

Gustavo Gutiérrez's Notion of "Liberation" and Marx's Legacy of "Ruthless Criticism"

by

Sarah Lynn Kleeb

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religion
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Sarah Lynn Kleeb 2015

Gustavo Gutiérrez's Notion of "Liberation" and Marx's Legacy of "Ruthless Criticism"

Sarah Lynn Kleeb

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religion
University of Toronto

2015

Abstract

This dissertation examines the content and meaning of Gustavo Gutiérrez's notion of liberation in his pre- and post-1986 writings, framing the trajectory of this notion as a direct response to the 1984 and 1986 Vatican condemnations of liberation theology, composed by former-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now, former-Pope Benedict XVI). While Gutiérrez's early theology was in part informed by Marxian social critique, charges of explicit "Marxism" resulted in a significant reordering of some central critical elements, in ways that complicate the fundamental liberationist assertion that theology is to be a "second act." Following Ratzinger's critique, Gutiérrez moves ever closer to a theology that talks about liberation, and away from a theology that is itself liberatory, particularly as bound to praxis and critique. Where Gutiérrez once questioned the very meaning of religious unity in a world characterized by (economic) division, for example, his later theology abandons such speculation, asking instead, "How are we to live evangelical charity in the midst of this situation?" The ramifications of this shift are such that the initial aims of Gutiérrez's liberation theology have largely been re-assigned, with a focus on liberation as a question of faith rather than a question of human emancipation and agency. The recent rise of Pope Francis, who frequently uses liberationist language and economic critique in

several recent interviews and encyclicals, has made such already murky waters even more complex. He has long distanced himself from liberation theology; now, as pope, Francis seemingly draws on the very same tradition from which he once sought to distinguish himself. What this means for Gutiérrez's notion of liberation remains to be seen, but this work attempts to put Gutiérrez and Marxian thinkers back into conversation with one another, particularly with regard to Marx's notion of "ruthless critique."

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Marx's Legacy of "Ruthless Criticism"	15
A Few Words on Approach, Terminology, and Key Concepts	22
Gutiérrez's "Liberation Theology"	22
Which Marx? Whose Marx? Why Marx?	25
Chapter Outline	28
Chapter One: Gutiérrez's Liberation Theology pre-1986	32
Liberation as Class Struggle	36
Chapter Two: Gutiérrez's Liberation Theology post-1986	44
1989 – "The Meaning and Scope of Medellín," and "Toward the Fifth Centenary"	52
1991: "New Things Today: A Rereading of <i>Rerum Novarum</i> "	57
1994: "Theology: An Ecclesial Function"	62
2009: "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ"	74
Chapter Three: Liberation and Orthodoxy	80
1961: "Mater et Magistra – Christianity and Social Progress"	81
1963: "Pacem in Terris – Peace on Earth"	87
1965: "Gaudium et Spes – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"	91
1967: "Populorum Progressio – On the Development of Peoples"	104
1971: "Octogesima Adveniens – A Call to Action"	110
Chapter Four: Liberating a "New Humanity"	116
Liberation and Human Society	125
Friction and Fellowship	132
Chapter Five: Uniting Theory and Praxis in Solidarity with the Poor	140
Structural Inequality and the Meaning of 'Authenticity'	151
"Evangelii Gaudium" and Gutiérrez's Notion of Liberation	157
The "Idolatry of Money"	159
Violence and Unity	162
Liberation as a Historical Project	166
Chapter Six: Conclusion – Yearning, Critique, and Liberation	173

From Marx to Marxian: The Frankfurt School and Religious Yearning 176

Bibliography..... 177

Notes..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Introduction

At several times over the course of its composition, this work teetered on becoming a historical project, tracing the trajectory of a movement in a context which seemed relegated to the past, its author more historian than contemporary critical theorist. When the present project was still in its early stages, the liberation theology that began with Gustavo Gutiérrez and other like-minded Catholics in Central and South America seemed as far as it could be from mainstream, contemporary religious and theological discourse.^A Since its infancy in the 1960s and 70s, this pioneering version of liberation theology has given rise to theologies of liberation that cross the boundaries of tradition and denomination, and which extend far beyond the initial borders of the Central and South American continents. Forms of religiosity dedicated primarily to a notion of material justice as a driving force in religious identity have blossomed within and outside of the Christian traditions, with the rise of Jewish liberation theologies, Islamic liberation theologies, and liberationist impulses weaving through multiple varieties of many of the world's religious and social movements.¹ It is impossible to deny the influence that this once remote form of theological inquiry has had in terms of discourse around faith and economic oppression, particularly within orthodox Catholicism. Key liberationist themes like the “preferential option for the poor” (a conscious decision to always put those who are oppressed in a position of primacy), and the “idolatry of money” (capital and private property being “worshiped” above, or

^A Because of the expansive spread of liberation theologies throughout the world since its inception in 1960s and 70s in Latin America, it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to speak of “Liberation Theology,” or even “liberation theology,” as such. While such theologies have multiple intersections and a common foundation in commitment to those who live in conditions of poverty and oppression, the idea of a singular, monolithic liberation theology is not adequate. Recognizing such constraints, in referring to “liberation theology,” I will primarily be speaking of and to the liberation theology of the movement's founder, the “grand old man,” Gustavo Gutiérrez, unless otherwise noted.

instead of, “god”) have become common parlance in many Vatican documents. That said, as yet, no movement like liberation theology has ever been but a minority.

Unlike some theologians, those such as Catholic liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez operate under a large scale, hierarchical system of religious authority: the Vatican. While many Catholic clergy and laity have enjoyed a degree or two of separation from the official Church² (e.g., American Catholicism and the rise of contraceptive use by some Catholic men and women), questions of theological interpretation and the very role of the religious institution itself have come under more rigorous scrutiny, with specific consequences for those who violate authoritative standards. From 1981-2005, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger operated as prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (nee Holy Office of Inquisition), and, working in tandem with Pope John Paul II, set to denying the doctrinal orthodoxy of liberation theology. In the 1984 and 1986 proceedings of his investigation, “*Libertatis Nuntius*” (“Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation’”), and “*Libertatis Conscientia*” (“Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation”), Ratzinger critiqued liberation theology as merely “Marxist ideology” dressed up in religious garb, and as a movement that focused excessively on the improvement of conditions of those living in material poverty, and thus of “mere” material (that is, worldly) liberation, without an equally sufficient eye to (his understanding of) theological orthodoxy and spiritual salvation. This particular critique is the dominant theme of the earlier document, “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” and thus this document will receive the most specific attention in the present work. In the aftermath of this document, many Catholic liberation theologians who utilized Marxian analyses were forced to rethink their early works, either defending their orthodoxical intentions, or editing and restructuring so that their writings aligned more completely with Ratzinger’s vision. During his tenure with the

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a renewed conservatism swept through the Catholic church, even – or perhaps especially – in dioceses in Central and South America that endorsed, or that were previously sympathetic to, liberation theology. As Arthur F. McGovern noted in 1990,

The diocese of Recife and Olinda [where noted liberation theologian Hélder Câmara had been archbishop from 1964-1985], for years one of the most progressive dioceses in Brazil, now has a conservative bishop. Peru, I am told, now has seven Opus Dei bishops. The bishop of Cusco has dismantled social centres once looked upon as models of work for change. The new head of the Bishops Conference in Peru, Bishop Ricardo Durand, is one of the fiercest critics of liberation theology. This trend in the hierarchy, combined with the worsening of economic conditions in most Latin American countries, do not presage a very promising future for the hopes expressed in liberation theology.³

When Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, many spectators felt certain that this was undeniably the death knell for Catholic liberation theology. With Benedict XVI in the papal chair, there seemed to be little reason to expect that any changes in the perception of liberation theology were in the future of this institution.

Then, on February 11, 2013, something quite unexpected happened, as Pope Benedict XVI became the first Pope in 600 years to resign his position. Following him, Jorge Mario Bergoglio emerged as Pope Francis, the Vatican's first Pope from the global South. While admittedly a welcome change in the eyes of some Vatican observers, many of those familiar with Bergoglio and his history in Argentina, his home country, were not particularly hopeful that any significant changes with regard to the church's position on liberation theology would take place under his reign. The "dirty war" in Argentina in the 1970s was a key target of liberation theologians; that Bergoglio never spoke out publicly against the Argentine junta seemed to confirm doubts about any direct ties he could have had with liberation theology. Labelled a "populist conservative,"⁴ Bergoglio ultimately developed a reputation for an approach to liberation theology that

appeared, at best, very cautiously amenable, and there seemed no reason for resounding optimism among proponents of this particular religious movement that this position would change. It seemed clear that, while he was not necessarily an enemy of liberationist thought, he wasn't really an ally, either. Then, on November 24, 2013, Francis released the apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium," a document which, among other things, took up and espoused multiple liberationist concepts including the aforementioned "preferential option for the poor," and "idolatry of money." In the ultra-conservative, right wing (and particularly American) press, this document ironically received many of the labels once placed on liberation theology by Joseph Ratzinger, including, but not limited to, that of being "Marxist."⁵

There can be no question, many liberation theologies do utilize insights and analyses provided by Karl Marx in evaluating conditions of material poverty that are necessarily manifest in contemporary capitalist economies, and the foundation of liberation theology, constructed by Gustavo Gutiérrez, was established in connection with Marxian concepts and critiques. Such theologies engage in

...Marxian-inspired critique of the historical, economic, and political dynamics of injustice and oppression suffered by the majority of Latin Americans and a critique of mainstream "academic" or "traditional" theology whose main concern with metaphysical transcendence and the individual spiritual life was understood as passively supporting the material conditions of injustice and oppression prevailing at the time.⁶

Gutiérrez, for example, utilizes Marxian analysis and vocabulary in his assessment of the social, political, and economic climate of Central and South American countries in the foundational text of liberation theology, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, originally published in 1971, and translated and published in English by Orbis Books in 1973.⁷ Liberation theologians like Gutiérrez felt that they were indeed following the so-called "signs of the times,"

and interpreting the texts and tenets of their faith accordingly. However, neither Gutiérrez, “nor any of the early liberation theologians understood themselves as incorporating anything more than what they judged to be those ‘proper and positive’ elements of Marx that aided their social, economic, and political analyses of the Latin American reality.”⁸ Regardless, Vatican officials, particularly Pope John Paul II and Joseph Ratzinger, ultimately declared the efforts and theories presented as little more than a veiled form of “Marxist ideology.” This was particularly due to liberation theology’s use of Marxian economic and social analysis, and Ratzinger’s conviction that (violent) class struggle, atheism and “Marxism” are inextricably linked. When Gutiérrez challenged the very unity of the institution of the church in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*,⁹ mired as it was in economic and social inequality, and other theologians began to follow suit,¹⁰ the work of shutting down liberation theology began in earnest. Moreover, the hope for a more equitable and just earthly existence, envisioned by Gutiérrez as “historical liberation,” in anticipation of a divinely righteous afterlife, was interpreted by Ratzinger as a call to attempt to establish a purely earthly (and thus a-theistic or non-theistic) “kingdom,” neglecting the primacy of the eternal paradise that is claimed to exist only beyond this world, and never exclusively within it.

The works and theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez will receive special attention in the present work for a number of reasons. He is widely acknowledged as the “founding father” of this way of doing theology. He participated widely in theological conferences organized around liberationist themes in the 1960s and 70s, and his 1970 article, “Notes for a Theology of Liberation,” and 1971 book, *A Theology of Liberation*, are seminal early works for this movement; in many ways, these laid the bedrock upon which theologies of liberation would come to be built. His centrality to liberationist thought and action can thus hardly be over-emphasized. The first

edition of *A Theology of Liberation* laid out the fundamentals of liberation theology, shaping the commitment to the preferential option for the poor and the idea of theology as a “second act,” as something that must be shaped by the lived experience of the theologian in solidarity with the poor, rather than a theology that itself shapes the way in which that commitment is performed, each of these adding up to an expanded conception of “integral liberation.” He emphasized a denial of a genuine state of neutrality, recognizing this as, at least, tacit complicity in oppressive structures, and warned that the very unity of the faith to which he belonged was at stake in the acceptance or rejection of the challenge to side concretely with the materially poor. Because of this rejection of traditional theology, encouraged by sources in the social sciences, by the political climate in Central and South America at the time, by his experiences living with the poor, and – importantly – by the documents from and around the Second Vatican Council, Gutiérrez landed in the sights of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, under investigation for violation of doctrinal orthodoxy.

Gutiérrez was not the sole liberation theologian put under the theological microscope of the Vatican, but the trajectory that his work takes following this investigation warrants the exclusive focus offered here. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his office as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued the 1984 and 1986 “Instructions” on liberation theology, following a direct confrontation with Gutiérrez regarding his doctrinal “errors.” Gutiérrez’s thought, and the liberation theology that emerged from it, were condemned as follows: “This system is a perversion of the Christian message as God entrusted it to His church.” Liberation theology was identified as “a new type of heresy,” which “does not fit into accepted categories of heresy because it accepts all the existing language but gives it new meaning.”¹¹

Following this harsh appraisal, the direction and overall focus of Gutiérrez's theology was noticeably reoriented. His works composed after 1986, including the revised second edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, take a considerable step back from previous "radical" innovations, no longer challenging contemporary notions of orthodoxy, but more and more conforming to those same notions. His works begin incorporating Ratzinger's critiques, disavowing earlier source material from the social sciences, and emphasizing a spiritualization of liberation, rather than a liberation that requires a unity of theory and praxis, with a particular eye turned toward the seemingly endless worldly suffering caused by economic inequity and the social and political structures which perpetuate poverty and oppression.

While the spiritual dimension of liberation was certainly present in Gutiérrez's early works (e.g. in the soteriological aspect of integral liberation), the narrowed scope that emerges following Ratzinger's critiques deserves critical engagement. Gutiérrez's mission has always been pastoral in nature; rejecting Ratzinger's assessment of his early theology may have compromised his status as clergy, thus complicating the pastoral aspect of liberation, or, at least, complicating the official status he maintained as clergy.¹² In the years following the 1984 and 1986 documents, the spiritual aspect of liberation becomes more and more the central focus of Gutiérrez's liberation theology, such that the critical reflection on praxis advocated in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation* increasingly becomes critical reflection on *belief*. As Arthur McGovern states, in summarizing liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo's critique of the ideology of traditional (Catholic) theology, "One begins to suspect that the church's alleged neutrality in politics masks a support for the status quo, and that the church's pastoral ministry ignores the social conflicts that divide society."¹³ In constructing theology as a second act and as a critical reflection on praxis, and advocating an integral liberation that focuses on history, material

conditions, *and* spiritual salvation, it is clear that Gutiérrez is aware that the pastoral is the political; spreading a message of liberation – theologically, ideologically, spiritually – necessarily entails a confrontation with the status quo.

However, it is precisely this spiritual content that can be manipulated to support that very same status quo. Because it is immaterial, it can easily be deployed to challenge orthodoxy or to support orthodoxy; it can maintain alienation or critique it; it can foster Marx’s “inverted world” or turn it right-side up again. The increasing evidence of a spiritual theology of liberation, rather than praxis of liberating theology, may be attributable to Gutiérrez’s desire to maintain status that enabled his pastoral efforts, but this shift runs the risk of supporting the Vatican’s official claim that it ought to remain neutral in political discussions, that religion and politics are ultimately separate. The incorporation of liberationist terminology into official Vatican documents acts as evidence of such a co-option of abstract concepts. Contemporary exhortations include the appeal to a “preferential option for the poor,” but this is largely incorporated as part of the evangelizing (read: spiritual) mission of the church, rather than a reorientation that moves beyond orthodoxy and into praxis.

Other liberation theologians responded to Ratzinger’s criticisms with incredulity, resisting the spiritual and orthodoxical turn that complicates theology as a “second act.” For example, Juan Luis Segundo went so far as to author *Theology and the Church: A Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church*, a work of righteous (and valid) indignation that attempts to reveal Ratzinger’s misconceptions about liberation theology, and presages in liberation theology’s dismissal nothing less than “*the negative evaluation of Vatican II and of the post-conciliar period.*”¹⁴ That is to say, the “opening” of the Catholic church to society, the very aim of the Second Vatican Council, was in danger of deflating and ultimately failing in

Ratzinger's rejection of liberation theology. As will be shown, many liberation theologians saw themselves enacting the exact forms of engagement called for in Vatican documents from and around Vatican II, documents with at times surprising intensity in terms of a critique of material poverty and the ways both clergy and laity ought to approach such poverty in an attempt at easing suffering and encouraging a development toward a more just and equal (global) society. Another prominent liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff, left the priesthood entirely after receiving a reprimand that included a year of being "silenced."¹⁵ Gutiérrez, however, seems to have toed the line in many ways, and we can follow this route of conformity by examining a number of his works from the past 30 years. In particular, Gutiérrez was admonished for reliance on the works of Karl Marx; beginning with the 1988 publication of the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, his overt disavowal of Marxian theory becomes a central motif as he moves his theology more and more in line with established orthodoxy.

Gutiérrez and many other liberationists have undeniably used Marx as a resource in their works,¹⁶ especially in the years prior to Ratzinger's "Instructions." In the first edition of Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation*, the use of Marxian theory is quite obvious. Marx is directly referenced and theoretical engagements of specifically Marxian varieties are plainly evident. Following the Vatican's responses to liberation theology in the 1984 and 1986 "Instructions," a glaring shift takes place in the second edition of this book. The content and direction of this modification will be detailed in a later chapter. For now, it is important to acknowledge two related points: First, there is no question that liberation theologians, Gutiérrez specifically, drew on Marx's thought; even the most basic of tenet of this tradition, that theology is a "second act" which can only be done after a commitment to living with and for those who are economically impoverished and oppressed, invokes Marx's insistence on a unification of

theory and praxis as manifest in his proclamation that “philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.”¹⁷ This sentiment also aligns liberation theology with Frankfurt School critical theory, particularly the reflections on “Traditional and Critical Theory” presented by Max Horkheimer, who, like all such scholars, also calls for theory that is informed by the praxis of critical social engagement, rather than praxis oriented solely by theory. Second, the category of “Marxist” or “Marxian” theory is hardly a static or stable classification, and it is imperative to tease out the meaning of the charges of “Marxism” made by Joseph Ratzinger and the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. This term is used uncritically and without qualification throughout “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” in particular. With the condemnation of liberation theology firmly rooted in such an accusation, understanding the ways in which the concept of “Marxism” is defined and applied will be an important aspect of the broader claims of the present work.

The ultimate position of the church regarding liberation theology was that its use of Marx as a resource rendered it unorthodox, asserting that Marx’s own rejection of religion was fundamentally inseparable from the social theory he advocated. As such, according to Ratzinger’s logic, any use of “Marxist” analysis was likewise rendered atheistic, and wholly antithetical to the articles of Christian faith. In this way, he established a series of exclusive (and arguably problematic) binaries, in which one could either agree with Marx entirely or reject his work entirely, use Marx as a resource or use the Christian faith as a resource, believe in Marx or believe in Jesus. This is clearly an overly simplistic division of categories which often have a good deal of overlap, and the logic at work here will come under investigation at a later point in this work. For now, suffice it to say that as critical agents responding through faith and philosophy to grave injustices that cause immeasurable suffering in the world, it would make

little sense indeed to rely strictly and solely on one form of analysis in constructing their theories of social justice and its establishment. Several of the well-known and widely-published liberation theologians, including Gutiérrez, were or are “proper” scholars, having participated in the academic endeavour while attaining advanced degrees, and often doing so at prestigious institutions, Gutiérrez having famously studied at various universities throughout Europe, eventually obtaining his Ph.D. from France’s Université Catholique de Lyon.^B During this time he would most certainly have been exposed to Marx and Marxian analyses, such as those of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, which ultimately left an unquestionable mark on his own forms of theorizing and theologizing.¹⁸ Of course, drawing and building on a variety of sources and perspectives is precisely the kind of scholarly activity one would expect from persons educated in such a fashion, in which one is trained to do precisely this kind of research and analysis.

In the end, “*Libertatis Nuntius*” and “*Libertatis Consciencia*” left a deep scar on the tradition of Catholic liberation theology. This mark is exemplified in the alterations Gutiérrez made to his foundational work, *A Theology of Liberation*, in the 2nd edition, published in 1988. As mentioned previously, a substantial change in the text took place with regard to specifically Marxian concepts and direct references to Marx. This, however, is hardly the sole alteration. Along with the deletion of references to Marx, Gutiérrez offers a new, extended, introduction

^B It is worth briefly noting here that, when asked to distinguish liberation theology from European political theology, two traditions that have much in common in terms of the critiques of the political-economic status quo, Gutiérrez notes that political theologians in a European context are responding to the realities of historical groups that have maintained a status of “personhood.” That is, the European subject is distinctly a *subject* with agency in the global political realm. In Central and South America, however, liberation theologians address the needs of the “non-person;” that is, those whose lives and stories have been thoroughly omitted from history, whose needs are not at all addressed by global economic systems, those whose personhood has been altogether functionally denied in the social and economic structuring of the world.

that “fizzles into a defensive apologetics,”¹⁹ and replaces the original chapter twelve, previously titled “Christian Brotherhood and Class Struggle,” with the newly-fashioned chapter “Faith and Social Conflict.” This latter transformation marks an important shift in the overall work of Gutiérrez: now, the central question is not necessarily how human beings are to engage conditions of inequality, but rather, “How are we to live evangelical charity in the midst of this situation?”²⁰ Gutiérrez ultimately modifies the orientation of such questions away from the humanistic and toward the spiritual, and this refocus underscores the majority of Gutiérrez’s work after 1988.

While Marx and later theorists inspired by Marx serve as references for Gutiérrez’s and others’ works, they were far from the sole sources to which liberation theologians turned in their evaluative tasks. References to such thinkers are obvious in works such as the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, yet even more recurrent are the references to Vatican documents, particularly those stemming from, or compiled shortly before and after, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Issued in the span of years from 1961 - 1971, it would be difficult to argue that documents such as “*Mater et Magistra*” (1961) “*Gaudium et Spes*” (1965), and “*Populorum Progressio*” (1967), were not immensely and immediately influential to Gutiérrez and the formation of what would be known as liberation theology in general, and indeed, these are cited repeatedly throughout liberationist works. The themes and issues addressed in these documents are of no meagre importance. One can find in these pages stringent, and at times uncompromising, condemnations of the social and economic imbalances that continually plague our world. While each document is careful to warn against the specific involvement of the church *as an institution* in such political affairs (a point of contention with liberation theologians), there are a variety of roles assigned to, or opened up for, both clergy and laity as

they encounter systems or structures of oppression. The call for service with respect to those in need is quite clearly made, and the roles of clergy, theologians, and laity are detailed with respect to a condemnation of privilege endowed by wealth and luxury.

Not only do Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians offer extensive engagement with documents such as those noted above, entire conferences were assembled to reconcile the advancements made in Vatican II with the core beliefs of liberation theology, as based in the specific condition of poverty in Central and South America. The most well-known of these is the 1968 meeting in Medellín, Columbia, the proceedings of which were made into an official document of the Church. Another example is the 1971 essay, “Justice in the World,” the official text of the second general assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which states, “To construct a just society in Latin America and in Peru signifies liberation from the present situation of dependency, oppression, and exploitation in which the great majority of our people live... this means that the people ought to have a real and direct participation in a *revolutionary action* against oppressive structures and attitudes and for a just society for all.”²¹ In examining such documents, a disconnect becomes apparent. While liberation theology was ultimately condemned for its reliance upon Marxian concepts, in multiple documents approved and/or published by the Vatican, the language used and the critiques of society and economy often border on – or, in some cases, become completely indistinguishable from – these very same “Marxist” analyses. With proclamations against the ownership of private property, and the idea that the entire notion of labour ought to be redefined with reference to the needs of the full human person (orienting existence toward something more than mere labour) in “*Gaudium et Spes*,” for example, it seems that at least some of the critiques of liberation theology’s “Marxism” are either misplaced or confused. As McGovern notes, “A few critics, like Cardinal

Ratzinger, direct their criticism at both the social analysis and theology proper of liberation theology, but in doing so sometimes ‘read into’ it much more than is actually stated.”²²

Joseph Ratzinger’s outline of what constitutes or violates orthodoxy with regard to social justice movements seemed to require a significant adjustment of emancipatory concepts and sources (exemplified in the re-issue of *A Theology of Liberation*), a dissenting abandonment of Church orthodoxy (such as Leonardo Boff’s decision to leave the Church), or forsaking the liberationist project altogether. As briefly noted earlier, Ratzinger’s eventual appointment to the papal chair seemed to solidify this perception: a Pope so openly antithetical to liberation theology could only be interpreted as adverse to those theologians. The installment of the first South American Pope upon Benedict XVI’s unanticipated retirement may have altered the narrative to a certain extent. Jorge Mario Bergoglio, in his role as Pope Francis, has created new avenues for acceptance of liberation theology as not only orthodox in belief, but as necessary in terms of creating a more just world. To be clear, there remains a reasonable and expected degree of skepticism with regard to his apparent commendation of liberation theology, but there can yet be no doubt that this papacy is far more amenable to this movement than those prior (particularly Benedict XVI and John Paul II). While he had never officially condemned liberation theology in his pastoral roles in Argentina, Bergoglio had never spoken out specifically for this movement either. However, less than six months into his papal tenure, Francis hosted Gustavo Gutiérrez for a private visit to the Vatican, an occasion noted by Harvey Cox in his December 2013 op-ed, “Is Pope Francis the New Champion of Liberation Theology?”²³ In June of 2014, the renewed ordination of indigenous deacons in Mexico – long a liberationist goal in terms of creating a theology by and for “the people” – was instituted by Francis’s decree. In August of the same

year, Francis cleared the way for the beatification of liberationist icon Archbishop Oscar Romero, of El Salvador; Romero's beatification by Francis became official on May 23, 2015.

Marx's Legacy of "Ruthless Criticism"

As with Marx, Gutiérrez, and, seemingly, Francis, social and economic critique are central constitutive elements of the school of thought known broadly as critical theory, and in particular the critical theory of the Frankfurt School; it is possible that this particular form of theory provides crucial links between early ideology critique and liberation theology. As defined by Max Horkheimer, in his now-classic essay, "Traditional and Critical Theory," critical theory is "an aggressive critique not only against the conscious defenders of the status quo but also against the distracting, conformist, or utopian tendencies within" all portions of human social reality, from the most obviously oppressive to the most intimate and beloved.²⁴ It is a "ruthless" critique, in the Marxian sense, fearlessly confronting conditions of inequality, even if such analysis results in an evaluation that is personally disruptive or politically risky.²⁵ The inspiration for this perspective can be traced back to Marx, and as such it operated with the intention of fostering emancipatory social movements via a negative evaluation of contemporary social structures and trends. Liberation theology can be traced along a similar trajectory, engaging in extensive (but, perhaps, less than "ruthless") critique, and doing so in a way which draws upon its specific theological traditions, in concert with other forms of philosophy, including Marxian critique.

This, however, is a point of potential division between Marxian thought and that of liberation theologians: whether we agree or not, for Marx, no theologian *qua* theologian could ever be an entirely *critical* thinker; the very notion of "critical theology" itself is considered oxymoronic.²⁶

To have no affiliation so strong that it is beyond reproach, the critical theorist must engage in constant evaluative processes, willing to break even the strongest commitment if it is shown to perpetuate human misery. Theology – even *critical* theology – cannot meet such criteria, in Marx’s estimation, as the positive notion of a deity or deities, and particular ways of envisioning and engaging the world in accordance with the will of such a transcendent being or beings, is always-already present in the theologian’s worldview. Moreover, for Marx, religious belief is inextricably linked to human alienation: it just another palliative ideological measure that fosters concession, rather than resistance, to the status quo.²⁷ Marx’s own depiction of theologians assumes that deep, foundational critical inquiry has never taken place, or if it has, the conclusions reached will consistently be tainted by theological pre-convictions, thus surrendering the label of the “truly” critical. For Marx, if one is critical, one is not a theologian. Whether one agrees with Marx’s point here or not, he highlights potential tensions between self and community, inquiry and tradition, which require unpacking and investigation. Simply put, from Marx’s perspective, critique “must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be;”²⁸ a theorist of any stripe can never be a *critical* theorist if there are certain convictions that are sheltered from the possibility of negation. By Marxian standards, a critical theology that maintains its position *as theology* is a difficult, if not impossible, task. As critical theorist Marsha Aileen Hewitt states, “Theology in any form cannot easily transform into a critical theory and remain theological, even if it is animated by a shared ethical choice to make the world a better place in solidarity with the oppressed.”²⁹

This issue of critique and negation lies at the heart of Marxian critical theory. For Marx, the ideal future can never be pre-ordained or concretized; by establishing an all-encompassing, revolutionary, and positively-constructed vision of a liberated world, the theorist risks

establishing a closed system where oppressions might be obscured by a myopic focus on ends rather than means. That is, the process of establishing an emancipated society carries the potential for becoming totalitarian: if both eyes are on the future, one may overlook (or, worse, recreate) injustices found in the present. According to Marx, "...each is compelled to confess to himself that he has no clear conception of what the future should be. That, however, is just the advantage of the new trend: that we do not attempt dogmatically to prefigure the future, but want to find the new world only through criticism of the old."³⁰ This "way of negation" is a fundamental orienting concept for many members of the Frankfurt School (most obviously in Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*). As such, in critiquing the notion of positive dialectics – the (particularly) Hegelian notion that opposites are brought into unity and harmony in the process of history, with each individual part establishing a cohesive synthesized whole – Marxian theorists warn against construction of an idealized future. Indeed, this hesitation is a key distinguishing mark between such critical theorists and many other forms of philosophical or religious speculation, including liberation theology.

Far from avoiding a specific construction of an emancipatory future, liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutiérrez maintain that such an ideal not only exists, it exists as a space of divine justice connected to a transcendent union with one's deity. This union is only available in the world to a certain extent; in this theology, material, historical, and soteriological emancipation, *qua* "integral liberation," move humanity closer to the divine, but this path ultimately culminates outside the world, extending beyond earthly reality. While the liberationist project is grounded in the (sometimes "ruthless") critique of extant material conditions, the heavenly vision of perfect justice is asserted as tangible and immanent, but also as ultimately unreachable in full within the mundane world. The thesis ([economic] *oppression*) and antithesis ([economic

and/or spiritual] *liberation*) are conceived as synthesized in this perfectly just realm. This notion of an ultimately unachievable yet fully envisioned condition which suggests a particular construction of a concrete future stands in stark contrast to Marx's assertion that such a realm is absolutely achievable via material liberation, yet that cannot be confined to the structure of a specific vision of the future. As will become evident, this distinction is of particular importance with reference to Ratzinger's condemnations of liberation theology, which he identifies exclusively as "Marxist" ideology.

While it is possible, in this important dimension, to contradict the idea of an *exclusive* reliance upon Marxian theory by Gutiérrez and others, this is not to minimize the role Marx does play in liberation theology. In some ways, Ratzinger was not incorrect in applying this label. Where he was mistaken is in his insistence on "Marxism" as an all-encompassing totality, and in his seeming lack of attention to elements of documents *from the Vatican itself* which employ analyses and offer condemnations of wealth and private property that actually fit rather well into a more nuanced understanding of Marxian critique. Liberation theology itself would not have been possible before Marx broke open history, laying structural, systemic, economic injustice bare for all to see. What might be called the "Marxian vocabulary," a discourse which consciously sides with those in economic poverty, which exposes and critiques multiple forms of alienation, exploitation, and estrangement through capitalist systems, and which is dedicated to a critique that is both "ruthless," and which relentlessly advocates human liberation, has proven itself to be seemingly inexhaustible. The legacy of Marx is clear throughout many critiques of social and economic oppression, including the important liberationist analyses of institutional violence, theology as a "second act," the "idolatry of money," and the "preferential option for the poor." In the same way, however, this legacy can at times be witnessed in Vatican

documents themselves, which often – and increasingly, over time – reject private property as an inalienable right, which claim to consciously side with “the poor,” taking up the liberationist concept of “the preferential option for the poor,” and acknowledging concepts such as estranged labour and systemic injustice. While there is much that can, and will, be said about such an unexpected connection, this also allows for a commentary on the cross-pollination of theology and philosophy. With an eye to liberation theology and particular Vatican documents, including Francis’s exhortation, there may be ground for suggesting that there are instances, especially in the context of social and economic critique, in which Marx’s philosophy is as yet still unexhausted (perhaps inexhaustible?) as a bearer of a particular kind of liberatory semantic potential, as intimately connected to a commitment to liberatory praxis.

The future of liberation theology remains uncertain. However, this uncertainty is itself a step up for its supporters from the (rightfully) pessimistic evaluation of this movement’s evolution prior to the appointment of Francis. Under Joseph Ratzinger, in his roles as cardinal, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and as Pope, the discourse around liberation theology and all of the critiques it has made regarding global oppression were effectively closed off within the Vatican, or at the very least, restrained. Accusations of liberationists as “Marxists” grew out of his declarations, and formed the dominant narrative even outside the Catholic faith: “popular” opinions of liberation theology often follow Ratzinger’s appraisal completely. With such a condemnatory structure in place, Gutiérrez’s liberation theology devolved from a radical critique which was not “afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be,”³¹ and that called out institutions which have functioned to support inequality, regardless of whether such institutions were religious or secular. One of the boldest steps in Gutiérrez’s works is the rejection of the notion of unity in faith when disunity is the

lived reality of the poorest members of the church.³² Under the closed system erected by Ratzinger, this and many other forceful critiques were modified or ultimately abandoned; they were made ever more amenable to the power structure under which the Catholic liberation theologians worked. While liberation theology left its mark on Catholic orthodoxy, with the noted incorporation of many liberationist concepts, it is difficult to discern whether these retain the revolutionary force which gave them birth, or if this is an instance of mere co-option in the interest of taming seemingly ‘feral’ theologians. Jorge Mario Bergoglio, on the other hand, upon appointment to the papal seat, almost immediately re-opened a path of discourse on a matter that had seemingly been settled (the orthodoxy and value, or lack thereof, of liberation theology). While his assertions are far from beyond critique – as could be said about liberation theologies themselves – they at least represent an unlocking of sorts, dusting off the past 30 years of condemnatory texts and breathing new life into a bruised and battle-worn tradition. Published in Italian in February 2014, *Poor for the Poor: the Mission of the Church*, a new book with liberation themes, has been compiled by the current head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Gerhard Mueller; it contains an introduction by Pope Francis himself, as well as two chapters by Gustavo Gutiérrez. This offers a potentially quite different “sign of the times.”

This is not, however, to suggest an entirely rosy picture of the relationship between liberation theology and the papacy. The 2014 recommencing of ordination of indigenous clergy, mentioned earlier, is the first actual step toward a real, official modification of the Vatican’s stance with regard to liberationist concepts. That is, Francis has affected quite a bit of in terms of “*interpreting*” the faith, in various ways, doing little, however, “to *change* it.”³³ As well, while there can be no denying the substantial proclamations regarding contemporary social and economic oppression in Francis’s papal declarations “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” the emancipatory

motifs in much of his writing are rather elementary when compared to the development of liberation theology's concerns with intersectional persecution. Along welcome, if well-worn, statements such as, "Seeing their poverty, hearing their cries and knowing their sufferings, we are scandalized because we know that there is enough food for everyone and that hunger is the result of a poor distribution of goods and income,"³⁴ one can also find rather archaic evaluations of those who suffer multiple oppressions which intersect with economic inequality. While liberation theologians of all stripes have spent the last 30+ years contemplating and critiquing issues around, for example, sexual orientations and women's status as active agents in society, these are largely spurned in some of Francis's writings (including the much-lauded "*Evangelii Gaudium*"). His liberatory positions, that is, seem to have caught up to the liberation theology of the 1970s and 1980s, while liberation theology itself was spreading to multiple Christian denominations and various other of the world's religions. Many such theologies have embraced the notion of intersectional oppression, focusing, for example, on ideas such as the specific liberation of women (Feminist liberation theology) and the acceptance of LGBTQ persons (Queer liberation theology).³⁵ Of particular concern in this area is Francis' rejection of "Gender theory" as "ideological colonization" of poor nations by wealthy nations, and his comparison of transgender individuals to nuclear arms and genetic manipulation, all three offered as examples of a destruction or disavowal of "the order of creation."³⁶ While the original focus of liberation theology was economic inequality, and while this remains the foundation upon which liberation theologies are built, mature emancipatory movements have acknowledged multiple and concurrent forms of oppression that are furthered and exacerbated by material poverty and global financial inequality. Contemporary emancipatory movements cannot operate as though

these spheres are separate and independent of one another; many liberation theologians have acknowledged this, but it seems, as yet, the current Pope has not.

A Few Words on Approach, Terminology, and Key Concepts

Gutiérrez's "Liberation Theology"

As mentioned previously, unless otherwise specified, "liberation theology" will refer to the theology that sprung out of Central and South America in the 1960s and 70s, particularly the liberation theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez. The author acknowledges the variety and span of the various liberation theologies that have developed into the 21st century, but the specific focus on Gutiérrez is necessary for the current project. His theology, as many liberation theologies inspired by his work, is identified with the following characteristics:

- 1) A preferential option for the poor – In Gutiérrez's use of the phrase, this represents the conviction that those who are materially impoverished should be treated with particular urgency in terms of orienting religious, economic, historical, and social narratives, programs, or initiatives. Public policy as well as religious faith ought to prioritize the well-being of the world's poor and powerless.
- 2) Theology as a "second act" – In constructing theology as a critical reflection on praxis, Gutiérrez specifies that his theology requires "man's critical reflection on himself," where such reflection entails a consideration of one's own place in oppressive social, cultural, and economic structures.³⁷ This reflection, however, must necessarily come *after* a commitment to the liberation of those who suffer from poverty and injustice. "The Christian community professes a 'faith which works through charity.' It is – at least ought to be – real charity, action, and commitment to the service of [people]. Theology is

reflection, a critical attitude. Theology *follows*; it is the second step... Theology does not produce pastoral activity; rather it reflects upon it.”^{38, 39} It is this commitment that enables the critical reflection Gutiérrez equates with theology; this commitment must necessarily come first, so that the self-evaluation that occurs can do so in full awareness of the reality of those who suffer in conditions of poverty.

3) The priority of praxis over theory – When theology, as reflection, is relegated to a secondary position, this necessitates a privileging of praxis over theory. If theology is that which reflects, then it is theoretical in nature; if active solidarity is a precondition for theological reflection, then that action is placed in a position of precedence. Theology interprets the world; solidarity that makes manifest a preferential option for the poor potentially changes the world.

4) Critique of institutional violence and/or structural sin – Gutiérrez and other early liberation theologians identified the “poverty, injustice, and exploitation of man by fellow man in Latin America” as “institutionalized violence.”⁴⁰ The concept of institutional violence, as a reorientation away from the focus on individual sin and the repercussions of individual sin, acknowledges that oppressive, “sinful,” conditions can be erected and actively or passively maintained by and within social structures that are sustained by a minority of elites and fostered by the continued influence of colonial dynamics.

5) Acknowledgement of the existence of “class struggle” – The above understanding of violence as structural and institutional necessitates a conception of class struggle. The very existence of such structures requires, at the very least, an elite class in whose interest these structures operate, and a lower class that suffers the brunt of oppression. As such,

Gutiérrez does not merely posit the suggestion that class struggle exists; rather, he plainly states, “The class struggle is a fact and neutrality in this question is not possible.”⁴¹ The process of moving toward a more just society entails this acknowledgement, as well as a conscious, intentional participation in the class struggle, working alongside those who are oppressed. With these structures so entrenched in even our basic ways of life, the class struggle is not something one can escape or opt out of, for Gutiérrez; it is “not a question of admitting or denying a fact which confronts us; rather it is a question of which side we are on.”⁴² As such, the class struggle brings together the other aspects of Gutiérrez’s liberation theology listed above: in acknowledging the class struggle, one ought to (in Gutiérrez’s opinion) side consciously with the poor and give preference to improving their conditions, this option must involve action toward such improvement alongside the critique of institutional violence, and theology then becomes the lens through which all of these actions are scrutinized and evaluated in the second place, as a critical reflection on praxis.

6) “Integral liberation” – this refers to the unity of material liberation, human liberation, and liberation from selfishness and sin. Material liberation refers to the elimination of extreme economic disparity as the source of global poverty, particularly as this disparity is manifest in institutional violence. Human liberation points beyond mere material conditions and into the sphere of historical agency. This entails an ability to define and develop one’s own self freely and with dignity, compromising the supremacy of hegemonic ideological structures which often work to influence those identities that fall in line with the status quo. Liberation from selfishness and sin is the result of reflection on praxis of solidarity, which also connects to a soteriological understanding of salvation. In

enacting the preferential option and then examining one's own privileges, biases, or participation in violent and oppressive social structures, a self-evaluation from a liberationist perspective encourages disengagement from one's own tendencies toward egocentrism and one's own violations of others via supporting structural or personal sin.⁴³ As such, this aspect of integral liberation aligns well with Paulo Freire's notion of *conscientización*, the process of realization of the structures of violence in society, and the understanding of one's own place within such structures. This self-liberation entails becoming aware of oneself as living in an alienated and alienating society, which thrives on the suffering of the oppressed, and which can be overcome through a union of personal reflection and collective action in the interest of establishing a more just and liberatory world.⁴⁴ As Gutiérrez sees such liberation as bound to a "correct" enacting of religiosity ("orthopraxis"), this is necessarily connected with the spiritual salvation common to various Christianities (redemption, forgiveness of sin, and admittance into the transcendent kingdom of god).

This theology emerged from a commitment to solidarity with those who are poor (those who are "non-persons"), the lived experiences of those impoverished persons themselves (particularly those of Central and South America), the documents issued from the Second Vatican Council, and exposure to the works of emancipatory Continental philosophers, especially – though not exclusively – Karl Marx and the later Frankfurt School of critical theory, which was heavily influenced by Marx's works.

Which Marx? Whose Marx? Why Marx?

Multiple terms shall be employed in referring to the works and legacy of Marx. Particularly when representing Joseph Ratzinger's critiques of liberation theology, the terms "Marxism" or

“Marxist” will be used (generally in quotation marks). These are the terms specifically used by Ratzinger himself, so conforming to this when representing his claims in this context makes sense. However, this also points to an area of tension, which acts as a comparative reference with the other terminology employed here. For Ratzinger, “Marxism” is a singular, totalized whole, a system that is either employed wholesale or not at all, and which is identical in its employment in vastly different social, political, economic, and ideological contexts; this is a remarkably simplistic reduction of a vast and complex theoretical scheme. Illustrating this tension vis-à-vis a singular “Marxism,” Friedrich Engels once reported the following (in a letter to Conrad Schmidt in 1890) with regard to Marx’s appraisal of French communists engaging in a particular kind of materialist theory of history, inspired by Marx’s own writings: “Just as Marx used to say, commenting on the French ‘Marxists’ of the late [18]70s: ‘All I know is that I am not a Marxist.’”⁴⁵ That is to say, even during Marx’s own time, the question of what is or is not “Marxist” was already hotly debated; the expanse of time between Marx and the present era have only intensified such divisions. The “Marxism” of Soviet Russia, for example, is quite different from the “Western Marxism” employed by the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School. As Lars Roar Langslet notes, in discussing Marx’s “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,”

The problems Marx deals with [in the “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844”] go to the very roots of socialism and involve questions with which the present age is still very much concerned. It is thus as a contribution to the understanding of the human position that the works of the young Marx have been discussed, a perspective that often makes him appear in conscious opposition to the form of Marxism professed in the socialistic countries.⁴⁶

Western Marxism’s primary characteristic is a focus on the so-called “philosophical Marx,” with less specific emphasis on the calculations of the “scientific Marx.” Western Marxists particularly engage in a humanistic critique of ideological norms and structures in society which

abandon many in the “inverted world” of alienation (and, for Marx, this alienation is uniquely facilitated by religious belief). Rather than computing the formulae and calculations that populate *Das Kapital*, which are largely insufficient for addressing the overwhelming complexity of contemporary globalized capitalism, Western Marxian thinkers draw on ideology critique in order to illustrate the ways in which hegemonic ideas and ideals in a society are merely re-constructions of the dominant social interests of a ruling class, and thus draw largely from the so-called “early Marx.” The elevation and preservation of specific concepts as generalized principles serves to legitimate and naturalize forms of ideology that prevent disruption of oppressive practices, maintaining the “inverted world” of alienated beings who suffer from social and economic oppression. The humanistic weight of the exposure and dismantling of such structural oppression is a key point uniting Western Marxian thinkers (who may differ in terms of the specifics of their critiques and their use of Marxian concepts). Western, “philosophical” Marxism is the Marxian thought that advocates “ruthless criticism” and the union of theory and praxis. As such, favouring the term “Marxian” over “Marxist,” as the present work does, removes some of the rigidity suggested by an “ism,” which ultimately amounts to a false concretization in Ratzinger’s employment of the term and (his interpretation of) its qualities.

The content of Ratzinger’s conception of “Marxism” is considered to be that of manufactured (and violent) class struggle, an unquestionable commitment to (a rather pedestrian form of) atheism, and a privileging of the material over the spiritual. The “Marxian” thought presented in the present work (and the work of many liberation theologians), however, draws more upon the command to critique, even if such critique ultimately problematizes one’s own convictions. Thus, it is critique without end, in which any unquestioned (or unquestionable) commitments

are impossible, and which is oriented toward emancipatory action with regard to material poverty, estrangement, and alienation. Marx's dedication to this call to "ruthless critique" is evident, for example, in his "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," in which even communism itself is identified as a means rather than an end. "*Communism* is the necessary pattern and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development – the structure of human society."⁴⁷ Viewed this way, we find a tension between a perception of "Marxist" totality as a system of thought that functions only as a complete whole, its concepts locked into perpetual association with one another, and "Marxian thought" as that which follows Marx's call for "ruthless critique" and the necessity of establishing a more just world through critique of the present, which allows for greater creativity in interpreting various spheres of human belief and action. While "Marxism," as an "ism," signifies something ideologically stable, self-sustaining, and indivisible, the idea of "Marxian thought" allows for a fluidity that seems to align more appropriately with the call to analyse all systems and structures, even those one advocates.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 of the present work will trace the Marxian legacy as manifest in Gustavo Gutiérrez's first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, highlighting the influence of Marx's critique on Gutiérrez's notion of liberation. In particular, the conviction that theology ought to be a "second act" is constructed as an equivalent to Marx's insistence upon the unity of theory and praxis, which also opens up an opportunity for connecting Gutiérrez to the Frankfurt School of critical theory. The relegation of orthodoxy to a secondary position is central to Gutiérrez's early notions of liberation. Chapter 2 highlights the indelible mark left on Gutiérrez's work by the Vatican's reaction to liberation theology, particularly as manifest in Joseph Ratzinger's

“*Libertatis Nuntius: Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation.’*” This mark will become particularly visible in the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, and its effects ripple throughout Gutiérrez’s work following this reissue, with particular ramifications for the idea of theology as a “second act,” and thus the notion of liberation itself. For the purpose of direct contrast, then, chapter 2 will provide a specific juxtaposition of Gutiérrez’s writings and those of Ratzinger, enabling the reader to witness the shifts in Gutiérrez’s theology and their corresponding admonishments in the Vatican “Instructions.”

While Marx was and remains an undeniably important resource for liberation theology, it is important to investigate other sources of inspiration for this movement; chapter 3, then, gives significant attention to several documents issued from and around the Second Vatican Council. Doing so will allow for an identification of liberationist (and, potentially, Marxian) themes in these texts, as well as striking language with regard to material poverty and those who gain from it.⁴⁸ As shown in chapter 4, constructing a specific, ideal future is a task against which Marx vehemently warns, as do his intellectual heirs in the Frankfurt School. Creating such an ideal in a worldly fashion, as Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians do, puts pressure on the notion of an absolute reliance on Marx as a resource (*contra* Ratzinger/Benedict XVI). This works to emphasize several ways in which Gutiérrez’s three-fold notion of liberation – material, historical, and soteriological – moves beyond, or at least, outside of, Marxian critical theory in ways unappreciated, underemphasized, or plain ignored by critics in the Vatican. Ultimately, this tension allows for a critique of Gutiérrez’s conceiving of such ideals as manifest in a *construction* of an ideal future, as opposed to the Marxian idea of discovering a new world only through critique of the old one.

Chapter 5 examines the recent apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, “*Evangelii Gaudium* – The Joy of the Gospel,” in order to highlight a number of liberationist (and often Marxian) tendencies in Francis’s first major publication as pope. His apparent softening with regard to liberation theology, and Gutiérrez in particular, is the highlight of this chapter; however, evidence of the fundamental changes that occurred after Ratzinger’s “Instructions” remains in Gutiérrez’s continued retreat from the position of theology as a “second act,” a key liberationist theme which Francis seemingly advocates at times. Chapter 6 will conclude by examining Marx’s identification of religious yearning as the measure by which we can gauge worldly suffering, yet also as the means for expressing dissent in the face of that suffering. This connection of religion and protest will underscore an increasing lack of connection between theory and praxis in Gutiérrez’s later works, an issue with potentially massive consequences. Liberation theology was intended to be a theology that is more than a mere “opiate,” which resists, rather than fosters, alienation brought on by economic impoverishment and hegemonic social and historical narratives, but the move towards a spiritualization of liberation at times undermines this intention.⁴⁹ While a bold and fearless critique is a prime orienting factor for Marx and many later critical theorists, Gutiérrez ultimately backs away from such audacity, and his work, therefore, becomes difficult to reconcile with Marx’s call to “ruthless criticism.” The point here is not to question Gutiérrez’s sincerity or commitment to liberation, or to deny the substantial and necessary contributions he has made to contemporary theological and social/economic discourse, but rather to show how the abandonment of Marxian theory, at the command of Ratzinger, led to a *reversion* to the very orthodoxy liberation theology was constructed to resist, critique, and complicate. In the move away from theology as second act, Gutiérrez also moves further away from Marx. Marx’s “ruthless” critique of alienation is

generally inseparable from the specific critique of capitalist economy that connects theory to praxis; by moving away from active resistance and transformative content of such critiques, Gutiérrez's notion of liberation becomes merely another form of theological reflection among many.

Chapter One: Gutiérrez's Liberation Theology pre-1986

In the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, Gustavo Gutiérrez utilizes, among other resources, the class analyses provided by the social sciences in his assessment of the socio-political climate of Latin American countries. It is not a steep step into these analyses which leads directly to the works of Karl Marx. Critical theorist Marsha Hewitt has identified this connection in the context of liberation theology multiple times, most recently in her 2012 essay, "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory? Aporias in the Theology of Liberation: Juan Luis Segundo Revisited." Here, Western Marxian thought, with its philosophical emphasis on alienation and estrangement, is identified as a central component of Gutiérrez's early work. "The first edition of Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* was particularly explicit in its socialist politics that called Christians to confront unjust social structures and political practices that prevailed in Latin America, using a number of selected Marxian notions such as 'class conflict' and 'exploitation,' which were used as key explanatory categories of analysis."⁵⁰ While Marx would almost surely take issue with the appropriation of his works in a specifically religious context, the insights and vocabulary he provides in terms of oppression, class struggle, alienation, and estrangement are invaluable in this arena – a conviction which Gutiérrez himself seems to advocate in his earliest works.

Despite Marx's critique of even the most "critical" of theologies,⁵¹ in terms of their understanding the need for a new form of ethical humanism, and the many obstructions along such a path, Marx and Gutiérrez have much in common. Particularly in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, the use of Western Marxian philosophy is quite evident. Marx is directly referenced, Marxian vocabulary is utilized extensively in critiquing a present reality

saturated by oppression, and theoretical engagements of specifically Marxian varieties are plainly visible.

There is no question that some key elements of Marxian theory were enormously influential on some of the founders of liberation theology, meaning that, without Marxian social analysis, liberation theology, at least in its early phase, would in all likelihood not have existed. Inspired by Marx, early liberation theologians were able to shift their understanding of injustice and oppression from individual sin and its consequences, to a social analysis that exposed the dynamics of institutional violence and structural exploitation whereby small elites and colonial powers accrued wealth and power by enslaving and oppressing the impoverished majority.⁵²

Drawing on philosophical Marxian thought, Gutiérrez's early notion of liberation emphasized more than mere individual salvation and sin, but declared social processes and institutions as either potentially complicit in alienation and estrangement, or potentially advocating the transformation of society through liberatory praxis. That said, there is a peculiar shift in the second edition of this book, published after the Vatican "Instructions" for liberation theology in 1984 and 1986. It is this shift that necessitates the specific attention given to Gutiérrez in the present work. This renovation of Gutiérrez's notion of liberation extends far beyond the bindings of either the first or second edition of his most renowned work. Chapter 2 of the present work will trace this shift by examining the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, a selection of his later essays, and the claims made in "Libertatis Nuntius: Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'"⁵³ in order to discern just how deeply his theology was marked by the condemnations from then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his role as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and thus in his role as the author of the 1984 and 1986 "Instructions."

The original introduction to *A Theology of Liberation* is a concise clarification of purpose and a critique of the problematic theme of unity in the Catholic church, as this church confronts the

realities of a modern world filled with the inherently divisive conditions of poverty and oppression. His understanding of liberation challenges these realities, as “a theological reflection born of the experience of shared efforts to abolish the current unjust situation and to build a different society, freer and more human.”⁵⁴ Gutiérrez outlines the bonds that he sees between Catholic beliefs and concrete social action (liberation) and solidarity with those who suffer, a solidarity which itself is a manifestation of those same beliefs. The intention to remain committed to the basic tenets of Catholic faith, with reference to Catholic doctrine and scriptures, is made clear:

Our purpose is not to elaborate an ideology to justify postures already taken, nor to undertake a feverish search for security in the face of the radical challenges which confront the faith... It is rather to let ourselves be judged by the Word of the Lord, to think through our faith, to strengthen our love, and to give reason for our hope from within a commitment which seeks to become more radical, total, and efficacious. It is to reconsider the great themes of the Christian life within this radically changed perspective.⁵⁵

This orients the reader to the idea of seeking to refract this religious tradition through a previously unexplored or unacknowledged lens, one which declares social, historical, and spiritual liberation as a communal effort in response to structural injustices. The combination of the social and historical contexts of Central and South America, and the lived experiences of the persons who exist in such contexts, provided a new palette for painting the picture of what it means to follow this religion, according to Gutiérrez. These contributions of “the universal Christian community” are at the heart of not only this particular work, but Gutiérrez’s liberation theology in general.⁵⁶ Liberation is thus not merely an individual task or goal, it is eminently communal, social, and as such engages institutional violence and structural sin. In asserting this, however, Gutiérrez is ultimately trying to warn of an impending *fracture* in this (“universal Christian”) community, precipitated by a spiritual consideration of what justice means in a

world of immeasurable suffering, and a maintenance of unequal and divisive systems of authority whether through direct support or passive “neutrality.” Liberation theologians like Gutiérrez hope(d) to invert pyramidal religious, economic, and political power structures, allowing for the irruption of voices of those who yearn to escape their context of suffering, who strive to help others achieve liberation from such conditions, and who thus foster a shift in focus necessary to make this emancipatory and praxis-oriented faith visibly manifest in the actual lives of those who live in situations of extreme poverty.

Ultimately, this introduction lays the groundwork for Gutiérrez’s critical analysis of the very notion of unity in a state of deep, systemic inequality, and for engaging in a process reconsidering “*the very meaning of Christianity and... the mission of the Church.*”⁵⁷ The introduction particularly emphasizes the theme of the relationship of (material) liberation and (spiritual) salvation, as well as the unity of “man’s various dimensions.”⁵⁸ There is also an allusion to a later critique of what Gutiérrez deems a mere veneer of unity within the church, which only abstracts from the concrete experiences of those who suffer. As such, Gutiérrez sought to address what he perceived as a serious lack of dialogue and action with and for those who are poor. For him, this unity is simply a façade if it cannot, or refuses to, inspire specific denunciations of a capitalist economic system which renders certain individuals irrelevant when they are neither a significant part of the stream of production nor of consumption.

In this way, however, giving voice to these rather common themes which are explored in depth later in the same work, this introduction is essentially unremarkable. There is nothing particularly provocative in its content – that is, outside of the potentially controversial statements that will be expanded upon in further chapters. It does not stand out as contentious, and it works as any general introduction should work: at a mere three pages in length, it offers

the reader a succinct clarification of purpose, definitions of technical or particular terminology, and sets the stage for what is to come. While this original introduction remains included in the second edition of this book, it is followed by a new introduction (to be addressed in the next chapter), which works to tame and reframe the arguments made by Gutiérrez, and to rein this brand of liberation theology back into the confines of what was detailed as acceptable within the organized church.

Liberation as Class Struggle

In chapter 12 of this initial edition, we find a section entitled “Christian Brotherhood and Class Struggle,” itself a partial invocation of Marxian vocabulary. It is in this (later revised) segment that we find some of the strongest and most blatant affinities between Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation and Marx’s critique of economic oppression and alienation. The section begins with a glaring condemnation of prevailing conditions, those who uphold and willingly benefit from the unjust social order. Humanity itself, he says, is fundamentally divided between oppressors and oppressed, between “owners of the means of production and those dispossessed of the fruit of their work.”⁵⁹ Gutiérrez directly criticizes the perpetrators of this inequality, stating that “the dispossessed exist because of those who direct and govern this society,” and further that class struggle itself is “the product of demented minds.”⁶⁰ Rather than fostering or engaging in a form of conflict, it is crucial to a proper understanding of this text to understand that this division is seen by Gutiérrez as *a pre-existing state* into which today’s humans are born.⁶¹ In this construction, class struggle is accepted as a fact, rather than an interpretive category or an assertion made by the theologian himself. In this discussion, “...Gutiérrez reminds his readers that Marx did not invent or discover the reality of class conflict... As for the idea of class society... liberation theology could hardly advocate something that was already a fact of life.”⁶²

Gutiérrez attempts to guide his readers to an understanding of the source and perpetuation of this struggle, and to an attempt to resolve it through a religious faith commitment which includes a conviction that enacting universal justice (liberation in history) and material equality (material liberation) are requisite conditions for fulfilling the demands of that tradition (soteriological liberation). For Gutiérrez, cultivating this *awareness* is an absolute necessity to starting on the path to liberation. This echoes Marx's assertion: "The people must be taught to be *terrified* at itself in order to give it *courage*."⁶³ The first, and perhaps most crucial, phase in this process is that of *acknowledgement*. This acts as another instance of alignment between Marx and Gutiérrez and a broader concept of liberation theology more generally. Marx states, "To have its sins forgiven [hu]mankind has only to declare them to be what they really are."⁶⁴ This fits well into the liberationist idea of "conscientización," literally becoming conscious of the reality of inequality and oppression, and developing a will to disclose and resist the causes of such conditions.⁶⁵ In establishing a discursive act of *confession*, directed toward a negative evaluation of present conditions, both Marx and Gutiérrez here avoid the potential pitfalls of positive constructions which may tend toward concretization and rigidity, neither of which are useful for a project that advocates a refusal of a world in which suffering and injustice have the final say. As Marsha Hewitt notes,

The...discourse of theology as religious negativity searches out discursive practices that can create and recreate open-ended images and symbols of justice which in turn may generate social structures and associations similarly open-ended and fluid.... This discourse and praxis of religious negativity has nothing to do with sterile debates about theism and atheism because it is ultimately a discourse that goes beyond both polarities. From this perspective, religion negates the atheist's allegation that there is nothing to hope for as well as the theist's affirmation that justice derives only from God.⁶⁶

The declaration and cognizance of the wrongs committed against marginalized persons is part of a larger process, for Gutiérrez (as it is for Marx), as it is a recognition and attempted negation of

these as *pre-existing realities*, which, for Gutiérrez, must be negotiated in the light of faith. It is “an expression of a will to abolish [the] causes” of such conditions, and “a will to build a socialist society, more just, free, and human, and not a society of superficial and false reconciliation and equality.”⁶⁷ It is not sufficient to merely discuss class inequality in enacting liberation; one must uncover the foundational and functional reasons for its very existence, and with that knowledge, direct oneself towards an active rectification with the goal of achieved parity for all human beings.

The objective, for Gutiérrez, is a negative evaluation and rejection of conditions that perpetuate inequality and alienation, through which workers regain possession of their means of production, and thus their own *selves*, and oppressive forces of materially-determined social stratification are rendered non-existent. This clearly connects to the material and human aspects of Gutiérrez’s integral liberation. Again, this heralds back strongly to the words of Marx: “*Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e. human) being – a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development.*”⁶⁸ Marx continues his discussion of the importance of criticism in his “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction.” Criticism, he says, is “no passion of the head, it is the head of passion.”⁶⁹ It is for Marx a form of armament, a weapon against a perceived enemy: those who directly benefit from the exploitation and suffering of others. Ultimately, critique is presented a means to an ideally benevolent end: restoring agency and personhood to those who are “treated by their *rulers as licensed existences*,”⁷⁰ or, in terms stemming from liberationist thinkers, liberating those who are degraded to the level of “non-persons.” In the first edition of *A*

Theology of Liberation, Gutiérrez acknowledges such a reality, and utilizes clearly Marxian vocabulary in expressing it to his reader, identifying “the division of humanity into oppressors and oppressed, into owners of the means of production and those dispossessed of the fruit of their work, into antagonistic social classes.”⁷¹

The early Gutiérrez declares that denying the structural existence of oppression and class struggle is categorized as equivalent to aligning oneself with the dominant forces, stagnating the process of liberation. There can likewise be no sense of neutrality, no middle ground – either one sides with the poor and marginalized, or they side with those who maintain what he deems a corrupt structure of power. “To build a just society today necessarily implies the active and conscious participation in the class struggle that is occurring before our eyes.... The class struggle is a fact and neutrality in this question is not possible.”⁷² As such, the Catholic church itself is called on to re-examine itself and its own ties to this order, as it has frequently opted to remain “impartial,” or even to side with the dominant class. Gutiérrez asserts that it is in the church’s best interest to side with the oppressed; the existence of class struggle and impoverishment threaten the concept of “Christian love” and the very unity of the church itself.

In his own words:

...our love is not authentic if it does not take the path of class solidarity and social struggle. To participate in class struggle not only is not opposed to universal love; this commitment is today the necessary and inescapable means of making this love concrete. For this participation is what leads to a classless society without owners and dispossessed, without oppressors and oppressed.⁷³

This love, for Gutiérrez, is universal, for although it may consist of class conflict, it is first and foremost directed towards the goal of universal emancipation. This includes emancipation for the oppressors themselves – freeing them from their own selves, from their own egocentricity and callousness or disinterest in the face of extreme and unjustifiable suffering.⁷⁴ Moreover, it is

worth noting the *negative* tactic Gutiérrez employs in questioning a unifying love in oppressive conditions: by describing precisely what such love is *not*, he retains an open path for the renegotiation of that love in the process of struggling for its realization.

Furthermore, the existence of disparity in the world renders equivalent divisions within the church: “The unity of the Church is not truly achieved without the unity of the world.”⁷⁵ If, as stated in several documents from and since the Second Vatican Council,⁷⁶ the church intends to open itself to the world and put itself at the service of the people of the world, it must acknowledge that it is negotiating a context already divided, according to Gutiérrez. The suffering that stems from this division cannot be merely set aside, overlooked, or rendered inconsequential; it affects the daily reality of multitudes of individuals, fostering systems of oppression and domination. As such, Gutiérrez asserts that the church must dispel illusory internal conceptions of community and concordance if it is to make sufficient and substantial strides towards contributing to a global project of liberation. Gutiérrez’s understanding of the greater Christian identity depends upon this convergence of processes in the interest of the liberation of the oppressed.

To try piously to cover over this social division with a fictitious and formalistic unity is to avoid a difficult and conflictual reality and definitively to join the dominant class. It is to falsify the true character of the Christian community under the pretext of a religious attitude which tries to place itself beyond temporal contingencies. In these conditions, to speak, for example, of the priest as the ‘man of unity’ is to attempt to make him into a part of the prevailing system. It is to attempt to make him a part of an unjust and oppressive system, based on the exploitation of the great majorities and needing a religious justification to preserve itself.⁷⁷

According to Gutiérrez, it is of no use to the project of liberation, or the very project of salvation itself, as defined by liberation theologians, for the church to remain in a state of obliviousness or denial in regards to its own position, or the positions of its poorest constituents, within this

power construct. Nor is it useful to construct or maintain a false or merely partial unity in a world characterized by division. Thus, the church is called upon to understand itself in the context of concrete reality, the lived experience of those who are robbed of agency and intrinsic value, and to thus critically engage its own position in, or against, the liberatory process.

Gustavo Gutiérrez clearly draws on the legacy of Western Marxism in his early work. While Marx is far from the sole influence, Gutiérrez utilizes Marxian vocabulary, makes direct reference to the words and works of Marx and Marxian thinkers,⁷⁸ and seems to take seriously the claim that criticism must be “ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of...conflict with the powers that be.”⁷⁹ This first edition of *A Theology of Liberation* provides an uncompromising stance against oppression, utilizing social and economic critique, and charging the broader Catholic church with the necessity of reflection and adjustment. In the first edition, he boldly and unreservedly asserts that “Christian-Marxist dialogue” is not only possible, but crucial to the project of liberation. In constructing a theology that is a critical reflection on praxis, he outlines various factors that influence this new way of doing theology, including the Second Vatican Council, humanistic philosophy, and Christian eschatology.

To these factors can be added the influence of *Marxist thought*, focusing on praxis and geared to the transformation of the world... [It] is to a large extent due to Marxism’s influence that theological thought...has begun to reflect on the meaning of this world and the action of [humans] in history. Further, this confrontation helps theology to perceive what its efforts at understanding the faith receive from the historical praxis of [humans] in history as well as what its own reflection might mean for the transformation of the world.⁸⁰

This appraisal of the applicability of Marxian analysis is not limited to Gutiérrez, and many liberation theologians express a similar connection to this kind of theorizing. For example, Juan Luis Segundo’s “hermeneutic circle,” which is built on a foundation of ideological suspicion regarding the structure of society, including theology and the “neutral” political position of the

Catholic church. While Segundo critiques Marx for only focusing on the ideological nature of religion and religiosity, his approach nonetheless borrows from Marxian ideology critique.⁸¹ José Porfirio Miranda, a member of the Society of Jesus who left the priesthood in 1971, spent much of his career explicitly connecting Marxian theory to biblical exegesis and theological movements. With titles such as *Communism in the Bible*, *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression*, and *Marx against the Marxists*, the connections between his liberationist convictions and Marxian theory are plainly evident. In various ways, each of these works centers on the conviction that

...if Marx's fundamental and thoroughgoing criticism of capitalism centers around the fact that capitalism does not respect human beings as persons, as real subjects and agents, then that analysis turns out to be eminently Christian... and if he views the primacy of the economic factor in a way that is radically different from the view usually offered by materialism, then we are faced with a philosophical corpus that is more Christian than is ordinarily presumed.⁸²

Similar to Gutiérrez's use of Marxian thought, Segundo and Miranda portray Marx, and particularly the "philosophical" Marx who focuses on alienation and estrangement (which, stated above, result in an economic system that "does not respect human beings as persons...real subjects, [or] agents"), as enabling a rupture within history that reclaims the agency of the individual or subject and that transforms the world via revolutionary liberatory action. For Gutiérrez, this transformation is connected to a liberating praxis that is both humanistic and theological in nature, and the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation* he acknowledges both the centrality of Marx and the multiplicity of interpretive readings of Marx's works, stating that Marx's "originality is indisputable, although it has given rise to a variety of interpretations."⁸³

In the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, published in 1988, we find a re-writing which undermines the potency of the original message, which is now constructed as little more than

apologetics in an attempt to re-frame the discussion of social inequality merely within the specific confines of Catholic orthodoxy as outlined in Ratzinger's "Instructions." Here, Gutiérrez employs a purely theological vocabulary, abandoning and, at times, even refuting,⁸⁴ that which would be considered "Marxist," except in instances when Marxian language can be found within official church documents.⁸⁵ Granted, Gutiérrez received stern reprimands from church authorities for his alignment with the social sciences (particularly with Marx), and, as previously mentioned, these revisions took place after the official "Instructions" for liberation theology. If he had continued on this path, or challenged this authority, Gutiérrez may have compromised his pastoral position, and potentially relinquished any security the church could have provided for him in the often violent and dangerous geographical contexts in which he and other liberation theologians worked. It is important to recall that he was working in a time of "disappeareds" in Argentina, when dissidents were at times captured, tortured, and potentially executed by corrupt officials.⁸⁶ It was the time of, "Be A Patriot, Kill A Priest!" in El Salvador. In this sense, and with these consequences, a revision at this stage becomes more understandable, even if not necessarily more palatable. Yet, as we follow Gutiérrez through his later writings, it seems less and less that these were primary motivating factors. Rather, it appears that disciplinary measures taken against Gutiérrez and liberation theologians in general, represented in particular by the harsh reprimands offered in "Libertatis Nuntius," were internalized in ways that changed the fundamental function of Gutiérrez's innovative notion of liberation, not to mention the forms liberation theology may take. We turn to these later writings now.

Chapter Two: Gutiérrez's Liberation Theology post-1986

In comparison to the brief introduction of the initial edition, the revised introduction to the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation* spans nearly thirty pages, and acts as a treatise which re-frames the entirety of the following discussion, re-aligning it in a way that “fizzles into a defensive apologetics.”⁸⁷ The iconic first line of the original introduction, “This book is an attempt at a reflection, based on the gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited land of Latin America,” once framed the analysis that followed.⁸⁸ It acted as a foundation which made clear the maintenance of a preferential position for the lived experiences of those who suffer, and attempted to unify resources of faith and concrete reality. The opening lines of this new introduction immediately draw on specifically religious documents, particularly those that resulted from the conference of Latin American bishops at Medellín in 1968. Indeed, the purpose of this gathering aligned particularly with the intentions of liberation theologians,⁸⁹ and so it is not necessarily the invocation or context of such texts that is being critiqued; however, these texts had already been *validated* by those with authority in the church, so their position potentially reads as defensive. While lived experience might be charged as merely subjective by those in power, these particular documents – sources of inspiration for the revised text – received official sanction from authoritative figures, as the Medellín documents were brought into official church canon. As such, the inclusion of these statements and quotes at the head of the work do little but situate the work as essentially tamer, and thus more evidently amenable to mainstream doctrine in this tradition, as elucidated by Joseph Ratzinger in his role as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The previously-central lived experience of the theologian with and for the

poor is still to act as “inspiration” toward liberation, but the “perspective given by faith should help us see what is at stake in the present stage of history.”⁹⁰

Rather than a blossom directly stemming forth from ground fertilized with the cries of those who suffer in material poverty, Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation itself is now constructed as a particular articulation, losing any kind of spontaneity, which instead “represents...an attempt to accept the invitation of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council and interpret this sign of the times by reflecting on it critically in the light of God’s word.”⁹¹ It is not so much the specific content of such a statement that is under review; liberation theologians have always seen this movement, in part, as a response to the calls issued through the Second Vatican Council. What draws the most attention is the renegotiation of a previously central theme for the apparent purpose of “reining in” an innovative theology to situate it within the boundaries of the orthodoxy it once interrogated. As discussed at length in chapter four, there are, and have always been, very close ties between the aforementioned call issued by papal decree under Pope John XXIII and the intentions of Catholic liberation theologians, Gutiérrez in particular. However, to say that liberationist thought is not “an automatic result” of the experience of working with and for those who are poor,⁹² for the primary purpose of creating a society that is more just and more loving, seems to undermine the conviction that the very essence of this form of Christianity is *re-examined and re-figured* by these reflections. This is not to suggest some sort of rashness or recklessness in the connection made between the experience of poverty and the turning of a religious eye to this situation; there is no doubt that these thoughts were mediated by a variety of theories and theologies. But that experience itself, that lived commitment to the poor which precedes the “second act” of theology, was most certainly considered the impetus and inspiration for Gutiérrez’s liberation theology, and this

commencement was marked by a certain urgency, evident in the observation that material poverty is indeed a death sentence, that it is “a subhuman situation.”⁹³ In such a state, it is difficult to imagine how the effort to help others overcome such a situation could *not* lead rapidly to the kinds of reflections offered by Gutiérrez and others.

As we’ve seen, in their allegedly puerile analysis and interpretations, these thinkers, Gutiérrez included, made reference to a theorist frequently considered one of the ultimate anti-theists: Karl Marx.⁹⁴ The connection to Marx has been made clear in many ways already, but it is of prime concern that the specific distancing from this sort of analysis is engaged as thoroughly as possible. As this revised introduction reads as a sort of letter of clarification, or a statement of re-purpose, to the reader, it outlines the supposedly mistaken and juvenile associations made in the former edition and those who ‘erroneously’ interpreted and applied it, which are now emphatically disavowed. Throughout the new edition, Gutiérrez denies, again and again, any association with this particular figure with whom he once clearly shared bonds of theory and praxis, as well as unity in a vocabulary of resistance with reference to themes of class struggle, exploitation, and the like. Instead, a new vocabulary permeates the pages of this second introduction, which not only functions as apologetics, but a sort of self-deprecation or expression of regret with regard to some of the convictions and uncompromising stances present in the first edition. In particular, Gutiérrez resorts many times to language of “maturity,” implying that the previous reflections were the result of a theology not yet come-of-age, one that was still in the stage of naïve infancy. Likewise, those who have taken the message of the first edition quite seriously, and who have allowed it to inspire them to take radical steps on the path toward liberation, and perhaps at times away from the dominant discourse of orthodox Catholicism, are also critiqued for their simplicity and immaturity:

The years have...brought serious and relevant critiques that *have helped this theological thinking to reach maturity*. On the other hand, the theology of liberation has also stirred *facile enthusiasms* that have interpreted it in a *simplistic or erroneous way by ignoring the integral demands of the Christian faith* as lived in the communion of the church... we must refine, improve, and possibly correct earlier formulations if we want to use language that is understandable and faithful both to the integral Christian message and to the reality we experience... The theological labor must continue, but in pursuing it we now have some important documents of the magisterium that advise us about the path to be followed...⁹⁵

As will be detailed shortly, this kind of language parallels precisely the kinds of admonishments made of liberation theology by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith in the “Instructions” regarding this movement. Repeatedly, Gutiérrez refers to periods of “maturation,”⁹⁶ a theology “coming of age,”⁹⁷ those who engage in “ambiguous interpretations,”⁹⁸ and now a movement that “strives to be in continuity with the teaching of the church,”⁹⁹ *to the same extent* that it concerns itself with the liberationist project. All of this proposes a structural unity that was considered fractured in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*. Following the statements of Vatican officials, particularly Joseph Ratzinger, Gutiérrez now offers his readers a discussion of the “enrichments” his viewpoints have received, which led his thought through a kind of rebellious intellectual puberty, bringing it once again into harmony with church orthodoxy. As will be illustrated in chapter three, the statements issued during and around the Second Vatican Council themselves show remarkable resemblance to liberationist thought, and sometimes even to the works of Marx himself, making Gutiérrez’s distancing peculiar. Obviously, Gutiérrez’s own work can be related to a number of theorists (as with any scholar), European and Latin American, some of whom were undoubtedly connected to, or inspired by, Marx.¹⁰⁰

Of course, one can never expect a thinker or theory to remain static, frozen in time without further revision, consideration, additions and retractions. In Gutiérrez’s work, however, the

changes that are offered strikingly parallel the specific critiques offered by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It seems unclear whether these refined insights were the result of further experience and engagement with those who are materially poor, or if the “Instructions” were followed as a sort of theoretical script, as something telling the theologian what s/he *should* say about these conditions. “The point [of a vocabulary including terms such as ‘dominated peoples,’ ‘exploited social classes,’ etc.] was to make it clear that the poor have a social dimension. But the turbulent situation in Latin America has caused many to place an almost exclusive emphasis on the social and economic aspect of poverty (this was a departure from the original insight).”¹⁰¹ This statement in and of itself, with its final qualification, is remarkably broad and abstract, with no direct reference to who, exactly, is minimizing analysis to only the social and the economic. Even at the time of publication, analyses of poverty acknowledged the complex contexts which give rise to such conditions. If anything, this reads as an admonishment of the past-Gutiérrez himself – a condemnation reaching back through time to his earlier, supposedly naïve, self. The complexity of poverty is certainly previously acknowledged, with references made to institutional violence and the process of awareness, or *conscientización*.¹⁰² The approaches of the social sciences, however,

...carry with them ideological baggage requiring discernment; for this reason the use of the sciences can never be uncritical (see the Introduction of *Libertatis Nuntius*)... We need to make an unruffled but critical use of mediations that can help us to better understand where and how the Lord is challenging us as we face the life (and death) of our brothers and sisters.¹⁰³

Gutiérrez begins the revised section of chapter twelve, now entitled “Faith and Social Conflict,”¹⁰⁴ in a similar fashion as the original, stating that the current conditions of the impoverished are a direct result of the political and economic order. The central question of how human beings are to engage such conditions, however, is replaced by the question, “How are we

to live evangelical charity in the midst of this situation?”¹⁰⁵ Where once he convincingly critiqued the very notion of unity itself, he now attempts to construct a new unity, one based on “evangelical charity” rather than the “fact” of “class struggle.” Again, as in the first edition, he notes the factual basis for the understanding of humans engaged in social conflict, the reality of class antagonism. However, he almost exclusively utilizes sources from within the organized church, rather than the social sciences, to support his claims. It is important to note, the discrepancy here is not that these orthodox theological sources were *absent* from the former edition. The influence of Vatican II and the documents around this pivotal event cannot be overstated. What is of note is the use of these references to the *exclusion* of those taken from the social sciences. In this section of the first edition, Gutiérrez makes no qualms about Marx’s influence on his analysis; in the second edition, this inspiration comes entirely from papal officials and other such church authorities.

From the start, he seems clear in his dissociation from explicitly Marxist sources, quoting the French Episcopal commission on the working classes:

Oppression of the workers is a form of class struggle to the extent that is carried on by those managing the economy. For the fact of class struggle must not be confused with the Marxist interpretation of this struggle. *The class struggle is a fact* that no one can deny. If we look for those responsible for the class struggle, the first are those who deliberately keep the working class in an unjust situation, oppose its collective advancement, and combat its efforts at self-liberation.¹⁰⁶

The issue here is that the difference between this understanding of class struggle and the “Marxist interpretation of this struggle” is unclear. Both acknowledge the existence of class struggle, its origins among elite minorities, and the necessity of resolution. It would seem the only real divergence lies in the inspiration for such action – for Marx, class conflict must be resolved for the sake of *humanity*; in the above mentioned framework, it must be resolved for

the sake of *proper faith*. This is an important point, as Gutiérrez's notion of liberation follows this same reorientation.

At this point, Gutiérrez resurrects another theme from the first edition of his book, that of the impossibility of neutrality. In the former version, this discussion is framed by the idea of neutrality as tantamount to alignment with dominant forces; here avoiding neutrality is an expression of Christian love and ethics: "The gospel proclaims God's love for every human being and calls us to love as God loves... we cannot remain passive or indifferent when the most basic human rights are at risk. That kind of behavior would not be ethical or Christian... we are trying to eliminate [conflict's] deepest root, which is the absence of love."¹⁰⁷ Only a prior acknowledgement of class struggle, understood as a purely *religious* undertaking, will lead to a proper "Christian evaluation" and response to that struggle, for Gutiérrez.¹⁰⁸ He invokes biblical resources in terms of peace and justice, stating that the church must not overlook the necessity of universal love called for in the Bible. For Gutiérrez, this belief in an ideal of *universal Christian love* demands that those who maintain power in the world must utilize it at every possible opportunity for the liberation of the marginalized. However, any hint of a break in the actuality of the unity or universality of this love, inside or outside the Christian community, has been erased.

In this discussion of Christian love we find Gutiérrez's most apparent, albeit somewhat vaguely expressed, refutation of Marxian affiliation. He states, "I am obviously not identifying the preferential option for the poor with any ideology or specific political program. Even if they represent legitimate options for the Christian laity, they do not at all satisfy fully the demands of the gospel."¹⁰⁹ It is plainly clear that by "any ideology or specific political program" he is referring to (a particular definition of) "Marxism." In the final paragraphs of this section,

Gutiérrez revisits the idea of Christian unity. To recall, in the former edition, the very conception of this unity was called into question, on the basis of the disparity between church officials and the common believer living in poverty. This cause is generally abandoned in the second edition, however, and instead of challenging this unity, Gutiérrez reestablishes it within the framework of Christian charity. He states, “the church must help the world to achieve unity, while knowing that ‘unity among human beings is possible only if there is real justice for all.’”¹¹⁰ Rather than asking the church to abandon a façade of unity, he asks that they attempt “a unity that does not conceal real problems but brings them to light and evaluates them in the light of faith.”¹¹¹ The actuality of unity is taken for granted here, it is merely the *expression* of that unity which is called into question – and in reality, it seems that it is not so much even called into question, but rather simply reframed.

The differences between these two editions are stark enough, but these reformulations ripple throughout Gutiérrez’s later work. Essays in the years following the 1984 and 1986 “Instructions” carry fragments which maintain the same tone of cautioning or correcting youthful naïveté, and Gutiérrez soon begins repeating many of Ratzinger’s own critiques. It seems the damage done particularly by 1984’s “*Libertatis Nuntius*” was insurmountable with respect to Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation, particularly as connected to theology as a “second act.” The above discussion of love and unity among and within the church suggests that the consistency of orthodox representations and expressions of such love and unity have been elevated above a critique of a love that “is not authentic if it does not take the path of class solidarity and social struggle.”¹¹² This becomes ever clearer as one surveys a selection of essays written by Gutiérrez following these issuances and his own experiences with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.¹¹³ Here, essays spanning the late-1980s to the late-2000s will

highlight the ways in which Gutiérrez not only seemingly rebukes his former self, but seems to reconstruct and confine his understanding of liberation within the guidelines established by his superiors. To be clear, the point of this exercise is not to question Gutiérrez's sincerity, his dedication to the project of liberation, his commitment to the world's poor and oppressed, but rather to show how the abandonment of Marx and Marxian theory led to a series of revisions that ultimately revert back to the very same focus on orthodoxy that liberation theology was constructed to complicate, critique, and resist. That is, with each of these documents, Gutiérrez's liberation theology moves ever closer to a theological discourse *about* liberation, rather than a commitment to discursive and political *practices* indivisibly connected to liberatory praxis. Theology shifts from being a "second act" back into a position of primacy.

1989 – "The Meaning and Scope of Medellín," and "Toward the Fifth Centenary"

Written two decades after, and in commemoration of, the Medellín Episcopal Conference of 1968, "The Meaning and Scope of Medellín" seeks to highlight the continued relevance of the proceedings of this historic gathering, as well as to show ways in which it may be interpreted for contemporary times. Similar to the talk of living evangelical charity in situations of injustice in the 2nd edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, this work offers considerations regarding what it means to speak of 'Christian faith' in such contexts. In reflecting on a "new evangelization," defined by Gutiérrez as an evangelizing mission formed for specifically Latin American peoples, he speaks to one of the prime concerns of Joseph Ratzinger: the question of history, and its perceived unity as a spiritual salvation in the church, rather than a locus of liberation *that is also manifest in the world* (as it is in Gutiérrez's "integral liberation"). Already, just a few short years after "Libertatis Nuntius" and "Libertatis Consciencia" were written, Gutiérrez

begins toeing the proverbial line in this area. He claims that there is one and only one history, and he does so in a way that maintains the warnings and admonishments offered by Ratzinger.

We refer to the perspective that emphasizes the fundamental – but not monolithic – unity of history, in the sense that every person is called to communion with God and with others. This unity does not permit confusion between the aspects we call temporal and religious. Indeed the difference between those dimensions should not lead us to think in terms of two histories; that would imply a devaluation, from the viewpoint of faith, of the tasks involved in establishing a just and human world.¹¹⁴

“*Libertatis Nuntius*,” in particular, critiqued theologies of liberation for their apparently unorthodox notions of history, tainted by “Marxist” ideology, stating:

It is not the 'fact' of social stratification with all its inequity and injustice, but the '*theory*' of class struggle as the fundamental law of history which has been accepted by these "theologies of liberation" as a principle...According to this conception, the class struggle is the driving force of history. History thus becomes a central notion. It will be affirmed that God Himself makes history. It will be added that there is only one history, one in which the distinction between the history of salvation and profane history is no longer necessary. To maintain the distinction would be to fall into "dualism." Affirmations such as this reflect historicist immanentism.¹¹⁵

Here, liberation theologians are accused not only of misidentifying the locus of history as one and the same thing as class struggle; in such supposed confusion, they were perceived as encouraging a division between worldly and transcendent history. The supposed distinction (which is not clear in Gutiérrez's earlier work, particularly because of the notion of “integral liberation”) and the identification of history with class struggle is treated as a perversion of the Catholic understanding of human progression toward an ultimately destined end (theologically speaking). Gutiérrez seemingly takes on this critique, and continues it as his own, stating, “It is...*dangerous* to reduce the message of Christ to its historical and political dimensions. That *mutilation* and *deformation* of the Gospel must be firmly rejected.”¹¹⁶ That is to say, Gutiérrez is firmly refuting something that many liberation theologians would reject. Gutiérrez's notion of

liberation may necessitate theology as a “second act,” but it remains an “act,” nonetheless. The “reduction” of faith to *only* the historical and political is largely a caricature manufactured in Ratzinger’s critiques. This will become increasingly clear as “*Libertatis Nuntius*” is engaged further in this chapter.

While many and far-reaching, such shifts in focus can only be interpreted as more amenable to (Ratzinger’s definition of) orthodox notions of liberation within the confines insisted upon by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, and associated documents; however, these are not the only areas for concern within Gutiérrez’s later thoughts. A theme that will become evident as his further essays are explored is that of distancing via attribution. That is, when Gutiérrez elucidates core convictions connected to his idea of liberation, he often does so primarily by framing these in the words of (particular, theologically-approved) others. Such statements are *only* made when they can be connected back to orthodoxy, and acknowledged sources of authority become exclusive figures in Gutiérrez’s formulations and citations, to the total exclusion of non-theological resources and inventive and innovative discussions of what “doing” theology means in Central and South American contexts. Rather than challenging orthodoxy via critique or creativity such as the notion of orthopraxis,¹¹⁷ as Gutiérrez does in both editions of *A Theology of Liberation*, orthodoxy becomes the touchstone for his notion of liberation. For example, Gutiérrez places talk of challenging false peace or unity – the very language removed in the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation* – or of radical liberation, at a significant distance from himself:

We can say that *the Medellín proposal* for peace is a call to truth: a challenge to avoid the deception of a false peace that seeks to disguise the inhuman situation of the poor on this continent.... Medellín moved in a direction that *John Paul II* would later call *the gospel of liberation*.... [H]e wrote [in April 1986]: “The poor of this country, who have you as their pastors, the poor of this continent are the

first to feel the urgent need for this **gospel of radical and integral liberation**. To hide it would mean defrauding and disillusioning them.”¹¹⁸

These are notions once distinctive to the kind of theology advocated by Gutiérrez, which he now places at a safe distance, proposed not as something innovative and backed by particular conviction drawn from the experience of living with and for materially impoverished individuals and communities, but as something for which one group of theologians (or even one theologian in particular) cannot be held solely responsible. It is true that these themes are found in such official documents, as will be shown in chapter three; this is not in dispute. Now, however, only to the extent that such theories of fundamental dislocation and redetermination of perspective can be confirmed and validated by other, *official*, bodies are they included in Gutiérrez’s vision of a liberatory theological practice.

A more positive development, found in the essay, “Toward the Fifth Centenary,” is a continued effort to normalize language which puts poor and oppressed peoples at the center of their own liberation – an important piece of Gutiérrez’s “integral liberation.” As this essay offers a somber commemoration of the colonization of Central and South America, the privileged place of this historical “Other” is only natural. Here, there remain critical elements more often seen in Gutiérrez’s earlier writings, as he calls upon his audience to recall these pivotal historical moments, but to do so through the eyes of those who suffer. He urges this same audience to make connections between the destructive legacy of colonialism and present conditions, moving forward toward an inspired and inventive future.

We must...have the courage to read the facts from the other side of history. Here our sense of truth is at stake. In fact, only historical honesty can free us from prejudices, narrowness, ignorance, fudging by interested parties, which makes our past a burdensome mortgage instead of an impulse to creativity.

Recovering our memory will make us throw out the so-called “black legend” and “rosy legend” as inadequate and therefore useless. Hiding what really happened during those years for fear of the truth in order to defend entrenched privileges or – at the other extreme – frivolously mouthing mere slogans condemns us to historical sterility.¹¹⁹

Gutiérrez’s incisive language here hearkens back to the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, particularly in suggesting lack of unity caused by the division of two very different recollections of the past. In acknowledging historical honesty, he implicitly maintains that there are likewise *dishonest* histories, and suggests that individuals and institutions can and do choose which version(s) of such histories are propagated. Indeed, this is precisely the aim of “historical liberation,” one of three components of Gutiérrez’s “integral liberation.” This is included to show that Gutiérrez clearly has not fully abandoned the convictions of his earlier writings, which in the 2nd edition of *A Theology of Liberation* were largely written off as adolescent growth pangs. However, his framing of certain aspects of liberation changes in many ways, which often seem to undermine the creativity of his notion of liberation, and he increasingly backs away from the most challenging aspects of his theology.

The retained critical edge in “Toward the Fifth Centenary” only makes the concurrent and subsequent changes in Gutiérrez’s approach even more apparent. While he clearly remains a thinker willing to engage in analysis which is disruptive of dominant narratives, these moments increasingly occur only within certain constructs or contexts. When he asserts that “[our] approach to the past must be motivated not by nostalgia but by hope; not by a fixation upon former painful and traumatic occurrences, but by present suffering and the conviction that only a people which has a memory can transform the situation it is in and build a different world,”¹²⁰ he is clearly taking on structures of reflection which, in multiple ways, abstract from the lived experience of those in materially impoverished conditions (this lived experience being the “first

act,” which theology was to follow), and does so with an eye to a future in which such suffering is overcome. But, the object of these condemnations is a rather vague, anonymous audience. After the publications of “*Libertatis Nuntius*” and “*Libertatis Consciencia*,” Gutiérrez never again attempts to problematize the notion of unity specifically within the church, or to critique official positions (present and historical) of the organized system of religion within which he works. While he implicitly suggests a certain form of praxis and engagement in statements such as those provided above, he does so not in reference to the role of the church, but to the general community of believers and those who work for social justice. Thus, Gutiérrez concludes this essay by saying that “...Puebla calls all Christians and the Church as a whole to conversion. This cannot be achieved without an attitude that the Acts of the Apostles... calls *parrhesia*. This Greek term means boldness, outspokenness, the opposite of the timidity we see at present in so many Church circles.”¹²¹ Here, complacent elements within the Christian or Catholic religion as a whole are indirectly addressed, but, in the face of *specific* church structures or belief systems that may maintain neutrality or complacency, that very boldness and outspokenness for which he calls ironically seem to be resigned to his own personal history.

1991: “New Things Today: A Rereading of *Rerum Novarum*”

One hundred years after Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*,” Pope John Paul II commemorated this publication with his own “*Centesimus annus*.” The primary purpose of this essay was to repeat the calls offered in “*Rerum Novarum*” for worldly authorities to work to protect the rights of all humans in the interest of social justice. Part of this presentation is devoted to a general refutation of Marxian analysis, highlighting the perceived error of following the path of such a philosophy in the search for liberation from oppression. At this stage of church history, this was hardly a new or novel topic (an issue which will be addressed

in the next chapter); what is important are the ways in which Gutiérrez takes up this discussion, as it is here that it starts to become particularly clear just how deeply he was influenced by the “Instructions” of 1984 and 1986. The essay in question, “New Things Today: A Re-reading of *Rerum Novarum*,” acts as a sort of “translation” of “*Centesimus annus*” into a Latin American context, but in terms of theory, there is nothing particularly challenging, innovative, or surprising here. It is a “report back,” the content of which remains only amenable to the orthodox positions of the church, and there is no critical engagement of the material contained therein. While Gutiérrez and others offered ostensibly *valid critiques* of a situation of seemingly disingenuous unity between those who, while sharing the same faith, want for nothing and those who live in situations of inhumane poverty, these critiques have all but disappeared, despite very little concrete change actually occurring in the approach or stance of the organized church, let alone in the wider world. If anything, Gutiérrez appears at times to neutralize certain statements made in “*Centesimus annus*,” ensuring they are not taken by his (Latin American) audience as overly incendiary.

Written prior to the temporal scope of the current project, Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical, “*Rerum Novarum*,” largely addresses the division of peoples into classes, based on an economic divide. While the “deep abyss” between the two is acknowledged, “socialist” solutions are rejected alongside the capitalist structure which initiated such a chasm.¹²² The concept of the alienation of labour and the problem of class division were taken up by John Paul II, and in “*Centesimus annus*,” he “even speaks of the ‘*positive role of conflict*’ when it takes the shape of a struggle for social justice.”¹²³ In another document, “*Laborem Exercens*,” John Paul II “had already noted the **existence** of the great conflict between capital and labor (and thus between the people who represent each side) and the class struggle employed as a **means** of resolving social

injustice.”¹²⁴ Gutiérrez, in connecting this sentiment to the idea of positive conflict expressed in “Centesimus annus,” is quick to remind his readers that class struggle “responds to an ideology, *not to a reality*, thus providing artificial confrontations which make social relations more difficult.”¹²⁵ This theme of class struggle once played a pivotal role in Gutiérrez’s theories, as is clearly shown in the earlier treatment of the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation* - recall the earlier claim that “The class struggle is a fact.”¹²⁶ In this early edition, class struggle threatened the very notion of “Christian love” itself, as well as the unity of the church, as it brought to the fore the relations of material inequality in Central and South American contexts. It was not a struggle to dismantle the church, it was a struggle to highlight a disunion that was made manifest by economic inequality amongst members of the same tradition. Now, “class struggle” is spoken of as little more than a contrived construction which is divisive as a synthetic construct, as an unreality which causes schism by means of *the theory around it*, rather than for the disquieting conditions the term represents or describes. The connection to “*Libertatis Nuntius*” is evident:

It is not the 'fact' of social stratification with all its inequity and injustice, but the 'theory' of class struggle as the fundamental law of history which has been accepted by these "theologies of liberation" as a principle. The conclusion is drawn that the class struggle thus understood divides the Church herself, and that in light of this struggle even ecclesial realities must be judged. The claim is even made that it would be maintaining an illusion with bad faith to propose that love in its universality can conquer what is the primary structural law of capitalism.¹²⁷

Here, Joseph Ratzinger, in his role as prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, is clearly referring directly to Gutiérrez’s early claims regarding class struggle. Ratzinger rejects that “the class struggle is a fact” (particularly notable are the quotation marks that frame “fact” in the above excerpt), and situates it as a theory that is ultimately divisive in the church. Again, in asserting this “fact,” Gutiérrez was not necessarily inciting division, he was drawing attention

to an already divisive reality. Now, though, on the matter of class struggle, once a potent measure for examining the need for liberatory thought and praxis, Gutiérrez now takes on the position and vocabulary of the harshest critic of liberation theology.

Not a decade prior to “New Things Today,” Ratzinger opened a formal investigation of Gutiérrez, and now, the very terms of that investigation seem to have dominated Gutiérrez’s position with regard to elements such as class struggle. Ratzinger’s official biographer, John L. Allen, Jr., reports,

In February of 1983, Ratzinger sent a letter to the Peruvian bishops, asking them to investigate Gustavo Gutiérrez. Ratzinger listed several alleged flaws in Gutiérrez’s writings: (1) a Marxist view of history; (2) a selective reading of the Bible that overemphasizes the poor; (3) treating the Holy Spirit as a source of revelation separate from the church’s tradition and teaching office; (4) a class-riddled theology; (5) an emphasis on building the kingdom through class struggle, a process which also involves changing the structures of the church; (6) making the church into a partisan group, an idea “which puts into jeopardy the hierarchy and its legitimacy”; (7) a neglect of the beatitudes; and (8) a Marxist perversion of the gospel. “These are grounds for being deeply worried” about the theology Gutiérrez advocates, Ratzinger concluded.¹²⁸

With class struggle comes, as always, the spectre of “Marxism,” and the essay in question is no exception. Gutiérrez addresses the issue directly in his report to his readers at the beginning of a segment entitled “The Preferential Option for the Poor,” asserting that “the critique of capitalism and Marxism belong – as we have said – ‘to the evangelizing mission of the Church.’”¹²⁹ Merely four lines into a section devoted to the topic for which liberation theology is particularly renowned, the idea of which was inspired by multiple forces – church doctrine, the social sciences, critical theory, etc. – Gutiérrez specifically links the “preferential option” to the *rejection* of “Marxism.”

The lines between Catholic social doctrine, liberation theologies, and socialist or socialistic convictions are far from tidy, but what is certain is that the specific charge of “Marxism” against liberation theologians, and Gutiérrez in particular, was issued by Ratzinger. In the first “Instruction,” “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” some form of the term “Marx” (i.e. the proper name, “Marxism,” Marxist,” etc.) appears twenty nine times in approximately twenty pages. “For the ‘theologies of liberation,’” it states, “...the social doctrine of the Church is rejected with disdain... Concepts uncritically borrowed from Marxist ideology... [are] corrupting whatever was authentic in the generous initial commitment on behalf of the poor”¹³⁰ These reprimands ultimately made their way into Gutiérrez’s own discussion of liberation theology and his interpretation of church documents.

The context of [the] magisterium is “social morality”; it is about ethical demands and not a third way between capitalism and socialism. The Pope affirmed this energetically in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*: “The social doctrine of the Church is not...a ‘third way’ between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to two less radically opposed solutions, but belongs to a ‘separate category.’” It is a *separate statute*, which makes it a part of the primary mission of the Church.¹³¹

In terms of content, this isn’t even so much a translation for context as it is a parroting of language. The pattern of vocabulary here, of “third ways” and “separations,” in no way engages in critical consideration, in no way offers new or novel ways of interpreting these texts in the light of the lived experience of the poorest members of Central and South American societies. Gutiérrez continues in this vein, advising his audience that “[in] recent times ‘the sincere desire to take the side of the oppressed’ has led many believers ‘to seek in diverse ways an impossible compromise between Marxism and Christianity.’ It is impossible because they are two very different and even opposite philosophies, with regard to their ultimate vision of history and the human person.”¹³² To return briefly to the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, the theme of

“Christian-Marxist dialogue” is treated much more sympathetically, stating that “...contemporary theology does in fact find itself in direct and fruitful confrontation with Marxism, and it is to a large extent due to Marxism’s influence that theological thought... has begun to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of this world and the action of man in history.”¹³³ This kind of engagement is framed as “collaboration and dialogue with those who from different vantage points are also struggling for the liberation of oppressed people,” something that is “[v]ery important” to the process of “learn[ing] to live and think of peace in conflict and of what is definitive in what is historical.”¹³⁴ This framing of “Christian-Marxist dialogue” is utterly incompatible with the later statements made in “New Things Today.” As developments in Catholic social doctrine since the dawn of the liberation movement have adopted the language of theologians like Gutiérrez, so, now, Gutiérrez adopts the language of the critics of that same movement.

1994: “Theology: An Ecclesial Function”

It is worth taking a step back at this point, in order to emphasize just how deeply “*Libertatis Nuntius*” affected Gutiérrez’s thought. With reference to the supposed reliance on Marxism, and Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation in general, the aforementioned theme of naïveté or lack of critical engagement becomes a central notion around which Gutiérrez establishes his later discussions of the role of theology in his own work. The 1994 essay, “Theology: An Ecclesial Function,” particularly emphasizes a kind of rashness of earlier theory, a lack of understanding with regard to the point and position of the Catholic church and its various social doctrines, and confusion about the role of the theologian within this institution. In so doing, Gutiérrez issues his most compliant essay yet; it is an essay that at times seems to read like a letter of apology to Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Before addressing this

aspect, we must continue to explore the language and admonishments found particularly in “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” which can then be connected to “Theology: An Ecclesial Function.”

“*Libertatis Nuntius: Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation’*” is not merely a document which critiques liberation theology; while this is its primary function, enacted through an often questionable set of accusations regarding the influence of (certain interpretations of) “Marxist” analysis, it further asserts that liberation theologians fundamentally misunderstand what the term “liberation” itself means in the context of this particular faith, and Ratzinger warns that those who continue to advocate this kind of theologizing are not only incorrect and immature, but they “inevitably...betray the cause of the poor.”¹³⁵ With Ratzinger’s inquiry into Gutiérrez’s liberation theology in 1983, this 1984 document seems in many ways a direct evaluation of Gutiérrez and his notion of liberation. The critiques that are offered are such that those like Gutiérrez simply could not walk away triumphant. In particular, the charge of “Marxism” permeates “*Libertatis Nuntius*.”

When Marx is seen as a serious resource for liberation theology, his work is cast as fundamentally and inexorably counter to the Catholic faith:

Let us recall the fact that atheism and the denial of the human person, his liberty and rights, are at the core of the Marxist theory. This theory, then, contains errors which directly threaten the truths of the faith regarding the eternal destiny of individual persons. Moreover, to attempt to integrate into theology an analysis whose criterion of interpretation depends on this atheistic conception is to involve oneself in terrible contradictions.¹³⁶

When Marxian thought is seen as merely a foundation or a starting point, the theologians in question are portrayed as naïve, erroneous, impulsive, or simply ignorant (in the sense of implying that a meticulous examination of the theories in question has *not even taken place*; a charge that may be paternalistic at best).

Impatience and a desire for results has led certain Christians, despairing of every other method, to turn to what they call “marxist [sic] analysis.” Their reasoning is this: an intolerable and explosive situation requires “effective action” which cannot be put off. Effective action presupposes a “scientific analysis” of the structural causes of poverty. Marxism now provides us with the means to make such an analysis, they say.... [But, the] preliminary critical study [of what constitutes a scientific theory] is missing from more than one “theology of liberation.”¹³⁷

Section VII of “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” entitled “Marxist Analysis,” begins with the above announcement: that use of this literature from the social sciences is not just anathema to the social doctrine of the church, but that the very use of such theories is erroneous at the outset. Mere impetuosity, it declares, has led these theologians to a facile use of decidedly abhorrent material.

The first condition for any analysis is a total openness to the reality to be described. That is why a *critical consciousness* has to accompany the use of any working hypotheses that are being adopted. *One has to realize* that these hypotheses correspond to a particular viewpoint which will inevitably highlight certain aspects of the reality while leaving others in the shade. This limitation which derives from the nature of human science is *ignored* by those who, *under the guise of hypotheses* recognized as such, have recourse to such an all-embracing conception of reality as the thought of Karl Marx.¹³⁸

The theory being utilized, this suggests, has not itself been put through rigorous analysis, and if any should assert that this has indeed taken place, then this, too, is an indicator of merely superficial engagement. Despite the fluidity of the terminology and analysis actually used by liberation theologians (a fluidity never acknowledged by Ratzinger), “*Libertatis Nuntius*” insists that there is one and only one “Marxism,” and that any appeal to Marxian concepts is flawed before it even begins. The interpretation offered in “*Libertatis Nuntius*” is promoted as the sole correct interpretation, the orthodox position. Gutiérrez once critiqued such orthodoxy as the “primacy and almost exclusiveness which doctrine has enjoyed in Christian life”; part of his liberatory agenda was to “modify the emphasis, often obsessive, upon the attainment of an orthodoxy which is often nothing more than fidelity to an obsolete tradition or a debatable

interpretation.”¹³⁹ As the earlier discussion of Western Marxism shows, this orthodoxy advanced by Ratzinger is indeed “a debatable interpretation” which is posited as an absolute. Rather than maintaining this nuance, or teasing out the idea of “Christian-Marxist dialogue” further, Gutiérrez makes Ratzinger’s definition of “Marxism” his own.

The opening lines of Gutiérrez’s essay in question, “Theology: An Ecclesial Function,” seemingly respond to (or mirror) the accusation of an inappropriate use of misunderstood theories:

I would like to present here some thoughts about how I see the present role and future tasks of theological reflection in the life of the Church present in Latin America and the Caribbean. My intention is to elucidate what I have stated on other occasions and thus to *clarify certain concepts* in a sphere where it is easy to *fall into oversimplifications* and even *erroneous ways of understanding theological work*.¹⁴⁰

The essay itself is largely a response to the 1990 document, “Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian,” issued by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, of which Joseph Ratzinger remained prefect. Rather than the negative role played by “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” this new “Instruction” positively dictates what theologians should aspire to be, as opposed to what should be avoided or condemned. In his affirmations of the “Instruction,” though, Gutiérrez seems to form and proffer arguments which simultaneously respond to the critiques made in the earlier Ratzinger document, “*Libertatis Nuntius*.” In reporting the 1990 “Instruction” back to his readers, he seemingly internalizes and imitates the reprimands made against him and his fellow liberation theologians in Ratzinger’s earlier documents.

As previously noted, it was Ratzinger’s assertion that the social doctrine of the church was treated with “disdain” by liberation theologians, and that all liberation theologies ultimately sought to undermine and dismantle church authority and structure. The task of the theologian is

expressed as one of evangelization and exploration of Christian themes *within* the official boundaries already established by the organized church. Making reference to, or even creatively re-interpreting and applying, philosophies or methods considered contrary – in whole or in part – to orthodox understandings of theology are said to challenge the validity of the church, and this renders such interpreters potentially impious.

To the extent that they remain fully Marxist, these currents continue to be based on certain fundamental tenets which are *not compatible with the Christian conception of humanity and society*... Those who use similar formulas, while claiming to keep only certain elements of the Marxist analysis and yet to reject the analysis taken as a whole, *maintain at the very least a serious confusion* in the minds of their readers.... It is only when one *begins* with the task of evangelization understood *in its entirety* that the authentic requirements of human progress and liberation are appreciated.”¹⁴¹

Here, the liberationist approach, to the extent that it maintains a relationship with “Marxist analysis,” remains invalid and partial at best. According to Ratzinger, even a tinge of (his definition of) “Marxism” undermines the entirety of the project, and suggests that theologians who taint their work as such are unable to even comprehend the requirements of living a proposed kind of evangelical faith. With Gutiérrez’s mission being largely pastoral, the accusation of such ignorance has particular ramifications for his notion of liberation.

Gutiérrez continues such a narrative in his own discussion of the role of the theologian in “Theology: An Ecclesial Function”:

...“the theologian, without ever forgetting that he or she is a member of the People of God, must respect it and commit himself or herself to give them a teaching *which does not injure in any way the doctrine of the faith*.” Otherwise, theologians run the risk that the pressing needs of the moment *may make it hard to see the requirements of the message in its entirety. They will not fulfill their function of service to the evangelizing of the Church*...”¹⁴²

The “pressing needs of the moment” in Gutiérrez’s case once fostered a sense of urgency in his notion of liberation, an obligatory re-situating which fosters a position of solidarity with the

poor, in the present moment, utilizing philosophy, theology, and the social sciences – in conversation with one another – to make bold statements of conviction with regard to the historical and actual living conditions of the poorest members of Latin American societies. Now, however, these “pressing needs” are potential distractions, and the means of exploring them are diversions when they step outside the boundaries of orthodox theology, which itself begins to move away from a “second act” and toward a “first act.” If clergy’s fulfillment of “their function of service to the evangelizing of the Church” is positioned in a place of primacy, and any action or commitment must first be determined “not injure in any way the doctrine of the faith,” this is seemingly *a re-assignment of theology to a “first act.”* Moreover, in a complete reversal of his earlier position, theologians are now called upon to speak *only in ways which are amenable* to the Catholic church itself, rather than opening space for a critique of the unity and neutrality of a church in conditions of vast economic injustice. Here, the censorship from which Gutiérrez previously only narrowly escaped earlier has seemingly become internalized; he seemingly echoes the words of “*Libertatis Nuntius*” in his own writings.

The role of, or return from, Marxian thought in Gutiérrez’s theology, by now identified almost exclusively as “the social sciences,” is admittedly implicit in many of the examples provided from this particular essay. Lest there be any suspicion that the present analysis is extra-contextual, that it is an analysis reading into the words something that is not there, Gutiérrez makes this connection clear in a segment entitled, “A Moment for Latin America.” He states:

It is easy to be *absorbed by the emotional aspects* of the situation, to experience a certain *fascination with something new*, or to *overestimate the value of the social sciences*... [T]o speak of a scientific understanding of the social universe cannot be considered something definite or apodictic, nor as something completely free of ideological connections... Social and political liberation should not in any way hide the final and radical significance of liberation from sin which can only be a work

of forgiveness and of God's grace. It is important then to *refine our means of expression* in order to avoid confusion in this matter.¹⁴³

As in the introduction to the second edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez here continues using language that suggests immaturity in his early writings. Now, as if they had been children “playing” theology, the early liberation theologians are portrayed as enraptured or mesmerized by “new” theories, flawed by the supposed blemish of emotionalism. Not only are these early contemplations portrayed as incorrect, the deviations encountered along the way are labelled “dangers.”¹⁴⁴ A period of development, if one can call it that, has corralled a once innovative theologian, steering him back into line with official assessments of “Marxist” thought and/or “the social sciences.” Rather than an actively liberating theology, his work increasingly becomes that which was once sternly chastised: a theological discourse about liberation. In the apparent shift of theology from a “second act” to a “first act,” as a contemplation of theological orthodoxy that must come prior to action, Gutiérrez’s very notion of liberation is altered; integral liberation, the union of material, human, and soteriological emancipation, is implicitly restructured. The critique of economic disparity in material liberation is cut off from valuable resources (Marxian thought and “the social sciences”), the content of which is difficult to sever from any such critique (as will be highlighted in the next chapter). Human liberation in historical agency is likewise potentially severed from useful analyses, such as those provided by Critical Theory, which undoubtedly took root in Western Marxian analysis. Soteriological liberation, liberation from sin, was connected to a process of *conscientización*, which requires an understanding of ideology critique as directed both outward to unjust social realities and inward to one’s own selfishness and sin (where “sin” is understood, at least in part, as that which facilitates oppression). Here, salvific reality was intimately linked to worldly liberation, the former a continuation, rather than an equivocation, of the latter. Ratzinger insisted

that liberation theology erroneously conflated these two concepts; while this is inaccurate, Gutiérrez nonetheless alters his focus to correct that which required no correction in the first place.

We can compare this shift to yet another passage from “Libertatis Nuntius”:

When modes of interpretation are applied to the economic, social, and political reality of today, which are themselves borrowed from Marxist thought, they can give the initial impression of a certain plausibility, to the degree that the present-day situation in certain countries is similar to what Marx described and interpreted in the middle of the last century. On the basis of these similarities, certain *simplifications* are made which, abstracting from specific essential factors, *prevent any really rigorous examination* of the causes of poverty and prolong the confusion.¹⁴⁵

Here, it is considered somewhat understandable that Gutiérrez and his peers would make recourse to these kinds of resources, plausible as they may be at first glance. But, for Ratzinger, the allegedly unrefined engagement, which led to a “simplistic” analysis, betrays a naïveté which brings with it no “really rigorous” investigation of the issues at stake,^C and which ultimately obstructs the way for those who hold emancipatory interests at heart. Following up this idea of immaturity, Ratzinger paints an even more disturbing portrait of those members of the laity who had been such an inspiration for theologies of liberation. Of the members of the base ecclesial communities, he says, “The theses of the ‘theologies of liberation’ are widely popularized under a simplified form, in formation sessions or in what are called ‘base groups’ which *lack the necessary catechetical and theological preparation as well as the capacity for discernment*. Thus these theses are accepted by generous men and women *without any critical*

^C This ironically seems to mirror Marx’s own critique of theology, when he suggests that the idea of “critical theology” is oxymoronic (as noted in the introduction). While Marx contends that a commitment to theology necessarily reflects an inability or unwillingness to be authentically critical, Ratzinger contends that a commitment to *liberation theology* necessarily reflects an inability or unwillingness to be authentically discerning in appropriating ideas or concepts imported from Marxian theory or “the social sciences.”

judgement being made.”¹⁴⁶ Such members of the religious community, by his estimation, could not – could *never* – have the necessary knowledge or experience, let alone the critical faculties, to properly discern what it means to be a member of this faith while also being a person who suffers from material poverty. Here, those who encourage and learn from such communities – “listening to” the poor being a central liberationist theme¹⁴⁷ – are cast as doing so in a way that is not only erroneous, but which is (religiously) detrimental to those same communities.

Gutiérrez continues this segment, “A Moment for Latin America,” further praising his former critics and validating their view of his earlier theologizing. The “Christian unity” and love that was once in question, divided as such believers can be along economic lines, is once again unproblematized, as he tells his readers that “[c]onflictive social realities cannot make us forget the requirements of a universal love that does not recognize the boundaries of social class, race, or gender.”¹⁴⁸ This is not to suggest that this is in and of itself a controversial or problematic statement – if anything, a love that transcends these boundaries, allowing for an opening to the historical and material Other, is laudable. What is unfortunate is that the earlier critical insights, that such divisions *do* exist, that “the class struggle is a fact,” and that attempting to wash over such divisions with a false narrative of unity, based on ideals less so than actualities, manifests as a detrimental commitment to the status quo, have been abandoned. Gutiérrez continues to call his own former critique into question, asserting that “[it] is possible to go astray in these matters, and in fact this has happened,”¹⁴⁹ as he applauds those who made “well-founded objections, requests for necessary refinements,” and who offered “a legitimate presentation of

doubts.”^{150,D} The connections made so far in analyzing this essay seem to make it very clear, indeed, that Gutiérrez is speaking to a particular audience: those who raised precisely these critiques of liberation theology, i.e. Joseph Ratzinger in his role as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Pope John Paul II, who endorsed Ratzinger’s appraisal. As if admitting defeat, he finally concludes,

All of this leads us to see that the effort to capture new realities theologically has to be constantly clarified. Imperfections of language must be overcome, and inexact formulations must be corrected by concepts which do not give rise to errors in matters concerning the doctrine of the faith.... It is important above all to be clear about these risks and limitations, to listen with humility to divergent opinions.¹⁵¹

The emphasis on “clarification” again reasserts the primacy of orthodoxy, of a correct interpretation of belief that must guide action. As well, reinforcing this focus, “listen[ing] with humility to divergent opinions” is clearly an assertion meant to encourage attentiveness to the critics of liberation theology, rather than, say, an assertion meant to encourage attentiveness to extra-theological analyses, which may diverge from orthodoxy, such as those provided by “the social sciences.”

In light of this, it is worth returning to Gutiérrez’s early definition of theology:

Theology is reflection, a critical attitude. First comes the commitment to charity, to service. Theology comes "later." It is second. The Church's pastoral action is not arrived at as a conclusion from theological premises. Theology does not lead to pastoral activity, but is rather a reflection on it. Theology should find the Spirit present in it, inspiring the actions of the Christian community. The life of the Church will be for it a *locus theologicus*.¹⁵²

^D As noted in Juan Luis Segundo’s, *Theology and the Church: a Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church*, this is not a universal appraisal of Ratzinger’s “Instructions.” While Gutiérrez claims that such critiques are “well-founded,” offering “a legitimate presentation of doubt,” Segundo’s work suggests that a fundamental theological disagreement takes place in the confrontation of liberation theology by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a disagreement which, as noted earlier, Segundo suggests amounts to an undermining of the whole of the Second Vatican Council.

Later, and more famously, he expands this definition in the following way:

Theology must be critical reflection on humankind, on basic human principles. Only with this approach will theology be a serious discourse, aware of itself, in full possession of its conceptual elements. But we are not referring exclusively to this epistemological aspect when we talk about theology as critical reflection. We also refer to a clear and critical attitude regarding economic and socio-cultural issues in the life and reflection of the Christian community.... *But above all, we intend this term to express the theory of a definite praxis.* Theological reflection would then necessarily be a criticism of society and the Church insofar as they are called and addressed by the Word of God; it would be a critical theory, worked out in light of the Word accepted in faith and inspired by a practical purpose – and therefore *indissolubly linked to historical praxis.*¹⁵³

An essential aspect of Gutiérrez's early liberation theology was precisely this assertion: that liberatory practices are at the fore of what is required of a theologian who wants to stand in solidarity with and for the poor. Speaking theology comes after doing theology, and doing theology is explicitly linked to transformative praxis that is connected specifically to the lived experiences of those who are socially and economically oppressed; this, above all, was the expression of Gutiérrez's notion of liberation. Theology – theologizing in a context of liberation – itself was said to only come *after* this practice, and as such is partially *dependent upon* this experience. What one witnesses and practices in working with the poor will inform the theology that follows. As such, theology itself becomes as transformative as the praxis that shapes it. Now, however, it seems that this conviction has been reversed. Continuing from an earlier quoted passage from "Theology: An Ecclesial Function," in speaking of the "imperfections" and "inexact formulations" that came in his previous discussion of liberation and its connection to theology,¹⁵⁴ Gutiérrez offers the following:

It is important above all to be clear about these risks and limitations, to listen with humility to divergent opinions. This attitude follows...from *understanding the meaning of theological work as a service to the evangelizing mission of the entire Church*...In theology it is necessary to be ever ready, in the words of John Paul II, to "modify one's own opinions" in function of one's service to "the community of

believers.” *This is the meaning of theological works*; this is why it may rightly be affirmed, as the “Letter on the Formation of Future Priests” puts it, that theology “cannot prescind from the doctrine and lived experience in the sphere of the Church in which the magisterium authentically watches over and interprets the deposit of faith.”¹⁵⁵

Whether or not a liberationist perspective can work, to whatever extent, within these new definitions, what is clear is that *the very meaning of theology*, and thus *the very notion of liberation*, has changed considerably for Gutiérrez. Theology is not primarily in the service of the people – whichever “people” is identified within various currents of theologies, liberationist or not; theology is now in the service of the church itself, as part of “missionary” and evangelizing aspects of the faith.¹⁵⁶ Theology now is inseparable from the “authenticating” hand of the “magisterium” and the “interpretations” offered by this body. Praxis no longer informs theology, nor does it come “first.” Action is based on official, and officiated, interpretations, offered by the authorized interpretations of a proselytizing faith. As noted by Leonardo Boff in the essay “The Originality of the Theology of Liberation,”

Liberation is not just one item on the theologians’ list. It is a horizon against which everything is illuminated, a plane in which everything has a position and acquires new meaning. In other words, liberation is not just an entry in an encyclopedia alongside other entries. It is a perspective from which all the other terms are understood, analyzed, and explained... This is the new element introduced by Gutiérrez, a new task for Christian reflection: to examine critically, in light of faith and revelation, historical action, to understand theology **as one moment** in a much larger process of transformation of the world and its relationships.¹⁵⁷

Liberation, as the central defining element of this innovative theology, and which required an intersection of theological, sociological, economic, and philosophical engagement, is now relegated to the solely theological.

Even when facing critiques that amount to mere caricatures of liberation theology, Gutiérrez simply seems to bow out, to acquiesce. After the 1984 and 1986 “Instructions,” he

fundamentally changes some of the most critical, some of the most inspired, and some of the most necessary observations of his early theology, and the impact of this is evident throughout his later works. Already, in 1990, Arthur F. McGovern identified this as a spiritual turn in Gutiérrez's theology.¹⁵⁸ While spirituality was certainly not foreign to Gutiérrez, the writings that follow "Theology: An Ecclesial Function," as characterized, for example, by the more recent collection entitled, *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Spiritual Writings* (2011), tend ever more to the ideas of theology as spirituality and transcendence through faith, rather than in material reorganization of a toxic global economic system as a demand of that faith. As "Theology: An Ecclesial Function" ends with a nod to missionary and evangelizing efforts, understood primarily as theological efforts rather than liberationist efforts, so do his writings in the 21st century maintain a preference for doctrinal orthodoxy over emancipatory action. Gutiérrez's mission has always been pastoral in nature, but that very pastoral activity was once defined as similar to Boff's statement above: as one piece of a larger transformative movement. Evangelizing is now positioned as the central element of pastoral action. This is particularly evident in his 2009 essay, "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ."

2009: "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ"

The title of this work, in and of itself, exemplifies the shifts that have been detailed so far. Theology, as determined by an orthodox understanding of what it means to have "Faith in Christ," and once positioned as a "second act," is now the primary determinant for the shaping of the option for the poor; *faith no longer arises from praxis, praxis arises from faith*. This essay was written in response to the May 2007 General Conference of the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Aparecida, Brazil. Joseph Ratzinger, now in his role as Pope Benedict XVI, spoke at this conference on the theme of the preferential option for the

poor, a speech which Gutiérrez credits with the “presence of this commitment [to the poor] at Aparecida.”¹⁵⁹ Benedict XVI situates this option in the following way: “the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty.”¹⁶⁰ Characteristically, Benedict XVI reverses the focus of the option for the poor from those who actually suffer from material poverty and on to his theological interpretation of poverty as something which fosters closeness to god, and thus to spiritual salvation. That Gutiérrez utilizes such a framework, and does so in a laudatory way, yet again confirms his distancing from his early theories. “The option for the poor,” he says, “is deployed in three arenas: the following of Jesus, theological work, and the proclamation of the gospel.”¹⁶¹ Praxis specifically guided by solidarity with the poor is conspicuous in its absence.

In what follows, Gutiérrez aligns this option with a transcendent, spiritual mystery, rather than a real historical event. He makes recourse to the language of mysticism to suggest that the heart of the preferential option for the poor is the “*spiritual experience of the mystery of God* who is, according to Meister Eckhart, both the ‘unnameable’ and the ‘omni-nameable’ one.”¹⁶² While he goes on to assert that the least of history ought to take priority, this is done for the purpose of making known the “mystery” of the Christian god and/as Jesus. “This,” he says, “is what the preferential option for the poor points to: walking with Jesus the Messiah.”¹⁶³ Here, the irruption of the poor serves as a sign not of material justice or liberation, but of “a true irruption of God into our lives.”¹⁶⁴ Gutiérrez insists that this reversal is not meant to render secondary the lived experiences of the materially impoverished, nor to ignore those who decry systems of injustice. Rather, he asserts that what is really at stake in seeking justice is a spiritual path that leads either toward or away from god. To quote at length:

Saying this does not deprive the poor of the historical flesh of their suffering. Nor does it deprive them of the human, social, and cultural substance of their cry for justice. It is not a short-sighted “spiritualization” that forgets their human dimensions. Rather, it makes us truly see what is at stake, according to the Bible, in the commitment to one’s neighbor. Precisely because we so value and respect the density of the historical event of the irruption of the poor, we are positioned to make a faith-based interpretation of this event. It is worth saying: we understand the irruption of the poor as a sign of the times, which we must scrutinize in the light of faith in order to discern the challenge of the God who has pitched his tent among us. Solidarity with the poor is the source of a spirituality, of a collective – or communal, if one prefers – journey toward God. This journey takes place in a history that the inhuman situation of the poor exposes in all its cruelty, but that also allows its possibilities and hopes to be discovered.¹⁶⁵

Gutiérrez once called upon his readers not only to evaluate the plight of the poor through faith, but also to evaluate *one’s own faith through the plight of the poor*. This latter challenge no longer carries the substantial weight it once did; first and foremost, one must now understand the spiritual foundation that is a “journey toward God,” otherwise, the authenticity of the evaluation itself may be called into question. This is not to say that this particular mission of approaching the divine was absent in early liberation theology; this is, after all, a specifically *theological* movement. No, the salvific reality of a life directed toward universal equality was always included in Gutiérrez’s theology. The *orientation* toward that end, however, was one that was first material, and that materiality would then be practiced through *doing* an emancipatory theology. While it seems that Gutiérrez still has much to say about the material world, words that do carry significant weight in the present, this material world no longer seems to constitute one’s engagement with theology, except to the extent to which striving for economic justice coincides with a pre-existing orientation toward a particular kind of faith. What was once a dynamic model seems now to be a singular trajectory, with one purpose, one goal, and which is validated only through an orthodox version of the Catholic church’s religious doctrine, rather than in the lived experiences of those who are economically oppressed. “The poor” are ultimately framed as a means, rather than an end in and of themselves.

In noting this orientation toward a spirituality of liberation, Marsha Hewitt observes the following.

[Gutiérrez's liberation theology] has become less critical of the socio-political realm and more preoccupied with the *spirituality* of liberation and of the poor, which could lead to a situation where the discourse of liberation becomes a substitute for actual liberation. If this is indeed the case, liberation theology may foreclose on its emancipatory potential by acquiescing to the status quo... [T]his new emphasis on the spirituality of the poor, coupled with the repudiation of former political and theoretical positions, such as the need for a socialist transformation within Latin America, indicates a retreat back into the *camera obscura* that liberation theology once rejected.¹⁶⁶

The retreat from materiality and the more exclusive turn towards spirituality marks a similar shift away from praxis back into theory. In the spiritualization of liberation theology, what was once a discursive practice, validated through active engagement with the poor in the interest of constructing a socialistic society of justice and equality, now deflates in the very detached, transcendent speculation against which this movement was established. Gutiérrez and his peers called for their faith to climb down from the heavens and orient itself once again in the world, the message of its messiah practiced in the liberation of the oppressed. The distinction between Gutiérrez's writing before and after the Vatican "Instructions" on liberation theology is as clear as it is stark. The fundamental meaning of his notion of liberation as such has been altered. In his essay, "Reason and Revelation," Theodor Adorno remarks on the "turn toward transcendence" he sees manifest in the religious themes of his own time:

Only weakness seeks bonds; the urge for bonds, which exalts itself as though it had relinquished the restrictions of egoism, of mere individual interest, in truth is not oriented toward the humane, on the contrary, it capitulates before the inhumane. Certainly underlying this is the illusion society needs and reinforces with all its conceivable means: that the subject, that people are incapable of humanity – the desperate fetishization of presently existing relations... The turn toward transcendence functions as a screen-image for immanent, societal hopelessness.

Intrinsic to it is the willingness to leave the world as it is, because the world could not possibly be different.¹⁶⁷

The move from the concrete to the abstract, the withdrawal from the world in pursuit of the transcendent, is, for Adorno, indicative of a hope that has been utterly defeated. As liberation theologians like Gutiérrez in many ways felt swells of support from some local bishops and other authorities, so did some of their aspirations plummet after the release of Ratzinger's "Instructions," and the various punishments laid upon their peers. Leonardo Boff officially left the priesthood of the Catholic church after his silencing. Juan Luis Segudo was so outraged that he composed his infamous response to Ratzinger, *Theology and the Church: a Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church*, as he was simply unable to recognize the liberation theology he knew in the caricature of the movement provided in "Libertatis Nuntius." Gutiérrez, on the other hand, revised and republished one of the most fundamental works of Latin American liberation theology, sanitizing the theory of any "Marxist" taint, and deleting some of the most important critiques of perceived or forced unity in a world of division. The spirit of this alteration has only intensified over time, as Gutiérrez's works continue to retreat more and more away from the earthly and toward the heavenly, away from the living, suffering bodies of the oppressed and toward the spiritual opportunity their suffering presents. In returning to the proverbial fold, the punished theologian sought again the "bonds" of orthodoxy, brought on by struggling under the heavy burden of Ratzinger's critique. That said, the concurrence of these two events – Ratzinger's admonishment and Gutiérrez's "turn toward transcendence" – does allow for a measure of curiosity with regard to the present, in which a new pope, seemingly more amenable to liberation theology, has replaced Ratzinger in his role as Benedict XVI. As noted in the introduction to the current work, in February 2014, a new book, *Poor for the Poor: the Mission of the Church*, was published in Italian (those not fluent in

Italian eagerly await its translation). It was composed by Ratzinger's successor as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Gerhard Mueller; its introduction was written by Pope Francis, and Gutiérrez has written two chapters. Perhaps, with more supportive climate in the Vatican, Gutiérrez will reaffirm some of the deservedly lauded convictions of his earlier notion of liberation, bringing both liberation and theology back down once again into lived human reality.

Chapter Three: Liberation and Orthodoxy

As we've seen, Joseph Ratzinger rejected the bulk of liberation theology, particularly as articulated by Gustavo Gutiérrez, as little more than a social, political, and economic movement with exclusive and inflexible adherence to (Ratzinger's own definition of) "Marxist ideology." The use of one particular form of social analysis invalidated any other viable emancipatory insights offered by liberation theologians, despite the fact that there is actually a significant amount of overlap between Gutiérrez's liberation theology and the stances offered in various official Catholic documents – in particular, those from and surrounding the Second Vatican Council. Despite Ratzinger's dismissal, the canon of the Catholic religion was a solid orienting element for liberation theologians (though their exegesis on this material was drawn seriously into question by critics in the Vatican), perhaps the most immediate theological impetus outside of the holy book of their particular faith are the documents around the events and proclamations of Vatican II.¹⁶⁸ As Marsha Aileen Hewitt aptly notes, "The Council's concern with the social and economic problems suffered by millions of human beings and its recognition of the need for sweeping changes in the material conditions of life was especially important and inspiring for Latin American theologians and lay Christians who were committed to bringing social justice to their continent."¹⁶⁹ It should be noted that the intent here is not to analyze the presented documents in full, but rather to scrutinize them with particular objective: to seek in them the passages that served to inspire liberation theologians, particularly Gustavo Gutiérrez, and which convinced such theologians that they were, in fact, acting in accordance with the dominant themes of their tradition, prior to Ratzinger's "corrections." That said, the most intriguing part of this process is what it reveals about the prevalence of Marxian-type analyses in the face of social oppression. When orthodoxy and liberation theology overlap in their denunciation of

existing social and economic conditions, and they frequently do, the link between these two forms of thought is often facilitated by critiques that are remarkably similar to Marx's own words. Such commonalities suggest that there may be no substantive discursive reserve for economic and social critique which does not carry, at least in part, a Marxian shade. The comprehensive and unwavering analysis Marx offered remains for many the rubric by which the efficacy and validity of contemporary economic and social critique is evaluated.

1961: "Mater et Magistra – Christianity and Social Progress"

"Mater et Magistra," authored by Pope John XXIII, opens with a statement that firmly orients the purpose of the church as connected to the "daily lives" of all people, not merely with reference to evangelism, but with material concerns, as well. Merely three paragraphs into this work, John XXIII makes this connection explicit. "[A]lthough Holy Church has the special task of sanctifying souls and of making them sharers of heavenly blessings, she is also solicitous for the requirements of men in their daily lives, not merely those relating to food and to sustenance, but also to their comfort and advancement in various kinds of goods and in varying circumstances of time."¹⁷⁰ Rather than recognizing the duties of the church as purely spiritual, "Mater et Magistra" asserts a necessarily *dual commitment* for its officials and authorities. Here, not only is the mission of the church the metaphysical feeding of souls, it is also to be concerned with the alleviation of "the [physical] hunger of the crowds."¹⁷¹ It is worth noting very early on the precise location of such a statement in this work. One need not turn past even the first page of this document to begin witnessing such passages as that quoted above. This is not to say that this is the first instance of the statement of worldly concerns in an encyclical letter (one could, for example, look to the earlier letter "Rerum Novarum," which was concerned with the issue of the conditions of workers in the Industrial Age), but the explicit assertion of the duty of the

church as containing within it a concern for the material needs of its followers is something that shows itself with more and more frequency and intensity as we approach the commencement of what would later be called liberation theology (as Juan Luis Segundo notes, “liberation theology has been developing for a quarter of a century, although without that name...”).¹⁷² Themes such as this, as well as their position of primacy in this document, make evident to the reader the urgency of the statements themselves.

In what seems nearly a foreshadowing of this later movement, “Mater et Magistra” goes on to instruct followers to maintain a “twofold commandment of *giving*, wherein is contained the full social teaching and action of the Church.”¹⁷³ The dual mandate requires both a sense of evangelization with regard to the faith, as well as a charitable orientation in the world. With respect to this second notion, this document sets out to describe the ways in which such forms of assistance are to be enacted in the world – *praxis*. While the recommendations given are expectedly inspired by the Catholic church’s particular interpretation of Christianity, there can be no denying that the advice given, both in outlook and practice, is explicitly to be carried out in the earthly realm – though with an eye to the assumed will of a deity. “[T]he organization of economic affairs must be conformable to practical morality.”¹⁷⁴ All of the rights of modern humanity carry with them a corresponding obligation – we are indeed generally perceived as free to pursue reasonable enjoyment and accumulation of goods, but the source of these things is called seriously into question by John XXIII (and the depths and extremes to which this questioning goes increase as we move further along in the documents being analysed here). While one is presently said to have a right to hold private property (an assertion that is called into question in later documents like “Populorum Progressio”), this property must be held in conjunction with a sense of social responsibility.¹⁷⁵ It is not enough to simply exist in the world,

ordering one's own life according to whim or desire. If one is to live within the standards and dictates issued by this faith, according to this particular document, one must always be mindful of the repercussions of one's actions and accumulations, and the intersection of these with the *physical* well-being (not simply the spiritual well-being) of our fellow human beings.

Yet, at this point, John XXIII declares that it is not the church's role to interfere explicitly in the lives of its followers, and there are limitations to the types of regulation he recommends: "For the unregulated competition which so-called *liberals* espouse, or the class struggle in the *Marxist sense*, are utterly opposed to Christian teaching and to the very nature of man."¹⁷⁶ Already in the first of the documents to be investigated here, we see a stern refutation of all things "Marxist," "communist," or "socialist," especially to the extent to which such systems are interpreted as exalting humans over even (this particular) god. It is assumed that all who follow these theories must necessarily subscribe to atheistic persuasions as well, and that they see all of history as solely the culmination of human advancements, successes and enterprises.

[T]he views of *communists*, as they are called, and of Christians are radically opposed. Nor may Catholics, in any way, give approbation to the teachings of *socialists* who seemingly profess more moderate views. From their basic outlook it follows that, inasmuch as the order of social life is confined to time, it is directed solely to temporal welfare; that since the social relationships of men pertain merely to the production of goods, human liberty is excessively restricted and the true concept of social authority is overlooked.¹⁷⁷

A statement such as this is, of course, something of a caricature, and one that does not take into account in any way the complex developments, variants and evolving lines of thought in Marxian and socialist philosophies that had already occurred up to the time of its writing. To concretely proclaim that there is but one form of "Marxism," but one type of socialism, even in the year 1961, is highly problematic. This kind of impermeable, unyielding restriction which assumes an all-encompassing, totalizing structure where there really is none is the source of

some of the more frustrating encounters between the organized church and the liberation theologians. What is perhaps most curious, however, is the way in which the language used in this document, as well as those that follow it, begins to merge with language that cannot but be compared to – if not directly associated with – socialistic or Marxian principles.

As an example of this, consider the following statement, “[T]he interests of individuals or of societies especially must be harmonized with the requirements of the *common good*...[and] on a world-wide scale, governments should seek *the economic good of all peoples*.”¹⁷⁸ While one cannot responsibly say that these are specifically socialistic (let alone communistic) statements *per se*, there can be no denying the cohesion between these viewpoints in their concern for the common good as at least equal to that of the individual. While the Catholic church may take issue with these groups in terms of their stress on temporal transformation and an “insufficient” attention to the otherworldly (although, again, this is arguably a misrepresentation of vast and diverse groups of theologians), it seems there is still little recourse but to draw on the sense of universal responsibility which is so espoused by the very groups they are refuting. As though confirming this very point, the encyclical continues, “[T]he economic prosperity of any people is to be assessed not so much from the sum total of goods and wealth possessed as from the *distribution of goods according to the norms of justice*.”¹⁷⁹

Continuing the theme of collective accountability, one next finds the boldest statement of this kind in the whole of “*Mater et Magistra*.” In a deceptively simple statement, it states, “[w]e all share responsibility for the fact that populations are undernourished.”¹⁸⁰ Here, John XXIII claims that the citizens of the world have become so aware of their intimate connections that

individual persons “feel, as it were, as if they are all members of one and the same household.”^{181,E} The point in such a call is to suggest that our actions in the world have repercussions, and often the gain of one is the suffering of another. The current structure of our societies – and particularly our economic relations – leaves little room for disputing this unfortunate fact. This idea, however, of social responsibility, while not the sole intellectual property of socialism, is nevertheless difficult to divorce entirely from *socialistic types of values*. If socialism essentially advocates the idea that the collective shares in the responsibility for the individual, and the individual shares in the responsibility for the collective (that “[w]e all share responsibility for the fact that populations are undernourished”),¹⁸² then it is easy to understand how and why certain groups may find in such religious writings a sort of kinship with reference to the roles of the individual and society with regard to the theologian and/or the church itself. Moreover, the call to such responsibility, the acknowledgement of the complicity of the collective in the circumstances of individuals who live in poverty, lends itself quite readily to Gutiérrez’s conception of institutionalized violence: by participating in, or at least in not questioning or resisting, social structures that maintain severe economic inequality, “we all share responsibility” in the perpetuation of a form of violence seemingly inextricable from modern capitalism.

^E While the intention of the author of this encyclical is surely one of conjuring up notions of such ideal conceptions as brotherhood, kinship and camaraderie, one must question the rationality of such a model of perfection as the family is here considered to be. While the idea of humanity as a sort of global family may not be inaccurate, this conception only holds its weight if we are not trying to obscure the actuality of familial relationships. More often than not, the long-dismissed ideal of the so-called “nuclear family” falls seriously short in practice. If one is more honest, acknowledging the actuality of “dysfunctional” households (which are, perhaps, the norm rather than the exception), of submerged or simply hidden violence (whether physical or psychological), of transferred and projected aggression, of power or dominance, of rebellion and betrayal, then yes, certainly the people of the world behave as though they were “members of one and the same household.”

To conclude the evaluation of this particular document, there is one final, crucial section to address. This is the section entitled “Practical Suggestions,” which serves as a substantial inspiration for later liberation theology. Attempting to offer some kind of concrete plan for the members of the church who find themselves in the midst of injustice, “Mater et Magistra” recommends a three-fold strategy for analysis and engagement. “[F]irst, the actual situation is examined; then, the situation is evaluated carefully in relation to these teachings; then only is it decided what can and should be done in order that the traditional norms may be adapted to circumstances of time and place. These three steps are at times expressed by the three words: *observe, judge, act.*”¹⁸³ “*Observe, judge, act.*” These words will be repeated many times throughout the works of the liberation theologians. This is the task they saw as being set before them in a situational crisis that seemed to directly hearken back to the kinds of concerns issued in this document and those that follow it. More than that, the exact wording of the above statement is vital here. The “traditional norms” are not to be simply applied, they may not be immediately appropriate or relevant in their current form. Rather, they are to be “*adapted*” in circumstances which call for them. This does not seem to be a reference to something static and fixed. It is instead the type of language one uses to describe something that is at times variable, something dynamic and malleable, something that can *be made useful* through a careful consideration of what might be applicable in shifting situations.

Before continuing into the analysis of the next document, let it be clear at this point: the intention here is not to accuse the Vatican of covertly espousing particular views that they officially admonish. The goal, rather, is to illuminate some of the discrepancies and vagueness which arise in some of their most central documents, particularly with reference to the economic and social problems of the modern world. One cannot say that the organized Catholic church is

“really” a socialist institution. What one may perhaps be able to say, though, is that those who live in the most dire of situations – in situations of poverty, oppression, dehumanization, and exploitation – who are searching their own faith for a way to confront these very circumstances *may not necessarily be mistaken* if the paths they choose follow a socialistic analysis or critique. While the church may actively denounce such political affiliations (though the early Gutiérrez would likely assert that abstention from politics is itself a political move, which fosters inequality through non-action or “neutrality”), the way in which the crises of humanity are analysed may *lend itself* to a certain type of (“Marxist,” “Marxian,” “socialist[ic],” “social scientific”) interpretation, whether or not such an interpretation was the original intention. These ambiguities are showing themselves already at this early stage, there will be more and greater ambiguities to come.

1963: “Pacem in Terris – Peace on Earth”

“Pacem in Terris,” also composed by John XXIII, begins with a lengthy description of the various rights that each person possesses in the eyes of the church (and these generally correlate with the common standard rights assumed, if not always enacted, by many in the broader public realm). Many of these are of the expected variety: access to basic needs including medical care and to social services in times of need, the right to respect for one’s own person, for freedom and education, to share in the benefits of culture, to worship one’s god in accordance with conscience, and the like. In the realm of economic rights, one is entitled to an opportunity to work, and to do so in safe conditions and with an appropriate wage proportional to the requirements of one’s position.¹⁸⁴ As mentioned in the previous encyclical, one is also entitled to the accumulation of private property. However, this last right is followed with a caveat that does not accompany many of the other rights listed in this document. While one of the purposes

of this portion of the document is to establish a set of rights, only to assign these rights concomitant duties *in the next section*, this particular entitlement is followed *directly* by the admonition that “there is a social duty *essentially inherent* in the right of private property.”¹⁸⁵ For now, this is all that is said on the matter. What exactly is contained in the words “essentially inherent” (let alone “social duty”) is not expanded at this point.

This statement does, however, lead the way into the next section where the notion of duty is the primary focus. The notions of “right” and “duty” are intimately connected in this document, one necessarily implies the other – which, of course, is not particularly innovative. What is of interest here is the kind of approach taken in this part of the document as compared to the former. Whereas the section on rights functions as something of an inventory of the various liberties one can only hope will be extended to all of humankind, when dealing with the issue of the connected duties, the document generally leaves this systematic model behind in favour of one which acknowledges the issue of responsibility and reciprocity in a substantially different way. There are a few concrete duties assigned to humans, such as the duty to preserve life, to seek “truth,” and so forth.¹⁸⁶ But the *primary* focus here is less on the concrete duties of the individual, and more on the common obligations of each person for all other persons. “[I]n human society to one man’s right there corresponds a duty in all other persons: the duty, namely, of acknowledging and respecting the right in question... Those, therefore, who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget or neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other.”¹⁸⁷ Simply asserting one’s rights or acknowledging the rights of others is construed as insufficient in the realm of human interaction. John XXIII underscores the need to strive for the actualization of the rights of others just as intensely as individuals strive for the realization of their own. The society which is being

advocated here is one of mutual responsibility, of partnership, of the individual working in tandem with the collective. It is a view of society as a truly social, reciprocal, *cooperative* mechanism – one in which all are accountable, and none are truly alone.

This is not to say, however, that the church is suggesting a world in which the perfect bliss associated with a benevolent afterlife is actually fully achievable in the mundane realm. To do so would be to “fall victim” to the very errors that liberation theology is later accused of promoting. “Men... composed as they are of bodies and immortal souls, can never in this mortal life succeed in satisfying all their needs or in attaining perfect happiness, therefore the common good is to be procured by such ways and means which not only are not detrimental to man’s eternal salvation, but which positively contribute to it.”¹⁸⁸ But, the establishment and fulfillment of this common good, however deficient or limited it may be, is not the realm of the average citizen, according to this document. Rather it is up to (political, international, religious) authorities and officials to uphold the rights and enforce the necessary duties of their constituents. In fact, the encyclical clearly states, in an interesting foreshadowing of the role of authority in the later documents specifically addressing liberation theology, that *these authorities alone* can ensure equality amongst citizens, and that left to their own devices, “inequalities between the citizens tend to become more and more widespread...and...human rights are rendered totally ineffective and the fulfillment of duties is compromised.”¹⁸⁹ This theme of the Catholic church as the sole or primary stalwart against inequality and oppression is carried throughout a variety of Vatican documents, as is the related idea of the church as a central structure in the process of salvation. However, this very centrality lends itself to an atmosphere of suspicion regarding some liberation theologians’ critiques of systems of power, particularly with reference to structural or institutional violence. There was great fear among

many Vatican officials that such critiques would lead to an unfavorable appraisal of their own hierarchical system of authority - and in a few select cases, these critiques led precisely to that.¹⁹⁰ This view of the culpability of systems of authority is perhaps one of the most contentious issues that arose in the conflict between the Vatican and liberation theology, and the divinely-mandated license of the church is affirmed numerous times in the “Instructions” for liberation theology.

However, the notions of corrupt or “neutrally” abstaining authorities, or of those who consider themselves to be honest members of the faith and yet act against these broader social interests, are not entirely lost in this document. This becomes clear in the section entitled “Integration of Faith and Action,” where this discontinuity is explicitly addressed:

It is Our opinion that the explanation [for why some who contribute to injustice identify themselves as Christians] is to be found in an inconsistency in their minds between religious belief and their action in the temporal sphere. It is necessary, therefore, that their interior unity be re-established, and that in their temporal activity faith should be present as a beacon to give light, and charity as a force to give life.¹⁹¹

This union of faith and action – of *theory and praxis* – is precisely the intention of the liberation theologians. Time and again in their writings we find similar sentiment, and while Ratzinger later attributes this legacy to “Marxist ideology,” it is evident from the above statement that its locus can also be identified *directly in the writings of the Vatican itself*, which potentially suggests the indispensable nature of Marxian critique. From “Mater et Magistra” we find the origin of the “Observe, Judge, Act” model, and now in “Pacem in Terris” we see that this action is to be unified with the internal commitment to their faith. Already we are constructing a line of thought which flows through each of these documents, and which ends precisely in the so often rebuked tradition of liberation theology.

1965: “Gaudium et Spes – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World”

“Gaudium et Spes,” compiled by committee and endorsed by Pope Paul VI, will be the only document specifically issued by the Vatican II council that will be examined here, but this is with good reason. First, it is the longest document of the Council, and also the most comprehensive with regard to the types of issues and questions presently being examined. In terms of content, it is also the most immediately relevant. Finally, this text was one of the single most important works in terms of inspiring the advocates of liberation theology, and it was arguably the most influential of all of the Vatican II documents for this particular group. It is true that the other writings being examined had a profound effect on the thinking of these theologians, facilitating many lines of thought common in their works. However, in “Gaudium et Spes,” not only is there a substantial reflection on the issues of economic deprivation, dehumanization through structures considered “sinful,” and the human causes of these atrocities, there is also an unparalleled sense of *authority*. While all of the other documents under examination indeed hold authoritative weight, written as they were either by the popes themselves or by papal decree, the documents of Vatican II are intended to delineate for the church and its followers its mission, purpose, intentions and actions in the world. They aim to establish a particular paradigm and constitute a re-definition of *what it means to be a follower of this faith*.

Unique to this document is its opening call for unity, which is a persistent theme in this work. This call is not extended solely towards members of the church, nor even only to those who identify themselves as members of the Christian faith. Rather, it is intended as a supplication

addressed to the whole of humanity – those who are Christian, those who are not, those who believe, those who dissent, those who are rich, those who are poor, those who reside at any point between any of these extremes. Its purpose is to define for all exactly how the church sees itself and how it intends to interact as a participant on the world stage. This vision is described as one of solidarity, of love, of dialogue, and of counsel; as “an offer of service to humankind...supplying humanity with the saving resources which the Church has received from its founder under the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”^{192,F}

In the eyes of Paul VI and participants in the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic church’s duty in the world is to propose answers to the anxious questions we humans often pose with regard to systems of meaning-making, and to offer counsel with regard to what are seen as the urgent crises of humanity. In the case of “*Gaudium et Spes*,” these are primarily questions of economic disparity, the dignity of humans as social beings, consideration of the role of non-believers, and the role of the faithful – both clergy and laity – with regard to these issues. Although other concerns are addressed, the dichotomy between those who live in abundance and those who suffer unjustly is of primary importance in this document.

In no other age has humanity enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic well-being; and yet a huge proportion of the people of the world is plagued by hunger and extreme need while countless numbers are totally illiterate. At no time have people had such a keen sense of freedom, only to be faced by new forms of social and psychological slavery. The world is keenly aware of its unity

^F It is important that the wording here be noted. Although this statement begins with an attitude of inclusiveness, it could be said that this last portion of the statement gives the impression that the document is essentially dictating the course of the conversation in the same breath as welcoming a sense of dialogue (a theme which is often found in this document, and which is also vital to the kinds of critiques that will be made later in this work). While offering a sense of openness to all members of the world, the document immediately makes an exclusive claim to a particular form of truth by declaring its standing as the sole possessor of certain “saving resources.” These kinds of epistemological assertions dominate the later declarations against liberation theology.

and of mutual interdependence in essential solidarity, but at the same time is split into bitterly opposing camps.¹⁹³

Despite the realization of the connectedness of humanity, these vast disparities abound, and as part of its constitution in the world, the church is bound to respond. This is not perceived as simply a courtesy or a platform, but a *duty* in the name of their religion. Seeing the great injustices of the world and *not* responding, from the viewpoint of this document, is now considered to be a violation of the very tenets of their faith (a foreshadowing of liberation theology's critique of "neutrality"). Moreover, the current state of the world is "a situation that challenges and even obliges people to respond."¹⁹⁴ That is to say, not only are addressing and seeking to rectify these injustices actions that the official hierarchy of the church is compelled to perform, it is considered a situation that requires the efforts of all humanity. The call to unity at the commencement of this document is thus not simply intended to be a gesture of good will, or even mere solidarity, it is the precursor to establishing a sense of collective – social – duty.

This call to a common sense of responsibility for all members of the world community is based on the increase in deprivation which parallels the increase in industrialization and affluence. As our social connections grow and the world seems more intimately linked, the personal development needed to turn these connections into *relationships* is more and more evidently lacking.¹⁹⁵ As a result, those who have been left behind, those who are neglected as the exclusive producers in the economic equation, and who receive little or nothing in return, cry out for justice. Equality is a demand, it is realized as a right and not simply a privilege, and especially not simply a privilege of those who are economically prosperous or socially or politically powerful. This generally social and economic demand is seen as a "sign of a deeper and more widespread aspiration," for people "crave a life that is full, autonomous, and worthy of their nature as human beings."¹⁹⁶ At once the authors of this document see within humanity a

desire for freedom and parity and a corresponding tendency to domination and exploitation. This dichotomy is the root of what is called “the modern dilemma.”¹⁹⁷

The final section of the introduction re-asserts this dichotomy, suggesting that this signifies an even deeper division inherent in humanity itself – the feeling of limitless possibility with regard to fulfillment of desire and the limitations placed upon each of us by a variety of physical and social forces.¹⁹⁸ The search for liberation is a manifestation of this tension, but even in this search there are limitations in terms of what is acceptable (in the eyes of the church) and what is not. “There are [those] whose hopes are set on a genuine and total emancipation of humankind through human effort alone and look forward to some future earthly paradise where all the desires of their hearts will be fulfilled.”¹⁹⁹ The focus on philosophical, historical liberation is yet another foreshadowing of the accusations of Marxism later directed at liberation theology. However, there is something larger going on here. The precise wording of this statement, especially the phrase “all the desires of their hearts” seriously diminishes the inspiration for the longing for a better world – whether this inspiration is cultivated from a religious or a humanistic perspective. It disfigures an essentially egalitarian and ideally altruistic hope and transforms it into something effectively self-serving, motivated by little more than personal whim, egocentrism, and a desire to re-create the world in one’s own image. The supposition that genuine yearning for a world free of suffering, an “earthly paradise,” can come only from a religious source (implied singularly as the Catholic church, of course) seemingly undermines the opening call to unity, offensive as it might be to non-believers and members of other religious traditions. The statement which follows, “that Christ...can show people the way and strengthen them through the Spirit so that they become worthy of their destiny: *nor is there given any other name under heaven by which they can be saved,*”²⁰⁰ likewise contradicts the inclusive

statements which were issued in the opening pages of this section of “*Gaudium et Spes*.” While the critique may be made that, as a theological system, it may not really be the concern of the Vatican to be wholly inclusive, statements such as those above call seriously into question the all-embracing stance proclaimed earlier. As quickly and comprehensively as these statements are issued, they are negated or compromised.

An issue that is explicitly addressed, and rejected, in this document is that of atheism, which “must...be regarded as one of the most serious problems of our time.”^{201, G} The way in which this matter is dealt anticipates both the critiques of liberation theology’s ties to Marxian theory as well as the dismissive and narrow language utilized by Ratzinger with regard to these theologians. The most problematic forms of atheism are identified as those which assert the absolute dignity and supremacy of humanity. Those who do so have an “exaggerated idea of humanity...[and] are more prone to affirm humanity than to deny God.”²⁰² That is to say, there is a sort of (perceived) implicit or covert atheism which exists in those who insist upon humanity as the end and the sole resource of humanity, which is a common theme in Marxian thought.²⁰³ The failures of humankind in this regard are said to precipitate a more concrete form of atheism, that which exists as “a violent protest against the evil in the world, or from the fact that certain human ideals are wrongfully invested with such an absolute character as to be taken for God.”²⁰⁴ Turning on its head Marx’s understanding of religion as itself a form of protest against the injustices in the world, this document states that rather *atheism* is such a form of dissent, based upon either a kind of rebellion against the evils of the world in the vein of one like Dostoevsky’s

^G That it is addressed as such represents precisely what Enrique Dussel identifies as essentially a schism between European and Latin American forms of theology. The primary concern of the former is the issue of the *non-believer*; of the latter, the *non-person*.

Ivan Karamazov,²⁰⁵ or a false or faulty evaluation of the capacities of those who have proverbially turned their back on the divine. This kind of active rejection is at the core of the Catholic church's understanding of non-believers, but there are few who are considered truly sincere in their disbelief: "Without doubt [there are] those who wilfully try to drive God from their heart and to avoid all questions about religion, *not following the dictates of their conscience*."²⁰⁶ They are seen, at least, as a kind of "anonymous" Christians; Christians who are unwilling or unable to acknowledge their own Christianity.

There is yet another, even more troublesome, form of atheism in the eyes of the church, and one that will coalesce more smoothly with the topics at hand. This form is what "Gaudium et Spes" refers to as "Systematic Atheism," which, for Pope Paul VI, essentially means Marxist-inspired atheism:

For those who profess atheism of this kind freedom means that humanity constitutes its own end and is the sole maker, in total control, of its own history... One form of modern atheism which should not be ignored is that which looks to people's economic and social emancipation for their liberation. It holds that religion, of its very nature, frustrates such emancipation by investing people's hopes in a future life, thus both deceiving them and discouraging them from working for a better form of life on earth.²⁰⁷

With its references to material (economic) liberation, and the renunciation of all things heavenly in favour of earthly freedom, and the critique of religion as something that fosters alienation, the similarities of this passage with the basic tenets of Marx's philosophy with respect to religion are apparent. In this massive encyclical, specifically collected for the purpose of outlining the various stances of the Catholic church in the world, this issue (which seems directly related to the issue of "Marxism," or, at least, Marxian-inspired resistance) already shows its face. Yet, the document extends beyond this analysis, inviting even those who are staunchly atheist into dialogue. Before this interesting step, however, it is important to make note of one particular

transitional statement: “[The church] teaches that hope in a life to come does not take away from the importance of the duties of this life on earth but rather adds to it by giving new motives for fulfilling those duties.”²⁰⁸ Is this not precisely the intent and focus of Gutiérrez’s liberation theology? The goal he established is precisely that of addressing the great and expanding disparities in the world, their causes and their effects, examining them through the lens of this particular faith, and “fulfilling those duties” in engaged praxis. These causes and effects may require the guidance of the social sciences for excavation, but ultimately the *motives* for remedying the ills of the world come precisely from Gutiérrez’s own faith. So long as those motives are sincerely established in such a way, the source material for investigating economic and social complexities should seemingly be effectively irrelevant.

While Paul VI is adamant with respect to the church’s wholesale rejection of atheism, this section of “Gaudium et Spes” still ends with a plea for dialogue, even between the church and these non-believers themselves.

Although the church altogether rejects atheism, it nevertheless sincerely proclaims that all men and women, those who believe as well as those who do not, should help to establish right order in this world where all live together. This certainly cannot be done without a dialogue that is sincere and prudent... [The church] courteously invites atheists to weigh the merits of the Gospel of Christ with an open mind.²⁰⁹

Yet, upon further consideration, even this worthy aspiration for communication is promptly dismantled by the conditions set out immediately following. Hoping for an “open mind” or an embracing attitude constitutes a cooperative and reciprocal effort, which the document has already dismissed. Clearly rejecting the beliefs of atheists in the same breath as requesting, or even expecting, that these very same atheists approach the tradition and scripture of the church with an “open mind” potentially undermines the sincerity of such a call, as the same attitude of

openness to the (non-)beliefs of others seems to be a requirement from which the Catholic church considers itself exempt. These “outsiders” are to maintain an amenable disposition towards the foundational documents of the church, an outlook which does not seem to be required of the “insiders” themselves. Atheists are called on to sincerely engage Catholic thought on such matters, while a call on believers to approach, for example, Marx’s “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844” with an *equally open mind* seems unlikely. In fact, it becomes quite clear that there are limits to this requested dialogue once we consider the eventual critiques of liberation theology by the church in 1984 and 1986. Imprecision in language such as this suggests that this is an institution that at once beckons others to conversation, while simultaneously dismissing and effectively suppressing that same dialogue once it breaches certain internally-constructed boundaries of acceptability.

Whatever the critiques of this seemingly ambiguous appeal to dialogue, the highest regard is given to the notions of community and interdependence in this document. The condition of the individual and that of the society in which each individual lives are intimately linked and mutually dependent. The repercussions of both actions and inactions are to be carefully weighed with reference to the needs and hopes of individuals, communities, and “even those of the human family as a whole.”²¹⁰ This discussion of necessities and ambitions is not limited to merely the abstract in this document, and here, it is concretized:

[Humans] ought...to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life: for example, food, clothing, housing, the right freely to choose their state of life and set up a family, the right to education, work, to their good name, to respect, to proper knowledge, the right to act according to the dictates of conscience and to safeguard their privacy, and rightful freedom, including freedom of religion.²¹¹

Without improvements in the lives and conditions of individual humans, there will likewise be no moving forward with regard to the development of a just and equitable society for the entire human community (such development being essentially equivalent to Gutiérrez's notion of liberation).^H According to this document, every other worldly concern is subordinate to this one principle – the concrete betterment of each individual human's condition: "The social order and its development *must constantly yield to the good of the person,*" and this must necessarily include material good, as well.²¹² What is not subordinate or conditional, however, is the orthodox understanding of this particular faith.

One cannot remove the reason for this impetus to betterment, of course, which for the purposes of the Catholic church is nothing less than the coming of the "kingdom of God." From this perspective, it is the sacred duty of all humans to work toward the amelioration of the world's ills, for the purpose of ushering in this new world, determined by god, in which goodness and benevolence reigns.²¹³ Members of the human community are charged with the obligation to make ready the world for this future establishment, to make the world into a place which is worthy of the descending of the divine, and of the paradise which is believed to be in store.

Far from diminishing our concern to develop this earth, the expectation of a new earth should spur us on, for it is here that the body of a new human family grows, foreshadowing in some way the age which is to come. That is why, although we must be careful to distinguish earthly progress clearly from the increase of the

^H Many liberation theologians would likely add that this is not simply a material concern. While having the physical capability to live a full life is indeed important, there is another issue here beneath the surface. The various and manifold conversations which revolve around questions of how to improve the world are indeed *privileged discourses*. Only those who already have the means to safeguard their own well-being, and that of their family, have the luxury of taking part in such processes. We have yet to hear the voices of those dubbed the "non-persons," those for whom daily life is a struggle, for whom necessities of life are extravagancies, and who, because of this, have yet been unable to take part in these larger conversations. Opening space for such voices is a primary goal of liberation theology.

kingdom of Christ, such progress is of vital concern to the kingdom of God, insofar as it can contribute to the better ordering of human society.²¹⁴

The equalization of social relations is not synonymous with the “kingdom of God,” but the former is rather seen as a precursor to the latter, and a necessary one at that. It is important to note this division of spheres, as the liberation theology movement was later accused of blurring this very same distinction. Nevertheless, this worldly advancement is seen here as a prime requirement for the later establishment of a realm of heavenly perfection.

While this development is explicitly acknowledged as containing social, political and economic elements, the document once again reasserts the church’s role as one that is not specifically aligned with any of these categories, rather it is firmly and solely a religious institution. However, this does not necessarily isolate the church from these concerns: “[T]his religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction, and vigor to establish and consolidate the human community according to the law of God.”²¹⁵ Members of the church are urged to utilize their religious commitment to foster a sense of duty in the world, to allow their belief in the precepts of their faith to inspire them to work towards a better society, one which attempts to usher in the future establishment of their god’s reign. Those who neglect this obligation, who do not strive to relieve the misery of their fellow humans are warned that they are not only therefore neglecting their duty to their god, they are jeopardizing even their own entry into this (purportedly) immanent paradise.²¹⁶ As such, “*Gaudium et Spes*” attempts to establish a sort of symbiotic relationship between the church itself, the world or society in which it exists, and the human community that constitutes that society. This allows the church to be “enriched...by the evolution of social life,” which allows them to “understand this constitution more deeply, express it better, and adapt it more successfully to our times.”²¹⁷ This mutual relationship between the church and the world is not expressed here as something that is static, where one

dictates the course of the other, or which has been permanently carved out, never to change. This last passage denotes a sort of flexibility, a willingness to consider and to reconsider, and to acknowledge and correct any wrongs that may be committed. This idea of adaptation, of kinetic application of religious duties and decrees to the changing circumstances of the world, and to the multiple and varied needs of peoples throughout the world, is precisely the kind of malleability with respect to doctrine that was utilized by liberation theologians. This idea that the church can change, resituate, and *adapt* was an idea that was taken quite seriously by this movement, as noted when Gutiérrez speaks of a redefinition of what it means to be a member of the Catholic faith. Though, as with the above call to open-mindedness among atheists in conversation with the church, there are more stern limits than expected to the elasticity of the fabric of this institution.

There is one final section of “Gaudium et Spes” that must be addressed before continuing, and it is this section that is the most radical in sentiment, and the one which bears the greatest sense of continuity with themes introduced in earlier documents, with liberation theology, and with Marxian principles in general. In this final section, one finds statements regarding the issues of production, wealth and distribution that are quite unexpected. It is this section that establishes particular guidelines which, in the view of the church, ought to take the utmost precedence with regard to the entirety of economic and social life.²¹⁸ What is perhaps more surprising is the extent to which this portion of “Gaudium et Spes” utilizes not just the language of Marx’s economic critique, but the very substance of his theories of economic oppression through alienated labor and private property. Such commonalities only further highlight the potency of Marx’s insight and vocabulary.

Under capitalist structures, all labour provided and goods created are entirely dependent on the human activity of work; the economic system of creation and distribution is owed to these humans themselves. Because of this human foundation, the so-called laws of economics, the invisible hands of the market, are “no excuse” for the enslavement and deprivation of those very humans who make such a system possible.²¹⁹ It is the *human*, not the *system*, which is ascribed paramount importance here. The beginning and end of this entire endeavour lies directly with persons themselves, not some kind of detached force with a will and objective all its own. As such, “[t]he *entire process of productive work*, then, must be *accommodated* to the needs of the human person.”²²⁰ The *needs* of the system, the *goals* of the market, the *whims* of the economy – these are all empty phrases, burdened with abstraction, and divorced from the human element which is their foundation and culmination. In what turns out to be a surprisingly Marxian portion of “Gaudium et Spes,” such terms all lose significance when they neglect the component of the *human person*. Thus, they are all secondary, or should be made and considered secondary, to the well-being, potential, and agency of human beings.

While this in and of itself reflects an uncompromising stance with regard to the centrality of the human person and the position of these persons as the originators and facilitators of production, it is far from the most extreme statement issued in this section of the document. Where we find the most far-reaching and fervent plea for transformation is in the sub-headed portion entitled “Earthly Goods Destined for All.”²²¹

God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity. No matter how property is structured in different countries, adapted to their lawful institutions according to various and changing circumstances, we must never lose sight of this universal destination of earthly goods. In their use of things people should regard the external goods they lawfully

possess as not just their own but common to others as well, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as themselves.²²²

While this may not make the steep plunge of recommending a wholesale rejection of the system of private property and ownership, there is still something remarkable in this statement. The passage goes on to assert the right of every human being to have adequate resources for the maintenance of themselves and their families.²²³ If, as noted earlier, a common theme in many of these documents is to correlate specific rights with corresponding duties, then it would seem that this declaration differs little. As stated here, in the opinion of this institution, if each human person has a (divinely mandated) right to necessary goods for the promotion of their own well-being, then the above recommendations may likewise be considered (divinely-mandated) *duties*. While not taking the full step into a kind of communistic reallocation of resources, there is still here at least a whiff of *communal* (i.e. Marxian) appropriation of goods. That is to say, while individuals may not be forced to divest themselves of all property in the interest of a common pool, to be utilized by any and all according to need, the very system of ownership warrants a corresponding set of *obligations* to make one's personal goods at least *accessible* to those who are in need. The right to own is equivalent to the duty of equitable allocation.

Even this, however, is not the most striking statement made in this section, though its consequences would be far reaching indeed, were it put into effect. Immediately following the above assertion regarding the duties of those who have, in the interests of those who have not, we find perhaps the most drastic and uncompromising statement with regard to the rights of those who live in dire need: "Persons in extreme necessity are *entitled to take what they need from the riches of others*."²²⁴ This glaring statement is not without precedent, as it is taken – in

spirit, at least – from Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*.¹ Yet, in the context of modern economic trends, consumer culture in general, and the vast manipulation of these forces by those who possess said riches, the interpretation of the meaning of these words requires a much broader stance. What changes here is not the significance of the words themselves, but rather the *scope* of their application. This statement would have had quite a different interpretation in 13th century Europe than it does in the framework of a document addressed to a global audience in the 20th century. That is to say, a statement such as this is not simply making implicit demands of a chosen few – the rulers, the monarchs, the theocrats – but rather questions the entire institution of our modern world, and it does so in such a way that, at times, is (ironically) nearly indistinguishable from Marx himself. It turns the power dynamic on its head, but it does so in a way that questions the very legitimacy of mainstream structures of commerce, policies of trade, and means of subsistence and assistance for those in need. What’s more, the language of upturning such institutions and norms in current times is the language of revolution. Search as we might, it is unlikely that we will find any more staunch and radical a position as this in any of the works of liberation theologians, Gutiérrez included.

1967: “Populorum Progressio – On the Development of Peoples”

Also composed by Pope Paul VI, “Populorum Progressio” was issued just one year prior to the historic bishops’ conference in Medellín and Gustavo Gutiérrez’s “Notes for a Theology of Liberation,” one of the first documents specifically referring to liberation theology. It opens by remarking on the dramatic pleas for charity made by “peoples in hunger” from those “blessed

¹ “Gaudium et Spes” specifically cites this document (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 66, a.7) following the above quote.

with abundance.”²²⁵ This statement establishes a continuum – one of poverty and of wealth, of needs satisfied and needs neglected – which work to orient the entirety of the document. The first half of this encyclical, entitled “For Man’s Complete Development,” details the *material* hindrances to the full actualization of each person in the impoverished world, and defines a corollary for each in the world of the religious. That is to say, it outlines the specific physical and psychological needs of each person to live a life of relative comfort, with basic human needs met (note the correlation here with Gutiérrez’s “material liberation” vis-à-vis integral liberation), which would allow each to develop their own person as they see fit (Gutiérrez’s “human liberation”), and then delineates the religious basis for the fulfilment of these needs, and why this realization is so necessary in this particular version of Christianity (Gutiérrez’s liberation from “selfishness and sin”). The needs themselves are of the standard variety: the ability to acquire basic necessities (again, i.e., “material liberation”), overcoming selfishness and egocentrism (i.e., liberation from “selfishness and sin”), and the dismantling of oppressive social structures (i.e., “human liberation”).²²⁶ What is unique here is the way in which the role of the church itself is positioned: while the church is said to be “founded to establish on earth the Kingdom of heaven,” it also “lives in history, [and]...ought to ‘scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.’”²²⁷ That is to say, even though civil and ecclesial powers are separate, this does not mean that they are necessarily distinct. This is a pinnacle moment in the definition of what it means to be a religious institution, and one that echoes the commitment to a particular kind of worldly betterment made in “Gaudium et Spes.” If the church exists in the world, then, by this logic, it has a duty to engage that world in a way which reflects the dictates and tenets of the faith.²²⁸

With this duty of engagement in mind, “Populorum Progressio” continues, describing precisely what this means concretely for those acting in this world, and what sorts of societal restructuring are necessary to bring about its fulfillment. Drawing on the previous declaration analyzed here, “Gaudium et Spes,” the universality of goods and property is reaffirmed, stating that “all rights...are to be subordinated to [the] principle” that “created goods should abound” for all humans “on a reasonable basis.”²²⁹ Going back to the earlier discussion of rights and duties, this document establishes a dynamic between the two which is less than simply mutual. When it comes to the sustaining and perpetuating of human life itself, the rights of the privileged are placed in a *secondary* position compared to the duties placed upon them with respect to their fellow humans. The supposed right to luxury cannot be held in higher esteem than the duty to assist those who suffer. In this document, this may even mean the forfeiture of some of the most basic rights assumed in many parts of the world, particularly the right of private property. “[P]rivate property *does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditioned right*. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities.”²³⁰ What this leads to is essentially a total re-evaluation of the very definition of the word “right” in the context of acquisition and consumption of goods. This statement expands the discussion of private property in “Pacem in Terris” (above), where private property was indeed a right, but one that came with particular responsibilities, to question the *very existence* of an absolute right of exclusively holding goods in a situation of general scarcity. Where previously this right was held as universal, with added caveats but regardless of context, it has now become entirely dependent on the general material well-being of a given society.

While the text takes this somewhat unexpected turn in terms of critiquing the very notion of extravagance in private property while substantial portions of a populous live in deprivation,

there is a decisive moment wherein it is emphasized that a Marxian-style programme is not being adopted or advocated, seemingly acknowledging the overlap between the two analyses. "The Christian cannot admit that which is based upon a materialistic and atheistic philosophy, which respects neither the religious orientation of life to its final end, nor human freedom and dignity."²³¹ Yet even here, an openness is retained, which carries over into liberationist perspectives. "But, *provided that these values are safeguarded*, a pluralism of professional organizations and trade unions is permissible, and from certain points of view useful, if thereby liberty is protected and emulation simulated."²³² This appears to be a rejection of what is categorized as a hollow atheistic stance, an atheism which discards wholesale any religious affiliation as automatically bankrupt, yet space seems retained for groups which maintain an attitude of inclusion directed toward other traditions, such as that requested in "Gaudium et Spes" (and the freedom that necessarily accompanies a choice of adhering to or rejecting a religious form). This is of particular interest because, when taken in conjunction with the above discussion of private property, it suggests a certain amount of leniency with respect to social and political forms which, *prima facie*, conflict with a traditional, Catholic worldview. Such flexibility opens a path for a movement like liberation theology to navigate territories and boundaries between their own religious frameworks, and that of critical, evaluative social movements. As such, it should have come as no real surprise that such a movement would follow these avenues, while concurrently presuming a stance of theological validity.

What must be aimed at is complete humanism. And what is that if not the fully rounded development of the whole man and of all men? A humanism closed in on itself, and not open to the values and the spirit and to God Who is their source, could achieve apparent success. True, man can organise the world apart from God, but "without God man can organise it in the end only to man's detriment. An isolated humanism is an inhuman humanism." There is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute and is conscious of a vocation which gives human

life its true meaning. Far from being the ultimate measure of all things, man can only realise himself by reaching beyond himself.²³³

The above occurs as a call for "spiritual humanism,"²³⁴ and while there is much that could be critiqued in terms of exclusive epistemological claims, and a lack of reciprocity in terms of demanding openness from some (e.g. atheists, above), while refusing to offer it in return, this statement is of particular interest for the current project due to its request for precisely what liberation theology seemed to offer. For, at its core, what could we call such a programme, if not a humanist movement which retains a spiritual impetus and openness to its religion's epistemological certainties? In its defence of those who are materially poor, in its demands for equity and justice, liberation theology was indeed a humanistic movement. Not only that, as a method of theorizing which simultaneously took inspiration from the originary figure of their religious tradition, as well as the specific documents issued by their own religious leaders, the religiosity of these theologians cannot reasonably be called into question.²³⁵ In fact, the "Christian View of Development," as outlined in "Populorum Progressio," seems to cohere quite well with the tenets of liberation theology:

Less human conditions: the lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essential for life, the moral deficiencies of those who are mutilated by selfishness. Less human conditions: oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions. Conditions that are more human: the passage from misery towards the possession of necessities, victory over social scourges, the growth of knowledge, the acquisition of culture. Additional conditions that are more human: increased esteem for the dignity of others, the turning toward the spirit of poverty, cooperation for the common good, the will and desire for peace. Conditions that are still more human: the acknowledgement by man of supreme values, and of God their source and their finality.²³⁶

The "Final Appeal" of this document allows for yet another intimate bond to be formulated between the actions of the liberation theologians, and the guidelines established by the organized church. The concluding paragraphs offer a call to engagement, and this call is issued

to every member of the Catholic church, and to every person "of good will" on earth, regardless of tradition or affiliation.²³⁷ Those in all nations, and living in all conditions, are called to assist in establishing a more just order of existence, to the benefit of all of humankind. What is interesting in this particular plea is the apparent leniency granted to those who must act in order to bring into being this better possible world. "[I]t belongs to the laymen, *without waiting passively for orders and directives*, to take the initiative freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live."²³⁸ Here, it seems the Paul VI is acknowledging the potential crisis of stagnancy which can occur when members of a group or collective must only tentatively approach goals and solutions, while waiting for bureaucratic approval of whatever actions are to be taken. In situations of dire misery and oppression, such time can mean a difference of lives continuing to be lived, or being extinguished. As such, those members of the Catholic faith who wish to construct a more just society are no longer ordered to patiently await confirmation from Rome, they may act out of the dictates of their consciences, and take the steps necessary to bring such a world into being, to the best of their abilities.

It is worth mentioning in conclusion an ironic twist that follows the issuing of "Populorum Progressio." This document is presently being utilized as a single brushstroke in a larger picture which shows the close affinity of liberation theology to its core tradition, and the connections of both of these to what may be called a Marxian vocabulary. There is no denying the nature of the stances taken in this document – they side unequivocally with the economically poor, the socially oppressed, and against those who would live in luxury while others suffer. It calls for a humanistic outlook. The attitudes conveyed within parallel those of many, if not all, Catholic liberation theologians, including Gustavo Gutiérrez, and they highlight the extent to which the

tenets of liberation theology are firmly rooted in the religion that sparked their dedication to constructing a more just world. Upon release of this document, however, curious accusations were made against its contents. Popular media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time* published articles that characterized “Populorum Progressio” as little more than “warmed-over Marxism,” bearing “the strident tone of an early 20th century Marxist polemic.”²³⁹ These were certainly not the only portrayals of the message of this work, and many people understood the document for what it is – a call for a restructuring of the dynamics for examining injustice in the world, which at times extends beyond binary divisions of competing ideologies, and which focuses almost exclusively on the foundational cause of the majority of worldly injustice: gross economic disparity. It is, however, another source of support for the inexhaustibility of Marxian vocabulary to see a papal encyclical of this kind charged with the same accusations that haunted some of its most ardent and faithful defenders: the liberation theologians.

1971: “Octogesima Adveniens – A Call to Action”

This final text in the current examination, also authored by Paul VI, continues the lines of thought developed throughout other such documents issued over the previous ten years. “Octogesima Adveniens” reinforces the idea of individual citizens and members of this faith engaging unjust circumstances in their own nations, it illustrates – for the first time here – a specific “preferential option” for the poor, and it warns against the alignment of social values with certain forms of social analysis. Here, we can begin to witness a specific exchange between the upper echelons of the Vatican hierarchy and those known now as liberation theologians, with Gutiérrez’s foundational essay, “Notes for a Theology of Liberation,” having been published only a year earlier in 1970. While these theologians were initially informed by documents such as those presented above, in this issuance we see the beginnings of a theoretical

discourse, taking place on an official level. Theologians with liberationist ideas and tendencies had already been collaborating and concretizing their ideas for several years (the famous Medellín conference taking place in 1968), bringing to life the directives of these papal writings. “Octogesima Adveniens” is one of the first times we can witness a clear cross-pollination, where liberationist ideas are included in an authoritative document of this kind.

In terms of a demand that those in situations of wealth and affluence renounce some of the fruits of their prosperity for the sake of those who have little or nothing at all, this document builds quite directly on “Gaudium et Spes.” What distinguishes this from the other, however, is precisely the language used, which finds kinship in the language of the budding liberation theology movement.

In teaching us charity, the Gospel instructs us in the *preferential respect due to the poor* and the special situation they have in society: *the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights* so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others. If, beyond legal rules, there is really no deeper feeling of respect for and service to others, then even *equality before the law can serve as an alibi for flagrant discrimination, continued exploitation and actual contempt*. Without a renewed education in solidarity, an overemphasis on equality can give rise to an individualism in which each one claims his own rights without wishing to be answerable for the common good.²⁴⁰

Here we have yet another assertion that efforts toward justice and parity must be somewhat disproportionately allocated. Those who live in comfort, and whose rhetoric of equality merely reinforces their own rights while continually neglecting those of others – especially those who live in dire poverty – are chastised for essentially laying claim to a false sense of equality, which is merely legal in form. There must be a deeper level, Paul VI states, or else we are left with merely a façade of unity and a travesty of justice. Those who suffer the effects of material poverty are to be given special consideration, over and above the possessions and even rights of those living in material abundance.

“Octogesima Adveniens” continues with the assertion that such a redistribution of goods and wealth is not, however, equivalent to Marxism, despite the logical connections. While such a statement is to be expected, what is most interesting here is that distinctions are highlighted between *differing forms* of Marxism, though not without warning. The convenient literary devices “some people,” and “for some,” are employed to allow for a discussion of these various manifestations of Marxian thought, while still leaving room for advisement against the wholesale adoption of any of these forms. Yet, this does not deny that these *separate expressions* are acknowledged. Four expressions of “Marxism” are outlined in this work: First, “for some,” Marxism is “reduce[d]... to no more than a struggle.”²⁴¹ In this perceived version, “Marxism” is nothing but the class struggle itself, and there are those who engage in and perpetuate this struggle seemingly only for struggle’s own sake. Next, a form of “Marxism” is aligned with totalitarian-style forms of government, where “the collective exercise of political and economic power [are] under the direction of a single party...[which] would deprive individuals and other groups of any possibility of initiative and choice.”²⁴² Third, “Marxism” is called a “socialist ideology,” based (in this instance) on Marx’s atheism and rejection of transcendence outside of the present world.²⁴³ Lastly, and most importantly, it is called,

...a scientific activity, as a rigorous method of examining social and political reality, and as the rational link, tested by history, between theoretical knowledge and the practice of revolutionary transformation. Although this type of analysis gives a privileged position to certain aspects of reality to the detriment of the rest, and interprets them in light of its ideology, *it nevertheless furnishes some people not only with a working tool but also a certitude preliminary to action*: the claim to decipher in a scientific manner the mainsprings of the evolution of a society.²⁴⁴

Whether or not these delineations are entirely correct is beside the point for our current purpose. While the question of accuracy is indeed an important one, generally speaking, what is of greatest interest here is the very idea that *Marxian thought itself is being distinguished at*

different levels. It is not “Marxism,” full-stop; it is this or that sort of “Marxism,” this or that function of “Marxism.” This is a unique and notable moment in the history of papal commentary on Marxian thought. While a warning follows to keep in mind the “intimate link” – a perceived permanent connection between “ideology” and “violence”²⁴⁵ – this passage in its entirety is nevertheless an implicit admission that Marxian thought is not some impenetrable, totalizing system of thought. This is in seeming contradiction to the earlier monolithic portrayal of “Marxism” discussed at the beginning of this chapter, not to mention in Ratzinger’s later critiques of liberation theology.²⁴⁶

Such demarcations in Marxian thought are especially interesting when connected to a similar discussion of socialism, just two pages earlier in this same work:

Distinctions must be made to guide concrete choices between the various levels of expression of socialism: a generous aspiration and a seeking for a more just society, historical movements with a political organization and aim, and an ideology which claims to give a complete and self-sufficient picture of man. Nevertheless, these distinctions must not lead one to consider such levels as completely separate and independent. The concrete link which, according to circumstances, exists between them must be clearly marked out. *This insight will enable Christians to see the degree of commitment possible along these lines,* while safeguarding the values, especially those of liberty, responsibility and openness to the spiritual, which guarantees the integral development of man.²⁴⁷

This provides such an interesting reference because we see, essentially, the exact same division of a form of social analysis and action, yet the conclusion bears a distinct ring of something that borders on contextual sanctioning. Here, socialism is treated similarly to Marxism, with various levels, expressions, and interpretations teased out for those who may be tempted to follow such paths, and there is a similar warning about considering these elements as wholly separate. But, understanding such potential ramifications of socialist thought (as it has been described and defined here), now allows for those of a particular faith to discern their “degree of

commitment,” while simultaneously remaining true to their religious tradition.²⁴⁸ It is not an ideology that must be accepted wholesale or not at all; it is possible to accept a measure of socialism while rejecting whatever lies outside that measure. Such allowance is not made for currents of analysis that follow a specifically Marxian trajectory, and yet it is granted – to a degree, but granted nonetheless – for a kind of social(ist) movement which “claims to give a complete and self-sufficient picture of man.”²⁴⁹ This kind of insistence against anything which bears the name of a particular 19th century philosopher, in tandem with at least partial acknowledgement of the potential benefits of theories which often differ in name only, is both peculiar and indicative of the entirety of the critique which is part of the current work.

Analysis of this perceptible contradiction provides an opportunity for reflecting back upon the other documents examined in this chapter. It is clear that in the realm of *theory*, papal authorities during the decade spanning 1961-1971 (popes John XIII and Paul VI), as well as general Vatican authorities via the Second Vatican Council, have offered bold statements and recommendations for addressing the issues of material and social injustice in the world. While these recommendations are rarely innovative, they still at least circumnavigate the radical and emphasize action in *this* world, though admittedly with an ever-present referential eye to the otherworldly or transcendent. They offer unyielding condemnations of material luxury in the face of poverty, and go so far as to argue against the absolute right of private property. While “Marxism” is vehemently and consistently opposed, concepts that at the very least *border* on the Marxian are present, and it is admitted that both “Marxism” and “socialism” can be conceived of in a variety of ways, some more and some less consistent with orthodox Catholic thought and teachings. It seems little wonder, then, that someone like Gustavo Gutiérrez would walk away from such documents with confidence regarding his notion of liberation and liberation theology

more generally. In the call for "spiritual humanism," it is easy to identify a call for a movement like the liberation theology under discussion – such a call, in fact, amounts to a conspicuous equivalent of Gutiérrez's conception of a "new humanity," the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Liberating a “New Humanity”

"It is important to keep in mind that beyond - or rather, through - the struggle against misery, injustice, and exploitation the goal is the *creation of a new humanity*."²⁵⁰ So begins the section entitled "Faith and the New Humanity," in both the first and second editions of Gustavo Gutiérrez's classic work, *A Theology of Liberation*. This “new humanity” is the conclusive manifestation of Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation, and in some ways this functions as a tether that connects the early and late writings of Gutiérrez. The themes of the “new man,” the “new humanity,” and the “new humanism” are observable in the works of Marx and Gutiérrez, as well as a variety of Vatican documents. The idea of the construction of a “new humanity” marks an important point of deviation between liberation theology and Marxian forms of social and economic critique. The construction of Gutiérrez’s “new humanity” is distinguished from Marx precisely because it is just that: a *construction*. The “new humanity” of Gutiérrez calls for the creation of a new worldly society, based on parity and “integral liberation.” This creation, as opposed to negation, will form the foundation of this work’s final analysis, particularly as connected to Marx’s legacy of “ruthless criticism,” but first the process and content of Gutiérrez’s creation must be determined.

Defining the concept of "new humanity" in Gustavo Gutiérrez's writings demands a connected understanding of the notions of salvation and liberation, as conceived in a liberationist construct. The theological concept of salvation, often associated in orthodox Catholicism with salvation from individual sin based upon conversion or confessional means, retains its importance in liberation theology (despite critiques to the contrary); however, this notion is expanded considerably in conjunction with a broader consideration of what, exactly, constitutes “sin” in

the modern world. Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians see societal structures themselves as potentially containing or fostering 'sinfulness,' when sin is conceived as an affront or violation against one's deity or fellow humans (which, for Gutiérrez, are generally considered equivalent: "sin is the breaking of friendship with God and with other human beings").²⁵¹ This idea of structural sin is equivalent to "institutionalized violence," one of the hallmarks of liberation theology. Gutiérrez states, "Sin is evident in oppressive structures, in the exploitation of humans by humans, in the domination and slavery of peoples, races, and social classes. Sin appears...as the fundamental alienation, the root of a situation of injustice and exploitation."²⁵² Here, individuals and structures are seen as intimately bound to one another through the ties of necessitated community, and thus the notions of salvation and liberation are expanded to likewise include a general social representation, and a call to action in terms of manifesting social movements.

If we mean by the 'history of salvation' not only those actions that are properly divine - creation, incarnation, redemption - but the actions of human beings as they respond to divine initiatives (either accepting them or rejecting them), then there is in fact only one history, for the uncertain endeavors of human beings, whether they like it or not, whether they know it or not, have their place in the divine plan.²⁵³

This concept of a singular history, expressed through a redemptive divine purpose, indicates the beginnings of a union between the individual and the social. It also provides the foundation for the unification of salvation and liberation in Gutiérrez's liberation theology.

Gutiérrez's notion of a threefold structure of liberation sets the stage for unifying the concepts of salvation and liberation. Gutiérrez outlines this arrangement repeatedly throughout his writings, but it is most clearly and comprehensively elucidated in his essay, "The Task and Content of Liberation Theology."

In using the word 'liberation' we distinguished between:

(1) Political and social liberation, which points toward the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice, especially with regard to socio-economic structures. On this basis, an attempt can be made to construct a society based on respect for the other, and especially for the weakest and the insignificant;

(2) human liberation, meaning that, although aware that changing social structures is important, we need to go deeper. It means liberating human beings of all those things - not just in the social sphere - that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity. Here we are speaking of what Vatican II called a 'new humanism';

(3) and, crucially, liberation from selfishness and sin. In the analysis of faith, this is the last root of injustice that has to be eliminated. Overcoming this leads to re-establishing friendship with God and with other people... It is clear that only the grace of God, the redeeming work of Christ, can overcome sin.²⁵⁴

Integral liberation, as this structure is called, is a notion embraced and propagated by both local clergy, via the documents from the meetings at Puebla and Medellín, and taken up by Pope John Paul II in issuances like "Evangelii Nuntiandi."²⁵⁵ It consists first of an emancipation from economic-material structures of inequality and oppression, a political-social liberation that specifically targets socio-economic inequality. It is here that institutional violence and structural sin are highlighted – these concepts suggest that individuals, as socially connected beings via labour, community, and the like, are often part of political, economic, and social arrangements which foster the gain and success of some individuals to the deprivation of others. The reality of vast economic disparities of the modern world are easily observable by quoting at length the following statement provided by Ivan Petrella in his 2006 work, *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto*.

Liberation theology's challenge, famously expressed by Gustavo Gutiérrez, comes from the non-person or the non-human, the human being who is not recognized as such by the prevailing social order. Let me here give a dramatic example of what Gutiérrez had in mind. It would take six billion dollars of additional yearly investment to ensure basic education in all developing countries; eight billion dollars a year are spent on cosmetics in the United States. It would take nine billion to ensure clean water and sanitation for all; 11 billion are spent on ice cream in

Europe. It would take 13 billion dollars to guarantee basic health and nutrition for every person in the developing world; 17 billion are spent on pet food in Europe and the United States combined. It would take approximately an additional 40 billion dollars to achieve universal access to basic social services, 0.1 per cent of the world's income, *a rounding error*, would cover the bill for basic education, health, nutrition, clean water and sanitation for every single person on the planet. Yet currently, while the world's richest nations possess only one-fourth of the world's population, they consume 70 per cent of the world's energy, 75 per cent of its metals, 85 per cent of its wood and 60 per cent of its food. Gutiérrez's choice of the term 'non-human' is not a rhetorical flourish intended to provoke; it is a literal description of a terrible reality...their needs to not count at all for the way the world's resources are distributed.²⁵⁶

The connection of these kinds of figures with the theological conviction that "[t]he Kingdom and social injustice are incompatible,"²⁵⁷ inspire the element of Gutiérrez's liberation that calls for a "preferential option for the poor" – yet another theme which was later adopted by the shapers of official church doctrine. The need for social and economic liberation in a context of such striking disparity, disparity which today is even starker, necessitates the first dimension of Gutiérrez's "integral liberation." As salvation and liberation are intertwined for Gutiérrez, a salvific reality can never manifest among conditions such as those identified by Petrella. Here, rather than establishing the "kingdom of God" exclusively in the earthly realm, as charged by Ratzinger, Gutiérrez would maintain that the conditions of the present actively impede the very manifestation of that "kingdom," on earth or beyond.

The second aspect of integral liberation includes structural transformation which embraces both the social and the historical, which thus presents individuals with the freedom to engage the world as creatures with their own intention and agency. That is to say, it is both human and historical liberation, liberation from all things which prevent humans from freely developing their own selves, and having these selves portrayed in a way which takes into account diverse histories, not just a singular history written by those with the social authority to do so. This

began with the notion of *conscientización*, initially devised and advocated by Paulo Freire, but quickly adopted by other liberationist thinkers, as well. “Indeed,” says Gutiérrez,

...an awareness of the need for self-liberation is essential to a correct understanding of the liberation process. It is not a matter of “struggling for others,” which suggests paternalism and reformist objectives, but rather of becoming aware of oneself as not completely fulfilled and as living in an alienated society. And thus one can identify radically and militantly with those – the people and the social class – who bear the brunt of oppression.^{258, J}

Here, Gutiérrez expresses a radical need to *become aware* of one’s own place as an alienated being in a materially unjust society, to engage in an act of *confession* (a conception that will be seen again in the upcoming treatment of Marx with regard to the construction of a “new humanity”). For Gutiérrez, this awareness is particularly cultivated to the extent that one witnesses such injustice and willfully rejects it as being part of a wider structure of violence.

This second form of liberation contains another related element – the notion of “historical” liberation, the reviewing of history with a renewed awareness of those who have been “conquered” or “vanquished.” This is a theme very much connected to contemporary post-colonial critiques, and which is exceptionally reviewed in the works of Enrique Dussel, particularly his essay “Was America Discovered or Invaded?,” written for the fifth centenary of Columbus’ arrival in the so-called “New World,”²⁵⁹ and his incisive book, *The Invention of the Americas*.²⁶⁰ This task includes the reclaiming of the varying histories of such peoples, the re-telling of their stories as narratives of violence and oppression, rather than of victory, conquest, and material gain for the Western world. As part of this *conscientización*, literacy and activist movements were established via base ecclesial communities, which focused precisely on the

^J It is worth briefly calling attention to the Marxian vocabulary utilized in this quotation, where Gutiérrez makes use of ideas like alienation and social class.

education of those who could not previously access academic systems, the navigation of history from the viewpoint of the marginalized, and reading the Bible in light of the lived experiences of those abandoned in the lowest stratum of society.^K In recent years, these forms of learning and intellectual exploration have been expanded to include raising questions about environmental destruction and climate change, gender and sexual orientation, race and racialization, and all other human systems susceptible to oppressive tendencies. All of this, as a form of re-education, leads, for Gutiérrez, to the potential for a “new humanism,” and with it, a “new humanity,” made up of those once lost in history, those who are now claiming space to raise their voices and engage the dominant paradigm on their own terms, a revived base of peasants, farmers, and laborers, providing for the world an opportunity to embrace the “lowest” of society, and reject the systems that profit from such exploitation. All of this, for Gutiérrez, combines the struggle for material liberation with the salvific work of the Christian ideal of the coming “kingdom.” “One looks then to this world, and now sees in the world beyond not the ‘true life,’ *but rather the transformation and fulfillment of the present life*. The absolute value of salvation – far from devaluing this world – gives it its authentic meaning and its own autonomy, because salvation is already latently held.”²⁶¹ This “kingdom,” for Gutiérrez, is something which is at least partially manifest in human history, constructed through human action, in the insistence on justice at all levels of society, and in a liberating ethical reciprocity which is borne of the realization of the connectedness of humanity, and the innate moral potential in each of us.

^K Recall, these base ecclesial communities, and the exegetical exercises that encouraged a reading of the Bible from the specific perspective of the materially poor, were a particular point of critique in Ratzinger’s “Libertatis Nuntius.”

The third form included in integral liberation is liberation from sin and selfishness, “the last root of injustice.”²⁶² This liberation from sin occurs both in the sense of a personal commitment to the moral good, and in the sense of refraining from perpetuating structures which embody or enable corrupt positions or actions.^L Gutiérrez connects this to the previous two forms, claiming that sin, which “constitutes a break with God, a historical reality... [and] a breach of the community of persons with each other,”²⁶³ lies at the root of institutional violence, the silencing of alternate histories, and ultimately the oppression of the materially poor. This form carries with it a redemptive weight, which clearly has ties to traditional conceptions of salvation: “The conclusion to be drawn...is clear: salvation embraces all persons and the whole person; the liberating action of Christ – made human in this history and not in a history marginal to real human life – is at the heart of the historical current of humanity; the struggle for a just society is in its own right very much a part of salvation history.”²⁶⁴ In the notion of integral liberation, the individual, the social, and the (perceived) transcendent coalesce into a whole which represents a comprehensive picture of a humanity freed from moral injustices and personal or structural oppression. Gutiérrez provides an emancipatory framework which is at once worldly and theological – each, in his analysis, necessitates the other. They are fundamentally and intrinsically linked. The liberationist and the salvific interrogate and refine one another while simultaneously reinforcing one another, with reference not only to our actions in this world, but their potential ramifications in the (speculated) beyond.²⁶⁵ Here, in Gutiérrez's formulation, salvation is entwined with historical reality, and the component of liberation makes possible that

^L While these three aspects of integral liberation are likewise ordered in Gutiérrez's own writings, it is important to emphasize his insistence that these three components of integral liberation are not necessarily hierarchical; each is rather intimately bound to the other two. This is in distinction to his delineation of the first and second acts in theology, which, at least in his earlier writings, were specifically ranked as “first” and “second.”

deliverance from sin.²⁶⁶ The conception of a fundamentally singular history lays the first stones on the path to analyzing the notion of the "new humanity" for Gutiérrez. The heart of such a re-established community is illustrated through this synthesis, and it is also this construction which led to some of the most overstated critiques of liberation theology by Joseph Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

As such, Gutiérrez expects a kind of revolution of being in order for the birth of the new humanity to take place, which comprises a reorientation to the oppressed of the world. "A spirituality of liberation will center on a *conversion* to the neighbor, the oppressed person, the exploited social class, the despised ethnic group, the dominated country."²⁶⁷ Based on a liberationist reading of Proverbs, Deuteronomy, and Exodus,²⁶⁸ Gutiérrez asserts that "neighbor" is a broad category, at once individual and social, local and global – it refers to any person or group that exists as part of the vast social fabric of reality; that is, to any person, class, or culture.²⁶⁹

Liberation is a precondition for the new society, but this is not all it is.... Without liberating historical events, there would be no growth of the Kingdom. But the process of liberation will not have conquered the very roots of human oppression and exploitation without the coming of the Kingdom, which is above all a gift. Moreover, we can say that the historical, political liberating event *is* the growth of the Kingdom and *is* a salvific event, but it is not *the* coming of the Kingdom, not *all* of salvation.²⁷⁰

For Gutiérrez, the turn away from injustice and toward a condition of greater morality constitutes a moment of redefinition, a new way of being human, which can lead to the opportunity to *construct* a society worthy of being labeled as pleasing to the (literal or metaphorical) divine.

Salvation and liberation, then, are not ultimately rendered identical, as critics like Ratzinger charge, but are rather bound in a dialectical relationship, which leads to a transcendent synthesis which is both part of and more than these two component parts.²⁷¹ The human contribution to this transcendence is the legacy of Gutiérrez's "new human." Here, liberation is part of the portrait of human salvation, and salvation can only occur when given foundation in human liberation. Gutiérrez weaves a theological tapestry which is at once worldly and otherworldly, with neither of these capable of genuine fulfillment without the other. This is perhaps one of the most lasting legacies of Gutiérrez's thought. Indeed, this connection of the immediate and the immanent, the unjust suffering of human beings and the ideal of a realm of peace and equanimity, a realm of ends, is perhaps a touchstone of all liberation theologies. It focuses on the simultaneous limitation *and* capacity of the present, so that each moment is ripe with ethical potential, as our current conditions have the option of either fostering or stifling hope for the future. Gutiérrez's position is clear:

Salvation is not something otherworldly, in regard to which the present life is merely a test. Salvation - the communion of human beings with God and among themselves - is something which embraces all human reality, transforms it, and leads it to its fulfillment in Christ... One looks then to this world, and now sees in the world beyond not the 'true life,' but rather the transformation and fulfillment of the present life. The absolute value of salvation - far from devaluing this world - gives it its authentic meaning and its own autonomy, because salvation is already latently there.²⁷²

For Gutiérrez, salvation is an intrinsic component of liberation, as liberation is an intrinsic component of salvation. One is not valued more highly than the other; such a separation is not even possible for Gutiérrez's integral liberation.²⁷³ These are mutually reinforcing and mutually sustaining concepts, each incomplete without the inclusion of the other. In their synthesis, we find the birth of Gutiérrez's "new humanity."

Liberation and Human Society

In *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez states,

...when we assert that humanity fulfills itself by continuing the work of creation by means of its labor, we are saying that it places itself, by this very fact, within an all-embracing salvific process. To work, to transform this world, is to become a man and to build the human community; it is also to save. Likewise, to struggle against misery and exploitation and to build a just society is already to be part of the saving action, which is moving towards its complete fulfillment. All this means that building the temporal city is not simply a stage of “humanization” or “re-evangelization” as was held in theology until a few years ago. Rather it is to become part of a saving process which embraces the whole of humanity and all human history. Any theological reflection on human work and social praxis ought to be rooted in this fundamental affirmation.²⁷⁴

The focus on labour, history, community, and praxis easily lend themselves to a Marxian interpretation. The notion and repercussions of what Marx calls “estranged labour” lay at the heart of the connections between Gutiérrez and Marx, not to mention the previously examined Vatican documents on social justice. Particularly through the “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,” it is possible to construct a Marxian notion of a new human community, a “new humanity,” and to tease out a potential non-theological definition of sin, which helps draw a connection to Gutiérrez’s three-fold notion of liberation. This latter project must be taken on carefully and assembled piecemeal, as there is no substantial discussion of “sin” as such in Marx’s philosophical works. Rather, one can work backwards from the notion of sin as a *violation*, as expressed by Gutiérrez, to examine the critiques of Marx with regard to capitalist society and economic oppression in this light. It is worth noting, however, that the attempts at translation that take place in uncovering a Marxian “new humanity” stem more from the ground of critique than that of affirmation (negative, rather than positive engagement). As Marx makes clear in his letter to Arnold Ruge, later titled “For a Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing,” attempts to structure the future in a specific, constructed, affirmative way amount to a kind of

betrayal of that same future, which may recreate the same structures of social and economic inequality; as such, one can “find the new world *only through criticism of the old.*”²⁷⁵ This understanding is crucial to any discussion of the legacy and appropriation of Marx’s “ruthless criticism.”

To speak of violation in a Marxian context is to speak of a fundamental human essence, which is obscured or destroyed via the processes of capitalist economic structures, and the social ramifications which flow from these systems. While Marx refrains from delimiting a specific “human nature,” he does assert that there is an essential level of human existence (“species being”), manifest in human society, which is constrained by the structure of labour.

From the spring of 1844 onwards, Marx was clear that the emancipation of humanity belonged to a historical process grounded in the development of social relations (the material history of social humanity), and that the process of class struggle that drove and informed the realization of real emancipation emerged from the interests of the working class in their immediate character as “common humanity” ...²⁷⁶

In the requirement to assign to oneself (or to accept the assignment of another) to a particular realm of work, this essence, which cries out for constant redefinition and pursuit of life-affirming activities, is inhibited and negated. Individuals are compelled to identify wholly with a singular vocation, to the extent that one is no longer a substantial and multifaceted human being, but a labourer: a factory worker, a farmer, a banker, etc. “[The labourer’s] work is forced, not free self-activity. He is at home if he does not work, and if he works he is not at home... The conditions of labor thus deprive him of a truly human existence, divide him from his fellows, and set worker against employer, poor against rich.”^{277, M} In such a relation of person to labour,

^M It is interesting to consider this quote in comparison to Gutiérrez’s (early) insistence that liberation theology does not create or advocate class struggle, but rather that it is responding to an already-existing condition. It is not the

Marx asserts that *who we are* is determined by the form and status of our labour. Very few have the luxury of engaging in work which at once satisfies their own (subjective and certainly variable notion of) humanity, and that also satisfies the productive requirements of a particular society. Even in such an ideal arrangement, however, the impetus to identify wholly with a static and singular effort, when the identities and ideals of humans are in constant flux, points to a kind of stagnation which acts against the Marxian notion of essence. As Langslet notes, “We can [only]... speak of *one* fundamental quality that is common to men at all times and in all historical phases, a quality that constitutes precisely the ‘humanity’ of all man: his creative ability or force. Man [for Marx] is a creative or productive being; and he differs from the animal by remaining in conscious relationship to his own creative activity, his own production.”²⁷⁸ In the system of labour, this production is not performed as an end in itself and for oneself (human accomplishment, development, and the procurement of the means to sustain one’s own life), rather it is done in the interest of another, so that this other may profit and fulfill their own essence, leaving the worker in a fundamentally alienated and alienating relationship with regard to her or his productive capacity. Marx himself expresses this as such:

...labour is *external* to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being... in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind... His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is *forced labour*. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a *means* to satisfy needs external to it... the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else’s, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates independently of the individual – that is, operates on him as

critique of capitalism that leads to conditions of conflict; this critique is responding to a conflictive reality made manifest by exploitative economic practices in many forms of modern capitalism.

an alien, divine or diabolical activity – in the same way the worker’s activity is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; *it is the loss of his self*.²⁷⁹

Here, the system of production is not only a system of alienation from our physical exertion (labour), nor even from other beings (society), but from our very selves. This system, called by Marx “forced” and “estranged” labour, constitutes a primary violation of human “essence” and existence; as the individual is bound to the social, social relations themselves are corrupted by the violation of the human “essence” in each person. The entire foundation of work, upon which all things in the world are built, is poured into a void from which human self-determination may once have sprung forth.

If, as Gutiérrez states, sin is the “breaking of friendship,” or, to rephrase, if sin is the disruption of amicable relations between self and other as situated within the bonds of community, then “forced” and “estranged” labour can surely be seen to fit such a definition. Moreover, it is worth recalling the description of Gutiérrez’s “human liberation,” provided earlier in the present work. Human liberation, as part of Gutiérrez’s three-fold “integral liberation,” concerns this very issue of historical agency and self-determination. “It means liberating human beings of all those things - not just in the social sphere - that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity.”²⁸⁰ As in Marx, the connection of “material” and “human” liberation in Gutiérrez’s “integral liberation” underscores the role of physical conditions in historical agency. Understood in this way, the structure of exploitative capitalism does far more than merely oppress in a physical capacity; the manifold ideological structures that sustain and are sustained by such a system of labour extend into each person’s ability to define and develop oneself freely and with dignity. As the means by which this takes place are inherently social (self in connection with other[s]), it is more than the corporeal or individual human person that is despoiled; for Marx and Gutiérrez, the “essence,” as Marx calls it, of humanity is violated.

As becomes even more evident in Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," this "essence" that is violated is manifest in the self-definition of human beings, but also in their relations to one another (self-definition is necessarily connected with the social, since such definition takes place in positive or negative connection with others). "[T]he human essence," Marx claims, "is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."²⁸¹ That is to say, to speak of a generalized human nature, or human essence, as some kind of permeating condition which is inborn in all members of the species is even still an abstract limitation which denies the complexity not only of individuals, but of the human community itself. Indeed, the entirety of Marx's analysis of capitalist society, religious ideation, and the alienation and oppression of human beings under each of these forms, revolves around these connected issues of *identity* and *sociality*. The system of labour reduces each human to their roles as producers or consumers, such that the primary notion of one's humanness is supplanted by one's utility as a worker or consumer (i.e. only ever in relation to capital and material goods/private property).

Thus in this double respect the worker becomes a slave of his object, first, in that he receives an *object of labour*, i.e., in that he receives *work*; and secondly, in that he receives *means of subsistence*. Therefore, it enables him to exist, first, as a *worker*; and, second, as a *physical subject*. The extremity of this bondage is that it is only as a *worker* that he continues to maintain himself as a *physical subject*, and that it is only as a *physical subject* that he is a *worker*.²⁸²

This is the vast extent to which humans are subjugated and oppressed, for Marx. *Who we are* is determined by *what we do*, when what we "do" is defined by our place in the system of labour and production. Our very lives are not our own, they are dependent, ascribed to us by a foreign power which is maintained and validated not by some invisible force, but by human ignorance and desire (a conception that connects well to Gutiérrez's notion of liberation from "selfishness and sin"). "Life itself appears only as *a means to life*... Estranged labour reverses [the natural relationship of life-activity], so that it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his

life-activity, his *essential* being, a mere means to his *existence*.”²⁸³ Under this system, humans are no longer ends in and of themselves, and our right to self-development is rendered null. Our value lies only in our ability to *delay or defer* the cultivation of selfhood, as many are left with little choice but to devote their lives to the labour assigned by another. “If the product of labour does not belong to the worker, if it confronts him as an alien power, this can only be because it belongs to some *other man than the worker*. If the worker’s activity is a torment to him, to another it must be *delight* and his life’s joy. Not the gods, not nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over man.”²⁸⁴ Our work, our lives, our identities, our communities are subverted for the sake of the development of someone else’s work, life, identity, and community. Under such a system, the advancement of one person frequently depends on the suffering and alienation of another.

Marx is consistently hesitant to *construct* any kind of totalizing agenda with which to combat this set of circumstances. As such, a description of a Marxian “new humanity” can generally be arrived at through *negation* rather than affirmation. That is to say, Marx’s attempts to voice a position of change are established through critique rather than construction; rather than risking a recreation of presently oppressive conditions, merely rearranged into a new form, he insists that,

...we shall confront the world not as doctrinaires with a new principle: “Here is the truth, bow down before it!” We develop new principles to the world out of its own principles. We do not say to the world: “Stop fighting; your struggle is of no account. We want to shout the true slogan of the struggle at you.” We only show the world what it is fighting for, and consciousness is something that the world *must* acquire, like it or not.²⁸⁵

The intention of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* is spelled out in the final sentences of this letter from Marx to Ruge, which highlights Marx’s “ruthless criticism” and connects this idea of creating a new world only out of a negative critique of present conditions.²⁸⁶ “[W]e can

express the trend of our journal in one word: the work of our time is to clarify itself (critical philosophy) the meaning of its own struggle and its own desires. This is work for the world and for us. It can only be the work of joint forces. It is a matter of *confession*, no more. To have its sins forgiven mankind has only to declare them to be what they really are.”²⁸⁷ Though metaphorical, it is worth drawing attention to the term “sin” here. Marx, of course, is using this as an analogy, a way to speak of confession, disclosure; in the development of what liberation theologians called *conscientización*, this recognition is crucial. The “reform of consciousness” acts as a *precursor* to actual emancipation for Marx, “putting religious and political questions into self-conscious human form.”²⁸⁸ By way of analogy, Marx is able to draw on the semantic weight of admission in the context of a religious rite. That which denies or obscures the “reform of consciousness,” which upholds alienation, estrangement, and exploitative conditions, which maintains a hegemonic ideology of a status quo that builds luxury for some on a foundation of suffering for others, is the content of the “sin” which must be “confessed.”

From the position of negation, that which is morally sound is that which defies and ultimately conquers such prevailing conditions of exploitation and oppression. In connecting the current analysis to this idea of moral good, as well as the notion of “sin,” it is worth considering the following short statement made by Marx: “[H]ow can I live virtuously if I do not live? And how can I have a good conscience if I am not conscious of anything?”²⁸⁹ One could say that, for Marx, the goal of the “new humanity” is to reclaim freedom in the arena for *living* and to open a space for moral and ethical action to flourish (which he sees as nearly impossible, due to the constraints of ideology and estranged labour). Such freedom and openness are critical components of identity formation, for determining who one’s self is, and how this self engages others. To sin, then, might be to *remove* this possibility of cultivation – leaving individuals

unable to even have the opportunity to express virtue or goodness. *Every* act is a violation if one is not permitted to have an opportunity to reflect and to consciously choose the path of moral good. If even passive or “neutral” participation in institutionalized violence is rendered nearly impossible for many, then even the seemingly banal actions we perform daily contribute to this violation; the “reform of consciousness” necessitates a realization of complicity with regard to such structures, and the vast expanse of everyday practices that passively or actively support institutionalized violence. A concept of conversion which maintains a character of cognitive self-direction, necessarily carries with it a notion of *choice* – indeed, for Gutiérrez this measure of decision is paramount in the context his notion of theology as a “second act”; that is, theology that is borne from a decision to work with and for the world’s poor. The system of estrangement is equivalent to a system which erases this opportunity for choice, by virtue of the removal of life *as a process of evaluation* of one’s self and one’s actions as that self, and the broader system of social relations – the norms, biases, and various oppressions in even the most mundane existence. This, indeed, is a “violation,” as Gutiérrez conceptualizes the term, of the Marxian notion of the human “essence.”

Friction and Fellowship

We are to a certain extent “playing” with categories, here. While the impetus and foundations of liberation theology cannot be traced to Marxian thought alone, so can Marxian thought not be wholly extended to the theories of these theologians. While critics accuse Gutiérrez and others of uncritically adopting Marxian categories and critiques, this simply cannot be the case by virtue of their commitment to remaining *theologians*. For Marx, all theology, even “critical” theology, is complicit in the structures of world-construction against which his theories are devised. If the process of “critical philosophy” elucidated by Marx is dependent on a foundation

of ruthless critique, critique which attempts to remove all base assumptions and which refuses to put constraints on the future, then such a philosophy cannot be connected to theology of any kind, without transforming “critical theology” into “critical theory.”²⁹⁰ This is about more than just Marx’s supposed atheism;^N for Marx, it is an assessment of pre-critical stances of theology, or any system of thought which begins with a non-negotiable thesis.

...even the *critical* theologian remains a *theologian*. Hence, either he had to start from certain presuppositions of philosophy accepted as authoritative; or if in the process of criticism and as a result of other people’s discoveries doubts about these philosophical presuppositions have arisen in him, he abandons them without vindication and in a cowardly fashion, *abstracts* from them showing his servile dependence on these presuppositions and his resentment at this dependence merely in a negative, unconscious and sophistical manner... forever repeating assurances about the *purity* of his own criticism...²⁹¹

This tension is never sufficiently addressed in the Vatican “Instructions” against liberation theology, perhaps because it undermines one of the most widely asserted claims used against this movement, that of “Marxism.” It is a tension, however, that can be addressed by adding other thinkers into the present conversation, by appreciating the innovations of liberation theology despite the philosophical connections being forged, and by acknowledging the social circumstances out of which liberation theology came to be.

Before continuing with a more direct comparison of the thinkers assessed in this chapter, it is necessary to make a few crucial words regarding context. Both theologians and philosophers focused on liberation in Central and South America are wary of connection to thinkers from the

^N That is to say, the notion of atheism is often introduced as a central, defining component of Marx’s philosophy (and “*Libertatis Nuntius*” is no exception to this). While it is true that Marx has been a continuous and fruitful resource for a variety of critiques of religions as potentially alienating structures, by the time of his later writings (e.g. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*), Marx was no longer concerned with atheism. As atheism becomes non-sensical without a theism against which it may be established (a dialectical relationship), the entire issue of atheism ultimately becomes a moot point for Marx.

European Enlightenment, and Continental Philosophy in general. This is understandable, especially considering Enrique Dussel's compelling tracing of the Enlightenment lineage to the pillage and destruction of native Central and South American lands and peoples.²⁹² As well, there have been attempts to reduce liberation theology to 'merely' another form of European political theology. The concern about such a reduction is worth noting, however insisting upon a complete disassociation of the two is both peculiar and limiting. The establishing of conversations which span eras, cultures, and land masses is a core endeavour of academia (in which Gutiérrez and many other liberation theologians participated, earning advanced degrees), and there is little doubt that many liberation theologians drew inspiration from the social sciences, critical theory, and economic critique, including those which are the heirs to Enlightenment thinking. While the present analysis constructs comparisons between Gutiérrez and Marx, the intention is one of *similarity*, not *identity*. Rather than a *negative reduction*, this is a case of comparing *multiple systems which come to analogous conclusions*, despite the vast temporal, contextual, ideological, and social differences between them.

That said, it is now worth retracing the path laid out in this chapter, to highlight both connections and distinctions between Marx and Gutiérrez. In their own ways, each maintains a notion of a refashioned humanity, and each considers the concept of social violation which can at times be translated into the language of "sin," broadly defined. In considering the three-fold notion of liberation outlined by Gutiérrez, we can most clearly highlight the areas in which Marx is relevant and those in which recourse to his theory would be unlikely, if not impossible without disregarding the core of certain aspects of his thought, such as the connection between a critique of religion and a critique of alienation (which will be expanded on in the concluding chapter of the present work). Political and social liberation and a focus on social and economic

justice constitute the first of the three aspects of total liberation for Gutiérrez. With the notion of a preferential option for the poor and an analysis of systemic and institutional violence, the applicability of Marxian thought is self-evident. Human liberation, liberating humanity from all systems and structures which prevent them from engaging such structures as active agents, and also liberating oneself and others from material forms of exploitation, can be explicitly connected to Marx's critique of capitalist economic structures and the labour relations that exist within these structures. As he states,

By *counting* the *lowest* possible level of life (existence) as the standard, indeed as the general standard... [the political economist] changes the worker into an insensible being lacking all needs, just as he changes his activity into a pure abstraction from all activity. To him, therefore, every *luxury* of the worker seems to be reprehensible, and everything that goes beyond the most abstract need – be it in the realm of passive enjoyment, or a manifestation of activity – seems to him a luxury... Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its cardinal doctrine. The less you eat, drink and read books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public-house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you *save* – the *greater* becomes your treasure which neither moths nor dust will devour – your *capital*. The less you *are*, the more you *have*; the less you express your own life, the greater is your *alienated* life – the greater is the store of your estranged being... The worker may only have enough for him to want to live, and may only want to live in order to have [enough].²⁹³

With the system constructed as such, no worker is free to develop her or his own self; in fact, the very notion of self-development is not only rejected, it is discouraged. Rather “self-denial” is the preferred mechanism of identity cultivation, so that an individual renounces the freedom to engage and experience the world and the things within the world which bring pleasure, for the sake of preserving capital and directing the drive to *live* toward the more ‘productive’ command to *work* and to *be*.

The final category of Gutiérrez's integral liberation is more difficult to compare to Marxian thought, and it is precisely the area which most closely relates to the distinction between

liberation and salvation (mis)attributed to liberation theology by Joseph Ratzinger and other conservative critics. Liberation from (religiously-defined) sin is the tie that binds the notions of human (earthly) liberation and transcendent (heavenly) salvation; it is the synthesis in the dialectic. This sin, for Gutiérrez, is connected to selfishness and self-interest, the ability to allow oneself to thrive at the expense of the suffering of others, which, as we've seen, connects with Marx in several ways. However, while this dimension has clear ramifications on earthly relations, there is also a specifically transcendent salvific element which carries redemptive weight, in the sense of conversion. The spiritual dimension of salvation, in the sense of acceptance and worthiness of a divine encounter after death, renders Marx generally irrelevant in this area, unless one takes on the interpretive task of construing "sin" as merely "violation."⁰ Such a presentation, however, at once lowers the intentions of Gutiérrez and over-extends the thought of Marx. As a theologian, Gutiérrez stands firmly against the reduction of transcendent salvation to mundane liberation, although the two must be considered connected in his theology, and each may be striven for in light of, or in reference to, the other.

As well, due to his unrelenting critique of theology, or any pre-bound system of thought, Marx's theories simply cannot be considered wholly relevant here. Theologians who choose to utilize certain of his insights must do so in a selective way which neglects or disregards this crucial tie which binds together his interconnected analysis of society, economics, and religion: namely, Marx's concept of alienation (which we will revisit in the final chapter). For Marx, religion is merely a *manifestation* of worldly suffering, brought on by alienating social conditions, an

⁰ Or, conversely, if one suggests that the future liberated society constitutes a transcendent kind of salvation, in the sense that it exists beyond the present world. Such a connection is frequently advocated by those who set out to describe Marx/ism as "really" religious (i.e. more akin to religious ideology than proponents realize). This subject extends beyond the scope of this particular work.

“inverted world” of hegemonic ideology, and estranged labour, and thus alienating as such via these manifestations. The very phenomenon of religion acts as a measure by which social discontent can be gauged – the yearning for justice makes little sense outside of a reality in which justice is frequently withheld or rejected. One generally does not protest conditions one finds acceptable, and so expressions of hope for a liberating future indicate the intensity of present oppressive conditions. This connection of religion and/as alienation is precisely the reason why critiques which center *exclusively* on the ties of liberation theologians to Marxian thought ultimately fail. While the *tools* offered by Marx are certainly utilized in Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation as well as many other liberation theologies, a specifically *theological Marxism* is necessarily oxymoronic. Without the critique of religion and of theology – regardless of one’s acceptance or rejection of this particular critique – the broader picture offered by Marx of an ideology which permeates every aspect of conscious and unconscious thought and activity, leaving us alienated from our very “essence” as human beings, is incomplete. This distinction is important, as Ratzinger’s “Instruction” conceives of “Marxism” as a totalizing structure, while it has been suggested here (as well as in certain Vatican documents) that there are multiple strains, variations, and modified manifestations of Marx’s thought, such that “Marxism” as a stable category is treated with suspicion. The insistence that “Marxism” is an impenetrable structure often functions as a justification for ideological positions opposed to liberationist concepts. The fact remains, Marx is not wholly sufficient in tracing the theoretical influences of Gutiérrez’s liberation theology, and this is as it should be. Any theological movement, or any movement of any kind, is likely to have a multitude of inspirations and sources – just as some liberation theologians may have been inspired by certain

forms of European philosophy and European political theology,^P so have they inspired thinkers throughout and beyond the European context (or Central and South American contexts, for that matter). By examining these multiple intersections, an approach such as the present one allows for the idea of a *conversation* between these schools of thought, which highlights particular, and crucial, moments of convergence with and divergence from Marxian analysis. Marx's insistence on praxis over theory helped make Gutiérrez's notion of liberation possible, but liberation theologies that took inspiration from this form of analysis ultimately evolved into something that is more Marxian than "Marxist."

With this distinction in mind, we can now turn our attention to the most recent document with liberatory themes in the current project. After Benedict XVI's unexpected departure from the papal seat, a papal enclave appointed the Catholic church's first Pope from the global South: Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope Francis on March 13, 2013. As briefly noted earlier, Bergoglio was neither friend nor foe to liberation theology during his tenure as priest, archbishop, and cardinal in Argentina. However, in his first apostolic exhortation as pope, "Evangelii Gaudium," published November 23, 2013, Francis takes up a social critique similar to those expressed in the previous Vatican documents examined here, especially "Populorum Progressio." Moreover, he frequently quotes and cites Ratzinger's 1984 "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" but does so in a way that alters, and at times even inverts, the meaning and scope of the critique Ratzinger made of liberation theology. Following this document, and the much-reported personal invitation extended to Gustavo Gutiérrez to meet

^P That is, alongside theories from other regions, and the lived experience with the poor in Central and South America. European influences, as has been mentioned, are far from the sole inspirational resource for liberation theology.

with Francis at the Vatican, media outlets and Vatican spectators began publishing articles with headlines such as, “Vatican Reverses Anti-Liberation Policies in Mexico,”²⁹⁴ and, “Is Pope Francis the New Champion of Liberation Theology?”²⁹⁵ Themes from liberation theology are many and significant in this document, and these are directly comparable to Marxian social and economic critiques. These then lend themselves to a conception of religious *yearning* expressed by Marx and expanded by Max Horkheimer. For the purposes of the present work, this serves as the final, crucial, link forged between a Marxian vocabulary, Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation, and critical theory.

Chapter Five: Uniting Theory and Praxis in Solidarity with the Poor

As an apostolic exhortation, Francis's "Evangelii Gaudium" is intended as a call to believers, encouraging a particular kind of perspective, without necessarily altering or defining doctrine or orthodoxy. Such a document does not carry the authority of a papal encyclical; it is not binding, but it illustrates the position of the pope on a variety of matters, in the hopes that fellow Catholics will see the validity of that position (as well as the implicit authority of anything written by a figure like the pope) and follow suit. This is not necessarily Francis interpreting dogma, it is his personal presentation of what he believes the world ought to and ought not to be, and what actions Catholics and the church might perform in this context. As such, with this kind of intimate declaration made, we might assume that the fundamental underlying structure of Francis's beliefs and worldview are sincerely laid bare. Because of this, it quickly becomes apparent just how influential liberation theology and liberationist themes were for Jorge Mario Bergoglio in his time in Argentina. During that time, he never considered himself a liberation theologian, and liberation theologians certainly did not consider him one of their own, either. However, something about the shift from Jorge to Francis may have complicated that understanding of this person. As will quickly become evident, "Evangelii Gaudium" advocates a wide range of liberation theology's convictions, even those that were – and remain – most contentious.

As we've already seen, the priority of praxis over theory, or the necessity of connecting theory and praxis, is a common theme in Gutiérrez's notion of liberation. This mandate can clearly be traced back to Marx, particularly the infamous eleventh of his "Theses on Feuerbach," that "the philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point however, is to *change*

it.”²⁹⁶ Interpretation can only ever be a partial project from a perspective that is concerned with social justice and elimination of oppressive social and economic structures. Only to the extent that it is geared toward actual, manifest, alterations of the physical world can theory be useful to such movements. This assertion is particularly evident in the idea of theology as a “second act,” one of the more contentious constructs avowed in the early works of Gutiérrez. The action – *praxis* – of living in solidarity with materially impoverished and socially oppressed persons shaped his initial theories of his god’s requirements for humanity, along with notions of justice and ways of opening the path toward salvation and liberation. Beginning with theology as a first act only ever reveals a partial image of what is needed for such progress, particularly for the early Gutiérrez. Rather, the lived experience of poverty and camaraderie with the most oppressed members of a society, and the kinetic applications of such experiences in emancipatory praxis, must first be exercised in order to reach the status of a theology of liberation. Such prioritization can be traced from Marx to certain aspects of 20th century Frankfurt School critical theory, particularly via Max Horkheimer’s foundational work, “Traditional and Critical Theory.”

In distinguishing the Frankfurt School’s way of engaging theory from more conventional forms of theory, issued from more conservative – and more mainstream – branches of philosophy, Horkheimer preserves and sustains Marx’s emphasis on actions over (or, at least, alongside) interpretations. After posing the question, “How is critical thought related to experience?” Horkheimer asserts the insufficiency of abstract thinking alone for attaining concrete goals.^Q

^Q This is reminiscent of Hewitt’s identification of liberation theology as, in part, “a critique of mainstream ‘academic’ or ‘traditional’ theology whose main concern with metaphysical transcendence and the individual

Indeed, this question alone establishes a paradigm for a union of theory and praxis: the invocation of “experience” and a relation of this to critical thinking, assumes a structure which does more than offering mere interpretation; “experience” necessarily relates to the active world. In addressing this question, Horkheimer replies:

One might maintain that if such thought were not simply to classify but also to determine for itself the goals which classification serves, in other words its own fundamental direction, it would remain locked up within itself, as happened to idealist philosophy. If it did not take refuge in Utopian fantasy, it would be reduced to the formalistic fighting of sham battles. The attempt legitimately to determine practical goals by thinking must always fail. If thought were not content with the role given to it in existent society, if it were not to engage in theory from the traditional sense of the word, it would necessarily have to return to illusions long since laid bare.²⁹⁷

Laying the groundwork for this new (or, at least, re-newed) way of *doing* theory in the creation of an innovative branch of philosophy, Horkheimer distinguishes such thought from previous forms of theory by making the connection to praxis as *a defining element* of critical theory. It is this necessity that characterises critical theory and the critical theorist her- or himself; simply stated – without a connection to praxis, theory cannot be “critical.”

From Horkheimer’s perspective, the critical theorist necessarily maintains a “ruthless criticism,” to borrow Marx’s terminology, of present states of affairs. More so, however, and again in line with Marx’s notion of “ruthless criticism,” the critical theorist must also turn such evaluations on her or his own life, aspirations, and ways of being. Marsha Hewitt fittingly identifies this, saying, “...a theory that did not engage in sustained negative critique of everything, including its own concepts, premises, and underlying values structure, was in danger of aiding the reproduction of the current conditions of injustice in rearranged, less obvious form.”²⁹⁸ In

spiritual life was understood as passively supporting the material conditions of injustice and oppression prevailing at the time.”

attempting to furnish a future of justice and equality, all aspects of the given society, including the theorist's own position, must constantly and consistently be under review for potentially oppressive elements. Going beyond mere evaluation, specifically *critical* theory then foments an alteration within the theorist and the society in which s/he participates: praxis to match the theory.²⁹⁹

Likewise, in Francis's "Evangelii Gaudium," the role of the theorist - here represented by the idea of the "teacher" - is of particular importance. While the information and interpretations constructed and allocated by the teacher are crucially enacted via a determination to demolish present oppressive states and tendencies, such critiques must also be directed inward toward the teacher and the ways s/he lives her or his own life. In the first chapter of this apostolic exhortation, Francis proclaims that we "need to remember that all religious teaching ultimately *has to be reflected in the teacher's way of life.*"³⁰⁰ External critique is indeed important and a necessary component of critical theory and (liberationist) theology, but central to both is this requirement that the lived-life of the theorist, teacher, or theologian must likewise be subject to analysis and alteration, should oppressive or conformist tendencies be identified in the process of such excavation. This aligns particularly well with Marx's assertion in "For a Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing" that critique "must not be afraid of its own conclusions."³⁰¹ That is to say, even the uncomfortable occasion of discovering one's own potential complicity in states of oppression must be as thoroughly engaged as those states of oppression themselves.

Interrogating one's position in systems that may perpetuate inequality is only part of the equation, however, if our intended result is the union of theory and praxis. Examination alone is categorized as an unstable and incomplete foundation, when addressed by Francis: "...[Those] who inculturated the Gospel in the life of our peoples [impel] us *to put the word into practice*, to

perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful. Not to put the word into practice, not to make it reality, is to build on sand, to remain in the realm of pure ideas and to end up in a lifeless and unfruitful self-centredness and gnosticism."³⁰² Here, we see a clear distinction between the value of lived engagement and mere interpretation. This language of "pure ideas" is implied to be pejorative; it does not contribute to establishment of just living conditions, and it centers on self-interest rather than the interest of those who suffer, or of the social whole. The locus of theological *doing* is found in the rejection of mere ideas, when such ideas are not extended to the realm of action. This, too, finds its corollary in the works of Horkheimer, in particular. In "Traditional and Critical Theory," he states, "If...the theoretician and his specific object are seen as forming a dynamic unity with the oppressed class, so that his presentation of societal contradictions is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a force within it to stimulate change, then his real function emerges."³⁰³ The "real function" of the critical theorist is performed in actions which promote social justice and which work against oppression. In both critical theory and the kind of reflective, action-oriented theology seemingly advocated by Francis in "Evangelii Gaudium," the very legitimacy of the movements in question hinges on the progression from mere talk to effective, active, and intentioned practice.

Reminiscent of Gustavo Gutiérrez's assertion in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, Francis even goes so far as to suggest that the very unity of the church, its entire structure, is at risk of breaking down if action is not prioritized. It is worth noting again that this kind of declaration was particularly decried by Joseph Ratzinger in the 1984 and 1986 "Instructions," and the allegation of fractured or facile unity is the most drastically revised component of the second edition of Gutiérrez's classic work. As noted previously (in chapter two), Gutiérrez

radically altered his position here, first calling such unity into question, and then revising this statement to suggest that the actual concern of liberation theology is to understand “[how we are] to live evangelical charity in the midst of [a situation of injustice and oppression].”³⁰⁴ While Gutiérrez maintains the “preferential option for the poor,” he retreats from the allegation that unity may be impossible if social and economic relations render some people as “more” or “less” than others. This appears as something of a reversal of the original conviction that theology ought to be a “second act,” first comes the solidarity of living with and for the poor, and following this comes reflections on proper theology and the living of “evangelical charity.” Francis, however, positions this potential fracture in a way that is remarkably akin to the original declaration provided by Gutiérrez:

Any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, *will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticize governments*. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness *camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk*.³⁰⁵

The continued community of the Catholic church is called into question here, when theological contemplation takes precedent over actions which improve the actual conditions of those who live in material poverty. Francis demands of church members a “creative concern,” concern that is *animated*, and which is directed toward “cooperation” – *action in solidarity with the poor*. Even the most ruthless of critiques is meaningless if that critique is not associated with attempts to *change* the situations under analysis. This is the quintessential meaning of theology as a “second act.” If god-talk is prioritized over, or – worse – utilized to the exclusion of, praxis, then a primary criterion of Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation is violated. The “preferential option for the poor” requires an elevation of liberatory commitment and action above theological contemplation; the preference comes first and the theology follows as a “second act.” As

Gutiérrez and Vatican officials who have adopted the “preferential option” assert, such contemplation is incomplete and insufficient if it is not first informed by the lived experience of solidarity – “cooperation” in Francis’s quote above – with the poor. Before theology can begin to take place, the fundamental problem of inequality and oppression must first be addressed. As Francis said in an interview with *The New Yorker*, “It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds.”³⁰⁶ That which is acute is assigned priority; it makes no sense to talk of saving souls if the human body itself, as a whole or as part of a Marxian “essence,” is crushed under the weight of poverty’s burden, and alienated from its own self through the mechanisms of modern economic and ideological structures.

Again, we find a corollary with the Frankfurt School in such a preferential schema. Horkheimer, too, advocates a theory that is kindled by resistance, stating that, “Every part of [critical] theory presupposes the critique of the existing order *and the struggle against it* along lines determined by the theory itself.”³⁰⁷ The “struggle” here is the precondition and the animating factor in a critical theory that then sustains that very struggle as a result. Theory is both “of” and “for” praxis, and praxis is validated and furthered by the theory it informs. Moreover, as one ventures into such analysis, the primary outcome is a necessary uniting of theory and praxis: “...the theory which urges a transformation of society as a whole *is only an intensification of the struggle* with which the theory is connected.”³⁰⁸ Theory and praxis are not separate elements of a struggle against oppression; they are intrinsically bound to one another, constitutive of one another, merely pieces of the same whole. Action doesn’t follow thought, it is an extension of thought, a fundamental consequence of any theory (or, in this case, any theology) which advocates real, substantial, worldly changes in the interest of fostering more equal relations

among humans. This is echoed in “*Evangelii Gaudium*” when Francis states, “Ideas – conceptual elaborations – are at the service of communication, understanding, and praxis. Ideas disconnected from realities give rise to ineffectual forms of idealism and nominalism, capable at most of classifying and defining, but certainly not calling to action.”³⁰⁹ Theory is here considered worthless without a connection to practice, and the entire efficacy of such thought hinges on the extent to which it advocates “communication, understanding, and praxis.” Elsewhere in the same document, Francis establishes an even sharper and more explicit preference for action that is oriented toward real, substantial changes of social conditions that foster injustice. “What we need...is to *give priority to actions which generate new processes* in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they *bear fruit in significant historical events*.”³¹⁰ As in the legacy of Marxian thought, it is not enough to interpret the world; one must attempt to change this world, as well. The efficacy and emancipatory power of these changes are measured by the extent to which they “bear fruit in significant historical events”; liberation here plays out on a historical, rather than (or, perhaps, in addition to) a transcendent stage.

Such change is not neutral, nor is it conducted in the interest of those who maintain such structures of power. The “preferential option for the poor” is a key component of liberation theology, and the moral force of such partiality is powerful enough that it made its way into the standard doctrine, the orthodoxy, of the Catholic church (albeit perhaps in a decidedly tamer

way than intended by some liberation theologians).^R The language of preference is notable in “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” particularly when Francis states,

The poor person, when loved, “is esteemed as of great value,” and this is what makes the authentic option for the poor differ from any other ideology, from any attempt to exploit the poor for one’s own personal or political interest. Only on the basis of this real and sincere closeness can we properly accompany the poor on their path of liberation...Without the preferential option for the poor, “the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today’s society of mass communications.”³¹¹

Just as Horkheimer delineates critical theory from traditional theory on the basis of its commitment to action on behalf of, and in solidarity with, those who live under systems of oppression, so does Francis advocate the priority of working with and for persons who live in situations of material poverty. In suggesting that “the greatest and most effective presentation of the good news of the kingdom” is located in the preferential option for the poor, Francis yet again advances a position for which liberation theology was once reprimanded.³¹² Ratzinger is adamant in “*Libertatis Nuntius*” and “*Libertatis Consciencia*”: there is one and only one path of salvation, of presenting “the good news of the kingdom,” and that it exists only in a world beyond physical reality at the will of god alone. Francis instead suggests that liberation of the poor can only take place in a situation of camaraderie, and this camaraderie is the utmost expression of the “kingdom of God.”

^R This is a highly contentious issue. Some would suggest that the incorporation of such ideas/language in official stances of the Vatican illustrates the compelling nature of liberation theology. Proponents of this view see the use of “preferential option for the poor” as a victory for those like Gutiérrez. Others, however, are more reluctant to accept such an adoption as purely benevolent and genuine. Such critics may suggest that this is little more than a co-option of terminology, for the purpose of placating this potentially revolutionary theology. The “preferential option” is emptied of much of its radical content, and re-presented as more of an attitude than a practice

So conceived, the priority of praxis in the interest of the poor extends to the most basic aspects of human well-being in the present, earthly, realm. Harkening again back to Marxian thought, this well-being is presented as directly connected to one's position in the system of labour. Systems that foster fairness, ingenuity, and authentic support of the full human person are placed in a position that is, at least, a constitutive element of an authentic liberation.³¹³

We are not simply talking about ensuring nourishment or a “dignified sustenance” for all people, but also their “general temporal welfare and prosperity.” This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labour that human beings *express and enhance the dignity of their lives*. A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use.³¹⁴

In his “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” Marx likewise addresses the issue of mere subsistence over a concern for the development of the whole person. He accuses political economists (and capitalists) of,

...reducing the worker's need to the barest and most miserable level of physical subsistence...relegating his activity to the most abstract mechanical movement. Hence, he says: Man has no other need either of activity or of enjoyment. For he calls *even* this life *human* life and existence.... By counting the *lowest* possible level of life (existence) as the standard... he changes the worker into an insensible being lacking all needs.³¹⁵

Gutiérrez's notion of integral liberation stresses the multidimensionality of the emancipatory project. Mere *existence* is not the standard by which fulfillment of the human can be measured, for Marx, Gutiérrez, and Francis. Relief from the agony of poverty is a key component of integral liberation, but it is just that: *a* component. The whole, liberated, person requires a condition of material well-being, but also a condition of maintenance of health, furthering of education and development of knowledge, and the general ability to advance and grow in all of the multifarious ways that people (ideally) evolve over time. If the merely material condition – bare subsistence – is the sole measure of human liberation, then the three thinkers under

consideration all seem to agree that crucial aspects of human potential are neglected. The full human person is considered as much more than mere biological necessity. Moreover, the development of that human person is intimately linked with the social conditions in which we each and all find ourselves; "...the human person, 'by nature stands completely in need of life in society' and always exists in reference to society, finding there a concrete way of relating to reality."³¹⁶ Only an "integral liberation" that acknowledges this is considered by these thinkers to be genuinely liberative.

As in Gutiérrez's notion of liberation, Francis identifies 'authentic' faith as something defined by praxis and realized through actions by establishing a "kingdom of God on earth." The social is the key to an internally-defined validity; solidarity in action takes precedence over isolated contemplation. "Solidarity is a spontaneous reaction by those who recognize that the social function of property and the universal destination of goods are realities which come before private property... solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them."³¹⁷ As in the other Vatican documents discussed in the present work, the parallels to Marxian economic critique are unmistakably present. The dissolution of private property as a fundamental norm of contemporary economic reality, in favour of a system which recognizes and attempts to meet the needs of all, is so clearly comparable with Marx's own thought that the dismissal of such kinship, particularly by Joseph Ratzinger, is not only curious, but also baffling. Considering Marx's thought as a closed system, in which parts may never be extracted from the whole, potentially weakens this stance, rather than fortifying it. It, like all theory, is merely a "conceptual tool," at the service of those who require explanations for, and critiques of, various social and economic realities. By suggesting that there is one and only one form of Marxian analysis and that such "Marxism" is a totalizing structure, liberation theologians who

deny Marx and critics within the Vatican who have issued condemnations of private property are robbed of a potentially powerful supporting resource.

Structural Inequality and the Meaning of ‘Authenticity’

That the perpetuation of conditions that either neglect comprehensive human development or that deny even the most basic of human needs is a manufactured and structural reality that pervades all social structures is a key innovation of Marx and the bearers of the legacy of Marxian critique. While oppression can take place at an individual level, more insidious are the forms of oppression which are ultimately built into the very architectures of societies themselves. The idea of structural or institutional violence is intimately linked to Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation, and Francis fosters such a connection as well:

The Church has realized that the need to heed [the plea to dismantle oppressive structures] is itself born of the liberating action of grace within each of us, and thus it is not a question of a mission reserved only to a few... In this context we can understand Jesus’ command to his disciples: “You yourselves give them something to eat!” (Mk 6:37): *it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor...* The word “solidarity”... refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It presumes the *creation of a new mindset* which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.³¹⁸

In advocating the union of theory and praxis, identifying oppression as pervasive within social systems, requiring solidarity with the materially poor in a way that promotes, at least, socialistic values (“the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few”), and connecting all of this through the notion of integral liberation, it seems almost as though Francis is cataloguing the tenets espoused by liberation theologians, particularly Gutiérrez. Even the notion of “the creation of a new mindset” harkens back to the idea of the “new man,” or “new humanity,” as found not only in the works of Gutiérrez, but of Marx, as well. Here, the integral

liberation of the new human is identified with and made possible by the critique of structural causes of poverty and oppression. It's worth noting that an important shift has taken place here: while Joseph Ratzinger and those before him maintained that the Catholic church is decidedly *not* a politically-active institution, Francis seems to back away from such limitations. Invoking "the Church," and noting a kind of realization of the necessary involvement of all in the eradication of poverty and oppression, he seems to imply that "the Church" absolutely should intervene on behalf of those who suffer, an intervention that is necessarily political, even if only in part. "The mission," after all, is not "reserved to only a few." While not directly advancing into the realm of the political, such an affiliation with a specific position, which necessitates a rejection and dismantling of social structures of inequality, strikes a tacitly political position at the very least. "To opt for one particular way of life inevitably involves rejecting another."³¹⁹ Opting for one side over another, for the oppressed over the oppressors, is a choice with political ramifications, whether or not this association is intended or acknowledged.

That said, elsewhere in the document, Francis gives reason to believe that, in this area, violating certain traditional boundaries is not necessarily a prime concern, when compared to meeting the needs of the poor. He goes so far as to admit that those who staunchly advocate orthodoxy above all often appear callous with regard to those in need, passive in the face of institutional and systemic oppression, and ultimately complicit in such oppression through the veil of neutrality or through the concern for "right" belief (orthodoxy) over "right" practice (orthopraxis).

[The biblical message of mercy toward the poor] is so clear and direct, so simple and eloquent, that no ecclesial interpretation has the right to relativize it... Conceptual tools exist to heighten contact with the realities they seek to explain, not to distance us from them. This is especially the case with those biblical exhortations which summon us so forcefully to brotherly love, to humble and

generous service, to justice and mercy towards the poor. Jesus taught us this way of looking at others by his words and his actions. So why cloud something so clear? ...*We should not be concerned simply about falling into doctrinal error*, but about remaining faithful to this light-filled path of life and wisdom. For “defenders of orthodoxy are sometimes accused of passivity, indulgence, or culpable complicity regarding the intolerable situations of injustice and the political regimes which prolong them.”³²⁰

While he does not move away from doctrinal concerns altogether (not that such a move should be expected, of course), Francis seems to emphasize a *prioritization* of developing concrete resistance against the realities of poverty, that is, making theology a “second act.” Moreover, the final sentence in this quotation, itself a quotation of another document, is taken directly from Joseph Ratzinger’s 1984 “Instruction,” “*Libertatis Nuntius*.” It is worth examining the full context of this quote in the original document:

The defenders of orthodoxy are sometimes accused of passivity, indulgence, or culpable complicity regarding the intolerable situations of injustice and the political regimes which prolong them. Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbor, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone, and especially of pastors and those in positions of responsibility. The concern for the purity of the faith demands giving the answer of effective witness in the service of one's neighbor, the poor and the oppressed in particular, in an integral theological fashion.³²¹

Whereas Francis seems to use the first line of this passage to suggest that such “defenders of orthodoxy” are characterized in such ways because of their insistence on an understanding of doctrine which supersedes all “conceptual tools” and privileges “correct” theological interpretation over praxis, the original text has a rather different tone. Not only does it clearly advocate thought, theory, and internal conditions over action (“*spiritual conversion*,” “*intensity of love*,” “*zeal for justice and peace*,” “the Gospel *meaning*”), Ratzinger here champions the cause of these “defenders of orthodoxy” not by suggesting that they, too, are part of the active movement toward integral liberation, but by asserting that “the concern for the purity of the faith” itself occupies a place of primacy in considering the role of the theologian in the

liberatory process. Francis uses this line to warn theologians that when they privilege doctrine over action, they are seen as hard-hearted, and in doing so, references Ratzinger's thought while apparently espousing the opposite of Ratzinger's own intentions. When Ratzinger uses this line, he does so to *justify* the seemingly insensitive perspective of those who prioritize orthodoxy over orthopraxis.

As noted previously, in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, Gustavo Gutiérrez claims that "our love is not authentic if it does not take the path of class solidarity and social struggle."³²² For the early Gutiérrez and the notion of liberation that follows, the legitimacy of any emancipatory movement is evaluated by its engagement with the social and in its tendency to act in accordance with principles of solidarity with the poor. While this is precisely the kind of language Gutiérrez retreats from following Ratzinger's "Instructions," Francis picks up this theme of authenticity, and connects it explicitly to the social, and to the manifestation of the "kingdom of God" on earth (i.e. an earthly "kingdom," established partially in the mundane realm through social interaction). While Ratzinger categorized such thought as a potential reduction of the theological message of the Catholic church, and suggested that any "authentic" pursuit of liberation must be based solely in the gospels, "correctly [i.e. orthodoxically] interpreted,"³²³ Francis follows the liberationist path of positing a divine realm within the worldly, as manifest through specifically social interactions.

To evangelize is to make the kingdom of God present in our world.... [If the] social dimension of evangelization... is not properly brought out, there is a constant risk of distorting the authentic and integral meaning of the mission of evangelization.... Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society. We are seeking God's kingdom... Jesus' mission is to inaugurate the kingdom of his Father; he commands his disciples to proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."³²⁴

Ratzinger insists that the locus of theology lies in interpretation and meaning in a transcendent context; Francis insists that theology divorced from the issue of social conditions is ineffective, “distort[ed],” and partial. Here, rather than pre-established and approved orthodox formulations creating the rubric by which religious movements are validated or rejected, it is the “social dimension” which determines the authenticity of spreading this particular religious message. This very act of evangelization itself is to be oriented toward actions and results, toward having “an impact on society,” toward *praxis*.

It is precisely this social dimension, as directed toward the critique of structural and systemic inequality, that shapes Francis’s characterization of “authentic faith.” There is an implicit rejection that accompanies a critique of social and economic oppression: the refusal to accept the conditions of the present world is likewise an expression of the desire to change that world. Just as for Marx “[r]eligious suffering is at the same time an *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering,”³²⁵ so is the suffering borne of living in, or the sense of existential horror that comes from witnessing, situations of extreme poverty a “*protest* against real suffering.” In solidarity with the poor, Francis identifies a desire to change their circumstances, to work with them to build a better world – a more just world, a more equal world, a more fair world. This attempt, made by those who search for liberation and in solidarity with who suffer, is what constitutes “authentic faith,” in Francis’s view. “An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it... If indeed ‘the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,’ the Church ‘cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.’”³²⁶

Ironically, the final line of the above quotation, which states that the church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice,” is itself a quotation that was taken from Benedict XVI’s “Deus Caritas Est.”

The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church.³²⁷

Here, Benedict XVI firmly orients the church as working outside of the political realm while still struggling for justice in the world. Francis again seems to employ Benedict XVI’s phrasing to a quite opposite end. In a significant departure from Joseph Ratzinger’s/Benedict XVI’s insistence on the separation of the church from the political realm, Francis seems here to acknowledge that the church (like any other institution) can never be entirely separated from political concerns. While such “ordering” is done in the political realm, he encourages members of his faith, and the church itself, not to stand aside or remove themselves from the struggle for justice. Rather, by constructing a conditional statement, an “if,” he suggests that it is precisely *because* such ordering takes place amongst politicians that those who are members of a faith that encourages equality and liberation (by its own interpretation, of course) should make their voices heard. “If” the politicians do the political work, “then” the Catholic church must participate in discourses around poverty, inequality, and oppression.

While Francis edges closer to a more nuanced understanding of the political reality of all worldly aspirations, he still misses a key insight provided by the Frankfurt School, again, for our

purposes, represented by Max Horkheimer's "Traditional and Critical Theory." "There is...no theory of society...that does not contain political motivations, and the truth of these must be decided not in supposedly neutral reflection but in personal thought and action, in concrete historical activity."³²⁸ Whereas Benedict XVI perceived the role of the Catholic church as providing "neutral reflection," Francis, as we have seen, underscores the necessity of praxis within *and* outside the church in creating a more just world. As well, he concedes the church's proclamations as merely one voice among many, "...neither the Pope nor the Church have a monopoly on the interpretation of social realities or the proposal of solutions to contemporary problems."³²⁹ Both Francis and Benedict XVI, however, ultimately miss a key point offered here by Horkheimer: in the search for a just world, there is no apolitical. Just as Gustavo Gutiérrez and other liberationist thinkers helped disseminate the realization of supposed "neutrality" as tacit acceptance of the status quo, so Horkheimer provided a similar conclusion. For such thinkers, there is no middle ground – either one sides with the oppressed, or they (implicitly or explicitly) side with those who maintain the conditions that perpetuate oppressions.³³⁰

"Evangelii Gaudium" and Gutiérrez's Notion of Liberation

Clearly, Francis's initial publication as Pope shares a good deal with Gutiérrez's liberation theology, his early theology in particular. As well, both Gutiérrez and Francis have a good deal of overlap with Marxian thought, as do a number of other Vatican documents. So far, in the context of "Evangelii Gaudium," this has been addressed with regard to theory and praxis, as well as the idea of an intimate social connection that necessarily runs through all of humankind, which is inflected by material conditions. These social bonds, these thinkers suggest, require a sense of accountability, and Francis has acknowledged that enacting this responsibility requires an engagement with the world that, at least, borders on the political. As a member of this social

fabric, even the Catholic church itself is not considered exempt from this obligation. All of this aligns generally well with components of the various concepts engaged thus far. Where we find the most significant association between Francis, Gutiérrez's early notion of liberation, and Marxian critical theory is in Francis's critique of the deeply intertwined issues of modern economic practices, private property, accumulation, and estrangement.

In chapter two of "Evangelii Gaudium," entitled "Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment," Francis offers a number of critiques which resonate rather well with Marx's own analyses, as well as those constructed by Gutiérrez. Section I of this chapter, "Some Challenges of Today's World," is organized by a series of *rejections*: "No to an economy of exclusion," "No to the new idolatry of money," "No to a financial system which rules rather than serves," and "No to the inequality which spawns violence."³³¹ Here, "Communal Commitment" is established via a *negative engagement with presently existing conditions*, and this series of rejections fosters a number of important comparisons. The status of money as an idol, as the ultimate good and "visible divinity,"³³² the "denial of the primacy of the human person," and a complex understanding of the realities of violence with regard to oppression and resistance, together weave a narrative that unites Marxian analysis, liberation theology, and a picture of orthodoxy that emerges under the Catholic church's first Latin American pope. While Francis has not promoted liberation theology specifically, certain aspects of its influence on some of his beliefs and priorities seem undeniable.^S Similarly, left-leaning socialist(ic) and Marxian political

^S It is worth reiterating a point mentioned in the introduction: while lauded by many, the pope's position with regard to liberatory concerns has not been fully positive or fully embracing of the now wide expanse of liberation theology's concerns. As contemporary theologies of liberation take on issues of gender and gender identity, for example, Francis I's position has often seemed contradictory. While he issued the now-infamous "Who am I to judge?" statement regarding homosexuality, he has also referred to gay marriage as something that is ultimately destructive to "God's plan," and has painted transgender individuals in a negative light, despite meeting with and

ideologies and programmes have long held sway in many contexts throughout Latin America. In some ways, liberation theology was a union of these ideologies with a particular religious commitment; if this points to a generalized definition of liberation theology, then Francis may well be something of an “anonymous” liberation theologian, rejecting in name the very thing that manifests in his analysis. At the very least, his observations and those of Gutiérrez’s liberation theology run parallel to one another.

The “Idolatry of Money”

The notion of the idolatry of money originates in Marx’s critique of capital and consumption, particularly in his “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844.” As money is that which makes any and all things possible under capitalist economics – one can *do*, *own*, and *be* virtually anything with access to enough money – it becomes elevated to a seemingly divine status. Massive accumulation of capital effectively renders the possessor all-powerful, capable of supplementing her or his identity, of owning and doing all that one could wish for, of expanding one’s control beyond one’s own life by buying support and influencing social, economic, and political policy. Money is both power and the validation of the individual who possesses this power.

By possessing the *property* of buying everything, by possessing the property of appropriating all objects, *money* is thus the *object* of eminent possession. The universality of its *property* is the omnipotence of its being. It therefore functions as the almighty beings... The extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money’s properties are my properties and essential powers – the properties and powers of its possessor. Thus, what I *am* and *am capable* of is by no means determined by my individuality. I am ugly, but I can buy for myself the most *beautiful* of women. Therefore I am not *ugly*, for the effect of *ugliness* – its

deterrent power – is nullified by money... Money is the supreme good, therefore its possessor is good... Do not I, who thanks to money am capable of *all* that the human heart longs for, possess all human capacities?... [Money] is the visible divinity... That which I am unable to do as a *man*, and of which therefore all my individual essential powers are incapable, I am able to do by means of *money*.³³³

Not only is money seemingly necessary for even the barest of subsistence, substantial accumulation of wealth allows the owner to fulfill every wish, to transform her- or himself and the world. One's own identity and potential are frequently considered determined by the amount of money one possesses, rendering money the ultimate priority of life itself under (this kind of) capitalist structure.

In saying “no to the new idolatry of money,” Francis also identifies such properties of economic potential and affluence. In maintaining a system in which some are able to reap the material and existential benefits of capital under the present financial structure, we have denied others their very humanity when one person's wealth is built upon the exploitation and alienation of another.

The current financial crisis can make us overlook the fact that it originated in a profound human crisis: the denial of the primacy of the human person! We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf... has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings; man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption.³³⁴

As in Marx, here the elevation of the status of money, by means of a reduction of a human essence to mere consumption (literally, in terms of sustenance, and more broadly in terms of accumulating private property), creates a new god worshipped in place of the old. In reducing the human person to mere economic competence, so are humans themselves either elevated or degraded by their ability or inability to thrive under such conditions. Our very humanity has become monetarily appraised. Under this hegemonic ideology, to be a good person is to be a

wealthy person.^T The current economic system amounts to the apotheosis of money itself, and unification with this newly-fashioned divinity is possible only through amassment and consumption.

Similarly, many liberation theologians are deeply concerned by, as Gustavo Gutiérrez puts it, "[t]he idolatry of money...this fetish produced by the work of human hands, [which] is indissolubly and causally connected with the death of the poor. If we thus go to the root of the matter, idolatry reveals its full meaning: it works against the God of the Bible, who is a God of life. Idolatry is death; God is life."³³⁵ The option of life or death is constructed along a similar economic binary. One either has sufficient means for subsistence or one does not. One has the freedom and ability to consume (in a biologically necessary fashion) or one does not. Not only does the present economic system maintain a validation of the human person itself only via an elevation of monetary affluence above all, *invalidation* in this area results in the ultimate invalidation of that very human person: the loss of not just self, but of life. That so many wittingly or unwittingly opt in to such a system is a manifestation of institutional violence, in which the very structure of society amounts to a perpetuation of oppression and alienation, such that the living of life is borne as a struggle. As stated in "Mater et Magistra," "[w]e all share responsibility for the fact that populations are undernourished;"³³⁶ for both Gutiérrez and Francis (and their associated influences) if we tacitly or actively accept such a system, we do violence to both the physical and existential being of all those who suffer from impoverishment.

^T This very assertion is a point of juxtaposition for liberation theology and its fundamental opposite, prosperity theology. The latter associates wealth with being blessed by one's deity: monetary success is a manifestation of one's closeness to god.

Violence and Unity

For Francis, this violence is *causally linked* to economic inequality that narrows opportunities for human development and extinguishes human life; this violence cannot be resolved without eliminating such inequality and its causes. While asserting that a call to arms on behalf of revolutionary persons or groups will not be able to overcome such violence (and elsewhere he extends this to advocates of the status quo who call for greater security measures *against* such revolutionaries through armed defence), he also identifies the hypocrisy of those who accuse economically and socially oppressed persons of perpetuating such violence while existing in an inherently violent system.

*No to the inequality which spawns violence... [U]ntil exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples is reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence. The poor and the poorer peoples are accused of violence, yet without equal opportunities the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode... This is not the case simply because inequality provokes a violent reaction from those excluded from the system, but because the socioeconomic system is unjust at its root...Inequality eventually engenders a violence which recourse to arms cannot and will never be able to resolve. This serves only to offer false hopes to those clamouring for heightened security.*³³⁷

It is crucial to repeat Francis's conviction that the violence of the oppressed is *specifically caused* by the violence of the economic system under which they live and the active or passive violence of those who support this system. For Francis, the division that is established and fed by inequality extends throughout all of society, no institution is untouched by it, and the violence it engenders will never cease unless this division itself is surmounted with a more "authentic" unity.

Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence resulting from the domination of one part of society over others. Nor does true peace act as a pretext for justifying a social structure which silences or

appeases the poor, so that the more affluent can placidly support their lifestyle while others have to make do as they can. Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights *cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority*. The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges... In the end, *a peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed*; it will always spawn new conflicts and various forms of violence.³³⁸

Francis draws a proverbial line in the sand, here. On one side are those who would sacrifice the lives of others for their own comfort and extravagance; on the other side are those who have not even enough to subsist. In a literal and powerful example of the “preferential option for the poor,” Francis makes it clear that he has chosen sides, and his apostolic exhortation thus urges his fellow Catholics to do likewise. To be clear, he has not *proposed* a division; he, as many liberation theologians, Gutiérrez included, is merely observing it, judging it, and acting upon that judgement, siding resolutely with the poor. All of this suggests that a false unity, “a consensus on paper,” is perpetuated by a peace that is not directed toward real equality, manifest in “integral development.” Remaining neutral or siding with those who live in affluence is to maintain a division that cuts across all of society. It does not seem to be an overextension to suggest that such a division might be present within the Catholic church itself, its very unity called into question once again.

The distinction between oppressors and oppressed, and the refusal to condemn those of oppressed classes who resort to violence to the same extent and with the same intensity as the condemnation of those who thrive because of the suffering of others, are common themes for Gustavo Gutiérrez, other liberation theologians, and their supporters. Like Francis, Gutiérrez doesn’t attempt to foment division; he merely *describes a pre-existing condition*. In questioning the unity of the church, as detailed in chapter one of the present work, he doesn’t attempt to create a fracture within the church community; he rather questions the authenticity of the unity

insisted upon by those within the organized church. If such division exists in the world, and the church is a part of that world, then it would be reasonable to suggest that such a rupture might make its way into this institution, as well. As we've seen, in the 1984 "Instruction," Ratzinger accuses liberation theology of doing precisely what Gutiérrez tries to avoid: *constructing* a condition of disunion in the church. Relatedly, in his discussions of the discord caused by economic inequality, and the revolutionary violence that sometimes erupts in attempts to overcome that inequality, Gutiérrez never advocates violence, despite Ratzinger's claims to the contrary.³³⁹ He insists that violence enacted in a state of resistance is "just violence," while the overt and/or institutional violence that perpetuates oppression is "unjust violence." Recalling statements made during the Medellín conference, as well as the document "A Letter to the Peoples of the Third World," signed by eighteen Third World Bishops, and related works, Gutiérrez states,

[Latin American bishops] describe the misery and the exploitation in Latin America as "a situation of injustice that can only be called institutionalized violence;" it is responsible for the death of thousands of innocent victims. This view allows for a study of the complex problems of counterviolence without falling into the pitfalls of a double standard which assumes that violence is acceptable when the oppressor uses it to maintain "order" and bad when the oppressed invoke it to change this "order." Institutionalized violence violates fundamental rights so patently that the Latin American bishops warn that "one should not abuse the patience of a people that for years has borne a situation that would not be acceptable to anyone with any degree of awareness of human rights." An important part of the Latin American clergy request, moreover, that "in considering the problem of violence in Latin America, let us by all means avoid equating the *unjust violence* of the oppressors (who maintain this despicable system) with the *just violence* of the oppressed (who feel obliged to use it to achieve their liberation)."³⁴⁰

Quite simply, for Gutiérrez and his like-minded peers, violence is not "only" violence; all forms of violence are not equivalent or interchangeable, and likewise evaluations of violence must

maintain distinctions that acknowledge this. Those who live in poverty live in a perpetual state of violence, and thus any violence they use to resist is necessarily *defensive* violence.

Fellow liberation theologian Dom Hélder Câmara, archbishop of Olinda and Recife in Brazil from 1964-1985, published his massively influential work, *Spiral of Violence*, in 1971, when liberation theology was still in its infancy, prior even to the first edition of Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation*. In fact, Gutiérrez cites Câmara's *Spiral of Violence*, and Câmara's theories are clearly an inspiration for Gutiérrez's delineation of just and unjust violence. The purpose of *Spiral of Violence* is to examine the issues of state violence and reactionary violence, as manifest in both the so-called "developed" and "underdeveloped" nations. Câmara does not advocate violence, rather he laments the attraction of violence to violence, allowing for a more nuanced approach when considering the recourse to violence of those who are oppressed, and the violence enacted by those who would keep the oppressed subjugated for their own benefit. He differentiates between three different forms of violence: The First Violence – the oppressive violence of the state; The Second Violence – the reactionary violence of the oppressed who rise up; and The Third Violence: the panicked intervention of authorities losing control of the masses as they rebel.³⁴¹ Delineated as such, any violence that may occur as dissident parties act out against those who repress them, who manipulate them, who portray them as little more than agitators or subversives, is wholly dependent upon the initial violence of that very repression. Protest, whether violent or not, would be non-sensical, were there nothing to protest against. Rather than condemning those who resist, he places the responsibility upon those who maintain a situation worthy of resisting. As we have seen, this is a line of thinking that decisively connects the thinkers discussed in the present work.

Liberation as a Historical Project

As established in Gutiérrez's notion of integral liberation, the "liberation" in liberation theology is not merely a transcendent liberation, liberation from sin, but a concrete process that takes place, in part, in history. Soteriological liberation is one of the three requirements of integral liberation, but the heavenly "kingdom of God" is in part formed as the "kingdom of God" on earth. Material liberation means liberation within the physical world of human existence, and this is done for the sake of the full development of each and every human, in the interest of establishing this utopian "kingdom." Ratzinger accused liberation theologians of reducing the meaning of salvation in their conception of liberation as a historical project, claiming that they distort the very meaning of Christian redemption.

[Liberation theology] facilitates the fusing of the biblical horizon with the marxist [sic] idea of history, which progresses in a dialectical manner and is the real bringer of salvation. History is accordingly a process of progressive liberation; history is the real revelation and hence the real interpreter of the Bible... We can say that the concept of history swallows up the concepts of God and Revelation... [H]istory has taken over the role of God.³⁴²

While this latter component is not considered absent from the process of salvation, for Ratzinger and other conservative members of the organized church, it is situated far from the place of primacy promoted by some liberation theologians. Francis, however, frequently focuses on the historical (concrete historical occurrences, taking place in the material world) aspects of the Catholic faith, emphasizing renunciation of some rights (particularly those around private property) for those who live in affluence, and a reallocation of both monetary capital and necessary material resources, in the interest of establishing a more equitable global economic reality.

It must be reiterated that "the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others..." In all places

and circumstances, Christians, with the help of their pastors, are called to hear the cry of the poor. This has been eloquently stated by the bishops of Brazil: “We wish to take up daily the joys and hopes, the difficulties and sorrows of the Brazilian people, especially of those living in the barrios and the countryside – landless, homeless, lacking food and health care – to the detriment of their rights. Seeing their poverty, hearing their cries and knowing their sufferings, we are scandalized because we know that there is enough food for everyone and that hunger is the result of a poor distribution of goods and income.”³⁴³

Here, as expressed by Brazilian bishops and echoed by Francis, the duties, previously outlined in the analysis of church documents issued from and around the Second Vatican Council, which corresponded to each of the general rights of the human person, are not sincerely upheld; the vast inequality in the world is held as evidence of this. Asymmetrical distribution of goods and wealth has resulted in seemingly infinite suffering and death, and so Francis repeats the call issued in the 1971 apostolic letter, “Octogesima Adveniens, A Call to Action”³⁴⁴ – that those who live in abundance should deprive themselves of the continued right to private property in the interest of restructuring the very social and economic structures which grant those rights while simultaneously perpetuating poverty. The *action* called for here takes place in and fundamentally alters human history. It is a plea for effectively revolutionary action, as that which dismantles oppressive tendencies in the current distribution of money and private property, and modifies the central functioning structures of the world, with consequences for actual human actors in the concrete, mundane world. *This can be nothing other than a specifically historical project.*

The idea of liberation as a historical project – at least in part – has its roots in Marx as the logical extension of the unification of theory and praxis. If an emancipatory movement seeks to privilege real world-altering change over mere discourse about such change, then this action

takes place in history and is negotiated through history (via *negative* evaluations of the present, in a Marxian scheme). The “‘liberation’ of ‘man,’” he says,

...is not advanced a single step by reducing philosophy, theology, substance and all the trash to “self-consciousness” and by liberating man from the domination of these phases, which have never held him in thrall... it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means... slavery cannot be abolished without the steam engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and... in general, *people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity*. “Liberation” is a historical and not a mental act, it is brought about by historical conditions.³⁴⁵

With passages like this, not to mention all other such examples provided so far, the insistence of those like the later Gutiérrez on a substantial degree of distance between certain forms of liberation theology and Marxian theory grows ever more puzzling. There are few, if any, passages from foundational thinkers in the social sciences, let alone Catholic orthodoxy, which so aptly express a concept taken up by liberation theologians who advocate liberation as a historical project, as Gutiérrez does. Material liberation takes on two meanings in the above quotation; in one sense, material liberation represents the ability for all to procure tangible goods necessary for survival, in another sense, liberation is material in that it is facilitated by material *qua* technological means. For Marx, the scientific and industrial advancements humanity has made ought to be used in the service of all persons, in the interest of making us freer, giving us more time for leisure and, in this, for our own development as human beings. The enacting of liberation in history results for Marx in real and sustained change in both the violent structures of current systems, and in our own individual capacities for self-actualization.

The connection of salvation and liberation, discussed at length in the earlier analysis of a “new humanity,” highlights the historical and transcendent components of Gutiérrez’s integral

liberation. Material liberation, liberation in history, on its own does not constitute spiritual salvation, for Gutiérrez, but rather the latter requires the former. As Ivan Petrella says in *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto*,

Among liberation theology's founding fathers, Gutiérrez best systematizes the relationship between the concept of liberation and historical projects... Gutiérrez connects his notion of liberation to the idea of a historical project... [B]ecause a historical project is not merely a political program but also a movement toward an ultimately just society... [it] is thus intimately linked to the idea of liberation. It is, in fact, what allows the notion of liberation to address the current society and yet not be reduced to a particular political program. It protects us from a dual idolatry – of society as it now stands by providing an alternative vision, and idolatry of any future social form by remembering that any such vision is ultimately provisional and incomplete.³⁴⁶

Gutiérrez's integral liberation is itself the system that maintains his theology as theology. Spiritual salvation is, in part, dependent upon historical liberation, as historical liberation represents the defeat of "selfishness and sin."³⁴⁷ But spiritual salvation as the singular or primary condition is insufficient in resisting the injustice of the physical world; "a purely spiritual resistance becomes just a wheel in the machine of the totalitarian state."³⁴⁸ "In the analysis of faith," Gutiérrez says, "this is the last root of injustice that has to be eliminated. Overcoming this leads to re-establishing friendship with God and with other people."³⁴⁹ Liberation in history, according to Gutiérrez, is dependent upon the conversion to a "new humanity" in which sin is vanquished; in his analysis, a sinful situation cannot cultivate material liberation, and integral liberation is impossible if missing one of its key components.

Of course, the intimate connection between these two forms of liberation was rejected by Ratzinger, who claimed that, "[to] some it even seems that the necessary struggle for human justice and freedom in the economic and political sense constitutes the whole essence of salvation. For them, the Gospel is reduced to a purely earthly gospel."³⁵⁰ While Ratzinger

doesn't name any liberation theologians specifically in "Libertatis Nuntius," a review of his early notes for this document reveals his particular attention to Gutiérrez and his theology. Collected in an extensive interview published as *The Ratzinger Report*, the short document, entitled, "A Certain 'Liberation,'" outlines the general direction of the first "Instruction" on liberation theology. In these notes, Ratzinger offers and argues against several quoted statements, never identifying the specific author, simply referring abstractly to "a well-known liberation theologian."³⁵¹ The quotations attributed to this anonymously-invoked author are, in fact, two of the most famous lines written by Gutiérrez: "Nothing lies outside...political commitment. Everything has a political color;" and, "The class struggle is a fact; neutrality on this point is simply impossible."³⁵² With no other liberation theologians directly quoted, it seems that the present analysis is not faulty in discerning a particular focus on Gutiérrez inferred in "Libertatis Nuntius." While he was certainly not the only liberation theologian under review, Gutiérrez seems to have drawn Ratzinger's inquisitional eye most particularly. By focusing so exclusively on what he deems "Marxist" influence, Ratzinger effectively misses Gutiérrez's point again and again. The utilization of some of Marx's ways of theorizing was absolutely a defining task for many liberation theologians. As we have seen, however, and as we see again presently in the exhortation issued by Francis, Marxian vocabulary and concepts are used (even if unknown or unacknowledged as such) in that there seems to be *no viable alternative* to the comprehensive and incisive critiques Marx formulated with regard to social and economic oppression. Different forms of Marxian thought were defined in "Octogesima Adveniens," acknowledging the very idea that such differentiation can indeed take place; liberation theologians and several popes themselves wittingly or unwittingly make use of Marxian categories and critiques; Pope Francis has likewise affirmed such categories and, as we shall see

shortly, has acknowledged the humanity of “Marxists” he himself has known (a surprisingly radical position, it seems).

Upon release of “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” with its discussions of the “idolatry of money,” critique of modern capitalism, and rejection of political, social, and economic structures that perpetuate human suffering and oppression, Francis has himself ironically received the label of “Marxist” from some on the political and religious right.^U His response to the accusation is both telling and relevant to the present project. In an interview with *La Stampa*, he explained, “Marxist ideology is wrong. But I have met many Marxists in my life who are good people, so I don’t feel offended [at being called a Marxist]... there is nothing in the exhortation that cannot be found in the social doctrine of the church.”³⁵³ Aside from the apparently extreme acknowledgement of “Marxists” as “good people,” it is worth drawing particular attention to the final portion of this quote: the seemingly defensive claim that the controversial moments in his exhortation are firmly rooted in established, orthodox, church sources. In connecting the affirmation of Marxists as “good people” with the justification of “*Evangelii Gaudium*” as connected to orthodox sources, it seems Francis may have anticipated the charge of “Marxism” or “Marxist ideology.” This potentially reveals an understanding that his position may be contentious, his critiques provocative. As we’ve seen, at times Francis uses church sources in ways that seem not to align completely with their original intentions, and this is particularly so when drawing on Joseph Ratzinger’s and first “Instruction” for liberation theology and its identical charges of “Marxism.”

^U Just as “*Populorum Progressio*,” another document, as noted previously, with strong ties to Marxian-type theory, received the very same label in 1967.

Moreover, in the defensive statement with regard to “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” Francis allows for a distinction between “Marxist ideology” and “Marxists” who are “good people.” With the church’s insistence that “Marxist ideology is wrong,” he seems to make room for an alignment of people with what might be more appropriately called Marxian thought, rendering such individuals virtuous even as they conform to a kind of theorizing that has been deemed abhorrent in a century’s worth of papal documents. Despite his distancing from “Marxist ideology,” “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” perhaps more so than any other Vatican document examined here, clearly represents what has been referred to here as “Marxian” analysis. In the following chapter, this connection will be examined with a referential eye to both Marx himself and to the impetus for a specifically *liberating* theology.

Chapter Six: Conclusion – Yearning, Critique, and Liberation

For Marx, religion itself is a symptom, more so than an intrinsic agent, of human oppression; in his estimation, religion may *perpetuate* such oppression, but it is not necessarily the genesis of this condition. That religion exists at all is seen as a *reaction* to oppression, alienation, estrangement, and the like, as opposed to their causal starting point. However, in this reactionary function, religion *maintains a system of alienation* by providing a consolatory force in the face of such oppression, rather than acting as an impetus for confronting and dismantling oppressive structures; “human religiosity is the disavowed exteriorization of a world that the human being is alienated from.”³⁵⁴ Religion, for Marx, is “*the fantastic realization* of the human being inasmuch as the *human being* possesses no true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly a struggle against *that world* whose spiritual *aroma* is religion.”³⁵⁵ The target of critique here, for Marx, is not necessarily or solely religion itself, as he sees religion as merely one manifestation of a larger ideological reality among many. Religion is not the flame; it is the waft of smoke that indicates the flame is present. Because the reality we experience is little more than an “inverted world,” for Marx, developed and dictated by a history of injustice and oppression, he claims that humans have developed in an alienated and abstracted way, so that there exist no authentic human realities.³⁵⁶

In such a state, religious and utopian ideals are ultimately expressions of potential, of *hope*, in the face of a cruel and dominating social and economic reality. “*Religious* suffering is at the same time the *expression* of real suffering, and also the *protest* against real suffering.”³⁵⁷ In aligning religion with protest, Marx illuminates a deeper condition whereby religious longing signals at once a fracture and a desire to mend that very fracture; the vision of an emancipated

future becomes symbolic of both our oppression and our attempt at resistance. As Kenneth Surin notes,

...as long as humans continue to live in a heartless world, the ideological formation that is the core of religion would be inexpugnable. The crucial need, therefore, is not the abolition of religion by fiat, but the abolition of the heartless world that is the fount and origin of the religious impulse. Whatever happens to this impulse, primacy has to be ceded to the task of emancipation: only an emancipated world will be in a position potentially to dispense with religion.³⁵⁸

Were the world we inhabit one of intrinsic fairness, there would be no need to dream of absolute justice residing elsewhere in the human future. Such a wish would be pointless or nonsensical were it identical to the present reality – we only wish for that which we lack. So, for Marx, the key is to struggle against that “heartless” world that initiates the manifestation of the religious wish for a fairer and more just world. To be sure, Marx considers religion itself is a key component in human alienation; its existence may illuminate the longing for deliverance, but it itself is ultimately *only a manifestation* and perpetuation of the condition that makes such longing necessary in the first place. Peter Scott, drawing on David McLellan, notes that “if Marx does consider religion to have a positive significance, it is... ‘an extremely backhanded compliment’ in that the role of religion is to ‘represent humanity’s feeble aspirations under adverse circumstances.’”³⁵⁹ For Marx, there is no vision of liberation on horizons comprised of religious ideation. Religion may provide a scope, but, in this view, it can never be utilized as an impetus.

While Marx’s own conception of this tendency of religion to make such a wish manifest cannot be formulated in a positive light, it does point to a “central impulse or ‘vital reality’ of religion as a protest and longing for better conditions, for heart in a heartless world, the unquenchable yearning for a just world.”³⁶⁰ Additionally, in the later tradition of critical theory, via the

Frankfurt School, and particularly Max Horkheimer, this rejection of the "heartless world" which is expressed through religious longing is significant for its ability to articulate the desire for justice, reciprocity, and a meaningful existence on earth that is free from unnecessary suffering. The cry of protest found manifest in religious sentiments is thus an expression of a desire for a good life, a yearning for liberation, a wish for a more just world: yearning is protest is critique. Such beliefs point to a world beyond *that which is* towards *that which could possibly be*. From this perspective, the very existence of such religious wishes can serve as a direct denial, and thus condemnation, of prevailing conditions. When this motivation is directed towards an active engagement (i.e., praxis) with a political, economic, or social system, in the form of a striving towards justice and a stable, sufficient, and equitable existence for all, such impulses might be viable sources of inspiration towards emancipation. This is clearly not an exclusive realm for religion, as the wish for such an existence has been identified in multiple schools and systems of thought in various philosophical traditions. Yet, in Marx's view, while religion may not hold a special or unique place in terms of inspiration or motivation to action, *its very existence* is itself an indicator that the world is very much something other than what we desire it to be.

The construction of any utopian reality which exists above and apart from the mundane, superimposed upon the very reality of the suffering individual, is, at least in part, a refutation and rejection of the world as it is; through the picture of what it *could be*, we are better able see what it is not. Marx famously says, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions."³⁶¹ Viewed this way, religious conceptions of deliverance, of divine justice, and of a world which is wholly other to present prevailing conditions maintain viability *to the extent that they can act as indicators*, in that they express the

desire for these conditions over the current unjust social order. This is likewise for constructed future visions like Marx's liberated and classless society,^v and Gutiérrez's notion of liberation. However, in following Marx's conception, religious beliefs (specifically associated with religious forms or manifestations that focus on transcendent salvation [i.e., for Marx, mostly Jewish and Christian traditions]) are merely a measure by which we can gauge the prevalence of an oppressive system which crushes beneath it those who resist. Such beliefs can articulate the yearning for liberation felt by those who live under that system.

From Marx to Marxian: The Frankfurt School and Religious Yearning

Members of the Frankfurt School, particularly Max Horkheimer, tend to focus on religion as this expression of anguish and vision of hope for the future. In his outline of the consideration of religious ideation among members of the Frankfurt School, Christopher Craig Brittain notes that they, "like Marx... aggressively [criticize] religion's ideological function. But rather than simply dismiss religion for such a phenomenon, they also intend to probe underneath it... [Religion] provides an orientation towards a negative concept of truth, one that prevents the absolutizing of the existent and which nurtures a longing for a just society."³⁶² In Max Horkheimer's "Thoughts on Religion," this longing is portrayed as the crucial element in the search for a realm of absolute justice; protest finds particularly eloquent expression through religious ideation. "Dissatisfaction with earthly destiny is the strongest motive for acceptance of a transcendental being. If justice resides with God, then it is not to be found in the same measure in the world. Religion is the record of the wishes, desires, and accusations of countless

^v That is not to say that Marx himself conceived of such a concretization, rather that this has been done in his name, often with disastrous consequences.

generations.”³⁶³ It is difficult to say whether or not overcoming this sensibility was a priority for Horkheimer – his pessimistic philosophy seems not to allow for a reality in which such dissent and its religious manifestations are no longer necessary. He identifies an element of alienation latent in this religious yearning, in that it can never be fully actualized. The very act of constructing this desire in a metaphysical context renders it unreachable for merely physical beings. However, this should not lead to a kind of complacency or to a defiance that is wholly abstract, expressed in the symbolic and thus pacified from further expression; the union of theory and praxis, also advocated by Horkheimer (and Marxian philosophers in general) demands much more. Religious protest is not a substitute for continued critique, and religion – despite its ability to communicate such protest – is not itself exempt from this critique.

As part of such a critique, Horkheimer suggests that the liberalization of religion requires a re-evaluation of the emphasis placed on the “correctness” of belief. Maintenance of orthodoxy over all else betrays a potentially unifying moment in Marx’s articulation of religious longing. Religious forms, rather than sets of exclusive, stable, and impenetrable beliefs (which they clearly are not), become fluid for Horkheimer precisely at the moment of existential horror and the yearning that follows from experiencing or witnessing extreme suffering. This allows such ideation to act as a unifying point by which humans can conceive of and share ideals that resist an oppressive status quo, rather than devising something divisive and antagonistic.

All our concepts are subjective. Nevertheless, or rather because of it, we can say that the surrounding world is not the ultimate reality. An authentic liberalization of religion ought to concentrate on this insight. Over against it, the questions about the change in beliefs and customs are much less important. What is essential is, as I see it, the new human conception of God. God as positive dogma acts as a disaggregating moment. Against it, the yearning that the reality of the world, with all of its horror, not be the ultimate unites and relates all humans that cannot or do not want to resign themselves to the injustices of this world. God thus becomes an

object of yearning and veneration of humans and ceases to be object of knowledge and possession.³⁶⁴

For Horkheimer, and indeed many others, the world as each individual perceives it is not, and can never be, an “ultimate” reality, and this is likewise for ideological and social structures that categorize reality in various ways. All that we are, were, and ever will be exists in a constant state of flux; there is no stagnancy even to the most dull and redundant of exercises. Moreover, each individual’s perception of existence makes up only a part of this reality, and the whole is not merely the sum of its parts, in this case. As such, claims to the “proper” interpretation of scriptures, sensibilities, or orientations in the world are rendered null. If everything is at least partially subjective, nothing is absolute; our lived lives in the world are not singularly conclusive realities. We can thus make no statements about *what* “absolute reality” *is*; we can only know that what we experience is *not* “absolute reality.” The hope that the horrors of this world do not have the final say, is a potentially *unifying negation* – the idea of a reality beyond that which we experience can work to express a desire for something more. That said, each manifestation of reality – and this extends to both religious and non-religious perspectives – brings in tow its own illusions and disillusions, ideas and ideals. So long as this continues, then religious *or* political wishes for a renewed existence, a refashioned reality, are hardly unique – they are rather singular re-creations of the world among many.

If, as Horkheimer claims above, these aspirations can be formulated as a uniting potential, aimed towards a kinetic application of positive ideals onto the existing world (i.e. *praxis*), then we may find another important area of overlap between Marxian thought and liberation theology. Regardless of what such desire represents in the concrete, it is at least a preserver of the yearning to strive for something altogether better, a reliquary for the aching of the bitter and beaten. As “the record of the wishes, desires, and accusations of countless generations,”³⁶⁵

“religious customs can continue to manifest, since it is comprehensible that the humans who share the same yearning, the same *deep conviction that something is wrong with that which exists*, and this conviction is shared by religion with Marx, also have common customs to preserve alive this yearning.”³⁶⁶ In this context, religious beliefs have very little to do with dogma, orthodoxy, or even orthopraxis. The question of truths regarding metaphysical claims or values ceases to hold supremacy, and focus is re-established on social injustice and worldly suffering. So long as these conditions prevail, there will continue to be expressions of the wish that the world was otherwise.

If the cries that the oppressed direct toward their deities can be understood, at least in part, as direct manifestations of the wish for a better world, and utilized as an impetus to social action that expresses yearning as dissent, then the idea of a theology that liberates need not necessarily be oxymoronic. Horkheimer states, “We must strive to unite all humans that do not want to consider as definitive the horrors of the past; who find themselves in the same, conscious yearning that there exists an absolute that is opposed to the world that is mere appearance.”³⁶⁷

When Gutiérrez constructs a “God of life,” he establishes a binary that is itself a rejection of present conditions; the “God of life” is counter to a world of death, the construction of the former depends on the existence of the latter. It is true that the phenomenon of religion itself embodies much more than just this bitter cry, and often times these embodiments are to the detriment of our relations as human beings, yet this does not necessarily discredit this particular manifestation of suffering and yearning. By working toward overcoming notions of correct theory and praxis, based in epistemological assumptions, and realizing the potential for the unification and reciprocation of dissent, resistance, and negation, movements like liberation theology might be utilized as positive potential for inspiration to action. In Marx, “Theory

becomes now the consciousness of practice, the reflective element of social activity and, as distinct from ideology, inseparable from the concrete historical effort to overcome the contradictions of existing society.”³⁶⁸ This union of theory and praxis potentially transcends notions of purported truths, as Horkheimer notes, and allows for a re-examination of religious sentiment in such a way that transforms this sentiment itself into an emancipatory notion. It necessarily draws the focus back from beyond this world, and into the very understanding of the world as we wish it could be.

As religion, according to Marxian thought, is a manifestation of oppression and a response to that oppression, it itself is also a *negative critique* of oppression. For Horkheimer, the manifestation of an ultimate reality in which justice has the final say is ultimately inconceivable without recourse to a positive representation of absolute justice. The need for a referent and the construction of a realm or being that enacts perfect justice and liberation is, in part, a response to the existential horror at witnessing limitless suffering in the world. This response of horror, however, can act as a unifying construct for humanity. Quoting Holbach, Horkheimer expresses the longing for justice as universal, and based on suffering and uncertainty.

“It has always been in the womb of ignorance, fear, and misery that men have formed their first conceptions of the divinity.... [W]hatever part of the globe we look at... we find that people everywhere have trembled and, as a result of their fears and their misery, either created their own national gods or adored those brought to them from elsewhere. It is ignorance and fear which have created the gods; conceit, passion and deceit which have adorned and disfigured them; it is weakness which adores them, credulity which nourishes them, and tyranny which supports them in order to profit from the delusions of men....” [The] promise of happiness in this world is as problematical as bliss in the next, which is extremely uncertain.³⁶⁹

The yearning borne of suffering is itself a negative critique of existing conditions, and religious language, with its linguistic formulation of a being equivalent to absolute and universal justice,

at times also serves as a negative critique, in that it expresses a desire for a better life. However, when this expression takes the form of positive constructions of a future reality, moving away from “ruthless critique” that only moves toward a new reality through negative critique of presently existing conditions, we risk establishing a future that is prone to narrow and totalitarian conditions. The dedication to a positive future condition, formed by manufacturing more so than critiquing, may ultimately reproduce the oppression of the present as an inflexible image that no longer applies “ruthless critique” to its own conceptions. In its commitment to relentless evaluation of oppression and its own conditions, Marxian analysis appears as an unexhausted – perhaps *inexhaustible* – source for expressing yearning in a negative evaluation of the world.

Once the manifestations of religious sentiment, directed towards utopian ideals, are recognized as implicit condemnations of existing conditions, these manifestations themselves can be viewed as expressions of protest that are directly critical of the prevailing order. When a Marxian theorist identifies religion as a reactionary impulse which maintains alienation by providing consolation, rather than acting as an impetus for confronting and dismantling oppressive structures, we begin to trace the outline of the creative connection between such theory and liberation theologies. The very intention of those like Gutiérrez, who knew well the potential alienating function of certain forms of religiosity, was to foster a religious perspective that intentionally moved away from such alienation, and towards a liberating theological reality. Rather than leaving the “inverted world” of Marx inverted, Gutiérrez’s liberation sought to re-right this overturned world. If such “critical impulses” can be identified and utilized as a means for overcoming oppression and suffering, then religious movements like liberation theologies might retain this element of dissent, provoking the individual to actively engage the world, to

unite theory and praxis. Gustavo Gutiérrez's early notion of liberation was constructed around the notion that change in this world – via liberating praxis – is necessary, indeed *mandatory*, and this obligation is characteristic of an ideal that is given representation in religious belief, executed in a form of praxis which is devoted to universal emancipation, even above its own “god-talk.” Liberation theology need not necessarily be a contradiction of terms, but, as shown in the present project, Gutiérrez's notion of liberation, particularly as connected to the idea of theology as a “second act,” quickly deflated following Ratzinger's “Instructions,” to become more discourse on liberation than actually liberating praxis. As Ivan Petrella notes,

[The] distancing from social theory [in some contemporary liberation theologies] is often linked to a trend away from a focus on sociopolitical critique and towards more traditional theological concerns such as ecclesiology, spirituality and faith. Gustavo Gutiérrez serves as a notable example of this trend... For [the early] Gutiérrez, socialism was the historical project that pertained to liberation; liberation had a specific political and economic content that could be envisioned and enacted within history... In the early 1980s, however, Gutiérrez started to describe theology differently. Theology became “a discourse about God” which must always proceed from within the church, and by church, he means the official ecclesial structures”... The end result is that when he does address economic issues his analysis, owing to the lack of a social theory, is far less sophisticated than it used to be... Gutiérrez has abandoned his once incisive take on socioeconomic issues for a much vaguer discourse.³⁷⁰

In their moments of association with a similar form of critique, though nominally denied, Gutiérrez's liberation and the liberationist themes utilized by Francis are frequently expressed via a Marxian vocabulary that unites this idiom with praxis inspired by hope and yearning. Gutiérrez quickly moved away from this following Ratzinger's “Instructions”; how his theology reacts to the seemingly more agreeable environment provided by Francis remains to be seen.

After examining Gutiérrez's notion of liberation and the Vatican documents on social justice discussed in the present work, there can be no denying the evidence of Marx's work serving as a mechanism for decrying the existence of a system in which some benefit from the suffering and

alienation that is part and parcel of present human conditions, and this foundation has served as the base for liberation theologies and various other theological and political movements. Evidence of a Marxian conception of alienation, of theory/theology as secondary to praxis, and of the need for a resolute commitment to the liberation of the full human person has clearly been identified in the works of Gutiérrez *and* in the theological texts in which he found his inspiration. These are clearly not the *only* sources of inspiration, but we've seen that passages in both of these categories are occasionally almost indistinguishable from Marx's own writings. Surin characterizes the seeming ubiquity of Marx in various liberatory struggles as follows:

In the beginning was struggle. If there is something like a "postulate of reason" for the fusion of theory and practice that is marxism [sic], it is perhaps this one, however commonplace it may appear. The struggles of countless women, children, and men for a better world have taken place over the ages in hugely diverse settings of theory and practice. This diversity is of such breadth and complexity that it cannot be embraced within a single movement—even one as commanding and comprehensive as marxism. Uncountable numbers have engaged in different and not always necessarily compatible ways in such struggles. These struggles have never owed their "relevance" to marxism. Rather, it is marxism, in whatever form, that has owed its "relevance" to them. As long as someone, somewhere and somehow, struggles for liberation it will be possible for marxism to be, or to continue to be, "relevant," and, equally, for other forms of struggle having nothing to do with class or capitalism to possess their own rationales and forms of plausibility and legitimation.³⁷¹

That is to say, in any kind of liberationist endeavour that encourages a critique and surmounting of unjust and oppressive social and economic structures, Marx will be there, whether or not we request his presence. In many ways, he has provided a *vocabulary* for resistance and for trenchant, probing, "ruthless" examinations of society, far beyond the temporal limits of his own context. Here, his philosophy helps to facilitate a lexicon of dissent that can move between and among a wide variety of emancipatory movements, and inspire the kind of commitment to praxis Gutiérrez encouraged with his conception of theology as a "second act."

To be a Marxian vocabulary, fluency requires more than simple talk or even interpretation. Mere discourse, lacking praxis, amounts to a deferral of actual change, which can only function to support the status quo. As Theodor Adorno has noted, “A practice indefinitely delayed... is mostly the pretext used by executive authorities to choke, as vain, whatever critical thoughts the practical change would require.”³⁷² Because passivity or neutrality (as Gutiérrez conceives of it) often work only to bolster supporters of an oppressive status quo, the critical theory populated by a dissident vocabulary “*must itself be an emancipatory force to stimulate change*, where the theorist is motivated by an ‘existential judgement’ that forms a dynamic unity between him and the oppressed. ‘Its own nature... turns it towards a changing of history and the establishment of justice among men.’”³⁷³ Gutiérrez’s emphasis on liberation, the Catholic social doctrine regarding justice in the world, and the Marxian philosophies engaged in the present work all share a single “existential judgment” – that we live in a world in which oppression can indeed be overcome, and yet in which we consistently find ourselves perpetuating systems of inequality, tyranny, and immeasurable yet ultimately avoidable suffering. This judgment, and the critique that both spawns and sustains it, is particularly well-articulated by a Marxian vocabulary of resistance. The extent and the power of such a vocabulary has been demonstrated here, showing kinship between sentiments that are frequently constructed as oppositional, if not outright adversarial: Karl Marx’s own writings, Vatican social justice documents, Frankfurt School critical theory, and Gustavo Gutiérrez’s liberation theology. The shared “existential judgment” has as its source a yearning for freedom and parity; both Marxian critical theory and liberation theology are expressions of this yearning, and attempts at directing this deep and often painful desire toward liberating praxis that demands solidarity with those who suffer.

There is, however, an important discrepancy between Marxian thought and Gustavo Gutiérrez's liberation theology. The call for a "spiritual humanism" in "Populorum Progressio" is well-defined as a concept that reflects Gutiérrez's notion of liberation more so than Marx's call to ruthless critique, which excludes the possibility of a "critical theologian" as a contradiction in terms. Gutiérrez eventually outlines a task that is purely creative in its scope; he seeks to construct a new future, a "new humanity," by engaged praxis that builds on the rubble of the past, and which is placed in a secondary position to the orthodox positions of his particular theological context. Marx, however, and other critical theorists of his kind, warns stringently *against* such constructions. Gutiérrez *creates*; Marx *destroys*. Prefiguring the future is a perilous task, prone to myopia and the kinds of orthodoxical boundaries that were rendered secondary in Gutiérrez's early works. For Marx, "...each is compelled to confess to himself that he has no clear conception of what the future should be. That, however, is just the advantage of the new trend: that we do not attempt dogmatically to prefigure the future, but want *to find the new world only through criticism of the old*."³⁷⁴ This discrepancy is far from incidental; it is not a fracture, it is a chasm between these two schools of thought. To an extent, this complicates the accusations of "Marxism" levelled against liberation theologians, as this exclusively negative tactic is a significant component of Marx's "ruthless criticism," which suggests that, in fact, Gutiérrez was perhaps not too "Marxist," but not Marxian enough. This "way of negation," explored by Denys Turner in the context of liberation theology,³⁷⁵ is directed not only toward (Marx's understanding of) religiosity, but to an entire discipline, an entire school of thought, the commencement of which is rightly attributed to Marx. For Marx, *any* positive construction of this kind is vulnerable to recreating a system that might perpetuate, rather than resist, suffering

and oppression. Marsha Hewitt notes a similar construction in early forms of liberation theology.

It was real human suffering that became for liberation theology what Theodor Adorno would call, the “condition of its own truth.” From the perspective of a critical theory of religion, it can be argued that liberation theology attempted to negate traditional, positive and positivistic theology that postulates structures of identity between God, church and world in order to both recognize and release the negative power of suffering that understands that peace with God means, and requires, conflict with the world. The religious dimension of the negative power of suffering lies in its longing for the future in the present, for justice and reconciliation in a world where humanity may finally come to discover itself as truly human.³⁷⁶

Thus it is the negative, the *rejection* of the unjust present, the new society established purely *through critique of the old one*, that is the task for a Marxian critical theory. In this particularly important area, Gutiérrez’s later liberation theology diverges considerably from Marx’s “ruthless criticism.”

In examining the issue of Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation and use of Marxian theory, we necessarily confront the question of whether or not there can ever be such a thing as a “liberating theology.” On one hand, as noted previously, despite his critiques of religion, Marx himself identifies religion as an expression of, and protest against, “real suffering.”³⁷⁷ A yearning for liberation, signifying a discontent that acts out against and critiques unjust conditions, lies at the core of the religious convictions examined in the present work. On the other hand, a theology, when structured as an organized system of orthodoxical religious convictions oriented toward specifically detailed ends, has the potential capacity to stagnate in such orientations, to rigidly codify tradition, and to ultimately amount to a (seemingly) closed

system of reflection and validation.^w As Gutiérrez makes the turn away from Marx and almost entirely toward the spiritual, theology unseats praxis and returns to the “first act.” With the move from liberation theology to discourse on liberation and a spirituality of liberation, Gutiérrez abandons negative critique, informed by the social sciences, in favour of purely theological concerns (faith, spiritual salvation, orthodoxy, etc.) that maintain an evaluation both of what *is* and what *should be* within the confines of his own religious tradition.

Reflection on Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation before and after the pivotal years of 1984 and 1986 provides substantial cause for suggesting that the devolution from praxis back to theory is at least in part attributable to Ratzinger’s “Instructions” on liberation theology. The fact that Gutiérrez’s post-1986 theology responds to Ratzinger’s concerns so directly that certain of his essays read like checklists of, especially, “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” only adds to such suspicion. References to Marxian theory rendered early liberation theology anathema to orthodox Catholicism, according to the Grand Inquisitor. Assuming “Marxism” as a totalized theory, an all-encompassing and rigid structure that frames all of reality, Ratzinger and others denounced liberation theology at every turn. This, however, allows for consideration of whether or not Marxian thought actually *is* such a totality. It was Ratzinger, not the early Gutiérrez, nor any critical theorist discussed here, who asserted that there is but one form of “Marxism” or Marxian thought. We’ve seen that this is simply not the case, through the creative elaboration of Marx’s insights through Frankfurt School theorists and Gutiérrez’s own use of Marx, not to mention the instances in which church documents themselves have been labelled “Marxist,” particularly by

^w “Seemingly” because even within such “closed” systems, there may be room for creativity. Francis I’s use of Ratzinger’s “*Libertatis Nuntius*,” discussed in chapter five, stands as evidence of this.

right-wing American media.^X For Ratzinger, there is but one and only one form of “Marxism,” and it is inseparable from an atheistic worldview that considers religion an unfortunate incarnation of abstracted desires, caused by the lack of justice in the existing world. Charged with being “Marxist” itself, “*Populorum Progressio*” admits that multiple forms of “Marxism(s)” exist,^Y and though the varieties supplied in this admission are construed negatively, the very acknowledgement of varying forms of this philosophy opens space for more nuanced engagement between these two schools of thought (liberation theology/Catholic social doctrine and Marxian analysis). Speaking broadly, Francis has said, “Ideas – conceptual elaborations – are at the service of communication, understanding, and praxis.... Conceptual tools exist to heighten contact with the realities they seek to explain.”³⁷⁸ Francis is not referring to any particular system of thought here, and this is generally not a particularly contentious or innovative statement. However, it could easily take on these qualities, at least with regard to the Catholic faith, were it expanded to include even Marxian thought.

That said, the answer to the question of whether Marxian thought is a totality is not entirely clear-cut. For Marx himself, religion is undeniably an inherently alienating manifestation of oppressive ideology. There can be no doubting this, even if he sees this manifestation as a source of protest against oppression. Both “Marxian theology” and “liberation theology” would be contradictory terms in Marx’s own estimation. But, the very fact that such diverse theological and social movements *have* been formed with explicit or implicit reference to Marx’s own

^X See, for instance, the reception of Francis I’s apostolic exhortation, discussed in the introduction to the present work.

^Y This is not to suggest that this is a unique insight; such variations have been evident since the time of Marx himself (with his infamous reaction to French “Marxism,” “If anything is certain, it is that I myself am not a Marxist”). The admission of this by the head of the Catholic church, long an enemy of Marxian thought, is what is remarkable here.

works is itself evidence of the many and variable qualities of this philosophy. Of course we can have multiple interpretations of theories and analyses; our conceptions are ours to use as we see fit, they are never – or need never be – immobile or stagnant. In discussing the search for “real” Christianity, Marsha Hewitt argues that there “is little validity to arguments that presume the existence of ‘religion itself,’ or the ‘core’ or ‘essence’ of Christianity as something apart from, above, or behind Christianity in *any* of its historical, cultural forms.... Religion is unimaginable apart from the people who practice it in specific contexts.”³⁷⁹ The same could be said of any religion, any theology, any ideology or dogma or school of thought in general. As Marx himself warned against closed systems, timid critique, and an analytic eye that neglected the investigation of the potentially oppressive tendencies of one’s own philosophy and actions, it seems natural to think that he would appreciate a similar stance directed toward even his own theories. One of the points of “ruthless critique” is *fearlessness* with regard to the possible exposure of one’s own beliefs or ideals as repressive or despotic; if such tendencies are found, they must be discarded, constituting a possibly massive renovation of one’s ways of engaging and perceiving the world.

Rather than maintaining a fearlessness of the “powers that be,” Gutiérrez submits nearly entirely and immediately to Ratzinger’s “Instructions.” When, as Cardinal, he asserted that there is one and only one “Marxism,” that this “Marxism” fomented violent revolution, and that Catholicism and this “Marxism” were fundamentally incompatible, Gutiérrez embraced such critique indiscriminately, and his entirely notion of liberation as connected to theology as a “second act” changed for it. “In his introduction to the revised edition of *A Theology of Liberation*,” Hewitt states,

Gutiérrez drops the dependency model of social analysis that once informed his social criticism, and this is a further indication of his repudiation of Marx's initial influence on his thought. Liberation theology contains more and more criticism of Marx's "worldview" and philosophy, charging that it reduces everything to "matter." The irony is that *there is no all-embracing worldview in the sense of a 'totalitarian vision' in Marx's work....* If, according to the more recent work of Gutiérrez, theology is to be understood as a discourse about God enacted within the church and by it, then theology inevitably functions as a discourse of domination as long as church structures maintain themselves in the form of hierarchies of descending power relations criticized by Leonardo Boff.³⁸⁰

As previously noted, Ivan Petrella echoes this, stating that the "end result [of Gutiérrez's abandoning Marxian theory] is that when he does address economic issues his analysis, owing to the lack of a social theory, is far less sophisticated than it used to be.... Gutiérrez has abandoned his once incisive take on socioeconomic issues for a much vaguer discourse."³⁸¹ While Gutiérrez's liberation theology originated as a reaction to suffering and oppression, motivated by the changes in the Catholic church stemming from the Second Vatican Council, and refined through the insights of Marx and Marxian theorists in the Frankfurt school, his active, critical, praxis-oriented approach that put theology in a secondary position has turned into just another kind of god-talk, a discourse on spiritual liberation.

Francis may be a proverbial breath of fresh air for sympathizers and allies of liberation theology, but what will be most important is what he actually *does* during his tenure as pope, whether he merely "interprets" theology "in various ways," or whether he *changes* it. For many, it is inspirational to hear liberationist themes being encouraged in an exhortation from the pope; such a document, however, does not function to enact substantial changes in church policy with regard to social justice; it is more a personal interpretive suggestion than a binding declaration. It is not clear if, as Oscar Romero in El Salvador, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was converted to the poor in the streets of Argentina. As a high-ranking church official during the years of the Argentine junta, he certainly did not speak out in any visible way against the quite literal

inquisition of liberationist revolutionaries and theologians. Today, in Rome, Francis has taken to living in a standard apartment, rather than within the lavish walls of the Vatican, and has eschewed many of the standard trappings of the papal kit (the precious metals and jewels, the Prada shoes, the golden throne, etc.), preferring a cassock, wooden cross, and plain chair to the extravagancies of his predecessors. This, indeed, functions symbolically to make an important statement indicating his commitment to those who live in poverty. The power of such imagery should not be underestimated. While these are important moments of praxis in his personal way of living life, as the head of one of the most massive, and most wealthy, institutions the world has ever seen, he has the power to bring such praxis into the official position of the Vatican. A liberatory vocabulary has certainly made its way into the orthodox writings and beliefs of the Catholic church; but, to prioritize praxis in the interest of global emancipation, dialogue must be actualized and dynamically extended beyond privileged discourses. Francis's recent renewal of ordination of indigenous deacons in Mexico seems a promising step, as do his repeated invitations extended to Gutiérrez. These are, however, only but a few steps on a seemingly infinitely long path.

In the beginning, the disconnect between theology and praxis was the heart and the impetus for Gutiérrez's liberation theology. Hearing the call to redefine and evaluate doctrine in a way that reflects the concrete lives of all members of a given tradition, not just those in positions of authority, and to extend this evaluation into transformative, emancipatory action, has now motivated entire generations of clergy and laity, not to mention interested observers from outside this particular tradition. However, Gutiérrez ultimately abandoned a commitment to Marxian analysis that focused on developing a new world only through the critical (negative) evaluation of present conditions. Gutiérrez's post-1986 theology positively constructs a deity of

absolute justice and a future union with that deity, and moves spirituality into the place of primacy that praxis once held. Introducing his 1991 book, *The God of Life* (the title itself a positive conception), Gutiérrez says, "My desire is that this book may help readers to know more fully the God of biblical revelation and, as a result, to proclaim God as the God of life."³⁸² However laudable the conception of a deity who prefers life and healing over death and suffering may be, this kind of *construction* diverges considerably from a complex negative dialectics, rooted in yearning, attempting to "find the new world only through criticism of the old," and the liberatory emphasis behind such critique suffers for it.^{383,Z}

Concern over the polemical nature of Marxian source material has manifested in Gutiérrez's notion of liberation as a turn away from the nuanced analysis provided by the social sciences, and toward discourse *about* liberation. Construing "Marxism" and Marxian thought as inherently violent and aggressively atheistic, Ratzinger's representation of this philosopher in "Libertatis Nuntius" is strikingly pedestrian, and pointedly advocates internal states of charitableness over transformative praxis in the world. As Hewitt states,

...the focus of the first Instruction is to categorically reject Marxism as a global ideology that is absolutely and irreconcilably antithetical to Christianity. Wherever liberation theology betrays any influence of this "atheist" ideology, such as its acceptance of the concept of class struggle, it is to be condemned. In its uncompromising condemnation of Marxism, the earlier Ratzinger document in particular reveals the central point of absolute incompatibility between liberation theology and Roman Catholic official teaching. The Instruction is clear that since injustice lies in the human heart, then change takes place through individual moral transformation and spiritual conversion. Concepts such as class conflict and its concomitant focus on human and political transformation that may lead to violent struggle, are all antithetical to this official theological point of view.³⁸⁴

^Z Note the language here: We "search" for and "find" ("suchen") this new world, rather than *building*, or *constructing* it.

If a Marxian theory and vocabulary allow for a variety of interpretations, and a critical theology like Gutiérrez's opens itself to investigations that may ultimately undermine it – *despite the fact that such undermining is a real possibility* – then a certain kind of critical examination remains possible. The fear that the “ruthlessness” of critical theory may actually lead to the death of theology is not entirely unfounded. A theology that is critical, in a strict Marxian sense, becomes paradoxical: it presages its own eventual destruction through ideology critique, and this critique necessarily reaches the religious for Marx, particularly in the understanding of religion as a reactionary and compensatory device in the face of suffering – eliminating that suffering would, in this understanding, lead to an elimination of the abstracted manifestation of that suffering: religion. While Marxian thought has evolved into a myriad of philosophies, some more and some less atheistic or anti-theistic, others dismissing the binary of theism and atheism entirely (as Marx himself eventually did), this doesn't necessarily resolve the problem posed by Marx in his rejection of “critical theology.” After all, as noted previously, for Marx, “even a *critical* theologian remains a *theologian*,”³⁸⁵ a pejorative appraisal, to be sure. If “ruthless criticism” requires that all of our systems and structures undergo analysis with the real intent of abandoning them should they turn out to perpetuate oppression, and if religion is a manifestation of earthly suffering and emancipatory yearning necessitated only by oppressive tendencies that it itself perpetuates through these very constructs, then a Marxian critical *theology*, in the end, has the real possibility of transcending itself as critical *theory*. This is a critique that could retain, translate, and interpret elements of Marxian thought, much like the Frankfurt theorists with regard to religion as a negative measure of truth. Gutiérrez abandoned this opportunity to explore new and innovative applications of Marxian theory, following “*Libertatis Nuntius*.” His

once compelling and “ruthless” critique shrunk back into orthodox conformity and positive construction over negative critique.

This is remarkably unfortunate, as it was precisely the connection to Marx and Marxian thought that made Gutiérrez’s early work so powerful, challenging, and unique. Enrique Dussel’s observations of the difference between European and Latin American theology – that the former focuses on the non-believer and the latter on the non-person – is absolutely accurate. But it is the *combination* of these two commanding forms of critique that made liberation theology so remarkably innovative. As Surin asserts, “When it comes to remembering the forgotten of the earth, common cause can be made”; that is, whether theoretically or theologically, from this kind of perspective, the question of liberation takes precedence over doctrinal *or* academic orthodoxy.³⁸⁶ With Gutiérrez a particular target of Ratzinger’s inquisition, “*Libertatis Nuntius*” once again divided this creative union, and the effect this has had on Gutiérrez’s liberation theology is clear.

The distortion of Marx that is surfacing in liberation theology is an integral part of a larger change in direction now taking place. Liberation theology seems to be reorienting itself away from an emancipatory critical religious theory and praxis toward a more traditional type of theological discourse that can only be more acceptable to the official hierarchical church. The price to be paid for this change of direction may be intolerably high... The danger now is that liberation theology is dissolving into an idiom of liberation, which will drain away its authentic meaning and emancipatory promise. If this process continues, the result will be a theology that reflects *upon* the theme of Christian liberation, rather than a theology that is itself, “liberative.”³⁸⁷

Ultimately, the move away from Marx and toward the spiritual signals the move away from a liberating theology and toward a theological discourse on liberation. The force of Gutiérrez’s notion of liberation, which required theology come second to a dedication to the poor, was once

“ruthless” – even the unity of the church was called into question in the negative evaluation of social structures of power that can maintain oppression.

If we follow through the criteria of Gutiérrez’s early theology provided in the introduction to this work, we can see just how stark these alterations are. Recall, these were: 1) A preferential option for the poor (the conviction that those who are materially impoverished should be treated with particular urgency, even above issues of “right belief”); 2) Theology as a “second act” (where theology *follows* the preferential option as a second step; 3) The priority of praxis over theory (active solidarity is a precondition for theological reflection as part of the preferential option); 4) Critique of institutional violence and/or structural sin; 5) Acknowledgement of the existence of “class struggle” (recognizing that the preferential option necessarily takes place in a pre-existing state of classist oppression which deserves reckoning); 6) “Integral liberation” (the unity of material liberation, human liberation, and soteriological liberation). The “preferential option” has been accepted into church doctrine, but as a preferential option regarding spiritual contemplation more so than a lived act that precedes theological contemplation. This in and of itself shows the now-precarious position of theology as a “second act,” as Gutiérrez has moved further and further into a spirituality of liberation that focuses on a theological perspective (and orthodox commitment to that perspective). Such a re-positioning of theology complicates the priority of praxis over theory, and the critique of institutional violence is still present, but no longer directed internally toward the church itself. Elements of class struggle are only mentioned insofar as they can align with official church documents, thus severing a particularly necessary tie to the important source material once provided by the social sciences, Marxian critique and critical theory, in particular. While all of this may not necessarily invalidate the notion of “integral liberation,” it has clearly affected the order and priority of this tripartite

division: while material, historical, and spiritual liberation are, and have always been, connected for Gutiérrez, the emphasis has clearly shifted. Following Ratzinger's condemnation, Gutiérrez's work moves ever farther away from radical, negating critique, and he ultimately modifies the orientation of his theology, moving from oppression as a *human condition* addressed by faith to oppression as a *faith condition* addressed by humans.

Notes

-
- ¹ See, Aguilar, Mario I. *Church, Liberation and World Religions: Towards a Christian-Buddhist Dialogue*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012; Althaus-Reid, Marcella. *The Queer God*. London: Routledge, 2003; Boff, Leonardo. *Ecology & Liberation: A New Paradigm*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995; Boff, Leonardo, and Virgilio P. Elizondo. *Ecology and Poverty: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. London: SCM Press, 1995; Dabashi, Hamid. *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire*. London: Routledge, 2008; Ellis, Marc H. *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation: The Challenge of the 21st Century*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2004; Nalunnakkal, George Mathew. *Green Liberation: Towards an Integral Ecotheology*. Delhi: ISPCK/NCCI, 1999; Hammond, Constance A. *Shalom/Salaam/Peace: a Liberation Theology of Hope*. London: Equinox, 2008; Maduro, Otto. *Judaism, Christianity, and Liberation: an Agenda for Dialogue*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991; Naseef, Omar. *Liberation Theology: Islam and the Feminist Agenda in the Qur'an*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007; Scharper, Stephen B. *Redeeming the Time: a Political Theology of the Environment*. New York: Continuum, 1997.
- ² Unless otherwise noted, references to the “official church,” “official hierarchy,” and the like are used to refer primarily to the Pope and the official mediating office with regard to maintaining orthodoxy, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The response to liberation theology was and remains far from consistent throughout and across all tiers of Catholic hierarchy.
- ³ Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 231-232.
- ⁴ Dennis J. Bernstein, “Liberation Theology Haunts New Pope,” *Consortium News*, March 19, 2013, <http://consortiumnews.com/2013/03/19/liberation-theology-haunts-pope-francis/>.
- ⁵ Ultra-conservative American pundits Rush Limbaugh and Glen Beck have both called Francis and his writings “Marxist,” and British weekly financial magazine, *The Economist*, offered the following statement about Francis on its official blog: “By positing a link between capitalism and war, he seems to be taking an ultra-radical line: one that consciously or unconsciously follows Vladimir Lenin in his diagnosis of capitalism and imperialism as the main reason why world war broke out a century ago.” Quoted in, Josephine McKenna, “The Economist accuses Pope Francis of ‘following Lenin,’” *Religion News*, June 24, 2014, <http://www.religionnews.com/2014/06/24/economist-accuses-pope-francis-following-lenin/>. See also, “Rush Limbaugh vs. Pope Francis: Talk Show Host Attacks ‘Pure Marxism’ Of ‘Evangelii Gaudium,’” *Huffington Post*, February 12, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/02/rush-limbaugh-pope-francis_n_4373635.html.
- ⁶ Marsha Aileen Hewitt, “Critical Theology, or Critical Theory? Aporias in the Theology of Liberation: Juan Luis Segundo Revisited,” in *Religion und Kritik in der Moderne*, ed. Ulrich Berner and Johannes Quack (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012), 181-182.
- ⁷ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, 1st ed, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. (London: S.C.M, 1973).
- ⁸ Hewitt, “Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?” 191.
- ⁹ In a section of Chapter 12, entitled, “Christian Brotherhood and Class Struggle,” to be discussed in Chapter 1 of the present work.
- ¹⁰ See, Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1990). The initial public issue of this book was published in 1985, however, Boff sent an early copy to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith on Feb. 12, 1982. This was sent of Boff’s own volition, not as a requirement sent down from the Vatican, and did so in the hopes of avoiding what he considered serious potential misinterpretations of his analysis. See also: Joseph

-
- Ratzinger, "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Notification on the book 'Church: Charism and Power' by Father Leonardo Boff, O.F.M." *Doctrina Fidei*, n.d., http://www.doctrinafidei.va/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19850311_notif-boff_en.ht.
- ¹¹ In, John L. Allen, Jr., *Cardinal Ratzinger: The Vatican's Enforcer of the Faith* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 155, 154.
 - ¹² As evidenced by Leonardo Boff, who ultimately left the priesthood, spreading the message of liberation theology is not something confined to officially-sanctioned pastoral efforts.
 - ¹³ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, 41.
 - ¹⁴ Juan Luis Segundo, *Theology and the Church: a Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 155.
 - ¹⁵ See, Harvey Cox, *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff: The Vatican and the Future of World Christianity* (London: Collins Flame, 1989).
 - ¹⁶ For example, the liberationist positions of those such as Hugo Assman, Juan Luis Segundo, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, and Otto Maduro.
 - ¹⁷ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition, Ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978) 145.
 - ¹⁸ This is similar to Marsha Hewitt's assertion regarding the affinities between Marxian theory and another liberation theologian, Juan Luis Segundo. "[Segundo's] work has deep affinities with Marxian philosophy and, at times, resonates with its most significant intellectual heir, Frankfurt School critical social theory, which is not surprising given Segundo's European education." Hewitt. "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?" 184.
 - ¹⁹ Marsha A. Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," *The Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* XIII, no. 1 (1992): 30.
 - ²⁰ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 156.
 - ²¹ Quoted in McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, 229.
 - ²² Ibid.
 - ²³ Harvey Cox, "Is Pope Francis the New Champion of Liberation Theology?" *The Nation*, January 13, 2013, <http://www.thenation.com/article/177651/pope-francis-new-champion-liberation-theology#>.
 - ²⁴ Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, et. al. (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1982), 216.
 - ²⁵ Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition, Ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 13.
 - ²⁶ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition, Ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 68.
 - ²⁷ The ambiguous status of the "opium" metaphor in Marx's writing is cleverly elucidated by one of the foremost scholars of Marx and religion, Roland Boer: "[I]n contrast to the assumption that opium here means a destructive narcotic, the term is more ambiguous than that. Religious suffering may be an expression of real suffering and religion may be the sigh, heart and soul of a heartless and soulless world. But it is also a protest against that suffering. All of which is captured – surprisingly – in the key phrase: it is the opium of the people. Yet the catch is that in 19th century Europe opium was a deeply ambivalent term (see McKinnon 2006). Over against our own associations of opium with drugs, altered states, addicts, organized crime, wily Taliban insurgents, and desperate farmers making a living they only way they can, opium was at the time regarded as a beneficial, useful and cheap medicine, but also (especially later in the 19th century) as a curse. Opium was the centre of debates, defences and parliamentary enquiries, was one of the only medicines available for the working poor, albeit often adulterated, was a source of utopian visions for artists and poets, but it was increasingly

-
- stigmatized as a source of addiction and illness. In effect, it ran all the way from blessed medicine to recreational curse.” See, Roland Boer, “Opium, Idols and Revolution: Marx and Engels on Religion,” *Religion Compass* 5, no. 11 (2011): 703.
- ²⁸ Marx, “Ruthless Criticism,” 13.
- ²⁹ Hewitt. “Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?” 184.
- ³⁰ Marx, “Ruthless Criticism,” 13.
- ³¹ Marx, “Ruthless Criticism,” 13.
- ³² This discussion takes place in the first edition of *A Theology of Liberation*, and will be detailed in Chapter 1 of the present work.
- ³³ Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” 145.
- ³⁴ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” *The Holy See*, November 24, 2014, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii_gaudium.html#_ftn155.
- ³⁵ See, for example, the works of Marcella Althaus Reid: *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender, and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2000), *From Feminist Theology to Indecent Theology: Readings on Poverty, Sexual Identity, and God* (London: SCM Press, 2004), *Liberation Theology and Sexuality* (Burlington, VT : Ashgate, c2006). Althaus Reid also has several edited works addressing the intersectional nature of liberation theology and gender theory.
- ³⁶ Harry Readhead, “Did the Pope Just Compare Transgender People to Nuclear Weapons?” *Metro*, February 21, 2015, <http://metro.co.uk/2015/02/21/did-the-pope-just-compare-transgender-people-to-nuclear-weapons-5073155/>
Francis is also reported to have said the following, in a January 2015 speech in the Philippines, in which he addressed the issue of same-sex marriage: “The family is also threatened by growing efforts on the part of some to redefine the very institution of marriage... As you know, these realities are increasingly under attack from powerful forces which threaten to disfigure God’s plan for creation and betray the very values which have inspired and shaped all that is best in your culture.” Francis X. Rocca, “Pope, in Philippines, Says Same-Sex Marriage Threatens Family.” *Catholic News Service*. January 16, 2015, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1500200.htm>
- ³⁷ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 11.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Notes for a Theology of Liberation,” *Theological Studies* 31 (1970): 244.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 251.
- ⁴¹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 275.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present: Selected Writings*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999): 97.
- ⁴⁴ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 97.
- ⁴⁵ Friedrich Engels, “Marx-Engels Correspondence 1890: Engels to C. Schmidt in Berlin.” *Marx/Engels Internet Archive*, 2000. 28 February 2015.
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_08_05.htm
- ⁴⁶ Lars Roar Langslet, “Young Marx and Alienation in Western Debate,” *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 6: no. 1 (1963): 3.
- ⁴⁷ Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,” 93.
- ⁴⁸ Note, the term “liberationist” will be used in this work as an adjectival reference to general themes from liberation theology and their advocates, such as liberation philosophers (e.g. Enrique Dussel).
- ⁴⁹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 116.
- ⁵⁰ Hewitt. “Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?” 182.

-
- ⁵¹ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, 68.
- ⁵² Hewitt, "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory," 198-199.
- ⁵³ This "Instruction" will receive the most thorough attention, as it is this document that offers the most specific alignment of liberation theology and "Marxism."
- ⁵⁴ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., ix.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., x.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., xi – Emphasis in original. This critique of unity is the emphasis of a later rewritten section (to be detailed in Chapter 2), after a particularly harsh disavowal on the part of Joseph Ratzinger other members of the church hierarchy (e.g. conservative bishops in Central and South America), who alleged that the meaning of liberation was being promoted as the (singular) "true" meaning of Christianity.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., x.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 273.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 274.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 274-275.
- ⁶² Hewitt, "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?" 191-192.
- ⁶³ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition. Ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 56.
- ⁶⁴ Marx, "Ruthless Criticism," 15.
- ⁶⁵ See, Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).
- ⁶⁶ Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," 33.
- ⁶⁷ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 274-275.
- ⁶⁸ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 84.
- ⁶⁹ Marx, "Contribution to the Critique: Introduction," 55.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 56
- ⁷¹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 273.
- ⁷² Ibid., 274-275.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 276. This could also be considered part of "human" liberation in Gutiérrez's integral liberation.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 275.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 278.
- ⁷⁶ To be discussed in chapter 3.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 277
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 9-10, 29-30, 31, 25, 38 n.12, 104, 106-7, 137, 220, 284 n.51, etc. The number of similar occurrences nearly doubles when one includes searches for "Communism" and "Socialism."
- ⁷⁹ Marx, "Ruthless Criticism," 13.
- ⁸⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 9-10.
- ⁸¹ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, 41.
- ⁸² José Porfirio Miranda, *Marx Against the Marxists*, trans. John Drury. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980), xi.
- ⁸³ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 40, n.29 .
- ⁸⁴ Indeed, following the 1984 and 1986 Instructions, Marx and "Marxism" are addressed in Gutiérrez's work only to the extent that they can be refuted or critiqued.
- ⁸⁵ A connection which is not necessarily minimal or trivial, as will be shown in chapter 2.
- ⁸⁶ As John L. Allen, Jr., recounts in his detailed examination of liberation theology and the conflict with the organized church, "By 1980 more than 800 priests and nuns had been martyred in Latin America."

John L. Allen, Jr., *Cardinal Ratzinger: The Vatican's Enforcer of the Faith* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 134.

⁸⁷ Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion, 30.

⁸⁸ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., ix.

⁸⁹ The proceedings from the Medellín conference are directly referenced nearly two dozen times in both editions of *A Theology of Liberation*.

⁹⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., xvii.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, xxi.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁹⁴ Here, I use the term "anti-theist" in place of atheist due to Marx's ultimate decision that neither theism nor atheism were tenable theories worthy of consideration. Atheism boils down to a dependence on theism which Marx found utterly insufficient. The question of theism itself, whether engaged positively or negatively, was rendered insubstantial and essentially pointless. For further consideration, in the context of liberation theology, see Marsha A. Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," and Denys Turner, "Marxism, Liberation Theology and the Way of Negation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁹⁵ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., xviii-xix. Emphasis added.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, xix, xx.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xxvii.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, xx.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, xlv.

¹⁰⁰ In particular, Frankfurt School critical theorist, Max Horkheimer. The connections between these two thinkers will be drawn out particularly in chapters 5 and 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, xxi.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, xxiv.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, xxv.

¹⁰⁴ Previously, "Christian Brotherhood and Class Struggle."

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 156. This question is also posed in the first edition, but it does not receive the same attention and privileged position as it does in this version.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in *A Theology of Liberation: 2nd edition*, p. 157-8.

¹⁰⁷ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 159.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹¹² Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 276.

¹¹³ For a detailed discussion of Joseph Ratzinger's investigation of Gutiérrez and other prominent liberation theologians, see Allen, Jr., *Cardinal Ratzinger*, 153-61.

¹¹⁴ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 79.

¹¹⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, "Libertatis Nuntius: Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" *The Holy See*, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html, section VIII, number 5; section IX, number 3.

¹¹⁶ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 92. Emphasis added.

-
- ¹¹⁷ While creative, “orthopraxis” is still a problematic term, along the same lines liberation theologians used to critique “orthodoxy.” As Marsha Hewitt notes, “Gustavo Gutiérrez explains that the term *orthopraxis* does not intent ‘to deny the meaning of *orthodoxy*, understood as a proclamation of and reflection on statements considered to be true. Rather, the goal is to balance and even to reject the primacy and almost exclusiveness which doctrine has enjoyed in Christian life and above all to modify the emphasis, often obsessive, upon the attainment of an orthodoxy which is often nothing more than fidelity to an obsolete tradition or a debatable interpretation...” The term *orthopraxis*, however, implies more than a balance between doctrine and action; it implies the concept of a *correct* form of action that itself harbors an authoritarian element. Who decides what action is correct or right? What criteria are involved?” In, Marsha Aileen Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 5-6, n. 4.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., 89-90. Italicized emphasis added; bold emphasis in original.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., 103.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., 106.
- ¹²¹ Ibid., 112.
- ¹²² Ibid., 41.
- ¹²³ Ibid., 41-42. Emphasis added. Additionally, consider the following passage from “Quadragesimo Anno” – “Indeed, when the class struggle abstains from acts of reciprocal violence and hatred, it is gradually transformed into an honest discussion, based on the search for justice.”
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., 42, emphasis in original.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., emphasis added.
- ¹²⁶ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 275.
- ¹²⁷ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section IX, number 2.
- ¹²⁸ Allen, Jr., *Cardinal Ratzinger*, 153.
- ¹²⁹ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 43.
- ¹³⁰ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section X, number 4; section VI, number 10.
- ¹³¹ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 45. Emphasis added.
- ¹³² Ibid., 47.
- ¹³³ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 9.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid., 137.
- ¹³⁵ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” Introduction.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid., section VI, number 9.
- ¹³⁷ Ibid., section VII, number 1, 2, 4. Marsha Hewitt precisely identifies the overall climate within the Vatican, with regard to liberation theology’s use of Marxian concepts. “As far as the Vatican was concerned, liberation theology...was irredeemably contaminated with Marxist ideology that put it squarely at odds with Church teaching authority and its claim to the exclusive right to interpret revelation.” Hewitt, “Critical Theory or Critical Theory?,” 190.
- ¹³⁸ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section VII, number 13. Emphasis added.
- ¹³⁹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 10.
- ¹⁴⁰ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 176. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁴¹ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section VII, number 8; section XI, number 5. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁴² Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 177. Emphasis added; internal quotation comes from “Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian.”
- ¹⁴³ Ibid., 180. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section VII, number 11. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid., section XI, number 15. Emphasis added.

-
- ¹⁴⁷ Consider this in contrast to Paulo Freire's classic, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. As the title suggests, Freire (who initially developed the notion of *conscientización*) asserts that only a condition of living and learning with and from those who are poor will lead to an adequate understanding of what constitutes an authentic liberation.
- ¹⁴⁸ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present* 181.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁵¹ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present* 181.
- ¹⁵² Gutiérrez, "Notes for a Theology of Liberation," 244-5.
- ¹⁵³ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 9. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁵⁴ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 181.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 181-2. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 181.
- ¹⁵⁷ Leonardo Boff, "The Originality of the Theology of Liberation," in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*. Eds. Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), 38-39. Emphasis in original.
- ¹⁵⁷ Marx, "Ruthless Criticism," 15.
- ¹⁵⁸ McGovern, *Liberation Theology and its Critics*, 87-89. In 1992, this was also confirmed in Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion." As well, Leonardo Boff notes that spirituality is a "point that *repeatedly returns with emphasis in Gutiérrez's writings*." Boff, "The Originality of the Theology of Liberation," 40.
- ¹⁵⁹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ," *Theological Studies* 70, no. 2 (06, 2009): 317.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁶¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁶² Ibid., 318. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 319.
- ¹⁶⁶ Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," 34.
- ¹⁶⁷ Theodor Adorno, "Reason and Revelation," in *The Frankfurt School on Religion*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 170.
- ¹⁶⁸ I refer here both to documents issued by papal decree, as well as those authored by such groups as the Synod of Bishops, etc.
- ¹⁶⁹ Hewitt. "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?" 182.
- ¹⁷⁰ John XXIII, "Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress," in *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*, ed. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977), 51.
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁷² Segundo, *Theology and the Church: a Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church*, 27.
- ¹⁷³ John XXIII, "Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress," 51.
- ¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 58.
- ¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 55.
- ¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 56.
- ¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 57.
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 58. Emphasis added

-
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 69. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 90.
- ¹⁸¹ Ibid., 89.
- ¹⁸² Ibid., 90.
- ¹⁸³ Ibid., 107.
- ¹⁸⁴ John XXIII, "Pacem in Terris: Peace on Earth," in *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*, ed. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977), 126-7.
- ¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 129. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 130. Though, it should be noted that, as with the mention of god in the previous section, a specific form of "truth" is assumed here – truth, that is, which conforms with the teachings of the church.
- ¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 131.
- ¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 138.
- ¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 139.
- ¹⁹⁰ See Boff, *Charism and Power*.
- ¹⁹¹ Ibid., 161.
- ¹⁹² Paul VI, "Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Basic Sixteen Documents, Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), 164.
- ¹⁹³ Ibid., 166.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 168.
- ¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 170.
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 171.
- ¹⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰⁰ Ibid., 172. Emphasis added.
- ²⁰¹ Ibid., 181.
- ²⁰² Ibid.
- ²⁰³ "Religion" being "only the illusory sun about which man revolves so long as he does not revolve around himself." Marx, "Contribution to the Critique: Introduction," 56.
- ²⁰⁴ Paul VI, "Gaudium et Spes," 181.
- ²⁰⁵ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Vintage Books, 1950).
- ²⁰⁶ Paul VI, "Gaudium et Spes," 181. Emphasis added.
- ²⁰⁷ Ibid., 182.
- ²⁰⁸ Ibid., 183.
- ²⁰⁹ Ibid., 184-185.
- ²¹⁰ Ibid., 191.
- ²¹¹ Ibid.
- ²¹² Ibid., 191-192.
- ²¹³ Ibid., 195.
- ²¹⁴ Ibid., 205.
- ²¹⁵ Ibid., 209.
- ²¹⁶ Ibid., 211.
- ²¹⁷ Ibid., 215.

-
- ²¹⁸ Ibid., 246.
- ²¹⁹ Ibid., 247.
- ²²⁰ Ibid. Emphasis added.
- ²²¹ Ibid., 248-250.
- ²²² Ibid., 248-249.
- ²²³ Ibid., 249.
- ²²⁴ Ibid. Emphasis added.
- ²²⁵ Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio: On the Development of Peoples," in *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*, 311.
- ²²⁶ Ibid., 319.
- ²²⁷ Ibid., 317.
- ²²⁸ Whether or not such dictates and tenants are *actually* maintained is a different question entirely, but one that extends beyond the scope and interest of the current project.
- ²²⁹ Ibid., 320.
- ²³⁰ Ibid., 321. Emphasis added.
- ²³¹ Ibid., 326.
- ²³² Ibid. Emphasis added.
- ²³³ Ibid., 327-328.
- ²³⁴ Ibid.
- ²³⁵ That is, the *orthodoxy* of their beliefs certainly was called into question, and endlessly challenged. However, any claims that they were not at all a religious movement would fall flat.
- ²³⁶ Ibid., 319-320.
- ²³⁷ Ibid., 342.
- ²³⁸ Ibid., 341. Emphasis added.
- ²³⁹ As noted in, *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*, ed. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, 311.
- ²⁴⁰ Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio," 365. Emphasis added.
- ²⁴¹ Ibid., 369.
- ²⁴² Ibid.
- ²⁴³ Ibid.
- ²⁴⁴ Ibid., 369-70. Emphasis added.
- ²⁴⁵ Ibid., 370.
- ²⁴⁶ In the analysis of "Mater et Magistra," page 71.
- ²⁴⁷ Ibid., 368-369. Emphasis added.
- ²⁴⁸ Note the contradiction with the severe indictment of socialism in "Mater et Magistra."
- ²⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁵⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 81.
- ²⁵¹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., xxxviii.
- ²⁵² Ibid., 103.
- ²⁵³ Ibid., xxxix.
- ²⁵⁴ Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The Task and Content of Liberation Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*. ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 26.
- ²⁵⁵ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 97.
- ²⁵⁶ Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology*, 17. Emphasis added.
- ²⁵⁷ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 97.
- ²⁵⁸ Ibid., 82.
- ²⁵⁹ Enrique Dussel, "Was America Discovered or Invaded?" *Concilium* 200 (1988): 126-134.

-
- ²⁶⁰ Enrique Dussel. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 1995). Here, Dussel connects the entire legacy of the European Enlightenment to the razing of these lands by the conquistadores – the wealth thus accumulated allowed for the financial stability of “development,” leading to Enlightenment thought and the Industrial Revolution in Europe.
- ²⁶¹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 85. Emphasis added.
- ²⁶² Ibid.
- ²⁶³ Ibid., 85.
- ²⁶⁴ Ibid., 97.
- ²⁶⁵ As conceived by members of this particular religious tradition.
- ²⁶⁶ As noted in the previous quotation, “We refer to the perspective that emphasizes the fundamental – but not monolithic – unity of history, in the sense that every person is called to communion with God and with others. This unity does not permit confusion between the aspects we call temporal and religious. Indeed the difference between those dimensions should not lead us to think in terms of two histories; that would imply a devaluation, from the viewpoint of faith, of the tasks involved in establishing a just and human world.” Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 79.
- ²⁶⁷ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd edition, 118.
- ²⁶⁸ Ibid., 110.
- ²⁶⁹ Ibid., 116.
- ²⁷⁰ Ibid., 104.
- ²⁷¹ For further discussion, see: Anselm Kyongsuk Min. *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).
- ²⁷² Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present: Selected Writings*, 85.
- ²⁷³ For further discussion, see: Stephen Bede Scharper. *Transcendence and Transformation: Gustavo Gutiérrez's Notion of Liberation and the Reductionist Critique*. (Toronto: St. Michaels College, 1988).
- ²⁷⁴ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 91.
- ²⁷⁵ Marx, “Ruthless Criticism,” 13. Emphasis added.
- ²⁷⁶ George Comninel, “Emancipation in Marx’s Early Work,” *Socialism and Democracy* 24, no. 3 (2010): 62. Kenneth Surin situates the “species being” as such, “‘Species being’ for Marx designates the manifestation or realization of our being in an always specific and contingent social and historical milieu, even though there is, of course, a biological underpinning to all manifestations of the human. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx defines our nature as a “totality of needs and drives, which exerts a force upon me,” clearly indicating that for him, as with Spinoza, the human species is a highly complex amalgam of plasticity and invariance (the latter owing primarily to our constitution as biological beings).” Kenneth Surin, “Marxism and Religion,” *Critical Research on Religion* 1, no. 1 (2013): 11.
- ²⁷⁷ Loyd D. Easton, “Alienation and History in the Early Marx,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 22, no. 2 (1961): 197.
- ²⁷⁸ Langslet, “Young Marx and Alienation in Western Debate,” 4.
- ²⁷⁹ Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,” 74.
- ²⁸⁰ Gutiérrez, “The Task and Content of Liberation Theology,” 26.
- ²⁸¹ Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” 145.
- ²⁸² Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,” 73.
- ²⁸³ Ibid., 76.
- ²⁸⁴ Ibid., 78.
- ²⁸⁵ Marx, “Ruthless Criticism,” 15.
- ²⁸⁶ Marx, “Ruthless Criticism,” 13.

-
- ²⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁹ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 97.
- ²⁹⁰ Hewitt, "Critical Theology or Critical Theory?" 185.
- ²⁹¹ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 67.
- ²⁹² Cf. Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity* (New York: Continuum), 1995.
- ²⁹³ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 95-96.
- ²⁹⁴ Ruth Chojnacki and Jennifer Scheper Hughes, "Vatican Reverses Anti-Liberation Policies in Mexico," *Religion Dispatches*, June 24, 2014, <http://religiondispatches.org/vatican-reverses-anti-liberation-policies-in-mexico/>.
- ²⁹⁵ Harvey Cox, "Is Pope Francis the New Champion of Liberation Theology?"
- ²⁹⁶ Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 145.
- ²⁹⁷ Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, 211-212.
- ²⁹⁸ Hewitt, "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?" 185.
- ²⁹⁹ Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, 216.
- ³⁰⁰ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 1, section IV, number 42. Emphasis added.
- ³⁰¹ Marx, "Ruthless Criticism," 13.
- ³⁰² Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section I, number 233. Emphasis added.
- ³⁰³ Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, 215.
- ³⁰⁴ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 156.
- ³⁰⁵ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section I, number 207. Emphasis added.
- ³⁰⁶ James Carrol, "'Who Am I to Judge?' A Radical Pope's First Year," *The New Yorker*, December 2013, 4.
- ³⁰⁷ Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, 229. Emphasis added.
- ³⁰⁸ Ibid., 219. Emphasis added.
- ³⁰⁹ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section I, number 232.
- ³¹⁰ Ibid., chapter 4, section I, number 223. Emphasis added.
- ³¹¹ Ibid., chapter 4, section I, number 199.
- ³¹² Ibid.
- ³¹³ That is, "authentic" from the perspective of the Pope (and, ostensibly, liberation theologians), as that which fulfills the standards common to the Catholic faith.
- ³¹⁴ Ibid., chapter 4, section I, number 192. Emphasis added.
- ³¹⁵ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 95.
- ³¹⁶ Ibid., chapter 3, section I, number 115.
- ³¹⁷ Ibid., chapter 4, section II, number 189.
- ³¹⁸ Ibid., chapter 4, section I, number 188. Emphasis added.
- ³¹⁹ Hewitt, "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?" 186.
- ³²⁰ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section I, number 194.
- ³²¹ Ratzinger, "Libertatis Nuntius," section XI, number 18.
- ³²² Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 276.
- ³²³ Ratzinger "Libertatis Nuntius," section VI, number 4, 5, 6.
- ³²⁴ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section I, number 176, 180.
- ³²⁵ Marx, "Contribution to the Critique: Introduction," 54.
- ³²⁶ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section I, number 183.
- ³²⁷ Benedict XVI, "Deus Caritas Est: God is Love," *The Holy SEE*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/

- benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritasest_en.html. December 25, 2005. Part II, number 28a. Emphasis added.
- ³²⁸ Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, 222.
- ³²⁹ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” chapter 4, section I, number 184.
- ³³⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1st ed., 275.
- ³³¹ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” chapter 2, section I, numbers 53-60.
- ³³² Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,” 104.
- ³³³ *Ibid.*, 102-104.
- ³³⁴ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” chapter 2, section I, number 55.
- ³³⁵ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The God of Life* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 49.
- ³³⁶ John XXIII, “Mater et Magistra,” 90.
- ³³⁷ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” chapter 2, section I, number 59. Emphasis added.
- ³³⁸ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” chapter 4, section III, numbers 218-219. Emphasis added.
- ³³⁹ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section VIII, number 6.
- ³⁴⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 2nd ed., 63-64.
- ³⁴¹ Hélder Câmara, *Spiral of Violence* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), 30-37.
- ³⁴² Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 182.
- ³⁴³ Francis I, “Evangelii Gaudium,” chapter 4, section II, numbers 190-191.
- ³⁴⁴ Discussed in Chapter three of the present work.
- ³⁴⁵ Karl Marx, “The German Ideology, Part 1,” *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972), 169. Emphasis added.
- ³⁴⁶ Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology*, 15-16.
- ³⁴⁷ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present*, 97.
- ³⁴⁸ Horkheimer, “Thoughts on Religion,” 131.
- ³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵⁰ Ratzinger, “Libertatis Nuntius,” section VI, number 4.
- ³⁵¹ Ratzinger and Messori, *The Ratzinger Report*, 180.
- ³⁵² Ratzinger and Messori, *The Ratzinger Report*, 176, 180.
- ³⁵³ “Pope Francis: ‘Marxist Ideology is Wrong, But I Know Many Marxists Who Are Good People,’” *HuffingtonPost.com*, last modified January 25, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/14/pope-francis-marxist_n_4447229.html.
- ³⁵⁴ Surin, “Marxism and Religion,” 10.
- ³⁵⁵ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique: Introduction,” 54.
- ³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.
- ³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.
- ³⁵⁸ Surin, “Marxism and Religion,” 10.
- ³⁵⁹ Peter Scott, *Theology, Ideology, and Liberation: Towards a Liberative Theology*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 21.
- ³⁶⁰ Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis*, 207.
- ³⁶¹ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique: Introduction,” 54.
- ³⁶² Christopher Craig Brittain, “The Frankfurt School on Religion,” *Religion Compass* 6, no. 3 (2012): 204.
- ³⁶³ Horkheimer, “Thoughts on Religion,” in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, et. al. (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1982), 129.
- ³⁶⁴ Horkheimer, “Observations on the Liberalization of Religion,” 255.
- ³⁶⁵ Horkheimer, “Thoughts on Religion,” 129.

-
- ³⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁶⁷ Horkheimer, "Observations on the Liberalization of Religion," 259.
- ³⁶⁸ Charles Davis, *Theology and Political Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 117.
- ³⁶⁹ Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," 217-218.
- ³⁷⁰ Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology*, 81.
- ³⁷¹ Ibid., 12.
- ³⁷² Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2007), 3.
- ³⁷³ Hewitt, "Critical Theology or Critical Theory?" 184. Emphasis added.
- ³⁷⁴ Marx, "Ruthless Criticism," 13. Emphasis added.
- ³⁷⁵ See, Denys Turner, "Marxism, Liberation Theology, and the Way of Negation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*.
- ³⁷⁶ Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," 32.
- ³⁷⁷ Marx, "Contribution to the Critique: Introduction," 54.
- ³⁷⁸ Francis I, "Evangelii Gaudium," chapter 4, section II, number 194.
- ³⁷⁹ Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," 22.
- ³⁸⁰ Ibid., 33-34. Emphasis added.
- ³⁸¹ Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology*, 80-81.
- ³⁸² Gutiérrez, *The God of Life*, xviii.
- ³⁸³ Marx, "Ruthless Criticism," 13.
- ³⁸⁴ Hewitt, "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory?" 189.
- ³⁸⁵ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 67.
- ³⁸⁶ Surin, "Marxism and Religion," 13.
- ³⁸⁷ Hewitt, "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion," 35.

Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor W. *Negative Dialectics*. New York: Continuum, 1983.
- . "Reason and Revelation," in Mendieta, Eduardo (ed.) *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Allen, Jr., John L. *Cardinal Ratzinger: The Vatican's Enforcer of the Faith*. New York: Continuum, 2000.
- Benedict XVI, "Deus Caritas Est: God is Love," *The Holy See*. December 25, 2005. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritasest_en.html.
- Bernstein, Dennis J. "Liberation Theology Haunts New Pope." *Consortium News*. March 19, 2013. <http://consortiumnews.com/2013/03/19/liberation-theology-haunts-pope-francis/>
- Boer, Roland. "Opium, Idols and Revolution: Marx and Engels on Religion," *Religion Compass* 5, no. 11 (2011): 698-707.
- Boff, Leonard. *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*. New York: Crossroad, 1990.
- . "The Originality of the Theology of Liberation." In *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*. Eds. Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989.
- Brittain, Christopher Craig. "The Frankfurt School on Religion." *Religion Compass* 6, no. 3 (2012): 204-212.
- Câmara, Hélder. *Spiral of Violence*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1971.
- Carroll, James. "'Who Am I to Judge?' A Radical Pope's First Year," *The New Yorker*, December 23, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/12/23/who-am-i-to-judge>.
- Chojnacki, Ruth and Jennifer Scheper Hughes. "Vatican Reverses Anti-Liberation Policies in Mexico." *Religion Dispatches*. June 24, 2014, <http://religiondispatches.org/vatican-reverses-anti-liberation-policies-in-mexico/>.

-
- Comninel, George. "Emancipation in Marx's Early Work." *Socialism and Democracy* 24, no. 3 (2010): 60-78.
- Cox, Harvey Gallagher. "Is Pope Francis the New Champion of Liberation Theology?" *The Nation*. January 13, 2013, <http://www.thenation.com/article/177651/pope-francis-new-champion-liberation-theology#>.
- . *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff: The Vatican and the Future of World Christianity*. London: Collins Flame, 1989.
- Davis, Charles. *Theology and Political Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*. New York: Vintage Books, 1950.
- Dussel, Enrique. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity*. New York: Continuum, 1995.
- . "Was America Discovered or Invaded?" *Concilium* 200 (1988): 126-134.
- Easton, Loyd D. "Alienation and History in the Early Marx." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 22, no. 2 (1961): 193-205.
- Engels, Friedrich. "Marx-Engels Correspondence 1890: Engels to C. Schmidt in Berlin." *Marx/Engels Internet Archive*. February 28, 2015. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_08_05.htm
- Flannery, Austin. *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*. Dublin, Ireland: Dominican Publications, 1996.
- Francis. "Evangelii Gaudium." *The Holy See*. March 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii_gaudium.html#_ftn155.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo, Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro, eds. *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *The Density of the Present: Selected Writings*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999.
- . *Essential Writings*. ed. James B. Nickoloff. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996.

-
- . *The God of Life*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991.
- . *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993.
- . "Notes for a Theology of Liberation." *Theological Studies* 31, no. 2 (1970): 243-261.
- . *On Job: God-talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987.
- . "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ." *Theological Studies* 70, no. 2 (2009): 317-326.
- . *Spiritual Writings*. ed. Daniel G. Groody. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.
- . *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. 1st edition. London: S.C.M, 1974.
- . *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. 2nd edition. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988.
- . "The Task and Content of Liberation Theology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*. Ed. Christopher Rowland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- . *We Drink from our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*. Australia: Dove Communications, 1984.
- Hewitt, Marsha. "Critical Theology, or Critical Theory? Aporias in the Theology of Liberation: Juan Luis Segundo Revisited." In *Religion und Kritik in der Moderne*, edited by Ulrich Berner and Johannes Quack. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012.
- . *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- . *From Theology to Social Theory: Juan Luis Segundo and the Theology of Liberation*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990.
- . "Liberation Theology and the Emancipation of Religion." *The Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* XIII, no. 1 (1992): 21-38.
- Horkheimer, Max. "Observations on the Liberalization of Religion." In *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers*. Ed. Eduardo Mendieta. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- . "Theism and Atheism." In *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. London: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1989.

-
- . "Thoughts on Religion." In *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1982.
- . "Traditional and Critical Theory." In *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. London: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1989.
- John XXIII. "Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress." In *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*. Eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon. Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977.
- . "Pacem in Terris: Peace on Earth." In *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*. Eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon. Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977.
- Langslet, Lars Roar. "Young Marx and Alienation in Western Debate." *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (1963): 3-17.
- Marx, Karl. "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.
- . "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.
- . "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in *The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.
- . "The German Ideology, Part One," in *The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.
- . "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.
- McGovern, Arthur F. *Liberation Theology and its Critics: Toward an Assessment*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989.
- Mendieta, Eduardo, ed. *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers*. New York, Routledge: 2005.
- McKenna, Josephine. "The Economist accuses Pope Francis of 'following Lenin,'" *Religion News*, June 24, 2014. <http://www.religionnews.com/2014/06/24/economist-accuses-pope-francis-following-lenin/>

-
- Min, Anselm Kyongsuk. *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Miranda, José Porfirio. *Marx Against the Marxists*. Translated by John Drury. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980.
- O'Brien, David J., and Thomas A. Shannon. *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice, and Liberation*. Garden City, N.Y: Image Books, 1977.
- Paul VI. "Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." In *The Basic Sixteen Documents, Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*. Ed. Austin Flannery. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, Inc., 1996.
- . "Populorum Progressio: On the Development of Peoples." In *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*. Eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon. Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977.
- Petrella, Ivan, ed. *Latin American Liberation Theology: The Next Generation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005.
- Petrella, Ivan. *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto*. London: SCM Press, 2006.
- "Pope Francis: 'Marxist Ideology is Wrong, But I Know Many Marxists Who Are Good People.'" *HuffingtonPost.com*. January 25, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/14/pope-francis-marxist_n_4447229.html.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation.'" *The Holy See*. March 1, 2015. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html
- . "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation." *The Holy See*. June 27, 2014. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19860322_freedom-liberation_en.html
- . "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Notification on the book 'Church: Charism and Power' by Father Leonardo Boff O.F.M." *The Holy See*. July 8, 2014. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19850311_notif-boff_en.html

-
- Ratzinger, Joseph, and Vittorio Messori. *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985.
- Readhead, Harry. "Did the Pope Just Compare Transgender People to Nuclear Weapons?" *Metro*. February 21, 2015. <http://metro.co.uk/2015/02/21/did-the-pope-just-compare-transgender-people-to-nuclear-weapons-5073155/>
- Rocca, Francis X. "Pope, in Philippines, Says Same-Sex Marriage Threatens Family." *Catholic News Service*. January 16, 2015. <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1500200.htm>
- Rowland, Christopher, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- "Rush Limbaugh vs. Pope Francis: Talk Show Host Attacks 'Pure Marxism' Of 'Evangelii Gaudium.'" *Huffington Post*. February 12, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/02/rush-limbaugh-pope-francis_n_4373635.html.
- Scharper, Stephen Bede. *Transcendence and Transformation: Gustavo Gutierrez's Notion of Liberation and the Reductionist Critique*. Toronto: St. Michaels College, 1988.
- Scott, Peter. *Theology, Ideology, and Liberation: Towards a Liberative Theology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Segundo, Juan Luis. *Theology and the Church: A Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Surin, Kenneth. "Marxism and Religion." *Critical Research on Religion* 1, no. 1 (2013): 9-14.
- Turner, Denys. "Marxism, Liberation Theology and the Way of Negation." In *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 2nd ed. Ed. Christopher Rowland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.