property-bound white liberal subjectivity should be critiqued as the fundamental ground upon which racial colonial modernity and its sinfulness stand.

. Revealing the historical development of private property, its sacramental and soteriological dimensions, and the critical role it plays in upholding white liberal subjectivity and racial colonial modernity thus far have demonstrated both demonstrated the stage of historical development as contingent and socially-constructed. Consequentially, I maintain both white liberal subjectivity and racial colonial modernity as limit-situations which impose and restrict both our epistemological recollections and our ability to intervene in the historical present. Conceived as the only ontological truth in modernity, these two material forces and ideologies, subjective and objective, operate as false bodies and soteriologies which dominate both theological imaginations and the lived experiences of all persons and creatures deemed incapable of participating in their false sacraments.

The following section seeks an alternative “ethic of intervention” to concretize visible, tangible alternative paths to salvation and eco-liberation. It does so by advocating for a return to Hooker’s sacramental and participatory architecture through the eco-liberation theology and liberatory praxis of 17th-century dissenter and activist Gerard Winstanley.

IV. An Anglican Eco-Soteriological Subjectivity

The Eco-Liberation Theology of Gerrard Winstanley

Gerrard Winstanley was born in 1609 in Wigan, England. He was a tailor and freeman at Merchant Taylors Company before falling into poverty after the death of his father and the outbreak of war.¹⁰⁴ Once the English Civil War started in 1640, Winstanley quickly came under the influence of Lilburne and the Levellers.¹⁰⁵ The Levellers were a “radical tendency” during the period whose adherents’ demands included: “adult male suffrage based on property qualifications; annual elections; abolition of the monarchy, aristocracy, and House of Lords; religious freedom; trial by jury; abolition of taxation and church tithes on annual earnings below £30 and a maximum interest rate of 6 percent.”¹⁰⁶ This influence was short-lived, however. By 1649, Winstanley had stopped identifying with the Levellers and participated in forming the Diggers, or True Levellers. During this period, Winstanley was both the most politically active and prolific in his writing – he wrote several pamphlets and treatises exhorting the ideology and strategy of the Diggers. More radical than the Levelers, the Diggers advocated for the direct re-taking of recently enclosed common land for egalitarian, communal use. As an act of defiance and prefigurative politics, the Diggers would re-take enclosed and idle land by digging up hedges, cultivating it, and begin communally sharing the work, harvest, and life together. This movement culminated in the re-taking of St. George’s Hill in 1650, where a commune of at least 100 Diggers formed and began cultivating the land for common use.¹⁰⁷ Concomitantly, historians note that at least five other Digger-inspired communes formed within the year. All of the Digger communes were routed and crushed within the year by combinations of state, local landlord organizing, and mob violence.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ John Hoffman (2007). “Winstanley, Gerrard.” *In A Glossary of Political Theory*. Edinburgh University Press. https://search-credoreference-com.yale.idm.oclc.org/content/entry/edinburghgpt/winstanley_gerrard/0?institutionId=1032

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ D. E. Lowes (2006). “Levellers, the.” *In The anti-capitalist dictionary*. Zed Books. Credo Reference: https://search-credoreference-com.yale.idm.oclc.org/content/entry/zedacd/levellers_the/0?institutionId=1032

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

The Diggers most enduring legacy are the various writings of Gerrard Winstanley, who articulated the movement's ideology and praxis. Winstanley's writings represent a significant fusion of theological insight, biblical exegesis, and political economy that are both characteristically and uncharacteristically Anglican and rather unprecedented in their various crystallizations. If considered in the contemporaneous established tenets of the then-forming Anglicanism, the primary Anglican characteristic in Winstanley is his emphasis on the primacy of both reason and scripture. Notably, however, Winstanley breaks from tradition in his relentless critiques of the established Church, its clergy, and their alliance with the monarchy.¹⁰⁹ Thus, I uphold Winstanley as an unlikely but necessary historical alternative for the formation of a fusion between liberal rights and sacramental ontology for the formation of an Anglican eco-liberation soteriological subjectivity.

I contend that Winstanley offers an Anglican eco-liberation theology grounded in the personal experience of the oppressed, scripture, and the land as a mediator of social relations. In particular, his allegorical reading of biblical text provides a foundation for an Anglican eco-liberation theology. Winstanley's writings often expound an interpretation of the biblical text that connects history, political oppression, land, and a preferential option for the poor. As a primary example, he writes:

O thou A-dam, thou Esau, thou Cain, thou hypocritical man of flesh, when wilt thou cease to kill thy younger brother? Surely thou must not do this great work of advancing the creation out of bondage; for thou art lost extremely, and drowned in the sea of covetousness, pride and hardness of heart. The blessing shall rise out of the dust which thou treadest underfoot, even the poor despised people, and they shall hold up salvation to this land and to all lands, and thou shalt be ashamed.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Christopher Hill (2006). *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and Other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Gerrard Winstanley (1649). "The True Levellers Standard Advanced: Or, The State of Community opened, and Presented to the Sons of Men." In *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and Other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 83.

In other words, whether or not the human family is in a state of freedom or oppression is inextricably linked to the land. Directly referring to humanity-as-interdependent-with-dirt as A-dam, Winstanley understands the trajectory of Adam's lineage to be one of conflict over the earth itself. As Shulman observes: "The struggle within Adam over whether to honor the soul and the Father becomes the struggle within mankind over whether to share the earth and honor the Father's 'law of righteousness'."¹¹¹ Thus, Winstanley understands there to be a specific trajectory within human history in which the powerful (Cain, Ishmael, and Essau) rule by violence and the oppressed they rule over (Abel, Isaac, and Jacob) receive the oppressor's birthright as a preferential option.¹¹² In Winstanley's context, the enclosure of common land in England was another form of this rule of Cain. In this line of reasoning, Winstanley condemns landlords as bearers of the mark of Cain. He writes:

For the power of enclosing land and owning property was brought into the creation by your ancestors by the sword; which first did murder their fellow creatures, men, and after plunder or steal away their land, and left this land successively to you, their children. And therefore, though you did not kill or thieve, yet you hold that cursed thing in your hand by the power of the sword; and so you justify the wicked deeds of your fathers; and that sin of your fathers shall be visited upon the head of you and your children, to the third and fourth generation, and longer too, till your bloody and thieving power be rooted out of the land.¹¹³

The mark of Cain for Winstanley is the power derived from claiming for oneself what God gave in common to all of humanity. A consequence of this is the enslavement of those descendants of Abel: the dispossessed, the weak, and the oppressed. With the common gift of God claimed by Cain, the descendants of Abel are dispossessed, forced to wander, and work for Cain as a means of subsistence.¹¹⁴ Here, in Winstanley, two centuries before Marx, we have a theo-political

¹¹¹George Shulman (1989). *Radicalism and Reverence: The Political Thought of Gerrard Winstanley*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 86.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Gerrard Winstanley (1649). "A Declaration From the Poor Oppressed People of England." In *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and Other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 99.

¹¹⁴ Shulman (1989). *Radicalism and Reverence*, p. 87.

articulation of what is established by Marx as primitive accumulation. Coding landlords as Cain and displaced peasants as Abel, Winstanley articulates an eco-liberation theology and materialist history rooted in social ecology and biblical exegesis.

Significant for the purposes of this paper is Winstanley's critique of and suggestion that those who possess the land subsequently bear the mark of Cain and the fallenness of Adam. If an Anglican eco-liberation theology is to be articulated, then the perpetuation and inheritance of the mark of Cain, according to Winstanley as it relates to wealth, land, and the empowered sense of self-derived from these key constituents of racial colonial modernity must be critiqued and soteriological alternatives formulated. To not do so is to continue what Winstanley refers to as, "Cain killing Abel to this very day."¹¹⁵ Thus, it is imperative to understand what motivates Cain to claim creation as his own. As Shulman summarizes, the white liberal subject:

creates a realm to which he claims the title, making the earth and fellow creatures into his second and immortal body. By identifying his person with the realm, the king overcomes the vulnerability, need, and mortality of his personal body, which represents his real bond and equality with others. As the king pretends to represent "his" people, he appropriates to himself the right to think and act for them, becoming the head of a mute body that is flesh to his spirit. As a result, says Winstanley, the kingly elderly brother becomes law unto himself: his "prerogative" is itself declared law. From being a brother, a fellow creature of earth and spirit, the elder brother becomes a god. Therefore, he becomes "the king of beasts," for the denial of his real limitations is manifested in the coercion of his subjects.¹¹⁶

At the root of this impulse, which seeks an independence that is inextricably dependent on control over bodies and land, Winstanley envisions a Cain and his descendants that suffer in isolation from the sources of life and nourishment. Shulman writes that as "an essential source of nourishment, the earth appears now as the primary object of 'covetous' imagination and desire. People do not mistakenly imagine nourishment from this 'outward object' but imagine and seek

¹¹⁵ Winstanley (1649). "A Declaration From the Poor Oppressed People of England," p. 134.

¹¹⁶ Shulman (1989). *Radicalism and Reverence*, p. 90.

control of it.”¹¹⁷ In this way, land enclosure and its practical applications is the imagined outward unit of control of the earth and its inhabitants. Thus, for Winstanley, despite political turmoil and the decline of monarchism in England, the ascendancy of private property, the kingly power of subjection continues and is usurped by new outward objects of desire – in the case of Winstanley’s context, this is the transition of feudalism to agrarian capitalism or the monarch’s body-as-property becoming private-property-as-the body-of-the-state.

Interruption of this production of the outward object of desire hinges on an inward transformation. For instance, as Shulman notes, Winstanley observes in the biblical narrative that Israel’s outward desire for a king in the Bible “appeared outwardly because it had already appeared inwardly as the covetousness that will not and cannot share the earth.”¹¹⁸ Therefore, the liberation of the oppressed and inheritance of Abel depends on a transformation of the inward desires of all the human family – both descendants of Cain and Abel. This is not merely a call for quietism or an inward acceptance and subsequent subversion of outward circumstances. Rather, Winstanley holds an inner witness to be inextricably connected to outward transformation. Shulman writes that in Winstanley’s thought: “A witness bears an experience pregnant with words; responsible for what he embodies, he is committed to ‘bringing forth’ its truth.”¹¹⁹ Bearing witness to God’s preferential option for the descendent of Abel and Christ’s rising within them as the oppressed in his own circumstances, Winstanley had no other option than to interrupt enclosure with his immanent eschatological vision of digging. Winstanley’s basic principles of inward transformation, as applied to the Diggers, were: necessity, poverty, and hunger.¹²⁰ These principles of inward conviction bound the Diggers in common purpose to liberate the people and

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 88.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 58

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 123.

soils of England or to “manure the earth” by necessitating communal living that negated wage labor, provided a means of production and subsistence by re-cultivating common and idle land, and actively denied the logics of enclosure¹²¹ To dig, then, is an act that realizes England as a common treasury accessible to both the descendants of Cain and Abel.¹²² Winstanley writes:

Therefore we justify our act of digging upon that hill, to make the earth a common treasury. First, because the earth was made by Almighty God to be a common treasury of livelihood for whole mankind in all his branches, without respect of persons; and that not any one according to the Word of God (which is love), the pure law of righteousness, ought to be lord or landlord over another, but whole mankind was made equal and knit into one body by one spirit of love, which is Christ in you the hope of glory; even [as] all the members of man's body, called the little world, are united into equality of love to preserve the whole body.¹²³

Therefore, the eco-liberation theology of Gerrard Winstanley can be described as both a social ecological analysis of the context of land enclosure elaborated in the previous section and sacramental engagement with Creation for the dual purpose of salvation and liberation. By engaging in an allegorical revision of the biblical text, Winstanley describes a politically-charged salvific history and places himself and his audience on a horizon of liberation as the descendants of Abel. Key to understanding their position as Abel is how the land is used as a medium to construct the narrative of their disinheritance. As an outward object of the inner desire for possession, the land becomes a means through which narratives of expulsion, poverty, and criminality are materially justified. Winstanley’s solution for an ecologically-reified system of social hierarchy and property-bound salvation is to erode its grasp on the land by re-cultivating the inner desire and outward realization of life shared on common land.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Winstanley (1649). “True Levellers Standard Advanced.” p. 93.

¹²³ Gerrard Winstanley (1649). “A Watch-Word to the City of London” In *Winstanley: ‘The Law of Freedom’ and Other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 133.

Towards an Anglican Eco-Liberation Theology

In Ashon Crawley's *Blackpentecostal Breath*, Crawley sets out to elaborate a Black liberation theology that dissolves and breaks through the intellectual and theological constrictions of racial colonial modernity has imposed upon Black intellectual thought and life. Grounding his approach in the 2014 killing of Eric Garner, he carefully delineates how Garner's repeated phrase "I can't breathe" is not only the tragic, embodied reaction of his death at the hands of the New York City Police Department but also the result of the intellectual, theological, and ontological restrictions imposed upon Black life in racial colonial modernity as an outgrowth of white liberal subjectivity. He writes:

The announcement, "I can't breathe," is not merely raw material for theorizing, for producing a theological and philosophical analysis. "I can't breathe" charges us to do something, to perform, to produce otherwise than what we have. We are charged to end, to produce abolition against, the episteme that produced for us current iterations of categorical designations of racial hierarchies, class stratifications, gender binaries, and mind-body splits. "I can't breathe," Garner's disbelief, his black disbelief, in the configuration of the world that could so violently attack and assault him for, at the very worst, selling loosies on the street. "I can't breathe," is also, the enactment of the force of black disbelief, a desire for otherwise air than what is and has been given, the enunciation, the breathing out the strange utterance of otherwise possibility. If he could not breathe, it was because of the violence of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy, a violence that cannot conceive of black flesh feeling pain, a violence that cannot think "I can't breathe" anything other than a ploy, trick, toward fugitive flight. Garner's plea, his "I can't breathe," an ethical charge for those of us who are alive and remain to be caught up in the cause of justice against the violence, the episteme, that produced his moment of intensity, the moment of his assault and murder.¹²⁴

This moment, not unlike Winstanley's call to recognize the theological and political repetition of "Cain killing Abel to this day," represents for Crawley the fulcrum of racial colonial modernity's – its intellectual episteme, transcendental institutions of whiteness, and all-too-real incarnations of physical coercion, oppression, and violence – contact with the Black and criminalized body

¹²⁴ Ashon Crawley (2016). *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*. Fordham University Press: New York, pp. 1-2.

opposite the salvation accessible to the white body through the sacrament of whiteness as property. Yet, as a “sonic event,” Crawley finds the last words of Garner as something that “keeps going” and “keeps moving.”¹²⁵ Subtle and almost imperceptible for its own protection, this event is a gift. Crawley describes this gift as:

Giving something of itself while remaining a resource from which such force can eternally return and emerge. It is a resource that is plenteous, that exists in plentitude, always available and split from itself, split from while transforming into itself. It is the gift, the concept, the inhabitation of and living into otherwise possibilities. Otherwise, as word—otherwise possibilities, as phrase—announces the fact of infinite alternatives to what is. And what is is about being, about existence, about ontology. But if infinite alternatives exist, if otherwise possibility is a resource that is never exhausted, what is, what exists, is but one of many. Otherwise possibilities exist alongside that which we can detect with our finite sensual capacities. Or, otherwise possibilities exist and the register of imagination, the epistemology through which sensual detection occurs—that is, the way we think the world—has to be altered in order to get at what’s there.¹²⁶

To access these otherwise possibilities inherent in the gift of Creation, Crawley advocates for a *digging back*, an atheological and aphiosophical accounting, or a “listening to and feeling the vibration of the tone, black tone.”¹²⁷ This process is a-theological because theology, in Crawley’s understanding, is a project which seeks to constrain and eliminate black tone.¹²⁸ Rather than orienting ourselves around an eschatological future, Crawley advocates for a “preferential option for *digging back*.”¹²⁹ Though Crawley’s project of digging back finds theological authority in the sonic events of Black pentecostal religious experience and the expressions of the Black body, I maintain that an Anglican eco-liberation soteriology must not only make space for autonomous digging back of Black bodies as their own source of authority, it must also dig back and retrieve sacramental participation in natural law as the foundation for ecclesial authority and salvation within the visible Church.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 2.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 18.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

While it is, to say the very least, epistemologically perilous to advocate for a return to Hooker, given his intellectual and political adjacency to structures of theocracy and monarchy, it is also imperative that Anglicans, particularly white Anglicans, seek resources within the tradition to espouse alternative soteriological subjectivities and ecclesial formations that resist and begin dissolving racial colonial modernity that are in conversation with Black and marginalized voices within liberation theology discourse. Therefore, in advocating for a return to Hooker, I am advocating not for a nostalgic yearning for the social hierarchies and political formations that might represent a symbolic, non-contemporaneous participation in natural law as a second mode of eternal law. Rather, I advocate for the natural law which views Creation as a sacrament intended to convey God's Logos to humanity – a sacrament in which humanity finds itself utterly and completely dependent upon each other, our individual but interdependent bodies, beyond human creatures, and fragile ecological systems. As both Hooker and Locke do in their theo-political projects, beginning here is the foundation of Anglican eco-liberation theology from which we might begin to formulate an alternative soteriological subjectivity.

Concerning the laws and sacramental ontology of Richard Hooker, as they relate to salvation, Sinut maintains that Hooker clearly seeks:

to describe the laws of the civil community, which are political in nature, in such a way that later he can explain the laws of the Christian community, which are spiritual in nature. Hooker states firmly that he does not wish to speak much of the invisible Church, which he considers to be the mystical body of Christ, and not existent in history. He intends to discuss the laws of the visible Church, those laws that come from the Christian doctrines of Scripture. This means that Hooker's ecclesiology depends principally upon his doctrine of Scripture. His purpose in bringing these two doctrines together is eventually to point to the doctrine of salvation. Hooker sees Scripture as containing Christian doctrine, which is the foundation of the laws of the Christian spiritual community. But since Christian doctrine is the teaching of salvation, this clearly shows the way by which a sinner can be saved and incorporated into the visible Church of God.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ C.C. Sinut (2005). *The Doctrine of Salvation in the Sermons of Richard Hooker*. De Gruyter, Inc: Berlin, p. 205.

Of course, it is within and from this salvific revelation of Scripture that Hooker derives a participatory-analogical universe of salvation centered on the renewal of life in Christ. In Hooker's understanding, Salvation is grounded in the visible Church as it participates in Christ's mystical body in a sacramental universe. According to Sinut, Hooker understands salvation in Christ in two fundamental ways: 1) objective salvation, "or the every essence of salvation, which describes Christ's work at the cross; and 2) subjective salvation, "or the application of salvation, through which Christ's work becomes effectual to the believer."¹³¹ In this regard, the efficacy of salvation is completely dependent on the believer's faith in Christ as the incarnation, his atoning death, resurrection, and ascension.¹³² Subsequently, as no one individual is completely sanctified, the daily practice of repentance of one's sins is paramount to Hooker's understanding of salvation. As Sinut writes, for Hooker:

repentance must always be a daily process, by which the sinner asks God to forgive his sins, even if the sinner does not know for sure how many he has committed or what they are. Every Christian must be alert and aware of his actions. He must learn to identify sins from his good actions, and then he must repent for each sin specifically.¹³³

Therefore, salvation is a participation in natural law as ordered by the scripturally-bound visible Church, which derives its authority from the continued remembrance and real presence of Christ instituted by the sacrament of the Eucharist. The primary interface between faith in Christ and the continuing experience of salvation is the practice of repentance or the concomitant acknowledgment of our hypostatic unity with God through the body of Christ and our continued distinction from God through our own fragility and brokenness as created beings within a realm of natural law which itself participates in eternal law.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 191.

¹³² Ibid, p. 192.

¹³³ Ibid, p. 193.

With this soteriological and sacramental schema in mind, I contend that Gerard Winstanley's biblical hermeneutics provides a pathway for considering the soteriological horizon of an Anglican eco-liberation soteriological subjectivity. Grounded in the intersection of human oppression of one another and the natural world, this soteriological subjectivity begins with listening to the sonic event described in Genesis 4:10 (NRSVUE): "And the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen, your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!." Within this brief passage of scripture is encapsulated both the beginning of salvation history as it relates to the intermingling of humanity's sinfulness, the relative beginning of salvific history, and the communication via natural law of God's grace and instructions for repentance. In the allegorical revision of Winstanley, the neglect of Cain to listen to this sonic event becomes the genesis of an intergenerational perpetuation of the false body and soteriology, which, throughout history, becomes embodied and constitutive of racial colonial modernity. Put differently, premised on the concomitant identification with control over land and body with soteriological subjectivity of white liberal personhood, the individual either continues to participate in the false sacrament of cherished white property or they listen and respond to the cry of blood from the soil of Creation through repentance and the act of digging back by to grace communicated in the very law of nature: that we are created beings wholly dependent on one another and capable of salvation through God's continued act of incarnation, sacrifice, and resurrected life. In seeking this liberatory and sacramental participation, an alternative soteriological subjectivity seeks salvation by viewing Creation, the land, and all its inhabits, human and beyond human, as a sacrament meant to convey God's intention for God's Creation and God's grace in the forgiveness of all sin. In context of racial colonial modernity, its crises, and its sinfulness, an Anglican eco-liberation theology necessarily begins with the blood crying out from the soil – at the intersection of

ecological crisis and human oppression. It is only there that we might begin to critique the false body and soteriologies of modernity and its secular state – the white body and its lands.

V. Conclusion

This paper has endeavored to provide a pathway towards an Anglican soteriological subjectivity of eco-liberation that takes seriously the mandates and realities wrought by racial colonial modernity. This has necessarily involved the investigation of racial colonial modernity as a racial regime of property ownership which derives its ontological supremacy through a historical development that involved the usurpation of divine authority away from the ecclesial body to the body of the white liberal property owner. In this investigation, I found that, while the secularization theory of the radical orthodoxy school sheds significant insight on the ills of modernity, it does not fully take into consideration the grasp which cherished white property holds on the false soteriologies of the secular state and the individuals therein which perpetuate it. To better comprehend this grasp, I delineated the development of white liberal subjectivity as it relates to property and salvation from Hooker to Locke through a social ecological analysis of land enclosure in the 17th-century and sacramental critique. Engaging in a historical method that sought to identify white liberal subjectivity and its racial regimes of ownership as limit-situations within a contingent history of otherwise possibilities, I then placed the theo-political theory and praxis of Gerard Winstanley as an ethics of intervention towards the development of a soteriological subjectivity of eco-liberation. In conclusion, I advocated for a return to Richard Hooker's architecture of sacramental participation through the biblical hermeneutics of Winstanley, which, taken together, provides a foundational framework for recognizing the sonic event of Abel's blood crying out from Creation which reverberates in the life-denying realities of

racial colonial modernity as the beginning of a fuller participation in the mystical body of Christ through the visible Church.

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