

**The Problem of the Two Ultimates
and the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity:
In Dialogue with Thomas Berry,
Sallie McFague, Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida**

Part I

Tokiyuki Nobuhara, Ph.D. & D.Min.

Professor of Philosophy (emeritus)

Keiwa College

Founder/Director

The East-West Process Studies Project (since 1985)

tnbhara@cocoa.ocn.ne.jp

Introduction:

One of the most important questions we have to ask and answer in the realm of theology (or philosophy of God, to refer to theology's locus in philosophy) today might be one as to the relationship between the problem of God and ecology. Within this particular context, let me take up in this essay two topics I have recently been most strongly concerned with (namely, the "problem of the two ultimates in interreligious dialogue" and ecology the crux of which has been termed "the Ecozoic Era" by Thomas Berry) and give a certain twist to them to deliver my thesis on "The Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity."¹

In this regard, let me elucidate and articulate the rationales pertaining to my proposal by pursuing dialogues with six thinkers: Thomas Berry, Sallie McFague in Part I dealing with my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity; and Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida in Part II dealing with the philosophical verification and consolidation of my proposal against the background of the thoughts of my favorite thinkers, East and West.

¹ I happened to deliver the original version of the present essay as a lecture in the Kyoto Philosophy Foundation Symposium "Theology and Religious Studies" at Kyoto Garden Palace Hotel, September 8 thru 10, 2010. I am deeply indebted to Professor Shizuteru Ueda, advisor; and to Professor Masako Keta, director for their kind invitation to the symposium. The present English essay, however, is drastically revised and renewed from the original Japanese lecture—especially in the case of "Conclusions" of Part I.

What I mean by the two topics I am most strongly concerned with these days are the problem of the “two ultimates” and “ecology.” With regard to the latter topic of ecology, I happened to write a short essay for *The Ecozoic*, one entitled “A Tribute to Thomas Berry: In Dialogue with Whitehead, Basho, and Ryokan,”² celebrating the legacy of Dr. Thomas Berry as an internationally well known pioneer of ecology in the United States of America and beyond. From this experience I have learned that the words “Ecozoic Era” are much better than ecology in pointing to the crux of the matter. “Ecozoic” is a neologism created by Thomas Berry himself for describing a geological epoch following the Cenozoic Era and it signifies something like “Eco or *Oikos*, standing in Greek for a house or a dwelling place, plus *Zoe* meaning life.” The reason for this neologism is that Berry as a geologist is deeply convinced that in view of the outrageous fact that our present modern industrial petroleum civilization will have used almost 80 % of fossil fuels, especially of petroleum, for our fuel and energy during recent three centuries (especially between mid-19th century and mid-21st century). We need to transcend the present civilization in such a way that humans might be able to live in conformity with the entire life community of the Earth.

Berry started his academic career as a researcher of the history of Western thought by writing in 1951 a treatise entitled *The Historical Theory of Giambattista Vico*. As a Catholic thinker he was a successor to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s evolutionary thought, renown for his *Dream of the Earth* (1988) and *The Universe Story* (with Brian Swimme, 1994). He called himself a geologist because he thinks theologically through the Earth.

I said earlier that my proposal came out of my concern with the problem of the two ultimates as it is twisted into ecology or, rather more correctly, the Ecozoic Era. What I mean by the twist involved herein is the possibility of thinking in the following manner: namely, the relationship between God (as the religious ultimate) and Buddhist emptiness or the Whiteheadian creativity (as the metaphysical ultimate) as they are both at the core of the problem of the two ultimates would lead us to think that the way in which the former “is located within” the latter as the invisible place (such as that which Kitaro Nishida calls the place of absolute Nothingness) might be grasped as the content (even the divine content or abyss) as such of ecology.

In this case, what is crucial is to think that God’s mode of being within the place of the metaphysical ultimate would define our ecological thinking at its core. In other words, the problem of the two ultimates are now to be incorporated into ecology, thus

² See Herman Greene, ed., *The Ecozoic: A Tribute to Thomas Berry* (Chapel Hill, NO: Center for Ecozoic Studies, 2009), pp. 195-199.

being “ecologized,” as it were. Thus, it is possible for us to “substitute” the “problem of the two ultimates” for the framework of ecological thinking. Especially, as in my own case, when we designate ecology in terms of Thomas Berry’s rendering of “Ecozoic” (namely, in the sense of “*Oikos=Zoe* or the Dwelling Place giving rise to Life), this possibility of “substitution” might be regarded as persuasively appropriate.

When it comes to substituting the “problem of the two ultimates” for the Ecozoic thinking, there is, however, an important presupposition. That is the fact that I think it proper to consider the “ecology of the Deity” prior to the “ecology of the world.” Usually, we make it a rule to consider the ecology of the world under the heading of ecology. However, this would not be sufficiently proper when we think about ecology at least theologically. We should rather think of the ecology of the Deity before considering the “ecology of the world”—and this as its presupposition. And specifically, when we have learned from Thomas Berry the “Ecozoic” way of thinking as the deeper level of ecological thinking, we are led to a new science which I might designate “an Ecozoics of the Deity.” This is what my proposal is all about.

Thinking of the ecology of God or the Ecozoics (i.e., *Oikos/Life science*) of the Deity implies at least that there inheres for God God’s proper Dwelling Place or *Oikos* in such a way that while getting in touch with the world God has God’s own unique place in God’s own inner depth-realm. In Jesus’ phraseology, we might have to attend to the fact (ad intra) that “Your Father is in the secret place” (Matt. 6: 6a). It is precisely because of this that Jesus turned to say (ad extra) that “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matt. 6:6b) If this is the case, this way of thinking necessarily denies that we can think of God as simply a “pure spirit.”

At the beginning of the Modern Age Rene Descartes is said to have awakened to the human self in the form of “pure spirit” which he termed “*res cogitans*.” This self was perceived as a subject who exists apart from the body-world (or *res extensa*) and sees it as object. The human subject for Descartes was one that needs nothing other than itself in order to exist—namely, a substance.³ Viewed from this viewpoint analogically,

³ While repudiating Descartes’ substance philosophy severely, Whitehead does not fail to acknowledge and praise that he attended to the subjects enjoying conscious experiences as providing the primary data for philosophy. Whitehead writes: “This is the famous subjectivist bias which entered into modern philosophy through Descartes. In this doctrine Descartes undoubtedly made the greatest philosophical discovery since the age of Plato and Aristotle.” (*Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition, eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, New York: The Free Press, 1978, p. 159; hereafter cited as PR). However, in place of the Cartesian proposition, “This stone is gray,” expressing a primary form of known fact from which metaphysics can start its generalizations, Whitehead opts for the type of primary starting point, “My perception of this stone as gray.” This is due to his new theory of the “reformed subjectivist

it appears that God in God's pure aseity might well be conceived as a bodyless or placeless "naked spirituality." We might proceed to think next that God as a pure spirituality can be housed for the first time in the world as God's body, a vision which opts for the idea of a theology of the body of God. My proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity denies such a theology of God's body insofar as it lacks in the vision of the Original Dwelling Place for God.

Hence, when we reflect upon theology as the Ecozoics of the Deity while incorporating into its core the newest achievements of ecology, we must know (1) that because God is Life (*Zoe*) being located within (ad intra) the Original Dwelling Place (*Oikos*) (2) God is also capable of manifesting this double Hidden Selfhood (constituted by the Place/Life or *Oikos/Zoe* dynamics) toward (ad extra) the world on the basis of God's inner ground which is at the same time the ground of the world, thereby "making the world God's own body." Jesus' principle "Thy will be done on earth as well as in heaven" appearing in the third prayer of the Lord's Prayer is also inherent in our Ecozoic theology. The "Ecozoics (i.e., Place/Life science) of the Deity as it is led by this prayerful principle is a new form of theology in our ecological age which Thomas Berry designates the Ecozoic Era.

In what follows let me now turn to the task of articulating and proving the truthfulness of my proposal of an "Ecozoics of the Deity" by reference to the thoughts of six thinkers I have been familiar with for some time. Part I deals with the articulation of my proposal of the "Ecozoics of the Deity" with the following procedure: Section I. Preliminary Considerations: The Problem of the Two Ultimates and the Perspective of the Theology of Loyalty; Section II. The Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity; 1. Against the Background of Thomas Berry's Ecozoic Idea; 2. A Reappraisal of Sallie McFague's Idea of the "Body of God." Part II deals with the philosophical verification and consolidation of my proposal of an "Ecozoics of the Deity with the following procedure: Section I. The Thinking of "Nihil Maius" (Nothing Greater) in Anselm's *Proslogion*; Section II. Creative Uses of Aquinas' Analogy of Attribution *duorum ad tertium* and God, Creativity, and the World in Whitehead's *Metaphysics*; Section III. The Place of Absolute Nothingness and the Place of Absolute Being in Nishida's *Philosophy*; Concluding Remarks: Learning from Jesus' Theology Anew.

Part I. The Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity

Section I. Preliminary Considerations: The Problem of the Two Ultimates and the Perspective of a Theology of Loyalty

principle."

John B. Cobb, Jr. has eloquently evidenced that one of the most important questions in interreligious dialogue in general and in Buddhist-Christian dialogue in particular is one as to how we might be able to consider the distinction between the two ultimates, God and the metaphysical ultimate, such as the Whiteheadian notion of creativity and Buddhist Emptiness. I myself began being concerned with this question with my own unique perspective in mind, one which not very many thinkers involved with interreligious dialogue are observed to hold. It is the perspective from which one questions how our “trust in the ultimate” would emerge in our hearts and minds in the midst of our religious self-awareness whether in the form of theistic belief, Christian faith, or in the Buddhist enlightenment to Emptiness.

1. The Problem of the Two Ultimates and the Emergence of “Our Trust in the Ultimates: Jodoshinshu and Christianity

As is well known, in Jodoshinshu (Pure Land Buddhism) this issue of the emergence of trust is considered only in terms of “Amida’s sincerity or loyalty.” It doesn’t lie in our human (or sentient) capacity of whatever kind (including reason, the will, and sentiment or imagination) which is heavily contaminated with wickedness and depravity. Originally, it only lies in the purity and truthfulness of Amida’s causal religious practice in the person of Bodhisattva Hozo (Skt., *Dharmakara*). Consequently, we solely rely upon Amida’s directing of virtue in order to procure the emergence of trust. At the core of the issue of the emergence of trust as it is embodied in “Amida’s sincerity or loyalty” is Amida’s Primal Vow, especially the 18th Vow which runs to the following effect:

(18) If, after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters should not desire in sincerity and truthfulness to be born in my country, and if they should not be born by only thinking of me for ten times, except those who have committed the five grave offences and those who are abusive of the true Dharma, may I not attain the Highest Enlightenment.⁴

This willingness of *non*-attainment of the Highest Enlightenment by Amida for the sake of saving sentient beings is peculiar to Amida’s sincerity or loyalty.⁵ It implies the

⁴ D. T. Suzuki, *A Miscellany of the Shin Teaching of Buddhism* (Kyoto: Shinshu Otanaha Shumusho, 1949) p. 16; cited in Alfred Bloom, *Shinran’s Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), pp. 2-3.

⁵ See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, “Sunyata, Kenosis, and Jihi or Friendly Compassionate Love: Toward a Buddhist-Christian Theology of Loyalty,” *Japanese Religions*, 15/4, July 1989,

salvific meaningfulness for us sentient beings of what Cobb in his essay on the three ultimates refers to as the standpoint of *Sambhogakaya* (Body of Bliss, or Amida) in relation to *Dharmata Dharmakaya* (Dharma-nature Dharma-body, or Emptiness), namely, the standpoint as it is qualified with wisdom and compassion.

Inasmuch as Amida expresses his will of salvation for the sake of us sentient beings who are not enlightened, in saying, “May I not attain the Highest Enlightenment, if they should not be born by only thinking of me for ten times,” those in the Pure Land Buddhist Sect founded by Shinran in the 13th Century have been perceiving “Amida’s sincerity or loyalty.”

A parallel case is found in those Christians who believe in the “righteousness of God by virtue of the faith of Jesus as the Christ (*dikaiosune de theou dia pisteos Iesou Xristou*)” as espoused by the Apostle Paul (see Rom. 3: 22). Most translations of this text (as found, for instance, in NRSV and NKJV), however, are mistaken in rendering it as: “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” The original intention of Paul was to say that the “righteousness of God” emerges in the very faith of Jesus as the Christ who believes, whereas we don’t believe, in God.⁶ In this case, what Paul means by the “righteousness of God” is, primarily and fundamentally, a rightful mode of human existence appearing in the God-man Jesus who was sent by God; while, secondarily and derivatively, it signifies the righteousness by which God justifies us sinners (*iustitia qua nos iustus faciens*—Martin Luther) insofar as we entrust ourselves to Jesus the Christ and put on him (Rom. 13: 14) because God views us through him and reckons us as righteous although we are faithless and unrighteous in the presence of God. The righteousness of God in and through Jesus the Christ, in a nutshell, is forgiveness.

With this twofold structure of the righteousness of God in Jesus the Christ in mind, Karl Barth puts the motif of the obedience of the Son of God (der Gehorsam des Sohnes Gottes) at the center of his doctrine of reconciliation (i.e., the Incarnation) as developed in *Church Dogmatics, IV/1*. What is inherent in the notion of “obedience” for Barth is that there are in God “an above and a below, a *prius* and *posterius*, a superiority and a subordination.”⁷ In fulfilling his obedience vis-à-vis the Father to the full, Jesus has lived up to the inner principle of the Incarnation, thus going through and beyond its outer principle, suffering.

50-66, esp. 61-63. See also my Japanese book *A Theology of Loyalty: Toward a Fusion of Civilizations, East and West* (Kyoto: Kohro Sha, 1997), pp. 24-26, 162; hereafter cited as TL..

⁶ TL, 20-27, 36.

⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, IV/1*, pp. 200-201.

2. Learning from Cobb's Theory of "The Two Ultimates": A Proposal of Three Principles in My Theology of Loyalty Owing to the Elevation of "The Emergence of Trust"

As is clear in the above, my theology of loyalty gets started from the viewpoint of a fusion of Eastern and Western civilizations as they encounter each other around the issue of the "emergence of trust" by bringing together Shinran's Pure Land Buddhist notion of "Amida's sincerity or loyalty" and the Apostle Paul's idea of "faith of Jesus the Christ" lying at the core of his theology. However, if it is to be endowed with the authentic quality of a philosophical theology there has to be a leap in it. Here the leap must connote the elevation of Jesus' locus of obedience to the locus of the Deity's attitude as such.

It is at this juncture that I have learned much from Professor John Cobb's thesis of the "two ultimates." Cultivating this outstanding thesis in his celebrated 1982 book *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism*, Cobb promotes vigorously Buddhist-Christian dialogue based on Whitehead's distinction between God and Creativity. He holds that Creativity as the metaphysical ultimate is ultimate reality while regarding God as the religious ultimate, with the consequence that neither is superior than the other in the matter of ultimacy. When it comes to speaking of Buddhist-Christian dialogue per se, Cobb opts for the distinction between Buddhist Emptiness and the Christian God whom he designates as the Empty One.⁸ Cobb's proposal for this distinction is an eye-opener going straight into the core of Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

What would happen if I brought in my motif of a theology of loyalty mentioned above to Cobb's proposal for the distinction between God and Creativity/Emptiness? Naturally, I would regard it as very important that I have prized God's loyalty to Creativity. In my case, the idea of God's loyalty to Creativity is put forward as a philosophical-theological thesis on the basis of Whitehead's dictum to the effect that "the primordial nature of God is the acquirement by creativity of a primordial character."⁹ My major concern here is to see how we can obtain the emergence of trust in this locus of theology in which we are related to God as the one who is related to Creativity in terms of "acquirement of a primordial character" by it. I interpret Whitehead's notion of "primordial characterization" as implying "God's loyalty to

⁸ John B. Cobb, Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 110-115; hereafter cited as BD.

⁹ Whitehead, PR. 344.

Creativity.”

Combined with this is the fact that my studies of Josiah Royce’s *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908) have led me to seek the sense in which we use the word “loyalty” generally in the voluntary, self-expressive relationship between some particular individual self and the Universal. According to him, “Loyalty is the will to manifest, so far as is possible, the Eternal, that is, the conscious and superhuman unity of life, in the form of the acts of an individual Self.”¹⁰

Yet, in my case, since what is at the center of my concern is the relationality between God and Creativity/Emptiness, Royce’s philosophy of loyalty must be put within and substituted for the context of this *theo*-logical relationality, thereby undergoing an elevation. What is at stake here is, in Whitehead’s words, the “Apotheosis”¹¹ of loyalty. And what is now transposed to the “individual Self” is God while the “Eternal” or the “conscious and superhuman unity of life” corresponding to Creativity. It is in this manner that Royce’s philosophy of loyalty is to be elevated to the position my theology of loyalty occupies. In my theology of loyalty God plays the role of the “individual Self” vis-à-vis Creativity or the “Eternal Unity.” Hence, this theology is one whose ultimate agent is God, not any one of us theologians.

Thus far, I have disclosed a reflection on the first principle of my theology of loyalty, one which I might designate: “God is loyal to Creativity or Emptiness.” To this I must add a second principle from the side of Buddhist Emptiness and say, “Emptiness empties itself.” Or, in Whiteheadian terms, “Creativity is characterless in such a throughgoing way that its characterlessness is not another character.” Further, a third principle is to be designated: “God is the only one in the universe who can and actually does evoke a loyalty in us creatures.”

In my theology of loyalty mentioned above, the ultimacy of God (which I might call the “evocative power”) is actually to be looked upon as a different type of ultimacy than the ultimacy of ultimate reality which Creativity or Emptiness is. For in order that one might be able to call upon us, saying, “Be loyal!” one should have experienced one’s own loyalty; however, Creativity or Emptiness lacks such an experience of loyalty, with the consequence that it is not qualified to call forth our creaturely loyalty. The locus of God as the “One Who Calls”¹² in the universe is unique. By contrast, the ultimacy of

¹⁰ Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1914), p. 357.

¹¹ Cf. “Creation achieves the reconciliation of permanence and flux when it has reached its final term which is everlastingness—the Apotheosis of the World” (PR, 348).

¹² See John B. Cobb, Jr., *God and the World* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), Chap. 2. The One Who Calls, pp. 42-66.

Creativity or Emptiness lies in its being “without a character of its own”¹³ or in its “non-bhava” (Jpn., *mujisho*) state of affairs.

Section II. The Problem of an Ecozoics of the Deity: Against the Background of Thomas Berry’s Idea of the Ecozoic Era and Sallie McFague’s Idea of the Body of God

In Section I in the face of the problem of the two ultimates (namely, the question of how the Christian God and Buddhist Emptiness or creativity in Whitehead’s metaphysics are interrelated to each other) that has been taken up to consider through the history of interreligious dialogue since mid-20th century, we have presented our solution by means of a theology of loyalty. My proposal in the present essay aims at initiating what I call an Ecozoics of the Deity, which might be far more strictly theologically articulate than a theology of ecology, in such a way that we can incorporate the problem of the two ultimates into the core of the ‘Ecozoic Era’ that Thomas Berry invented. My reflection in the previous section gave me a clearer rationale for my proposal. By this I mean the possibility that my vision of a theology of loyalty would be valid for showing an interrelationship between the two ultimates, God and Buddhist Emptiness (or Whitehead’s creativity). Let us recall three principles inherent in my theology of loyalty:

- (i) God is loyal to Buddhist Emptiness/creativity.
- (ii) Emptiness empties itself.
- (iii) God is the only one in the universe who can and actually does evoke loyalty in us creatures.

Now, what does this new vision of theology of loyalty concerning the “problem of the two ultimates” bring about for my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity in this essay? In order to answer this question let me first scrutinize and elucidate Thomas Berry’s vision of the Ecozoic Era. As stated above, this is for the purpose of turning Berry’s secular-historical theology into a strict philosophy of God. Next, keeping its result in mind, I will scrutinize Sallie McFague’s theory of the “Body of God.” This is for the purpose of elucidating that there has to be an Ecozoics of the Deity as a uniquely possible and even necessary theological enterprise in the field of the ecology of God that precedes the vision of the universe as “God’s body” McFague espouses.

1. Thomas Berry’s Idea of the Ecozoic Era and My Theology of Loyalty Giving Rise to the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity

¹³ PR, 31.

Berry's idea of the Ecozoic Era is constituted by his critical view of our Earth-human civilization which quite paradoxically gave rise to his search of its salvation. Let us see his view of the crisis of our civilization first.

(1) Thomas Berry's Critical View of Our Earth-Human Civilization

In his speech at the Eleventh Annual G. F. Schumacher Lectures (October 1991, Great Barrington, Massachusetts) Berry discloses that in this regions and to the north in Southern Quebec, the native maple trees are dying out in great numbers due to pollutants humans have put into the atmosphere, the soil, and the water. And he refers to the cause of this natural disaster as resulting from the human aberration in the use of petroleum in such a way as to disrupt the integral functioning of the Earth at its core, the element carbon. He writes:

Their [i.e., the native maple trees'] demise is largely a result of the carbon compounds we have loosed into the atmosphere through the use of fossil fuels especially of petroleum, for our fuel and energy. Carbon is, as you know, the magical element. The whole life structure of the planet is based upon the element carbon. So long as the life process is guided by its natural patterns, the integral functioning of the Earth takes place. The wonderful variety expressed in marine life and land life, the splendor of the flowers and the birds and animals—all these could expand in their gorgeous coloration, in their fantastic forms, in their dancing movements, and in their songs and calls that echo over the world.

To accomplish all this, however, nature must find a way of storing immense quantities of carbon in the petroleum and coal deposits, also in the great forests. This process was worked out over some hundreds of millions of years. A balance was achieved, and the life systems of the planet were secure in the interaction of the air and the water and the soil with the inflowing energy form the sun.

But then we discovered that petroleum could produce such wonderful effects. It can be made into fertilizer to nourish crops; it can be spun into fabrics; it can fuel our internal combustion energies for transportation over the vast highway system we have built; it can produce an unlimited variety of plastic implements; it can run gigantic generators and produce power for lighting and heating of our buildings.¹⁴

¹⁴ Thomas Berry, "The Ecozoic Era," CES/Foundational Essays/The Ecozoic Era.01-12-2003.final, 1-2.

The reason why Tomas Berry counts the merits of petroleum is, however, for the purpose of recognizing deplorable results we will see when we have finished it up. What kind of results, then? He goes on to say:

It was all so simple. We had no awareness of the deadly consequences that would result from the residue from our use of petroleum for all these purposes. Nor did we know how profoundly we would affect the organisms in the soil with our insistence that the patterns of plant growth be governed by artificial human demands met by petroleum-based fertilizers rather than by the spontaneous rhythms within the living world. Nor did we understand that biological systems are not that adaptable to the mechanistic processes we impose upon them.

I do not wish to dwell on the devastation we have brought upon the Earth but only to make sure we understand the nature and the extent of what is happening. While we seem to be achieving magnificent things at the microphase level of our functioning, we are devastating the entire range of living beings at the macrophase level. The natural world is more sensitive than we have realized. Unaware of what we have done or its order of magnitude, we have thought our achievements to be of enormous benefit for the human process, but we now find that by disturbing the biosystems of the planet at the most basic level of their functioning we have endangered all that makes the planet Earth a suitable place for the integral development of human life itself.¹⁵

The global crisis Berry is concerned about is related to the macrophase biology consisting of five basic spheres: land, water, air, life—and how these interact with one another to enable the planet Earth to be what it is—and a very powerful sphere: the human mind. However, Berry thinks that consciousness is certainly not limited to humans. For every living being has its own mode of consciousness. It is important for Berry to be aware that consciousness is an analogous concept, in the sense that “it is qualitatively different in its various modes of expression.”¹⁶ I think this way of grasping consciousness is quite akin to Thomas Aquinas’s notion of *Analogia Entis* (analogy of being). However, Berry’s grasp of consciousness is unique in that it is centering around the inter-subjectivity of consciousnesses, even going beyond the Cartesian type of objectifying cognition.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

As is well known, Descartes has split Aquinas's notion of being into two pieces: *res cogitans* and *res extensa*; and structured a modern epistemological system in which the former (i.e., human consciousness) looks at the latter (including the human body and the environment) in order to know and govern it. Here is at work no perspective of interaction, however. Berry notices in this Cartesian epistemology what destroys the Earth-life community as this consists of the inter-subjectivity of consciousnesses. His uncompromising view of Descartes is shown in the following passage:

Descartes, we might say, killed the Earth and all its living beings. For him the natural world was mechanism. There was no possibility of entering into a communion relationship. Western humans became autistic in relation to the surrounding world. There could be no communion with the birds or animals or plants, because these were all mechanical contrivances. The real value of things was reduced to their economic value. A destructive anthropocentrism came into being.¹⁷

Compared with this sort of Cartesian view of consciousness, Berry's view of consciousness is shot through with inter-subjectivity, which Berry articulates succinctly with these words: "Consciousness can be grasped as the capacity for intimate presence of things to one another through knowledge and sensitive identity."¹⁸

Let me then turn from consciousness to an actual issue of importance. Berry's perception of one of the most crucial issues of today is as follows:

The biggest single question before us is the extent to which this technological-industrial-commercial context of human functioning can be made compatible with the integral functioning of the other life systems of the planet. We are reluctant to think of our actualities as inherently incompatible with the integral functioning of the various components of the planetary systems. It is not simply a matter of altering our ways of acting on a minor scale by recycling (which presupposes a cycling that is devastating in its original form), by mitigating pollution, reducing our energy consumption, limiting our use of the automobile, or by fewer development projects. Our efforts will be in vain if our purpose is to make the present industrial system acceptable. These steps must be taken, but according to my definition of the Ecozoic Era there must be more: there must also

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

be a new era in human-Earth relations.¹⁹

Berry thinks in this connection that our present system, based on the plundering of the Earth's resources, is certainly coming to an end. He even declares: "The industrial world on a global scale as it functions presently, can be considered definitely bankrupt."²⁰ This harsh statement sounds as if Berry had warned in advance the imminent coming of the Lehman Crisis of September 15, 2008—already almost seven years before the incident. We have to be well prepared for the future which turns out to be severe enough, realistically speaking, before being changed into a great age named the Ecozoic Era which might come into being by what Berry calls the "Great Work" of humans in cooperation with the entire Earth community while led by what I designate the "Ecozoics of the Deity." Cruel as this words are, Berry further states quite frankly:

The petroleum at the base of our present industrial establishment might at its present rate of use last another fifty years—probably less, possibly more. But a severe depletion will occur within the lifetime of young people living today. The major part of the petroleum will be gone. Our youngest children may see the end of it. They will likely see also the tragic climax of the population expansion. And with the number of automobiles on the planet estimated at six million in the year 2000, we will be approaching another saturation level in the technological intrusion into the planetary process.²¹

Further, he writes:

It is awesome to consider how quickly events of such catastrophic proportions are happening. When I was born in 1914, there were only one a half billion people in the world. Children of the present will likely live to see ten billion. The petrochemical age had hardly begun in my early decades. Now the planet is saturated with the residue from spent oil products. There were fewer than a million automobiles in the world when I was born. In my childhood the tropical rain forests were substantially intact; now they are devastated on an immense scale. The biological diversity of life forms was not yet threatened on an extensive scale. The ozone layer was still intact.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., 3.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ Ibid., 3.

²² Ibid., 3.

Scrutinizing the present situation of humans on Earth, Berry is courageous enough to speak of cruel things as in the above. I now turn to Berry's theory of "salvation" in the sense of the Ecozoic Era.

(2) Thomas Berry on the Salvation of the Earth: His Vision of the Ecozoic Era

While learning from Vico's secular-historical theology and absorbing Chardin's cosmic Christology, Berry's theory of salvation of the Earth is unique in that it uncovers the critical situation of Earth-human civilization resulting from its "exploitation of petroleum" and yet it, nevertheless, turns to a theory of salvation of the Earth. It is precisely within this context that his idea of "the Ecozoic Era" comes up. Berry's words continue:

In evaluating our present situation I submit that we have already terminated the Cenozoic Era of the geo-biological systems of the planet. Sixty-five million years of life development are terminated. Extinction is taking place throughout the life systems on a scale unequaled since the terminal phase of the Mesozoic Era.

A renewal of life in some creative context requires that a new biological period come into being, a period when humans would dwell upon the Earth in a mutually enhancing manner. This new mode of being of the planet I describe as the Ecozoic Era, the fourth in the succession of life eras thus far identified as the Paleozoic, the Mesozoic, and the Cenozoic. But when we propose that an Ecozoic Era is succeeding the Cenozoic, we must define the unique character of this emerging era.²³

In defining the new geo-biological period as the Ecozoic Era Thomas Berry's shining genius and his geo-historical contribution coincide. Incorporating this coincidence into my own thinking I present myself for re-defining the task of philosophical theology in this new global age (which is the age of ecology or the Ecozoic Era) by submitting my proposal of an "Ecozoics of the Deity" I am pretty much excited about the task before me.

Berry suggests the name "Ecozoic" as a better designation than "ecological." For him, while eco-logos refers to an understanding of the interaction of things, Ecozoic is a more biological term that can be used to indicate the integral *functioning* of life systems

²³ Ibid., 3-4.

in their mutually enhancing relation. In other words, what the Ecozoic means is the salvation of the entire Earth-life community. Then, in what sort of mode the Earth-life community is to be saved? Berry replies:

The Ecozoic Era can be brought into being only by the integral life community itself. If other periods have been designated by such names as “Reptilian” or “Mammalian,” this Ecozoic period must be identified as the Era of the Integral Life Community. For this to emerge there are special conditions required on the part of the human, for although this era cannot be an anthropocentric life period, it can come into being only under certain conditions that dominantly concern human understanding, choice, and action.²⁴

According to Berry, there are six conditions of the integral life community as the mode of salvation as follows:

1. The first condition is to understand that the universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.
2. The second condition for entering the Ecozoic Era is a realization that the Earth exists, and can survive only in its integral functioning.
3. A third condition for entering the Ecozoic Era is a recognition that the Earth is a one-time endowment.
4. A fourth condition for entering the Ecozoic Era is a recognition that the Earth is primary and humans are derivative.
5. A fifth condition for the rise of the Ecozoic Era is to realize that there is a single Earth community.
6. A sixth condition is that we understand fully and respond effectively to our own human role in this new era.²⁵

Of these I think the second condition manifesting the “integral functioning of Earth life” and the fourth condition indicating “the primary Earth and the derivative human” have to be ontologically unified. In my own view, ontologically speaking, there have to be in the universe that which enables the “second condition” to appear, as its dynamics; and when it comes of speaking of the unification of the second and the fourth conditions, we have to be aware that the principle of order functioning between the dynamics of the universe and all things is to be found at the base of the “relationship

²⁴ Ibid., 4.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, 4-8.

between the Earth and humans.” In his earlier book *The Dream of the Earth* (1988) Berry describes beautifully the dynamics of the universe; and in his later work *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (1999) there is a reference to the fact that the universe is self-referent while all things in the universe being universe-referent. Let me thus quote his famous passage on the dynamics of the universe:

If the dynamics of the universe from the beginning shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the sun, and formed the Earth, if this same dynamism brought forth the continents and seas and atmosphere, if it awakened variety of living things, and finally brought us into being and guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened in us our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitized to such guidance from the very structure and functioning of the universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.²⁶

The importance of Berry’s view of this dynamism at work in the universe is not only contained in his description of what enables the evolution of the universe to appear. If it is, it is merely a theory of the evolution of the universe; and there is no need for me to dwell on the ontological integration of the dynamics of the universe and the evolution of the universe. What I designate the ontological integration of the dynamics and evolution must have denied at first a mere linear type evolution of the universe by retreating to its origin or ground or bottom. And it must have advanced therefrom toward the present, thus further looking forward to the future.

(3) The Ontological Integration of the Universe: Kitaro Nishida and Ryokan on the Thought of the “Turning Point”

To me, when it comes to speaking of this sort of ontological integration of the universe with its ground of dynamism (which consists in retreating to the ground and in advancing therefrom toward the future), Kitaro Nishida’s theory of recollection (contained in *Nishida’s Works, Vol. II*) is profoundly illuminating. Nishida writes:

Though [Bergson says that] pure duration is unrepeatable, in creative evolution the entire past acts as present, and the more we attain the deep foundation of the

²⁶ Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), p. 137.

self, attaining a state of creative evolution, the more we are able to transform the past into the present. Bergson compares memory to a cone, with the past as its base and the present as its apex: this cone continually advance at its apex. Developing this image, we can say that the farther back we go toward the broad base of the cone, and the more concentratedly we assume the movement from base to apex, the more the entire past becomes the present, so that the present becomes the center of gravity of the totality.²⁷

As is evident in the above passage, Nishida's reflection upon the ontological-integral depths of the dynamics of the universe is indicative of the turning point (or the hinge of the universe, as it were) of what Thomas Berry calls "the Ecozoic Era" as this enables my proposal of an "Ecozoics of the Deity" to come out. The turning point (or the hinge of the universe) was poetically praised by the Zen poet Ryokan in his brilliant *tanka*:

**Waga nochi o
Tasuke tamae to
Tanomu mi wa
Motonu chikai no
Sugata narikeri**

While beseeching thee
For Mercy after my death
Lo I find myself
Already embodying
The Original Vow now!²⁸

Ryokan's original intention in this *tanka* is to say something like this: "While getting sick in bed and feeling pain so much that I cannot but roll over again and again in bed with a prayer asking Amida for mercy upon me after my death, I am nevertheless aware of myself as embodying the Original Vow here-now!" Here at this juncture I would like to incorporate into this self-expression of Ryokan's in terms of "**sugata**

²⁷ Kitaro Nishida, Trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, Yoshinori Takeuchi and Joseph S. O'Leary, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 132.

²⁸ See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, *Ryokan in a Global Age* (Niigata: Kokodo, 2001), p. E35.

narikeri” (“already embodying”), the entire vision of my theology of loyalty. What happens, then? An event of the cosmic renewal happens, ontologically-integrally.

That is to say, the entirety of the future-intentionality inherent in the universe is to be enhanced by virtue of the Vow of the religious ultimate, Amida (which is the act of relinquishing the will of attaining the Highest Enlightenment, if after [his] obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters shall not desire in sincerity and truthfulness to be born in [his] country) toward being culminating in loyalty—loyalty to the metaphysical ultimate, Emptiness or Dharmata Dharmakaya. It is precisely at that point that the universe all of a sudden transmutes itself into an integral self-systematization, encouraged and awakened by the Call of the religious ultimate, Amida, saying, “Be loyal!” Ryokan’s *tanka* --finishing with the last two lines, namely, “already embodying / the Original Vow now!”—is an excellent poem which is more than enough to express artistically the “Ecozoics of the Deity.”

(4) Berry on Cosmic Dynamism and the Universe-Referent Nature of All Things

When we reflect ontologically-integrally upon the cosmic dynamism, as we did in the foregoing sub-section 1.(3), by way of discussing the paradoxical self-integration of the Deity (as “me”) as it is envisioned in Nishida’s theory of recollection and in Ryokan’s poem with the lines “lo I find myself / already embodying / the Original Vow now!,” we come to know that when the cosmic dynamism in its self-reflective aspect (*regressus*) relinquishes itself (toward the metaphysical ground) under the phase of loyalty, the cosmic dynamism in its advancing aspect (*egressus*) revives as life-giving activity (in the form of the Call of the metaphysical ultimate “as” the religious ultimate) toward all things in the universe under the phase of evocation. Let me quote a brilliant passage in which Berry speaks of the “problem of reference.”

Even when we recognize the spirit world beyond the human we make everything referent to the human as the ultimate source of meaning and of value, although this way of thinking has led to catastrophe for ourselves as well as a multitude of other beings. Ye in recent times we begin to recognize that the universe, in the phenomenal order, is the only self-referent mode of being. All other modes of being, including the human, in their existence and in their functioning, are universe-referent. Their relation with the universe has been recognized through the centuries in the rituals of the various traditions.²⁹

²⁹ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999), p. 18.

The “self-referent” character of the universe is a make-up within phenomenal world, whereas within the ontic world to which Jesus referred as the “secret place” (Matt. 6:6a) the “self-referent” nature of God prevails. It is identical with what Whitehead calls the “Primordial Nature of God.” It is therefrom that the universe-referent functioning of all things arises. In that case, we are faced with the question: What is the “self” inherent in the designation of “the self-referent Deity”?

Our theology of loyalty answers this question by saying (i) that the self of the Deity, fundamentally speaking, is the Place of Emptiness to which the Deity is loyal. Further, I say (ii) that the self of the Deity, expressively viewed, is the Evocation Spirituality calling forth from the Place of Emptiness, saying, “You should be loyal likewise!” If we see the self of the Deity only as Evocative Spirituality without paying due attention to the Place of Emptiness to which the Deity is loyal, we will have such a view of the universe as the “body of God” which presupposes a view of God as “pure spirituality” and thus utterly bodiless. An utterly bodiless God alone must be supplied God’s body by means of the coming-to-be of the universe. It is from this point of view that I think I can criticize Sallie McFague’s theology of the “body of God.”

2. A Critique of Sallie McFague’s Theology of the “Body of God”: What is the “Body of God” ?

In her celebrated volume *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* Sallie McFague thinks of God in close relationship with the entire universe as the “body of God.” Her attempt came out of the influence of the “Common Creation Story” as this arose as the *Zeitgeist* in the aftermath of the scientific proofs of the Big Bang theory. It is an outstanding achievement in a new frontier of systematic theology, ecological theology.³⁰

The Big Bang theory of the Russian physicist George Gamow was testified as true when the astronomer Edwin Hubble made a discovery, observing the universe through the telescope at Mount Wilson in California in 1929, that the galaxies of the universe are moving away from us, which meant that the universe is expanding. It was also testified as true by two astronomers, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, working at the Bell Laboratories in Holmdel, New Jersey, when they identified the cosmic background radiation in 1964. These two incidents of the Big Bang truth are indicative of the big explosion that took place some 13.7 billion years ago, thus giving rise to the coming into

³⁰ See John B. Cobb, Jr., *Is It Too Late? A Theology of Ecology*. Revised Edition (Denton, Texas: Environment Ethics Books, 1995) whose first edition was published in 1972, thus cultivating the genre of ecological theology in the realm of systematic theology.

existence of our present universe. Thus we have come to have “the *prime fact* of the twentieth century, the most amazing scientific discovery of all time—the first one pointing beyond science altogether.”³¹

As a result, it is the “Common Creation Story” that arose as a new gigantic ideology in the West in place of Socialism, while accepting the Big Bang truth as the unavoidable framework of the *Zeitgeist* of our times. By the term “common” we mean that not only believers in mono-theistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam but also humanists and even atheists are commonly affirmative of this “theory of the creation of the universe.” Here we can observe how a scientific discovery and the formation of a *Zeitgeist* are to be followed by a theological construction. In this sense, McFague’s *The Body of God* is a characteristically contemporary (in the sense of a post-Socialist) theological phenomenon.

(1) The Intention of the Concept of the “Body of God”: Its Idealism or Mono-Spiritualism

The intention of McFague’s concept of the “body of God” is clearly described in the following passage.

In this body model, God would not be transcendent over the universe in the sense of external to or apart from, but would be the source, power, and good—the spirit—that enlivens (and loves) the entire process and its material forms. The transcendence of God, then, is the preeminent or primary spirit of the universe. As we are inspirited bodies—living, loving, thinking bodies—so imagining God in our image (for how else *can* we model God?), we speak of her as *the* inspirited body of the entire universe, the animating, living spirit that produces, guides, and saves all that is.³²

To be noteworthy here is the fact that McFague could not find the source of the universe as the “spirited body” in any other place than in the transcendence of God as the “preeminent, primary spirit of the universe. Nothing is more symptomatic than this fact regarding the idealistic or mono-spiritual nature of McFague’s theology of the “body of God.” In pursuing the source of the “ecology of the world,” she was not able to

³¹ Dennis Overbye, *Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 47; cited in Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Hidden Face of God* (HarperSanfrancisco, 1995), p. 224; italics Friedman’s.

³² Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Mineapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 20.

find it anywhere other than in the “eco-less logos” of the Deity, that is, the transcendent spirit.

By contrast, we rather think that we can find the transcendent source of the inspirited bodies of the universe not directly in the “spirit” but in the “field” as this is peculiar to the realm of the Deity. What in Jesus’ theology is called the “secret place” (Mtt. 6: 6a) is the Divine field. I take the Johannine Logos, “who was in the beginning” (John 1: 1a) as the ground of the world, to mean at the same time the Divine field insofar as “the Logos was with God” (John 1: 1b) in such a way that the togetherness of the Logos with God constitutes the inner relational depth of both the Logos and God. We might say that the Logos has two natures, one *ad extra* (which was “in the beginning of the world”) and the other *ad intra* (which was “with God”). The latter nature is not personal but all-inclusive; and this nature of the Logos I might designate the “Divine field.”

This whole discussion of the Logos entails the all-inclusive Logos or the Divine field is the ultimate place whose Divine poles we call “Father” (God) and “Son” (the personal Logos).³³ Further, when the Divine field or the ultimate place is viewed as at the same time the ground of the world,³⁴ it is to be called the “Place of absolute Nothingness,” as by Kitaro Nishida.

This state of affairs is commensurate with the truth as inherent in our theology of loyalty we discussed at the outset of the present essay, namely, the dynamics that arises in the fact that the Deity, *qua* the religious ultimate, such as the Christian God or the Buddhist Amida, being loyally within the “Place of Emptiness or Dharmata Dharmakaya,” *qua* the metaphysical ultimate, is entitled to call forth loyalty in the bodies of the universe, saying, “You too should be loyal.” This state of affairs is at the core of my proposal in the present essay for an Ecozoics (i.e., Place/Life science) of the Deity, as has already been mentioned.

At this juncture we need to pay enough critical attention to the above-cited

³³ Cf. “The Logos was Divine” (John 1: 1c).

³⁴ If the Divine field is limited to be within the realm of the Deity alone, it goes to be a Being, a Concept, not all-inclusive Reality. It must be at the same time the ground of the world. For this reason, a Being or a Concept of the intra-Trinitarian Place is to be negated once in order to get in touch with the full Reality of Place, within (ad intra) and toward the world (ad extra), of the Deity. Hence, the Place of absolute Nothingness. To depict this state of affairs, Shizuteru Ueda uses the expression “World/Emptiness” in his book *Shizuteru Ueda’s Works, II* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), p. 144. On September 9, 2010 in the midst of my presentation at Kyoto Philosophy Foundation Symposium, I said, “What you mean by the / (slash) here is God, it seems to me.” Professor Ueda so gladly acknowledged my words. And we have had a very nice conversation. God belongs to Emptiness and to the World at the same time!

passage of McFague's:

“...so, imagining God in our image (for how else *can* we model God?)”

This simply shows how McFague's method of theologizing on the basis of a human-created God-model is built upon a shaky ground which is not free from the arbitrariness of an objectifying knowledge. Yet, she seems to be utterly unaware of that. She should have been humble enough to think it over introspectively. She rather speaks critically of Thomas Berry's standpoint of “creation spirituality” with these words:

Creation spirituality suggests an ungrounded optimism, based in part on its reading of evolutionary history but also on an illumination mode of how human beings change: to know the good is to do the good. If we learn about the common creation story and when we fit into the scheme of things, we *will* change.³⁵

Is this critique justifiable? I think not. Is the fact that Berry in his *The Dream of the Earth*, as mentioned before, looks back upon the past of the universe to acknowledge its underlying dynamics thereby paradoxically looking forward to the future, really an “ungrounded optimism”? I think not, either. What if that which works at the bottom of the past (especially at the bottom of the Big Bang of 13.7 billion years ago) is not derived, as McFague imagines, merely in a linear fashion from the act of inspiring the bodies of the universe by virtue of the “spirit of God” but rather from the turn of the Deity from the “phase of loyalty” into the “phase of evocation” by virtue of the double structure/dynamics of the Ecozoics of the Deity, in the sense that inasmuch as God dwells within the secret place *ad intra* (Matt. 6: 6a) God is capable of getting God's own spiritual force of seeing and calling creatures (Matt. 6: 6b) *ad extra*? Isn't it, in other words, the case of a reverse analogy as found in the theology of Jesus (especially in the third prayer of the Lord's Prayer) in terms of the expression “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6: 10b) rather than the case of a metaphorical analogy like one McFague imagines in accordance with human-created images—and this regarding the reference (or analogicity) inherent in the universe?

I might say that Berry's view of the universe as “self-referent” is nearer to Jesus' theology than hers is in that it implies that all things in the universe are “universe-referent. What is central to the case of McFague is her vision of the universe

³⁵ McFague, op. cit., p. 71.

plus her construction of God-model as they are based upon the enterprise of culture (one of whose elements is theology) as this is merely universe-referent. The order in the matter of reference (or analogicity) is totally upside down, I might say.

(2) The Impasse of McFague's Ecological Theology of the "Body of God": An Overestimation of the Body

This being so, it is quite natural for McFague's ecological theology of the "body of God" to give way to an overestimation of the body. Let me quote the following passage:

Radicalizing the incarnation, therefore, by using the model of the universe as God's body is neither idolatry nor pantheism: the world, creation, is not identified or confused with God. Yet it is the place where God is present to us. Christianity's most distinctive belief traditionally expressed in the Chalcedonian formula that Christ was "fully God, fully man." For our time when we understand human existence in continuity with all other forms of life and hence must think of our relation to God in an ecological context, that mediation is appropriately radicalized and expanded to include the entire cosmos. In both instances, the Word is made flesh, God is available to us only through the mediation of embodiment. We are offered not the face of God, but the back. God is neither enclosed in nor expanded by the body shown to us, but it is a body that is given.³⁶

If there is anything to say regarding this passage, it is the fact that even if she expanded the incarnation of the Word to include the entire cosmos it is the matter of what my mentor Katsumi Takizawa referred to as the "secondary contact of God and humans," but not the matter of the "primary contact of God and humans" or the *Protofactum* Immanuel. For Takizawa the former contact signifies the awareness or satori or belief of the latter contact which exists at the base of all beings (including human beings).³⁷ In my own opinion, the fundamental unity of God and humans resides in the Place of Emptiness. I might depict this unity by saying that the

³⁶ Ibid., p. 134.

³⁷ Takizawa criticized his mentor Karl Barth for thinking the coming into the world of Jesus of Nazareth as giving rise to the *Protofactum* Immanuel, because he thought the truth of the matter is the other way round. See Katsumi Takizawa, *The Origin of Freedom: Immanuel* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 1969), pp. 209-215. See also Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Reflections on God Who Is 'With' All Creation: Phases of Mysticism in D. T. Suzuki's Zen Thought and Whitehead's Metaphysics," *Process Studies*, 34/2, Fall-Winter 2005, 240-263.

relation between (or the Between) God and humans (or, more inclusively, the universe) is more fundamental than either of God and humans (the universe) in such a way as to include them in itself. This understanding of the *Protofactum* Immanuel is not the same as my mentor Takizawa's³⁸; it is rather a new formation coming into existence by reforming his original doctrine.

By the Between I mean the Place of Emptiness. The Place of Emptiness is the hidden core of the *Protofactum* Immanuel, as far as I can see.³⁹ This being so, there is reason for the coming into existence of God's loyalty to the Between (or the Place of Emptiness or the inclusive Logos, mentioned earlier); and there is reason also for God's paradoxical evocation of loyalty in us creatures in the matter of evolution of the universe. Here we can see that the loyal God paradoxically transforms Godself into the evocative God. This is the mystery of the Deity in bringing the *ad intra* movement out into the *ad extra* dynamics of evolution. If we did not see the inner core of the *Protofactum* Immanuel as the Between (or the Place of Emptiness between God and beings, including human beings) we would not be able to get in touch with the depths of the Divine *kenosis* or the dynamism of creation.

(3) The Impasse of A Theology of Spirituality: The Misplaced Fundamentalness

All this seems to be related, thirdly, to how to read Gen. 1: 2:

...the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind [spirit] from God swept over the face of the waters.(NRSV)

McFague reads this text as follows:

The motif that runs throughout is the spirit as the source of life and the renewer of

³⁸ Takizawa's original doctrine of the *Protofactum* Immanuel is shot through with the threefold idea of the "inseparable, non-identifiable, and irreversible relationship between God and humans." By the idea of inseparableness between God and us he pioneered in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue while, however, on the other hand, emphasizing the irreversible order of God's priority over against humans vis-à-vis the Shinichi Hisamatsu's, his disciple Masao Abe's and other Buddhist thinkers' insistence on the reversible nature of the ultimate in relation to the creatures, as is evident in his book *Buddhism and Christianity* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1964).

³⁹ See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Reason and Intuition in Christian and Buddhist Philosophy: Anselm's *Proslogion II* and *IV* Reinterpreted in Light of D. T. Suzuki's Zen Thought," *Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 17, February 28, 2008, n.29 and n. 31; now contained in Ryusei Takeda, *Humans and Religions in the Age of Science* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 2010), pp. 85-230.

life; a theology of the spirit focuses on God as the creator and redeemer of life. The trajectory begins with the spirit of God hovering over the waters of chaos and breathing life into living beings.⁴⁰

Let me then juxtapose to it my mentor Takizawa's reading of the text. Takizawa writes:

Regarding the “formless void” and the “deep whose face was covered by darkness” we might certainly be able to speak of them as the “original stuff” (or the place where there is no separation between subject and object) out of which and at the same time toward which human existence as such can come into being.⁴¹

In this passage Takizawa is referring to the “formless void” and the “deep whose face was covered by darkness” as something more fundamental than what his long-time dialogue partner, new testament scholar Seiichi Yagi designates the “pure intuition” as this comes to appear in our actual life. As far as the viewpoint from which one regards the “void” and the “deep” as more fundamental than “God’s spirit” is concerned, my proposal of an “Ecozoics of the Deity” is in accord with Takizawa’s philosophy of the *Protofactum Immanuel*.

Conclusions:

To sum: it appears to me that that the “void” and the “deep” in Gen. 1: 2 are symbolically expressive of the Place of Emptiness in the sense of the metaphysical Oikos/Eco where God dwells loyally; and that the life (i.e., Zoe=Zoics) of God’s spirit can and actually does come out of that same Place of Emptiness insofar as it is at the same time the Place (Oikos/Eco) of the world as well as the Place (Oikos/Eco) of the Deity. As far as this point is concerned, McFague’s direct overestimation of God’s spirit suffers from a misplaced fundamentalness, it seems to me. This misplaced fundamentalness is, in my view, in line with an ecological theology of the universe as the “body of God” which is schematized in terms of a fundamentally Bodi-less and Eco-less Deity in the ultimate realm.

McFague’s vision of the Deity needs the universe as the “body of God,” but without an inherent foundation in the inner realm of the Deity. In a word, it lacks an *Ecozoics* of the Deity. It is merely a humanly-imaginative construction of the “body of God” as

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 147.

⁴¹ Takizawa, *The Origin of Freedom: Immanuel*, p. 124.

the universe which is presumably full of spirituality but is in reality without the Divine foundation.

My proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity has been necessitated to arise in view of the fact that our Modern Industrial Petroleum Civilization has been promoted ever since the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century by the modern consciousness but is bankrupt, as Thomas Berry critically declares. I might call the modern consciousness the consciousness of the “Sequence of Tenses,” in the sense that as long as the industrial productivity is capable of growing we sense that our Modern Age has been and is sequentially in progress. However, the truth of the matter is, rather, the “Robbery of Tenses,” in the sense that our Modern Industrial Petroleum Civilization has only been made possible through the use of fossil fuels, especially of petroleum, for our fuel and energy—namely, by the robbery of the riches of past sixty-five million years.⁴² Now, people are warning that Peak Oil is imminent. Accordingly, we have to get rid of this impasse of the erroneous relation to the Tenses of our Civilization. But how?

What is urgently in need is what I might call the “Transmutation of Tenses,” in the sense that we look back to the past in reflection and penitence, which, however, brings in paradoxically creative evolution in which the entire past acts as present because the more we attain the deep foundation of the self, the more we are able to transform the past into the present, and further into the future.⁴³ In my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity this transformation of the past into the present, and further into the future, is based on the Deity’s looking back on the self, the Place of Emptiness. What Nishida writes is very true : “When absolute free will turns and views itself, or, in Boehme’s terms, when the objectless will looks back on itself, the infinite creative development of this world is set up.”⁴⁴ I need to verify and consolidate the truthfulness of my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity in relation to the thoughts of Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida—in more detail; but that is the task of Part II.

(November 27, 2010)

⁴² See Thomas Berry, “The Ecozoic Era,” 1.

⁴³ See Kitaro Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, pp. 129-132.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.