

**A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN'S AND
GORDON KAUFMAN'S ENVIRONMENTAL THEOLOGIES**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to compare the environmental theologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman in order to explore the manner in which their thought exemplifies certain tensions within environmental theology itself, and to help us investigate those tensions. Moltmann and Kaufman are environmental theologians with different theological commitments. Moltmann (b. 1926) is a theological realist and theologian of radical environmental *hope*, and Kaufman (1925-2011), was a theological constructivist and theologian of radical environmental *responsibility*. I argue a tension within environmental theology between hope and responsibility can be explored through a comparison of the manner in which these thinkers—one realist, one constructivist—revised their positions on anthropology, eschatology and task of theology itself on the basis of their developing environmental consciousness. This comparison reveals that matters of human situatedness, universal *telos* and understandings of God have foundational significance for attempts to construct a theological response to the environmental crisis. Moltmann and Kaufman's positions on these foundational issues were informed by the different answers that they gave to certain fundamental questions within systematic theology, namely, what constitutes knowledge of God, the identity of God and what difference God makes in the world. I contend that the centrality of these questions to the construction of these two disparate thinkers' environmental theologies is exemplary of environmental theology as a whole. That is to say, these systematic issues are rarely highlighted within environmental theology and yet, I argue, they are fundamental and crucial. Through such an exemplary comparison, this thesis makes a contribution to the critical appraisal of the theologies of Moltmann and Kaufman and also to the development of environmental theology itself.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Two Environmental Theologians

Jürgen Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman present theological accounts of humanity's relationship with the environment as a response to their growing awareness of the consequences of global environmental destruction. These thinkers, as we shall see, have radically different views on what constitutes theology. However, they are united in their conviction that theology contains a wealth of resources that can aid humanity in reconstructing their relationship with the environment. Nonetheless, they are exemplars of opposing approaches to environmental theology. Moltmann is a theological realist whose environmental theology is based upon the radical hope given to humanity in Christ. Kaufman, by contrast, is a theological constructivist whose environmental theology is based on radical human responsibility. They offer us differing accounts of the content of anthropology, eschatology and God's relationship with the world within the context of environmental crisis. The premise of this thesis is that a dialogue between them can offer us insight into the foundational issues with which environmental theologians must wrestle as they seek to present an account of the relationship between God, the environment and humanity.

In this introductory section we shall offer brief biographies of our thinkers, examine their differing concepts of God, examine the pressures that environmental issues places upon their thought and present an outline of the structure and aims of the thesis. We will seek to lay the foundation for a dialogue between the accounts of anthropology, eschatology and God's relationship with the world contained within Moltmann's theology of radical environmental hope and Kaufman's theology of radical environmental responsibility. Furthermore, we shall present outline our argument that the resources generated by a dialogue between these two positions are exemplary for environmental theology as a whole.

1.1 Theological Beginnings

Jürgen Moltmann was drawn to theology through personal experiences of suffering. Born in 1926 and was drafted into the German army at the age of eighteen his hopes of studying Mathematics at university were dashed and he was thrust into the maelstrom of the Second World War. Moltmann was captured by British forces towards the end of the war in 1945 and interred in a prisoner of war camp in Belgium with other captured members of the

German armed forces.¹ During his interment in this prisoner of war camp, Moltmann and his compatriots were continually confronted by the Allied guards with photographs of the atrocities of the Nazi regime.² Moltmann, as with many rank and file soldiers in the German army, had no real knowledge of the atrocities of the concentration camps and, when faced with evidence of such brutality, was deeply shaken, both emotionally and psychologically. Indeed, when Moltmann came to recount this experience in later years he admitted that he would rather have died in battle and remained ignorant, rather than have lived and been confronted with the inhumanity of the regime for which he had fought.³

Moltmann found solace from his feelings of guilt and regret through his association with a group of Christians who were also interned within the camp. He was led towards Christ by the loving friendship he found in their company, as well as through his study of a Bible given to him by the American chaplain of the camp. Central to his conversion to Christianity was the feeling of dependence he felt upon Christ's love for redemption and salvation. Indeed, later in his career, Moltmann would describe this conversion experience in terms of his own passivity. Rather than him coming to Christ, it was Christ, he felt, who came to him and lifted him out of his suffering and despair.⁴ It is from this personal experience of suffering that Moltmann's own position of theological realism developed. Central to his theology is the deeply held conviction that it is only through Christ that we are saved from our temporal suffering. This tension between temporal suffering and the promise of redemption made in Christ forms the basis for his theology of radical hope. As John O'Donnell remarked, 'the context of Moltmann's thought is the suffering of the world'.⁵ It is Moltmann's aim to bring worldly suffering into the context provided by the promise made in Christ, which is the basis of hope.

Gordon D. Kaufman's approach to theology was markedly different to that of Jürgen Moltmann. The horrors of the Second World War turned Kaufman away from his original intellectual passion, mathematics, and towards theology. Kaufman was insulated from the effects of the war as he was a resident of the United States. However, nothing could insulate

¹ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ John J. O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality: The Christian Doctrine of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 111.

him from the effects of his knowledge of its events. Kaufman was struck by the brutality of the war and, particularly the Holocaust, and was moved towards theology in an attempt to make sense of life itself in light of what these events revealed about human nature.⁶ Whilst Moltmann was drawn to theology due to the salvation he found in Christ from his experiences of alienation in prisoner of war camps, Kaufman was drawn to theology in an attempt to make sense of life in the face of the alienating phenomenon of gratuitous suffering.⁷ At once, then, we see that the concept of suffering is central to the foundations of both their theologies. It could justifiably be argued that Moltmann's personal experiences of the war were keener and rawer than Kaufman's intellectual consideration of its bloodshed. However, it was suffering itself that led both these thinkers away from their respective scientific fields and towards theology.

Of course, how Kaufman constructs theology in the face of suffering is quite different to Moltmann's scripturally based approach to theology. During his early academic career he was greatly influenced by Karl Barth. This was particularly the case with regards to his personal struggles with faith. Kaufman's interpretation of Barth's account of the individual's alienation from God married well with his own uneasiness with claims to knowledge of God. Kaufman found intellectual solace in Barth's assertion of God's inscrutability and his assertion that any knowledge of God was contingent upon his grace, not human reason.⁸ Kaufman felt that such an understanding of God was commensurate with his own doubts and lapses in faith as it would only be natural to feel that way about a God who was so totally alienated from humanity. However, he soon became dissatisfied with this position. The death-of-God discussions of the early 1960s, of which Kaufman was a part, gave him an appreciation of the problems posed to faith by the concept of God itself.⁹

As a result, Kaufman began to move away from traditional theology and towards an understanding of God as the principle organising idea of human life. He felt that such a move was necessary as the theological tradition failed to address, let alone adequately overcome, the very serious problems he felt the concept of God raised for the faithful.¹⁰ He posited that theological symbols inherited from tradition would not necessarily be able to regulate the

⁶ Gordon D. Kaufman, "My Life and My Theological Reflection: Two Central Themes," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 22 (January 2001): 61.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰ Kaufman, 'My Life and My Theological Reflection', 63.

experiences of an individual far removed from the social and historical context in which they were constructed. It is for this reason that Kaufman gravitated towards a theologically constructivist position. His theological method centred on allowing his construction of theological symbols to be guided by the existential and pragmatic issues arising from the context of culture. These symbols, he contended, would be better able to regulate the experiences of individuals seeking meaning within the context of their culture than those inherited from tradition. Humanity is thus responsible for the construction of symbols of God that can adequately regulate their experiences such that we may overcome the social and historical quandaries of our existence. This is the root of his theology of radical human responsibility. It is our responsibility to provide an adequate theological response to our context rather than cleaving to the safety of tradition.

1.2 The Concept of God

Suffering, then, is central to Moltmann's theology as a whole, from *The Crucified God* and as we shall argue in our study on Moltmann as early as *Theology of Hope*, and most specifically pertinent to his account of God. Fundamentally, Moltmann wished to present an account of God as fully engaged with both the suffering and redemption of his creation. Moltmann was part of post-Second World War movement by German theologians, including Eberhard Jungel and Dorothee Sölle, against the German theological tradition, and mainstream theology itself.¹¹ Central to Moltmann's movement against the theological tradition was his argument that divine passibility was not a heterodox notion. He argued that the notion of the impassible God, relied more on the constructs of Greek philosophy, particularly that of *apatheia*, than on scriptural revelation.¹² *Apatheia* was the concept used to denote a logical and rational mind that was not mastered by emotional or instinctual impulses.¹³ This idea, Moltmann argues, became conceptually linked with the Early Church's understanding of God as absolutely self-sufficient, self-determining and independent.¹⁴ God, therefore, is to be understood as the opposite of the human individual who is forever influenced by opinions, actions and events external to their self.¹⁵ However, scripture, Moltmann argues, does not reveal a God who remains unmoved by his creation; in fact it

¹¹ Samuel M. Powell, *The Trinity in German Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 226.

¹² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 267.

¹³ Jeff B. Pool, *God's Wounds: Hermeneutic of the Christian Symbol of Divine Suffering, Volume Two Evil and Divine Suffering*, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 396.

¹⁴ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 267.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

reveals quite the opposite.¹⁶ Furthermore, such an account of God does not necessarily doom his creation.

So how does Moltmann justify this position? He argues that God suffers because of the perfection of his love for his creation.¹⁷ Indeed, Moltmann cites 1 John 4:16, ‘God is love’, to undermine the argument that God remains unaffected by his creation. If God is love then it is counter intuitive, Moltmann feels, to suggest that he does not suffer in some way with his creation. God cannot be forced to suffer but he can choose to suffer with his creation. If we wish to assert that love is God’s fundamental quality then his participation in his creation must include his own suffering. Moltmann stresses that understanding God as capable of suffering does not in any way diminish accounts of his redemptive relationship with his creation.¹⁸ Rather, it demonstrates the depth of God’s love for his creation, a love that is revealed by our study of scripture. God’s relationship with the Jewish peoples in the Old Testament is one of rejection and forgiveness. God accompanies the Jews in their Babylonian exile and redeemed their relationship with him through his revelation in the Prophets even when they had strayed from his word.¹⁹ In the New Testament we see God sacrificing his own Son as a promise for the salvation of all creation.²⁰ Moltmann argues that, far from weakness, this shows the depth of God’s love for his creation and his direct engagement with its history, including his willingness to suffer along with it. As above, we see Moltmann’s theological realism provides the structure for his account of radical hope. The historical instances of God’s self-revelation of his redemptive intent towards his creation demonstrate that God’s love for his creation entails that his participation in the history of his creation includes his own suffering. It is God’s passionate participation in his own creation that form the basis of Moltmann’s radical hope for the future.

Attempting to present an account of God, whilst contending with the issue of gratuitous suffering, led Kaufman to break with the theology of Barth. He found in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* resources that aided his consideration of God as organising principle rather than moral agent.²¹ In particular, Kant’s understanding of the concept of God belonging to the category of ‘regulative idea’ influenced Kaufman’s thinking. Kant’s

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 229.

¹⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM 1967), 107.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kaufman, ‘My Life and My Theological Reflection’, 66.

epistemology categorised God as fundamentally beyond the scope of human reason, a principle Kaufman shared.²² Of course, Kant argued, while we could not claim any direct knowledge of God, what we believed about God was of great importance to the manner in which we live our lives. To resolve this conundrum Kant argues that our understanding of God actually amounts to a ‘regulative idea’. This is an idea that is obviously of much greater depth and significance than our idea, for example, of a table or a chair. This is an idea that we use as the organising principle for our personal and moral lives on a daily basis. Kaufman found this idea particularly instructive in his formulation of a theology of symbolism. It provided the basis for an understanding of the moral dimension of symbol that would allow him to present a theology that was removed from tradition but engaged with human experience.²³

Indeed, Kaufman wishes to make clear that he does not attribute any specific superiority to the Christian tradition. Religious thought forms have arisen at all times and in all places throughout human history and each have offered an account of God.²⁴ This account has been of central importance to the ordering of the lives of those individuals within that tradition. However, he argues, these formulations are specific to their epoch and are only coherent within the epistemological framework of that epoch. It is on this basis that we cannot allow ourselves to become enveloped by tradition, but rather we must always be seeking to criticise and reconstruct these symbols.²⁵ Above, we noted the link between Kaufman’s constructivism and his theology of radical responsibility. Here, we see the role that Kantian philosophy played in helping him establish that link and use it as the basis for the construction of theological symbols.

1.3 Theology and the Environmental Crisis

Moltmann’s theology is grounded in a profound desire to offer a credible theological response to the existence of gratuitous suffering within God’s creation. Our suffering was drawn up into God’s being through the suffering he willingly undergoes to redeem his creation. Indeed, Moltmann argued that our true home was God’s Kingdom to

²² Ibid., 67.

²³ Ibid., 68.

²⁴ Gordon D. Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (The Westminster Press; Philadelphia, PA: 1981), 11.

²⁵ Ibid., 14.

come rather than the world around us.²⁶ However, as his career progressed, Moltmann's theology came into contact with the environmentalism and the issues of anthropogenic climate change and global environmental degradation. Theology in the post-Holocaust world focused, quite understandably, on the theodicy, suffering and salvation. However, a growing awareness of the effects of human expansion on our environment presented theology with a new set of challenging questions.²⁷ Moltmann became acutely aware that human history, while belonging to God, had a physical location, the Earth itself. While his theology had long focused on the relationship between God, humanity and history, this realisation demonstrated the importance of the inclusion of the environment in his theology. Our relationships with ourselves, each other and God do not exist in a vacuum but in a eco-system that itself is comprised of a multitude of complex inter-relations. A theology that fails to take account of this fails to take into account the effects of environmental degradation on societies that are often the poorest and most ill equipped to deal with them. The gratuitous suffering caused by totalitarian regimes is an overt reminder of humanity's capacity for cruelty and indifference. However, the casual and careless cruelty of environmental degradation is so destructive because of the insidious and inexorable manner in which it spreads.

Indeed, Moltmann in *God in Creation*, argues that the environmental crisis has re-oriented the theodicy problem. The Holocaust and the senseless suffering of the Second World War, he argues, caused him to focus on presenting an account of the redemption of creation that could uphold Christian faith in God in the face of gratuitous bloodshed.²⁸ However, the environmental crisis, Moltmann argues, forces us to look at this problem from the opposite direction. Now, faith in God is not the object of his defence but rather he seeks to use faith in God to advocate the defence of the environment. God is an important agent in this attempt to defend the environment, Moltmann argues, because the term 'ecological crisis' only had validity when we consider it as crisis of 'the whole system with all its part systems'.²⁹ That is to say, the ecological crisis is not simply a term relating to the death of the eco-system but also, for Moltmann, the death of the human spirit in the consumption culture

²⁶ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 289.

²⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology* (London, SCM, 2000), 314.

²⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, (Minneapolis: MN, 1985), xi.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22

of the late capitalist era.³⁰ Here, we see Moltmann's theological realism providing the basis for his theology of radical environmental hope. It is God's self-revelation, within history, of his creative and redemptive relationship with the world that forms the basis of environmental hope within his theology. That this hope is based upon historical events of God's self-revelation of his promise to redeem his creation underscores Moltmann's theological realism. God's promise to redeem that which he has created is both a statement of our radical interrelation with our environment and the radical hope that we ourselves can shape a better future. We can never forgo our status as member of God's creation and thus, as we engage with that status we overcome our alienation from our environment and, consequently, our destructive relationship with it.

Kaufman first examined the implications that global environmental degradation held for theology in his 1972 essay 'A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature', this essay was later republished as part of his 1981 volume *The Theological Imagination*. Here Kaufman stressed that a growing awareness of our role in the destruction of our global habitat forces us to rethink traditional theological understandings of the relationship between God, humanity and the environment. He argues that theology is complicit in this degradation as it has emphasised the relationship between God and humanity at the expense of any account of the relationship between these two parties and the environment.³¹ Kaufman argues that traditional theological concepts such as the *imago dei*, stewardship and the Creation Myth actually work to stress the difference of humanity from the rest of creation and offer us a picture of humanity removed from, rather than integrated with our environment. Kaufman, for this reason, feels that the theological tradition is incapable, in its current form, of meeting the existential needs of an ecologically conscious humanity. Indeed, Kaufman argues that this traditional theological account of God, humanity and the environment has led us to our current predicament.³²

Kaufman draws a direct link between the theological tradition and environmental degradation. He argues that theology established a clear division between God and humanity on one side and the environment on another. Humanity, in the image of God, has dominion over the rest of the created order and this notion, Kaufman contends, is central to the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination*, 226.

³² Ibid., 225.

dysfunctional manner in which we now engage with our environment. The dangerous flaws held within such an understanding of humanity have become apparent as they have become magnified by our technological advances. However, Kaufman argues, the root cause of environmental degradation is held within the concepts of theological tradition. These concepts authorise an understanding of the environment as an object to be worked upon by the will of the subject, that is to say, humanity. Here, we see the manner in which Kaufman's theological constructivism provides the basis for his account of radical human responsibility within his environmental theology. It is the task of the theologian to examine the theological symbols inherited from tradition to ascertain whether they are capable of regulating our experiences such that we can confront the environmental crisis which is the issue of paramount importance within our social and historical context. Kaufman argues that the symbols for God present within the theological tradition are not capable of structuring humanity's radical environmental responsibility and, therefore, must be reconstructed such that they are capable of fulfilling this purpose.

1.4 Deep Problems in Environmental Theology

Moltmann argues that our current relationship with the environment is based on the principles of economic growth rather than stability. Any outcome other than growth is anathema to capitalism. The environment, then, is another resource to be harnessed by our technology in the most efficient and productive manner in order to promote growth.³³ Even as the effects of global ecological degradation begin to impact developed nations, and not simply their poorer relations, the West, Moltmann argues, 'self immunises' against the thought of ecological catastrophe.³⁴ We 'self-immunise', he claims, by assuming that our technology will advance to such a degree that we will be able to protect us from the consequences of the destruction we have wrought upon our environment.³⁵ This notion, in turn, creates apathy towards what Moltmann terms the 'slow death' of our environment and leads to the stagnation of any attempt to bring about meaningful change in our practices of consumption.³⁶

³³ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 23.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

The valorisation of growth at all costs has its roots, Moltmann argues, in Enlightenment philosophy, particularly the thought of René Descartes.³⁷ Descartes presented a dualistic philosophy based on the distinction between two substances *res cogitans*, or mind and *res extensa*, or body. Humanity alone possessed *res cogitans* and the associated faculty of reason, this reason mirrored God's but was finite rather than infinite. God's reason was infinite and perfected and thus, Descartes reasoned, he had no need for a bodily form. Human perfection relies, he felt, on the development of reason and the exercise of that reason in the mastery of ourselves and the world around us. This mastery imitated God's infinite mastery of his creation.³⁸ Moltmann argues that this understanding of the relationship between God, creation and humanity is not supported by scripture.³⁹ In Genesis 1:31 we are told that God looked upon his creation and saw that it was good. All of God's creation is his glory and thus it is a gift to humanity to be treasured rather than a resource to be exploited. This helps us to make sense of Genesis 1:26 in which we are told that humanity has 'dominion' over creation. Our 'dominion' cannot contradict God's love for his creation and must be based on an avowed belief in the fundamental goodness that God declares it possesses.

Here, we see the content of the radical environmental hope that Moltmann constructs from his theologically realist position. It is God's self-revelation of his love for his creation, combined with the promise, made in Christ, that the coming of his Kingdom shall bring redemption to his creation that Moltmann argues provides us with the hope for the future of our relationships with our environment. When we live lives that anticipate the coming of God's Kingdom we move away from the destruction of the environment and towards relationships that prefigure the community of all creation present within God's Kingdom. The content of Moltmann's radical environmental hope reveals that there is a certain account of the anthropology, eschatology and God's relationship with the world at the centre of his environmental theology. Moltmann's environmental anthropology is based upon a fundamentally practical ontology, seeking to present humanity's relationship with the environment in terms of God's relationship with his creation as a whole. His environmental eschatology is fundamentally directed towards a *telos*. God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation provides our understanding of the world with a *telos* which then provides us with an account of the content of eschatological action within the context of

³⁷ Ibid., 27.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 29.

environmental crisis. Finally, his account of God's relationship with the world provides the foundation of his hopeful environmental theology. God's promise of redemption to his creation provides us with the hope for the future that transforms our understanding of our responsibility towards our environment. Fundamentally, our relationship with our environment becomes internal to our relationship with God. We demonstrate faith in God when we build relationships with our environment that anticipate the coming of his kingdom and the fulfilment of his relationship with his creation.

As seen above, Kaufman is deeply critical of the theological traditions account of the relationship between God, humanity and the environment. In his attempt to offer a reconstructed account of this relationship he begins by arguing against the traditional theological understanding of God. He argues that when we understand God as a universal King we actually place ourselves in something of a moral quandary.⁴⁰ How can we criticise the conditions of our life if these conditions are ultimately a part of God's plan for his universe? Indeed, how are we to criticise our own role in environmental degradation? After all, this would simply be another part of God's universal plan that, however perverse it may appear, will be resolved in the culmination of God's own history. Kaufman, therefore, argues that for the replacement of traditional theological notions of God as Universal King with a model of God as creativity.

This model is founded, not upon God's Kingship, but on God's mystery, his fundamental inscrutability. Kaufman wishes us to understand God as the mysterious creativity that is the source of both the universe and the creative trajectories towards life within it. Kaufman argues that, we can never know how or why there is something rather than nothing or how or why events within the universe have conspired to bring us to this point in our evolutionary history. It is this epistemological gap that Kaufman wishes to use as the starting point for his model of God. For Kaufman, understanding God as creativity rather than as a universal King leads us to a re-evaluation of our own position within creation.⁴¹ At the beginning of his career, Kaufman's anthropology focused on the individual as a historical being. However, his understanding of God as creativity led him to consider that the biological component of humanity must be of equal importance to our self understanding as the

⁴⁰Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge; MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 367.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 371.

historical. The principal purpose of Kaufman's re-conception of God as creativity is to allow us to reformulate our self understanding in manner more in keeping with our growing environmental consciousness.⁴² Understanding God as creativity allows us to understand ourselves as being products of universal creativity and therefore fully interrelated with the rest of creation. Our similarity to, rather than our difference with, our environment is stressed and an awareness of our inability to transcend or supersede the limits place upon us by our environment comes to the forefront of our minds. In such a way, Kaufman argues, he has shown us a convincing alternative to what he considers a harmful account of relationship with God and the environment offered by the theological tradition.

Here we see how Kaufman's theological constructivism forms the basis of his theology of radical environmental responsibility. First, Kaufman identified the environmental crisis as the most significant existential and pragmatic issue of our social and historical context. Having done so, he constructed a theological symbol of God to order our experiences towards our responsibility for the future of our relationship with our environment such that we build sustainable relationships with it. His symbol of God as creativity achieved this by giving rise to an anthropology that stressed the intractable interrelation of biology and history at the heart of human existence. God as creativity is the symbol that Kaufman identifies as most fit for the purpose of conveying our radical environmental responsibility and to thus replace the inadequate symbol for God that we inherit from the theological tradition.

The content of Kaufman's radical environmental responsibility reveals that there is a certain account of the anthropology, eschatology and God's relationship with the world at the centre of his environmental theology. Kaufman's anthropology contains a fundamentally epistemological account of human ontology. That is to say, he categorises human existence as a function of the framework of knowledge in which the individual developed. This framework of knowledge regulates our self-understanding as we derive meaning from our experiences in relation to it. The environmental crisis affects our framework of knowledge about the human such that our anthropology must be restructured in such a manner that our environmental responsibility becomes the regulatory principle of our experiences. Moltmann's anthropology is epistemological in the sense that it seeks to present an account of meaning which is interrelated with environmental responsibility.

⁴²Gordon D. Kaufman, *In the Beginning...Creativity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 50.

His eschatology functions on the rejection of a universal *telos* derived from God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation. The content of Kaufman's account of eschatological action is derived from the unification of human creativity with universal creativity. The creative trajectories of the universe have brought about the existence of the conditions necessary to sustain human life. The universe continues to provide the opportunity to move towards a creative rather than destructive relationship with our environment through its creative trajectories. Eschatological action, then, entails the acknowledgement of our fundamental interrelation with our environment through the pursuit of sustainable relationships with our environment. In such a way our own creativity can be understood to be unified with universal creativity.

Finally, Kaufman's account of God's relationship with the world is fundamentally regulative. We create a symbol of God that functions to regulate our understanding of our relationship with the environment such that our responsibility for the future of our relationship with it is central to our epistemology. Faith in God as creativity is demonstrated when our actions are congruent with the epistemology of environmental responsibility that is central to the regulatory function of this symbol of God, constructed within the context of environmental crisis. We express faith in God, as the ultimate source of all creativity within the universe, when we use our creativity to take hold of the opportunities, provided by universal creativity, to fulfil our environmental responsibility and move towards creative, rather than destructive, trajectories within our relationship with our environment.

From the above we see that bringing Moltmann's theology of radical environmental hope into dialogue with Kaufman's theology of radical environmental responsibility reveals some deep problems within environmental theology itself. The status of the ontology that we place at the heart of our environmental anthropology, the account of *telos* that underpins our environmental eschatology and our account of God's relationship with the world all have foundational consequences for the direction of our environmental theology. These decisions are foundational to our presentation of the relationship between God, the environment and humanity. Below we shall outline the key questions that we hope to answer by bringing these two different positions within environmental theology into dialogue.

The purpose of the final chapter, chapter 8, is to fulfil our research questions, firstly by building a comparison to illustrate the foundational significance of these different positions by bringing them into dialogue and, secondly, to ascertain how this dialogue is exemplary. That is to say, we seek to understand how constructing a dialogue between these positions may help illustrate the tension at the heart of the field of environmental theology itself as it moves into the future.

1.5 Key Questions in Environmental Theology

Above, we have examined the deep problems within environmental theology that begin to emerge from a comparison between Moltmann's theology of radical environmental hope and Kaufman's theology of radical environmental responsibility. The key questions that this thesis shall seek to answer are, firstly, what foundational issues within environmental theology are revealed by bringing these two opposing theologies into dialogue. Secondly, we wish to ascertain in what manner the resources we gather from a dialogue between the resolutions that these two thinkers give to these foundational issues can be exemplary for the construction of future environmental theologies. In so doing, we aim to provide future environmental theologians with an insight into the deep theological issues that, we argue, a dialogue between these two thinkers reveal to be foundational to environmental theology as a whole. In order to answer the key questions of this thesis we shall structure the final chapter in terms of a dialogue between these two thinkers on the matters of anthropology, eschatology and theology itself within the context of environmental crisis. This will allow us to bring the resources gained from the main body of the thesis, wherein we track the influence of the blossoming of their respective environmental consciousness on the development of their theology as a whole, into conversation.

So what does a discussion of the manner in which Moltmann's and Kaufman's theology adapted to provide an account of the relationship between God, humanity and creation offer us as we seek to understand the foundational issues within environmental theology itself? We shall answer this question fully in the final chapter by constructing dialogues between these two thinkers on the matter of anthropology, eschatology and theology itself within the context of environmental theology. Below, we shall briefly outline the form that these dialogues shall take.

Firstly, a dialogue between these two thinkers on the matter of anthropology can illuminate how different accounts of human ontology can give rise to different understandings of our place within the relationship between God and his creation. Moltmann's anthropology is founded upon a practical account of human ontology that functions to locate humanity within God's creative and redemptive relationship with creation as a whole. Kaufman's anthropology is founded upon an epistemological account of human ontology that performs a regulative function upon human experience. Kaufman's epistemological ontology functions to regulate our experience such that we understand that the consequences of our interrelation with our environment are central to our self understanding. Bringing these opposing accounts of anthropology into dialogue allows us to ascertain whether they can reveal the foundational significance of our understanding of our own ontology to the construction of future environmental anthropologies.

Secondly, we shall bring them into dialogue on the matter of eschatology. We shall bring their respective approaches to the matter of universal *telos* into conversation in an attempt to ascertain the environmental significance of the creative and redemptive relationship between God and his creation. Moltmann's account of eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis rests upon the universal *telos* that is revealed in God's relationship with his creation. It is this *telos* which links our relationship with our environment to our relationship with God as we seek to build relationships with our environment that anticipate the coming of God's Kingdom and the community of all creation therein. It is hope for the future of creation, then that generates our responsibility towards it. Kaufman's account of eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis is actually based upon a rejection of God's creative and redemptive relationship with creation. He links human action to the symbol of God as creativity such that we understand our responsibility to create relationships with our environment that foster creativity rather than destruction. Here it is our responsibility towards creation, resourced by the symbol of God as creativity, which is generative of hope for a creative rather than destructive environmental future. Bringing these two opposing accounts into dialogue will allow us to examine the foundational significance of the notion of *telos* to the construction of future environmental eschatology

Thirdly, we shall bring these two thinkers into conversation on the matter of theology itself within the context of environmental crisis through an examination of their accounts of

what constitutes knowledge of God, God's identity and the difference God makes in the world. Moltmann categorises knowledge of God, God's identity and the difference God makes in the world in practical and relational terms. We understand God's ontology as fundamentally practical, placing us within his relationship with his creation such that our understanding of our relationship with our environment is transformed. Kaufman also focuses on God's transformational influence upon our understanding of our relationship with our environment. However, he categorises God's ontology in epistemological terms relating to the regulative function of our symbol of God. God informs our understanding of the world such that the regulating principle of our experiences is our responsibility for the future sustainability of our relationship with our environment. In bringing these two irreconcilable categorisations of God into dialogue we seek to illustrate the foundational importance of these categorisations for the direction of environmental theology as a whole as we move towards the future.

This thesis is structured such that we will first establish a basis for a dialogue between these two thinkers before proceeding to construct that dialogue and analyse its contents. To this end, we will first provide an introduction to environmental theology that locates these two thinkers within the field before examining their differing styles, audiences and receptions. We will then examine their theologies in isolation to ascertain how their thought developed to incorporate their growing environmental awareness. Having done so, we will construct a dialogue between these two thinkers on the central issues of anthropology, eschatology and theology within the context of environmental theology itself. In so doing we hope to draw out resources that can help guide the construction of environmental theologies in this era that is so dominated by the destructive relationship that we have created between ourselves and our environment.

In the following chapter we shall outline the development of environmental theology as a field and locate Moltmann and Kaufman within this development. This will allow us to more deeply examine the manner in which their environmental theologies are exemplary of trends within the field of environmental theology itself. In turn, this will allow us to locate the foundational issues for environmental theology their thought reveals within the context of the development of environmental theology itself. Following this, we will be well placed to assess the exemplarity of a dialogue between them in terms of how it can inform the construction of future environmental theologies.

Chapter 2: Jürgen Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman within the History of Environmental Theology

In the following section we will attempt to outline the origins of environmental theology and locate both Jürgen Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman within the movement. These two contemporaries, both drawn to theology from other intellectual fields by the suffering of the Second World War, sought to provide theological responses to the environmental crisis, but did so in opposing ways. In this chapter we aim to bring radical environmental hope, exemplified by the theology of Moltmann, into dialogue with radical environmental responsibility, exemplified by the theology of Kaufman. We shall argue that this tension between radical hope and radical responsibility seems to be at the heart of development of environmental theology. Furthermore, we contend that Moltmann and Kaufman, in exemplifying these opposing approaches, make for productive dialogue partners as we seek to understand the implications of these tensions for the future of environmental theology itself.

2.1 What is environmental theology?

Celia Deane-Drummond defines environmental theology as ‘that reflection on different facets of theology in as much as they take their bearings from cultural concerns about the environment and humanity’s relationship with the natural world’.⁴³ This school of theology came to prominence in the mid-to-late twentieth century and the early twenty first century at roughly the same time as the environmentalist movement itself. Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, is generally held to be the catalyst for this shift in consciousness. The premise of her work was that humanity, through their use of pesticides, had irrevocably damaged the ecological web.⁴⁴ Another key figure in early environmentalism was Garrett Hardin who, in his article ‘Tragedy of Commons’, published in *Science* in 1968, focused on the potentially apocalyptic effects of explosive population growth on the Earth’s ability to sustain humanity.⁴⁵ However, the relationship between theology and the environmentalism was not straight-forward in its development. Karl Barth, perhaps the most prominent theologian of the twentieth century, was deeply suspicious of the link between

⁴³ Celia Deane-Drummond, *Ecotheology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2006), x.

⁴⁴ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston; MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), 266

⁴⁵ Garrett Hardin, ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’, *Science*, New Series, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (Dec. 13, 1968): 1243-1248.

theology and nature. Barth's theology was founded upon the assertion of an 'infinite qualitative distinction' between God and humanity that he argued was necessary in order to stop theology being abused in the manner it had been by political regimes during the First and Second World War.⁴⁶ Indeed, this led Barth to reject theologies that attempted to read from creation towards God. God, Barth argued, must be external to and qualitatively different from his creation otherwise we risk a scenario similar to that of the cultural Protestantism in Germany wherein God's perceived availability allows him to be incorporated into a certain political association or social grouping.

An example of Barth's forthrightness on this issue can be observed in his relationship with fellow German theologian Emil Brunner. Brunner rejected both liberal theology's representation of Jesus as well as the notion that humanity was ultimately capable of its own salvation, his stance on natural theology caused a gulf to open between he and Barth. Brunner argued that,

What the natural man knows of God, of the law and of his own dependence upon God, may be very confused and distorted. But even so it is the necessary, indispensable point of contact for divine grace.⁴⁷

Here, we see that Brunner argues for a decidedly moderate understanding of natural theology wherein humanity may move very tentatively towards God on the basis of our own reason. Barth flatly rejected Brunner's position on the basis that any intrusion into Christ's exclusive position as God's revelation gave rise to the possibility of totalitarianism. All that humanity has available to them in their 'natural state' is a perception of the laws of the natural world. Any knowledge of God is given by God alone and is beyond the purview of human reason. Of the natural laws available to humanity's senses Barth wrote,

They cannot claim to be more than relative necessities because they relate only to limited spheres of existence... It is only partially, formally, and above all within the world and the equivocal nature of all its relationships, that they are valid formulae. And it is only as valid in this way that they can claim to be constant and continual words and truths.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 10.

⁴⁷ Emil Brunner, *Natural Theology: Comprising Nature and Grace* (London: The Centenary Press, 1946), 32.

⁴⁸ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics Study Edition 27: The Doctrine of Reconciliation IV.3.1*, eds. G. W. Bromiley, Thomas F. Torrance (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 140.

Here, we see Barth enforce a strict distinction between what we can and cannot achieve through discourse on nature. Through such discourse we can achieve some knowledge of our world, this knowledge itself may be partial and contingent upon a changeable set of criteria, but we can never achieve knowledge of eternal truths. These belong to God alone and can only be revealed to us at a time, and in a manner, of his choosing. From this Barth intends us to understand the world around us as temporary and contingent. God's revelation in Christ orients us within history and is the only source of indubitable knowledge.

Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that Christian Theology was portrayed in a negative light by Lynn White Jr. when he published 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis', in 1967. Here White argues that that Christianity is largely to blame for the environmental crisis. He argues that,

Our science and technology have grown out of Christian attitudes toward man's relation to nature ... Despite Copernicus, all the cosmos rotates around our little globe. Despite Darwin, we are not, in our hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim.⁴⁹

White's argument focuses on what he understands to be the ontological division that Christianity imposes between human and non-human creation. Genesis reports that humanity is to rule over all creation and this, he argues, on one reading lays the foundation for the environmentally destructive attitudes that threaten the long term viability of life on Earth. Indeed, from our above reading of Barth this would appear to be a reasonable conclusion to draw about Christian theology. This theme of ontological division would be taken up, to differing degrees and in different directions, within the environmental theology of Moltmann and Kaufman. However, theological responses to the environment that stand in contrast to Barth's, actually predate not only White's paper but also the work of both Harden and even Carson herself.

2.2 Early Environmental Theology

A theological awareness of the importance of humanity's relationship with its environment appears to predate the Second World War. Environmental theologian Roderick Nash quotes an address given on Jerusalem radio in 1939 by American Christian Zionist and

⁴⁹ Lynn White Jr., 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis', *Science*, New Series, Vol. 155, No. 3767 (Mar. 10, 1967): 1206.

soil conservationist Walter Lowdermilk outlining an Eleventh Commandment. Lowdermilk argued that the Eleventh Commandment ought to be, ‘Thou shalt inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation’.⁵⁰ Furthermore, American theologian Walter Horton had engaged with the question of whether scripture legitimised humanity’s domination of creation almost two decades before White’s paper was published. Horton argues that if we examine Psalms 8:6 we see that the traditional notion of Biblical dominion and our modern understanding of the relationship between humanity and the eco–system are not as disparate as critics might allege.⁵¹ The language of Psalms 8:6 reminds us that God has made humanity to have dominion over the works of God’s own hands, we are reminded that God has put all things under our feet. Horton argues that it is modern society and not Christianity that is to blame for the current environmental crisis. Christianity provided humanity with moral criteria and metaphysical limits that have been overruled by the concerns of our present day societies.⁵² Christian anthropology, he argues, reminds us that we must meet certain moral conditions if we are to exercise dominion without causing destruction. Furthermore, it reminds us that our capacity is bounded by the metaphysical limits of creatureliness; we are always to understand ourselves as God’s agent and never God’s rival.⁵³

Paul Tillich also approached the issue of environmental theology via Psalms 8:6. We see, in his 1964 paper ‘Man and Earth’, published in his work *The Eternal Now*, the blossoming of the environmental consciousness that he first voiced in his 1948 sermon ‘Nature, also, Mourns a lost Good’, later published in his collection of sermons *The Shaking of the Foundations*. In ‘Nature, also, Mourns a lost Good’, Tillich espoused an environmental philosophy based on the idea of being in community with nature.⁵⁴ In ‘Man and Earth’ we see Tillich building an environmental theology that starts from an analysis of Psalms 8: 3-6 and builds to an eschatological account of the redemption of all creation. He quite poignantly argues that,

⁵⁰ Ronald Nash, *Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 97.

⁵¹ Walter M. Horton, ‘Conditions and Limits of Man’s Mastery Over Nature’ in *Das Menschenbild Im Lichte Des Evangeliums: Festschrift Zum 60. Geburtstag Von Prof. Dr. Theol. Hc DD Hc Dr. Iur. Hc Emil Brunner* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1950), 91.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵⁴ Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (Eugene; OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012), 86.

Only the eternal can save us from the anxiety of being a meaningless bit of matter in a meaningless vortex of atoms and electrons. Only the eternal can give us the certainty that the earth, and, with it, mankind, has not existed in vain, even should history come to an end tomorrow.⁵⁵

Here, we see Tillich expanding on the notion of humanity communing with nature, a notion drawn from both his love of the natural world and the German Romantic tradition, and presenting us with an account of the eschatological community of all creation. Here, we see humanity presented as one part of the whole creation that is to be redeemed in the coming of God's Kingdom. Humanity is not raised above creation but is seen as integrated with it in both an ontological and eschatological sense.

In the work of American Lutheran minister and theologian Joseph Sittler we see an even earlier incident of the notion of an eschatological community of creation. Furthermore Sittler, argues from the eschatological character of creation towards the development of an environmental theology. In his 1954 paper 'A Theology for Earth' Sittler argues that,

When Christian orthodoxy refuses to articulate a theology for earth, the clamant hurt of God's ancient creation is not thereby silenced... If the church will not have a theology *for* nature, then irresponsible but sensitive men will act as midwives for nature's unsilencable meaningfulness, and enunciate a theology of nature. For Earth, not man's mother- which is a pagan notion- but, as St. Francis profoundly surmised, man's sister, sharer of his sorrow and scene and partial substance of his joys, unquenchably sings out her violated wholeness, and in groaning and travailing awaits with man the restoration of all things.⁵⁶

Here, Sittler argues that an environmental theology is of such importance to the Christian that theologians ought to consciously move their theology in the direction of the environment regardless of whether the Church has made a similar move. The reason for the urgency of this move, Sittler argues, is the eschatological status of creation itself. Creation, as well as humanity, enjoys a relationship with God, its Creator. Creation, he argues, is our sister and yearns for reconciliation with its creator, and the accompanying redemption, as keenly as humanity itself.

⁵⁵ Paul Tillich *The Eternal Now* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 30.

⁵⁶ Joseph Sittler, 'A Theology for Earth', in *Evocations of Grace: The Writings of Joseph Sittler on Ecology, Theology, and Ethics*, eds. Steven Bouma-Prediger, Peter W. Bakken (Grand Rapids; MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 25.

So, in the late 1940s and early 1950s we begin to see a shift towards the environment within the work of certain theologians. The catalyst for this shift in the work of Horton, Tillich and Sittler was an awareness of the capacity for self destruction that humanity possessed in the form of nuclear weaponry.⁵⁷ Writing post-Hiroshima and Nagasaki these theologians felt unable to ignore the potential consequences that such weaponry could wreak upon, not just humanity, but all creation.⁵⁸ Writing in 1950, Horton states that the nuclear threat had risen to be a grave concern and argues that the movements against nuclear weaponry and against environmental damage were closely connected.⁵⁹ Tillich, writing in 1954, published a five point statement on the hydrogen bomb in the *Pulpit Digest*. Key amongst these points was the notion that humanity may well destroy itself via the tensions within itself and that the meaning of history is not dependent upon the manner in which humanity is annihilated. He stated that wise and courageous resistance to self destruction was called forth by all people who recognised humanity's 'suicidal instincts' and that this resistance must take place in all levels of politics, moral and religions.⁶⁰

Finally, Sittler in his 1961 address to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 'Called to Unity', sought to draw out the substance of the ethical obedience that is required by humanity in light of our actions within history and our 'creaturely placement within the world of nature'.⁶¹ Here we see him develop his understanding of the Earth as our sister and places creation at the centre of both our soteriology and our eschatology through his metaphorical use of the term light. He argues that,

This radio-active earth, so fecund and so fragile, is his creation, our sister and the material place where we meet the brother in Christ's light. Ever since Hiroshima the very term light has ghastly meanings. But ever since creation it has had meanings glorious; and ever since Bethlehem meanings concrete and beckoning.⁶²

Here, Sittler contrasts the light of the atomic explosion at Hiroshima with the light provided to us through the love of Christ. While Hiroshima introduces us to a new understanding of 'light', one centred on destruction, we are reminded of the glorious meanings of light that are contained with the promise of the redemption of creation and in the salvation won for us

⁵⁷ Panu Pikhala, *Early Ecotheology and Joseph Sittler* (Münster: LitVerlag, 2017), 265.

⁵⁸ Laurel Kearns, 'The Context of Eco-theology', in *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, Gareth Jones ed. (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 473.

⁵⁹ Horton, 1950, 101.

⁶⁰ Paul Tillich, *Theology of Peace* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 158.

⁶¹ Pikhala, *Early Ecotheology*, 13.

⁶² Joseph Sittler, 'Called to Unity', *The Ecumenical Review*, 14 (January 1962): 187.

through the suffering of Christ. Sittler both acknowledges that we can never go back to a world before Hiroshima, we have in a sense lost our innocence with regards to our own destructive potential, while arguing that the light of redemption and salvation is still present all around us in God's Creation and Christ's sacrifice.

2.3 Environmental Hope and Environmental Responsibility

From the above survey of early environmental theology we see two key themes emerging that seem to pre-emptively respond to the criticisms raised by White. On the one hand we see a hope for the future redemption of creation that is founded upon the relationship between creation and creator. On the other we see our own responsibility for the future of creation in light of our own capacity, both creative and destructive. This second theme is related to but distinct from the theme of stewardship as it contains an awareness of the qualitatively different nature of our capacity to both create and destroy in the modern age. There is an obvious tension between these two themes as we may, in our hopefulness, neglect our responsibilities whilst in attempting to attend to our responsibilities we may very well lose hope. As noted in the previous section, Moltmann is fundamentally a theologian of radical hope, whilst Kaufman is fundamentally a theologian of radical responsibility. Indeed, their polarised positions make them intriguing dialogue partners as they respectively pursue the opposing halves of the tension at the heart of environmental theology. Below we shall briefly outline how the duelling themes of hope and responsibility shaped their respective environmental theologies.

In the mould of the environmental theologians before him, Moltmann was drawn to reconsider humanity's relationship with the environment through contemplation of the implications of nuclear war. He first tackled this issue in his 1984 collection of essays *On Human Dignity*, wherein he expressed his understanding that the spectre of nuclear war had fundamentally changed our relationship with the environment. On this matter he wrote,

There is ethically no conceivable justification of a possible destruction of humanity and of life on earth in order to protect the rights and freedom in one of the social systems in which human beings live today... Even without nuclear war the stockpiling of armaments already destroys the life of human beings and the natural environment. The

“military-industrial complex” spreads itself like a cancerous growth and infects all dimensions of life.⁶³

Here, we see that Moltmann understands all of life on Earth to be overshadowed by humanity’s nuclear capacity. We have moved to a new phase in our history wherein we have the capability to annihilate not only ourselves but all of life on Earth.

Moltmann offered a clearer enunciation of the paradigm shift engineered by our nuclear capacity in his late career work *Ethics of Hope*. With regards to this concept he wrote,

When the atomic bomb was invented and dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945, it was not just the Second World War that was ended. The whole human race entered its end-time as well. That is meant in an entirely non-religious sense. The end time is the age in which the end of humanity is possible at any time. Through the potentialities for a global nuclear war, the human race as a whole became mortal.⁶⁴

From this we see that Moltmann understands humanity’s nuclear capacity to signal a change in our history. We have entered into an era of the end times in which our ultimate self-destruction is entirely possible. Moltmann speaks of humanity as a whole becoming ‘mortal’ on account of this possibility. With the development of nuclear weaponry we have moved past the point at which our mistakes, whilst costly, may be reversible.

As we recall from the previous section, Moltmann is fundamentally a theologian of radical hope. So how does his theology seek to provide hope within the context of an age of the end times. In his 1985 work *God in Creation*, Moltmann alleges that the root cause of the thought processes that have led to our current age of the end times is an alienation from our environment brought about by the Cartesian dualism of the Enlightenment. Moltmann sought to relocate humanity within the environment through a theological account of the relationship between Creator and Creation. This would, in turn, influence his Christology, his anthropology and his ethics. Central to Moltmann’s environmental theology was the assertion, also found implicitly in the work of Sittler, that Creation itself possesses an eschatological identity. This identity ensures that the promise made in Christ’s resurrection stands for all creation and that all things shall be made new in the coming of God’s

⁶³ Jürgen Moltmann, *On Human Dignity: Political Theology and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 122.

⁶⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, Trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 46.

Kingdom.⁶⁵ From this Moltmann constructs a theological anthropology based in humanity's ontological commonality with Creation that reaches its denouement in his assertion that the ultimate manifestation of humanity's faithfulness to God is the construction of a community of all creation.⁶⁶

In the work of Moltmann we see a crystallization of the hope for the future of Creation that is contained within the Christian tradition. We saw the theme of eschatological hope for the environment beginning to emerge within the work of Tillich and Sittler, whilst the theology of Horton stressed the importance of the ontological relationship between creator and Creation. In the work of Moltmann we see a synthesis of these two notions as we see him work from the relationship between creator and creation towards a theology of radical environmental hope. This hope is founded on the redemption of creation promised to it by its creator which in turn provides us with hope for our own future in the era of the end times. Moltmann argues that our true identity lies not simply in our being made in the image of God, but in our being made in the image of the world also. It is only when these two concepts are balanced that we can bring glory to God's creation by ruling over it 'with Christ'. To rule over creation with Christ is to align our capacities with the hope for the future given in Christ in order to bring about a sustainable community of all creation in present.

As seen in the previous section, Kaufman's theology offers us a contrasting premise to that of Moltmann's. Kaufman's is a theology of radical responsibility and the approach to the Christianity and the environmental crisis found within it is reminiscent of that of White Jr. himself. His initial response was made in his 1972 paper 'A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature' which was republished in 1981 as part of his work *The Theological Imagination*. Here he concludes that the ontological difference that Christianity posits between humanity and the rest of creation is responsible for environmental crisis.⁶⁷ Let us place this assertion within the context of Kaufman's theology as a whole. Kaufman engaged in a theological method based upon the premise that theology itself is a socially and historically constructed phenomenon. He argued that throughout human history theology has been criticised and reconstructed to fit the needs specific to a certain historical or cultural context. Kaufman states that the most pressing issue facing humanity in the present day, and

⁶⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, (Minneapolis: MN, 1985), 189.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁶⁷ Gordon D. Kaufman, 'A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature', *Harvard Theological Review* 65 (1972), 353.

in its future, is the matter of how to sustain life on earth in the face of both our environmentally destructive activities and the capacity for self- destruction granted by nuclear weaponry.⁶⁸ He is deeply suspicious of the Christian tradition's ability to provide humanity with any hope for the future of the environment in its current form. The *imago dei* enforces an ontological divide with the environment whilst eschatology infantilises us with promises of redemption no matter how destructive our actions. Furthermore, the introspective nature of Christian worship, ethics and moral development philosophically alienate us from the environment with which we are intractably interconnected.⁶⁹

Fundamentally, Kaufman argues that what is necessary for our current situation is a theology that stressed our radical responsibility for both the destruction wreaked upon the environment and for the creation of a sustainable community of all creation. He does not believe that Christian theology can achieve this task without reconstruction and thus works towards a theology based upon an understanding of God as universal Creativity. Here, God's agency is limited to the creation of possibility itself and eschatological responsibility falls into the hands of humanity. In turn, we are presented with an understanding of worship in terms of our taking hold of the possibilities granted to us by creation to bring about our own eschatological salvation through the creation of a sustainable relationship with the environment.⁷⁰ Here, we see that Kaufman's theology is one of radical responsibility that attempts to generate hope through the notion of the possibility contained within universal creativity.

Kaufman was highly influential upon the work of his student, feminist environmental theologian Sallie McFague. McFague took inspiration from Kaufman's constructive theological method in the development of her theology of metaphor. McFague's metaphorical theology aims to move away from traditional patriarchal understandings of God and towards more environmentally edifying constructions, whilst still being guided by scripture. To this end she developed the metaphor of the Earth as the body of God. She argues that this metaphor is legitimate as we find in scripture the notion that the entire

⁶⁸ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Theology for a Nuclear Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 3.

⁶⁹ Gordon D. Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (The Westminster Press; Philadelphia, PA: 1981), 223.

⁷⁰ Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge; MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 411.

universe is God's self-expression and therefore the whole of creation is sacred.⁷¹ Conceiving of the Earth as the body of God, she argues, encourage us to see,

the creator in the creation, the source of all existence in and through what is bodied forth from that source.⁷²

McFague argues that the metaphor of the Earth as the body of God motivates humanity to fulfil the eschatological potential of creation via the social, political, economic and technological changes necessary to build a sustainable community of creation. She writes that 'creation is the place of salvation, salvation is the direction of creation'.⁷³ Thus this metaphor promotes both an awareness of humanity's responsibility for both the destruction of the environment and the construction of a more sustainable future.

Above, we see that there was a movement within theology that actually appeared to agree with Lynn White Jr. in principle. Kaufman, as well as his student McFague, seem to work from the premise that Christian theology cannot provide us with an ethic of environmental responsibility without quite a serious degree of reconstruction. They do not agree with the notion, present within the strand of environmental theology that Moltmann exemplifies, that Christianity can provide hope for the future of the environment. Indeed, they see the sources from which Moltmann draws hope as ultimately limiting the account of human responsibility towards the environment. Rather than seeking hope from within the resources of the tradition, they seek to construct new theological formulations. The foundation for these new formulations is not God's promise for redemption but humanity's radical responsibility for the future of their relationships with creation.

2.4 Hope and Responsibility: The Tension Driving Environmental Theology?

Our survey of the development of environmental theology revealed that this process was driven by the tension between hope and responsibility. This tension arose from the manner in which human development, particularly our nuclear capability, complicated accounts of God's promise for redemption. We hope for the future because it is promised to us by God, however, we could no longer fail to take responsibility our own capacity for self-annihilation. Moltmann and Kaufman present solutions to this tension that exemplify its respective strands. Moltmann's environmental theology approaches the environmental crisis,

⁷¹ Sallie McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 72.

⁷² Sallie McFague, *The Body of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 20.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 180

as with all of modernity's quandaries, from the context provided by God's grace. God's redemptive promise to his creation encompasses and interpenetrates the relationships between humanity and the environment. Moltmann posits that promise of God's Kingdom to come transforms our understanding of ourselves, the environment and our relationship with it. We see that creation belongs to God and that it is our responsibility to rule over it 'with Christ', thus bringing glory to God. In such a way, Moltmann seeks to overcome the tension between hope and responsibility by presenting environmental responsibility as a product of the hope provided by God's grace.

Kaufman's solution to this tension between hope and responsibility moves in the opposite direction to Moltmann's thought. That is to say he presents an account of responsibility that he contends is generative of hope. Kaufman considers accounts of redemption based in God's grace to infantilise humanity and thus seeks to move away from account of modernity existing within such a context. Rather, he wishes to use the awareness of humanity's responsibility for the environmental crisis, arising from modernity, as the basis for the reconstruction of theological formulations such as God, anthropology and eschatology. The symbol of God that Kaufman constructs as a response to human responsibility is that of Creativity. Here, God is understood as the creativity that brought the universe into being and creative trajectories running through the universe that sustain it. God, here, does not provide humanity with hope through a promise, made in Christ, that his act of creation and his act of redemption are linked. Rather, God is that which ensures there will be future opportunities for change within the universe. It is humanity's responsibility to grasp these opportunities for change as they relate to our relationship with the environment. Kaufman contends that his environmental theology is based on responsibility but that this account contains within it an account of hope. Hope, he argues, is generated from an understanding that our radical responsibility is accompanied by the continued arising of possibilities to build a sustainable future due to the creative trajectories that run through the universe.

We see that both thinkers offer pioneering and novel solutions to the tension between hope and responsibility that appears to reside at the heart of environmental theology. Moltmann would contend that his account of radical hope contains within it an account of responsibility. Likewise, Kaufman would contend that his account of radical responsibility contains an account of hope. These two solutions are fundamentally irreconcilable because of their differing positions on God's action in the world. Moltmann, as a theological realist,

bases his account upon the manner in which our understanding of God's action in the world transforms our experience of the world. Kaufman, as a theological constructivist, formulates his account upon the way in which our experience of the world transforms our understanding of God's action in the world. However, it is because of their irreconcilability that a dialogue between them is able to so strikingly illuminate the respective sides of the tension between hope and responsibility at the heart of environmental theology. Furthermore, we would argue that this dialogue between them offers us an understanding of environmental theology that moves us beyond its traditional identity as an applied or contextual theology. Their responses to the tension between hope and responsibility lead us to ask the kind of questions that are usually reserved for systematic theology. Questions of who God is, how God is known and what difference God makes within the world are central to their attempts to offer an environmental theology that resolves this tension in the direction which they respectively choose. Their theological responses to the environmental crisis indicate that there are questions more usually associated with of systematic theology that must be wrestled with if we seek to resolve the tension between hope and responsibility at the heart of environmental theology.

In the following chapters we shall examine the development of Moltmann's and Kaufman's theologies in isolation before bring them into dialogue on the key issues of anthropology, eschatology and theology itself within the context of environmental crisis in the final chapter. In so doing, we hope to ascertain how their theologies were influenced by their growing awareness of the environmental crisis, before bring them into dialogue so ascertain what their irreconcilable theological responses to this crisis can tell us about the foundational questions facing environmental theology as it moves into the future.

Chapter 3: An analysis of the respective styles, audiences and receptions of Jürgen Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman

In the previous two chapters we have introduced the thesis and offered an analysis of the place that both thinkers occupy within the history of environmental theology. Before turning to our examination of their respective environmental theologies, we will offer an analysis of their respective styles, audiences and receptions. This will allow us to establish the context necessary to bring these two thinkers into dialogue in the final chapter. We will gain a deeper understanding of the architecture of their thought and the directions in which their environmental theologies may take us. This chapter will be split into three sections. The first section will focus on Moltmann whilst the second on Kaufman. The third shall offer some concluding remarks on whether this discussion has provided us with the resources to construct a dialogue between these two thinkers on the matters of environmental theology outlined in the introductory chapter.

3.1 Jürgen Moltmann: Style, Audience and Reception

In the following analysis of Moltmann's style, audience and reception we shall attempt to substantiate the claim that the focus on universal liberation found within his theology allows him to open lines of dialogue with a variety of Christian and non-Christian perspectives. Furthermore, within the Christian tradition itself, the soteriological and Christological focus of Moltmann's theology is seen as offering a wealth of resources by a variety of denominations outside of Moltmann's own tradition.

3.1.1 Style: Moltmann the Ecumenical Theologian

In his late career work *Experiences in Theology*, Moltmann reflects upon the directions in which theological journey has taken him. He calls theology 'an adventure of ideas' and an 'open, inviting path' that emerged only as he walked it.⁷⁴ This epithet reveals the openness of Moltmann's scripturally based theology to dialogue with denominations, faiths and philosophies outside the sphere of both his native Protestantism and his native Germany. Indeed, the seeds of his ecumenism were sown during his time as a member of the

⁷⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London, SCM, 2000), xv.

World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order from 1963 to 1983.⁷⁵ He states that his interactions with other denominations profoundly affected his outlook on theology, writing ‘The outcome of my ecumenical participation, as I willingly confess, is this: my origin is Reformed--my future is ecumenical!’.⁷⁶ Indeed, this ecumenism manifests not just in his interactions with other faiths and denominations but in his attempts to bring scripture and tradition into dialogue with issues of justice and liberation arising out of modernity.

This is a trait displayed from the earliest stages of his theological career. *Theology of Hope* saw him attempt to recover the eschatological basis of theology in response to the barbarity of the Holocaust. The *Crucified God* linked humanity’s suffering and redemption in the twentieth century to the suffering and redemption of Christ upon the cross and thus developed a universality eschatology. The third and final instalment in this systematic theology, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* dealt with the necessity of the Church’s support for modernity’s liberation movements out of faithfulness to the redemption God offers to the suffering throughout scripture. Here, we see that Moltmann’s ecumenical style is founded upon a commitment to theological realism. That is to say, his ecumenical theology is based upon the presuppositions that God exists independently from humanity, God can be known and that meaningful statements can be made about God. God exists independently as the creator of the universe whose promise to his creation is revealed in Christ and who can, subsequently, be spoken about meaningfully as the creator and redeemer of the universe. It is from this perspective that, as his theological career developed, he entered into dialogue with Marxism, Feminism, science and ecology in particular.

So, from the above, we have established that Moltmann’s theological style is fundamentally ecumenical. His position of theological realism leads him to be open to, and indeed actively seek out, dialogue partners from within the culture of modernity. This ecumenism, however, does not remain a theological abstraction within Moltmann’s systematic thought. It drives him to develop a practical and political approach to theology that stresses the centrality of the Church’s action within the world. Citing Metz, Moltmann argues that the Church ‘is an institution within this world, having a critical liberating task in

⁷⁵ “50 years after Theology of Hope, Jürgen Moltmann's vision continues to inspire,” WCC, accessed January 3 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/50-years-after-theology-of-hope-jurgen-moltmanns-vision-continues-to-inspire>

⁷⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *A Broad Place*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 2007), 87.

regard to it'.⁷⁷ Moltmann offers an insight into how the church might engage in its critical liberating task when he argues that,

The theology of revolution which comes to us from Latin America demands from Christianity the new fundamental choice for socialism in the worldwide class struggled to liberate the oppressed and exploited people.⁷⁸

Here, Moltmann contends that Latin American socialism, as a movement that works for the liberation of the oppressed and overthrow of totalitarian regimes, is worthy of global Church support. This specific example is illustrative of his broader attitude to the link between systematic theology and ecclesiastical action. In his work *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* he writes that 'The Church needs the Bible as its foundation and the public discussion as a check'.⁷⁹ The Church, therefore, must necessarily be involved in public discussion in order to resist oppression, redeem suffering and guide us as we ourselves attempt to live lives within the constraints of modernity, that anticipate the coming of God's Kingdom.

Moltmann credits his participation in the Christian-Marxist dialogues, in particular his interaction with the work of Ernst Bloch, for this development in his theology.⁸⁰ The Marxist critique of Hegel's account of history has much in common with Moltmann's theology of history. While Hegel saw history as the self-expression of the Absolute both Marx and Moltmann, in different ways, saw history as a process building not from, but to, an Absolute. For Marx this was a Utopian State while for Moltmann it is the Kingdom of God. In the work of Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch Moltmann found an account of eschatology that allowed him to establish a relationship between history and the Kingdom of God. Bloch argued that humanity was drawn forward, through history, towards the creation of a Utopia by the 'concept of Nothing'.⁸¹ That is to say, the thought of failure, defeat and inadequacy drives us to pursue ever greater development. In Moltmann's thought Bloch's secular version of eschatology is replaced by the Kingdom of God. The redemption we shall find in God's Kingdom, promised in Christ, motivates us to pursue relationships of this order with ourselves and each other within our earthly lives.

⁷⁷ J. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1977), 16.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 102.

⁸⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, "Politics and the Practice of Hope," *The Christian Century*, 87 (March 11, 1970): 289.

⁸¹ Ernst Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity* (Freiberg: Herder and Herder, 1968), 228.

Moltmann's ecumenism is also demonstrated in his approach to the relationship between theology and science. He states that there is Biblical basis for Christian support of evolutionary theory, arguing that God's injunction to be fruitful and multiply, given in Genesis 9:7, applies to all life not simply humanity.⁸² On this basis Christianity need,

... no longer see Darwin's evolutionary theory as an attack on Christian anthropology, but begin to understand that the human being belongs to the same family as other living things on this fruitful earth. That is ultimately also the substance of the covenant with Noah...It is a covenant 'with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature' (Genesis 9:9–10). So all living creatures are God's covenant partners and our covenant partners too.⁸³

Here, Moltmann states that when we come to fully appreciate the relationship between Creator and creation we no longer understand ourselves as removed from the rest of the ecosystem. All of life is evolving in response to the life granted to it by God's creative act, and all of life is contingent upon God's grace in this matter. Religion and science, therefore, can be understood as complementary disciplines that aid our understanding of ourselves and our relationship with our environment.

Here, Moltmann could be accused of indulging natural theology and moving away from the scriptural revelation which he professes to be central to his theology. However, in *God and Creation* Moltmann offers a defence of natural theology based on an account of the relationship between natural and revealed theology. Underpinning Moltmann's ecumenical approach to theology is his understanding of the universal scope of the promise for redemption made in Christ's resurrection. In light of this, he would argue that natural theology certainly has its place within the sphere of human wisdom, even if it is not capable of presenting a full account of our relationship with God. Natural theology can provide us with knowledge of God so long as it approached from the perspective of the revelation of Christ in scripture.⁸⁴ It should not be pursued as independent source of knowledge of God but only as an extension of the revealed theology. The world, as we know it, has not yet been reunited with God but still offers us hints of what such a union would be like. Furthermore *Experiences in Theology*, sees Moltmann contend that theologians have been too ready to

⁸² Jürgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 112.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 324.

⁸⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (Minneapolis: MN, 1985), 57.

avoid discourse on the subject of nature due to the manner in which natural theology was been misused by the political institutions of the twentieth century. Moltmann argues that while such concern is not unwarranted it should not lead us to make natural theology taboo.⁸⁵ Whilst Moltmann states that Christ's revelation remains the necessary predicate of theologising, he offers a much more open and ecumenical understanding of the task of theology, encouraging the exploration of natural theology to expand our knowledge of creation.⁸⁶

The universal promise made in Christ also inspired Moltmann to openly advocate for feminist theology. His wife, Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel, a feminist theologian awakened him to the importance of feminist thought.⁸⁷ In his work *The Spirit of Life*, Moltmann argues that through baptism women have received the Spirit in the same manner as men and are therefore also destined to prophesy and spirituality. Exclusion of women from the Church hierarchy is therefore, he argues, a sin against the Spirit.⁸⁸ He posits that theology and Christianity would make fruitful dialogue partners as feminism can liberate men from their isolating positions of denomination. In a similar vein, theology can direct feminism past the assertion of the rights of women towards the rebirth of all the living.⁸⁹

Moltmann explores this concept of mutual liberation more fully in late career work *Experiences in Theology*. Here he attempts to understand the meaning of various liberation theologies for the oppressor. For example, what black theology might mean for white individuals, what Latin American theology might mean for those in the first world and revisits the meaning of feminist theology for men.⁹⁰ This is an expansion of his argument in *Spirit of Life*: oppressors themselves need to be liberated from the positions of power that alienate them from themselves and the other. In attempting to bring about this dialogue between oppressed and oppressor he aims to frame oppression not simply as a personal sin but as a product of a structure of violence from which oppressors need actively withdraw.⁹¹

The universal significance of Christ's resurrection and its influence on Moltmann's ecumenical approach to theology is also evident in his involvement in the Jewish-Christian

⁸⁵ Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 78.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 270

⁸⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 239.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 188

dialogues. In *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine*, co-authored with Jewish theologian Pinchas Lapide, Moltmann states that,

Christendom can gain salvation only together with Israel...For the sake of the Jew Jesus there is no ultimate separation between church and Israel. For the sake of the gospel there is provisionally, before the eschatological future, also no fusion. But there is the communal way of the hoping ones.⁹²

Here, we see Moltmann connects the salvation promised in Christ's resurrection to God's salvation of Israel. Whilst he acknowledges that Christianity and Judaism have different paths to walk in the world, he states that these two traditions will be reunited in the coming of God's Kingdom promised in Christ.

Above we have examined how Moltmann's commitment to the universal promise of Christ's resurrection has led him to seek out dialogue partners both within the Christian tradition and external to it. There is a uniformity to Moltmann's approach to these dialogue partners as he attempts to synthesise the apparent differences between their perspectives with reference to the universality of Christ's redemption. This universality precedes and encompasses the dialogues that Moltmann enters into and is what allows him to be both an ecumenical theologian whilst, at the same time, profoundly Christocentric. His dialogues with Marxism, Feminism, science and ecology emanate from, and proceed to, an understanding of the world as existing in anticipation of the coming of God's Kingdom promised in Christ. A clear and structured account of Christian identity within modernity emerges from Moltmann's account of knowledge of God. We gain our knowledge of God through God's self revelation in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Christian identity itself is founded upon this interruption, by God, of his own creation in order to deliver a promise of redemption to that creation. Therefore, Christian identity can be understood as at once, embedded within and separate from modernity. The suffering of Christ upon the cross embeds Christian identity within the world, making it continuous with it. The resurrection of Christ separates Christian identity from the world as to overcome death is to be fundamentally discontinuous with the world. It is for this reason that Moltmann is able to engage openly in dialogue with other traditions and other spheres of knowledge without losing his own Christian identity. This identity contains within it a certain account, derived

⁹² Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine: A Dialogue by Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann*, trans. Leonard Swidler (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 90.

from God's revelation, of the ontological nature of the universe. That is to say that the universe is promised redemption by its creator, God. His dialogues take place within this account of the universe and therefore he feels justified in bringing theology into conversation with new, and sometimes radical, concepts in order to determine whether they may better illuminate Christian identity within modernity. The concepts, however, can never permeate the heart of his identity as that has been derived from the revelation of God, given by God.

3.1.2 Audience: Moltmann a Global Theologian?

This principle of ecumenism at heart of Moltmann's theology led not just to a wide-ranging intellectual engagement but a broad readership, with his work having been translated into twenty languages. His work comprises a full spectrum of critical engagement having produced works of theology that fit both the mould of traditional systematic theology, such as *Theology of Hope* and *God in Creation* and those which are more accessible and less theologically rigorous, such as *Man and Hope and Planning*. German Lutheran Pastor and contemporaneous member of the World Council of Churches, Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz argued that the ecumenical nature of Moltmann's theology made him the most important German speaking Protestant theologian since the Second World War. Müller-Fahrenholz cites Moltmann's attempts to bring theology into dialogue with a plethora of social issues and religious and philosophical schools, as well willingness to challenge the established order of the German theological tradition, as representing a legacy that theologians ought to take to heart in the twenty-first century.⁹³ Indeed there is evidence that theologians from a wide ranging cross section of fields are in agreement with Müller-Fahrenholz's assessment. As recently as 2013, Professor Richard Bauckham delivered a talk at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, on the career of Jürgen Moltmann referring to him as the most influential Christian Theologian.⁹⁴ The most recent of Moltmann's many honorary doctorates came in September 2018 when he was awarded a Doctor of Theology degree from Hanshin University, South Korea.⁹⁵

Above, we see that Moltmann's ecumenical approach to theology, combined with his universalist eschatology, has generated a global audience. However, he has not been received

⁹³ Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Minneapolis; Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2001), 12.

⁹⁴ 'Jürgen Moltmann the most influential Christian Theologian' Cambridge University, accessed January 4 2019, <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/j%C3%BCrgen-moltmann-the-most-influential-christian-theologian>

⁹⁵ 'J. Moltmann Receives Honorary Doctor of Theology Degree from Hanshin University' The Kukmin Daily, accessed January 5 2019, <http://www.kukmindaily.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0012694415>

with such ardour in his native Germany. In the introduction to *Jürgen Moltmann: Collected Readings*, Richard Bauckham notes that such an interpretation of eschatology has not been well received by the German theological tradition which holds more strongly to the dialectical account of history found within German idealism.⁹⁶ Such an account of history is found within the eschatology of Moltmann's contemporary and friend Wolfhart Pannenberg. Pannenberg describes the *eschaton* in terms of it bringing about a synthesis between God's act of creation, which precedes times, and history itself.⁹⁷ He states that, 'only in the light of the eschatological consummation can we of the world understand the meaning of its beginning'.⁹⁸ For Pannenberg, then, the *eschaton* is that which makes sense of that which has preceded it, whilst for Moltmann the *eschaton* is that event which allows us to understand how the world around us ought to look. David Congden sums up this difference in their eschatology by stating that Pannenberg's *eschaton* is a chronological, quantitative future whereas Moltmann's is a theological, qualitative future.⁹⁹

Moltmann's audience within political theology

This theological and qualitative future that Congden identifies as central to Moltmann's eschatology underscores the political component of his theology and has led to a certain interpretation of his work by his contemporaries. Moltmann attempts to bring eschatological promise, fundamentally Kingdom of God theology, into conversation with modernity through the mediating influence of the voice of the Church. This mediatory approach is out of kilter with the prevailing attitudes within contemporary political theology. John Milbank, originator of the Radical Orthodoxy movement, writes in *Theology and Social Theory* of modernity as violence and advocates a retreat from its categories rather than integration with them. We uphold the fundamentally historical character of salvation only if there can be theology which we understand to be complete without the mediation of social sciences.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Finnish theologian and social theorist Arne Rasmussen, criticises the political aspect of Moltmann's theology in a similar vein. He characterises Moltmann's theology as a 'positive Christian reception of modernity' arguing that Moltmann's theological

⁹⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *Jürgen Moltmann: Collected Readings*, ed. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis; Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2014), 1.

⁹⁷ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology: Volume 2*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 140.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁹⁹ David W. Congdon, *The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann's Dialectical Theology* (Minneapolis; Minnesota: Fortress, 2015), 790.

¹⁰⁰ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 389.

focus upon enlightenment concepts such as freedom, self realisation and rights constitute an individualistic rather than Christian understanding of the self.¹⁰¹ Rasmusson states that the tensions that arise from attempts to bring such concepts into conversation with the *imago dei* or the coming of God's Kingdom will inevitably lapse into incoherence.¹⁰² He compares Moltmann's work to that of Stanley Hauerwas, concluding decidedly in favour of Hauerwas' more radical political theology which soundly rejects the integration of the Church with modernity.¹⁰³

Scott Paeth, American Professor of Religious Studies and author of numerous works on public theology, argues that Rasmusson is mistaken in his assertion that the tensions within Moltmann's approach to political theology doom it to incoherence. Paeth argues that these tensions are central to the dialectical aspect which binds Moltmann's theology itself together. Paeth understands Moltmann's attempts to bring the eschatological promise of Christ into dialogue with modernity as an assertion of the Church's dual status as the body of Christ and an institution within civil society.¹⁰⁴ He holds that Moltmann's attempts at dialogue are not a call for outright integration. The Church, within Moltmann's theology is an 'Exodus community' holding values that directly contradict those of the acquisitive society around it.¹⁰⁵ Paeth states that Moltmann's Exodus Church exists in anticipation of the coming of God's Kingdom. This leads it to engage with, rather than distance itself from, modernity's injustices so that it may attempt to shepherd it towards the ideal exemplified by God's Kingdom.¹⁰⁶ Paeth concludes that Moltmann's Exodus Church is the paragon of public theology, as opposed to political theology, as it urges Christians to anticipate God's kingdom through engagement with the iniquities of modernity that are present within their public lives.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, Paeth's conclusion appears to be in keeping with our own conclusion, drawn above, regarding the dialogical aspect of Moltmann's ecumenical style. Moltmann contends that the promise made in Christ's resurrection is transformative of both our understanding and our action. This leads us to understand the link between hope and responsibility made

¹⁰¹ Arne Rasmusson, *The Church as Polis: From Political Theology to Theological Politics as Exemplified by Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 42.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰⁴ Scott Paeth, "Jürgen Moltmann's Public Theology," *Political Theology*, 6:2 (2005): 231.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 232.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

within Moltmann's theology. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection is the centre of Christian identity that simultaneously grounds us within modernity and interrupts our experience of it. We are grounded within modernity in the suffering and death of Christ upon the Cross. However, the discontinuity of Christ's resurrection with history itself foreshadows the movement towards the interruption of modernity contained within Christian identity itself. Christ's resurrection is radically different to the rest of history and an identity founded upon this event will necessarily find itself somewhat incongruent with its surroundings. Christian identity, at its core, is an assertion about the nature of God that has implications for the ontology of the universe itself. It asserts that the universe was created, and shall be redeemed, by God. This may put Christians at odds with a modernity that is either unsympathetic to or disinterested in its account of universal ontology. Moltmann's theology, therefore, offers us an example of the manner in which Christian identity can uphold both its continuity and discontinuity with modernity whilst entering into dialogue with it.

Moltmann's ecclesiastical audience

The public aspect of Moltmann's theology, identified by Paeth, can be seen in the integral role he played in the development of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' (WARC) statement on human rights. Moltmann gave the main lecture at the 1970 WARC General Assembly, a paper entitled 'God Reconciles and Liberates'.¹⁰⁸ This led to the WARC deciding that before the next General Assembly in 1977 there ought to be a study project on 'the theological basis of human rights and liberation theology'. Moltmann was appointed by WARC chairman Jan Lochman to prepare an orientation paper on the subject to be sent to all members. In this capacity Moltmann extended his ecumenical approach to theology by seeking to 'connect Christianity with the politics of universal human rights' whilst also discovering the 'theological perspectives on these rights'.¹⁰⁹ In order to achieve this goal he suggested three fundamental principles as a structure for the study. These principles, very much in keeping with drawn out in our earlier analysis of his ecumenical approach to theology, were that Christ is our liberator, all of humanity is made in the image of God and finally that hope is provided by the promise of God's Kingdom.¹¹⁰ Moltmann offered an explanation of how these three principles allowed him to fulfil his goal outlined above, writing,

¹⁰⁸ Moltmann, *A Broad Place*, 214.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 215.

It is precisely when Christianity fills its special “Christian task” that it serves the humanity of all human beings. Conversely, it fulfils its special “Christian task” to the extent to which it serves the humanity of all human beings. By proclaiming God’s justifying grace, it proclaims the dignity of the human being. By practising the justice of grace, it practises a fundamental human right.¹¹¹

Here, Moltmann links the notion of human rights to God’s creative and redemptive relationship with humanity. God’s grace grants us both creation in the image of God and redemption in the coming of God’s Kingdom. When we put such an understanding into action, Moltmann argues, we are making a fundamental statement affirming the dignity of the human being. Moltmann delivered the conclusions of his study at a WARC consultation in London in 1976 in a paper entitled ‘The Justice of God and Human Rights’. His conclusions were accepted by the consultation and by the WARC General Assembly of 1977 where after it was published by the WARC as their Theological Declaration of Human Rights.¹¹²

Moltmann returned to the relationship between the Church and human rights in his work *On Human Dignity*, writing that the struggle for the advancement of human rights worldwide has become the framework of ecumenical politics and ethics. Therefore, he argues, it is through its involvement in this struggle that the church can become the church for the world.¹¹³ From the above we see that while his thought may not have found an audience within mainstream political theology, he has certainly found one within the domain of public theology, both academically and ecclesiastically. His theology appears insufficiently radical in its approach to modernity to be reconcilable with the prevailing ethos of political theology exemplified by Milbank. However, his attempts to construct a dialogue between modernity and theology have made him a prominent figure within the global Church community. Indeed as recently as January 13 2016 Jürgen Moltmann was invited by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to lead a day long series of presentations and discussions on ecumenism at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.¹¹⁴ Throughout these discussions Moltmann held fast to his assertion that ‘the ecumenical movement is as much about renewal as it is about unity’.¹¹⁵ This demonstrates both Moltmann’s enduring commitment to

¹¹¹ Ibid., 216.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Jürgen Moltmann, *On Human Dignity: Political Theology and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 6.

¹¹⁴ “Jürgen Moltmann leads ecumenical reflections in Geneva,” WCC, accessed January 7 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/jurgen-moltmann-leads-ecumenical-reflections-in-geneva>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

ecumenical theology and the significance this approach has to global church ethos and, consequently, Christians worldwide.

From the above examination we see that Moltmann's ecumenical approach to theology has granted him a broad global audience and a prominent position within the ecclesiastical community, as public theologian. Public theologians seek to bring together theological insights and social initiatives to better the humanity's lot. It is for this reason that Moltmann's response to the political movement for human rights was to reframe it, not as an issue arising from observable facts about humanity, but as a matter relating to our relationship to our creator revealed in scripture and confirmed in Christ. He enters into this dialogue on the basis that it is matter concerning the grace of God's creation within the constraints of modernity. The eternal value of human life, conveyed through God's creative act, is mediated within the provisional structures of modernity through the political construct of human rights. In such a way, Moltmann has followed the tradition of public theology by attempting to synthesise the contents of theological revelation, humanity being made in the image of God and promised redemption in God's Kingdom, with a social initiative, the human rights movement, in order to improve humanity's conduct towards one another. Here, perhaps, we see the reason that Moltmann's has enjoyed a global audience. His commitment to the promise of Christ and the future of God's Kingdom form the basis for his interactions with modernity and thus offer a strong account of Christian identity across cultures.

3.1.3 Reception: The Theological Breadth of Moltmann

Academic Reception

Harvey Conn notes that Moltmann's Christ centred theology, that espouses God's affinity for the suffering and oppressed people of the world whilst stressing that the Spirit's presence in history gives hope for change, has been widely referenced across Latin American liberation, Black and Feminist theologies.¹¹⁶ Moltmann's influence upon these movements is evidenced in the works of their prominent figures. South American liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez who states that Moltmann's work is pivotal in overcoming the tension between faith and the fear of the future that rests within many Christians.¹¹⁷ He states that

¹¹⁶ H. Conn, 'Theologies of Liberation: Toward a Common View', in *Tensions in Contemporary Theology*, eds. S. Grundy and A. Johnson (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 349.

¹¹⁷ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation*, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll; NY: Orbis 1973), 218.

Moltmann's connection of eschatological message of Christianity to revolution and political transformation is central to the project of liberation theology. Black theologian James Cone also praised this quality of Moltmann's eschatology. In his work *God of the Oppressed* Cone criticised white theologians for doing theology 'independently of the oppressed of the land'.¹¹⁸ He went on to write that Moltmann alone seemed to be aware of this inconsistency and lauded his theological attempts to bring an end to the 'navel-gazing of academic theologians'.¹¹⁹ Feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza takes note of Moltmann's ecumenical and dialogical approach to theology and argues that such an approach allows feminists to draw upon religion as a source of empowerment rather than being reduced to rejecting it outright.¹²⁰

The influence of Moltmann's eschatology on the Christian-Marxist dialogues can be seen in the work of Croatian Pentecostalist theologian Miroslav Volf. Volf argues that traditional Protestant theologies of work in terms of vocation are no longer applicable given the realities of modern labour. This he seeks to replace the notion of vocation with that of gifts of the spirit.¹²¹ In so doing, he casts labour in terms of a collaborative effort with God's to build his Kingdom on Earth through the eschatological transformation of the world.¹²² Volf's debt to Moltmann is also evident in his conclusion wherein he states that all work which contradicts this new creation is meaningless whilst all work that correlates with it is meaningful. Moltmann's theology was also well received beyond these liberation movements and indeed beyond Christianity itself. This is evidenced in *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine* co-authored with Jewish theologian Pinchas Lapide. Here, Lapide argues that Moltmann has developed an 'acceptable formula of reconciliation' between Jews and Christians on the nature of Christ's soteriology. Citing Moltmann's work *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, Lapide voices his agreement with Moltmann's statement that in his crucifixion Christ became the Saviour of the Gentiles while in his *parousia* he manifest himself as Israel's Messiah.¹²³

¹¹⁸ James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll; NY: Orbis, 1997), 129.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Transforming Vision: Explorations in Feminist The*logy* (Minneapolis; Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2011), 28.

¹²¹ Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Pinchas Lapide, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine: A Dialogue by Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann*, trans. Leonard Swidler, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 79.

Reception by Catholicism

Moltmann's revolutionary understanding of Christ's message led him into dialogue with the Catholic Church, most notably in his critical response to Pope Benedict XVI's second encyclical letter *Spe salvi*. Before his election as Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Ratzinger was critical of liberation theology, particularly the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez who was himself influenced by Moltmann as noted above. Ratzinger argued that in the work of Gutiérrez, and other liberation theologians, the notion of the Church as People of God is transmuted into a Marxist myth. Within this myth the People of God are always understood to be engaged in a class struggle against hierarchical institutions which are presented as oppressive powers. Ratzinger argues that this places the People of God at odds with the hierarchical Church itself.¹²⁴ This theme was picked up again in *Spe salvi* wherein he stresses the relationship between faith and hope within the Christian understanding of salvation. To underline the centrality of faith he relates the story of St Josephine Bakhita. He emphasises the contrast between her early life as slave and the hopelessness of her life as a pagan with her conversion to Catholicism after finding the 'great hope' of Christ which redeemed her. It is from within the locus of the history of Church that Benedict seeks to criticise the logic of temporal power and offer hope to the suffering.¹²⁵

Moltmann argues that such a representation of the promise of Christ is exclusory and creates a division between the Christian and non-Christian world. He goes so far as to argue that, in such a representation 'the distinctive character of Christian hope falls away'.¹²⁶ As seen in his criticism of Barthian eschatology above, Moltmann does not believe that Christian hope can be considered in isolation from the God who delivers this hope to us in the promise of Christ. As such, Moltmann's understands God's promise to be universal and, therefore, Christian hope must also be universal. While these two positions appear to be incommensurable, Catholic theologian Timothy Harvie argues that they offer each other valuable resources. Harvie argues that Moltmann's theology moves too rapidly from an ontology of hope to an endorsement of political revolution.¹²⁷ His theology may benefit from context and structure with Benedict's critique of the logic of power from within the locus of the Church tradition. By contrast, he argues Benedict's theology may benefit from

¹²⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927–1977* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998), 137.

¹²⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, Second Encyclical Letter, "Spe salvi", paragraph 3, accessed November 6 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html

¹²⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, 'Horizons Of Hope: A Critique of Spe salvi' in *Christian Century* (May 2008): 31

¹²⁷ Timothy Harvie, "Jürgen Moltmann and Catholic Theology: Disputes on the Intersections of Ontology and Ethics," *Heythrop Journal*, LV (2014): 372.

engagement with the challenge provided by Moltmann's radical ethic of hope. Harvie argues that directness of Moltmann's theological connection between Christ's resurrection and the pursuit of social justice could sharpen the critical edge of Benedict's critique of temporal power.¹²⁸ From the above we see that whilst Moltmann and Catholicism may appear incompatible, they may potentially provide each other with useful resources.

Reception by Evangelism

A similar trend can be observed in Moltmann's reception by the Evangelical tradition. Evangelical theologian Sung Wook Chung states that Moltmann's radical positions on key theological issues, particularly his universalist soteriology, have long stymied any dialogue between Moltmann and Evangelical theology.¹²⁹ However, Sung argues that Moltmann actually represents an invaluable dialogue partner for Evangelical theology as the centre of his theology is the centre of Christian witness itself, Christ.¹³⁰ Sung argues that it is surely right that Christ, especially of the Cross and Resurrection as in Moltmann's thought, should be the hinge of Christian theology. On this basis he states that while Evangelicals may quarrel with the directions that Moltmann's theology takes, they cannot refute its fundamental worthiness.¹³¹ To this end Sung edited a volume of essays by Evangelical theologians bringing the central themes of Moltmann's theology into conversation with the evangelical tradition entitled *Jürgen Moltmann and Evangelical Theology: A Critical Engagement*. As noted above, in our analysis of Moltmann's audience, Moltmann's eschatological and Christocentric commitments and the ecumenical theology that they produce allow his thought to cross denominational and cultural boundaries within the Christian tradition. Moltmann's theology enters into dialogue with its partners on the basis that all knowledge is fundamentally synthesised within the coming of God's Kingdom promised in Christ's resurrection. Such a statement of Christian identity within modernity leads Christians from other denominations towards both his ideas and a conversation with them.

3.1.4 Concluding Remarks

American Lutheran Carl Braaten sees Moltmann as belonging to the movement of theologians that rose out of the death of God movement's rejection of the inaccessible and

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Sung Wook Chung, *Jürgen Moltmann and Evangelical Theology: A Critical Engagement* (Eugene; Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2012), xvii.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 122.

¹³¹ Ibid., 123.

immovable God of Barth, Bultmann and Tillich. Braaten argues that Moltmann was fundamental to the recasting of the Christian eschatological message along revolutionary and transformative lines so that it might take part in the dialogue of a world reeling from the double trauma of World War Two and the Holocaust.¹³² We would seek to extend this comment and argue that Moltmann's ecumenical approach to theology is rooted in his theological commitment to radical hope, itself a product of his position on theological realism. He places the redemptive promise of Christ's resurrection at the heart of his thinking and allows it to guide the development of his theology. This leads him to understand Christ's promise as a demand upon the church to support the revolutionary movements of oppressed people. This call develops into a broader call to bring about the liberation of all creation on the basis that all living creatures are God's covenant partners and our covenant partners too. It is this approach that has granted him a global audience and influenced thinkers from other traditions to enter into dialogue with him. The prevailing opinion that seems to appear regarding Moltmann's theology, amongst thinkers from both Christian and non-Christian perspectives, is that its focus on Christ's resurrection and the liberation of the oppressed provides an enduring wealth of resources for the tradition as a whole.

So what can this preliminary survey of Moltmann's theology offer us with regards to the systematic questions that we contend lie at the heart of environmental theology? What does it tell us about who God is, how God is known and what difference God makes in the world? We see that for Moltmann the central aspect of Christian identity is an assertion about the nature of God that contains within it an ontological assertion about the universe itself. The nature of the universe is revealed by our understanding that God is both its creator and redeemer. We know this through God's self revelation in Christ, most importantly in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection which stands as a promise for the eventual redemption of all God's creation in the coming of his Kingdom. Christian identity, therefore, is founded upon an account of God's simultaneous continuity and discontinuity with creation. The continuous aspect is demonstrated in the suffering of Christ upon the cross, whilst the discontinuous aspect is seen in God's interruption of creation in Christ's resurrection. Moltmann's theology draws hope for the future from the discontinuous aspect of God's relationship with his creation. Furthermore, he establishes a link between the hope offered by God's discontinuity and the responsibility generated by God's continuity with creation. God's

¹³² Carl Braaten, *The Future of God: The Revolutionary Dynamics of Hope* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 11.

continuity within creations reminds us that, as Christians, we are embedded within the world and reminds us that redemption cannot replace creation any more than Christ's resurrection can replace his crucifixion. This leads to account of hope for the future that contains within it the responsibility to engage in the theological interruption of dialogues within modernity that oppress and destroy not just humanity, but all aspects of God's creation. Theological interruption forms the basis for action within modernity, the form of which is an understanding of the universe as created and redeemed by God and the content of which is God's wisdom revealed in the teachings of Christ.

3.2 Gordon Kaufman: Style, Audience and Reception

In the following analysis of Kaufman's style, audience and reception we shall attempt to substantiate the claim that his insistence that theology be guided by the principles of pragmatism and historicism led to his the interpenetration of the symbol of God with modern scientific concepts within his thought. Kaufman does not begin his dialogue with modernity by situating it within the context of God's grace. On the contrary, his account of God's grace emerges out of the resources of modernity and in response to the existential issues arising within it. We contend that, while this led to a radically open theology, his work found only a limited audience due to its failure, or even refusal, to provide a strong statement of Christian identity within modernity.

3.2.1 Style: Kaufman a Pragmatic and Historicist Theologian

In his 1968 work, *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* we see Gordon Kaufman offer his understanding of systematic theology's objective. This objective, he writes,

... is not simply to repeat traditional views but rather to grasp and think through the central claims of the Christian faith afresh, and one should expect this to produce novel or even offensive interpretations.¹³³

From this we gain an understanding of the theological style which came to define his career. Firstly, we see that his willingness to criticise or even reject, if needs be, the views held by

¹³³ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), xi.

the Christian tradition demonstrates a commitment to pragmatism.¹³⁴ That is to say, Kaufman posits that every theological symbol must be assessed on the basis of whether it is fit to inform and order the experiences of the individual within her social and historical context. Secondly, we see that his focus on the need to think through the central claims of the Christian faith afresh demonstrates his commitment to historicism.¹³⁵ Kaufman understands theology to serve a specific practical purpose: to order content and illuminate the meaning of our experiences. If the symbols that we inherit from the theological tradition fail to fulfil this purpose then they ought to be criticised and reformulated or else discarded. This purpose is linked to his understanding of the nature of theology as fundamentally historicist.¹³⁶ Kaufman understands theological symbols as humanity's creative responses to the existential and metaphysical quandaries that confound them. However, the natures of these quandaries are constantly evolving along with our society as a whole. Therefore, each generation must ensure that the theological symbols with which they are expected to make sense of the world are created in response to the quandaries arising out of their specific historical context.

This commitment to function over tradition reveals Kaufman's constructivist approach towards theology. Constructivists seek to redefine aspects of systematic theology that they feel have been marginalised or misrepresented through an attempt to make them fit into a predetermined theological system. This is especially true with regards to his approach to environmental theology. In his 1981 work *Theological Imagination* he argues that the traditional symbol of God is responsible for an anthropology that alienates humanity from our environment and authorises our destructive relationship with it. His principles of pragmatism and historicism directed him to conclude that the traditional symbol of God needed to be reconstructed as it was not fit for purpose in an ecologically conscious age as it was a remnant from a prior epoch that was not beset by environmental concerns.

Let us examine these two central commitments to pragmatism and historicism in greater detail, beginning with pragmatism. Kaufman is solely concerned with the efficacy of these symbols in the ordering of our lives. In his late career work of systematic theology *In Face of Mystery* outlines this position when he writes that,

¹³⁴ Nathanael L. Inglis, "The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology," *The Conrad Grebel Review*, 34, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 133.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ H. Victor Froese, "Gordon D. Kaufman's Theology 'Within the Limits of Reason Alone': A Review," *Conrad Grebel Review*, 6 (Winter 1988): 26.

...the reconception of the Christian faith and Christian ideas which I have worked out here is not intended as a mere academic exercise... If it cannot (or does not) succeed in doing that [i.e., helping men and women find their way in life in the world today], it must be reckoned a failure.¹³⁷

Here, we see that Kaufman's commitment to pragmatism extends even beyond that made to his own theology. He is quite willing to see his own theology jettisoned if it does not meet the criteria that he himself has laid out. We see him delve deeper into this notion when he writes, of the contents of *Mystery* itself,

We must remember that our exploration here is not to be grounded primarily in a speculative interest in the question of what is ultimately real but rather in the practical interest of finding orientation for life in face of the problems and evils of modernity—and in the hope that the central Christian symbols may provide us with such orientation.¹³⁸

This statement captures the kernel of Kaufman's pragmatism. Theology must not become stagnant out of reverence of tradition; it must constantly engage modernity and be willing to be shaped by the needs arising from it.

Kaufman's pragmatism is, of course, intimately linked with his historicism. His commitment to an understanding of theological symbols as historically conditioned underpins his argument that they must be continuously evaluated and reconstructed. Indeed in *Systematic Theology* he states that 'it is a serious mistake to invoke the authority of the major symbols of the tradition as the principal basis for theological work'.¹³⁹ By this Kaufman means that the symbols we inherit from the theological tradition will not necessarily meet our needs within modernity. He expands upon this argument in *Imagination*, arguing that all truth claims made on the grounds of religious authority must be assessed strictly in terms of the present existential needs of the individual.¹⁴⁰ From this, we begin to understand how historicism and pragmatism work together to underpin Kaufman's creative approach to theological symbols. Kaufman understands all theological symbols to be historically conditioned. On this basis, they must be evaluated against our specific historical needs to

¹³⁷ Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993), 430.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹³⁹ Kaufman, *Systematic Theology*, 64.

¹⁴⁰ Gordon D. Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (The Westminster Press; Philadelphia, PA: 1981), 192.

ascertain whether they possess the pragmatic utility to order our experiences. If they do not then we must engage our creativity, the constructive component contained within the historicist understanding of theology, to reformulate them such that they fulfil this purpose.

From the above we see that Kaufman's theological style is based upon a willingness to criticise theological formulations that are unable to fit the needs of modernity. In turn, this leads his theology into conversation with the existential and pragmatic dilemmas of our era. His own theological formulations arise out of this dialogue and thus attempt to fulfil the criteria necessitated by his commitments to pragmatism and historicism. In his 1972 work *God the Problem* he rejects the notion of a transcendent God with intentionality towards the world on the grounds that modern cosmology reveals only an orderly world, not a world with any specific *telos* bestowed upon it by a divine being.¹⁴¹ In his 1981 *Theological Imagination* he brought environmental issues into conversation with the symbol of God, arguing that the traditional understanding of God as a transcendent universal Lord led to humanity's alienation from our environment.¹⁴² Rather than understanding ourselves primarily in terms of our interrelation with and reliance upon our environment, we came to understand ourselves as separate from and superior to it on account of our likeness to our transcendent God.¹⁴³ It is this understanding which has led us into a destructive rather than sustainable relationship with our environment. Thus, he argues, traditional theological anthropology cannot fulfil its intended role within an environmentally conscious age.¹⁴⁴ Thus we can say that Kaufman exemplifies one particular type of theological response to the environmental crisis. A response based in human responsibility rather than divine promise. Kaufman locates hope not in the promise made in Christ's resurrection, but in the opportunities presented to us by the universe to fulfil their responsibility and form sustainable relationships with our environment.

So far we have seen how Kaufman's interaction with cosmology and environmentalism shaped the development of his theology. In his 1985 work *Theology for a Nuclear Age*, Kaufman examined the implications of nuclear weaponry for theology. He argues that traditional eschatology is unequipped to deal with the potential for self-annihilation that humanity now possesses.¹⁴⁵ We can no longer cleave to the idea that the end of history will be God's final triumph over all evil powers. It may very well be a cataclysmic

¹⁴¹ Gordon D. Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1972), 223.

¹⁴² Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination*, 226.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁴⁵ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Theology for a Nuclear Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 3.

conflagration borne of our own bellicosity. Therefore, our understanding of eschatology must be reformulated if it is to provide individuals with an understanding of humanity's direction within our nuclear age.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, it is this orientation for modernity that Kaufman addresses with *In Face of Mystery*. Here he moves from creation to eschatology via anthropology in an attempt to provide a reformulated account of theological ethics that can provide such orientation. Kaufman states that the root of the inadequacy of our ethics lies in our understanding of God as the Creator and Redeemer of the Universe.¹⁴⁷ It is such an understanding that Kaufman seeks to undo with his account of God's creative act as mystery, his understanding of eschatology in terms of creativity and of anthropology in terms of humanity's biological as well as historical aspects. This leads him to reframe traditional theological ethical notions of sin and morality in terms of the degree to which we strive for communities of peace, justice and well being for all.¹⁴⁸

From this, we see that Kaufman's style moves from an understanding of the role of systematic theology as being the orientation of the individual within their historical context to a philosophical attempt to deconstruct and reformulate theological symbols that are not deemed adequate for this task. He is a theologian who seeks dialogue with the scientific method, cosmology, environmentalism and technology all as he attempts to construct a theology that can provide a more just world for all. However, his interest in these issues stems from their ability to highlight what modernity requires from theology whilst illustrating the theological tradition's inability to meet these requirements. Therefore, we cannot say that Kaufman is an ecumenical thinker in the same mould as Moltmann. Kaufman's project is not to bring his theology into dialogue with a diverse cross-section of theological and non-theological perspectives. Rather Kaufman wishes to create his theological position from the dialogue that he creates between the theological tradition and the existential and pragmatic concerns of modernity.

From the above analysis of Kaufman's style we find a thinker who uses the principles of pragmatism and historicism to critically assess theological concepts. As environmental issues came to dominate the cultural conversation, so too did Kaufman's theology begin to turn towards the environment. These environmental concerns led him to posit that the traditional concept of God absolves humanity of environmental responsibility through the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴⁷ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 367.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 371.

eschatological redemption of Creation in the coming of God's Kingdom. He contends that, for the human individual to make sense of their experience within this epoch defined by humanity's relationship with its environment then the symbol of God must express our ultimate environmental responsibility. It is the theologian's task to construct such a symbol. Thus we can argue that Kaufman's pragmatic and historicist style leads him to exemplify a certain kind of human responsibility and thus a certain approach to environmental theology. Kaufman's account of Christian identity does not contain within it the ontological statement that God creates and redeems the universe. His account of Christian identity is based upon an understanding of God as being the mysterious source of our universe and the creative trajectories within it that have led to the existence of conditions favourable to the development of human life.

Kaufman's God, therefore, does not promise redemption any more than he consciously acts to bring about creation. However, he can be understood as the source of the creative trajectories that exist within the universe which allow us to plot the course of our future on Earth. It is to this universal creativity that our own creativity is responsible as our development, as a species, has been contingent upon the conditions for life that it has provided. That is to say, Kaufman draws an account of human responsibility from the manner in which God, in his theology, is continuous with the world. We are responsible to God, as the source of universal creativity and consequently life itself, to marshal our own creativity in the direction of life and away from destruction. This is the source of Kaufman's account of human responsibility now that we have reached a stage in our development where the greatest threat to the future stability of those conditions is the misuse of our own creativity. Despite the uncreative trajectories that our own behaviour has taken, creative trajectories still run through the universe providing us with an opportunity to redeem ourselves as we align our own creativity with it. In so doing we fulfil our responsibility to guide our future in a sustainable direction. This account of responsibility also contains within it an account of hope. As seen above, Kaufman draws his account of responsibility from the manner in which God is continuous with the world. Hope, within the framework of responsibility, is generated by the manner in which God is discontinuous with the world. That is to say we may have hope for the future because of the continual arising of creative trajectories within the universe despite our own uncreative trajectories. Therefore, we can hold the hope that as we grasp our responsibility for the creation of a sustainable future, so too will we be presented with opportunities to bring about such a future.

3.2.2 Audience: Kaufman an Academic Theologian

Gordon Kaufman enjoyed a long and successful academic career that began in 1953 at Pomona College, California. After a stay at Vanderbilt Divinity School from 1958 to 1963 he joined Harvard Divinity School where he stayed until his retirement in 2009. During his academic career he served as president of the American Academy of Religion from 1971 to 1982 and President of the American Theological Society from 1979-1980.¹⁴⁹ He also enjoyed a global academic reception holding numerous international visiting professorships and lectureships. The positions he held included United Theological College in Bangalore, India, 1976–1977, Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, 1983, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1984, University of Oxford, 1986, the Institute for Teachers of Systematic Theology, Bangalore 1988 and Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1991.¹⁵⁰ As well as being a globally recognised academic Kaufman was also an ordained Mennonite minister who helped to found the Mennonite Congregation of Boston in 1962.¹⁵¹ In addition to this he served as a member of the board of trustees for both Bethel College and the Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He also authored *Nonresistance and Responsibility: And Other Mennonite Essays* wherein he explored various Mennonite themes and stated that his Mennonite convictions went to the deepest level of his self-identity and had informed his thinking about behaviour throughout his life.¹⁵²

Kaufman's theological style was a major influence on the development of the thought of feminist theologian Sallie McFague. She states that it was Kaufman's 1983 Presidential Address to the American Academy of Religion, calling for a paradigm shift in theology on account of the possibility of nuclear war, that began the constructive phase of her own theology. She recounts that Kaufman,

...called theologians to deconstruct and reconstruct the basic symbols of the Jewish and Christian traditions -- God, Christ and Torah -- so as to be on the side of life rather than against it, as was the central symbol of God with its traditional patriarchal, hierarchical,

¹⁴⁹ "Gordon Kaufman, Leading Theologian, Dies," Harvard University, accessed 3/1/2019, <https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2011/07/28/gordon-kaufman-leading-theologian-dies#>

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Gordon D. Kaufman, *Nonresistance and Responsibility and Other Mennonite Essays* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1979), 8.

militaristic imagery. I answered this call, and my subsequent work has been concerned with contributing to that task.¹⁵³

Here, we see that Kaufman's thought was deeply influential to McFague's own theological career. McFague argues for constructive theology that builds theological symbols based upon metaphors of the human, rather than the non-human as in Kaufman's theology. She states that such an approach is more effective as, firstly they based on what we are most familiar with and, secondly, because they are based upon 'the most complex part of the whole that is the universe—that is on the model of ourselves'.¹⁵⁴ Whilst her approach may differ to Kaufman, his influence on her theological method is indubitable. We see this in the pragmatic and historicist approach she takes in her theological response to the environmental crisis. Her commitment to historicism is demonstrated in her willingness to reconstruct the symbol of God in response to the questions raised by modernity.¹⁵⁵ Her commitment to pragmatism is seen her attempt to bring about changes in behaviour and attitudes through the deployment of a theological method that equates God's body to the Earth itself.¹⁵⁶ Above, we explored the idea that Kaufman exemplified the position that humanity was ultimately responsible for the future of the environment. In the work of McFague, we see that Kaufman's exemplification of this position has influenced another theologian to follow his trajectory.

Kaufman was also influential on the theology of Maurice Wiles. His notion of God's 'master-act' helped guide the development of Maurice Wiles' own account of God's creative act.¹⁵⁷ Kaufman's account of God's 'master-act' comes from his early career and is a response to the incommensurability of the notion that God continuously performs intentional acts within the world with the scientific perspective offered by modernity.¹⁵⁸ We see the precursor to his construction of the symbol of God as creativity when he writes of God's creative act in terms of a master act setting up the structure of the world and sub-acts providing the direction of natural and historical processes. Whilst Thomas F. Tracy criticises the remote, unresponsive account of God that such a theological position contains both Kaufman and Wiles argue that such a position protects God from being reduced to one more

¹⁵³ Sallie McFague, *An Earthly Theological Agenda*, *The Christian Century*, Volume 108, Number 1 (January 2-9, 199): 12.

¹⁵⁴ Sallie McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 82

¹⁵⁵ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 19.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound: God, History, and the Religious Community* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 84.

¹⁵⁸ Gordon D. Kaufman, "On the Meaning of Act of God," *Harvard Theological Review*, 61, no. 2 (April 1968): 192

causal agent within a myriad of causal agents.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, whilst Wiles understands Kaufman's position as largely congruent with his own, he develops an even more exclusive account of God's creative act.¹⁶⁰ Wiles maintains the language of Kaufman's master-act but posits that all sub-acts, whilst they may be contained within this master-act, are not performed separately from it by God.¹⁶¹ In one creative act all of God's creation is unfolded.

Mennonite theologian Nathanael L. Inglis notes that despite Kaufman's commitment to the Mennonite community and his contributions to Mennonite theology some contemporary Mennonites do not recognise him as part of their theological tradition.¹⁶² Inglis argues that this is because of Kaufman's dual theological identity as both a Mennonite and a liberal theologian. Inglis argues that there is no need for these identities to be in conflict as Kaufman's theological principles of historicism and pragmatism function analogously to Anabaptist-Mennonite theological dispositions toward non-creedalism and christomorphic praxis. That is say, Inglis holds that a central tenet of the Mennonite tradition is the freedom for believers to follow their conscience, guided but not restricted by, the Bible which is analogous to the pragmatism of Kaufman's theology.¹⁶³ Furthermore Kaufman's theology seeks to enter into dialogue with modernity so that the symbol of God can continue to order and give meaning to our experiences. This is analogous with christomorphic praxis which seeks to translate the teaching of Christ into an ethical framework for modernity.¹⁶⁴

However, Kaufman's theology was not well received by Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder. He argues that Kaufman's commitment to pragmatism and historicism means his theology is always in flux and thus always seemingly ready to jettison its convictions in order to create yet another provisional theological position.¹⁶⁵ Kaufman addresses this criticism writing that Yoder argues that,

... I have rejected the all-too-great authority of the church in the Anabaptist tradition in the name of the mass-church tradition; it would be more correct to say I am rejecting

¹⁵⁹ Thomas F. Tracy, *God, Action, and Embodiment* (Grand Rapids; Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984), xiii.

¹⁶⁰ Maurice F. Wiles, *God's Action in the World: The Bampton Lectures for 1986* (London, SCM Press, 1986), 28.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 96

¹⁶² Inglis, 2016, 131.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁶⁵ John Howard Yoder, "Review of *The Context of Decision: A Theological Analysis*, by Gordon D. Kaufman," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 37 (1963): 138.

the common authoritarianism of both these lines in the name of ‘liberal’ traditions rooted in the Enlightenment and modern democratic experience.¹⁶⁶

Here, we see Kaufman’s defence of his integration of the Anabaptist tradition and liberal theology. It is not that he wishes to placate other traditions, it is that he does not wish to lose access to the resources which they provide for the sake of aligning himself with one specific tradition. He argues that his rejection of the authoritarianism has led him to the liberal tradition as a means of opening up a dialogue between modernity and theology. Furthermore, he wishes to open a dialogue within theology itself as it seeks to provide orientation and meaning to the modern individual.

Indeed, Mennonite theologian Scott Holland, praises this aspect of Kaufman’s theology and argues that it is evidence of christomorphism within his thought. Holland finds within Kaufman a desire to foster community with individuals who have the same aims regardless of their denomination, religion or philosophical perspective.¹⁶⁷ James C. Juhnke also notes this quality of Kaufman’s theology and upholds Kaufman’s right to be included in the Mennonite tradition of culturally engaged pacifism. He posits that Kaufman’s theology is misunderstood due the post-Second World War marginalisation of this understanding of Mennonite social responsibility in favour of a biblical non-resistance.¹⁶⁸ Juhnke is critical of this development in Mennonite thought considering it insular and disengaged and is receptive to Kaufman’s shift back towards a Mennonite pacifism based on an intimate dialogue with culture.

A. James Reimer also locates Kaufman within the tradition of Anabaptist-Mennonite social engagement, despite his scepticism regarding the historicism at the heart of Kaufman’s constructive theology. He holds that Kaufman’s thought,

¹⁶⁶ Kaufman, *Nonresistance and Responsibility*, 115.

¹⁶⁷ Scott Holland, “Einbildungskraft: 1. Imagination 2. The Power to Form into One,” in *Mennonite Theology In Face of Modernity, Essays in Honour of Gordon D. Kaufman*, eds. Gordon D. Kaufman and Alain Epp Weaver (Mishawaka; Indiana: Bethel College Press, 1996), 252.

¹⁶⁸ James C. Juhnke, “The Mennonite Tradition of Cultural Engagement,” in *Mennonite Theology in Face of Modernity: Essays in Honour of Gordon D. Kaufman*, eds. Gordon D. Kaufman and Alain Epp Weaver (Mishawaka; Indiana: Bethel College Press, 1996), 23

...harks back to the left wing of the Reformation with its voluntarism, protest against all forms of human heteronomy, and its emphasis on an historical, ethical, and eschatological kingdom of God.¹⁶⁹

Here, we see Reimer offering a similar perspective on Kaufman's thought to that which Kaufman himself offered in response to Yoder's criticism. Reimer understands Kaufman's openness to dialogue with both other traditions and modernity itself in terms of his rejection of one particular definition of humanity. Reimer sees Kaufman's theology as a genuine attempt to bring about eschatological change through a dialogue between modernity and theology.¹⁷⁰ The theological products of this dialogue are intended to move us towards a kingdom of God community rather than entrench us more deeply in one particular perspective.

From the above we see that Kaufman's work has generally been well received by liberal theologians, Christian naturalists and the Mennonite tradition but has found its influence confined to the North American academic sphere. The reasons for this can perhaps be illuminated by a consideration of his approach to environmental theology. As noted above, Kaufman is radically open to interdisciplinary dialogue and is perfectly willing to jettison elements of the Christian tradition that he judges no longer to be fit for the modern era in the process. This produces a dynamic, critical and contemporary theology but ultimately fails to provide a strong account of Christian identity within modernity. Indeed it appears that his theology becomes engaged in a feedback loop with modernity wherein the questions arising from modernity determine the direction of his theological constructs, which he then encourages us to evaluate on the basis of how well they answer the questions of modernity. As we see in his approach to environmental theology, it is the environment that determines his response to theology rather than theology determining his response to the environment. Rather than looking within the tradition for viable environmental resources, he instead seeks to remake the central concept of Christian theology in the image of environmental responsibility.

Kaufman presents an account of God as the source of both the universe and the source of the creative trajectories present within the universe. This is obviously far removed from traditional accounts of eschatology as he does not offer an account that links God's creative

¹⁶⁹ A. James Reimer, "Nature and Possibility of a Mennonite Theology," *The Conrad Grebel Review*, 1, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 46.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

and redemptive acts. However, his account of God presents him as continuous with creation in so far as he is source of all creative trajectories within the universe and thus, however indirectly, the source of all life. Humanity's responsibilities regarding the use of their own creativity are revealed through this continuity between God and the world. As God's continuity with the world is demonstrated through the trajectories of creativity that allowed the development of sustenance of life, so to ought the trajectories of our own creativity move in the direction of life and away from destruction. God, within Kaufman's model, is ultimately responsible for the existence of this creativity but does not promise the redemption of the universe or imbue humanity with an innate quality that guarantees their ability to redeem themselves. In severing this link between creation and redemption he leaves humanity as the agents of their own redemption. In so doing, he replaces Christian hope for the future in Christ with a hope derived from the opportunities provided by the universe for humanity to take on their responsibility and construct an environmental sustainable future. This demonstrates that Kaufman is not afraid to challenge the fundamental notion of who God is, and in the process Christian identity itself, in order to offer a theological response to the environmental crisis. Such a radical approach typifies his theology as whole and may explain why academics have shown an openness to his work that has not be replicated within lay Christianity.

3.2.3 Reception: Kaufman a Creative Theologian

Jerome P. Soneson states that Kaufman is one of the leading liberal Christian theologians of the second half of the twentieth century and singles out his theological method as significant contribution to the future of theology.¹⁷¹ Soneson admires both that Kaufman introduced a new theological methodology and that this methodology allows theologians to enter into dialogue with and attempt to address the unique problems of modernity. Soneson states that problems such as historical relativism, religious pluralism, social and natural sciences, and our awareness that our religious symbols and ideals have provoked and authorised profound evil have challenged Christian faith over recent centuries.¹⁷² Kaufman attempts to wrestle with the challenge of modernity in a manner that demonstrates the continued viability of theological discourse. In doing so he demonstrates a willingness to stray far from theological convention and the theological tradition itself. Soneson admires

¹⁷¹ Jerome P. Soneson, "The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman: Theological Method and its Pragmatic Norms," *Zygon*, vol. 48, no. 3 (September 2013): 533.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 534

this quality of Kaufman's work as well as his willingness to admit that his own theology is tentative and open to criticism, going so far as to demand that we recognise his work as historically relative.¹⁷³ Soneson agrees with Kaufman's assessment that there are many who share his ambivalence towards Christian faith. Many, like Kaufman, hold a deep respect for the compelling and powerful message offered by the Christian story and its theological symbols whilst also finding it difficult to profess faith in this story on account of the problems arising for it from modernity.¹⁷⁴

Soneson examines Kaufman's biohistorical anthropology to illuminate the significance of his thought to theology in modernity. Soneson sees the genesis of Kaufman's anthropology in *Theology for a Nuclear Age* wherein he deals with the possibility of nuclear holocaust. Indeed, Soneson notes that Kaufman was astounded that no theologian other than Henry Nelson Weiman was addressing this issue at this time.¹⁷⁵ Soneson praises Kaufman attempts to present an anthropology that encapsulates both human identity and responsibility in light of our capacity to annihilate both ourselves and the Earth.¹⁷⁶ It is this notion that Kaufman explores in *In Face of Mystery*. The concept of the biohistorical human contains the notion that our identity is inextricably with our biology, not simply our history. Kaufman argues that we cannot escape our evolutionary past nor our dependence upon our environment.¹⁷⁷ Of course, we are still dependent upon the historical aspects of humanity to furnish us with a cultural identity. Soneson argues that Kaufman's anthropology manages to hold humanity's biological aspect in tension with its historical aspect this presenting us with an account of,

...human plasticity and plurality in the hope that it would provide a framework enabling and encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation among persons who have been shaped by quite different cultural and religious traditions.¹⁷⁸

Soneson states that Kaufman's anthropology can fulfil this hope as it embraces religious pluralism as its centre. The significance of culture to human identity is encompassed by Kaufman's account of the historical aspect of human identity. The truths upon which our identity is based are themselves historically relative and thus we engage with individuals

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 535.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Soneson, 'The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman', 537.

from other cultures on an equal footing. Kaufman's anthropology allows for many different truths to exist without contradiction or conflict as each truth has arisen from a specific cultural context.¹⁷⁹ Kaufman's anthropology is deeply pragmatic as it forces our thought to return to that which is foundational to us. We are dependent upon our environment and unfinished without our culture. Our inability to escape our dependence upon our environment focuses our thought upon the reformation of our relationship with it. In a similar vein, our historicist understanding of culture encourages us to reconstruct our symbolic language rather than cleave to tradition. Sonesson lauds the resources that Kaufman has provided us with that help clarify the task of living together and in community with the rest of creation in modernity.¹⁸⁰

Above, we saw Sonesson praise the manner in which Kaufman integrated modern understandings of human evolutionary biology into his theology. However, American philosopher of culture Randall E. Auxier is more sceptical of Kaufman's relationship with science. Auxier states that when Kaufman was faced with the decision of whether to develop his theological project in line with the standards of scientific and historical plausibility, or to attempt to remould science and history with reference to religious plausibility, he chose the former.¹⁸¹ Auxier argues that the result of this decision was to 'render religion impersonal in order to satisfy the objective sensibilities and demands of scientific and historical enquiry'.¹⁸² Furthermore, he states that the contrary move, to personalise and humanise science and history, is never considered by Kaufman. This, he posits, creates deep conceptual problems for Kaufman's account of creativity. Kaufman presents us with an impersonal God who 'creates neither by love, nor design, nor intelligence of any kind'.¹⁸³ The serendipitous creative activity of this God is a 'flurry of fortuitous undirected activity' during which 'a few personal beings get luckily cranked out, and will be gone at some point in the not too distant future'. Auxier finds this proposal to be logically incoherent arguing that only a God who is 'possibly or actually personal in the divine mode of existence can, through creative and communicative action, raise biological beings into personal experience'.¹⁸⁴ Auxier's response may also help explain why Kaufman's work never truly found an audience within lay

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 539.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 543.

¹⁸¹ Randall E. Auxier, "Gordon Kaufman's Astronauts: A Review Essay of Jesus and Creativity," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Reflections on Gordon D. Kaufman's "In the beginning... Creativity" and "Jesus and Creativity" (January 2008): 26.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 30

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Christianity. Kaufman's symbol of creativity sacrifices a central tenet of Christian identity, the ontological statement that God creates and redeems the universe, in an attempt to encompass modern cosmology within his theology. This is unlikely to resonate with Christians seeking to maintain their identity within an already hostile modernity.

Whilst Auxier is critical of the non-personal account of God offered by Kaufman, Christian naturalist Karl E. Peters argues that it is effective when it is understood in terms of its function as a metaphor within the paradigm of constructive theology. He illustrates his position through a comparison Kaufman's non-personal metaphor of God as creativity with the personal metaphor of the Earth as the body of God constructed by McFague. Peters contends that the major flaw of personal metaphors for God is the problem of scale.¹⁸⁵ The limits of the concept of personhood also limit the scope of the metaphor for God constructed on its basis. By contrast, he argues, non-personal metaphors such as creativity can be applied on a universal scale.¹⁸⁶ Kaufman's theology, then, has not so much rendered religion impersonal in order to satisfy the objectivity of scientific enquiry as attempted to present a metaphor for God that encompasses the universal breadth of his creative act. Kaufman rejects the language of human persons as inadequate for this task and so employs the term 'creativity' to stand as the unifying symbol for all 'creative physical, chemical, biological, and historical causal processes'.¹⁸⁷

Indeed, Peters' account provides a rebuttal to the reading of Kaufman's creativity offered by Auxier. Peters states that is important to note that Kaufman's creativity is not an additional cause operative in the universe that transcends those discoverable by empirical enquiry. Rather it is the unifying symbol for all universal creativity that we see manifest in 'cosmic, biological, and human cultural evolution'.¹⁸⁸ Therefore it is not simply a case of non-personal God giving rise to persons but a case of a non-personal metaphor being used to construct a symbol for God that at once encompasses all creative trajectories that have led to the development of our ourselves, our world and our universe. Here, we see the reasoning behind Kaufman's willingness to challenge and replace the traditional account of God. As noted above, Kaufman exemplifies the theological response to the environmental crisis that stresses humanity's ultimate environmental responsibility. In order to convey this

¹⁸⁵ Karl E. Peters, "A Christian Naturalism: Developing the Thinking of Gordon Kaufman," *Zygon*, vol. 48, no. 3 (September 2013): 581.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

responsibility Kaufman sought to construct a symbol that encompasses all creative processes within the universe and linked humanity to them in terms of contingency and responsibility. Kaufman would argue that whilst the God of the theological tradition differentiates humanity from the environment and authorises our destruction of it, the symbol of creativity does the opposite. That is to say, it reminds us of reliance upon our environment and the responsibility that we bear for the consequences of our actions towards it.

As seen above, Mennonite theologian Nathanael L. Inglis asserts that the pragmatism and historicism of Kaufman's constructive theology are analogous to the central Mennonite principles of christomorphism and non-creedalism. Indeed, he argues that it is this quality of Kaufman's work makes an essential contribution to those who seek to do Mennonite theology within a de-traditionalised society. He states that this is because the Christian experience itself within a de-traditionalised society entails 'de facto constructive theology'.¹⁸⁹ That is to say an individual's Christian faith is always in dialogue with emerging ethical challenges within their personal life and the life of their congregation. Inglis allows that for Christians seeking to live according to the authority of tradition, Kaufman's work may make little sense. However, Kaufman's pragmatism and historicism offer a model for those Christians who seek out collaboration between different theological perspectives and in communities of faith as they seek to resolve the tensions raised by modernity.¹⁹⁰ Kaufman's pragmatism focuses on Christian's ethical responsibilities towards others and thus presents an understanding of collaborative communities as defined by the christomorphism of their practice and their shared experience.¹⁹¹ His historicism presents an understanding of communal identity that rejects the exclusivity and authority of tradition and thus offers a non-creedal basis for community.¹⁹² In such a way, Inglis argues, Kaufman has intuitively provided a model for Mennonite theology in a de-traditionalised context.

3.2.4 Concluding remarks

Inglis' comments illuminate the difficulties that accompany reading Kaufman's theology. Many readers may never access the wealth of resources within Kaufman's work but because of his rejection of traditional sources of Christian authority and identity. Inglis himself understands Kaufman's theology as a statement of Mennonite identity within the de-

¹⁸⁹ Inglis, "The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method", 147.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 151.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 152.

¹⁹² Ibid., 153.

traditionalised context of modernity. However, he understands that Kaufman's radical approach may make his work inaccessible to mainstream audiences. This is the paradox that appears to be at the heart of Kaufman's constructivist theology. His willingness to challenge theological authority is founded upon his resolution that theological symbols must meet the needs of the individual arising from their social and historical context. However, the radical nature of this willingness actually shortens the scope of his influence due to the dangers it presents to Christian identity. Kaufman allows concepts arising out of modernity to interpenetrate his theological constructions. His reason for allowing this is that, in doing so, his theology will better fit the needs of the individual within modernity. His account of creativity demonstrates his intention to offer an account of God for the modern era that can inform the experience of individuals living within an age of environmental crisis. However, in presenting such a formulation, he challenges not only Christian authority, as he intends, but also Christian identity, which he does not intend.

So what can this preliminary survey of Kaufman's theology offer us with regards to the systematic questions that we contend lie at the heart of environmental theology? What does it tell us about who God is, how God is known and what difference God makes in the world? For Kaufman, God's true identity is hidden from humanity by the epistemological gap between us. Therefore, theologians are attempting to provide humanity with a concept of God that can order their experiences in relation to the existential quandaries arising from their social and historical context. Therefore, God's identity does not contain within it the ontological claim that universe shall be created and redeemed by God. This leads to the question of how God is known. Again, the epistemological gap between God and humanity curtails any account of revelation within Kaufman's theology. We do not know God per se, we merely know who God is for us as our theological conception of him arises out of our context. Scripture, then, is a record of who God was to the ancient Jewish people and the early Christian communities. Who God is for us, Kaufman posits, must be determined in relation the environmental crisis, the central existential issue of modernity.

This leads us to our final question of what difference God makes in Kaufman's account of theology. As a general comment, Kaufman's symbol of God functions to order the experiences of the individual and this enable her to make sense of her context. An example of this can be seen in the function ascribed by Kaufman to the symbol of God as creativity. God as creativity functions to convey human responsibility for the conditions that sustain their life. This responsibility is conveyed by the continuity between God and the world and the

consequent continuity between universal creativity and our own creativity. God is continuous with the world in the sense that he is the source of the universe and the creative trajectories that allow the development and sustenance of life within it. Our own creativity, therefore, is contingent upon the universal creativity that Kaufman names as God. Kaufman moves from this contingency to develop an account of responsibility as continuity with universal creativity. That is to say that we have a responsibility to use our creativity to develop life bringing and sustaining, rather than destructive, trajectories within the world. Kaufman argues that hope is generated through God's discontinuity with creation. The universe will continue to provide opportunities for change through these creative trajectories in spite of the destructive or uncreative trajectories of our own creativity. Of course, there is no revelatory promise of redemption from a creator God. However, the eternal arising of opportunities to grasp our responsibility and guide our future provides humanity with hope for future redemption at our own hands.

3.3 Style, Audience and Reception Conclusion

Above we have examined how two radically different theological positions, realism and constructivism, have produced differing accounts of environmental theology. The presuppositions that underpin their respective approaches to theology indicate that their thought is fundamentally irreconcilable. However, there is uniformity in the manner in which they approach environmental theology. Both Moltmann and Kaufman offer environmental theologies that centre upon accounts of God's simultaneous continuity and discontinuity with creation. Moltmann's environmental theology centres on the hope offered by God's discontinuity with creation. God's resurrection of Christ is discontinuous with creation in that it is an interruption of its laws. God interrupts his creation in order to promise its eventual transcendence of death, prefigured in Christ's own transcendence of death. The hope generated by God's discontinuity with creation provides the main theme for Moltmann's environmental theology. However, God's continuity with creation, provided by the Cross, forms the basis of his account of responsibility within this framework of hope. Christ's crucifixion shows God's continuity with creation as his son his suffers and dies upon the Cross. This reminds us that, just as Christ's resurrection does not replace his crucifixion, nor does God's Kingdom replace creation. Hope for the future, therefore, cannot replace our responsibility for the present.

Kaufman's environmental theology centres upon humanity's responsibility for the future as conveyed by God's continuity with creation. God is continuous with creation in that he is the source of the creativity that brought the universe into being and the creative trajectories that create and sustain life within it. Humanity, as contingent upon this creativity, has the responsibility to steward their creativity in a manner continuous with it. That is to say to use our creativity to generate trajectories that are conducive to life rather than destruction. Humanity's responsibility for the future of creation, generated through our understanding of God's continuity with creation, is the principal theme of Kaufman's environmental theology. However, an account of hope is contained within this framework of responsibility. Hope is generated by God's discontinuity with creation. Universal creativity ensures that possibilities for future change will continually arise within creation, regardless of our own destructive or uncreative trajectories. Our responsibility to direct our own future within creation is bolstered by the hope which arises from the possibilities for us to achieve this provided by universal creativity.

Interestingly we see that, despite their very different approaches to theology both Moltmann and Kaufman understand God's continuity with creation as generative of responsibility and his discontinuity of hope. In Moltmann's account it is God's discontinuity that takes precedence and thus leads to an environmental theology based on radical hope. In Kaufman's account it is God's continuity that takes precedence and thus leads to an environmental theology based on radical responsibility. At the heart of their respective environmental theologies is this tension between hope and responsibility. This tension is not sourced by the contents of applied theology, seeking to answer questions of what is happening in the world, why it is happening, what ought to be happening and how theology might respond. Rather, this tension is sourced by questions arising from within systematic theology itself. Their environmental theologies are built upon questions of who God is, how God is known and what difference God makes in the world. The answers that they give to these systematic questions contain within them an implicit epistemological stance regarding the world and thus determine the kind of environmental theology they construct. This is demonstrated in the implications for the ontological status of the universe itself contained within their accounts of the nature of God. To create an environment theology, then, is to wrestle with the fundamental questions of systematic theology in order to resolve the tension between hope and responsibility that appears to arise when we attempt to speak theologically about the environment. In the following section we shall survey the development of

environmental theology itself and attempt to locate Moltmann and Kaufman within this tradition in relation to the answers to these questions of systematic theology contained within their thought.

Chapter 4: Jürgen Moltmann: Towards an Environmental Theology

In the introductory section above we have given an outline of Jürgen Moltmann's thought and the general direction of his theological career. Below we shall examine the development of his thought in greater detail in an attempt to draw out the fruits of the interaction between his theology and his environmental consciousness. We shall examine the progression of his theology over his career over the span of two chapters. In so doing we aim to chart how his theology became engaged with environmental themes, how these themes influenced his understanding of God and how this new understanding of God shaped his anthropology. In this first chapter we shall examine the theology of Moltmann's early to middle career in an attempt to gain an understanding of how his ecological theology evolves out of his theological account of suffering. This will provide us with a foundation upon which to begin the examination of the ecological theology of his mid-to-late career.

4.1 Moltmann's Theological Method: A realist rejection of Kant?

It is widely accepted that Moltmann's account of eschatology provides the basis for his theological method.¹⁹³ Moltmann's eschatology is grounded in Christ's resurrection and turns away from the transcendental eschatology of the post-Kantian German theological tradition. Kant understood eschatology in the same manner as he understood other archetypal ideas such as God, world and the self. The value of these ideas lay in their ability to regulate and order our experience and thus allow us to distil meaning from them. Kant presents us with an understanding of eschatology that centres around the ordering of our worldly experiences, rather than on the relationship between Christ's resurrection and our salvation. On the matter of heaven and hell, for instance, he argues that,

Though this representation is figurative, and, as such disturbing, it is nonetheless philosophically correct in meaning. That is, it serves to prevent us from regarding good and evil, the realm of light and realm of darkness, as bordering on each other and losing

¹⁹³ This argument is expressed by John J. O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality: The Christian Doctrine of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 111., Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 1., and Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (London: SCM, 2000), 23.

themselves in one another by gradual steps...but rather to represent those realms as being separated from one another by an immeasurable gulf.¹⁹⁴

Here, Kant demonstrates an understanding of eschatological symbols as regulative ideas. Kant is not concerned with whether there actually is a Heaven and a Hell, as he would argue that we could never attain sensory experience of them. His interest in eschatology in general, and Heaven and Hell specifically, is related to his understanding of transcendental philosophy as a whole as the ‘...principle of forms in a system of all relations. Of God, world, and the rational being in the world who comprehends them’.¹⁹⁵

The aim of Kant’s transcendental philosophy is for the individual to bring themselves into relation with God and the world through the contents of the transcendental imagination. Eschatological symbols, Kant argues, are instructive in this task on the grounds that they divide our moral world into two distinct realms. He argues that they are constant reminder of our ability to choose to act morally and our own culpability when we fail to do so. Kant argues that this aids the individual in their attempt to bring their own self into relation with God and the world. As this process unfolds, Kant argues, we come to an understanding of the significance of the Last Judgement within transcendental philosophy. Kant argues that when the individual,

... considers the verdict of his future judge (that is, of his own awakening conscience... he will not be able to conceive any other basis for passing judgement than to have placed before his eyes at that time his whole life and not a mere segment of it, such as the last part of it or the part most advantageous to him.¹⁹⁶

Kant’s understanding of the Last Judgement, then, is one wherein the individual who has brought themselves into relation with the world and God through the transcendental imagination passes judgement upon their own lives.¹⁹⁷

In this state of total relation, perhaps the ‘Last’ state, the individual is capable of understanding the genesis of their actions and the manner in which those actions effected

¹⁹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 53.

¹⁹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*. Translated by Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen. Edited by Eckart Förster, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 250.

¹⁹⁶ Kant, 1960, 71.

¹⁹⁷ Nicholas F. Grier, ‘Last Judgment as Self Judgement’, *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* XXVIII, No. 1 January 2001: 27.

their own development and the development of those around them. This link that Kant establishes between the transcendently awakened conscience and the Last Judgment leads into a discussion of the relationship between eschatology and the categorical imperative itself. On this matter Kant writes,

The concept of every rational being as one who must regard himself as giving universal law through all the maxims of his will, so as to appraise himself and his actions from this point of view, leads to a very fruitful concept dependent upon it, namely that of a kingdom of ends.¹⁹⁸

Here, we see that the awakened conscience that Kant writes of in relation to the individual who has related themselves to the world and God through the transcendental imagination is the foundation of his categorical imperative. If all individuals were to attain this level of consciousness then we would, Kant argue, live in a 'kingdom of ends' wherein humanity could progress toward an awakened form of society. Thus, we could argue, within Kant's transcendental philosophy it is we, as individuals, who bring about God's Kingdom on Earth through the fulfilment of our own moral and philosophical potential.¹⁹⁹ Theological symbols, Kant argues, guide us in this project but do not possess any agency with regards to bringing about this end.²⁰⁰

Moltmann rejects Kant's transcendental account of eschatology on the basis that the Last Things are not truly beyond the scope of our cognition as their nature has been demonstrated in Christ's resurrection. Moltmann argues that God's action within history, and specifically the promise of the resurrection of all things made in Christ, actually transforms our understanding of what is meant by history. The promise of death's ultimate defeat in the resurrection of Christ forces us to admit that the direction, and ultimate purpose, of history belongs to God alone and leads us to question knowledge that we may hitherto have accepted as fundamental truth. On this matter he argues that,

It might well be that the existing cosmic bounds of reality, which the moving historic horizon of the promise reaches in eschatology are not regarded as fixed and predetermined things but are themselves found to be in motion. It might well be that

¹⁹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 51.

¹⁹⁹ Hans Schwartz, *Eschatology*, (Grand Rapids; Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 15.

²⁰⁰ A certain reading of this understanding of theological symbols is central to the theological method of Gordon Kaufman. We shall examine the link between Kantian epistemology and Kaufman's theology in Chapter 6.

once the promise becomes eschatological it breaks the bounds even of that which aetiology had hitherto considered to be creation and cosmos with the result that the eschaton would not be a repetition of the beginning... but is ultimately wider than the beginning ever was...²⁰¹

Here, Moltmann outlines his argument on the effect that the eschatological promise of Christ's resurrection has on our understanding of time itself. Moltmann argues that this promise transforms our mechanistic understanding of time flowing ever onwards in a uniform but directionless manner and replaces it with one wherein we are moving towards a destination promised by God. Moltmann argues that we come to understand our world as passing through the various aeons of an apocalyptic process in which God's Kingdom is understood to be coming as the world that we know is passing away.²⁰²

Above, we see that Moltmann's position differs radically from Kant's transcendental eschatology. Kant's eschatology presented theological concepts in terms of their symbolic and pedagogical usefulness. For Moltmann, by contrast, Christ's resurrection is not simply of soteriological concern but of genuine historical concern also. This is illustrated when Moltmann offers the view that,

...the gospel which reveals the presence of the coming Lord requires a continuity with the earthly Jesus which has constantly to be discovered anew—for otherwise a myth about some new heavenly being threatens to take the place of Jesus of Nazareth...²⁰³

Therefore, we see that, in contrast to Kant's transcendental account of eschatology, theological realism is central to Moltmann's theology and specifically to his eschatology. Here, Moltmann draws the link between historical occurrence and eschatological promise. Christ's resurrection is our experience of God's Kingdom to come. Without this historical grounding, Moltmann argues, Christianity loses its ability to transform our understanding of the historical process. So what aspect of our understanding of the historical process is Moltmann attempting to change through his theology? Consistent with his concentration camp experiences that drew him to theology it is our understanding of suffering that he is seeking to transform. Below, we shall examine how he attempts to do so through a theology of God's suffering that he places at the heart of his eschatology.

²⁰¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM 1967), 136.

²⁰² Rod Crowell, "Jurgen Moltmann's 'Theology of Hope: A Brief Purport'" (1972). *Western Michigan University Honors Theses*. Paper 1864, 6.

²⁰³ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 300.

4.2 How Suffering Shaped Moltmann's Theology

Jürgen Moltmann's academic career began as a response to the atrocities of the Second World War. He reasoned that many theological assumptions, such as God's impassibility and the nature of God's relationship with his creation, needed to be critically evaluated and reformed if they were to have any meaning in a post-Holocaust world. As noted in the introduction to the thesis, Moltmann came to faith as a result of the influence of the American chaplain of the prisoner of war camp in which he was interned at the end of the Second World War.²⁰⁴ He would come to recount this process, not as he himself finding Christ, but as Christ coming to him, in the camp, and leading him out of his despair.²⁰⁵ The dialogue between suffering and hope is thus central to Moltmann's identity, faith and theology²⁰⁶ Indeed the centrality of this dialogue led John O'Donnell to remark that 'the context of Moltmann's thought is the suffering of the world'.²⁰⁷ Such an idea is contained within Moltmann's description of the guiding principle of his theology. He states that,

A theology which did not speak of God in the sight of the one who was abandoned and crucified would have had nothing to say to us then.²⁰⁸

Indeed Moltmann is sympathetic to those who claimed that, after the atrocities of the Holocaust, atheism was a more morally justifiable position than Christianity.²⁰⁹

Furthermore, Moltmann rejected the notion of an impassible God, handed down through the theological tradition from the Church Fathers and restated by Karl Barth, as strongly as Christianity's atheist critics.²¹⁰ Moltmann did not feel that such an understanding of God was either helpful or relevant to humanity in a post-Holocaust world. However, he also argued that the traditional understanding of God's impassibility was a reflection of Greek philosophy rather than scriptural exegesis.²¹¹ Indeed, this notion links well with those found in Moltmann's early career work on anthropology, *Man*. Here, he argues that the

²⁰⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 3.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁰⁶ Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power*, 23.

²⁰⁷ O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality*, 111.

²⁰⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 1.

²⁰⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 63.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 267.

accounts of creation found in Genesis we see that human beings are made in the image of God and remain in a constant relationship with him throughout their lives. In Christ we see a full explication of how an individual ought to live and the kinds of loving, self-sacrificing relationships one ought to pursue. In God's continued presence in the world through the Holy Spirit we see the continued possibility for our conversion to a life of *agape*. For Moltmann then, a human being is an individual created in the image of God, whose life is a continuous relationship with God.²¹² Indeed, it was through a biblically fuelled criticism of the incorporation of Greek philosophy into the theological tradition that Moltmann attempted to present an understanding of God as passionately involved with the suffering of the world.

Moltmann argues that the Early Church's doctrine of God's impassibility was not derived from Biblical sources but, rather, from the Greek philosophical concept of *apatheia*. This term was used to denote a purely rational mind, unfettered by emotion.²¹³ *Apatheia* is thus conceptually linked to the Early Church's characterisation of God as absolutely self-sufficient, self-determining and independent.²¹⁴ God cannot be forced to act by any external stimuli and thus stands as the antithesis of the human individual who runs this way and that under the influence of their desires.²¹⁵ A human being is capable of suffering whereas God cannot suffer. If God was passible then his self-determination, his will and, concomitantly, the salvation of his creation would be challenged. Fundamentally, we would be presented with an understanding of a God who cannot guarantee salvation to humanity.

However, to accuse Moltmann's theology of presenting such an understanding of God is unfair. As seen above Moltmann's critique of theology is based on the content of scripture. He is not suggesting that God suffers in the same way as a human being, because of a will external to his, but rather out of the perfection of his love.²¹⁶ Scripture tells us that 'God is love' (1 John 4:16). If this is the case, Moltmann argues, we can suggest that God can choose to suffer with or because of his creation. Furthermore, it implies that an account of God which does not contain this possibility is biblically incoherent. Love naturally implies intimacy rather than alienation. Therefore, to present God as distant from or unmoved by his

²¹² Jürgen Moltmann, *Man. Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*, trans. J. Sturdy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 108.

²¹³ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 228.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 267.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 229.

creation seems incongruous with the identification of God with love. Moltmann sums up his position on the impassible God by arguing that he is,

... poorer than any man... the one who cannot suffer cannot love either. So he is also a loveless being.²¹⁷

Moltmann contends that his claim that God suffers does not in any way weaken or dilute God. Rather, it strengthens our understanding of God and God's interaction with his creation. Scripture reveals a God who engages with his creation out of the perfection of his love. He is willing to suffer with his creation and to be intimately involved in its affairs.²¹⁸ God goes with the Jews during their exile in Babylon and called them back to him through the prophets even when they angered him by straying from their faith.²¹⁹ God was even willing to sacrifice his Son to ensure salvation for all of humanity.²²⁰ This, Moltmann feels, shows God's strength not his weakness.

So far, Moltmann seems to have established a plausible argument for why God's perfection infers the necessity of his ability to suffer. However on what theological basis can he sustain this argument? Put another way does the Christian theological tradition contain the resources to present a coherent account of how God suffers with humanity? Moltmann argues that such an account be rendered by a Trinitarian rendering of the Crucifixion. Protestant and existentialist philosopher Albert Camus held the Crucifixion to be emblematic of God's helplessness and thus the uselessness of faith in the face of suffering. On the cross, Jesus cries out to his father, questioning why he has forsaken him. From this, Camus argues, we see conclusive evidence of God's inability to prevent suffering. If God remains unmoved by his son's suffering then what hope is there of him delivering humanity from suffering? God is either unwilling or unable to help the suffering and is thus reduced to obsolescence by gratuitous hardship.²²¹ Moltmann offers a radical response to Camus' argument. God suffers during Christ's Crucifixion and it is this suffering that allows him to identify with suffering humanity.²²²

²¹⁷ Ibid., 220.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 229.

²¹⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM 1967), 107.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 68.

²²² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 278.

4.3 How does Moltmann's Theology provide us with Hope?

In order to provide hope to those who are suffering, Moltmann's theology emphasises the eschatological, not simply soteriological, significance of Christ. He claims the Old Testament's record of God's fulfilled promises to the Jewish people is expanded, in Christ, to the future of all humanity.²²³ The significance of Christ, for Moltmann, is encapsulated in the dialectic between his crucifixion and resurrection. Indeed this is fundamentally not just a dialectic but a dialogue between life and death framed by God's love. Christ's suffering upon the cross represents the suffering innately linked with the human condition while the resurrection stands as God's promise to conquer all death with the coming of his Kingdom.²²⁴ Moltmann summarises the promise held within Christ's resurrection as,

The dawn and assured promise of the coming glory of God over all, as the victory of life from God over death.²²⁵

Thus we see that, for Moltmann, Christ's resurrection foreshadows the overcoming of all death that shall accompany the coming of God's Kingdom.²²⁶ In this case, what exists in Christ's resurrection is God's conquering of death and suffering which foreshadows their total defeat in the coming of his Kingdom.²²⁷ Of course the coming of God's Kingdom does not occur with Christ's resurrection and thus the resurrection is God's revelatory promise of that which is to come.²²⁸

Suffering and hope are intimately linked in Moltmann's thought and this relationship is expressed in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Christ cries out on the cross, asking his father why he has forsaken him, just as individuals feel forsaken and at the mercy of history's vicissitudes. When God resurrects Christ his act stands as a promise of God's Kingdom to suffering individuals. Moltmann argues that this promise is transformative as it allows the individual to see the provisional nature of their situation within history and, indeed, the provisional nature of history itself. The promise for redemption emanates from God's history,

²²³ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 107.

²²⁴ Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 2

²²⁵ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 201.

²²⁶ Joy Ann McDougall, *Pilgrimage of Love: Moltmann on the Trinity and Christian Life: Moltmann on the Trinity and Christian Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

not humanity's and such an understanding empowers the human spirit to endure suffering.²²⁹ Moltmann argues that the God of scripture is not simply a figure of universal lordship but a God of hope. The God of scripture 'confronts us with the promise of something new, with the hope of a future given by God'.²³⁰

Our understanding of God is changed. Now, clearly, He is concerned about the suffering of his creation and its ultimate fate. History can no longer be seen as simply the temporal manifestation of God's will and His power is now exhibited through his eschatological engagement with his creation, as well as in his universal lordship.²³¹ The *eschaton*, Moltmann argues, allows humanity to anticipate a time when the world will be radically different to how it is now. Although the human world is characterised by suffering and injustice the eschaton reminds humanity that their world is only temporary and provisional; it will one day be superseded by the Kingdom of God. His Kingdom will be free of suffering and characterised by its justice and righteousness. Moltmann argues that the God of scripture is a God of hope, a God who 'confronts us with the promise of something new, with the hope of a future given by God'.²³² In the *eschaton*, God will overcome suffering. Therefore, Moltmann claims, the eschatological promise sealed by Christ's resurrection gives hope for change in even the direst situations. This radically interrupts the notion of the future as '*futurum*', literally being nothing more than a continuation of the present. Moltmann writes that the future, revealed by Christ, should be understood as '*adventus*', meaning 'arrival'. From this we understand that, in Christ, something genuinely new has arrived within creation. This is both a promise of redemption and a new way of understanding ourselves within creation.²³³

4.4 Suffering, History and the Trinitarian God

So how does Moltmann justify his claim that a Trinitarian account of the Crucifixion offers a more credible response to the problem of gratuitous suffering than the theology of his predecessors? In order to achieve this he invokes the Trinitarian doctrine of *perichoresis*. *Perichoresis* posits that the Trinity is fundamentally a familial interrelation.²³⁴ Just as in a family the individual members of the Trinity are sympathetic to the experiences of other

²²⁹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 330.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

²³¹ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 54.

²³² Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 16.

²³³ Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 31.

²³⁴ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 169.

family members without being the subject of those experiences.²³⁵ Therefore, Moltmann argues that when the crucifixion is understood as an event that takes place between the members of the Trinity. As such, he argues, it delivers an insight that overcomes the alienation of gratuitous suffering.

Here, God the Father, of his own volition, offers up his sinless Son in order to ensure the salvation of humanity. As Father and Son are inextricably linked in perichoretic union, a familial indwelling, thus they are joined in the suffering on the cross. Christ cries out, asking why he has been forsaken by the Father (Mark 15:34) and, likewise, God the Father suffers at the knowledge of his Son's suffering and alienation. The Father suffers Sonlessness as the Son suffers Fatherlessness. Their apparent sundering is overcome by the Holy Spirit which holds them together and unites them even in their alienation.²³⁶ This is a perichoretic act, internal to the Trinity, influenced by nothing exterior to it. Christ, God the Son, dies the death of criminal, although he is innocent, on the Cross. Christ, the Son of God, dies as one of the godforsaken and God the Father suffered as a Father suffers for his Son.²³⁷ Thus Moltmann can state that, 'God's being is in suffering and ... suffering is in God's being itself'.²³⁸ By this he means us to understand that the suffering people of the world enjoy God's solidarity. Moltmann argues that,

The call and mission of the 'God of hope' suffer man no longer to live amid surrounding nature, and no longer in the world as his home, but compel him to exist within the horizon of history.... The man who is summoned by the divine promise to the transforming of the world falls outside the sphere of Greek cosmic thinking.²³⁹

God's promise of his Kingdom to come, sealed in his own suffering at Christ's crucifixion, reaches out to the suffering in their alienation and offers them hope for the future. God's suffering is an ontological suffering, a suffering that, Moltmann argues, removes the alienation from our suffering. Moltmann contends that the experience of suffering itself is transformed by our knowledge that God, too, suffered with Christ on the cross.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 240.

²³⁷ Ibid., 278.

²³⁸ Ibid., 227.

²³⁹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 289.

4.5 Can a Suffering God help Humanity?

Paul Fiddes argues that Moltmann's account of God's suffering simply does not allow humanity room to participate in the creative process of suffering and resurrection.²⁴⁰ Fiddes argues that, throughout Moltmann's theology, God's inner passion is both the subject and object of his action. God is the source of his own suffering.²⁴¹ Moltmann's stresses God's intention to bring about the crucifixion and his direct participation in the suffering it entails. Fundamentally this is an action occasioned by God, upon God. Furthermore, we could ask, how authentic is the alienation of Father from Son and Son from Father in Moltmann's theology of the cross? Moltmann stresses that the Holy Spirit holds the Father and Son together in their alienation. There seems to be no danger of an unbridgeable chasm opening up between Father and Son even in the darkest moment of their relationship, does this really correspond to human experiences of alienation? Indeed this leads to the broader point of how are we to relate to this account of the Cross in a manner conducive to confronting our own suffering. As Fiddes remarks, 'God seems less the supreme victim than the supreme self-executioner'.²⁴² We, however, do not choose to suffer, we cannot, in most cases, end our suffering and our suffering stays in our consciousness and can lead to yet further suffering. Fiddes proposes that while God is changed by the crucifixion he only participates in it in the sense of being sympathetic to the suffering of Christ.²⁴³ Christ's suffering, alienated death and resurrection, an event which is beyond all hope, has the power to transform our perception of our own suffering. Fiddes argues that to make God a direct participant in the event, someone who suffers on the cross with Christ, removes both God's mystery and the Cross' ability to ameliorate human suffering.²⁴⁴

Moltmann's contemporary and fellow theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg criticised Moltmann's conflation of the economic Trinity and the Immanent Trinity more directly arguing that,

...the equation of the two means the absorption of the Immanent Trinity in the Economic Trinity. This steals from the Trinity of salvation history all sense and

²⁴⁰ Paul S. Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000), 187.

²⁴¹ Paul S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God*, (Oxford: OUP, 1992), 137.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., 168.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 137.

significance. For this Trinity has sense and significance only if God is the same in salvation history as he is from eternity.²⁴⁵

By this Pannenberg means that what gives salvation history its validity is its relationship to a reality beyond the one in which injustice is presently occurring. The immanent Trinity offers an objective, authoritative point of reference to justice movements and helps to contextualise their own suffering. When this immanent Trinity is conflated with the economic Trinity this aspect of salvation history is lost. The sense that the movement is part of some larger, cosmic framework is replaced by revolution as the framework of God himself. What if revolution fails as means of humanisation? What then for God's self expression? Pannenberg feels that Moltmann is arguing in favour of the idea that the Trinitarian God is the result of history and only achieves 'reality' upon history's eschatological consummation.²⁴⁶

For Pannenberg the eschatological consummation of God's creation is still of great importance. It is the statement that God is the same from eternity to eternity, the completion of his creative act and the fulfilment of his love. However its significance lies in establishing God's loving distinctness from his creation.²⁴⁷ Moltmann, he argues, goes too far towards the opposite end of the theological spectrum and entwines God so deeply with human history that he almost becomes contingent upon it.²⁴⁸ However, this may be an unfair interpretation of Moltmann's theology of history. Fundamentally, he feels that God's history is not complete until the coming of God's Kingdom on Earth. God's history and eschatological history are bound up in the sense that God's concern is the salvation of that which he has created. This salvation is yet to come and belongs to God alone yet it is anticipated in the promise of Christ's resurrection. Humanity is called by this promise to resist inhumanity in the anticipation of God's Kingdom.

Despite these conceptual difficulties the basic premise of Moltmann's theology, that God favours the oppressed and the Spirit's presence in history gives hope for change, has been evident in Latin American liberation, Black and Feminist theologies.²⁴⁹ The demand for full humanity and the according treatment has been univocal within the theology of these

²⁴⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004), 331.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Harvey Conn, 'Theologies of Liberation: Toward a Common View', in *Tensions in Contemporary Theology*, eds. Stanley Grundy and Alan Johnson (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 429.

movements and is this demand that Moltmann feels theology must give voice in a post-Reich world. He attempts to unfold a theology which shows the interrelation of God, humanity and history in such a way that empowers the oppressed to resist and overcome their suffering. Returning to *Theology of Hope* we see a succinct expression of such a view. He argues that,

Man neither stands above history...nor does he stand wholly within history...Always he stands both within history and also above history... He is historic and he has history. He must be able to detach himself from history as an investigator and spectator, in order to experience it in the modus of having.²⁵⁰

Moltmann's theology is deeply invested in the demand that individual's actively engage with the historical process. In the face of such a demand, the political and spiritual merge into one another. Private faith is something of an oxymoron in Moltmann's view. Faithfulness to God entails faithfulness to our fellow human beings.

4.6 Hope and a Theology of the Environment

As seen above Moltmann was originally concerned to present a narrative which negates the hopelessness of human suffering by grounding it within the context of God's own suffering. Whether the notion of the suffering God is helpful or not to the suffering individual has been discussed above, but what of the implications for our understanding of history that are secreted within such an understanding of suffering? Moltmann entreated individuals to no longer think of the world around them as home and, instead, think of the salvation that lay beyond the world of 'Greek cosmic thinking'.²⁵¹ The early stages of Moltmann's theological career saw him posit both a material resurrection of the dead and the transformation of creation in the coming of God's Kingdom. However, beyond advocacy for justice movements, he seemed to discount the importance of the events of human history and seems oblivious to the importance of a theological perspective on the interrelation of humanity with its environment. To his credit, Moltmann acknowledges this flaw in his theology and points out that such environmental blindness was characteristic of post-Holocaust theology. Such theology principally attempted to engage with questions God's interaction with history. He recounts that,

²⁵⁰ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 271.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 289.

It was only slowly, at the beginning of the 1970s, that we became conscious of the simple fact that human history is located within the ecological limits of this planet earth, and that human civilization can only survive if it respects these limits, and the laws, cycles, and rhythms of the earth.²⁵²

Here, Moltmann makes an important comment on the evolution of theological perspectives on history. The traditional theological model of history begins and ends with acts of God. However, with ever increasing resource consumption and the development of technologies such as the nuclear bomb, theologians had to take seriously the possibility that humanity could compromise the viability of their own environment. This is not to say that humanity is, in some way, capable of pre-empting God's plan for history with regards to the coming of his Kingdom but, rather, possesses the potential to bring about the end of its own history. Moltmann's theology seeks to transform our understanding of the present through an appeal to the future of God. To be successful, then, it seems necessary that his theology of the environment presents an understanding of God's future that generates an understanding of ourselves and our future as interrelated with our environment.

First, let us examine Moltmann's analysis of the way in which human history became alienated from the history of the environment. Moltmann's response to the totalitarianism of the twentieth century was to stress that the true source of human identity was to be found in Christ rather than political institutions. It is easy to see how this analysis acts as a powerful critique of totalitarianism of the twentieth, but how does this relate to our relationship with the environment? Moltmann argues this by arguing that totalitarianism and the unsustainable use of the earth's natural resources are predicated upon a corruption of the human will, principally the desire to dominate. In the preface to *God in Creation* Moltmann argues that,

In the 1930's, the problem of the doctrine of creation was knowledge of God. Today the problem of the doctrine of God is knowledge of creation. The theological adversary then was the religious and political ideology of 'blood and soil', 'race and nation'. Today the theological adversary is the nihilism practised in our dealings with nature. Both

²⁵² Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 314.

perversions have been evoked by the unnatural will to power, and the inhuman struggle for domination on earth.²⁵³

Here Moltmann is drawing a comparison between the rise of the Reich and the consumer-capitalist driven destruction of the environment. While these structures have manifested their destructive capacities in different manners, according to Moltmann, they share a common root: a privation of human will. The degradation of the environment, Moltmann argues, fundamentally centres on a refusal to view the Earth as being God's creation. Indeed Moltmann specifically makes the point that it is not humanity's technology per se, rather our attitude towards it, which has led to our current ecological crisis. Indeed, Moltmann states, the phrase 'ecological crisis' is too weak a description of humanity's predicament. It is a crisis fundamentally wrought upon humanity, and the rest of creation, by humanity itself. Technologies are, he argues, nothing but applied sciences. Both science and technology are tied up with the human concerns of the society in which they originate. These concerns are an expression of the system of value and meaning within that society. For this reason Moltmann argues that talk of an 'ecological crisis' only makes sense when we consider it as crisis of 'the whole system with all its part systems'.²⁵⁴ By this he means not only the destruction of the environment but also the destruction of the human spirit, evidenced by the nihilism prevalent within consumer culture.²⁵⁵

For this reason, Moltmann argues, the natural environment and the social environment are intractably interlinked. The destruction of the environment is rooted in human social and economic processes. Western socio-economic policy is focused not on stability but on growth. Capitalism's existential crisis is deflation. Increased productivity, labour efficiency and mechanisation are the ways in which this crisis is held back.²⁵⁶ Concern with the environment goes as far as consideration of how its resources can best be accessed, refined and utilised in the pursuit of greater productive output. The environment is something to be consumed.²⁵⁷ However, scant thought seems to be given to the geopolitical implications of

²⁵³ J. Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, (Minneapolis: MN, 1985), xi.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

total consumption. Capitalism lurches from crisis to crisis, through peak and trough, dragging those excluded from the economic elite into ever greater anxiety and uncertainty.

The psychological and social damage occasioned by the appetites of Western capitalism is obvious in the developing countries which bear the strain of the factories and child labour used to produce our consumer goods. Perhaps it is this insulation from the realities of the production process that contributes to the ‘self-immunisation’ phenomenon noted by Moltmann.²⁵⁸ While the vicissitudes of the financial markets cause real and present distress in the lives of those us living in the developed West, as a whole, we seem curiously non-committal on the environmental effects of the consumption underpinning those markets.²⁵⁹ Moltmann argues that Western societies immunise themselves against thoughts of ecological catastrophe with a dangerous, vague assumption that our technological innovations will eventually set right the imbalances that we have introduced into our environment.²⁶⁰ Moltmann argues this generates a fundamental apathy towards the ‘slow death’ of our environment which paralyzes a re-evaluation our relationship with our environment.²⁶¹

Moltmann argues that Renaissance philosophy, specifically the thought of René Descartes, provided the template for the instrumentalisation of the environment.²⁶² Cartesian dualism operates on the difference between two substances *res cogitans*, or mind and *res extensa*, or body. There is further division between infinite and finite *res cogitans*. The reason possessed by human beings is finite while God’s reason is infinite. God is the perfected master of creation, with no need for body. Human perfection thus lies in the development of their reason and the marshalling of that reason, through technology, to control their environment, thus imitating God’s universal mastery.²⁶³ The environment was something to be actively mastered and possessed rather than simply inhabited. ‘Progress’ consists of such action. It is for this reason, Moltmann argues, that socialist economies are no more environmentally enlightened than capitalist economies.²⁶⁴ Capitalist and socialist philosophy disagree over the distribution of wealth not on the notion that as much wealth should be

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 24

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 27.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 28.

generated as efficiently as possible. Both thought systems prize growth and progress with no thought for the environment other than as a means to those ends.²⁶⁵

The era of globalisation sees this approach to the environment imposed onto nations beyond the stronghold of the developed West. Moltmann criticises the manner in which global networks assess nations simply on the basis of how well they have assimilated the ideology of capitalism. Questioning only how much growth they have achieved and are forecast to achieve. Lagging behind the West leads to accusations of being ‘under-developed’.²⁶⁶ This, for Moltmann, demonstrates the imperialist intentions of globalisation. But if we are progressing to where or towards what are we progressing? When it comes to capitalism, Moltmann feels, this is the wrong kind of question. The cycle of consumption and growth is both the means and the end of capitalism. As Moltmann states ‘as needs are fulfilled, demands grow’.²⁶⁷ The human capacity for consumption is limitless, the ability of the Earth to sustain such activity is not. Moltmann’s is deeply concerned by what he sees as attempt to diminish our understanding of the future as radically open.²⁶⁸

Indeed, Richard Bauckham argues that Moltmann is greatly concerned by the manner in which ‘modern myth of progress’ shapes perceptions of history and lays the foundations for ‘universal death’ through the destruction of God’s creation.²⁶⁹ The ‘modern myth of progress’ makes a claim upon the future and, in so doing, attempts to collapse the conceptual viability of any alternative to the present. This benefits an economic elite who profit from the unsustainable consumption of natural resources and operate on the basis of a total disregard for the wellbeing of the environment whilst the consequences are, inevitably, foisted upon the global poor. How we view the environment is fundamental to how we view ourselves but also how we view our fellow human beings. As seen above, Moltmann is adamant that the environment has an inherent value due to its relationship with God. However the value that we place on the environment relates directly to how we value ourselves and each other. If the environment is simply a resource to be consumed for profit then we deny the world’s poor and disadvantaged full humanity. If those in the developed West exist simply for the purpose

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 29.

²⁶⁹ Richard Bauckham, ‘Time and Eternity’ in *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Minneapolis: MN, Fortress Press, 1985), 171.

of the most efficient instrumentalisation of the environment then do we not deny ourselves full humanity?

4.7 Is a Theological worldview complicit with Environmental Degradation?

Above we touched on Moltmann's understanding of the relationship between Enlightenment philosophy and theology. He concluded that a certain understanding of humanity's relationship with the environment was projected onto the Christian tradition as a result of a cultural movement founded on the valorisation of the human rational capacity.²⁷⁰ However, if this is the case, what kind of relationship with the environment is advocated by biblical sources? Can scripture stand up against the accusation that it contains divine commands that are environmentally damaging? Taken out of scriptural context it is easy to see how certain phrases in the creation narratives of both Genesis 1 and 2 could be used as justification for our current rapacious subjugation of our environment. However, Moltmann argues, such interpretations rest on a false doctrine of God.²⁷¹ We can argue that Cartesian dualism as biblical hermeneutic, gives rise to interpretations of Genesis that focus on humanity's domination of their environment, principally due to the Cartesian focus on the transcendence and omnipotence of God. The Bible reveals God to be creator, preserver and redeemer of creation, not simply its lord and master. Thus any human 'dominion' (Genesis 1:26) over creation, if it seeks to use scripture as a source of its authority, must model itself, not on Descartes' infinite reason, but on God's redeeming love. Indeed, Moltmann argues, an exegesis of the Genesis creation narratives reveals that this is the very relationship that humanity is intended to have with the environment.²⁷² Moltmann also cites Genesis 2:15 which instructs humanity to 'till and keep' the land thus evoking the image of a protective and judicious gardener.²⁷³ The Earth's resources are to be stewarded not abused.

A secondary criticism of Christian theology, which we touched on above, was the charge that it had authorised the economic enslavement of the environment through its demystification of the natural world and its preoccupation with heavenly salvation. Moltmann agrees that the Christian account of creation places no divine or demonic status on the environment. However, this should not be taken to mean that, in so doing, it has endorsed an

²⁷⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 29.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., 30.

exploitative attitude towards the environment. The Earth is God's creation and thus its equitable treatment is bound up in our faithfulness to God. For the Bible to authorise the exploitation of the environment it would have to espouse an irreducibly anthropocentric view of creation i.e. that heaven and Earth were created for humanity and human beings were the pinnacle of creation. However, as Moltmann points out, this is simply not the case.²⁷⁴ The Bible reveals that God created the world out of love, for his glory and, furthermore that the Sabbath, not humanity, is the crown of creation. Christianity may have been responsible for the de-mythologizing of the environment but that does not mean it presents the environment as insignificant.²⁷⁵ Indeed, far from doing so, it places an inalienable significance upon the environment. God looks at his creation and sees that it is good (Genesis 1:31), God's creation is God's glory. Humanity, made in the image of God, is called to honour His creation as a gift. Moltmann's theology of the environment seeks to illuminate what such a call entails. In part, he argues, it must entail the breaking down of the notion that science and religion are two hermetically sealed spheres with distinct roles and responsibilities.²⁷⁶

4.8 Science and Religion in the West

Moltmann argues that theology's response to the cultural rise of science has been of retreat. The environment has fallen under the purview of science and scientific investigation while theology's concern has been limited to the historical sphere and the moral evaluation of historical events.²⁷⁷ The environment, 'nature' as Moltmann terms it, is seen as inert, static and eternally recurring while 'history', a catalogue of human actions, is presented as the location of true hope and meaning. The environment is something to be dissected while history is something to be contemplated. Indeed, such thinking leads to humanity's relationship with the environment presented as part of human history rather than natural history.²⁷⁸ The contingency, potentiality and even history of the environment are subsumed into human history. The environment qua environment is conflated with humanity's relationship to it. However the environment has its own history, a history that has often placed limits on human history and, indeed, seems to place ultimate limits upon human

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 31.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

history. For this reason, Moltmann considers the binary distinction between nature and history to be both illogical and dangerous.²⁷⁹

So what insights can theology offer into the dissolution of this binary? Moltmann argues that theology has offered belief in creation without an adequate concept of creation. The environment has special significance due to its relationship with God and this implies that faithfulness to God implies faithfulness to his creation. However, this belief can only ever be a starting point for the development of an adequate concept of creation. The field of science, too, also seems to possess beliefs about the environment and seeks to arrive at conceptual understandings that allow us to harness the environment and its resources to our desire for growth and progress.²⁸⁰ This is a pursuit of power, a pursuit of domination. Moltmann argues that the theological tradition contains resources which allow it to develop its own concepts of creation in contradistinction to the scientific position of environmental domination.²⁸¹ Moltmann argues that a belief in creation, educated by meditative knowledge, can arrive at an understanding of creation.²⁸² Quoting Augustine, Moltmann argues that ‘We know to the extent to which we love’.²⁸³ How is this helpful in arriving at an understanding of creation? For Moltmann it provides the basis for a compassionate rather than domineering approach to our environment. It is the basis for a community of life, an appreciation of our separateness from our environment as well as our interconnection with it. It is the basis for an appreciation of the natural world’s own history, patterns and tendencies and the way in which these interlace with humanity’s own history.

4.9 The task for Moltmann’s Environmental Theology

According to Moltmann’s analysis the developed West’s attitude towards the environment can be summed up as follows i.) the environment has no innate value, it is a standing resource, an instrument for profit, the maximum productivity for which is always to be sought ii.) radical changes in this attitude are not, fundamentally, desired by the Western political elite, regardless of stated intent, as this would limit productivity and iii.) true human identity consists in the subscription to the notion that human productivity is more important

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 32.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

than environmental stability. These are the challenges to which Moltmann's environmental theology must seek to provide a response. Moltmann wishes to demonstrate that i.) the environment has innate value, ii.) that the possibility for change is built into the very fabric of creation and iii.) that true human identity consists in partnership with the environment rather than dominance over it.

Chapter 5: Jürgen Moltmann's Environmental Theology

Above we examined Moltmann's early-to-mid career in an attempt to establish how and why a growing environmental consciousness came to influence the direction of his theology. In the chapter below we shall examine his mid-career theology in order to examine the directions in which Moltmann's environmental consciousness led his theology to develop. In section 5.1 we shall focus upon Moltmann's account of God's relationship with creation. In so doing, we shall seek to ascertain whether Moltmann can provide us with an account of God's relationship with his creation that includes an account of the innate value of the environment and that the possibility for change is inherent within the fabric of this creation. In section 5.2 we shall focus on the impact of his account of God's relationship with his creation on humanity's relationship with its environment. We shall seek to ascertain whether Moltmann can provide a theological basis to support the notion that true human identity lies in partnership with, rather than dominance over, the environment.

5.1 God and Creation

5.1.1 Why does God Create?

Let us turn to the first theme that arose from Moltmann's analysis of the developed West's relationship with the environment: that of value. How does Moltmann attempt to establish the innate value of our environment? He does so by arguing that God's eschatological plan includes not just humanity, but all of creation. Indeed, Jürgen Moltmann's environmental theology is based upon the premise that creation and redemption are inextricably linked. God's love for creation is shown by his volitional act to bring it into being and sealed by his promise to eventually bring about its redemption. Moltmann writes that,

The key promise for the development of my eschatological vision is to be found in Isaiah's vision: 'The whole earth is full of his glory' (6:3). From that I concluded that this is the goal of creation from the beginning, and that with the creation of a world differentiated from himself and non-divine, God undertook a first kenosis: God involved himself in this endangered creation, and entered into it

through his Word and Wisdom.²⁸⁴

This dialectic forms the backbone of Moltmann's environmental theology and his understanding of God's love for his creation. God's creation his withdrawal from himself in order to allow the existence of otherness anticipates his redemption of his creation that will take the form of his eternal union with it. In the following sections we will examine his theological expositions of God's creative act, God's redemptive act to come and his explanation of the link between them.

Firstly, Moltmann must wrestle with the same question that any theologian attempting to present an environmental theology must wrestle: why does God create? From a purely logical standpoint there is no reason for a perfect God to create. Indeed, it seems counterproductive. God exists in perfection whereas his creation is, by its very nature, imperfect. Moltmann's answer to this conundrum lies in his explanation of the relationship between God's freedom and God's love. Moltmann argues that,

God's freedom is not the almighty power for which everything is possible. It is love, which means the self-communication of the good. If God creates the world out of freedom, then he creates it out of love. Creation is not a demonstration of his boundless power; it is the communication of his love, which knows neither premises nor preconditions: *creatio ex amore Dei*.²⁸⁵

Moltmann, here, seems to argue that God's freedom is his love and his love is his freedom. God's essence is love and therefore it is illogical to consider him possible of freely willing evil. God is not selfish and therefore loves that which is other to him rather than hating it for its difference. The totality of creation, therefore, exists because of God's loving nature. Out of his love God freely chooses to be the Creator of all things. Does this mean that Moltmann is impugning God's freedom by suggesting that it is necessary for God to create? This criticism seems to arise naturally from Moltmann's account of God's love but also contain, within them, an unexamined anthropocentric component. It is possible to coerce a human being while God, being omnipotent, is incapable of being forced to do anything

²⁸⁴ Jürgen Moltmann 'The World in God or God in the World', in, *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. R. Bauckham (Minneapolis: MN, Fortress Press, 1985), 39.

²⁸⁵ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 75.

contrary to his will. Therefore, following Moltmann, we could argue that, where God is concerned, freedom and necessity merge into one category: love. The dichotomy between freedom and necessity attaches itself so easily to the discussion of human will precisely because human will is contingent, imperfect and finite. God is completely in control of his creation. However, nothing obstructs God's love and therefore his love inexorably finds its outworking.

5.1.2 How does God Create?

Above we dealt with why God should create but what is Moltmann's account of how God creates? Moltmann subscribes to *creatio ex nihilo* with a proviso: the 'nothing' out of which God creates is also created by him.²⁸⁶ God creates a 'nothing', a space which is not him, in which something that is other than him can exist. He argues that,

The primordial moment is to be found before the creation of world and time, in God's designation of himself to be Creator. Out of the self-restriction of God's eternity there emerges the time of creation.²⁸⁷

Here Moltmann argues that God's self restriction is the pre-condition for creation. God acts to create the space for the other to live within him. Creation is therefore a place fundamentally devoid of perfection due to its otherness to God. Here, Moltmann deliberately invokes the Kabbalistic philosophy of *zimsum* as he states that God creates through a conscious 'inward act' of 'self-humiliation' and 'self-limitation'.²⁸⁸ Moltmann justifies his evocation of *zimsum* philosophy by arguing that it offers Christians a crucial new perspective on creation and God's creative act. He writes that,

...it is only the assumption of a self-limitation by God himself preceding his creation which can be reconciled with God's divinity without contradiction.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: MN, Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 282

²⁸⁸ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 59.

²⁸⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 86.

Thus we see that Moltmann feels that *zimusum* offers Christian theology a way of adequately explaining creation from nothing without damaging understandings of God's perfection and divinity. God must necessarily withdraw from that which he creates in order for it to have the possibility for freedom.

Moltmann is not suggesting that God's kenosis is a limitation of God's control over his creation, rather it is a necessary aspect of the freedom of creation. Moltmann notes that the prophets of the Old Testament,

...see judgment and history in the light of the freedom of Yahweh, not as immutable fate. Hence the plans of Yahweh can be 'repented of by Yahweh, and the proclamation of them leads the present into decisions which have an influence on the future of the divine action also.'²⁹⁰

Here, Moltmann argues that God is control of the destiny of his creation, and is even capable of changing his mind on when to deliver it to redemption. However, what he cannot do, without jeopardising the freedom of creation, is return it to an Edenic state. True otherness is defined in terms of the ability for freely willed contradiction. It is this which God guarantees creation, rather than a blissful existence. In sum, Moltmann's explanation of God's creative act is that God's creates through self-restriction out of the fullness of his love for that which is other to him.

Wolfhart Pannenberg is critical of Moltmann's attempts to fuse *zimusum* with traditional theological accounts of creation. In his view, it is an unnecessary complication to the notion of *creatio ex nihilo*. Pannenberg argues that *creatio ex nihilo* from nothing simply means that nothing existed before God willed it into existence. Moltmann's deployment of *zimusum* is, he states, a 'materially unfounded mystification'.²⁹¹ The elegant simplicity of Pannenberg's criticism forces us to consider what need Moltmann has of such mystification. The heart of Moltmann's theology is theodicy and, as seen above, *zimusum* allows us to speak of creation in terms of God's self humiliation for the purpose of free will. God's self-restriction allows Moltmann to explain how God can possess all of his classically ascribed

²⁹⁰ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 113.

²⁹¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology: Volume 2*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 14.

faculties while also accounting for gratuitous suffering. God, out of his love for the other, creates a place from which he is absent, although not eternally absent, in which the other is completely free. Celia Deane-Drummond is critical of this move and actually seems to consider Moltmann guilty of an act of theological legerdemain. She argues that the underlying reason that Moltmann brings *zimusum* into his account of creation is to allow him to bring the historical event of the cross, the promise of creation's redemption, into the heart of God's Trinitarian life.²⁹² *Zimusum* allows Moltmann to link God's creation, through self humiliation, and His promise of redemption, through humiliation on the cross. God suffers to create and suffers to redeem and thus his concern for what he creates is inviolable. Deane-Drummond argues that this link is problematic as it weakens the distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity.²⁹³ God does not simply stand outside creation, so to speak, guiding it towards its eventual redemption in the coming of his Kingdom but, rather, seems to be affected by the events within his creation in a manner that may be unhelpful, or even worrying, to the faithful.

5.1.3 What does God Create?

Further criticisms of Moltmann's account of creation arise from the language that he uses to describe the results of God's self humiliation. God's forms a space, within himself, from which he is absent, a '*nihil*' or 'nothing' and it is here that he creates. So what is the character of the 'nothing' that God creates?

the space which comes into being and is set free by God's self-limitation is a literally God-forsaken space. The *nihil* in which God creates his creation is God-forsakenness, hell, absolute death; and it is against the threat of this that he maintains his creation in life.²⁹⁴

This 'nothing', then, seems innately hostile to the possibility of life and inherently tends towards its destruction. Matthew Bonzo argues that this raises serious problems for Moltmann's environmental theology. Bonzo argues that Moltmann's account of creation comes very close to presenting a theodicy that ontologises evil. In his account of the '*nihil*'

²⁹² Celia Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 86

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁹⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 87.

Moltmann presents creation as a place where suffering is fundamental, inevitable and necessary. It seems that, in this model of creation our best efforts are forever doomed to failure.²⁹⁵ If suffering is the inevitable end why exert ourselves in the pursuit of its prevention? Bonzo feels that Moltmann's account of creation as '*nihil*' warps his theology and leads us to feel that creation is space of opposition to God rather than union with him.²⁹⁶ If suffering and death are woven into the very fabric of creation this leaves us with the disquieting feeling that our suffering is, in some way, necessary.

Moltmann was clearly aware of the problems arising from his use of the *nihil* as he offers a different account of God's retraction in his later work, *The Coming of God*. Indeed he moves away from the language of *zimsum* and *nihil* entirely. He argues that God's creative act,

does not leave behind a vacuum, as the kabbalistic doctrine of *zimsum* suggests. He throws open a space for those he has created, a space which corresponds to his inner indwellings: he allows a world different from himself to exist before him...The Creator becomes the God who can be inhabited.²⁹⁷

So how is this account of God's creation of an open space different to the *nihil* present within Moltmann's earlier account of creation? Moltmann's open space avoids the moral problems raised by his account of creation of *nihil*. Moltmann does not talk of the open space as 'absolute death' but rather as a space within which we are invited into relationships with God. Creation, and its contents, are different to God and therefore we cannot expect to enjoy perfection but we are called to take up the guidance we find in God's revelation to resist suffering and retain hope.

Perhaps this recasting of God's creative act can stand as a rebuttal to Bonzo's argument that Moltmann's environmental theology is irrevocably marred by the *nihil*. Indeed his description of the space God opens up in his creative act is much more helpful to our consideration of creation than the *nihil*. Moltmann writes, of the open space,

²⁹⁵ J. Matthew Bonzo, *Indwelling the Forsaken Other: The Trinitarian Ethics of Jürgen Moltmann* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 103.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁹⁷ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 298.

Through the space conceded by God, creation is given detachment from God and freedom of movement over against him... Remoteness from God and spatial distance from God result from the withdrawal of God's omnipresence ...they are part of the grace of creation, because they are the conditions for the liberty of created beings.²⁹⁸

Here, we see that God still withdraws to allow something other than himself to exist, a move that Moltmann seems to consider ontologically necessary, but this withdrawal does not warp creation from the outset. Creation is not doomed to suffering because of God's absence. Rather this withdrawal is an act of grace, the very precondition for volition and the potential of meaning. With this revision of his account of God's creative act, Moltmann transforms our understanding of our own possibilities within creation. It was difficult not to sympathise with the conclusions drawn by Bonzo from his reading of *God in Creation*. We were a forsaken people living in a forsaken creation waiting for our next inevitable suffering. Indeed, we can take this criticism even further. We were a forsaken people anticipating only a salvation that we could hope to play no real part in. What place did we have in such a creation?

Moltmann's re-configuration of his account of creation in *The Coming of God* appears, not only to remove the deeply troubling inherent God-forsakenness of creation, but also to open up ontological space for genuine human participation in the history of creation itself. The vacuum that God opens up by his withdrawal is a vacuum, not simply in spatial terms, but in existential terms. Humanity is able to determine its own value systems and we are free to either reject God's revelation or take it into our hearts. God's self-limitation opens up space for the freedom of the other. Interestingly, the freedom of creation, Moltmann argues, entails the freedom of the Creator. Moltmann argues that,

If the world is becoming emancipated from 'God', God is also emancipated from his function as 'emergency helper' in the world. He becomes free for himself, so that he can be contemplated and loved for his own sake.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 306.

²⁹⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, 'The Future as a New Paradigm of Transcendence' in *The Future of Creation*, trans, Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1979), 8.

God cannot enter into creation without jeopardising its freedom. In the case of humanity this means that we are free to follow God's revelation in Christ and, as Moltmann neatly expresses, love him for his own sake or, on the contrary, ignore or actively reject God's revelation. Moltmann feels that God's unconditional love for his creation mirrors that of a parent. God must pull back from creation and allow his creation its own liberty. God's Sabbath rest, upon the completion of his creation symbolises this withdrawal. Moltmann writes that,

In his present rest all created beings come to themselves and unfold their own proper quality. In his rest they all acquire their essential liberty.³⁰⁰

Regardless of our stance towards God's creation, God will not forsake us, or the rest of the creation. Moltmann is not suggesting a kind of deism in which God simply creates the world and then removes himself entirely. Indeed, Moltmann expresses that quite the opposite is true when he writes that in standing aside from his creation, God

... makes himself wholly receptive for the happiness, the suffering and the praise of his creatures.³⁰¹

Below, we shall explore the manner in which God remains open to the suffering of his creation.

5.1.4 Shekinah: God's suffering presence in Creation

Moltmann's theology is panentheistic. That is to say that he proposes that God permeates creation and extends beyond it. God's permeation of creation is facilitated by the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Moltmann's account of God's suffering on the cross he holds that the Father and the Son remain united, even in their deepest alienation, through the power of the Spirit which then expands out from the event of the cross to fill all creation. As seen above Moltmann's pneumatology is intimately linked with his ecclesiology. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* portrays the Church as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit and encouraged the Church to lend vocal political support of the Latin American social justice

³⁰⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 279.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

movements on this basis. The Church, in Moltmann's view, had a responsibility to uphold its sacred identification with the Holy Spirit through political activism. However, as his career developed, and he became more interested in the relationship between theology and ecology, the notion of God's presence in the world became more central to his thought and the divide between his ecclesiology and his pneumatology became more marked. In this section we shall examine how his understanding of God's presence in the world developed and what implications this holds for the structure of his theology.

Above we have dealt with Moltmann's account of the manner in which God brought creation into being, now let us turn to his account of God's continued presence in his creation. Although Moltmann eventually rejected the Kabbalah notion of *zimsum* in *The Coming of God* another piece of Jewish philosophy, the *Shekinah*, seems to have been more successfully integrated into his doctrine of creation. Within Jewish thought the *Shekinah* stands for God's presence, in the Holy Spirit, within his creation and encapsulates the essence of God's special relationship with the people of Israel. The notion of the *Shekinah* is rooted in Exodus and God's presence amongst the tribes of Israel in the desert Tabernacle. Here God instructed the Israelites to build a Tabernacle in which he would dwell (Exodus 25:8) and lead them through the desert and into their promised land (Exodus 29:45-46). This Biblical notion was greatly enriched and expanded by philosophical tradition that arose out the consideration of in what way God can be present in the world and what implications and consequences this presence has for God.

In *God in Creation* Moltmann cites Jewish theologian and philosopher Franz Rosenzweig who writes that,

The *Shekinah*, the descent of God to human beings and his dwelling among them, is conceived of as a division which takes place in God himself. God cuts himself off from himself. He gives himself away to his people. He suffers with their sufferings, he goes with them through the misery of the foreign land.³⁰²

Here, we see the fruits of a theological consideration of the theme of God's presence in creation. Immediately the notion of God's kenosis comes to the fore. God seems to alienate

³⁰² Ibid., 15.

himself from himself in order to dwell within his creation. This is a radical notion that forces us to consider possibility that God himself is in a process of development that is, as yet, incomplete. Indeed this is a conclusion that Moltmann himself appears to reach in *The Spirit of Life* where he writes,

When Israel is delivered, God's *Shekinah* will return home from its wanderings. The divine deliverance lies in the event in which the Eternal One will be united with his *Shekinah*.³⁰³

The language of reunification that Moltmann deploys in the passage above begs the question, is the *Shekinah* a sundering of God? Moltmann employed the theme of the Son's alienation from the Father on the cross to stress the eschatological significance of their reunification in the Resurrection; alienation also plays a significant role in the narrative of redemption that underpins Moltmann's environmental theology.

Tim Chester is concerned by the language of alienation employed by Moltmann in relation to the *Shekinah*.³⁰⁴ As Chester rightly observes Moltmann expended a great deal of effort in establishing a social analogy of the Trinity, he justifiably ponders how this analogy is affected by the image of the *Shekinah*, individualistic and isolated, waiting for eschatological reunion with the other two members of the Trinity.³⁰⁵ Indeed, Moltmann foresaw this as a potential problematic interpretation of his account the *Shekinah*. He moved to counter these claims by stressing the unity of identity within the Trinity, arguing that,

...the descent and habitation of God at a particular place and a particular time among particular people must therefore be distinguished from the very God himself whom even the heavens are unable to contain. The *Shekinah* is certainly the present God, but this presence is distinguished from his eternity.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 39.

³⁰⁴ Tim Chester, *Mission and the Coming of God: Eschatology, the Trinity and Mission in the Theology of Jürgen Moltmann and Contemporary Evangelicalism*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 27

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 48.

From the above it seems that Moltmann is proposing a temporal and spatial, rather than ontological alienation of the *Shekinah* from God. This distinction is central to our understanding of the two central themes of Moltmann's exposition of the *Shekinah*. Firstly, it provides us with an explanation of the mechanics of the evolutionary continuum that Moltmann proposes exists between the economic and immanent Trinities. He argues that,

...in the framework of this Israelite *Shekinah* theology, the statements of Christian incarnation theology, and utterances about the outpouring and indwelling of God's Holy Spirit on all flesh become comprehensible. The eschatology which follows from both is the vision of the cosmic *Shekinah*, the cosmic incarnation, and the cosmic temple for the indwelling of the glory of the triune God.³⁰⁷

Moltmann claims there is a sharp distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity arguing that the *Shekinah* is God's presence in the realm of historical time, the constant presence of the Trinity in its economic form. The coming of God's Kingdom will mark the end of the era of historical time. Creation and God's eternity will be united by God's indwelling in his creation. The immanent Trinity, the Trinity as it is in itself, will be continuously present in God's Kingdom, the eschatological goal of creation.

Above, we see Moltmann's interpretation of the *Shekinah* leaves God's history deeply entwined with the history of his creation. Not only does creation remain incomplete until the eschatological coming of God's Kingdom, God himself remains, in some sense, incomplete. Secondly God's spatial and temporal alienation from himself in the *Shekinah* allows Moltmann to extend God's suffering presence beyond suffering humanity to all of creation. Above we have established that the *Shekinah* is synonymous with God's presence in the sufferings of Israel and latterly, through Christ, all humanity. Moltmann states that,

The God who in the Spirit dwells in his creation is present to every one of his creatures and remains bound to each of them, in joy and sorrow.³⁰⁸

Here, we see the soteriological implications of Moltmann's account of God's creative act. God's act brought all of creation into being and, therefore, all of creation's suffering and joy

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 15.

is encompassed by the Spirit and all of creation is included in the promise redemption offered in Christ's resurrection. So, rather than Chester's interpretation of the *Shekinah* as discord amongst the Trinity, we have a model wherein all of creation is drawn up into the life of the Trinity. This is conclusion supported by David Beck who feels that the purpose of the *Shekinah* is to allow creation to, in some way, participate in the life of God.³⁰⁹ Indeed Moltmann stresses that God is able to participate in the suffering of the world through the spirit. God within creation must necessarily be different to the unconstrained God of eternity as God would not be capable of imposing himself on creation in his fullness without annihilating the very freedom that forms the basis of his intention towards creation. To preserve the freedom of creation and the life forms within it God, as *Shekinah*, is capable only of experiential participation in the tribulations and jubilations of creation rather than directing history in a specific direction.

5.1.5 Christ: God's redemptive presence in Creation

The role of the *Shekinah* seems to be to allow God to participate in the sufferings of his creation and, in this way, to allow his creation to be drawn up into the life of the Trinity. The *Shekinah* is God's constant presence in both suffering and jubilation and reminds us that God's creative act will be fulfilled in the redemption he plans to enact upon his creation. The *Shekinah* is God's promissory presence: creation is moving towards redemption whereupon all the sufferings of history shall be set right. But does this alter the position or significance of the event of the cross in Moltmann theology? As seen above the cross symbolises God's solidarity with the suffering and, in Christ's Resurrection, the promise of the eventual end of all suffering. However, has Moltmann's account of the *Shekinah*'s, seemingly universal passibility, inadvertently displaced the cross from the centre of his theology? This is a concern raised by David McIlroy who goes even further than enquiring whether Moltmann's account of the *Shekinah* has actually made Christ's suffering on the cross obsolete.³¹⁰ From his reading of Moltmann, McIlroy's argues that it is the *Shekinah* which is directly involved in the suffering of creation and which provides God's consoling presence.³¹¹ In light if this,

³⁰⁹ T. David Beck, *The Holy Spirit and the Renewal of All Things: Pneumatology in Paul and Jürgen Moltmann* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2007), 158.

³¹⁰ David H. McIlroy, *A Trinitarian Theology of Law: In Conversation with Jürgen Moltmann, Oliver O'Donovan and Thomas Aquinas* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 32.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

he feels unsure as to what additional purpose the cross actually plays within Moltmann's theology.

This is a robust criticism and, if it carries weight, has the potential to reduce our understanding of Moltmann's theology to thinly veiled pantheism. Moltmann is an avowed panentheist, holding that God's presence interpenetrates space and time and extends beyond it. However, if the presence of God within history, as the *Shekinah*, is now the sole necessary predicate for the salvation of creation then God-in-eternity, as revealed in the event of the cross becomes soteriologically redundant. If God-in-eternity is soteriologically redundant then how can Moltmann support the claim that God is both present in creation and beyond it? Thus, if McIlroy's claim holds true we can argue that Moltmann's theology has moved beyond the pale of panentheism into pantheism.

So can Moltmann's theology provide us with an explanation of the different soteriological functions of the *Shekinah* and Christ? Perhaps the answer can be found in his account of the universal significance of Christ's resurrection found in *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Here Moltmann argues that,

If Jesus' resurrection is interpreted as the anticipation of the general resurrection of the dead, how is his death to be interpreted? His death is then the anticipation of the death that is universal and absolute ...As an anticipation of universal death, Golgotha is the anticipation of the end of this world and the beginning of a world that is new... What has already happened to Christ is representative of what will happen to everybody: it is a happening *pars pro toto*.³¹²

How does this answer McIlroy's concerns? McIlroy was concerned that the Moltmann's pneumatology had overpowered his Christology. However, the above passage shows that Christ actually performs a differentiated role from the *Shekinah* within creation. While the *Shekinah* allows God to participate in the suffering of creation it is Christ's sacrifice, not the *Shekinah's* presence, which acts as a promise of the eschatological transformation of the world around us. The *Shekinah* shares in our joy and suffering but, it is only through Christ's death and resurrection that we are promised something truly new. Christ is creation's

³¹² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 155.

redemption *pars pro toto*, that is to say he shows us part of the redemption that awaits creation as a whole.

Indeed Moltmann stresses that the *Shekinah* does not override the significance of Christ by arguing that,

Christian hope for the world is not directed towards an abstract otherworldly pantheism in which all that Christ has done to overcome the world disappears, but rather towards the fact that ‘God will be all in all’.³¹³

The *Shekinah* is, out of necessity, God’s kenosis. God cannot constantly be present in the world of time and space, in his fullness and, and, at the same time, uphold the freedom that is so essential to his creation. The *Shekinah* cannot right wrongs in and of itself. Through its presence we may find our hearts and minds fortified to resist and overcome totalitarianism or reach out to our fellow human beings and the rest of creation but the *Shekinah* will not raise the dead nor did it cast down the Reich. The resurrection of Christ, by contrast, is a statement of God’s absolute control over the destiny of what he has created. What has happened in Christ’s resurrection will, in time, happen to everyone and all of creation itself. McIlroy’s reading of Moltmann, then, seems to give a soteriological predominance to the *Shekinah* that Moltmann himself never intended. The *Shekinah*’s presence allows the general suffering within creation to be drawn up into the life of the Trinity. However, this is simply a foreshadowing of the unification of God and creation, promised in Christ.

Let us now return to Christ specifically. The excerpt taken from *The Way of Jesus Christ* above stresses that Christ’s death is ‘the anticipation of the death that is universal and absolute’. Here we see Moltmann expanding the Christology of his early career beyond human suffering to the suffering of all of creation. Indeed the death and resurrection of Christ acts as an apocalyptic tipping point and an eschatological turning point. Moltmann writes that,

³¹³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, trans. Margaret Clarkson (London: SCM, 1971), 50.

If this death is viewed against an apocalyptic horizon, and not as something normal or natural, then the great apocalyptic dying, the death of all things, has already begun.

‘This world’ is passing away.³¹⁴

The cross marks the point from which the end of all things as we know them became inevitable as well as the promise that all things shall be transformed in the coming of God’s Kingdom.³¹⁵ Thus, all of creation’s suffering is encapsulated by the cross.

5.1.6 Trinity and Creation

The universal scope and significance of Christ’s suffering on the cross actually leads Celia Deane-Drummond to reverse the polarity of McIlroy’s concerns and argue that Moltmann’s Christology is in danger of overshadowing his pneumatology.³¹⁶ She contends that Moltmann presents Christ as drawing up all of creation’s suffering into his own suffering on the cross. In so doing, she argues, Moltmann reduces the *Shekinah* to obsolescence as its role as a suffering presence within creation is transcended by the universal significance of Christ’s crucifixion.³¹⁷ She feels that Moltmann could integrate Christ’s suffering and the *Shekinah*’s suffering more completely. She argues for an understanding of their relationship wherein Christ’s suffers the tribulations of creation through the Spirit rather than directly drawing them up into his suffering on the cross.³¹⁸ However, is her understanding of the significance Moltmann attributes to Christ’s suffering on the cross entirely faithful to the content of the excerpts examined above? She appears to argue that Moltmann has given the *Shekinah* and Christ identical roles within creation, however, the text examined above demonstrates that Moltmann delineates different functions for both the *Shekinah* and Christ.

While both the *Shekinah* and Christ are examples of God’s kenosis, and both suffer for creation, they suffer in different ways and possess different soteriological and eschatological functions. The *Shekinah* is God’s kenotic presence in his own creation. This presence suffers and celebrates with creation but can do nothing to directly influence the course of creation’s history as this would corrupt the freedom of creation established by

³¹⁴ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 157.

³¹⁵ Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 151.

³¹⁶ Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann’s Theology*, 256.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

God's self-limitation. God limited himself in order to create something other than himself with the freedom to accept or reject his revelation. Thus the *Shekinah*'s function is to experience all of the successes and failures that spring from the freedom of creation thus draw them up into the life of the Trinity. In such a way Trinity can assume all of creation's history and thus wholly redeem it in the eschaton. Christ's suffering for creation is both more and less direct. The *Shekinah* suffers with creation directly in space and time. Christ suffers for creation on the Cross as promise that creation will one day be redeemed in its eschatological transformation. His resurrection is God's promise that all of creation's sufferings will be made right in the coming of God's Kingdom. The *Shekinah* and Christ, then, seem to form a symbiotic soteriological and eschatological relationship. The *Shekinah* participates in the suffering of creation's history, drawing it up into the life of Trinity while Christ's suffers for the totality of creation and his resurrection stands as a promise for the total redemption of creation.

5.1.7 The Consummation of Creation: Eternal Sabbath

In the above section we have examined how the *Shekinah* and Christ, in different ways, represent God's kenotic presence within the realm of space and time, reminding us of God's Kingdom to come. Now, let us turn our attention to the Kingdom that is promised and explore the consummation of history in God's eternal indwelling in his creation. Just as God's creative act was a self-restrictive act, his redemptive act is a self-expressive act in which he breaks down the distance between himself and his creation. Moltmann writes of the eschaton that,

Once God finds his dwelling place in creation, creation loses its space outside God and attains to its place in God.³¹⁹

All of creation finds its place within God which, for Moltmann, means that,

all together, each created being in its own way – they will participate in eternal life
...one with another, they will enter into an unhindered communication towards every

³¹⁹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 307.

side, a communication which has been known from time immemorial as ‘the sympathy of all things’³²⁰

As Bauckham stresses, the coming of God’s Kingdom, truly God’s presence in his creation is ‘the redemption, transfiguration and eternal life of all creatures’.³²¹ Here we see a completion of the dialectical movement of God-in-eternity who has moved from perfect solitude, through kenotic alienation, to synthetic union of self and other in his dwelling in the other which he has created. Moltmann paints an interesting picture of the history of the Trinity. He seems to propose that the Trinity moves in dialectic fashion from unity before creation, to sundering in creation, finally arriving back at unity with the Coming of God’s Kingdom within creation itself.

Indeed, dialectical movement is central to Moltmann’s environmental theology as he is keen to stress that the historical process is not simply subsumed by God’s eschatological plan but drawn up into this plan. While Moltmann does characterise God’s Kingdom as an eternal Sabbath rest which mirrors the day of rest which concluded his creative act, this rest encompasses all of creation’s history and does not subsume it. Moltmann expresses this when he writes that,

The goal of this history of creation is not a return to the paradisaical primordial condition. Its goal is the revelation of the glory of God...the new creation of heaven and earth in the kingdom of glory surpasses everything that can now be told about creation in the beginning.³²²

Thus, Moltmann is not proposing that God’s Kingdom will be a return to Eden, nor even that it will be a New Eden. Rather, it will be a fulfilment of the promise that God made to his creation in Christ’s death and resurrection. The new creation will be richer than the primordial bliss of Eden because, while Eden was perfect, it could not truly be said to be other than God, and thus could not be considered free.

³²⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 183.

³²¹ R. Bauckham, ‘Eschatology in *The Coming of God*’ in *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. R. Bauckham (Minneapolis: MN, Fortress Press, 1985), 24.

³²² Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 207.

Indeed, we could argue that history, as otherness to God, only began at the moment at which Eve took a bite from the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In that moment something other than God's will came into existence and, from that moment, arose the very possibility of humanity rejecting God's love. True otherness is only established if rejection, as well as love, is possible and the establishment of this possibility means that we can never return to Eden. Indeed a return to Eden would be an erasure of history and the complete denial of God's creative act and the revelation of Christ. Moltmann expresses this when he writes that,

Created beings emerge out of time into the aeon of the divine glory through the raising of the dead and the cosmic annihilation of the power of death. Then all things will be brought back again in time, and will be gathered together.³²³

God created something other than himself out of his love and his union with that created other in the eschaton is his fulfilment. Moltmann feels that the new creation will surpass anything that preceded it because it will be a union of God and the other.

This account of the end of history allows us, perhaps, to address the concerns of Moltmann's contemporary and fellow theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg. As noted earlier, Pannenberg was deeply concerned by Moltmann's account of history based on his interpretation of the relationship Moltmann proposes between the Economic and Immanent Trinities. He criticises what he sees as Moltmann's failure to provide an adequate account of the Immanent trinity, indeed, arguing that Moltmann allows the Immanent Trinity to be absorbed into the Economic Trinity. Pannenberg feels that Moltmann is so invested in the notion that God suffers with his creation that he ends up linking God's own fate with that of his creation. The immanent Trinity, God in eternity, is marginalised at the expense of God's suffering presence within creation. Pannenberg feels that Moltmann is arguing in favour of the idea that the Trinitarian God is the result of history and only achieves 'reality' upon history's eschatological consummation.³²⁴ For Pannenberg the eschatological consummation of God's creation is still of great importance. It is the statement that God is the same from eternity to eternity, the completion of his creative act and the fulfilment of his love. However

³²³ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 329.

³²⁴ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 331.

its significance lies in establishing God's loving distinctness from his creation.³²⁵ Moltmann, he feels, goes too far towards the opposite end of the theological spectrum and entwines God so deeply with human history that he almost becomes contingent upon it.³²⁶ Indeed, this issue is exacerbated when expanded to fit the boundaries of ecology. What if humanity does annihilate itself through cataclysmic environmental degradation or an apocalyptic thermonuclear war? What would that mean for God in Moltmann's model of history? What does this mean for the promise made in Christ's suffering and resurrection? If Pannenberg's concerns are valid then Moltmann's theology seems to be compromised on a number of levels, most significantly would mean that Moltmann has effectively equated the life of the Trinity with human history.

So, is it fair to say that Moltmann is proposing that God is the same in creation as he is in Eternity? While this could be a conclusion that we could draw due to the importance of creation to God's own self knowledge and fulfilment it does not seem accurate or particularly fair in light of the material examined in this chapter. God's presence in creation is always, necessarily kenotic in order to preserve the freedom borne out of creation's otherness. God's message may be wholly rejected by all of creation but this will affect neither God-in-eternity, nor the presence of the Spirit in creation, nor the universality of Christ's redeeming promise. Neither will it stop God's eventual redemption of and union with his creation. Creation is drawn up into the eternal life of the Trinity through God's kenotic presence within creation in Christ and the *Shekinah*. God-in-eternity, however, is beyond the confines of time and space and not limited by them. Interestingly, Moltmann claims that the de-restriction of God's kenotic presence within creation, the moment when God becomes 'all in all' will have consequences for created beings themselves. He writes that,

created beings participate in the divine attributes of eternity and omnipresence, just as the indwelling God has participated in their limited time and their restricted space, taking them upon himself.³²⁷

This claim restates the restricted way in which God participates in creation prior to the eschaton and restrictions that this also places upon creation itself. Neither God, nor

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 307.

creation, is fully complete until the time at which God dwells within creation. God's redemption, however, cannot be denied as he is the destiny of creation, above and beyond any of the travails visited upon it by humanity.

So while Moltmann's theology seems able to resist Pannenberg's criticisms, his account of universal eschatology seems to raise serious questions about the freedom of creation and, more specifically, the freedom of humanity. While hope can be derived from the idea that our salvation is inevitable, such a hope is in danger of having a soporific effect. If our salvation is guaranteed, no matter how awfully we denigrate creation, why should we change our attitudes towards the environment? If we are not, ultimately, free to utterly destroy ourselves then what motivation for reform of our attitudes towards our environments can be found? However, Moltmann's view is more nuanced than this. He thinks that humanity is entirely free to destroy its environment and, indeed, itself. What humanity is not free to do, by contrast, is to believe that we cannot change the way in which we interact with our environment. Death is an unavoidable part of life but, for Moltmann, death is not the greatest obstacle that humanity is faced with as we are promised transcendence of death in Christ. Rather it is how to live within God's creation in a just and sustainable manner to honour both God's gift and the intrinsic value of our fellow humans and created beings. Moltmann writes of the freedom that God allows creation that,

We discover in freedom the relationship of determining subjects to the project they share. Without this dimension freedom has not been fully understood. In the relationship to a shared project, freedom is a creative movement.³²⁸

Moltmann's account of God's relationship with creation responds to the first theme which arose from Moltmann's account of the developed West's relationship with the environment: the environment has no innate value. The environment is a standing resource, an instrument for profit, the maximum productivity for which is always to be sought. Moltmann's theological account of the manner in which God creates, sustains and redeems the environment, his creation, stands in direct contrast to the attitudes of the developed West. Moltmann argues that the inherent value of creation is sealed in its relationship to God, its creator. Furthermore the events that take place within creation gain their importance through

³²⁸ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 48.

the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit's witness fleshes out the redemptive promise revealed in Christ. It is not just creation that is redeemed in the eschaton but history itself. Indeed, Moltmann is convinced that a better way exists and that it is made possible, not just by the hope offered by Christ, but by the possibility for change inherent in the very structure of creation.

5.2 Humanity and Creation

In this section we will examine Moltmann's theological anthropology in relation to the third theme that arose from his analysis of the developed West's relationship with its environment. This theme centred on the belief that true human identity rested on our ability to dominate the environment and instrumentalise it in such a manner that it yielded the greatest possible output. Contrary to this view Moltmann wishes to convey the idea that true human identity lies in an awareness of our interconnectedness with the web of creation and a stewardship of this creation that brings glory to God.

5.2.1 Theological anthropology in the Context of Environmental Crisis

Christian anthropology grows out the statement, made in Genesis 1:27, that humanity is made in the image of God. This conveys to us that human life is sacred and, seemingly, enjoys a privileged role in God's creation. But what other resources can be drawn from the idea that humanity is made in the image of God? Moltmann argues that,

The human being's likeness to God is a theological term before it becomes an anthropological one. It first of all says something about the God who creates his image for himself, and who enters into a particular relationship with that image, before it says anything about the human being who is created in this form.³²⁹

Here, Moltmann stresses the contingency of humanity's privileged status upon God's grace. We were created, like the heavens and the Earth and all the beasts that walk upon it, not begotten in the manner of the Son. God's blesses humanity with his likeness, but this should be no reason for pride, on the contrary it ought to instil humility and responsibility in the

³²⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 188.

bearer of this gift. God created humanity for a specific reason, the stewardship of all his creation until the day on which his Kingdom comes. In creating humanity in his image, God opened up a channel through which humanity can participate in a relationship with him. Without his graceful act such a relationship would be impossible.

From the beginning, then, Moltmann's account of anthropology is fundamentally relational. Moltmann feels that human identity grows out of a primordial relationship with our Creator into a relationship with ourselves, our fellow human beings and the rest of creation. Moltmann expresses the fundamentally relational nature of his anthropology when he writes that the human individual is,

...viewed as belonging within the enduring cohesion of the whole creation. Creation has its meaning for human beings, and human beings have their meaning for the community of creation. If we are to understand what human existence is, and what human beings are destined or called to be, we must see these human beings as belonging within the all-embracing coherences of God's history with the world, the history of creation and the history of redemption.³³⁰

From the above, we see that Moltmann understands true human identity to be defined in terms of the community of creation. For the human race to understand itself, Moltmann feels, it must understand the way in which its own existence, and future, is inextricably interconnected with the rest of creation.

For Moltmann, the actions we take in life are a reflection of what we believe to be true about ourselves. His theological anthropology stresses the relational and communal aspects of humanity. He feels that it is only in community that we are able to arrive at self understanding. It is this relational aspect of humanity that he feels is violated by the social values of Western capitalism. He argues that,

³³⁰ Ibid., 189.

...in families, neighbourhoods and free communities human relationships exist in mutual recognition and acceptance. If the market becomes the dominant power, then relationships if mutual recognition and acceptance come to an end.³³¹

Here, he highlights the fundamentally alienating aspect of capitalist social rhetoric. The human individual becomes a unit of production in a sea of competitors, and is actively encouraged to judge themselves and others in relation to accrued wealth and status. The determining authority within such a paradigm is, Moltmann argues, the market. The market dictates the value of our labour and we relate to each other in terms of that ascribed value rather than our shared humanity.

Moltmann argues that market's authority has reached such potency that it has achieved a form of transcendence. He writes that,

The global marketing of everything and every service is much more than pure economics...The marketing of everything destroys community at all levels, because people are weighed up only according to their market value. They are judged by what they can perform or by what they can afford.³³²

Here Moltmann argues that the market has slipped the surly bonds of the category of economics and has actually become a metaphysical narrative in its own right. It tells us who we are, who we ought to be and what we must do to bridge the gap between these two states. The focus is on the individual, the aggrandisement and fulfilment of the individual in isolation from her community and, indeed her species. Other individuals are economic competitors and that we ought to seek to outdo. Community building, within a capitalist society, more usually pertains to business networks than any form sustainable community of all creation.

Moltmann take this analysis further. Moltmann argues that, whilst those living in the developed West have been sheltered, as yet, from the worst consequences of the

³³¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 162.

³³² *Ibid.*, 153.

environmental degradation that arises from their relationship with the environment, this is only a temporary respite. He argues that,

Because our divided human worlds are inextricably interwoven, and because no human civilisation can cut itself free from the ecosystems of the one earth we share, the downfall of the Third World means the downfall of the First world too; and the destruction of the earth will also mean the extinction of the human race.³³³

Capitalism thrives by dividing humanity and promoting competition, however, this is an inauthentic representation of our ecological reality: we all share the same planet. In turning a blind eye to the forms of environmental degradation that do not directly affect it, the West seemingly denies that it is bound by ecological constraints and considerations. In forging onward with ever greater consumption of natural resources and environmental pollution the West demonstrates its inability, or sheer refusal, to accept its own finitude and mortality. What has happened in the Third World, Moltmann argues, will happen also to the First World. It may take longer, due to the economic and technological resources, but to deny that we face the same fate, if current consumption trends continue, is simply nonsensical.

In what way, then, would a humanity that was able to avoid such a fate differ from the humanity that seems to be proceeding blithely towards it? Moltmann argues that,

If the common catastrophe of human beings and the earth is still to be avertable at all, then it is certainly only by synchronizing human history with the history of nature, and if the experiment of modern times is carried out 'in accordance with nature' and not in opposition to nature, or at nature's expense.³³⁴

Moltmann argues that the fact that human history is embedded in the wider history of the Earth on which we live is censored. In the censorship of this fact, a fact anathema to economic progress, we invite disaster upon ourselves. Moltmann argues that it is only if humanity's interconnection with the global ecosystem becomes the centre of our self perception that we can avoid cataclysm.

³³³ Ibid., 13.

³³⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 137.

5.2.2 Human Identity and the Community of Creation

Moltmann feels that for humanity to avoid ecological catastrophe we must synchronise our history with the history of our environment. As seen above, Moltmann feels that Western capitalism is the absolute censure of the fact our interconnectedness with our environment. So can Moltmann's theological anthropology provide us with resources for considering our interconnectedness with our environment and what this means for human identity? As seen above Moltmann's anthropology is fundamentally communal and relational. He stresses that humanity discovers itself in relationships with itself and the rest of creation. However, there is also a messianic component to his anthropology that grows out of humanity's responsibility of stewardship towards creation. Moltmann expresses the view that being made in God's image places a unique responsibility upon humanity. He writes that,

As God's image, human beings are God's proxy in his creation, and represent him. As God's image, human beings are for God himself a counterpart, in whom he desires to see himself as if in a mirror. As God's image, finally, human beings are created for the Sabbath, to reflect and praise the glory of God which enters into creation, and takes up its dwelling there.³³⁵

Humanity is called to take up responsibility commensurate to the status granted to them God's grace. Moltmann argues that there is a certain way in which God wishes humanity to relate to creation, he wishes us to create a Sabbath community which reflects and praises the glory of God's Kingdom to come. We are, of course, entirely free to reject God's wishes and exploit the environment for materialistic ends, the consequences of this rejection are writ large on creation today.

So what does the *imago dei* charge humanity to do? Fundamentally, it is a charge to steward creation in such a way that it brings glory to God. How are to do this is revealed through an examination of the relationship between the messianic and eschatological elements of Moltmann's anthropology. As seen above, in the coming of God's Kingdom all of creation, humanity included, will share in God's glory, becoming limitless and ideal versions of the limited and contingent examples evidenced within creation. Such perfection

³³⁵ Ibid., 188.

is, of course, impossible while creation remains other to God. However, Moltmann argues, God's eschatological glory can be reflected within creation through human stewardship. The *imago dei* is humanity's ontology not their *telos*. Their *telos*, Moltmann claims, is the *imago Christi*, the image of Christ. Moltmann writes that,

In the messianic light of the gospel, the human being's likeness to God appears as historical process with an eschatological termination; it is not a static condition. *Being* human means *becoming* human in the process.³³⁶

In Moltmann's view the human being is in a state of permanent development, we are constantly involved in the process of our own humanisation. The path to the humanisation of the relationship between self and other is illuminated by that which is revealed in Christ.

Within the context of Moltmann's anthropology, the *imago dei* is a messianic seed that has the possibility to germinate into the *imago Christi*, a human being fully realised within the bounds of creation. We achieve this, Moltmann argues, when we rule over creation 'with Christ'. Moltmann explains this concept in the following way,

The appointment to rule over animals and the earth also appears as the 'ruling with Christ' of believers. For it is to Christ, the true and visible image of the invisible God on earth that 'all authority is given in heaven and on earth' (Matt. 28.18)...the sovereignty of the crucified and risen Messiah Jesus is the only true *dominium terrae*...It would be wrong to seek for the *dominium terrae*, not in the lordship of Christ but in other principalities and powers- in the power of the state or in the power of science and technology.³³⁷

'Ruling with Christ' signifies a rejection of the power structures devised by the human will. Christ's lordship humanises humanity by reminding us of our contingent and finite existence. Christ is the lord of this world and thus our pretension of mastery is shown to be, in the final analysis, a dangerous hoax. This is not to say that Moltmann is rejecting the notion of the state or either science or technology. Quite the opposite, Christ's lordship can educate these spheres of human existence and wisdom and orient them towards the goal of harmonious

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

relationships with the environment. There is nothing inherently wrong with the notion of the state or the fields of science and technology, it all depends on the will of the individuals who direct them.

So how can the *imago dei* advance to the state of *imago Christi*? Moltmann introduces a third anthropological modifier which helps explain the dynamic: the *imago mundi*. *Imago mundi* literally means ‘the image of the world’. Moltmann suggests that the notion of humanity being made ‘in the image of the world’ is fundamental to the fulfilment of our messianic potential. Indeed, so important is this understanding that, radically, Moltmann argues that it must precede even our self-understanding as *imago dei*. He writes that,

...it is important for the way the human being understands himself that he should not see himself initially as a subject over against nature, and theologically as the image of God; but that he should first of all view himself as the product of nature and-theologically too - as *imago mundi*.³³⁸

Here, Moltmann expresses that the *imago mundi* collapses the subject-object divide imposed upon humanity’s relationship with the environment by economic imperatives. Rather than subject-object, humanity and the environment relationship becomes subject-subject.

Moltmann’s ascription of subjectivity to the environment is based in both ecology and scripture. From an ecological perspective the environment is a collection of interdependent eco-systems with complex and, sometimes, inscrutable relationships. As mentioned above, the theological basis for the subjectivity of the environment is based upon its relationship with its creator, God. To illustrate the independent subjectivity of the environment, Moltmann cites Romans 8:19-23 which reads,

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed...We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies

³³⁸ Ibid., 51.

Moltmann argues that this passage grounds ecological theologies in a Biblical tradition that has been all but erased by the deification of human reason that has defined the post-Enlightenment world. This passage explicitly compares the relationships that both the environment and humanity enjoy with God on account of their shared contingency upon his grace. Creation as a whole is alienated from its creator, suffers because of this and yearns for the day of re-unification. The subjectivity of the environment leads Moltmann to propose the necessity of instituting a global statute endorsing a set of incontrovertible political rights on its behalf.³³⁹ Moltmann argues that our current mode of relating to our environment offers no account of the environment's subjectivity. Rather, it enforces an instrumentalisation of the environment in order to facilitate the over-consumption which drives economic growth. For this reason, Moltmann argues, a similar legal and political deterrent is necessary if we are to reform our relationship with our environment and avoid the suffering that will ensue when we make our own environment uninhabitable.³⁴⁰

Moltmann's notion of the *imago mundi* lays the conceptual basis for the enshrinement of environmental subjectivity in law as it reminds us that the human being is subject who arises out of the environment, a larger matrix of subjectivity. Within the structure of Moltmann's ecological theology the *imago mundi* seems to form an anthropological dialectic with the *imago dei* and *imago Christi*. For Moltmann we begin with the understanding that we are part of the environment. The antithesis to this understanding is the knowledge that we can manipulate the environment through the products of our reason. The synthesis of these two dissonant self-understandings, Moltmann argues, is the *imago Christi*. The human being, in the image of Christ, uses their reason to create a Sabbath community within creation for the glory of God. So what does this mean for humanity's relationship with the Spirit? As we saw above Moltmann's account of creation stresses the suffering presence of the Spirit within creation. Moltmann's theological anthropology stresses the importance of the relationship between humanity, and specifically human reason, and the Spirit. He writes that,

The creative and life-giving Spirit therefore arrives at consciousness of itself in the human consciousness...Consciousness of the Spirit in the human being should not be

³³⁹ Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 130.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

understood as an act of human domination over life. It should rather be seen as the beginning of a new organization of the Spirit of life.³⁴¹

Here, Moltmann explains his understanding of the special significance that human reason possesses within creation, as well as the responsibility that such a faculty imposes upon us. The possession of reason allows us to understand creation and, Moltmann argues, allows the Spirit that permeates all creation to gain an understanding of itself. Humanity explores, investigates and interacts with creation in ways infinitely more complex, creative and ingenious than other sentient life forms. Humanity is able to unlock the potential stored within the systems and structures moulded and maintained by the Spirit and, in such a way allow the Spirit to understand itself.

Moltmann argues that, just as human reason affects the Spirit, so too does the Spirit affect human reason. The Spirit's presence educates our understanding of stewardship, the role that God bestowed upon us when he created us in his image. Reason gives us the ability to dominate creation or to organise it in such a way that it provides for all of humanity without extinguishing all other life forms. This relationship between human reason and the Spirit draws humanity up into the life of the Trinity. Our actions within and upon creation have profound significance due to the intimate link they have with the Spirit's self knowledge. When we seek to use creation to give glory to God we not only fulfil our messianic potential but liberate both the environment and those in the developing world. True humanity is liberation from the desire for domination by knowledge of Christ's Lordship and, in this freedom, it becomes a force that can liberate all creation. Moltmann offers a poignant observation on the human condition when he writes,

...the frailty of the temporal creation of human beings is like a detonator for the sin of wanting to be equal to God and to overcome this frailty. Death is only a consequence of sin inasmuch as sin exists because of death: we cannot endure mortality, and by killing we can make other people die.³⁴²

For Moltmann, then, sin is inherently linked to mortality. We seek dominion on Earth because of the seemingly ephemeral nature of our own existence. The promise of God's

³⁴¹ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 288.

³⁴² Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 91.

Kingdom, expressed in Christ's resurrection, liberates us from this melancholy as it assures us of an existence after death. Furthermore, liberation from this melancholy liberates us from the compulsive desire to dominate. The eternal Sabbath of God's Kingdom is then able to inform our account of inter-subjectivity rather than the Western rhetoric of growth. Indeed, hope and revelation are synonymous in Moltmann as hope springs from the revelation of God's Kingdom.

5.2.3 The Evolution of Moltmann's Theology

In the introductory section we examined Moltmann's account of the developed West's relationship with the environment. Three themes emerged from this account. i.) The environment has no innate value, it is a standing resource, an instrument for profit, the maximum productivity for which is always to be sought ii.) radical changes in this attitude are not, fundamentally, desired by the Western political elite, regardless of stated intent, as this would limit productivity and iii.) true human identity consists in the subscription to the notion that human productivity is more important than environmental stability. Moltmann's theology offers both criticisms and reformulations of these statements and, consequently constructs a theological narrative of the environment which, he feels, has the potential to inspire reflection, deconstruction and action. Moltmann's theology of the environment thus supports the following three statements.

Firstly, the environment possesses innate value, conferred to it firstly by the creative act of God, and secondly through God's continued suffered presence, in the Spirit, and redeeming presence, in Christ. All of creation shall be transformed in the coming of God's Kingdom and the experiences of all members of creation shall be redeemed. Secondly, radical change is not only possible within creation but is, in fact, hardwired into it. The future is a matrix of sheer possibility the direction of which is determined by the decisions taken in the present, a realm of constant conflict. All human constructs are contingent and our allegiance to them ought to be tempered by this knowledge. Eternity belongs to God alone not to economic or political systems. Reform is possible even if it is not in the immediate interests of the economic imperatives of elite decision makers. Christ's resurrection is the source for the hope that all situations can be transformed. Finally, true human identity is rooted in our interconnectedness with our environment. The fulfilment of human potential is

a harmonious relationship with creation wherein creation is brought to its own full potential by the stewardship of human will and reason that rules with Christ.

Moltmann's theology grew out of his attempts to respond to the consequences of the dehumanisation of the Jewish individual, and concomitant denial of the universality of the value of the human individual, by the Reich. As his career developed, and humanity as a whole became more aware of its ability to shape and affect its environment, theology was presented with a new set of challenges. Humanity has never been more technologically potent yet, somewhat ironically, has never been in a more vulnerable position. Indeed, as an aside, despite the fact that over-consumption threatens to jeopardise our future spending on military technology far outstrips investment in sustainable energy projects. Moltmann argues that Renaissance philosophy, specifically the thought of Descartes, provided the template for this harmful instrumentalisation of the environment. Human perfection thus lies in the development of their reason and the marshalling of that reason, through technology, to control their environment, thus imitating God's universal mastery. The environment was something to be actively mastered and possessed rather than simply inhabited. 'Progress' consists of such action. The 'myth of Progress', as Moltmann calls it, reduces the environment, and its occupants, to units of productivity. This dangerous reduction, Moltmann argues, lies at the heart of the environmental, and existential crisis, consuming humanity in the modern age.

Moltmann's response to this is to provide a Trinitarian theology of the environment that encompasses creation, redemption and anthropology. Moltmann's theology, especially that which is expressed in his work *Theology of Hope*, demonstrates a heavy investment in the notion of the bodily resurrection, specifically that of the human individual in God's Kingdom on Earth. However, such a position could, all too easily, give rise to a view which denies the importance or, perhaps, fundamental reality of our environment. If, one day, it will be transformed by God, how dire is our need to reform our destructive relationship with it? To guard against such reasoning, his theology of the environment, first expressed in *God in Creation*, attempts to widen its eschatological focus by stressing that two types of subject, humanity and environment, are being redeemed in the coming of God's Kingdom. The environment itself, not just humanity, was created by God and thus resists classification as an object. The environment is not simply the back drop to the humanity's relationship with God but, in fact, has its own relationship, both creative and redemptive, with God. This

transforms our understanding of inter-subjectivity. Inter-subjectivity no longer simply denotes our relational experiences with our fellow human individuals or even with other sentient life-forms at large. Rather, it must now encompass our relationship with the larger subject that is comprised of the ecological mechanisms that comprise our environment.

As seen above, Moltmann's ascription of subjectivity to the environment, on the basis of its relationship to God, caused an expansion of his eschatology. It also profoundly affected both his Christology and pneumatology. In *The Crucified God* Moltmann argued that Christ's passion and resurrection stood as God's promise for the eventual redemption of all suffering peoples. In his principal work on Christology, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, Moltmann expresses an understanding of Christ's resurrection as pre-figuring of the eschatological resurrection of creation as whole. While Christ remains a redeemer of suffering subjects Moltmann's ascription of subjectivity to the environment expands his understanding of the scope of the redemptive promise of Christ. As seen in both *God in Creation* and *The Coming of God* Moltmann feels that suffering is rooted in the distance from God instituted by his creative act. It is not just humanity but creation, as a created subject, that suffers as a result of this distance. The redemptive promise of Christ, therefore, extends to creation and not just humanity. The seeming anthropocentrism of the Christology of Moltmann's early career is expanded to become a universal, or perhaps simply ecological, Christology.

This expanded Christology is matched by an expanded pneumatology. The pneumatology expressed in Moltmann's early career held soteriological, eschatological and ecclesiological concerns in focus. *The Crucified God* saw Moltmann explain that the Spirit played an important role in the event of the cross by holding Father and Son together in their respective alienations. Moltmann held that the Spirit emanated out into the world from the event of the cross, as both a witness to suffering and a force that empowers suffering peoples to resist and transcend their suffering. The Spirit's presence in the world, as a witness to suffering also makes an important contribution to Moltmann's eschatology. The Spirit witnesses all the wrongs of the world that so that all can be put right in the Coming of God's Kingdom. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* saw Moltmann's pneumatology give rise to a politically charged ecclesiology. Here, Moltmann argued that the Church stood as the physical manifestation of the Spirit in the world and thus had a duty to speak out against oppressive regimes, and to support oppressed peoples working towards freedom, in the political sphere. On this basis, Moltmann advocated that the Church offer its political voice in

support of the socialist movements in South America. As with his Christology, the role of the Spirit expands in accordance with Moltmann's understanding of environmental subjectivity. In his major work on pneumatology, *The Spirit of Life*, Moltmann offers us his account of the way in which the Spirit's constant presence within creation links God's creative act, bringing the physical world into existence, to his redemptive act, the eschatological transformation of the physical world. Just as humanity, the Earth itself possesses a history which begins in enforced difference from its creator, progresses through the inevitable suffering caused by this distance and finds its denouement in eschatological reunion with and transformation by its creator. The Spirit's presence, then, allows the history of creation, as a totality, to be witnessed and thus redeemed in the eschaton. In this way the history of creation is, in some sense, drawn up into the internal life of the Trinity.

The Spirit's presence within creation is also that which animates the world. It is the Spirit of life, the potential inherent within physical processes which can be activated, utilised and directed by human reason and will. Without the Spirit's presence the world would be inert and lifeless. The relationship between this aspect of Moltmann's pneumatology and his anthropology is crucial to his ecological theology as it offers us a way of reconsidering the basis and direction of our relationship with our environment. Moltmann's anthropology, in his early career systematic trilogy, centres on the notion of the *imago dei* which holds that the indissoluble worth of each human life is sealed by the likeness that humanity bears to its creator. This idea forms the basis of Moltmann's theological response to the totalitarianism of the Reich which denied the humanity, and subjectivity, of the Jewish individual. Fundamentally, he wished to offer a theology that showed that even when the humanity of an individual, or a people, is denied by a political regime, those who suffer retain their fundamental worth and are promised eventual salvation in God's Kingdom. The *imago dei*, then, forms the foundation of Moltmann's theology of hope. *God in Creation* sees Moltmann offer a radical reformulation of his anthropology. The *imago dei* still plays a central role but it now forms the antithetical component of an anthropological dialectic rooted in ecology. Moltmann propose that we think of ourselves as *imago mundi*, image of the world, as a manifestation of the physical processes animated by the Spirit, first and as *imago dei* second. To realise our messianic destiny, *imago Christi*, the image of Christ, we must find a way to balance these two most fundamental facets of our being. Our interconnectedness and fundamental similitude with our environment, *imago mundi*, must inform our fundamental difference from our environment, *imago dei*, if we wish to steward God's creation in the

image of Christ and thus bring glory to God. Stewarding God's creation in the image of Christ consists in the temperance of our God given reason, which gives us the ability to influence and mould our environment, by an understanding that what we do to our environment we inevitably do to our fellow human beings and, eventually, ourselves.

Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* seems to lay a foundation upon which his environmental theology can easily be constructed. In these concluding, let us explore why this should be so. The reason for asking this question is that it may allow us to uncover the central message that Moltmann's theology is attempting to convey. From this study of Moltmann theology it would seem that his theology attempts to use the link between subjectivity and God's creative act as the basis for a hopeful response to the travails of history. Moltmann's recasting of the subject and what constitutes subjectivity and, indeed, inter-subjectivity, in ecological terms, is what allows his theology to address environmental issues while retaining its fundamentally eschatological and soteriological focus. The environment, as a subject constituted by its creative and redemptive relationship to its creator, is drawn into Trinitarian life in the same manner as the suffering peoples of the world. Furthermore God's promise for redemption, sealed in Christ, now encompasses his creation in all its multitude subjectivities.

Chapter 6: Gordon Kaufman: Towards Environmental Theology

In the introductory section to our thesis above we have given an outline of Gordon D. Kaufman's thought and the general direction of his theological career. Below we shall examine the development of his thought in greater detail in an attempt to draw out the fruits of the interaction between his theology and his environmental consciousness. We shall examine the progression of his theology over his career over the span of three chapters. In so doing we aim to chart how his theology became engaged with environmental themes, how these themes influenced his understanding of God and how this new understanding of God shaped his anthropology and morality. In the chapter below we shall examine the theology of Kaufman's early to middle career in an attempt to gain an understanding of how his position of theological constructivism gave rise to his environmental theology. This will provide us with a foundation upon which to begin the examination of the environmental theology of his mid-to-late career.

6.1 Kaufman's Theological Method: A Constructivist Reading of Kant?

Gordon D. Kaufman (1925-2011) was a practising, ordained Mennonite theologian who spent the majority of his academic career at Harvard University, holding the Mallinckrodt Jr. Professor of Divinity chair until his death. Although Kaufman has originally intended to pursue an academic career in mathematics, the events of World War Two pushed him towards theology.³⁴³ As a Mennonite, Kaufman was a pacifist and opposed violence as a means of conflict resolution. The brutality of the Second World War moved him away from his earlier interest in the hard sciences and towards the consideration of the meaning of life and how it ought to be ordered.³⁴⁴ This became the principal concern of Kaufman's theology and the driving force behind his academic career. He felt that each new historical epoch was presented with its own existential challenges and intellectual developments and that, for theology to retain its relevance, it must demonstrate its ability to engage with these challenges and developments.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Gordon D. Kaufman, "My Life and My Theological Reflection", 61.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

As noted in the introduction to our thesis, the theological response to the suffering of the Second World War led Kaufman away from traditional theological concepts of God. Kaufman moved towards a constructivist understanding of God as symbol, constructed by human reason, arising out of the existential and practical concerns of the specific epoch to which it pertains.³⁴⁶ This inspired Kaufman's pragmatic and historicist approach to theology that we explored in the earlier section on his style, audience and reception. Gordon Kaufman acknowledges his debt to his reading of Immanuel Kant in the development of this approach to theology when, in *Theological Imagination*, he writes that,

For our purpose, the importance of Kant was his discovery that such central metaphysical concepts as God, self, and world are imaginative constructs, created by the mind for certain intramental functions, and thus of quite different logical order from the concepts and images which we have of the objects of experience.³⁴⁷

Within Kantian epistemology the world is divided into things-in-themselves, the noumena, and things as they appear, the phenomena. Kant argues that human reason only has access to the latter. We only ever comprehend the world around us in terms of how it appears to us, we do not have access to how it is in itself. Therefore, there is an epistemological gap between the individual and objective truth.

From this, Kaufman adopts a constructivist interpretation of Kant's philosophy. That is to say, we do not have access to objective knowledge. Therefore, we cannot engage in philosophical realism. Everything we attempt to say about objective truth is a construct, we continually strive to construct the most apposite formulation to convey the noumenal, to which we have no empirical access, in terms that are coherent with the phenomenal world. This is evidenced in Kaufman's comment above on how Kantian epistemology presents God. God, as a metaphysical concept, belongs to the noumenal realm. Furthermore, in *God the Problem*, Kaufman appears to mirror Kant's phenomenal-noumenal divide when he attempts to illuminate the difference between 'God' and the symbol of God. Here, he writes that,

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 63.

³⁴⁷ Gordon D. Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (The Westminster Press; Philadelphia, PA: 1981), 244.

The real referent for "God" is never accessible to us or in any way open to our observation or experience. It must remain always an unknown X, a mere limiting idea with no content. It stands for the fact that God transcends our knowledge in modes and ways of which we can never be aware and of which we have no inkling.³⁴⁸

Thus, we can understand Kaufman's 'unknown X' as God-in-himself and the symbol of God as God-as-he appears. We can never directly access God and therefore we construct a symbol of God that best fits the function that we understand God to fulfil within the human mind.

It is important to note that constructivist readings, such as Kaufman's, have been made of Kant's philosophy within post-Kantian scholarship, most notably by John Rawls as well as Onora O'Neill and Carla Bagnoli, but is by no means the consensus position amongst Kant scholars.³⁴⁹ The constructivist interpretation of Kant focuses on the role that reason plays in the examination and authorisation of its own constructs, as exemplified in the form and content of the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative, the moral law within us to which Kant refers, establishes universal moral maxims through the act of reasoning alone rather than through an appeal to knowledge about the world.³⁵⁰ That is to say, reason originates within the individual in the phenomenal world, creates maxims pertaining to that phenomenal world and judges the efficacy of these maxims in terms of their function within the phenomenal world.³⁵¹ At no point is human reason linked to the noumenal world nor is verification sought in terms of it. This led to scholars such as Rawls reading Kant as fundamentally anti-realist and presenting him as a constructivist. This self-authenticating aspect of Kantian reason is taken up by Kaufman in his own reading of his philosophy. Kaufman's insistence that theological symbols be understood as constructs of human reason, designed for the purpose of meeting the existential needs of the individual within their epoch, and are thus open to criticisms and reconstruction is derived from his constructivist reading of Kantian epistemology.

³⁴⁸ Gordon D. Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 43.

³⁴⁹ See John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, eds. Barbara Herman and Christine M. Korsgaard (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Carla Bagnoli, *Constructivism in Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³⁵⁰ Rawls, *Moral Philosophy*, 166.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 238.

However, Kant scholars such as Karl Ameriks and Pauline Kleingeld actually argue for a realist reading of Kant's philosophy from their understanding of the categorical imperative. Their argument rests on Kant's description of the manner in which the individual is aware of the categorical imperative. On this matter, Kant writes that 'Consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason because one cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason'.³⁵² Thinkers such as Ameriks and Kleingeld argue that from this description, the objectivity of the moral obligations that arise from the categorical imperative must be fundamentally based upon some concrete moral facts, 'the fact of reason'.³⁵³ That is to say, in their reading of Kant, the individual does have a link to the noumenal realm via 'the fact of reason'.³⁵⁴ This is the bridge between noumenal and phenomenal that allows us to create universal maxims on the basis of objective knowledge.³⁵⁵ If this is the case then Kant's epistemology has a realist, rather than an anti-realist basis.

Rawls, by contrast, in his constructivist interpretation does not explicitly examine the relationship between 'the fact of reason' and the objectivity of moral obligations. Instead he argues for an understanding of Kant as providing 'not only a constructivist conception of practical reason, but a coherentist account of its authentication'.³⁵⁶ Thus we see Rawls replace the causal link between the fact of reason and the objectivity of moral obligations, identified by the realist camp, with an account of categorical imperative as generative of moral obligation in relation to the origin and authentication of maxims within the phenomenal world. We know what we must do because we are able to assess the impact of our actions within the world and decide whether these actions have had a morally satisfactory outcome. It is not whether they cohere to some sense of universal objectivity that is important but how they function within the world around us.

Contemporary Kantian constructivists emphasise the collaborative aspect of the categorical imperative. O'Neill argues for an interpretation of Kant as a constructivist on the basis that Kant's philosophical aim is to construct the authority of reason itself in such a way

³⁵² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, eds. Mary J. Gregor, Andrews Reath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28.

³⁵³ See Karl Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003), 263–282, and Pauline Kleingeld, "Moral Consciousness and the 'Fact of Reason,'" in Andrews Reath and Jens Timmermann, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 55–72.

³⁵⁴ Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, 268.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 274

³⁵⁶ Rawls, *Moral Philosophy*, 268.

that it can provide the basis for ‘offering others reasons for truth claims and moral claims, reasons for favouring some rather than other practical and political aims’.³⁵⁷ O’Neill stresses that this is a constructivist approach to truth as Kantian reasoning seeks justification with reference to function rather than metaphysics. He argues that Kant’s philosophical project is the vindication of reason as the sole agent of both the construction and verification of moral laws. He is not concerned with attempting to ‘revive classical philosophical ambitions to build vast metaphysical structures on reason alone’.³⁵⁸ The maxims arising from the categorical imperative are not judged on how well they explain some fundamental truth about the world, as this would collapse the divide between phenomena and noumena at the heart of Kant’s epistemology. Rather the fundamental characteristic that maxims arising from the categorical imperative must exhibit is that they must exhibit patterns discernible to others and thus function in the manner of a law.³⁵⁹ Thus truth becomes an aspect of the function of a maxim. The key aspect of the function of the maxim is that the reasoning that generated it can be followed by others.³⁶⁰

Interestingly, O’Neill’s reading of Kantian epistemology as constructing the authority of reason such that it can offer others reasons for truth claims and moral claims is very similar to the approach that Kaufman takes to his own constructive theology. He writes,

I have become persuaded that theology is (and always has been) essentially a constructive work of the human imagination, an expression of the imagination’s activity helping to provide orientation for human life through developing a symbolical “picture” of the world roundabout and of the human place within that world... in which the symbol “God” provides the ultimate point of reference and orientation for human life, indeed for understanding all of reality.³⁶¹

Here, we see that Kaufman wishes to present an account of God that can give individuals reasons for truth claims and moral claims by presenting a picture of the world and humanity’s place within it. The symbol of God is the reference point for meaning within the individual’s

³⁵⁷ Onora O’Neill, *Constructing Authorities: Reason, Politics and Interpretation in Kant’s Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ Gordon D. Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (The Westminster Press; Philadelphia, PA: 1981), 11.

life. Kaufman wishes to present both this symbol and, through the ‘constructive work’ he mentions, the reasoning for why this symbol takes the form that it does. Thus we see that Kaufman is working within a constructivist reading of Kant that understands reason as originating from and operating within strictly the phenomenal realm. Our reason constructs a phenomenal symbol of God in response to the challenges presented by the phenomena of our epoch and this symbol is judged on the basis of how well it orders the experiences of the individual as they arise within the world of phenomena.

Kaufman’s understanding of the symbol of God functioning as the ‘ultimate reference point’ for the individual within the phenomenal world is similar to Kant’s understanding of God as ‘regulative idea’ that is found with the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the *Critique*, Kant presents a distinction between constitutive and regulative ideas.³⁶² Constitutive ideas are those ideas which are the product of empirically derived knowledge about the phenomenal world.³⁶³ A regulative idea, by contrast, is not an object of empirical knowledge but acts as the framework for meaning within the phenomenal world.³⁶⁴ For example, the three regulative ideas which act as postulates of practical reason within Kantian epistemology are God, freedom and immortality.³⁶⁵ We cannot have empirical knowledge of these three concepts but without these concepts our moral choices lack any justifiable basis. We must have the freedom to choose, an afterlife in which to be judged for those choices and a God who, as the supreme being, is capable as acting as an appropriate judge of these actions for our moral choices to have the necessary gravity to give our life meaning. It is in such a manner that these ideas regulate our experiences. Taking the regulative idea of God in isolation, Kant argues that to speak of God as the supreme being regulates our understanding of the world by directing us ‘to look upon all connection in the world as if it had originated from an all-sufficient necessary cause’.³⁶⁶ The regulative idea of God orders our experiences by positing that the world is a teleological unity, contingent upon God, wherein our actions have both meaning and consequence.

³⁶² We will return to Kaufman’s understanding of God as regulative idea in the final chapter where we will explore its centrality to the construction of his anthropology, eschatology and theology within the context of environmental crisis.

³⁶³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason: The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, eds. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 520.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 591.

While we cannot have empirical knowledge of God, the idea of God performs an ‘indispensably necessary, regulative employment, namely, that of directing the understanding towards a certain goal... a *focus imaginarius*’.³⁶⁷ The idea of God is ‘*focus imaginarius*’, the imaginary point that encompasses our seemingly disparate life experiences and presents them as emanating from and moving towards the unity contained within our understanding of God as the ‘all-sufficient necessary cause’ of the world. Indeed, the manner in which God functions as *focus imaginarius* is congruent with Kaufman’s late career notion of the function of God as ultimate mystery. On this matter he writes,

This notion of God's ultimate *mystery* implies (and requires) an acknowledgment of our *unknowing* with respect to God - an acknowledgement, that is to say, that we do not know how the images and metaphors in terms of which we conceive God apply...only in and with this acknowledgement does the symbol "God" turn us – by indirection – toward that ultimate source and context of our humanity which completely transcends us, our ideas, and our control.³⁶⁸

Here, Kaufman argues, in a manner similar to Kant, that we must first acknowledge that God is beyond our comprehension in order that the symbol of God might come to function as the regulative idea for our lives. The symbols of God that we create are inherently flawed because of the biases, limitations and interests inherent within human consciousness. However, in acknowledging this we are able to move beyond the form of the symbol and access its content.³⁶⁹ The transcendence contained within the symbol directs our lives towards our ultimate source and context, reminding us of the contingency and impermanence of our own ideas, systems and constructs.³⁷⁰ Just as Kant’s God drew our experiences up into the unity of the ‘all-sufficient necessary cause’ of the world, so too does Kaufman’s God attempt to direct us, via the transcendence contained within contingent symbolism constructed by reason, towards the unity of our experiences with the source of our humanity.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge; MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 56.

³⁶⁹ Thomas A. James, *In Face of Reality: The Constructive Theology of Gordon D. Kaufman* (Eugene; OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 45.

³⁷⁰ In chapter 8 we will examine the regulatory content of the account of God’s transcendence that Kaufman constructs within the context of environmental crisis. This content has foundational significance for our understandings of anthropology, eschatology and the relationship between God, the environment and ourselves.

However, there are crucial differences between the positions of Kant and Kaufman that highlight the problems that Kaufman's reading of Kant raises for his theology. Firstly, whilst Kaufman understands Kant's regulative ideas, such as God and the world, as coterminous with imaginative constructs, Kant himself would resist this association on the basis of the erroneous account of God such constructs would be likely to convey. Indeed, he argues that,

... it is better not to be able to represent something at all than only to be able to think of it confused with errors. This is the reason that the transcendental theology we have been treating is of such great utility: it puts us in a position to remove from our cognition of God everything sensible inhering in our concepts...³⁷¹

Here we see that, rather than an imaginative construct, Kant's God is an imageless *a priori* concept that grounds the transcendental imagination itself and allows it to perform its function. His transcendental theology presents us with an understanding of God as the limit of experience and, indeed reality itself, that he argues acts as a regulative authority bringing our experiences into order in relation to its own ultimacy. Kant argues that the notion of God's relationship to eternity highlights the struggle that human reason faces if it attempts to construct a concept of God. Human reason has great difficulty in conceiving of an eternity without limitation. Kant would judge Kaufman's attempts to present a symbol of God as both self-defeating and unnecessary. The imageless *a priori* concept of God stands for all individuals in all social and historical contexts and functions to draw our disparate experiences into unity. Attempts to present this function symbolically, rather than rationally, would be confusing at best as the limitations of our own cognition would inevitably lead us to make crucial errors as we attempted to convey the content of the ultimate.

This divergence on the matter of imaginative construction leads us to the deeper tension between Kaufman's commitment to relativism and the search for objectivity that is at the heart of Kantian epistemology. Kant is attempting to present a philosophical account of the structure of the mind that stands for all individuals, at all times and in all places. Language is, therefore, a secondary concern for Kant.³⁷² Kaufman, by contrast, appears to

³⁷¹ Immanuel, Kant, 'Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion.' In *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 385.

³⁷² J. Patrick Woolley, "Kaufman's Debt to Kant: The Epistemological Importance of the 'Structure of the World which environs us'," *Zygon*, vol. 48, no. 3 (September 2013): 554

wish to begin his account of the structure of mind with language which is, by its very nature, historically and socially relative. This contrast reveals the basis for his interpretation of Kant's account of God being one of imaginative construction. As language is an a priori category for Kaufman so, then, everything we say about God must be understood as arising from a historically and socially constructed perspective. This leads Kaufman to an epistemology that presents God in terms of Kant's regulative idea whilst also asserting that this concept constantly requires criticism and reconstruction in relation to its context. His account of God's ontology follows a similar line in that he agrees with Kant on God as the limit of all things and transcendence of limit, however, his understanding of language leads him to stress the importance of conveying this notion in a manner fit for contemporary society.

This tension, between ontology of limit and a historicist account of language, erodes the efficacy of God's ability to function as a regulative idea. Christopher J. Insole picks up on the difficulty presented to Kaufman as he attempts to marry Kantian epistemology and constructivist theology. Kaufman, he argues, is attempting to construct theological symbols on the basis of a Kantian account of God that has been deliberately left devoid of symbolism by its originator. This leads Kaufman's theology to the paradoxical position in which,

...there is no extra human constraint (the revelation of God) on what we say in our theology (except that we may not claim absoluteness, to know God-in-Godself). In a sort of conceptual deism, God is entirely detached from our models of God.³⁷³

Here, Insole claims that, in attempting to hold Kant's understanding of God as ontology of limit in tension with the historicist and pragmatic commitments of his constructivist theology, Kaufman has unintentionally detached God from the symbols he had constructed to represent him. Kant only wished us to understand God as a regulative idea, the limit of human experiences that helped order our experiences. This was the sole purpose of the idea of God and Kant avoided imagery regarding God lest these images occlude this purpose.

By contrast, the prime importance given to language by Kaufman led him to propose that this notion of ultimate limit needed to be conveyed anew by theologians in each epoch so

³⁷³ Christopher J. Insole, "Gordon Kaufman and the Kantian Mystery," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 47 (April 2000): 112.

that it was fit for the purpose of ordering the individual's experiences within her specific social and historical context.³⁷⁴ However, Kant's argument was that the imageless a priori idea of God was the regulative idea for all times and places that ordered our experiences regardless of context. God cannot be, at one and the same time, a concept that functions to order the experiences of all individuals in all social and historical contexts and is, therefore, a concept that is in constant need of revision in terms of the symbols we use to convey this function. If we follow Kaufman's logic we become invested in the form of the symbol rather than its content, thus detaching God from the model of God, as Insole argues above. Kant, by contrast, dispenses with the form and understands the rational expression of the content to be of singular importance. In terms of conveying the function of God as regulative idea it would appear that Kant, rather than Kaufman, has the more effective approach.

Nevertheless, Kant's notion of God as regulative idea is the determining principle of Kaufman's own theological method. Kaufman stresses that, in the course of an individual's life, their faith will be tested to breaking point by forces beyond their control and it is their response to the effect of tribulation upon faith that determines the meaning of their experience. Faith is ever changing, deepening, contracting and evolving. Likewise, Kaufman argues, the symbolism of our faith must be open to the same process. Indeed, it is only if this is the case that faith is capable of adequately engaging with the questions of meaning and definition that assail the individual in different epochs. Symbolic language attempts to mediate the content which we believe gives our experience meaning. However, it is in pragmatic, rather than conceptual terms, that we discern the merits of these symbolic constructions. Indeed, Kaufman argues that,

This test of the adequacy of our thinking and of the appropriateness of our faith occurs in a partial way in the lives of individual men and women, but, in a much fuller and more thoroughgoing fashion, the test is found in the rise and fall of communities and cultures, which bear their respective spirits.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ In chapter 8 we shall examine the implication central importance of reason to Kaufman's theological method to his attempts to construct account of anthropology, eschatology and theology itself within the context of environmental crisis.

³⁷⁵ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge, and Faith*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 115.

Here, Kaufman seems to state that the history of humanity can be seen as a process of conceptual and rhetorical evolution. Cultures have risen and fallen based on the identities that they created for themselves. It is this sentiment that leads us onto Kaufman's criticism of the content of the theological tradition itself. In the following chapter we shall first examine his argument that the symbol of God that we have inherited from the theological tradition is not only inadequate but actually dangerous within the context of our epoch of environmental crisis. This symbol of God, he argues, is directly responsible for our destructive relationships with our environment and must be examined, criticised and reformulated.

6.2 Kaufman: Theology, Anthropology and the Environment

Above, we saw that Kaufman's approach to theology is one based in historical context. The symbols for God that we construct are, fundamentally, nothing more than our attempts to adequately convey what God's divine mystery means in relation to our social and historical context. For Kaufman, traditional Christian symbols for God cannot help but be inadequate because they are based upon a false understanding of the nature of theological symbols. We cannot, Kaufman holds, ever present a definitive definition of God as this is beyond our human capacity. Therefore our symbols for God and our theological language remain sites of contestation to be continually revisited and open to reconstruction. Above, we noted Kaufman's belief that the mainstream theological tradition failed to understand this aspect of theology and therefore removed the capacity of the symbol of God to speak to humanity as our societies, relationships and consciousness as whole has developed. This is particularly evidenced, Kaufman argues, in the relationship between anthropogenic environmental destruction and the mainstream theological concept of God. Below, we will examine how he justifies this claim and the implications for the concept of God contained within this claim.

Humanity's relationship with its environment has, Kaufman argues, been a central theological concern from the very formation of our religious traditions. He argues that,

From the very beginning of Western religious consciousness there has been an awareness that the earth is not here for men and women to do with simply as they please: it is, after all, God's garden, and humans are here only to "till it and keep it"

(Gen. 2:15), not to transform it into whatever they wish. At best they are only stewards within God's creation.³⁷⁶

Here, Kaufman references Genesis 2 as an example of the manner in which a central tenet of our religious traditions has been the idea that the world in which we live is fundamentally not our own. We live within a created order and must endeavour to live in ways which sustain rather than denigrate this order. Indeed, even though religious traditions have upheld the idea that humanity is in some way possesses greater capacity and potential than the rest of the created order, we are instructed to use this potential for the good of the created order as a whole rather than our own aggrandisement. Like all members of this created order we are distinct and identifiable by our own characteristics, we are not, however, able to transcend the limits of this order. No matter how refined our technology capacity becomes it remains true that the Earth is our own habitat, to exploit it leaves us open to the consequences of the destruction of the created order. For this reason it seems prescient to accept the basic principle of stewardship and seek to sustain the created order and, in so doing, glorify its creator by demonstrating our faith in his intention for our world.

Kaufman argues that the Christian religious tradition appears to advocate a fairly straightforward environmental philosophy that points towards a symbiotic relationship between humanity and our habitat. However, he argues that this pragmatic and loving approach has been occluded by the theological tradition's treatment of anthropology. As we recall, theological anthropology is traditionally predicated upon the *imago dei*, the notion that humanity is made in the image of God. He feels that, throughout theological history this concept has been raised up in importance at the expense of concepts such as stewardship and the otherness of God to such a degree that humanity has come to be presented as in some way outside or above the created order. He argues that,

The very ideas of God and humanity, as they have gradually been worked out over millennia, are so framed as to blur or even conceal our embeddedness in the natural order as we are now increasingly conceiving it.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination*, 225.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

Here, Kaufman states his belief that the threat theological anthropology poses to our relationship with our environment is not simply a matter of whether Adam named all the animals and was given dominion over them but of what is implied about our relationship with the environment when it is viewed through the lens of the *imago dei*. The belief that humanity is the most advanced specimen within God's creation is markedly different to saying that being made in the image of God raises us above the bounds of creation in a manner similar to that which we attribute to God. It is the latter notion that Kaufman argues the theological tradition has been guilty of perpetuating. Furthermore, he argues that it is this notion that is responsible for the disconnect between the idea of stewarding a creation that does not belong to us and the destructive approach that now typifies the developed West's relationship with our environment.

So how does Kaufman argue that the notion of the *imago dei* has been transformed into a concept that alienates us from the rest of creation? Kaufman argues that the answer lies in the developmental pressures placed upon early Jewish thought by the religious disputes between Israel and Canaan. Canaanite religion offered the antithesis of the monotheistic, paternal religion of Judaism. Their religion was polytheistic and focused on the veneration of deities relating to natural cycles such as crop growth, fertility and weather. Judaism, by contrast, focused on the personal and moral relationship of the individual with their creator. Kaufman summarises his position when he argues that,

The great religious struggle between Israel and Canaan was over the relative metaphysical importance of natural power and process on the one hand and personal moral will on the other. When Yahweh won that struggle it meant that the ultimate object of loyalty and devotion for the humans in the West would be conceived increasingly in terms of models rooted in our moral and personal experience, not in our sense of dependence upon and unity with the orders and processes of nature.³⁷⁸

Here, Kaufman draws out the differences between the implications of faith and action within Judaism and Canaanite religion respectively. While Canaanite religion was based upon reverence of natural cycles and rhythms and thus faithfulness to these cycles was founded in actions understood to be beneficial to their sustenance, Jewish thought focused on morality as

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

a means to demonstrate faith in the one God of their religion. It is this personal relationship with the divine, mediated by morality, that Kaufman feels is responsible for the alienation of humanity from its environment. Our faith is directed beyond the created order towards spiritual development. While some component of this may encompass stewardship of the created order this is taken as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. We come to define ourselves in accordance with our attempts to adhere with greater obedience to a moral philosophy and code of ethics rather than in our connection with and dependence upon the world around us.

Kaufman argues that it is the relationship between God and the individual, within monotheistic traditions that has enforced a metaphysical divide between humanity and its environment. This begins in the Old Testament with the characterisation of Yahweh. Kaufman notes that,

Yahweh was one who acts, a personal and moral being, and so was the creature who had been made in his image. Thus, both man and that which was taken to be ultimately real were understood in terms of those features of man's being which most sharply distinguish us from other creatures...³⁷⁹

Christian anthropology begins with Genesis 1:27 which offers an account of the creation, by God, of man in his own image. Fundamental to Christian anthropology, then, is the resemblance that humanity bears to God; this is to be our defining feature. This feature, Kaufman asserts, is rational intentionality. Yahweh is an intentional, rational being who decides what to do on the basis of his discernment. Therefore, it is our own capacity to discern, discriminate, compare, analyse and execute a decision that marks out humanity as bearing God's image and that which marks us out from the rest of creation. This is also the basis of morality and ethics. We are able to weigh up a plethora of potential choices in any given situation which will have various motivations: some selfish, some self-sacrificing and some attempting the best outcome for all parties. We are capable of being judged as moral or immoral on the basis of this ability to discern our own ability to act on the basis of the different drives within us. This capacity also has more specifically religious and theological implications: only a human individual is able to consciously dedicate her life to the revelation

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 223.

of Christ. Not just morality, then, but the concept of spirituality rests upon rational discernment. If we take the Christian spiritual narrative we come to understand ourselves as volitional agents capable of either accepting or rejecting the saving message of the cross. Personal, moral and religious lives are made possible by reason and, therefore, it seems intuitive to suggest that it is the central aspect of human identity.

6.3 God, Humanity and the Environment

Indeed, Kaufman argues that the understanding of God, and humanity in relation to God, outlined above helps establish a worldview wherein humanity becomes conceptually removed from the natural world. This has grave implications for how we understand our relationship with, and duty to, the rest of creation. Kaufman argues that,

Nature is not conceived primarily as our proper home and the very source and sustenance of our being, but rather as the context of and the material for teleological activity by our (nonnatural) wills working upon it and in it...³⁸⁰

Above, we examined Kaufman's exposition of the relationship between reason and order. Here, he offers his account of the manner in which this relationship has sanctioned our use of our environment as nothing more than a tool. Just as we seek to order our own lives through the exercise of reason, so too do we seek to order the world around us through the deployment of our technology, the fruits of our reason. Kaufman notes that the real problem with such a pursuit is that the definition of 'order' to which we appeal is one allied solely with human ends. The problematic outcomes of following these ends unchecked are writ large in the humanitarian suffering brought about by the environmental degradation arising from the reduction of the environment to a standing resource for human consumption.

Indeed, the anthropocentric understanding of 'order' greatly complicates any attempt to institute a global reform of our ecologically dangerous practices. The unreserved manner in which the goals of, generally Western, humanity's are privileged leads Kaufman to suggest that,

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 225.

...it is also not surprising that such an attitude would tend to overlook and neglect the question whether certain “natural boundaries were being trespassed and certain natural balances upset.”³⁸¹

Here, Kaufman seems to suggest that there is a blasé assertion of the natural right of humanity to use the environment as they see fit concealed within the anthropocentric definition of order that we use to authorise our uses of our environment. Kaufman argues that, because of this, nature provides the most pressing and deepest challenge to theology and faith.

So what implications does Kaufman argue this has for theology? God, as envisioned by the theological tradition, appears to be the source of humanity’s alienation from our environment. If we are made in God’s image and that image confers to us a relationship with our creator based on personal moral advancement then our environment is relegated to simply the stage upon which this relationship is played out. For this reason he argues that,

...the very concept of God itself- as the concept that has developed in the West- has built into it a depreciation of the metaphysical, and certainly the religious, significance of nature. If we are to make theological use of the modern notion of nature- and how can we any longer avoid it, since all our thinking and experience is so heavily shaped by it?- we shall have to engage in theological reconstruction going down to the deepest roots of the western religious sensitivity and vocabulary.³⁸²

Above, Kaufman argues that the traditional theological understanding of God, outlined above, is not fit for the purpose of providing the account of humanity’s relationship with the environment that we so sorely need. He points out that environmental concerns quite rightly dominate dialogue concerning the future prosperity, and indeed survival, of the human race. An understanding of God that plays a role in the minimising the importance of the natural world is of no help to us in building a theological account of an epoch marked by the growing awareness that we are responsible for the destruction of our own environment.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid., 226.

Kaufman advocates a radical reformulation of the traditional theological understandings of both God and man as the first step in the process of building this theology. He writes that,

The idea of God as pre-eminently active moral will must be re-examined, as well as the correlative conception of humans as fundamentally moral and personal beings, a conception to which this idea of God gives metaphysical support.³⁸³

Above, we have discussed Kaufman's openness to the criticism and reconstruction of theological language and symbolism. Here, we see an example of this openness applied to his own theological project. He is setting himself the ambitious task of presenting a theology that flies in the face of the theological tradition whilst incorporating the ecological concerns that permeate the social and political dialogue of our age. How are we to speak of our environment in such a way that our radical difference is expressed at the same time as our radical interrelation? It is this problem that Kaufman aims to resolve in his theology.

6.4 *Telos* and Environment

Above, we have examined Kaufman's analysis of the dangers posed to our relationship with our environments by the anthropology derived from our understanding of God. However, there is another aspect of God's relationship with creation that Kaufman wishes to address. Kaufman also finds the teleological component of the theological tradition's concept of God to be somewhat problematic. In his work *God the Problem* he examines the theistic worldview and offers an explanation what he feels to be its fundamental failing. He begins by outlining the obvious attractions of the theistic worldview. He states,

Its ground is objective: the nature and will of the absolutely dependable God. Such a world-view, therefore, can provide stability, continuity, direction, and meaning for life almost without regard to the particular vicissitudes of experience or feeling tones of existence. It thus makes provision in its own distinctive way for man's feelings of anxiety and guilt, exaltation and fulfilment.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Gordon D. Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1972), 223.

Above, Kaufman demonstrates his sympathy to the traditional theistic position. It does present a coherent and compelling picture of reality. God creates, reveals himself within his creation as his promise of redemption to that creation and then, on a timeline known only to himself, brings about this redemption. All of our concerns fall into this framework and are orientated by it, providing us with a strong sense of purpose and identity.

However, despite the attractiveness of this position Kaufman feels that it is simply not convincing in light of human historical development. He argues that the transcendent God of Theism relies upon a teleological model of history wherein there is an objective purpose to existence. This he feels is simply unsupported by experience and reason. He argues,

But the transcendent God, the source of theism's great strength, is also the ground of its most damaging weakness. For what good reasons, after all, can be given for believing in this God and in the related intentionality of the world? Our ordinary methods of knowledge lead us to an awareness of an orderly world, but they reveal no teleological movement not any divine being; as we have seen they tend toward a secular world-view.³⁸⁵

Kaufman argues that the chief reason that the traditional theistic representation of God's relationship with history is due to its incongruence with human development. He argues that our ever greater understanding of the world has led us to knowledge of an orderly world but not to knowledge of a purpose for the world or, indeed, anything within it. Everything that exists does so in accordance with certain laws. All life from single celled organisms to fully formed ecosystems exhibit some kind of relational order. However, there is no evidence that any of this exists as the result of any intentional act. There appears to be no discernible *telos*, or end point, of existence. Rather, it appears that we exist within a relational order, but beyond that our existence is devoid of any meaning that we do not impute to it.

Indeed, Kaufman seems to move beyond stating that a teleological view of God's relationship with history is not simply incongruous with modern thought but that it might actually be unpalatable in the face of human history. He argues that,

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

A theistic position involves the acceptance of the events of a particular history as revelatory of the transcendent will which has created and is governing the world, and this is a price that – whatever the power of tradition in the past- many seem increasingly unwilling to pay.³⁸⁶

Here, Kaufman argues that while the coherence offered to our lives by the theistic understanding of a teleological history may appear attractive at first, upon examination it may lead us into moral quandary. If we are to accept that creation has a *telos*, and that that God is moving creation towards this *telos*, then we are left with the uncomfortable realisation that every event is necessary and, no matter how perverse or gratuitous, is ultimately subsumed within God's will for his creation. Above, we examined the formative influence that the suffering of the Second World War and specifically the Holocaust had on Kaufman's intellectual and moral outlook. Acceptance of such atrocities is, perhaps, an example of the price that Kaufman is unwilling to pay in exchange for the comfort afforded by the teleological understanding of history offered by theism.

So, for Kaufman, the God of Theism undergirds an inadequate picture of history in which humanity is fundamentally disengaged from their actions. In *Theological Imagination*, Kaufman draws out the specifically ecological implications of this teleological narrative. Kaufman notes that there are three principle actors in the Christian teleological narrative: God, humanity and the world. Indeed, world is generally taken as the stage upon which the relationship between God and humanity is played out rather than having any significant role to play itself. This leaves God and humanity as the centre of Christian metaphysics.³⁸⁷ Kaufman puts forth an argument for the anthropocentric nature of the Christian universe by noting that God creates humanity in his image (Gen. 1: 27), subjugates all other beings to them (Gen. 1:28-29) and the coming of his Kingdom will herald a new Jerusalem wherein God and humanity can live in peace and all suffering will be overcome (Rev.21-2-4). Kaufman argues that humanity appears to enjoy a kinship with God that the rest of creation does not. Humanity is created in God's image and promised redemption in his Kingdom, this promise is sealed in the sacrifice of God's only son (John 3:16). Further evidence of this, he argues, is seen in the Christian moral vocabulary, terms such as sin, repentance, hope and

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination*, 221.

faith, deals primarily with human realities and human becoming in relation to God's will.³⁸⁸ The relationship that the rest of creation enjoys with God is recognised but no redemptive narrative, metaphysical kinship or, even, convincing doctrine is ever expounded on its behalf.

6.5 Towards an Environmental Theology

Kaufman takes a radical approach to theology that stresses the importance of evaluation, deconstruction and reformulation of symbols for God. This approach is based on the influence of two key thought forms, historicism and Kantian metaphysics. Kaufman believes that all our knowledge is culturally and historically contextual and therefore there can be no thought forms that transcend human existence. Our ideas of God are, he argues, no different. If we attempt to present a certain understanding of God, itself historically and culturally conditioned as objective and eternal then we cause the concept of God to lose its ability to relate to the context within which it is posited. Concepts of God, Kaufman argues, can only relate to their context if they are constructed in dialogue with that context. Secondly, Kaufman was strongly influenced by Kantian metaphysics. He argues that ontological knowledge of God will forever elude humanity as God transcends our rational comprehension. Following Kant, Kaufman is principally interested in God as a regulative idea. God is an unknowable mystery; however, the idea of God allows us to understand and order our experiences. This is illustrated, Kaufman argues, in terms of eschatology. What we believe about the eventual fate of ourselves and the world will radically influence our attitude to the world around us. The content of our beliefs about God then, rather than knowledge about God, is Kaufman's chief interest.

From the above study of Kaufman's analysis of the Theistic God we can draw out his key criticisms and begin to form a picture of what his own theology is challenged to do in response. Firstly, theological anthropology, for Kaufman, drives a metaphysical wedge between humanity and our environment through our association with the rational and active Yahweh. Our faith in the rational and active God is demonstrated through our adherence to moral codes and introspective supplication. Our faith becomes an internal affair rather than one looking out across creation. In a metaphorical sense we are uprooted from our environment through this identification and our contemplation turns to a life beyond the

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 225.

world around us and towards God's Kingdom. This problem is compounded, Kaufman argues, by teleological relationship between God and creation contained within the Theistic tradition. God creates, promises and redeems, humanity is ultimately powerless either to bring about their own salvation or their own destruction. The environment, in such a paradigm, becomes nothing more than the backdrop to humanity's moralistic relationship with God. It will eventually be redeemed along with the rest of creation but has no special relationship to God in the manner ascribed to humanity. In the following chapters we shall examine how Kaufman brings these ideas directly into relation with the ecological crisis now affecting the planet whilst challenging his theology to present an account of humanity engaged with, and responsible, for its relationship with both God and our environment.

Chapter 7: Gordon Kaufman's Environmental Theology

Above we examined Kaufman's early-to-mid career in an attempt to establish how and why a growing environmental consciousness came to influence the direction of his theology. We shall now examine his attempts to construct a new symbol of God that can overcome the environmentally destructive connotations of the understanding of God that we inherit from the theological tradition. This analysis shall take place in two parts. In section 7.1 we shall focus on how Kaufman's consideration of humanity's nuclear capacity laid the foundations for his understanding of anthropology, eschatology and the symbol of God within the context of ecological crisis. In section 7.2 we shall examine how these understandings were expanded as Kaufman moved beyond the ecological consequences of nuclear technology specifically to a consideration of humanity's systemic destruction of the environment. We shall examine the contents of his accounts of anthropology, eschatology and the symbol of God within the context of ecological crisis to ascertain whether Kaufman is able to present a theological basis for a transformation in our relationship with our environment.

7.1 Environmental Theology as a Response to Humanity's Nuclear Potential

7.1.1 The Development of Kaufman's Environmental Theology

In his works *Essay on Theological Method*, *God the Problem* and *The Theological Imagination* Kaufman laid out his criticisms of the discipline of theology, the concept of God qua God and traditional representations of God's relationship with humanity. This deconstructive project was founded upon his avowed position as a historicist. Kaufman wished to assert the historically and culturally determined nature of all language, meaning and symbolism. This assertion formed the basis of his imaginative and constructive approach to theology which ran through the works mentioned above but which was elucidated at greatest length in *Essay on Theological Method*. This critical reconstruction of the theological method arose out Kaufman contention, in *God the Problem*, that our current representations of God are shown, not only to be unfit, but also potentially dangerous when brought into dialogue with the concerns of modern humanity. *The Theological Imagination* saw Kaufman begin to work through the implications of traditional theological

representations of God in relation to anthropology and ecology. Here, he laid out his thesis on the need for our symbols of God to be both humanising and relativising.

In *Theology for a Nuclear Age* we see Kaufman approach the notion of eschatology in attempt to use it as lens through which to reconsider the relationship between God, Christ and humanity. Eschatology deals with God's ultimate plan for his creation and thus encompasses a multitude of crucial theological themes such as hope, revelation, Christology and discipleship. Our understanding of the end of history, we could argue, greatly influences our understanding of ourselves as historical beings. Kaufman, as we shall see, is deeply dissatisfied with traditional eschatological formulations. His dissatisfaction arises from what he understands to be the eschatological agency of humanity, granted by our vast technological capacity for destruction. Kaufman feels that, the brute fact that we possess the potential to utterly destroy all life on earth, ourselves included, greatly complicates our understanding of eschatology, God, Christ and, most of all, ourselves. It is irrational and dangerous, Kaufman asserts, to ignore the capacity of humanity to bring its own history to an end. This new understanding of the eschatological potential of humanity and its implications for our conceptions of God and Christ laid the foundations for the great constructive work of Kaufman's later career, specifically in his reformulated systematic theology *In Face of Mystery*. Below we will attempt to, firstly, draw out the key themes of *Nuclear Age* and, secondly, use these themes as a basis for an exploration of the constructive theology of Kaufman's later career.

7.1.2 Theology for a Nuclear Age

The premise of Kaufman's *Theology for a Nuclear Age* is that the horrors of the twentieth century, most especially the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, necessarily changes the way we understand ourselves, God and eschatological salvation. We are confronted with the brute fact of the possibility of absolute self-destruction. As a species we have never been more technologically potent yet, somewhat ironically, we have never been more vulnerable. Indeed, the possibility of humanity itself ending all human life on Earth makes us, in Kaufman's view, an eschatological force in our own right and renders traditionally accepted expositions on eschatology obsolete. Traditional eschatology, he argues, is built upon an understanding of God as the active creator and governor of history,

whose purposes are worked out within history and moves towards a consummation that he alone has ordained. He argues that,

Undergirded by faith in an active creator and governor of history, one who from the beginning was working out purposes which were certain to be realised as history moved towards its consummation....A consummation of this sort was something that the faithful could live with- even look forward to with hope—for it would be the moment when God’s final triumph over all evil powers would be accomplished.³⁸⁹

Kaufman feels that the faithful could take solace in the notion that, whatever form the end of history took, this end would be God’s climactic act and final triumph over evil. This traditional model of eschatology is, Kaufman argues, utterly ill-equipped to deal with humanity’s self-destructive potential. Indeed, we could certainly argue that nuclear weaponry is perhaps the evocative and directly observable manifestation of the total authorisation of human will. However, it is the content, direction and parameters of this will that Kaufman aims to criticise and redefine in light of humanity’s eschatological potential. Fundamental to this process, Kaufman states, is a re-conception of the symbol of God which moves away from anthropomorphisms and towards mystery, serendipity and limit. In so doing, he argues, the human will can be unyoked from its dangerous association with God’s will and be bounded in such a way that its eschatological potential does not become a hubristic epitaph. Kaufman feels that theology must present an understanding of God that is both humanising and relativising. That is to say, it must promote human behaviours that encourage fellowship and compassion while also reminding humanity of the contingent nature of its existence.

7.1.3 God and the Apocalyptic Potential of Humanity

So, if Kaufman wishes us to move away from an understanding of God as the shepherd of creation, then how would he have us understanding him? Kaufman wishes to re-conceive in terms of a historical and evolutionary process, beneficial to life, within the universe, that finds its most complex expression in the being and history of humanity. In

³⁸⁹ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Theology for a Nuclear Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 3.

Nuclear Age, he presents an understanding of God which forms the basis for the process-oriented theology of his late career. Here he argues that,

The symbol ‘God’ suggests a reality, an ultimate tendency or power, which is working itself out in an evolutionary process that has produced not only myriads of living species but also at least one living form able to shape and transform itself, through a cumulating history, into spirit, i.e., into a being in some measure self-conscious and free, living in a symbolical or cultural world that it has created.³⁹⁰

By this, Kaufman appears to reveal his process orientated understanding of the universe. Pushed and pulled by environmental factors, life has gained ever greater complexity and specialisation and, in the human being, has arrived at self awareness. Humanity is unique amongst products of the evolutionary continuum in our ability to comprehend the basic conditions and limitations of our existence.

Indeed, we could argue that it is this very awareness of the precarious nature of our existence that has driven our advancements in technology and social organisation. Humanity possesses great potential, this potential remains value neutral until it is deployed in a specific direction, whereupon it is possible to argue either for or against the probity of the specific course of action. It is the maximisation of this potential with which, for Kaufman, God is intimately bound up. Kaufman seems to posit a radical intimacy between human history and God when he writes that,

God- this whole grand cosmic evolutionary movement – is giving birth, after many millennia to finite freedom and self-consciousness in and through our human history, in *us*; and before our human eyes a new and glorious vista- a hope- is gradually, over many generations, coming into view: a vision of life and community characterised by freedom, love, justice, meaning and creativity.³⁹¹

God and humanity then are, in Kaufman’s view, inexorably linked. God finds his outworking in the use we make of the life giving processes in which he is embodied. Indeed, humanity appears to occupy a special position within Kaufman’s theology. While God seems to be the

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 44.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

sum total of all evolutionary processes, it is humanity which provides self-awareness to the process of evolution itself.

If God is working itself out in the evolutionary process then what can we draw from humanity's ability to rationally comprehend the mechanics of this process? We are placed in a unique position with unique responsibilities. Kaufman argues that,

Although we can and certainly should hope that the creativity working in history will bring forth possibilities we cannot now foresee or intend, a pathway through the innumerable potential disasters that lie before us, this is not something on which we may rely with easy confidence (in the manner suggested by the traditional imagery of a providential God). Rather, our fate today is very much in our own hands, and we must take responsibility for it.³⁹²

Here, we can detect the tensions within Kaufman's attitude towards eschatology itself. He wishes to explicitly distance himself from any theology that offers an account of a providential God who ensures humanity's eventual salvation. This, he feels, tacitly absolves humanity of its reasonability towards its environment by removing our ultimate responsibility towards it. If God will eventually right all the wrongs that we visit upon creation, and ourselves, then what deterrent exists to discourage our environmentally destructive habits? However, this is not to say that Kaufman is simply rejecting the notion of eschatology out of hand. He does appear to offer an anthropocentric eschatology wherein humanity saves itself, and the rest of creation, by bringing about a just, loving, creative and meaningful community on earth. In so doing, humanity, in a sense, liberates God.

7.1.4 Christ and Spirit

It is this eschatological potential, that, Kaufman feels, calls us to reconsider the relationship between God humanity, and Christ. In *Nuclear Age* Kaufman attempts to make sense of Christ's eschatological role in the face of humanity's self-destructive potential. The traditional Christian understanding of salvation is based on the notion that God gave his only son as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. His crucifixion and resurrection ensures the

³⁹² Ibid., 45.

salvation of humanity and provides the template for the central Christian ethic of loving self-sacrifice. However, Kaufman argues that there is negative aspect to traditional Christian understandings of redemption that is almost, always left, unexplored by theologians: triumphalism. He argues that,

When the prospect of eternal blessedness is coupled...with the expectation that some sort of everlasting torment in hell will be the ultimate fate of those who go counter to Christian teaching and practice, it clearly becomes a matter of simple self-interest to follow the Christian way in this world; for whatever cost or unhappiness one experiences in this life will be amply recompensed in the next.³⁹³

Here, Kaufman seems to argue that the triumphalism of salvation by grace is dangerous when it complements, and perhaps compliments, the technological capacities of humanity. He seems to suggest that human evolution has passed a certain threshold, in so doing we have opened up a new spectrum of considerations by which our conduct must be moderated. Kaufman wishes to present a Christology that provides this moderating influence upon humanity in order that they may bring about God's fulfilment.

For Kaufman, soteriology is based firmly in practice, not in grace. He presents a behavioural analysis of the account of Christ's life and offers his analysis of the implications for our understanding of salvation. He writes that,

... following Paul's listing in Galatians 5, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness', and the link, attitudes and virtues that is to say which express the spirit of reconciliation and healing working within human affairs.³⁹⁴

What we are told in the New Testament, Kaufman argues, is how we are to live together under God. He wishes to distance himself from accounts of the Christian life that define themselves in terms of 'a supernatural quality, or group of supernatural qualities, accessible only through Jesus Christ'.³⁹⁵ Rather, he argues, the Christian life is 'the valuation as normative for human life of qualities and potentialities which for make for reconciliation and

³⁹³ Ibid., 49.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 58.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 59.

loving community'.³⁹⁶ These qualities and potentialities are those epitomised in the story of Jesus. Devotion to this message, through the manner in which we live our lives, is how we demonstrate our devotion to God.

Indeed, living our lives in pursuit of justice, reconciliation and healing provides us, in Kaufman's view, with an intimate link to spirit. In Kaufman's view,

All movements toward reconciliation and healing and liberation, towards overcoming oppression and alienation and deterioration, are to be understood as the activity of the salvific divine spirit – the spirit of Christ – at work in the world.³⁹⁷

Kaufman's dissatisfaction with the notion that the Holy Spirit is God's guiding presence within his creation was first seen in *God the Problem*. Here, Kaufman examined the viewpoint that the events of the twentieth century made belief in God's control over history unpalatable. In *Nuclear Age* we see the beginnings of a process based account of pneumatology wherein humanity's movements towards unity and liberation are understood as the Spirit at work in creation.

7.1.5 Kaufman's New Eschatology

So, let us examine Kaufman's position so far. He begins with the assertion that while humanity, so far, has been able to take something constructive from the horrors of their history we now find ourselves in a unique position: capable of our own utter self destruction. This state of affairs, he argues, radically changes our understanding of eschatology. Holding onto the belief that we will, ultimately, be saved no matter how badly we damage ourselves or our environment does nothing to discourage destructive behaviours or encourage constructive movements towards justice and unity. Humanity, he argues, must take responsibility for their potential both destructive and creative if we are to avoid self-annihilation. Kaufman responds to, what he sees as, the failure of traditional eschatological models to expound such a message by presenting a process based theology wherein God becomes seemingly synonymous with the process of evolution itself.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

Here, God is understood as that which makes life itself possible. Humanity, as the self-aware product of the evolutionary process, has the unique opportunity to either bring about the consummation of life in a harmonious community or, utterly reject life in pursuit of our destructive and acquisitive urges. The virtues that out to be cultivated in pursuit of this end are revealed in Christ, and Kaufman argues, it is these virtues that offer us hope of salvation rather than grace of God revealed in Christ's resurrection. Indeed, *Nuclear Age* sees Kaufman bring his rejection of the doctrine salvation by grace alone, begun in *Theological Method*, to its culmination. Within his anthropocentric account of eschatology there can be no place for, what he deems, the soteriological complacency of assumed salvation. Humanity, he feels must not allow itself to become distracted from its ability, and concomitant responsibility, to bring about either our own flourishing or demise. When we follow the example of Christ, we are, Kaufman argues, doing the work of the Spirit in the world as we move history, and thus God, towards its highest form of expression in a harmonious, just community.

So, now that we have established the eschatological framework within which Kaufman locates humanity let us examine, in greater depth, how he envisions a humanity moving towards its own salvation. As seen above, Kaufman's theology presents God and human history as inextricably linked. Fundamentally, as we bring about our own salvation we bring God to his fulfilment in creation. Such a goal can only be achieved, Kaufman argues, if humanity undergoes a,

... dramatic and full transformation- a *metanoia*- of our major social, political and economic institutions, of our ways of thinking and acting, of the very structures of our selves.³⁹⁸

Kaufman does not wish to underestimate the size of the task that confronts humanity: our very way of understanding ourselves is wrong. In Kaufman's view, this erroneous beginning is inevitably reflected in the ways in which we order our world and, consequently, relate with the rest of the natural world.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 45.

Kaufman argues that, lives orientated towards God must allow God to permeate all aspects of our existence. He argues that God is,

...understood as that ecological reality behind and in and working through all of life and history...service of God can consist thus only in universally oriented vision and work.³⁹⁹

So, in Kaufman's view, our lives must undergo a total reorientation if we are to bring about the fulfilment of God in history. Here, Kaufman makes an interesting argument on the way in which ontology influences ontogeny. How we understand ourselves, what we understand ourselves to be and how we understand ourselves to be in relation to the other, on an ontological level is of central importance to Kaufman's theology as this will directly and inexorably influence the way we develop as individuals, civilisations and as a species.

Above, we have examined Kaufman's stance regarding the importance of universally oriented action. Now let us turn to how he feels his symbol of God as evolutionary, historical process interacts with humanity's growing consciousness of the interdependence of all life. Fundamentally, we cannot be satisfied with simply knowing what direction lives orientated towards God should take. We ought to question Kaufman on the content of these lives. We must ask of him how his symbol of God helps us transform the way we live our lives in light of our growing self-understanding as a species. Kaufman explains this link when he argues that,

Awareness of God still means today, as it always has that at the most fundamental level 'we are not our own' (*cf* 1 Cor. 6:19)...since we humans now have the power to destroy human life on earth completely, what we do can have disastrous consequences for the divine life itself. Devotion to God today means, thus, that we resolve to make ourselves fully accountable for the continuance of life on earth.⁴⁰⁰

Here, Kaufman expounds more fully upon the link between God and human history that he proposed earlier in this work. If we, nuclear humanity, are to live in such a way that we honour the belief that we, fundamentally, are not our own and do, in fact, owe all things to

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 46.

God's grace, we ought to take responsibility for the continued viability of life on earth. This is because, for the first time in our history, we possess the power to destroy life on earth and thus bring about the end to the evolutionary, historical process that Kaufman identifies with God. Thus honouring God's grace, for Kaufman the possibility of life itself, principally consists in the maintenance of the conditions for life on earth. If we bring about an end to these conditions then, following Kaufman's reasoning, we have, in effect, brought an end to the process called God.

However, despite the crucial role that Kaufman feels humanity has to play in the destiny of this process, he is quick to qualify his stance and express it in ecological, rather than simply anthropological, terms. Kaufman argues that,

... the disaster we may bring forth upon the earth will not be one of merely human consequence...It will be, rather, a disaster for all of life, for the long, slow, painful evolution through which life has proceeded here on earth ... In short, it will be a disaster for God, an enormous set-back for we humans in this generation will have been responsible.⁴⁰¹

Here, Kaufman explains his belief that recognition that we are not our own places an ecological imperative upon humanity. Humanity can justifiably be called the most developed product of the evolutionary process. Indeed it is the only product that is consciously aware of this process: we could go even further and call it the evolutionary process' self-awareness. However, we still exist by grace of the conditions for life within which the evolutionary process which led to our development took place. We now stand able to either bring about a harmonious culmination or apocalyptic destruction of these conditions and must, Kaufman stresses, adjust our self-understanding.

The language Kaufman uses to describe the potential disaster for life illuminates his unique understanding of eschatology. He argues that such a disaster would be an 'enormous set back' for God. It is interesting that he does not use the language of utter defeat. It seems that, in doing so, Kaufman wishes us to consider the possibility that even if humanity did bring about its own extinction, given enough time new life-forms would emerge and,

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 45.

eventually, bring about a harmonious culmination to the evolutionary process. Here, it seems that Kaufman is suggesting to us that we stand on the cusp of achieving our own salvation but, if we are to fail, then new life forms could potentially emerge, after long aeons, and bring about such a community of creation instead. This seems to be both a challenge to humanity to take up the promise of its potential and build the world of which it is capable and, at the same time, a subtle reminder that we possess self awareness only through the grace of the process called God.

7.1.6 The Character of our Eschatological Lives

Above, we have examined Kaufman's process centred theology and come to understand his wish to present an account of salvation based on human responsibility. We are, Kaufman argues, entirely responsible for the manner in which we interact with the existence that we have been, by grace, granted. God, he argues, will not save us. He is, rather, to be understood as the process that allows us to save ourselves. Christ, likewise, does not redeem us in his death and resurrection: he grants us the opportunity to bring about our own redemption through the internalisation of the moral example with which he provides us. How, then, does Kaufman conceive of the Spirit? We can surmise, from the above, that he will reject any pneumatology that posits the Spirit's direct intervention in the world and will wish to offer an account of the Spirit founded in human action. This hypothesis seems to be vindicated when Kaufman argues that,

Salvation should no longer be conceived as a singular process or activity, a unilateral action from on high coming down to earth and working primarily in and through the church... wherever a spirit of creativity and liberation and healing, of reconciliation and reconstruction, is at work in the world, there is to be seen saving activity.⁴⁰²

Here, Kaufman appears to continue to develop his process theology by replacing the traditional theological notion of God acting in the world through the Spirit with an anthropocentric pneumatology. Of course, we expected that Kaufman would reject the idea of God entering into creation, through the Spirit, to bring about salvation but he appears to use his reformulated pneumatology to once again impress upon us the uniqueness and gravity of

⁴⁰² Ibid., 57.

human potential. When we work to bring about a just and harmonious community of all creation, we are not simply doing the Spirit's work, in Kaufman's it is this action that actually constitutes the Spirit.

This radical account of human action is both inspiring and somewhat worrying, perhaps for the same reason. In Kaufman's account of creation there can be no appeals to higher powers, no promise of salvation and no second chances. We, humanity, are responsible for our own salvation or own destruction. Kaufman does not pretend that it is easy for the individual, let alone humanity as a whole, to become reconciled with this notion. Kaufman admits that a life lived in pursuit of the spirit of salvation is almost guaranteed to be one fraught with conflict and unease. On this matter he writes that it,

... must be acknowledged immediately that this understanding of salvation cannot appeal directly to motives of self-interest: neither a peaceful and contented life on earth, nor eternal bliss in heaven is its expected reward. On the contrary, radical self giving in struggle with the world evils of contemporary human life, culmination perhaps in complete self-sacrifice – crucifixion – is what is to be expected.⁴⁰³

Here, Kaufman makes it clear that to live lives oriented towards God, to be disciples, we too must be willing to both resist institutions, regimes and individuals more powerful than ourselves and, be ready to accept the consequences for such action. Kaufman is also keen to assert that thoughts of reward, praise or enrichment are anathema to the pursuit of discipleship. He seems to feel that it is only by totally eradicating any trace of atonement by faith alone or divine redemption from his theology that he can adequately express the self-effacing, perhaps even self-destroying, quality that discipleship possesses. Kaufman cites Japanese writer Shūsaku Endō argued that Christ understood himself as coming into the world to be trampled on by fellow humans.⁴⁰⁴ In following Christ, Kaufman argues, we must take up this same outlook.

In addition to her comments regarding Kaufman's symbol of God, Carol P. Christ is also sceptical about the ability of his account of Christ to be humanising. She feels that Kaufman's vision of self-sacrificing morality is somewhat masochistic given the suffering

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 59.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 52.

that many people must endure in the course of their own lives. Christ argues that Kaufman's appeal to Endo and the 'trampled Christ' metaphor, does not foster humanisation and, in fact, provides nothing more than a pessimistic outlook on life wherein nothing we do can ever truly be considered satisfactory.⁴⁰⁵ Fundamentally Christ does not feel that Kaufman's theology is capable of fulfilling its avowed purpose of relativising and humanising human experience.⁴⁰⁶ She feels that the notion that humanity is somehow drawn up into some universal unfolding that finds conciseness in us is little more than a distraction. She does not see the need for the account Kaufman offers any more than the account offered by traditional theology. Both place humanity at the centre of creation and, while Kaufman's may give a more true account of humanity's self destructive capacity it still acts as buffer against what Christ feels is the most important motivating factor if humanity is to undergo an ecological *metanoia*.⁴⁰⁷

7.1.7 Problems Arising from Kaufman's Environmental Theology

Theology for a Nuclear Age could be seen as Kaufman's preliminary sketch of a process-oriented systematic theology. The radical theological formulations that he constructs in this work form the basis of the theology of his late-career. The direction, tone and character of this work carry through into his later theology and, I would argue, it marks the point at which he begins to speak, fearlessly, with his own theological voice. Of course, there are a number of theological moves that he makes within this work that distance him greatly from traditional theology and mainstream Christianity itself. From the very beginning, he is clear about his desire to remove the notion of an agential God standing over his creation, shepherding it to its pre-ordained end, salvation. Humanity, as the conscious, rational product of evolution takes centre stage in his reformulated eschatology. It is we that are capable of bringing about the fulfilment of the process called God in the world. It is we that are able to bring the Spirit into the world through our liberating and redemptive activity. Christ aids us in this redemption as the paragon of morality that stands as our instructor and ethical barometer: he does not save us through his suffering on the cross.

⁴⁰⁵ Carol P. Christ, "Rethinking Theology and Nature," in *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*, eds. Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 320

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Kaufman's view of history, and humanity's place in it, is both radical and problematic. Here humanity knows that it is not going to be saved and thus is left to utilise its own creativity and marshal its will in such a way that his appetites do not lead his destruction. The difficulty with this picture of history is that it is entirely dependent upon humanity's response to it. We could rise to the challenge of creating a harmonious community of all creation but could other, less desirable conclusions, be drawn from such an understanding of history? If we are, in Kaufman's view, ultimately responsible of our own future, for better or for worse, is he not in danger of colluding with the false eschatology of consumerism which exhorts us to live for today because there is no tomorrow? If we are, ultimately, not to going to be redeemed then for what were we created other than the expression of our own desire? Furthermore while possibilities for life do exist within the universe they seem to be scare. The overwhelming majority of species that have ever existed on the Earth are now extinct, how is humanity different? Are we not simply another line of evolutionary inquiry, fated to run its course? If that is the case then, one could argue, it is hard to resist the attractions of a more hedonistic ethos than Christianity. From the above, we see that a variety of problems arise from the central role that Kaufman gives humanity in his account of creation. Carol Christ argues that if Kaufman wishes to escape from the myriad issues that arise from an anthropocentric environmental theology then his position should begin with humanity's contingency upon its environment, rather than our potential to shape this environment. Let us now examine the work of Kaufman's late career in an attempt to ascertain whether he can move away from the anthropocentrism that seems to hold *Nuclear Age* back from reaching its true potential as a work of environmental theology.

7.2 Environmental Theology as a Response to Humanity's Environmental Interrelation

Above, we have examined the manner in which Kaufman's consideration of the environmentally destructive potential of nuclear technology laid the foundations for his accounts of anthropology, eschatology and God within the context of ecological crisis. Below we shall examine how these accounts changed and developed as his focus expanded beyond nuclear technology to a consideration of the multi-faceted nature of humanity's destructive relationship with its environment. We shall examine whether these expanded accounts are capable of offering a theological basis for the transformation of our present destructive relationship with our environment into a sustainable and creative one in the future.

7.2.1. Environmental Theology Revisited

Kaufman's *Nuclear Age* was inspired by his understanding that nuclear technology necessitated a drastic change in the manner in which humanity views itself in relation to God, creation and salvation. However, his nuclear anthropology does not appear to provide us with a great many insights into how we are to think of an ecological anthropology. In his, admittedly noble, desire to highlight the threat that humanity poses to its own existence, he seems to have failed to provide an adequate account of humanity's interconnection with its environment. Indeed this is the root of Christ's principal criticism of Kaufman's early process oriented theology: its anthropocentrism. Christ felt that Kaufman's account of humanity's relationship with the environment seemed to stress the contingency of the natural world upon human will while failing to adequately express the manner in which human existence is contingent upon its environment. Kaufman focuses his attention on the apocalyptic potential of nuclear technology while failing to give an account of humanity as a species within a habitat.

Kaufman's late career work *In Face of Mystery* contains revisions and expansions of the key theological components of *Nuclear Age*. Principal amongst these revisions is Kaufman's reconstruction of his anthropology. Here, he moves away from a strictly historical definition of the human towards an account which begins with an account of the interconnection of humanity, as a species, with its habitat. Kaufman writes that

...I suggest, we will come much closer to articulating the fundamental assumption about the nature of the human which are widely accepted today if we speak of our interconnectedness and interdependence with all other forms of life (on the one hand), and our cultural creativity in history, producing a thoroughly cultural form of existence (on the other)- if we speak of ourselves, that is to say, as what I shall call 'biohistorical' beings.⁴⁰⁸

This seems to represent, if not a break from the historicism that was so central to the intellectual outlook of his early career, then a substantial revision of it. Perhaps we could go so far as to say that Kaufman is outlining a new historicism: a historicism of the environment. In stressing humanity's contingency upon other forms of life Kaufman demonstrates his awareness of the need for an understanding of the historical distinctness of the environment to be incorporated into his anthropology. Kaufman gives the anthropology that arises out of the synthesis of the historicity of nature and the historicity of humanity the name 'biohistorical'. This term indicates that humanity is a historical being, grounded within a greater history, the history of its environment.

So how does Kaufman's account of biohistorical humanity differ from his apocalyptic account of humanity in *Nuclear Age*? Here, he stressed not just the history making, but the history defining, potential of humanity. Kaufman's nuclear anthropology seemed preoccupied with human potential and raised the psychological struggle for the direction of this potential into the defining aspect of the evolutionary historical process, which Kaufman held to be synonymous with God, itself. Biohistorical anthropology attempts to move our thinking away from the contingency of the world on human will, to an understanding of the contingency of the human will on the world. On this matter Kaufman writes,

We are given life by- and we continue to be sustained by- the great evolving ecosystem of life on planet Earth; but we humans have ourselves transformed that life into diverse forms of historical existence, and it is this our historicity which, above all gives our existence its distinctively human character.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 109.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

Here, Kaufman stresses that while it is culture within history that defines human existence, these cultures and, indeed, the history within which they unfold, are contingent upon a greater history, the history of the Earth itself. We cannot, therefore, place our faith in any anthropology that does not place the same importance on the biological contingency of humanity upon its habitat as it does the historical and cultural aspect of humanity. Kaufman seeks to present an anthropology that reminds us that without an environment we have no history and no chance for culture. In a sense it is our ecosystem that allows us to be human.

In his principal work on pneumatology, *In the beginning...Creativity*, Kaufman offers his explanation of the difference between a theological anthropology based on an understanding of humanity as *imago dei* and his biohistorical anthropology. He writes that,

...conceiving humans as biohistorical beings who have emerged on one of the countless creative trajectories moving through the cosmos instead of as creatures distinguished from all others as the very image of God, the climax of all creation makes it clear that we humans are indissolubly a part of the created order.⁴¹⁰

Here, Kaufman criticises what he sees as the unexamined anthropocentrism as the heart of traditional representations of Christian anthropology. He argues that the Christian tradition has been guilty of instituting a hierarchy wherein humanity is separate from and superior to its environment. In contrast, humanity's intractable interconnectedness with its environment forms the basis of his account of anthropology. Indeed, as seen above, he stresses that the very ways in which we understand ourselves to be human are utterly reliant upon the environment, our home.

Indeed the centrality of the entire web of life to human historicity, which Kaufman considers to be what essentially defines human experience, leads him to posit it as the essential pre-condition for talking about the ontology of humanity. Kaufman argues that,

If we ultimately want to say something about "immortal souls" or an "eternal destiny" or the "infinite value of the human spirit," it must be with this particular living being in

⁴¹⁰Gordon D. Kaufman, *In the Beginning...Creativity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 50.

mind - this biohistorical being - emergent from and dependent on lower forms of life, but transcending these through its creation of culture and history.⁴¹¹

Kaufman argues that if we are seeking to understand humanity, or make foundational claims about our existence, we must necessarily make reference to the way in which we arouse out of, and continue to exist within, an ecosystem. As members of an ecosystem we are dependent upon forms of life that we may consider to be lower or less developed than ourselves. However, our transcendence of these life forms is rooted in our dependence upon them. Human culture and history have been allowed to emerge by, and are maintained by, the conditions for life upon this planet.

From the above, we could infer that Kaufman has moved away from thinking of theology in terms of fitness for a specific epoch and has found a common undercurrent that theology must incorporate if it wishes to speak at all: the ecosystem. On this matter, Kaufman writes,

Any religious or theological interpretation of our humanity, if it is to be intelligible to us today, must make sense of this complex open-ended developing process that we are –rooted in the earth but aspiring to the heavens above- and of the qualities of life and being that we have in and through this process.⁴¹²

Here, we see a marked divergence from the anthropology, and intellectual predicates, of his earlier career. Kaufman's interpretation of historicism had, until this point, focused on the psychology of human epochs. The anthropology that he has unfolded above gives an expanded account of historicism which leads humanity towards a much less theologically relativistic position. Kaufman openly states his view that an account of humanity as a species within an ecosystem must necessarily be present if we wish to present a theological anthropology.

As seen above, Kaufman's earlier theology sought to present accounts of humanity in accordance with the contemporaneous historical and cultural context. Here, by contrast, he argues there is something that is true for all humanity in all places: our interrelation with the

⁴¹¹ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 109.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

ecosystem. In asserting that that the very way in which we understand ourselves to be human, as historical and cultural beings, depends upon the greater and more complex history of the ecosystem, Kaufman moves away from the anthropocentrism that Carol P. Christ identified in *Nuclear Age*. Here, Kaufman seems to argue that humanity must be understood in terms of its connection to all beings in the web of life.

7.2.2 Revisiting the Relationship between Humanity and God

Kaufman's biohistorical anthropology poses serious questions to the understanding of the relationship between humanity and God outlined in *Nuclear Age*. As we will recall from our study of this work Kaufman's early process theology placed humanity as the pinnacle of the evolutionary process, with which he equated God, and ascribed, to us, the power to bring history to its fulfilment. Time, such a theology tacitly alleges, possesses a specific trajectory, within which its fate is unfolded by agents arising from within it. This seems to posit a very rigid view of time as being cyclical and fundamentally unchanging. Indeed, such a model of time bears a striking resemblance to the very model that Kaufman himself criticises in *Mystery*. Kaufman now wishes to present an account of the evolutionary-historical development that has taken place on Earth as,

...a part, and expression of, a cosmic evolutionary-historical process that characterizes or pervades all reality [rather than] as transpiring within an eternal structure of things which follows essentially the same patterns forever.⁴¹³

This definition of the historical process is much more tentative, and we would argue helpful, than the definition given in *Nuclear Age*. Kaufman expresses a view of history wherein there is a basic, universal commonality that unites all aspects of reality. This universal commonality is the evolutionary-historical process out of which all reality has arisen.

So how does this understanding of history influence the development of his new symbol of God? The answer lies in Kaufman's more nuanced conception of the historical-evolutionary process. As he moves away from an understanding of time in terms of human epochs he is able to present an understanding that moves away from anthropocentrism into

⁴¹³ Ibid.

the biohistorical. He argues that if we are to hold that the fundamental reality of the world is matter, that possesses no potentiality, then it becomes difficult to avoid the conclusion that there must be,

some sort of creative activity in the universe which cannot be simply identified with or reduced to bare matter- the creativity manifest (for example) in the evolutionary development of life.⁴¹⁴

Here, Kaufman argues that our observations of the universe draw us to conclude that there must be some creative force, inherent within the universe that has allowed the development of life. This creativity both pervades and transcends the process of development itself and thus, he argues, remains mysterious in both its origin and its trajectory.

Creativity and mystery then are the two constituent elements of Kaufman's late theology. We sense a great reverence for the mystery of life within Kaufman's theology. He wishes to wrestle with the complex mystery of the creativity responsible for the existence of life, even if definitive answers elude him. On this basis Kaufman argues for,

... a model based on the creative development of culture as a whole. This model, I shall try to show, is better fitted to interpret the cosmic creativity with which we are here concerned, and it does not suffer the defects noted in the concept of the cosmic agents; it can, thus, provide a more intelligible and persuasive basis for our construction of a contemporary conception of God.⁴¹⁵

Here, Kaufman argues that our models of God must reflect our growing awareness of the mysterious nature of our beginnings and the creative trajectories that have led to our development.

Indeed, Kaufman argues that when we consider the process by which humanity, as we understand ourselves today, has come into existence we are given a significant clue about the nature of reality.⁴¹⁶ He argues that,

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 267.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 273.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 286.

The trajectory eventuating in the creation of human historical existence could be seen...as a significant expression of the serendipitous creativity manifest in the cosmos as a whole; and thus the appearance of human modes of being in the world be properly regarded not as a metaphysical surd but rather as grounded in the ultimate nature of things, in the ultimate mystery.⁴¹⁷

Here we see Kaufman argue that the development of humanity into a history creating species, encompasses the two central elements of his cosmology: creativity and mystery. The universal creativity present within reality is expressed through are the creative trajectories that human development has followed in its evolutionary journey. The universal mystery that contemplation of these trajectories reveals is that, for a reason that humanity can never be privy to, and, by a mechanism that we can never comprehend let alone empirically analyse, serendipitous trajectories promoting the development of life appear to be woven into the very fabric of reality.

Both Randall E. Auxier and William Dean criticise Kaufman's notion of serendipitous creativity. Auxier argues that Kaufman makes scientific and historical plausibility the defining characteristic of his theology. Auxier argues that Kaufman has, in his attempts to present a theology commensurate with science, in effect, abandoned his theological convictions. Kaufman is willing, Auxier argues, to jettison central theological propositions in an attempt to satisfy scientific and historical understanding.⁴¹⁸ Dean criticises Kaufman's account of the relationship between mystery and creativity on the basis of its usefulness as a regulative idea. The notion of the personal God which he so strongly rejects was, despite its flaws, capable of engaging human reason and emotion and directing our behaviour to some degree. The ultimate mysteriousness of serendipitous creativity is much weaker in this regard as it enforces limitations on its own applicability and usefulness by reference to its own inscrutability.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 284.

⁴¹⁸ Randall E. Auxier, Gordon Kaufman's *Astronauts: A Review Essay of "Jesus and Creativity,"* Reflections on Gordon D. Kaufman's "In the beginning... Creativity" and "Jesus and Creativity," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 2008): 26.

⁴¹⁹ William Dean, "The Persistence of Experience: A Commentary on Gordon Kaufman's Theology," *New Essays in Religious Naturalism*, ed. Creighton Peden and Larry Axel (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1993), 74.

Kaufman responds to these criticisms by arguing that it is not his intention to remould Christian religion according to the standards of scientific and historical plausibility, arguing that these standards are not broad or pertinent enough to guide human individuals and societies through the problems that confront them in the modern age.⁴²⁰ What Kaufman wishes to remould is Christian ethics and, in order to do so, he feels his theology cannot ignore the vast scientific and historical developments that have taken place in recent history. Kaufman argues that, if the symbol of God is to be able to act as the regulating principle of individuals' lives in the modern era, then it must be reconstructed in such a way that it incorporates our current understanding of the nature of reality.⁴²¹

7.2.3 God, Humanity and Creation

The above discussion leads us back to the consideration of the effectiveness of the symbol of God that Kaufman has constructed. So can Kaufman demonstrate that his symbol is effective? As we will recall, above, Kaufman stated he wished to move away from a model of God that had its basis in notions of personal agency towards what would be revealed in that consideration of the development of human history. What was revealed, he stated, would lay the foundation for a model of God that would be more convincing and useful for modern humanity. So what was revealed? Kaufman came to the conclusion that two intertwined and related phenomena characterise reality: creativity and mystery. It is these two phenomena that Kaufman makes the basis for his understanding of God. So on what basis can Kaufman recommend that we transform our understanding of the mystery of creativity into an account of God? Kaufman's justification is predicated upon the common identification of God as that which creates and sustains all of existence.⁴²² As the existence and development of all life on Earth has been contingent upon creative trajectories, the genesis of which remain ultimately mysterious to us, he feels justified in using this process of his model for God. Indeed, this model certainly fulfils the first criterion he demands of any account of God: that of relativising our experience of reality. When we consider God to be the creative force that animates the universe and facilitates the development of life we find that our own lives, and their existential quandaries, are thrown into sharp relief.

⁴²⁰ Gordon D. Kaufman, "Response to Critics," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 2008): 85.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 322.

Such an understanding shows us, firstly, the contingency of our lives upon creativity, perhaps Kaufman's account of grace, and secondly the provisional nature of our form of existence. Fundamentally, we take from Kaufman's account an appreciation of how fortunate we are to exist and how foolish it would be to mar this existence by placing undue import upon beliefs and behaviours that do not bring about our flourishing. However, the failure to relativise our lives, we will recall was not a criticism levelled at Kaufman's theology by Carol P. Christ. She was worried by what she saw as Kaufman's failure to present an account of God that led to our greater humanisation. She rejected the model unfolded in *Nuclear Age* because of the manner in which reifying humanity's relationship with God while failing to account for the interconnectedness of humanity with our environment. Indeed, we could argue that in *Nuclear Age*, Kaufman placed humanity in an apocalyptic and eschatological relationship with God. However, in *Mystery* we seem to be agents of revelation: as we examine our own existence so too do we uncover insights into God.

Humanity was an agent of revelation in Kaufman's theology of history and it is also true in his theology of humanisation. As one would expect, Kaufman rejects traditional theological accounts of humanisation. In his move away from a reified, agential God the inter-personal aspect of faith is inevitably lost. He argues that the pursuit of such a relationship often ends in despair when we feel that it is absent, or when it becomes morally dubious or incomprehensible to hold such faith, such as when attempting to give a justification for faith in the face of the evils of the twentieth century. Kaufman admits that the struggle for a more humane ordering of life has been far from easy. Indeed, he argues it is only on the last two or three thousand years that a vision of such an existence has come into view. However, he argues, that this vision, coupled with the grounding he has given the struggle for this vision's culmination in the serendipitous creativity of the universe allows us a new appreciation of the cosmic evolutionary and historical process and our place within it.⁴²³ Here, Kaufman outlines his vision of the manner in which, he believes, an eschatological hope is generated from our relationship with the universal creativity of which the trajectory which lead to the development of human life was a part. Hope, he argues, arises from the very way in which paths to ever more humane relationships with each other are opened. It is this hope that fends off despair and which encourages our efforts to continue to pursue communities of love of earth.

⁴²³ Ibid., 339.

It is here, in the pursuit of our own humanity and the humanisation of our relationships with the other than Kaufman argues we locate the Spirit. As we recall, *Nuclear Age*, saw Kaufman conflate human action with the spirit leading to Carol P. Christ's criticism that his nascent environmental theology as anthropocentric. *Mystery*, by contrast, sees a more nuanced and much less tangled exposition of the relationship between the humanity and the Spirit. Here, Kaufman links the Spirit to the directionality inherent within the universal creativity of God. He argues that,

This directionality manifested in the creativity of the ultimate mystery of things has come to significant fruition (for us humans at least) with the emergence of *historicity* within the evolutionary-historical process, that is, with the appearance within the created order of modes of *subjectivity* which are themselves free and creative in important ways.⁴²⁴

Above, we have seen Kaufman's reconstruction of God the Father in terms of universal creativity, and indeed of God the Son in terms of the possibilities for creativity open to beings arising within the creative matrix of reality. In a similar vein, he reconstructs the understanding of God the Spirit in terms of specific and discernible subjectivities arising within creation. God the Father allows there to be creativity, God the Spirit allows this creativity to develop into something new and distinct. God the Son is one such example of the distinctness and newness supported by the Spirit. Humanity and Spirit are, then, no longer coterminous within Kaufman's theology. However, they are not totally distinct, and neither is any subjectivity arising from a creative trajectory. The Spirit allows subjectivities that arise from creative trajectories, most especially humanity, to move towards ever greater harmony with themselves and the other by continually opening up new opportunities for the exercise of creativity.⁴²⁵ If God's creativity allowed everything to come into being then it is Spirit that sustains this everything by opening up the future through creative trajectories that offer us hope by giving us the chance to assess and reconfigure our behaviours.

David E. Connor is concerned by what he perceives to be the rather tenuous link that Kaufman draws between serendipitous creativity and hope. Connor argues that a theology

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 297.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

that rejects the notion of an agential God who has a plan for a creation with which he has a personal relationship puts itself in a very tricky soteriological position. Humanity is thrown back upon its own wits and resources and our only guidance seems to be the rather vague injunction to make use of our own creativity in conjunction with the creativity of the universe, a force that Kaufman himself admits is serendipitous rather than systematic.⁴²⁶ In response to Connor's criticism, Kaufman argues, is a term employed to remind us that the future is open to us and is inviting us on. Many events in our history as a species would be considered serendipitous and, Kaufman argues, similar opportunities will open up in our future, it is up to us to take hold of these opportunities and fulfil our own creative potential. However, this hope, he argues is coupled with an awareness of our contingency upon those very same trajectories. This awareness, Kaufman argues, stops us from overreaching and doing ourselves harm.⁴²⁷

Above we have examined Kaufman's account of God, humanity and creation. Now let us examine his account of how this account can bring about a change in environmental consciousness. He argues that it conveys the notion that,

Life must at all points be lived in awe and respect before the ultimate mystery of things. But now this mystery is apprehended as profoundly humanizing as well as relativizing: it is a mystery, therefore, that can be loved as well as feared, a mystery within which we can feel "at home."⁴²⁸

Here, Kaufman outlines his belief that his symbol of God is both humanising and relativising. It humanises us by reminding us that we are, each of us, products of a serendipitous creative trajectory and thus fundamentally of equal worth. It relativises our experiences by reminding us that nothing is final or ultimate and that all of nature, ourselves included, is in a constant state of flux, always open to criticism and reconstruction. Fundamentally, he feels, we are not alienated by the mysterious nature of the origins of the universe. Rather, we can come to understand that this mystery is our home and that we belong within it.

⁴²⁶ David E. Conner, "More Than a Creative Beginning: An Assessment of Gordon Kaufman's 'In the beginning... Creativity'," in *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Reflections on Gordon D. Kaufman's "In the beginning... Creativity" and "Jesus and Creativity" (January 2008): 16.

⁴²⁷ Kaufman, "Response to Critics," 81.

⁴²⁸ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 359.

This is a theme that Kaufman picks up on in his major work on pneumatology, *In the beginning...Creativity*. Here, while is quick to emphasise the impersonal nature of creativity, he is still able to demonstrate how humanising and relativising themes can be drawn from its contemplation. He begins by asserting that,

The concept of creativity in no way explains how or why new realities have come into being; rather, it simply gives a name to the profoundly mysterious fact that novel realities have come into existence in the course of time.⁴²⁹

Thus his understanding of serendipitous creativity is different to the notion of the rational, creative *Logos* found within John's Gospel. Creativity is not mere change and is not the pre-ordained extemporisation of God's plan for the world. Kaufman understands creativity as a trajectory which punctures the causal equilibrium and, in doing so, provides the potential for multi-faceted, multi-directional development. However, God does not have a plan for history, God does not promise redemption to history and God does not stand over the waters and bring creation into being. Kaufman is so wary of God the Father's potential to infantilise humanity through promised redemption that he presents history as an entirely open process with no fathomable beginning or promised end. Humanity is dependent upon its own heart and mind for its survival and flourishing. In Kaufman's view this is an empowering rather than bleak situation. Kaufman stresses how unique and mysterious a possibility life is and how fortunate we are that our conscious lives are sustained by forces, the origins of which, are beyond our reason.⁴³⁰ Humanity has the privilege of creating its own culture, civilisation and history within a plentiful environment which we did not, ourselves create.

So how does Kaufman's account of eschatology, examined above, differ from the account, given in *Nuclear Age*, decried as anthropocentric by Carol Christ? As we recall, Carol Christ considered Kaufman's earlier account of eschatology implicit in the centralisation of humanity in the history of creation. Kaufman's eschatology she felt, presented an account of the dialectical relationship between humanity and God that, she argued, left the rest of creation as nothing more than a stage upon which this drama was played out. God, conceived of as the historical evolutionary process, found self awareness in humanity and, through this self awareness, was able to bring itself to its consummation. It

⁴²⁹ Kaufman, *In the Beginning . . . Creativity*, 71.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

was for this reason that, Christ argued, that Kaufman's account of God could not be humanising. Humanity was, just as in traditional accounts of the *imago dei*, raised above the rest of creation and, creation's entire destiny was centred on humanity. No account was given of any purpose, agency or history of creation removed from humanity's purpose, agency and history. The account of eschatology developed in *Mystery*, while maintaining the centrality of humanity to the development of communities of love, takes on a very different form and offers us richer content than is found in *Nuclear Age*. Here, our definition of our own humanity is shown to be contingent upon the matrix of creativity within we are intractably enmeshed. The fulfilment of any eschatological potential, then, is likewise contingent upon creation. We are contingent upon our environment for the conditions that sustain our lives and, upon creativity itself for the continued manifestation of the trajectories that allow us to build a more humane future.

7.2.4 Christ, Humanity and the Environment Revisited

In *Mystery*, we see Kaufman present a Christology with a similar basis to that of *Nuclear Age*. This Christology, however, discards the overbearing zeal of *Nuclear Age* and, instead, seeks to furnish biohistorical humanity with a moral exemplar, borne of universal creativity, to aid us in the humanisation of our relationships. The eschatological portion of Kaufman's Christology seems to identical to that which he espoused in *Nuclear Age*. He is very clear in his assertion that salvation is to be found in human relationships and thus the potential for eschatological communities is to be found within human individuals and communities, not in an act of the divine. He writes that,

The salvation promised...is nothing else than that special quality human life is expected to take on within this new community, with its straining toward truly human patterns of existence within itself and its larger task of fostering further humanization in the world through a ministry of healing and reconciliation.⁴³¹

Here, we see that Kaufman upholds his earlier assertion of the eschatological significance of humanity and expresses his belief that the tools for the salvation that we are constantly looking toward actually reside within ourselves. We could view this as a continuation of

⁴³¹ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 407.

Kaufman's, already examined, rejection of the notion of salvation by grace. However, the manner in which he phrases this argument places a greater emphasis on the hope we can draw from human potential rather than the often censorious tone of *Nuclear Age*. Indeed, this more positive and hopeful tone carries over into the soteriological aspect of his Christology. He no longer echoes Shūsaku Endō's call for us to embody Christ's suffering by viewing ourselves as having come into the world in order to be trampled upon by our fellow human beings. Instead, we see Kaufman encouraging us to use Christ's teaching to deepen our understanding of what humanisation means and how we can bring it about in our lives. Love, rather than suffering, is the defining characteristic of the soteriological aspect of Kaufman's Christology.

Kaufman's focus on love of the other through the contemplation of Christ's life also, we contend, contains an ontological component. As we will recall, Kaufman views all life, humanity included, to be the product of serendipitous creative trajectories within the universe. Christ is no different. Christ, Kaufman argues, came into being not through Immaculate Conception facilitated by angelic intervention, but through the life giving creative trajectories that is grounded in the ultimate mystery of God.⁴³² Christ, then, stands as an example of the moral development that an individual, whose existence depends upon mysterious universal creativity, can achieve. Christ is both an example and an exhortation in Kaufman's account, we are forever called onwards towards greater humanisation by the gravity of the loving message this example of the flowering of universal creativity provides us with. Christ is thus embedded in creation itself, just as we ourselves and all of life in the universe. Christ arises out of creativity to direct us towards its consummation. Kaufman writes that,

Our lives are truly oriented on Christ (in the wider sense), and on the God who comes to expression in and through Christ, only to the extent that the spirit at work in us and our churches is the truly humanizing and reconciling Spirit that breaks down barriers among human beings, and builds communities of love, freedom and justice in their stead...⁴³³

⁴³² Ibid., 41.

⁴³³ Ibid., 411.

Christ, Kaufman argues, is the expression of God, the mysterious matrix of universal creativity, in that he espouses the principles that can bring to fruition the orientation towards life that, he contends, consideration of the creative trajectories, that have given rise to life, evokes within us. It is Christ's existence that makes explicit the direction of the evolutionary-historical process and illuminates, without uncovering, the mystery of creativity.

⁴³⁴ While we must be reconciled to the fact that ultimate answers shall elude us, we can choose to live our lives as witnesses to that which is revealed in Christ. We have the choice to follow the example of this highly developed moral genius, an inspiring product of the same creativity that brought us, ourselves, into being and, in so doing, humanise our own circumstances and relationships. This way, Kaufman feels, lies salvation and a loving community of our own creation.

7.2.5 Towards a Biohistorical Morality

Above, we have examined how Kaufman's symbol of God as creativity reshapes our understanding of God, Jesus, Spirit and humanity. But what moral insights does this symbol bestow upon us? First let us examine how he feels it illuminates the nature of sin. So what is the root of sin? Kaufman argues that an illustration of the nature of sin can be found in the words that the serpent uses to tempt Eve in Genesis 3:4. Here the serpent tells Eve that when she eats the fruit from the Tree she will become like God and possess knowledge of good and evil. From this Kaufman argues that,

The fall of humankind, that is to say, occurs when men and women come to suppose that that know what only God can know, what is truly good and what is evil...To suppose that we know them is to sin- to fall away from God, the very ground of our humanity, thus falling away from ourselves.⁴³⁵

Here, Kaufman asserts that what makes us human is our inability to access ultimate moral knowledge. We will continually wrestle with moral dilemmas throughout our lives and continually be frustrated by both our unavoidable need to choose, one way or another, despite our inability to know which choice is best.

⁴³⁴ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Jesus and Creativity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 51.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 368.

This is the truth that is encapsulated in the mysterious beginning of life itself: the very existence of the creativity which has brought us along an evolutionary trajectory to this point in history. It is this awareness of our basic ontological ignorance that Kaufman argues,

... induces within us deep humility: for it continuously reminds us that we must call into question our own actions, decisions, judgements, standards, criteria. We must acknowledge the possibility, even likelihood, that we are mistaken, in the wrong; and we must repent, thereby opening ourselves to other ways of thinking and acting, and opening ourselves to those others expressing alternative perspectives and modes of life.⁴³⁶

While the majesty God the Father, in Kaufman's view did little but encourage humanity's domination of the environment, the mystery of God as creativity encourages humility and reflection. It reminds us that, just as we do not know our ultimate origins, our ultimate destination remains an open question.

So how does God's mysterious creativity allow us to break down sin within the context of environmental crisis? Kaufman argues that the exponential evolutionary developments of the human race, our presumption to know good and evil, have set up tensions that now threaten the entire web of life. So, how are we to seek forgiveness? Kaufman argues that God's forgiveness comes in the form of an assurance, in the form of universal creativity, that the end of history has not been reached and the future offers possibilities for redemption. Kaufman argues that is expressed the mysterious creativity of God that ensures that,

Though we may be unaware of the particular countervailing forces bringing this about, the biohistorical trajectory which has brought us into being continues to move toward a balanced ecological order among all creatures- an order which on the human level is expressed in the hope and striving for communities of peace, justice and well being for all.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 371.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 371.

Here, Kaufman argues that God as creativity provides a universal perspective for faith which leads to the displacement of anthropocentrism and thus sin. Indeed it is such faith that allows humanity to come to full self-realisation in the pursuit a universal community which is inclusive all elements of the ecological order instituted and continually developed by the loving action of God.

Kaufman argues that understanding God as the creativity upon which all of creation is contingent, presents humanity a fully engaged, potent and responsible agent of historical development. Indeed he writes that faith in consists in three core principles. These are,

... (a) our discernment that there are in our world some movements and momentums toward a more human and ecologically sustainable order of life for women and men, (b) our living in the hope that these are the visible evidences of a deeply grounded trajectory along which human history is moving and may continue to move, and (c) our committing ourselves and our lives without reservation to this hope and the possibilities it opens up for us and the rest of life on earth.⁴³⁸

Here we see that the relationship between God, sin, forgiveness and faith comprises a comprehensive moral framework that informs our relationship with each other and the rest of creation. The symbol of God as creativity undergirds an all-encompassing narrative framework that places the individual within a moral universe. Here, the morality is not imposed by the individual by way of an ethical code but is woven into the very fabric of reality by the relationship that all creation enjoys with its Creator. We sin when we attempt to monopolise the resources of creation to the detriment of the whole, we are forgiven when we put aside this selfishness and accept the responsibility occasioned by the openness of the future and the possibility of change.

Van A. Harvey is critical Kaufman's use of the symbol of God as creativity as the basis for a moral code. He argues that Kaufman's approach to theology results in a kind of pantheism wherein God becomes synonymous with the evolutionary process. Harvey argues against the effectiveness of any theological message that is, at least in his reading, divorced

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 373.

from revelation.⁴³⁹ Indeed, he argues that, when a theologian seeks to sever the revelatory link between God and creation, religious naturalism is the inevitable outcome. Edgar A. Towne feels that Harvey's criticisms rest on an understanding of Kaufman's stance on revelation which is only partially accurate. Harvey, Towne argues, bases his argument on a belief that Kaufman's rejection of traditional accounts of revelation is an attack upon any attempt to present an ontological account of God. In essence, he argues, it is a rejection, they feel, not just theology but Christian belief itself. However, Towne argues, this is not Kaufman's position. Rather, Kaufman's Kantianism manifests in his belief that it is only possible to do theology from a perspective inside the universe, under the constraints of our rational and sensory faculties.⁴⁴⁰ Modern cosmology does not give credence to an ontologically distinct realm outside our universe wherein a being such as God could exist. Thus, we go too far, Kaufman feels, when we give greater credit to miraculous accounts of divine intervention that we do to the knowledge of creation granted to us by scientific endeavour. This is not to deny God's existence, Towne argues, but rather to remind us that we must accept that our theological constructs are images of our own construction that do not connote anything definitive about God's ontology. God as creativity is an image that has its basis in the creative trajectories that humanity is capable of discerning within the universe that have allowed life to come into existence.

7.2.6 The Evolution of Kaufman's Theology

At the beginning of this section discussing Kaufman's late career theology we resolved to keep Carol P. Christ's criticisms of the anthropocentrism that she identified in *Nuclear Age* at the forefront of our minds. She argued that he failed to express the depth of our interrelation with our environment and focusing instead on the valorising of human suffering for the sake of change. To her mind, Kaufman's environmental theology still began with humanity and ran through human action, the environment remained the backdrop to this human action and appeared to be thought of as an object to be acted upon rather than a subject in its own right. So now let us take stock of the responses Kaufman's late career theology can offer to these criticisms.

⁴³⁹ Van A. Harvey, "Feuerbach on Religion as Construction," in *Theology Toward the End of Modernity: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Kaufman*, ed. Sheila Greeve Davaney (Philadelphia: Trinity Press Int., 1991), 250.

⁴⁴⁰ Edgar A. Towne, "Facing Up to Mystery: Gordon Kaufman's Admirable Candor about Talk of God," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 2008), 69.

Let us begin with anthropology. Kaufman's anthropology becomes more sophisticated in his late career moving away from the apocalyptic potential of our nuclear capabilities to a broader account based on evolution and environment. *Mystery* saw Kaufman describe human beings a 'biohistorical'. By this he meant that human beings are indebted equally to their culture and their ecosystem for existence. We are not simply human beings; we are human beings living within a certain environment which we depend upon to provide us with the conditions for our existence. Regardless of the sophistication of our culture we are incapable of escaping the fact that our lives are supported by a larger ecosystem. This is an anthropology of ecological embeddedness and precedes any of Kaufman's arguments on the nature of human action or the notion of eschatology. This account of anthropology provides a much more hopeful basis for humanisation than the one offered in *Nuclear Age* which is roundly criticised by Christ. We are no longer defined in terms of our capacity to destroy or suffer but rather in terms of our fundamental interrelation with our environment.

Next let us turn to his account of the Trinity. *Nuclear Age* saw Kaufman present an account of the Trinity in which God was seemingly reduced to the historical- evolutionary process itself, the action of Spirit conflated with human action and Christ presented as an exemplar of the suffering we must commit ourselves to if we wish to bring about eschatological change in the world. Carol P. Christ accused Kaufman of anthropocentrism for the above portrayal of the action of the Trinity in the world. So can Kaufman's late career theology offer us a more engaged and environmentally focused account of the Trinity and history? *Mystery* reveals an understanding of God as the mysterious creativity that allows the universe, and life within it, to exist. God, is insulated from human action within this model in a manner in which he was not in *Nuclear Age*. In *Nuclear Age*, we were forced to examine the possibility that human action could in some way influence God if, as Kaufman held, we were to construct a symbol of God based on the historical- evolutionary process. This is not a problem for the model of God constructed in *Mystery* as God is now to be understood as the possibility of the conditions of life rather than simply the sum total of existence. God, within this model, is understood as the continued possibilities for change offered by the serendipitous trajectories running through creation. God does not guide history directly. Rather, he is responsible for the possibility of human redemption within history. His account of the Spirit also becomes more nuanced. The Spirit is no longer conflated with human action but rather with the possibility of historicity and subjectivity. The Spirit allows uniqueness within creation and is evidenced in the movement of trajectories that have brought about the

abundance of different life forms on our planet. God is the ultimate cause of creativity while the Spirit is to be understood in terms of the creativity that attends all corners of existence. Christ, as well, undergoes a reconstruction between *Nuclear Age* and Kaufman's late career. As we will recall, Carol P. Christ criticised Kaufman's understanding of Christ simply in terms of his suffering and rebuked Kaufman for suggesting that this suffering offered us a template for discipleship in a nuclear age. Kaufman's late career, by contrast, focused on Christ's message of love. In *Mystery*, Christ arises from the evolutionary-historical process and, through his moral genius, shows us the direction that our actions ought to take is we wish to humanise our relationships with ourselves and each other.

So far we have examined Kaufman's anthropology and his account of the Trinity. Now let us turn to his eschatology. As seen above, Kaufman radically disentangles humanity, history and God in his late career after having them deeply intertwined in *Nuclear Age*. In *Mystery*, humanity has the possibility, provided ultimately by the creativity of God, to move towards a loving community of creation, through the guidance given by the teaching of Christ, within a world the creativity of which is sustained by the Spirit. Kaufman attempts to relate this understanding through a biohistorical ethics that acts as an eschatological blueprint for his, admittedly non-traditional, account of Trinitarian history. Kaufman's biohistorical ethics rests on his reconstruction of the traditional theological concepts of sin and forgiveness. He argues that no matter how deeply we fall into despair as a result of our anthropocentrism, or sin, we are always capable of moving away from this attitude through the openness of the world of creativity that we inhabit. God's forgiveness is the openness of the future and the serendipitous creative trajectories that continue to arise within creation. We are always capable, he argues, of moving towards a sustainable ecological order, just as we can strive for peaceful and just communities amongst each other. Our faith in God, he argues, consists in recognising that there are serendipitous creative trajectories within our world, living in hope that human history is moving and will continue to move along one such trajectory and committing our lives to this hope and the possibilities it opens up for the rest of life on earth. Of course, this is far removed from a traditional; understanding of eschatology. Humanity is presented, not with the hope of salvation, but with the responsibility to save itself. From the above, we can argue that Kaufman presents an account of the relationship between the Trinity and history that relativises human experience by demonstrating our reliance on our environment, itself a product of serendipitous creativity, for our existence

while humanising us through an understanding that we are not isolated but, in fact, deeply interrelated with the rest of creation.

Chapter 8: A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the influence of Jürgen Moltmann's and Gordon Kaufman's environmental consciousness on their accounts of Anthropology, Eschatology and Theology

Jürgen Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman exemplify the contrasting strands of hope and responsibility that we identified as arising within the field of environmental theology. Their positions are fundamentally irreconcilable because of their respective stances on God's redemptive action in the world that we first presented in chapter 1. The contrast that is provided by Moltmann's realism and Kaufman's constructivism raised some deep problems for environmental theology. Whether we place a practical or epistemological ontology at the heart of anthropology, present an account of eschatology with a thick or thin definition of *telos*, or even potentially no *telos* at all, or give an account of God's ontology as relational or regulative are decisions that have foundational significance for the direction of our environmental theology. The purpose of this final chapter is to fulfil our research questions, firstly by building a comparison to illustrate the foundational significance of these irreconcilable positions by bringing them into dialogue and, secondly, to ascertain how this dialogue is exemplary. That is to say, we seek to understand how constructing a dialogue between these positions may help illustrate the tension at the heart of the field of environmental theology itself as it moves into the future.

For theologians that share Moltmann's approach it is God's redemptive action that provides hope and thus gives responsibility a direction. They would contest that without hope we would be unable to understand the form and content of our responsibilities. The hope provided by the promise of God's Kingdom to come interrupts our experience of the present and redirects it towards this future. We bring glory to God's creation, ourselves included, when we live lives that anticipate the coming of his Kingdom. We denigrate God's creation when we interact with it on the basis of a system of values determined by human reason alone. As we anticipate the coming of God's Kingdom, our relationship with creation is transformed from one of subject-to-object to one of relationality. Hope for the future, Moltmann would argue, thus provides us with an account of responsibility towards creation.

Theologians who share Kaufman's approach would argue that, on the contrary, it is responsibility itself that is generative of hope. Appeals to God's redemptive action occlude the fundamental contingency of humanity upon the environment and thus shield us from the

realisation that the responsibility for the creation of our future lies solely in our hands. Our contingency upon the environment is what is fundamental to the human being and our account of it is stymied when it is filtered through an account of God's redemptive action in the world. Without responsibility, they would argue, hope is baseless as it is only in a realisation and acceptance of our radical responsibility for our own future that we come to understand our own identity.

It is precisely because of their irreconcilability that a dialogue between Moltmann and Kaufman may illuminate foundational themes with which every environmental theology must wrestle. We contend that, through a comparison of the twenty five year period of development in their thought that this thesis focuses upon, we are able to reveal some foundational tensions which environmental theology needs to address as it moves forward.

8.1: Anthropology: The Ontology of Humanity and Environmental Responsibility

In order to create such a dialogue with regards to anthropology we shall compare the manner in which their environmental consciousness shaped their respective accounts of anthropology, specifically humanity's ontology, throughout their careers. Moltmann and Kaufman categorise humanity in fundamentally different ways. As a theological realist Moltmann's categorises human existence in terms of our relationship with God. His ontology is fundamentally practical and functions to structure our existence in terms of this theological relationship. This categorisation expands with his growing environmental awareness but remains fundamentally rooted in a theological account of humanity's relationship with God. Kaufman, as a theological constructivist, rejects such a categorisation. His account of humanity's ontology is rooted in epistemology. His anthropology functions to regulate our understanding of the world on the basis of this epistemological construct. Again, his ontological categorisation of humanity is expanded as his environmental consciousness grows but remains fundamentally rooted in an epistemological ontology. Bringing these two exemplars of two irreconcilable accounts of ontology into dialogue may illuminate the critical issues that future environmental theologies must overcome in order to present an anthropology that situates humanity within a sustainable rather than destructive relationship with our environment.

8.1.1 Consciousness and the Individual: Self and Other vs Self and Culture

In his early career work on anthropology, *Man*, we see Moltmann present an account of humanity's ontology based on the *imago dei* which actually contains the basis of his egalitarian moral outlook. Moltmann argues that a fulfilled individual is an individual who relates to others on the basis of the fundamental similarity conferred by the *imago dei*. That is to say, we understand that we each deserve to be treated with the respect befitting being made in God's image, and treat others with that same respect in turn.⁴⁴¹ Unfilled humanity consists of individuals relating to each other on the basis of the nation, race or society.⁴⁴² A fully expressed 'humanity' has, as yet, eluded us.⁴⁴³ Moltmann's early understanding of anthropology, then, was based on an egalitarian reading of the *imago dei*. He established a moral position from this reading, understanding human potential in terms of whether or not we treat others as if they were made, like ourselves, in God's image. Kaufman, by contrast, rejects not just the *imago dei* but any account of humanity's ontology that rests on the imparting of some innate quality by an external agent. He posits that all that can be said to be innate to the individual, in Kaufman's account, is her ability to criticise and reconstruct language and symbolism in order to bring order and meaning to her life.⁴⁴⁴ Within Kaufman's historicist anthropology, the self is not to be understood to belong to the same ontological category as the *imago dei*. Rather, it is to be understood as an individual incidence of human consciousness, arising out of and existing only in relation to its historical and cultural context.⁴⁴⁵

Thus we see that, while Moltmann's anthropology centres on how God breaks down the tension between self and other, Kaufman's account rests upon the perpetual tension between self and culture. There is a tension here between Moltmann's practical account of ontology and Kaufman's epistemological account of ontology. Within the bounds of Moltmann's practical ontology, the individual reaches fulfilment when she comes to understand that the *imago dei* breaks down the boundary between self and other. As we come to understand ourselves as made in the image of God and redeemed by the suffering and resurrection of Christ so we must cast aside worldly and contingent systems of classification,

⁴⁴¹ Moltmann, *Man*, 110.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 315.

⁴⁴⁴ Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith*, 57.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 77.

thus transforming our understanding of both ourselves and the other. Unlike Moltmann's anthropology, Kaufman's epistemologically centred anthropology does not offer the individual a linear moral path to fulfilment. The individual defines herself in both relation and contrast to her culture as she attempts to form her own identity and make sense of her experiences. Within Kaufman's theology it is the unity provided by the symbol of God that ultimately orders and brings meaning to our experiences. It is our responsibility to construct a symbol fit for this purpose in relation to the existential and practical concerns of our epoch. Indeed this comparison of anthropologies sourced respectively from the tension between self and other and the tension between self and culture is another way in which the tensions between relational and regulative ontological accounts of God begin to emerge. In Moltmann's case, God resolves an anthropological tension by bring the self into relation with the other. In Kaufman's case, our symbol of God structures our epistemology such that the self can be unified in spite of the tensions arising from her epoch.

8.1.2: Reason and Humanity's Alienation from the Environment

From the above, we see that Moltmann and Kaufman's anthropologies are fundamentally irreconcilable because of the differing accounts of humanity's ontology upon which they are founded. Moltmann's account of humanity's ontology is based on the *imago dei* and operates in a practical fashion to resolve the tension between self and other. Kaufman's account of humanity's ontology is based in historicism and operates in an epistemological manner to resolve the tension between self and culture. So, how did the structure of their respective anthropologies respond to their mutual growing awareness of the environmental crisis?

In Moltmann's case we would expect to find an anthropology that begins with an account of our alienation from the environment on the basis of categories that are overcome by God's creative and redemptive action in the world. Indeed this is what we find in *God in Creation*. Here, the contingent categories that form the basis of our alienation from the environment are provided by the Cartesian dualism of the Enlightenment. Descartes divided the world into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, mind and body. Humanity was characterised by its rational mind, while the rest of creation was understood as merely 'body' and lacking any

rational faculty.⁴⁴⁶ This, Moltmann posits, led to the imposition of a firm divide between humanity and the rest of creation and came to determine the manner in which humanity ruled over creation. Humanity came to rule over creation in terms of the designs of their own reason rather than in relation to the glory of God.⁴⁴⁷ So, how can the transformative aspect of God's creative and redemptive action in the world overcome this alienation? Moltmann states that Romans 8:19-23 is transformational of our understanding of creation's relationship with God, as we read of its yearning to be reunited with its creator.⁴⁴⁸ Here, we understand creation as an inter-dependent subject, not simply an object to be manipulated by humanity. Therefore, anthropology must begin with an account of God's relationship with his creation as a whole and not simply of the relationship between God, humanity and history. Indeed, he writes that if we are to avert the 'common catastrophe of human beings and the earth' we must synchronise human history and the history of nature itself.⁴⁴⁹ Here Moltmann appears to advocate a practical account of ontology that is able to place humanity within the creative and redemptive relationship between God and creation as a whole. Such an account of ontology would expand the relational aspect of the *imago dei* such that humanity's likeness to God is framed as congruent with environmental sustainability.

So, how was the structure of Kaufman's anthropology, based on the dynamic between self and culture, affected by his growing awareness of the environmental crisis? We would expect an account of a cultural symbol that had alienated the self from the environment and a call for the reconstruction of this symbol such that it presented humanity as interrelation with the environment. Indeed, such a change in the structure of Kaufman's anthropology is evidenced in his 1972 paper 'A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature'. Later published as part of 1981 work *The Theological Imagination*, this paper contains Kaufman's rejection of several mainstream theological concepts as environmentally destructive. Chief amongst these concepts was the *imago dei* which Kaufman argued alienated humanity from its environment. He argued that *imago dei* anthropology is informed by an understanding of God as a moral, rational and universal Lord.⁴⁵⁰ Kaufman posits that such an understanding of God leads us to define ourselves in the same terms thus distinguishing ourselves from the rest

⁴⁴⁶ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 279.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁵⁰ Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination*, 224.

of creation on the basis of our reason.⁴⁵¹ Thus, he contends, we come to believe that we live within the world but are not, fundamentally, of this world or constrained by it. If we are made in the image of God then why should we be concerned with the rest of creation? Kaufman argues that we must create a new symbol of God that informs an anthropology based upon our environmental interrelation rather than authorising environmental destruction.⁴⁵² The symbol that Kaufman creates to fulfil this task is that of God as creativity. Here, God is no longer the universal Lord who creates and redeems but, rather, is the source of the creative trajectories within the universe along which all life has developed and upon which all life is contingent. Kaufman presents a regulative concept of God that produces an epistemological account of anthropology that orders our understanding of the world such that we understand ourselves as intractably interrelated with our environment.

So, how are Moltmann's and Kaufman's anthropologies affected by their growing environmental concerns? There is a certain formal similarity in their responses. Both thinkers focus on the relationship between faith, reason and environment in their attempts to unify theological anthropology and environmental consciousness. However, the content of their responses are irreconcilable.

As a theological realist, Moltmann seeks to present a practical account of ontology that situates humanity within God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation as a whole. It is this relationship, within the context of ecological crisis, which overcomes the tension between the human self and the environment as other. The environment awaits the redemption promised by God, just as we ourselves do. Therefore, our relationship with our environment has consequences for our relationship with God. To use our reason to act upon our environment in a destructive and exploitative fashion is to disregard our relationship with God. When we align our reason with our faith in God we shall begin to engage in sustainable relationships with our environment that venerate our relationship with God. Consequently our faith in God can be said to transform our understanding of both the environment and our own reason.

So, if Moltmann's account of environmental anthropology rests upon the manner in which our relational aspect could influence our reason, Kaufman's depends upon an account

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 237.

of how our reason can regulate our relational aspect. As a theological constructivist, Kaufman attempts to present an epistemological account of anthropology wherein human reason reshapes faith in such a manner that we come to understand ourselves as interrelated with our environment. Faith and reason can then be said to be aligned when our relationships with our environment begin from this position of interrelation. In contrast to Moltmann's presentation of a practical ontology as the basis for a relational account of anthropology, we see that Kaufman presents an epistemological basis for ontology that underpins a regulative account of anthropology.

These responses demonstrate the radically different directions that anthropologies based on a practical ontology, on the one hand, and an epistemological ontology, on the other, can take environmental theology. Moltmann's anthropology locates humanity within the creative and redemptive relationship between God and his creation. Kaufman's anthropology takes the form of an epistemological framework that orders our experiences such that our reason and our faith become aligned in our pursuit of sustainable relationships with our environment.

8.1.3: Anthropology and the Future of the Environment

Above, we see that despite the irreconcilability of their respective anthropologies, both Moltmann and Kaufman pinpoint the manner in which a certain account of reason could be used to authorise our domination of the environment. In Moltmann's case Enlightenment reason is the antithesis of faith in God's creative and redemptive action. Enlightenment reason divides up God's creation into rational subjects and irrational objects rather than presenting it as uniformly the glory of God. Kaufman, by contrast, argues that it is the ontology contained within the *imago Dei* which causes human reason to divide creation into the likeness of God and that which is not like God, thus alienating from our environment. In this section we shall compare the ontological resolutions that Moltmann and Kaufman offer to the tension between faith, reason and the environment.

Moltmann's growing environmental consciousness has led to an expansion of his practical account of humanity's ontology. The function of the *imago dei* was ultimately relational, to resolve the tension between self and other. In order to resolve the tension between humanity and the environment as other, the relational aspect of Moltmann's

practical account of humanity's ontology expands to include our likeness to the world as well as the divine. Moltmann contends, we must move from our understanding of the environment as an object to an understanding of ourselves as interrelated with that environment and made in the image of the world, *imago mundi*, as much as we are made in the image of God. Moltmann asserts that, if we can bring the seemingly opposed notions into unity, then we are capable of ruling over creation 'with Christ'.⁴⁵³ The notion of ruling creation 'with Christ' contained within the writings of St. Paul, particularly 1 Corinthians 6: 2-3, relates to forming relationships with creation which bring glory to God's creation and anticipates the coming of his kingdom.⁴⁵⁴ A fulfilled expression human reason, then, is contingent upon our understanding that the environment itself is a subject with which we are interrelated.

Kaufman's growing environmental awareness also led to an expansion of his account of humanity's ontology. The function of his historicist anthropology was fundamentally regulative, seeking to resolve the tension between self and culture through the construction of an epistemological ontology. The tension between self and culture that Kaufman's historicist anthropology seeks to resolve is the tension between the environment and the notion of humanity as made in the image of God. In order to achieve this he expands his historicist categorisation of humanity to include our biological contingency upon our environment. The anthropology contained within the symbol of God as Creativity is that of 'biohistorical' humanity. This account of humanity incorporates both our historical and biological aspects and grants them equal value.⁴⁵⁵ As a product of universal creativity, the biohistorical individual understands that all the possibilities contained within her own creativity are contingent upon the conditions for life which have developed due to creative trajectories exterior to her own existence.⁴⁵⁶ Our future ability to exercise our reason through the use of our creativity is dependent upon the maintenance of the conditions for life. From this we understand that we demonstrate our faith to God, as universal creativity, by maintaining these conditions through the use of our reason to direct our creativity to bring about creative rather than destructive trajectories within the world.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 227.

⁴⁵⁵ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 109.

⁴⁵⁶ Kaufman, *In the Beginning...Creativity*, 50.

Once again, there is certain formal similarity between the accounts of the relationship between faith, reason and the environment offered by Moltmann and Kaufman. Both link faith in God to the exercise of reason to build community with the environment. However, this is where the similarity between their accounts ends as their accounts operate on fundamentally different presentations of human ontology.

Moltmann's is a practical ontology based on an expanded account of the relational aspect of the *imago dei*. Faith in God is no longer expressed simply through the breaking down of boundaries between groupings of humanity that appear other. Faith in God, within the expanded account of relational function of Moltmann's practical ontology, is expressed in breaking down the aspects of our relationship with God's creation that establish it as other. Kaufman's epistemological ontology is based on a rejection of the *imago dei*. He expands the regulative function of his epistemological ontology such that his historicist anthropology is replaced by a biohistorical anthropology that incorporates the contingency of humanity upon its biology, as well as its history. Here, faith in God as creativity entails the expansion of our epistemological account of ontology such that we understand that our contingency upon universal creativity entails our responsibility for the use of our reason to ensure the future sustainability of our relationship with our environment.

Thus, we see that there are foundational consequences relating to the nature of the ontology we place at the centre of our anthropology. Moltmann's practical ontology entails a relational account of the dynamic between faith, reason and the environment. Here, our faith in God is demonstrated in relationships with our environment founded upon the hopeful anticipation of the coming of his Kingdom. By contrast Kaufman's epistemological ontology entails a regulative account of the dynamic between faith, reason and the environment. Here our faith in God is demonstrated by the construction of a symbol of God that directs our reason towards its responsibility for our future relationship with our environment.

8.1.4: Concluding remarks on Anthropology: The Ontology of Humanity and Environmental Responsibility

Moltmann, a theological realist, locates the resources for his anthropology within the theological tradition itself, particularly scriptural revelation. Kaufman, a theological constructivist, locates his resources from within the social and historical context within which

he is writing. Indeed, Kaufman would argue that scripture is simply a record of symbol of God constructed by human reason out of necessity as a response to social and historical context in which it was written. Despite their differences, however, we see that both thinkers attempt to restructure their anthropology to incorporate ecological concerns through the resolution of the tension between reason, faith and the environment. However, the formal similarities between their environmental anthropologies give way to fundamental differences in the content of their accounts of the ontology of humanity. It is on the matter of whether we ought to understand humanity as made in God's image that they fundamentally differ. The dialogue that we have constructed between them helps illuminate firstly that an environmental theologian must make a decision regarding the ontological status of the human being, and that there are profound consequences relating to this decision.

First let us examine the formal similarities between Moltmann and Kaufman accounts of reason's relationship with both the environment and faith. Both thinkers present accounts of the manner in which our faith in God influences our understanding of the relationship between the environment and reason. These accounts are based on very different presentations of God as the ultimate source of the universe. These accounts generate an understanding of faith in terms the alignment of our reason with the sustenance of the community of creation that has arisen from this source. We come to understand that the manner in which we apply our reason within the context of our relationship with our environment can either fortify or denigrate our relationship with God, its ultimate source. We fortify that relationship when we move towards sustainability and we denigrate that relationship when we use the environment as means to our own ends. However, there is a fundamental difference between their respective accounts of the anthropological significance of God's decision to create humanity in his image that leads to a fundamental difference in the content of their critical accounts of human ontology.

Moltmann's anthropology is fundamentally practical and operates in a relational manner. Central to this anthropology is the assertion that there is an environmental significance that is entailed by being made in the image of God. We are placed within God's creative and redemptive relationship with all of his creation. It is through God's promise made in Christ that we come to understand how to live in community with our environment such that we anticipate the coming of his Kingdom. The hope that we can establish environmentally sustainable relationships with creation is thus a part of the ontology of the

human being as created in the image of God. The dynamic between faith, reason and the environment, within Moltmann's practical ontology, is one of relation. We express faith in God when we utilise our reason to engage in sustainable relationships with our environment and thus rule over it 'with Christ'.

Kaufman's anthropology, by contrast, is fundamentally epistemological and operates in a regulative manner. The role of human reason, Kaufman contends, is to construct a symbol for God that organises our experiences such that our self-understanding proceeds from our interrelation with our environment towards a sustainable relationship with it. Within Kaufman's account it is not God who provides us with the hope that we may bring about ecological harmony. This hope is innate within human reason. Hope arises when human reason grasps its responsibility for the future of its relationship with the environment. The dynamic between faith, reason and the environment within Kaufman's ontology, then, is fundamentally one of regulation. We demonstrate faith in God when the symbol of God that our reason constructs expresses our contingency upon our environment and our responsibility for our future relationship with it.

A comparison of the environmental anthropologies arising from Moltmann's realism, on the one hand, and Kaufman's constructivism, on the other, illustrates the foundational significance of the decision we make regarding humanity's ontology or environmental theology as a whole. We see that, within Moltmann's environmental anthropology, it is faith that gives direction to reason. In Kaufman's environmental anthropology it is reason that gives direction to faith. A *relational ontology* serves to place our relationship with the environment within the creative and redemptive relationship between God and his creation as a whole. Environmental responsibility is generated by the hope given in Christ for the redemption of all creation. We express faith in God through the construction of a relationship with his creation that anticipates this redemption. An *epistemological ontology* serves to place our faith in God within the context of relationship between reason and the environment. It is our reason that constructs a symbol of God that informs an epistemology wherein our responsibility for the future of our relationship with the environment is central to our self-understanding. It is from the acceptance of this responsibility that hope for the future of our relationship with the environment is drawn. The decision we make regarding human ontology then has intractable consequences for our accounts of environmental hope, responsibility and

our account of how relationship faith and reason generates environmentally sustainable action.

8.2: Eschatology: Universal *Telos* and Human Action

The premise of this comparative chapter is that irreconcilability of Moltmann and Kaufman's respective theological commitments allows us to create a dialogue that has significance for environmental theology as a whole. The manner in which their theologies exemplify two opposing theological approaches lends weight to conclusions which we draw from the dialogue that we construct between them. Below we shall seek to continue this process by creating a dialogue between their respective attempts to present an account of eschatology within the context of environmental theology. Fundamentally this will be an investigation into the effect that a growing awareness of humanity's role in the destruction of the environment had on the eschatological positions respectively espoused within the works of their early career. In so doing we hope to ascertain what themes arise from bringing eschatology into conversation with radical environmental hope on the one hand and, on the other, radical environmental responsibility.

Moltmann and Kaufman present accounts of environmental eschatology that diverge on the matter of the *telos* of the universe and the implications this has for human action. Within Moltmann's account it the *telos*, or purpose, of the universe that provides us with the content of human action. To have faith in God is to live lives directed towards this *telos* as we seek out relationships with creation that foreshadow its fulfilment. Within Kaufman's account the universe does not possess a *telos* and it this understanding that provides the content of human action within an era of environmental crisis. It is the role of human reason to construct a symbol of God that can order our experiences such that we pursue sustainable relationships with our environment. Of course, there is another way of reading this the distinction between their approaches to *telos*. We might suggest that, whilst Moltmann operates with a thick account of *telos*, Kaufman's operates with a thin account of *telos*. That is to say, in Moltmann's case the universe has *telos* ascribed to it by God's creative and redemptive intention towards it, Whilst, in Kaufman's case, *telos* is derived from the link between our own creativity and God as the mysterious source of all creativity within the universe. Human reason generates *telos* as it grasps the implications for its environmental responsibility contained within this link. However, for the purpose of this comparison we shall focus on

Kaufman's rejection of a *telos* arising from God's creative and redemption intention towards his creation. Below we shall compare these two irreconcilable accounts of environmental eschatology in order to illuminate the critical issues with which future environmental theologies must inevitably contend if they wish to present an account of eschatology they includes creation as a community, rather than humanity in isolation.

8.2.1: Eschatology and Environmental Consciousness

From the above we see that Moltmann and Kaufman provide radically different accounts of the structure of eschatology. These structures give rise to accounts of the function of eschatology which are similar in form but not in content. In both cases the form of eschatology's function is to locate our account of purpose within the context provided by faith in God. However, it is here that the similarity ends. Moltmann and Kaufman differ greatly on matter concerning the content of eschatology due to irreconcilable accounts of God intention towards the universe. Now let us examine how these differences in eschatological content inform their accounts of eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis.

From Moltmann's realist perspective we gain an account of eschatology that emerges from the tension between history and revelation. He builds a position of universal teleology based on the link between God's creative act and redemptive promise. That which is revealed by God about the universe interrupts history and re-orders our experience in relation to that revelation.⁴⁵⁷ The universe has a purpose, its reunification with God in the coming of his Kingdom. This purpose, in turn, provides us with an account of environmental action. We ought to seek to build communal relationships with creation that anticipates the fulfilment of universal teleology in the coming of God's Kingdom. It is universal *telos*, therefore, that forms the basis of Moltmann's account of eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis. Creation's relationship with God interrupts our understanding of the world as an object to be worked upon and re-orders it in relation to its status as a product of God's creative act, a fellow traveller on the road to redemption in God's Kingdom. This interruption is accompanied by an understanding that our relationships with our environment ought to take a shape that anticipates the fulfilling of the universal *telos* in the coming of

⁴⁵⁷ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 201.

God's Kingdom. Sustainable environmental relationships, therefore, arise out of the *telos* conveyed by God's creative and redemptive promise to the universe

By contrast, Kaufman's constructivist perspective presents an account of eschatology arising from the relationship between history and culture. Kaufman posits that, as our symbol of God arises from within our culture, so too does our eschatology. Therefore, he does not provide us with an account of God's creative and redemptive relationship with the universe and thus no account of universal teleology. It is the responsibility of human reason to reconstruct the symbol of God inherited from culture such that the account of eschatology it can resolve the tensions arising within our experiences.⁴⁵⁸ He actively rejects accounts of eschatology that contain an account of universal *telos* derived from God's redemptive promise as he argues they insulate us from our own eschatological responsibility for the future of our environment. He states that the traditional understanding of God as creating a world towards which he has certain intentions, particularly soteriological, is inadequate and unhelpful in our technologically rich epoch. We are much more aware of how to shape our world, and of the consequences of these actions than ever before in human history.⁴⁵⁹ Eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis centres upon the interruption of our destructive behavioural trajectories in the present by the future possibility of redemption offered by the universe in the form of creative trajectories. It is then a case of aligning our lives within these creative trajectories, rather than the destructive ones that we have authored for ourselves. According to Kaufman's symbol of God as creativity, these creative trajectories have their ultimate source in God. However, there is no intention to create, and certainly no intention to redeem, within Kaufman's symbol of God. What we find is the possibility of redemption and our own responsibility for bringing the redemption about.

The above comparison of Moltmann and Kaufman illustrates the significance of universal *telos* to accounts of eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis. Within Moltmann's account of eschatological action the universal *telos* provided by God's creative and redemptive intention interrupts our present relationship with our environment and directs us towards a relationship that anticipates the coming of his Kingdom. Kaufman's account of eschatological action rejects the notion of universal *telos* and presents the possibilities for change offered by universal creative trajectories as interruptive of our

⁴⁵⁸ Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith*, 112.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

destructive relationship with our environment. We are responsible for the future of our environment and cannot rely upon a universal *telos* to ensure our redemption. Moltmann's account of *telos* provides us with hope that motivates action. Kaufman's rejection of *telos* provides us with an account of responsibility that provides us with the hope that we shall be able to save ourselves.

8.2.2: Hope for the Future of the Environment: Resolving the tension between Future and Action.

Above we examined their differing accounts of eschatological action within the context of environmental crisis. Below we shall examine their accounts of the link between eschatological action and purpose within the context of environmental theology. Both thinkers locate purpose within the context provided by faith in God. However, within the context of environmental crisis it is necessary for eschatology to locate our account of purpose within the context of the relationship between faith in the future of God and the future of the environment. Below we shall compare their accounts of eschatological action, differing foundationally in content, to determine what resources their thought can provide environmental theologians with as they wrestle with this link between eschatological action, faith and the future.

So can Moltmann's account of eschatological action based upon the tension between history and revelation, provide such an account of purpose? Moltmann attempts to achieve this by providing an account of how our faith in the future promised to creation by God generates action in the form of a movement towards a community of all creation in the present. Moltmann's account of our faith in the future rests upon a Trinitarian account of God's eschatological relationship with creation.⁴⁶⁰ The redemption of creation is assured, within his eschatological framework, by the synthesis of God's creative act, Christ's resurrection and the Spirit's witness.⁴⁶¹ Such an understating of creation interrupts our destructive relationship with the environment in the present and transforms our understating of this relationship. The environment is no longer a resource to be acted upon but is the location for our relationship with God.⁴⁶² This transformation of our relationship with

⁴⁶⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 15.

⁴⁶¹ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 329.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 155.

creation also leads to a transformation in our understanding of our action within it. When we degrade creation we degrade our relationship with God just as when we give glory to creation we give glory to our relationship with God. Environmental responsibility thus becomes the primary function arising from the articles of faith from which we draw hope on the basis of our promised redemption

Now let us ask whether Kaufman's account of eschatological action, operating within a constructivist eschatological structure based upon the tension between history and culture, can provide an account of purpose in terms of the relationship between faith in God and the environment. Like Moltmann, Kaufman focuses upon the relationship between our faith in God and the future of creation. However, he diverges from Moltmann in his account of the God in whom we have faith. Kaufman's constructivist account of theology leads to an account of a God of possibility rather than a God of promise. Kaufman's symbol of God as creativity provides the structure for our understanding of the manner in which the future interrupts the present and how an account of action can be derived from this interruption.⁴⁶³ The future interrupts the present in the form of the opportunities to replace our destructive trajectories with creative trajectories that arise by virtue of the nature of universal creativity itself.⁴⁶⁴ What account of action does Kaufman derive from this interruption? The account of action contained within this form of interruption is one wherein humanity moves towards a relationship with the environment that sustains the characteristic by which it is signified as our home, namely the conditions that sustain life.⁴⁶⁵ In such a manner, our own creativity can be understood to be aligned with universal creativity. There is no promise of salvation arising from God's action, rather there is a possibility of salvation at our hand arising from the creativity present within the universe, for which God, in Kaufman's understanding is ultimately the source.

Earlier, we saw how realist and constructivist accounts of eschatology generated similar accounts of the form, but opposing accounts of the content, of eschatology's function. This similarity in form, accompanied by a profound difference, in content is also evident in their accounts of the manner in which faith in God is linked to the construction of a sustainable environmental future. In both cases, it is the faith that humanity has in God that is

⁴⁶³ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 367.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 373.

transformational of our understanding of our relationship with creation. However, their accounts of God, and therefore the content of the faith by which humanity's understanding is transformed, are different. Indeed, it is debateable whether we could truly call Kaufman's account of human action eschatological at all. Whether we flourish sustainably or bring about our own extinction our ultimate limit is the heat death of the universe. Of course, a modern cosmological account of humanity's relationship with our environment has its own merits. However, it is incongruous with the function of God intended within the Kantian epistemology upon which Kaufman so strongly relies. God, freedom and immortality are central to Kantian decision-making as, for our decisions to have any moral value, they must exist within a framework that allows them to be weighed and for ourselves to be judged accordingly. In removing accounts of God's redemption, Kaufman has also removed the notion of God's judgement. This leaves humanity with simply an account of God and freedom and, consequently, an account of both history and our own lives that is fundamentally without teleology. Thus we see the content of Kaufman's constructivist account of the link between faith in God and our construction of a sustainable future is at odds with Moltmann's realist account of eschatology.

8.2.3: Concluding remarks on Eschatology: Universal *Telos* and Human Action

Moltmann and Kaufman present us with fundamentally irreconcilable accounts of eschatology. Their conclusions, drawn as they are from positions that exemplify opposing approaches to theology, contain insights that may very well hold significance for the field of environmental theology as a whole.

Irrespective of the obvious structural differences in their presentations of eschatology both thinkers contend that the tension between eschatology and the environment can only be resolved in terms of an account of the world as our home. Of course, despite this similarity in form, the content of their accounts of home differ greatly. Moltmann argues that our understanding of our relationship with our environment can be transformed through a broadening of our account of God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation. Kaufman, by contrast, argues that for the world to be our home we must remove any account of its redemption by any external agent and reframe our eschatology in terms of our responsibility for our future. Despite the different directions that their accounts of home take,

it is clear that providing an account of the environment that locates humanity within the environment as our home is of central importance to environmental eschatology.

Furthermore, their respective accounts of the world as home function along the same active trajectory between faith in God and the future sustainability of our relationship with our environment. However, despite the formal similarities between their accounts of the link between faith and action within an environmental eschatology, there is a crucial difference in their content. Moltmann's theological leads him to a presentation of the link between faith and action rests upon an account of a universal teleology. For Moltmann, our action is motivated by the promise, made by God in Christ, that the universe has a definitive purpose. The universe is an end in itself in the sense that its purpose is to be reunited with its creator, God, in the coming of his Kingdom. Our actions within the world anticipate this reunification and derive their purpose and direction from it.

By contrast, Kaufman's account of the link between faith and action with environmental eschatology is based on the outright rejection of a universal *telos*. Within his account if the universe were to possess a *telos*, intrinsic to its relationship with its creator, then there can be no authentic human responsibility and, consequently, no coherent account of action. Kaufman is unswerving in his demand that we take full charge of our responsibility for the future of our relationship with our environment. Part of this process, he posits, is divesting ourselves of accounts of the universe that entail its salvation at the hands of a Father deity. To this end, Kaufman's theological constructivism leads him to the presentation of the symbol of God as universal creativity. This symbol removes the notion of universal *telos* and replaces the notion of eschatological salvation with an account of action based in the alignment of our own creativity with the creative trajectories that arise within the universe. In such a manner our destructive relationships with our environment are replaced by creative relationships without the need to refer to an account of universal *telos*.

Whether the universe possesses a *telos*, therefore, is a matter of crucial importance for environmental eschatology that has arisen from this dialogue that we have constructed between these two exemplars of opposing theological approaches. The position that prospective environmental theologians take on this matter has profound consequences for the account they give of the link between faith and action within the context of environmental crisis. If the universe possesses a *telos* then the argument can be made that our account of the

link between faith and action is devoid of any true account of responsibility. However, without an account of universal *telos* it becomes increasingly difficult to present an account that links faith in God to environmentally sustainable action. God's creative and redemptive intention towards the universe provides it with a *telos*. This *telos* allows us to regulate our actions in accordance with God's intentions for the universe. Once this *telos* is removed we are left with no authority external to our reason by which to regulate our actions. We may very well be able to present very good reasons to follow an environmentally sustainable path, but it would prove difficult to link such an account to faith in God once we have removed any account of his intention towards the universe from our eschatology.

8.3: Theology: God's Ontology and Environmental Sustainability

From the above, we see that distinctive and irreconcilable understandings of God underpin the content of Moltmann's and Kaufman's respective accounts of eschatology and anthropology within the context of environmental theology. Despite the irreconcilability of these understandings, arising from their status as exemplars of opposing theological methods, they both operate along trajectories that demonstrate a high degree of formal similarity. They move from an account of what constitutes knowledge of God, to an account of God's identity which then informs our notion of what difference God makes in the world. It is this trajectory, as it comes into contact with environmentalist concerns, which dictates the direction which their accounts of anthropology and eschatology take within the context of environmental theology. Below, we shall examine the three elements of their accounts of God in an attempt to draw out critical issues for the construction of future environmental anthropologies.

8.3.1: What constitutes knowledge of God?

Let us begin with a comparison of the how the respective accounts of how knowledge of God is constituted, given by Moltmann and Kaufman, are affected when placed within the context of environmental theology.

We see in Moltmann's accounts of environmental anthropology and environmental eschatology that he still draws his account of what constitutes knowledge of God from God's self-revelation. However, within the context provided by environmental theology,

Moltmann's account of that which is revealed by God is greatly expanded. When we examine God's self-revelation we discover not simply an account of God's creative and redemptive relationship with humanity but an account of God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation as a whole.⁴⁶⁶ Moltmann's position, therefore, is that the theological tradition itself is capable of providing an account of what constitutes knowledge of God that contains within it a certain understanding of the environment.⁴⁶⁷ How we come to know God also plays a fundamental role in how we come to know ourselves, our environment and the relationship between God, humanity and the environment. Realist knowledge of God, therefore, is fundamentally relational knowledge.

Now let us turn to Kaufman's accounts of environmental anthropology and environmental eschatology. Here, we see that his positions are informed by a symbol of God that he has constructed in order to organise the experiences of an individual living within an era that has come to be defined by the environmental crisis. Central to Kaufman's constructivist approach to theology is his injunction that theologians actively analyse, criticise and reconstruct theological symbols, inherited from tradition, that are no longer capable of organising our experiences due to their incompatibility with the existential and pragmatic considerations arising from within our culture.⁴⁶⁸ The existential and pragmatic concern facing humanity in our current era is our relationship with the environment. Kaufman posits that the theological tradition's account of God only serves to alienate us from our environment and must, therefore, be reconstructed.⁴⁶⁹ His symbol of God as creativity is constructed so as to function as the organising principle or regulative idea that ties together the relationship between God, humanity and the environment. Constructivist knowledge of God, therefore, is fundamentally regulative.

From the above, we see that despite the fundamental differences in the content of their accounts of how we know God, both thinkers come to very similar formal conclusions on the matter of what constitutes knowledge of God within the context of environmental theology. It is interesting then, that from both a realist and constructivist perspective, it is a formal necessity for environmental theologians to present an account of what constitutes knowledge of God that can also inform our understanding of the relationship between ourselves, God and

⁴⁶⁶ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 188.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴⁶⁸ Kaufman, *Theological Imagination*, 11.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

the environment. However, beneath the formal similarities is a fundamental difference in the content of their accounts that relates to irreconcilable differences between theological realism and theological constructivism.

For a theological realist, such as Moltmann, the content of God's self-revelation must be comprehensible in terms of the relationship between God, humanity and creation. For a theological constructivist, such as Kaufman, the content of the symbol of God arising from culture must be informed by the necessity of that symbol's ability to regulate our experiences such that they can provide an account of the relationship between God, the environment and humanity. Moltmann's account of what constitutes knowledge of God is fundamentally rooted in God's self-revelation. Kaufman rejects such a position arguing that it is the responsibility of human reason to construct culturally adequate symbols of God. This exposes the tension between God's self-revelation and human reason at the heart of the dispute between theological realism and theological constructivism. Theological realists state that we must correctly interpret God's self-revelation in order to discover transformational environmental truths contained within it. For theological constructivists, it is human reason that is fundamentally responsible for inventing its way out of the environmental crisis that it has got itself into by way of constructing the appropriate symbol for God.

The dialogue between these two thinkers reveals the very different directions environmental theology can take dependent upon whether we understand knowledge of God to be relational or regulative. Relational knowledge of God involves the individual in a relationship with God, through revelation that, in turn, informs our actions in the world. Regulative knowledge of God is the product of human reason, mediating the symbol of God such that it can inform our actions within the world. Within the context of environmental theology, relational knowledge of God is practical, placing us within the wider context of God's relationship with his creation. Regulative knowledge, within the context of environmental theology, is an epistemological attempt to mediate our understanding of God such that a wider context for our actions is created.

8.3.2: Who is God?

Now, let us turn our attention to their respective accounts of God's identity. Moltmann's theological realism leads him from God's self-revelation to an account of God's

identity that centres upon his creative and redemptive relationship with that which he has created. Kaufman's constructivism leads him to an account of God that rejects revelation and, instead, centres upon the ability of the concept of God, mediated by theological symbol, to regulate and unify our experiences. Below, we shall examine how these accounts of God's identity were affected when placed within the context of environmental theology.

Moltmann's accounts of environmental anthropology and environmental eschatology operate with an account of God's identity that centres upon the redemptive promise he makes to his creation as whole. Preceding both anthropological and eschatological accounts is the notion that God's promise of redemption should be understood solely in terms of his relationship with humanity, but rather, in terms of the redemption of all aspects of the creation that he looked upon and saw was good. This account of God's identity, therefore, that is transformative of how we understand our relationship with our environment is fundamentally relational. God's relationship with his creation directs us towards an understanding of the significance our relationship with the environment has for our relationship with God.⁴⁷⁰ To engage in destructive relationships with that which God has created and promised to redeem is to denigrate our own relationship with God. To bring glory to God through the pursuit of communal and sustainable relationships with his creation, in turn, glorifies our own relationship with God.⁴⁷¹ What is essential to Moltmann's realist account of God's identity within the context of environmental theology is that it is transformative of the aspects of our understanding of the environment that underpin our destructive relationship with it.

Kaufman's accounts of environmental anthropology and environmental eschatology also operate on an account of God that is transformative our understanding of our relationship with our environment. Whilst Kaufman is a constructivist and is, therefore, content to construct a symbol of God to fit this criterion, what is notable is the manner in which he transposes the Kantian notion of God as regulative idea into the context provided by environmental theology. The identity of God within Kaufman's thought is essentially regulatory.⁴⁷² The form this regulation takes must be decided in accordance with the existential and pragmatic quandaries arising within culture. Therefore, Kaufman's symbol of

⁴⁷⁰ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 157.

⁴⁷¹ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 288.

⁴⁷² Kaufman, *In the Beginning...Creativity*, 32.

God as creativity can be understood as construct intended to organise and regulate our experiences in such a manner that the individual is capable of moving along trajectories diametrically opposed to the destructive trajectories taken by humanity in our relationship with our environment thus far.⁴⁷³ What then is essential from Kaufman's constructivist perspective, with regards to our understanding of God's identity, within the context of environmental theology? It is essential that a symbol of God is created that can act to regulate our experiences through the transformational effect this symbol has upon our understanding of our relationship with our environment.

Both thinkers present an account of God's identity that is transformative of our understanding of our relationship with our environment. However, beyond formal similarity, we see a fundamental difference in the content of their respective accounts of God's identity. Moltmann's account of God's identity is rooted in a relational ontology whilst Kaufman's is rooted in a regulative ontology. Dialogue between these two thinkers demonstrates what is at stake for environmental theologians seeking to pursue either path. Understanding God's ontology as relational places us within his redemptive relationship with all creation. Our relationship with creation thus reflects upon our relationship with God and transforms our environmental action. Understanding God's ontology in regulative terms leads to the creation of a symbol of God that transform our understanding of our relationship with our environment such that we replace destructive trajectories within that relationship with creative trajectories. Within the context of environmental theology then, relational ontology is practical, placing us within God's redemptive relationship with his creation. Regulative ontology, within the context of environmental theology, is fundamentally epistemological. It is the mediation of the concept of God such that our understanding of our environment is transformed and we seek to redeem our relationship with it. Here, we admit that we have not used the term ontology in its more classically philosophical sense to denote an enquiry into the character of knowledge or structure of being. We have used this term to denote the differences in the category of being that these thinkers ascribe to God that reveal the foundational differences in the content and style of their accounts of God, despite the formal similarities in their accounts of God's identity.

⁴⁷³ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 411.

8.3.3: What difference does God make?

Finally, let us inspect their respective accounts of the difference that God makes in the world. The trajectory of Moltmann's theological realism lead him from his exposition of God's identity to an account of the difference God makes in the world which links our faith in God to our future relationship with his creation. The trajectory within Kaufman's constructivism leads him from his presentation of God's identity towards an account of the manner in which our faith in God, as regulative idea, can function to transform our relationship with our environment through the mediatory capacity of symbol. Below, we shall examine how these accounts of the difference that God makes in the world were affected when placed within the context of environmental theology.

So, let us begin by examining the account of the difference God makes to the world that runs through Moltmann's accounts of environmental anthropology and environmental eschatology. Moltmann's account of God's identity points us towards our relationship with creation as a crucial aspect of our relationship with God. The difference that God makes in the world is draws a link between the identity of the God in whom who have faith and the future of our relationship with the environment. Having faith in a God who promises to redeem that which he has intentionally created entails actively attempting to foster a communal and, therefore, sustainable relationship with God's creation.⁴⁷⁴ On this basis, we could contend that, whilst God's identity provides the form of our relationship with our environment, content for this relationship is provided by the link that we draw between faith in God and the future of this relationship. It is in this way that Moltmann posits that God makes a difference in the world.⁴⁷⁵ So, what is the crucial theme that emerges from Moltmann's realist account of the difference that God makes in the world within the context of environmental theology? This difference God makes in the world must be understood in terms of the sustainable relationships with our environment it establishes, through the link it provides between faith in God and our treatment of his creation. Furthermore, our understanding of God reminds us that we are internal to these relationships and can never extricate ourselves from them.

⁴⁷⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 188.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

We also find an account of the difference God makes in the world which operates in terms of the link between faith in God and our future relationship with the environment running through Kaufman's constructivist accounts of environmental anthropology and environmental eschatology. As we will recall from the above, within Kaufman's theology God's identity is fundamentally regulative. He is the limit of experience that allows us to bring all our experiences into relation to him and therefore present a unified account of ourselves. If this Kantian notion of God as regulative idea is the form of the God in whom we have faith then how should we understand its content? The content of our faith in God is provided by the symbol of God which is constructed, by human reason, to meet the needs of the individual that arise out of her social and historical context. Kaufman's symbol of God as creativity functions to provide us with an account of God that unifies our experiences such that our action becomes inextricably linked with the most crucial issue confronting collective human consciousness in our era, the future of our relationship with our environment.⁴⁷⁶ So what account of the difference God makes in the world, within the context of environmental theology, does Kaufman provide? Fundamentally, to demonstrate faith in the God of creativity is to align our own creative capacity with the opportunities for a creative, rather than destructive, relationship with our environment offered by the universe.⁴⁷⁷ In so doing, our faith in God leads us to the pursuit of sustainable relationships with the environment which has arisen, just as we have, from the universal creative trajectories that have their source in God.

There is a formal similarity between the two thinkers' accounts of the difference God makes in the world. For both God is the ultimate source of the environment, therefore, faith in God requires the pursuit of a sustainable future with that environment. However this formal similarity gives way to an irreconcilable difference in content based on the difference between relational and regulative accounts of faith. This difference illustrates the significance of the difference between relational and regulative accounts of faith for environmental theology. Moltmann's relational account of faith presents our future relationship with our environment in terms of our faith in God's redemption of his creation. We shall create sustainable relationships with our environment if we are faithful in a God who promises redemption that which he has intentionally created. Kaufman's regulative account of faith centres upon the symbolic presentation of God such that our account of faith in God

⁴⁷⁶ Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 297.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

necessitates the construction of creative rather than destructive relationships with our environment. Within the context of environmental theology, relational accounts of faith are practical. They place us within a relationship with God that is affected by the relationships we construct with the rest of his creation. Regulative accounts of faith within the context of environmental theology are fundamentally epistemological. They seek to construct a symbol of God that transforms our understanding of faith such that the construction of environmentally sustainable relationships with our environment becomes its expression.

The above conclusions regarding the irreconcilable content of their accounts of God's transformative action upon our understanding of the environment opens up new understandings of the significance of their work. Steven Bouma-Prediger was critical of the environmental consequences of the discontinuity that Moltmann presented between creation and the *eschaton*.⁴⁷⁸ He argued that Moltmann's account of creation as waiting for redemption devalued our present relationships with our environment.⁴⁷⁹ However, our response to Bouma-Prediger's criticism would be that this discontinuity between creation and *eschaton* is accompanied by God's continuity with creation in the crucifixion of Christ. Therefore, creation is placed at the centre of God's redemption and consequently our understanding of our relationship with it is transformed. In Kaufman's case, our study demonstrates that his theology provides environmental theology with resources that have been all but untapped by the secondary literature written on his work. In chapter 3 we examined Kaufman's style, audience and reception and concluded that it was the troubling account of Christian identity that accompanied his constructivist theology which made him inaccessible and potentially unpalatable to mainstream Christian audiences. This thesis demonstrates that, beneath his uncomfortable style, is a theology that can unveil foundational tensions within environmental theology and whose work is very much worth engaging with by environmental theologians.

8.3.4: Concluding remarks on Theology: God's Ontology and Environmental Sustainability

From the above, we see that Moltmann and Kaufman present accounts of what constitutes knowledge of God, who God is and what difference God makes in the world that

⁴⁷⁸ Steven Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology: The Ecological Models of Rosemary Radford Reuther, Joseph Sittler, and Jürgen Moltmann* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 89.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

share many formal similarities. Both thinkers contend that an account of what constitutes knowledge of God, within such a context, must also inform our account of ourselves, our environment and the relationship between God, humanity and the environment. Furthermore, both Moltmann and Kaufman contend that an account of God's identity, within the above context, must be transformative of our understanding of our relationship with our environment. Finally, they are in agreement that any account of the difference God makes within the context of environmental theology, must be presented in terms of the quality of the future relationships with the environment that arise from our faith in God. However, these similarities in form give way to fundamental differences in content caused by a clash between Moltmann's relational account of God's ontology and Kaufman's regulative account of God's ontology. This leads to radically different accounts of the relationship between God, the environment and humanity and the role that human reason plays in this relationship.

Moltmann's accounts of what constitutes knowledge of God, God's identity and the difference that God makes in the world are fundamentally practical and based upon a relational account of God's ontology. The individual is placed within God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation and it is this placement that transforms our understanding of our environment, generates hope for its future and catalyses action towards sustainable relationships with it. The redemption of both humanity and our environment comes from a uniform source external to the relationship between them. We are already unified with our environment in redemptive promise of Christ, it is a matter of attaining the *imago Christi*, inherent within us a gift from God, such that this unity is expressed in our relationships with our environment. To understand God's ontology as relational is to transform our understanding of ourselves. We express faith through the use of our reason to construct sustainable environmental relationships that anticipate the hoped for coming of God's Kingdom.

By contrast, Kaufman's accounts of what constitutes knowledge of God, God's identity and the difference that God makes in the world are fundamentally epistemological and based upon a regulative account of God's ontology. Here, the individual's reason constructs a symbol of God that transforms our understanding our understanding of ourselves, our environment and our faith. The individual is not placed within the creative and redemptive relationship between God and his creation. Rather, the symbol of God, constructed by human reason, is deployed to unify humanity with our environment on the

basis of faith. Our epistemology is transformed by this symbol of God such that we understand our relationship with our environment to have significance to our faith in God. This generates an account of the redemption of humanity and our environment that is internal to the relationship between them. It is human reason, and not God's redemptive intention towards creation, that places faith within the context of environmental sustainability. We are motivated not by a hope for redemption in God's Kingdom but by the responsibility for the future of our environment inherent within our own creativity.

Moltmann, a theological realist and theologian of radical environmental hope, and Kaufman, a theological constructivist and theologian of radical environmental responsibility, exemplify opposing accounts of God's ontology. Moltmann presents an account of God's ontology as relational whilst Kaufman presents an understanding of God's ontology as fundamentally regulative. The dialogue between these two positions demonstrates that the decision we make regarding God's ontology fundamentally determines our understanding of what constitutes knowledge of God, the nature of God's identity and the difference God makes in the world. In turn these systematic issues will determine the account we give of the relationship between God, the environment and humanity and our presentation of the role that human reason plays within this relationship. Moltmann categorises God's existence in terms of relationships, giving rise to a practical environmental theology focusing on humanity's response to the creative and redemptive relationship between God and his creation as a whole. Kaufman categorises God's existence in terms of meaning-making. This gives rise to an epistemologically based environmental theology in which humanity's reason creates a symbol of God that conveys our responsibility for the sustainability of our future relationships with our environment. These two irreconcilable and exemplary theologies reveal that, at the heart of environmental theology, is the question of God's ontology itself.

8.4 Thesis Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to conduct a critical and comparative analysis of Moltmann's and Kaufman's environmental theologies by creating a dialogue between their seemingly irreconcilable positions. The rationale for doing so was that such a dialogue could help illuminate foundational tensions within environmental theology that would be exemplary of the questions with which environmental theology must wrestle as it continues to develop. Above we have attempted to fulfil these research tasks by constructing a dialogue between

Moltmann and Kaufman on three central areas of environmental theology: anthropology, eschatology and theology itself. Theology was broken down into an examination of their accounts, within the context provided by environmental theology, of what constitutes knowledge of God, their account of God's identity and their presentation of the difference which God makes in the world. This revealed a number of deep problems for environmental theology. Firstly, this revealed the environmental significance of the ontology upon which we base our anthropology. Secondly, this revealed the environmental significance of presenting an eschatology based upon a thick or thin definition of *telos*, or even potentially no *telos* at all. Finally, this revealed the foundational significance of our account of God's ontology for our environmental theology as a whole and consequently the future direction of this theological field. The manner in which we categorise God's own existence has fundamental consequences for the manner in which we categorise our own existence and the existence of the environment itself, as well as the relationship between these parties. Moltmann and Kaufmann offer differing categorisations of God's existence which, in turn, give rise to very different accounts of humanity, the environment and the relationship between God, the environment and humanity. Below we shall examine these resources in greater depth to draw out their exemplarity for environmental theology as a whole.

Moltmann and Kaufman appear to concur that a theological anthropology, constructed within the context of environmental theology, must overcome the notion of the environment as other such that our faith and reason point us towards sustainable relationships with our environment. However, their positions are only similar in form and differ greatly in content with regards to the ontological status of the human being. Moltmann overcomes the notion of environment as other through an expanded account of what it means to be created in God's image. To be created in God's image is to possess the potential of the *imago Christi*, the image of Christ. When we unify our likeness to the image of God with our likeness to the image of the world we rule over creation 'with Christ', creating sustainable relationships with our environment. Kaufman rejects all such accounts of anthropology as environmentally destructive as they enforce an ontological difference between us and our environment. However, his account of reason is not without problems of its own. Whilst it does not enforce a necessary ontological difference between humanity and our environment it does not provide us with any substantial guidance for the application or development of our reason. Thus we see there are structural consequences for anthropology regardless of whether we link humanity's ontology directly to God or remove this link altogether. What is revealed by this

comparison is that the decision that an environmental theologian makes regarding the ontological status of the human being has profound implications for the construction of their theology.

They are also in agreement with regards to the formal necessities of an environmental eschatology. Both thinkers posit that such an account of eschatology must present an understanding of the world as our home such that our faith is expressed through environmentally sustainable actions. However, as in anthropology we see considerable differences in the content of these positions. Moltmann's presentation of environmental eschatology is based upon a teleological account of the universe based on the creative and redemption relationship that it enjoys with its creator, God. All of creation yearns for the fulfilment of its *telos* in its reunification with its creator in the coming of God's Kingdom. This *telos*, revealed by God in his self-revelation in Christ, unifies us with our environment, and places our actions towards our environment within the context of our relationship with God himself. Kaufman's account of environmental eschatology rejects the notion of a universal *telos* as, he argues, it insulates us from our responsibility for the future of our relationship with our environment. However, whilst his account may place human environmental responsibility at its centre, the lack of universal *telos* leaves his eschatology struggling to give direction to our actions. We are left with a mechanistic account of the universe wherein we are simply responding to needs as they arise with no certainty of the fruitfulness of any of our long term plans. So, we see that major conceptual difficulties attend both accounts of the universe that ascribe to it a *telos* and those that rejects such ascriptions. What is revealed by a comparison of these opposing viewpoints is that the teleological status of the universe is of central importance to future attempts to construct environmental eschatology.

Finally, they reach similar formal conclusions with regards to the systematic theological questions of what constitutes knowledge of God, the nature of God's identity and the difference God makes in the world, within the context of environmental theology. Both thinkers agree that if statements are to constitute knowledge of God they must contain an account of the relationship between God, humanity and the environment. Furthermore they concur that any account of God's identity, within the context of environmental theology, must transform our understanding of our relationship with our environment. Lastly, they are unanimous in their contention that any presentation of the difference God makes in the world,

framed within the context of environmental theology, must give an account of manner in which our faith in God affects the future quality of our relationships with our environment.

However, despite their formal similarity regarding the above questions of systematic theology, the contents of the conclusions they arrive at are markedly different. The reason for this is that their concepts of God have guiding principles that are fundamentally irreconcilable. Moltmann's concept of God is founded upon an account of God's relational ontology. It is this which allows him to build a practical account of environmental theology that places human reason within the relationships between ourselves and our environment whilst keeping accounts of the ultimate salvation of creation exterior to this relationship. Therefore, human reason seeks the betterment of its relationship with its environment in anticipation of the redemption promised to all creation by God.

Kaufman rejects Moltmann's position as being fundamentally incapable of providing a genuine account of our responsibility for the future of our environment. If salvation is guaranteed by God, regardless of our destructive relationships with our environment, then we cannot claim that faith can motivate sustainable environmental action. Kaufman's account of God's ontology, by contrast, is regulative. From this position, he builds an epistemological account of environmental theology that operates on the transformative content of the symbol of God generated by human reason. We create a symbol of God such that our faith leads us to the pursuit of sustainable relationships with our environment. The account of God's creative and redemptive relationship with his creation is replaced by an account of our responsibility for our own redemption of our relationship with our environment.

This dialogue that we have constructed between these irreconcilable theologies of radical environmental hope and radical environmental responsibility is exemplary of the foundational tensions within environmental theology, and has exposed the deep problems with which environmental theologians must contend as they move into the future. As we seek to construct an environmental theology our decision making is informed by the tensions that we were presented with as we brought them into conversation on the matters of the anthropology, eschatology and theology. Fundamentally, they show us that we must make a decision on the ontological status of humanity, the *telos* of the universe and the ontology of God himself if we are to present an account of the relationship between God, the environment and humanity. Indeed, of greater significance even than the decisions that they demonstrate

field of environmental theology must make, is the manner in which they illuminate the foundations of environmental theology itself. This dialogue we have created between these disparate thinkers reveals that at the heart of environmental theology are the fundamental systematic questions of what constitutes knowledge of God, the identity of God and what difference God make in the world. Their struggles with these questions exemplify the process that environmental theologians must engage with as they seek to construct a theology that encompasses the relationship between God, the environment and humanity.

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