

EVANGELICALISM AND CAPITALISM

A reparative account and diagnosis
of pathogeneses in the relationship

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by

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Abstract

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No sustained examination and diagnosis of problems inherent to the relationship of Evangelicalism with capitalism currently exists. Where assessments of the relationship have been undertaken, they are often built upon a lack of understanding of Evangelicalism, and an uncritical reliance both on Max Weber’s Protestant Work Ethic and on David Bebbington’s Quadrilateral of Evangelical priorities. This then gives rise to misunderstandings and faulty prescriptions for the future of Evangelicalism. This thesis seeks to remedy this situation by providing a robust diagnostic, not to refute Evangelicalism, but as a reparative. This reparative attends to the faulty responses of either over-dichotomising capitalist markets against ecclesial life, or the further capitulation of ecclesial life to the deforming forces of capitalism. It also allows for an alternative proposal for the future of Evangelicalism.

To achieve this, the thesis makes use of some methodological innovations and proposals, and also extends them. First, the thesis proposes and deploys its own ‘map-making’ method as a kind of heuristic concept map to trace correspondence between church acts and beliefs. This ‘map-making’ ensures that the thesis provides evaluation and resourcing for deployment to current and related Evangelical contexts. Second, the thesis proposes that, contrary to methodological worries by others, it is possible to talk about and make an account of the two broad domains of Evangelicalism and capitalism. Third, in order to provide a reading of ecclesial life, the main accounts for this thesis draw upon and deploy the ‘binocular dialectic’ and method of Martyn Percy, by reading theology with social science. This ‘binocular’ method establishes the thesis in two parts. Part one is an account of Evangelicalism and capitalism constructed from social science sources; part two follows with theological explication of this account.

Chapter one establishes the research problem, method and research design. Following chapter two’s review and modulation of Bebbington’s quadrilateral, chapters three and four make an account and reading from social science, drawing upon both with an ‘ideal type account’ with Max Weber, and a ‘materialist account’ with Karl Polanyi. Here, Evangelicalism is revealed to be both a creature of and response to capitalism, where Evangelical anxieties around assurance migrated into anxieties about providence. Where Evangelicals initially used the disciplined ascetics of the market for identity and relationships, these market ascetics ultimately deformed and replaced Christian social imaginaries, with market imaginations around Providence. Chapter five constructs a theological reading of the ascetics of that account, using Neo-Augustinian sources, in particular Vincent Miller, Daniel Bell and William Cavanaugh. From this, the thesis problematises capitalist markets as rival schools of desire to ecclesial life, not as a dichotomy, but rather as modes of resistance, resonance and co-creation. Drawing on the work of Graham Ward and James K. A Smith, chapter 6 shows how the ascetics of commodification leverage the nature of human agency around imaginations for Providence. This results in weakened resistance to, and further co-option to, the deforming forces of capitalism by Evangelicalism. The thesis reveals that producing more effective worship curricula is insufficient to the task of resisting the deforming forces of capitalism.

Ultimately the thesis functions as a ‘minority report’ proposing that Evangelicalism, armed with the findings from this thesis, is uniquely situated to respond to the problems it has caused. Understanding how Evangelicalism has lost its resistance to the deforming forces of capitalism, and in some ways perfected those forces, is the beginning of understanding how it might then respond constructively to the problems it has caused, and with its own internal resources.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: The research context, problem, limits, and methodology

Have we, over time and with good intentions and pure motivations, turned our churches into vendors of religious services and goods?

— Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*

1.1 Locating the Research and Researcher

Has my church, and my Evangelical kin, become captive to a mode of ‘dispensing religious goods and services’ to consuming participants? It is my church community and concern for its members that gives rise to my research project here. My over twenty years of pastoral ministry leave me with a sense, measure, and intuition of the implicit textures to the daily life of my church community. There are many textures that a pastor ‘knows’ by participation, observation, and reflection from the thousands upon thousands of daily interactions with his ecclesial community.¹ Within those textures, there seems to be a dominant, and persistent, strand and force, discerned from ‘deep listening’ and ‘sounding the depths’ of congregational life.² That captivating force would appear to be located in the mode of ‘dispensing of religious goods and services.’ Or, as Daniel Hardy describes, there is an abduction of human affections, an ‘extensity’ intrinsic to the human condition that draws us away from God, where “Capitalism is a major source of this culturally induced extensity”.³

My pastoral instincts observe and discern that this ‘extensity’ is a symptom of a disorder in the aspirations of the members of my church. It also infiltrates my aspirations as their pastor: my church members confess that, all too often, they are not living up to

¹ I am an observer participant, as per James Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 89.

² Martyn Percy draws on James Hopewell to explain the deeper task of paying attention to congregation, and for scholars to be immersed in their field of inquiry. It was immersion in my congregation that led me to this field of inquiry; see Martyn Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture: Christianity, Theology, and the Concrete Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 209–210.

³ Daniel W. Hardy, *Wording and Radiance: Parting Conversations on God and the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 68.

the imaginations and desires of their faith, with a pervading sense that something particularly pernicious has taken hold of their daily lives. I am not the first to ask this question. Jan Boer asked rather pointedly, looking through the lens of Western missions into Nigeria, “Are Christian missions stooges of capitalism?”⁴ The recent Emerging Church Movement (ECM) has a stated aim to reject consumer constructions of ecclesiology.⁵ Yet, in my participant observer role in the ECM, I perceived that, despite their aspirations, the new forms of ecclesiology that emerged were funded and shaped by deeper commitments to capitalist lifestyles. Even detailed critiques of the ECM miss this nature and influence of capitalism upon Evangelicals, with scant or no reference to it.⁶ Even more broadly sustained critiques of Evangelicalism fail to explore the intersections with capitalism.⁷ This thesis is an attempt to diagnose and better understand what gives rise to this problem. It aims to do so in a way that equips my congregation and others like them for the faithful living to which they aspire.

1.1.1 Deep Listening: Pastoral and ministry observations

I find many pastors within my wider denomination, as well as those in extended relationship, asking similar questions.⁸ When we share as colleagues our most pressing challenges, all too similar descriptions are made of the day-to-day textures of pastoral life. Those textures seem to reveal that, all too often, the members of our churches engage

⁴ Jan H. Boer, *Missions: Heralds of Capitalism or Christ?* (Indianapolis: Day Star Press, 1984).

⁵ See Gerardo Marti and Gladys Ganiel, *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 149.

⁶ For example, see Hannah Steele, *New World, New Church?: The Theology of the Emerging Church Movement* (London: SCM Press, 2017); Jeremy Bouma, *Understanding Emerging Church Theology: From a Former Emergent Insider* (Grand Rapids, MI: Theoklesia, 2014); Doug Gay, *Remixing the Church: Towards an Emerging Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 2011); and David Mark Rathel, *Baptists and the Emerging Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

⁷ D. G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004); Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

⁸ Conversations about my research inspired and led to a pastoral friend publishing this short work; Andy Hickford, *Retail Therapy* (Goring by Sea: Verité CM, 2011).

in worship as a means to a particular end. And those ends are usually not about receiving a Christ-directed life, but about the request for God to deliver things, items, experiences, or to use the vernacular, ‘stuff’. Through the practices of prayer and worship, people’s imaginations for life are brought into contact with their lived experiences. In those worship practices, it seems that God is all too often meant to provide for any lack in material experiences. Otherwise, a sentiment is often manifest: that God is not doing his job properly.⁹ We must ask: “What are we doing when we pledge allegiance to the accumulation of material possessions and consumer products?”¹⁰

Now, none of the pastors I work with have a spirituality that separates God from the everyday ‘stuff’ of life. We believe God is greatly concerned with the materiality of our existence, and is very involved within it. An instinctive and intrinsic belief in the incarnation and the cross as Evangelicals necessitates that. But what is startling is how much of the Christian life in my own church often collapses into prayers for ‘things’, for a certain way of life, imagined and expected. That which funds the imagination for life, and in particular the Christian life, seems to have become captive to something other than a Christian, and claimed Evangelical imagination. Evangelicals such as myself, my wider church community, and pastoral colleagues, would claim one thing as the source and fund for the imaginations of everyday life. That is the person and the work of Jesus Christ. That affirmation is not just close to the surface for our pastors but would also be the stated claim of most of our churches’ members. For Evangelicals, the Christian life is readily understood as being one centred on the pursuit of Jesus Christ. The things of this life, along with all material existence, are to be willingly submitted in faithful service to Christ and His mission through us, to be Christ-made.¹¹ Yet as I have mentioned, the opposite

⁹ My friend Alan Jamieson, who encouraged me into theological research, has asked, but not explained, why capitalist lifestyles have taken hold of the desires of Christians, now deemed to be essential to their lives; see Alan Jamieson, *Chrysalis: The Hidden Transformation in the Journey of Faith* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 3.

¹⁰ James K. A Smith, *The Devil Reads Derrida* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

¹¹ Already, I am making anecdotal claims about the nature of Evangelicalism, but for now see Bruce Hindmarsh, “What is Evangelicalism?” *Christianity Today*, last modified 14th March 2018,

all too often takes place. Jesus is expected to be faithful in the provision of the *things* of life, for the life we are making ourselves.¹² This is, I suggest, where Jesus is being called upon for the ‘dispensing of religious goods and services.’

My initial reflections give rise to some questions, questions that begin to locate the key criteria for my research methods. What are the forces that led to this re-orientation of faith and practice? Most importantly, do my anecdotes here and the cursory understanding I have developed over twenty years of my ministry practice bear up under further scrutiny? These questions lead me to my primary and initial research question — what is really happening, and why? How and why has the Evangelicalism in which I am located become captive to a false imagination, enacted in our worship? By false, I mean not true to the claims and aspirations of faithful living for Christ that is central to the Evangelicalism within which my church is situated. Furthermore, does Evangelicalism have its own internal resources to respond to the problems that I might diagnose it to have caused? Of course, this begs the question, what is Evangelicalism? My thesis will attend to the definition of what I mean by Evangelicalism immediately after this chapter. For the moment, I will talk broadly about Evangelicalism, as that church context that I, and members of my church would recognise as their ecclesial constituency.

1.1.2 Capitalism and Evangelicalism: Initial working definitions

I have the privilege of travelling around the world, and teaching Evangelical leaders, from the more progressive to the slightly more conservative. I have had regular occasion to teach conservative Evangelicals, whose natural inclination might be a defence of

accessed 11th April 2018, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/march-web-only/what-is-evangelicalism.html>.

¹² As early as 1978, questions were being asked about the nature of worship in relationship to contemporary culture and material life. See Ion Bria, “The Liturgy after the Liturgy,” *International Review of Mission*, 67.265 (1978): 86-90. For a more recent exploration of the consumer nature of contemporary worship, see Pete Ward, *Selling Worship: How What We Sing Has Changed the Church* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005).

capitalism and Evangelical lifestyles within that. Then I find myself with more progressive Evangelicals, more socially democratic in orientation, who are far more critical of capitalism and its collusion with Evangelical faith. These two constituents are both Evangelical, one perhaps located more in support of capitalist lifestyles, and unaware of Evangelical complicity with market forces, and the other far more self-reflexive of the problems of Evangelical faith in capitalism. Their ecclesial life is “deeply flavoured” in different ways from their cultural “terroir”.¹³ They have a different “ecclesial terroir” to each other, but they share a very similar vision and horizon for the practice of faith planted and cultivated in those contexts, i.e., Evangelical, concerned to bring people to Christ more than to convert anyone to the category of Evangelicalism.¹⁴ Being able to summarise your thesis in a few sentences for wider conversation is considered *de rigueur* for researchers, as a means to ensure they have a clear focus to their research.¹⁵ But it is also important when asked by non-academics. When I explain my project to both ends of this Evangelical constituency, I do by saying I am exploring problems in the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism and how we might respond as Evangelicals. I have never been asked in response what I mean by Evangelical, nor asked what I mean by capitalism.¹⁶ It is only academics who reply that such examination cannot possibly be made, with Evangelicalism being too diffuse, and capitalism too broad for any meaningful review. Mark Knoll, a leading church historian, asserts that academics are wrong to claim the term Evangelical, despite “ambiguity, fluidity and imprecision” that cannot

¹³ Here I draw on Percy’s notion of “ecclesial terroir”, and the analogy between the different environments that produce the taste of a wine, i.e., soil, weather, topography, etc. and the nature of local ecclesial identity. See Martyn Percy, “Response to Part II: Savouring the Social-Sacred: Reading the Real Church,” in *Reasonable Radical: Reading the Writings of Martyn Percy*, ed. by Ian S. Markham and Joshua Daniel (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 129.

¹⁴ Hindmarsh makes this claim about Evangelicals. See Hindmarsh, “What is Evangelicalism?”

¹⁵ There is even an international Three Minute Thesis’ competition, see “Vitae: Realising the Potential of Researchers,” accessed 2nd April 2018, <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/events/three-minute-thesis-competition>, and “The Graduate School,” accessed 2nd April 2018, https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/32665/elevator_pitch_presentation.pdf.

¹⁶ Indeed, at a non-academic level, many Evangelical leaders have been querying the relationship between the two domains of Evangelical life and capitalism, for example see Sam Van Eman, *On Earth as it is in Advertising* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).

“meaningfully designate any single group of Christians.”¹⁷ I use the term Evangelical for now as a kind of illocutionary shell noun, i.e., an abstract noun to convey complex concepts, whose specific content will be explored in more detail later.¹⁸ Many of the academic interlocutors for the rest of this chapter use the term in their work without definition.¹⁹ Indeed, academics have even produced award-winning books about the future of Evangelicalism which do not define what they mean by Evangelicalism.²⁰

1.1.3 Observed Impulses: Towards and away from the church

Over my years of full time ministerial life, I have seen two impulses manifest in response to the forces I am looking to diagnose. Many Evangelicals have simply drifted away from, or dramatically left, the church.²¹ For these Christians, participation in any particular church is deemed unnecessary for faithful Christian living.²² I want to discover if such post-church manifestations are actually a further and continuing capitulation to the very forces they claim to rail against.²³

¹⁷ “National Association of Evangelicals,” accessed 10th April 2018, <https://www.nae.net/evangelical-whats-name/>.

¹⁸ John R. Searle, “A Classification of Illocutionary Acts,” *Language In Society*, 5.1 (1976): 1–23.

¹⁹ Andrew Root, a leading scholar in the area of Youth Ministry and Practical Theology, has produced a very recent work that seeks in part to trace the path of consumer mentality via Charles Taylor’s understanding of authenticity. Whilst acknowledging that it is capitalism that underpins such consumerism, Root uses the term capitalism with no definition. See Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

²⁰ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009).

²¹ For an early ethnographic survey of this phenomenon, see Alan Jamieson, *A Churchless Faith: Faith Journeys Beyond the Churches* (London: SPCK, 2002).

²² Luke Bretherton has identified four streams of Evangelical response to contemporary concerns that support my own observations here. See Luke Bretherton and Andrew Walker, “Introduction”, in *Remembering our Future: Explorations in Deep Church*, edited by Andrew Walker and Luke Bretherton (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), xvii.

²³ Perhaps one of the books that started the whole post-church movement and gave expression to Evangelicals ceding their imaginations for ecclesiology to modern culture, is found in Cathy Kirkpatrick et al., *The Prodigal Project: Journey Into the Emerging Church* (London: SPCK, 2000). Then, there is Dave Tomlinson, whose 1995 Post-Evangelical book has been released as an SPCK “Classic”. Dave Tomlinson, *The Post-Evangelical* (London: SPCK, 2014). Tomlinson ended up becoming an Anglican priest after his post-church foray. I heard him speak at an event, explaining how he had become an Anglican as he realised he could gather a crowd in a pub to drink beer and talk about Christianity, but never get those people to follow Jesus and make any commitments required for community.

I have also observed another impulse, a turn not away from the church, but perhaps back towards it. Evangelicals, realising their ecclesiology has all too often been amnesiac, have turned back into the church to recover a sense of Christian memory and identity.²⁴ Many of my contemporaries have made this turn, with a journey towards Rome and Canterbury. Some have done so in terms of church membership and association. Some of my pastoral colleagues have gone further with ordination into an Anglo-Catholic mode of ecclesial life.²⁵ I am of course readily aware that one can be Anglican and Evangelical. However, I have often also perceived some of my Evangelical Anglican friends to be making a move out of their Anglican traditions due to their Evangelicalism.²⁶ That is rather different to Evangelicals making a turn into Anglo-Catholic traditions. For many Evangelicals, it is as if they have reached a kind of jumping-off point. Some move out of, and away from, all church commitments, whilst others at the existential ecclesial precipice have instead turned around and back into a discovery of identity within the historical church.²⁷

²⁴ This process is seen in the works of D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999); also Melanie C. Ross, *Evangelical versus Liturgical: Defying a Dichotomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014); Kenneth J. Stewart, *In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past and The Evangelical Identity Crises* (London: IVP Books, 2017); and *Remembering our Future*, ed. by Walker and Bretherton. This recovery project to resource Evangelicals has even moved to a resourcement for Pentecostals with Gordon T. Smith, *Evangelical, Sacramental & Pentecostal: Why the Church Should Be All Three* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2017).

²⁵ For example, my friend, and former Vineyard Church senior pastor colleague, who is now an Anglican ordinand, writes about becoming a priest. See Daniel Warnke, "Practically Priest: Privileging the Lived in Ministerial Training", in *Reasonable Radical*, 164–179.

²⁶ Since April 1967, when the first National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC) met at Keele University, many Evangelical Anglicans have been trying to work out if they are Evangelicals first and Anglicans second, or vice versa; see Melvin Tinker, *The Anglican Evangelical Crisis* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 1995).

²⁷ For an example of a text that precipitated and catalysed the evacuation of church by many Evangelicals, see James Thwaites, *Church Beyond the Congregation: The Strategic Role of the Church in the Postmodern Era* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2000). "Congregations are inherently evil and are to be shaken off to enable Christians to engage fully in mission." George Barna, the US Christian pollster, vainly claimed that the fastest-growing group of Christians in the USA were those abandoning congregational life for the fertile lands of missional engagement; see George Barna, *Revolutions* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 61–68. Recent research shows this constituency are in fact the 'Dones' who cease to practice their faith with others, and whose faith collapses into the private God-spaces of secular and consumer culture; see Josh Packard and Ashleigh Hope, *Church Refugees: Sociologists Reveal Why People Are Done with Church But Not Their Faith* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2015). Alan Jamieson's research was one of the earliest studies and sample of 'exiles' of

Personally, I have found this Anglo-Catholic turn attractive in many ways. It seems to result in an ecclesiology that makes *more* of church, not less of it. As I listen to my peers describe their new Anglican ecclesial environs, they seem a little more able to resist the false imaginations to faithful Christian living that I battle. Not that I am lionising their church experiences, but I do perceive something about their Anglo-Catholic turn that provides them with a funded resistance to the deforming forces that are the focus of my thesis. There does seem to be a natural inclination for those from an Anglo-Catholic tradition to be more alert to the disposition of bodies in worship, and culture and theology.²⁸ For I know that I do not want to end up within a post-ecclesial existence, a place that seemingly makes nothing of church and capitulates completely to anomic imaginations for life. These personal reflections lead me to realise that my research project is inherently an *ecclesial* one. For my research problem is about the construction and disposition of bodies, social bodies, and the organisational forces that come to bear upon those bodies. Ultimately, my research project is about how the body of Christ is instantiated through belief and practice in everyday life, in relationship to other social bodies. My pastoral observations show that imaginations lead to practices and habits which then orient and create the social realities of life. In other words, life is first imagined before that imagination is then enacted. I want to know if my observations are correct and how Evangelicalism has imagined and practised its imaginations. As I now begin to move from these anecdotes of my own experience, I have already started to frame these into my initial research questions, that I now delineate further.

those done with church and permanently isolated with their faith, unable to form the commitments required for community life, see Alan Jamieson, *A Churchless Faith*. Another study explored those shifting from Evangelicalism to Rome, see Scot McKnight and Hauna Ondrey, *Finding Faith, Losing Faith: Stories of Conversion and Apostasy* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008).

²⁸ For example, see Tom Beaudoin, *Consuming Faith* (Plymouth: Sheed & Ward, 2003), 79. Beaudoin details how his Catholic experience of the mass oriented him instinctively to reflections on the nature of human bodies in social and worship arrangements. Also, see the work of Catholic John F. Kavanaugh, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981).

1.1.4 Resistance: Immune systems and pathogenesis

Luke Bretherton suggests that the church in terms of doctrine, belief and practice, can be understood in terms of its contextual challenges, like an immune system. This immune system defends against threats and adapts to new challenges.²⁹ I suggest his metaphor of an immune system can be extended further into the mechanism of *pathogenesis*. The church as a body in its contextual relationships, subject to immunological responses, often results in sickness and disease. Pathogenesis is the biological mechanism (or mechanisms) that give rise to the condition of disease. The term is also used to describe the origins and development of a disease, and diagnosis of whether it is chronic or acute, etc. With my ecclesial concerns, I find myself needing a similar diagnostic. For I am trying to determine the mechanisms, origins, and conditions of ill health in the Evangelical *body*. I want to understand the development of the disorders in structure and function by Evangelical ecclesiology, and what gave rise to the symptoms that my pastoral experience has seen manifest, such as ‘the dispensing of religious goods and services’.

The body of Christ is subject to interactions with environmentally mutating pathogens. There is no pristine DNA-encoded form of church despite the claims of some to the contrary.³⁰ The church has always been a *corpus mixtum* in terms of theological geography and especially in terms of its ‘biology’. I do not seek a ‘pure’ Evangelical ecclesiology. But I do propose my Evangelicalism as having lost something of its initial DNA where it was once better able to resist environmentally deforming interactions. I want to recover some of the *resistance genes*, so to speak, of my Evangelicalism to pathogenic mechanisms. My research therefore is initiated from an observed pathogenesis between Evangelicalism in its relationship to capitalism. For now, similarly with my use

²⁹ Luke Bretherton, “Beyond the Emerging Church,” in *Remembering our Future*, ed. Walker and Bretherton, 50.

³⁰ Martyn Percy, *Shaping the Church: The Promise of Implicit Theology (Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology)* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 165.

of the term Evangelical, I use the term capitalism, knowing that term needs defining, and I note this for now as a methodological consideration to which I will attend later.

If I can make a suitable account and diagnosis of the pathogenesis within this relationship, how might I then respond with resources that are internal to my own Evangelical tradition and vision of the body of Christ? In short, my overall method and aim is an account and diagnosis in the mode of ‘physician heal thyself’. For I make my research in a dialogical as well as dialectical mode;³¹ I wish to be diagnosing and repairing, rather than refuting and abandoning.

Having presented the main questions I intend to explore in the thesis, I now turn to consider the method I will use to answer them. First, with John Milbank, I examine whether capitalism in its relationship with Evangelicalism warrants my focus, and begin an examination of the diagnosis of that relationship. Second, with the work of William Connolly, I examine further the potential primary pathogenic mechanisms within that relationship. Third, I consider how Evangelicals have addressed this relationship and the suitability or lack thereof of their work for my research. Fourth, and finally, drawing on the work of Peter Ochs, Nicholas Healy, and Martyn Percy, I then explain and confirm my thesis method.

1.2 Evangelical Christianity: A new mutation of Protestantism?

Today then, Protestant Christianity may be functional for capitalism. But equally, capitalism is functional for the logic of Protestant Christianity carried to a new extreme.

— John Milbank, “Stale Expressions”

³¹ By dialectical, I have in mind the method of Jacques Ellul’s, and his three levels of the interpretive, which I will outline later in this chapter. Jacques Ellul, “On Dialectic,” in Clifford G. Christians and Jay M. Van Hook, eds., *Jacques Ellul: Interpretative Essays* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 293–304.

In 2008 Milbank produced his provocative paper, “Stale Expressions”.³² In it, he claims that Evangelicalism has “consummated” a general Protestant tendency into a specific relationship. That relationship is one where Evangelical Christianity and capitalism are intensely functional to the logic of each other.³³ Milbank does not define what he means by Evangelicalism or capitalism in his short paper. His view is one of the harshest critiques of the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism. If his intention was to provoke, he succeeded with me. For it was reading his article that spurred me on to consider my own research here, in part, to examine if his claims are true. My research will show that his claims rest on an ignorance of Evangelicalism, and an unwillingness to engage with readily available resources about Evangelicalism.

1.2.1 A Diagnosis: Commodification and voluntarism

For Milbank, Protestant Christianity and capitalism are not only mutually dependent on each other, they are mutually constituent to each other. Within that symbiotic relationship, something has recently emerged that is “quite simply a new mutation of Protestantism in its mutually constitutive relationship with capitalism.”³⁴ For Milbank, that mutation is Evangelicalism itself. If I parse that through my earlier suggestion of *pathogenesis*, Evangelicalism becomes a disease, and manifestation of a symbiotic relationship with capitalism.

Milbank goes further, insisting that Evangelicalism is where workers are “expendable” and consumers are simply a means for “recycling resources” to maximise profits. He writes, “There is only one business that can capitalise even this unavoidable

³² John Milbank, “Stale Expressions: The Managerialist-Shaped Church. A Call for the Parishes of England to Rise up against the Powerful Usurpers of Their Canonic and Constitutional Authority,” in *Society for the Study of Christian Ethics: The Ideology of Managerialism in Church, Politics and Society* (Oxford: Wycliffe Hall, 2007), 121.

³³ Although the above quote refers to Protestantism, Milbank’s article makes the claim that this Protestantism has developed into Evangelicalism, which embodies this functional logic par excellence, see Milbank, “Stale Expressions”, 117.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

point of transitional indifference [...] It is the trade in souls as perfected by Evangelical Christianity.”³⁵ Capitalism in its nascence is “reciprocally” linked to the Reformation. That reciprocal relationship develops and intensifies over time, until we arrive at the situation today where “the point of Christianity becomes mainly the production of more Christians.”³⁶

The desire of Evangelical church communities to see others come to faith in Christ emerges from a particular mechanism — the *production* of more Christians. Here we are to understand the Evangelical desire to see others come to faith in Christ as being *fused* with capitalism, where “Christianity is reduced to a readily graspable product.”³⁷ For Milbank, Evangelicalism is to be understood as an ecclesiology that intrinsically “further perfects capitalist practice.”³⁸ There is no *resistance*, only a deep symbiosis between capitalism and Evangelicalism. If true, this situation - this symbiotic relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism - has an internal logic and practice generated by the forces and mechanisms of capitalism. Milbank points towards commodification as *the* mutating mechanism at work. The desire to see others come to faith becomes a process of the commodification of people’s souls. This commodification of souls prevents any move from “person as object to becoming person as subject.”³⁹ Here, the ‘redeemed person’ has not surrendered anything of his identity, but instead he has increased his ‘freedom’ within a market society to form his own identity.

It is this captivity to free market logic that allowed Evangelicalism with its appeal through voluntarism to revive and spread itself so strongly.⁴⁰ We can understand Milbank here to be claiming that previous growth of Evangelicalism was due to its captivity to the logic of commodification in concert with a *Protestant voluntarism*. By *voluntarism*, one

³⁵ Ibid., 118.

³⁶ Ibid., 119.

³⁷ Ibid., 120.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 121.

assumes Milbank, in taking aim at the Protestant origins of Evangelicalism, has in mind a type of Weberian Protestant Work Ethic voluntarism.⁴¹ From Milbank, we are left with the prognosis that this captivity now carries the DNA of Evangelicalism's undoing, generating captivity to the forces of 'dispensing religious goods and services.'

Milbank's account of the Evangelical body is a little like that of a pathologist. He provides a diagnosis of a likely mechanism of disease. But he is unable to describe what *life* and better health might be like for Evangelicals in their ecclesiology. Yet, like Milbank, I am left asking - "what is going on here?"⁴² What is going on in the confluence of life in capitalism with the habits and practices of Evangelicalism?

1.2.2 Resistance and Capitulation: Re-Catholicisation and intensification

Milbank claims that the capitulation to the forces of commodification is only "half the story." The other half concerns two trajectories. First, an ongoing resistance and, second, an ongoing capitulation.⁴³ The resistance is a continuation of and "generalisation of the Oxford Movement."⁴⁴ This is an *educated* Protestantism increasingly engaging in a process of "re-catholicisation which has come to a higher valuation of the sacramental and of the church as a spiritual society whose purpose is to be the body of Christ and not simply to "bring people to the resurrected Jesus", as if this reality could be encountered outside sacramental and ecclesial mediation."⁴⁵ This correlates with my own earlier anecdotal observations of my peers, along with cited sources for an established reality, of an Anglo-Catholic turn. Milbank also confirms my other observation concerning an alternative post-church trajectory. He evidences this reality with reference to recent ecclesial developments within the Anglican church of alternatives to any re-

⁴¹ Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (Mineola, N.Y: Dover Publications, 2003), 243.

⁴² Milbank, "Stale Expressions", 118.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

catholicisation. Here, Milbank has “fresh expressions” in his sights. For “fresh expressions” and “mission-shaped church” run the risk of perpetuating an Evangelical problem.⁴⁶ That problem is the forming of church around further voluntarist behaviours of the “like-minded, who associate in order to share a particular taste, hobby or perversion.”⁴⁷ Within this, “the refusal to come out of oneself and go to church is simply the refusal of church per se.”⁴⁸ Milbank admits there is value to associations around shared interests, but he does assert most forcefully that the “state of affairs” of Evangelicalism in concert with capitalist practices is “manifestly evil” and is a substitute for real embodied church and mission.⁴⁹

Whilst Milbank’s claims align with some of my personal observations, they are also jarringly disjunctive. Is Evangelicalism really so completely enmeshed within the logic of capitalist practices that it is inherently evil? Beyond any hyperbole, I understand Milbank’s claim to be ecclesial, and Anglo-Catholic. Is the body of Christ competing against all other social bodies, and are all other *bodies* in relationship to the Body of Christ the anti-Christ? Milbank’s assertion does lead me to an ecclesial question. Has Evangelicalism resulted in an anomic existence that joins people directly to Jesus but not to his body, the church? Does Evangelicalism have an ecclesiology that has colluded and combined with the processes of commodification? Also, are there really only two trajectories, as Milbank claims, where “mass and elite Protestantism are going in two different directions”?⁵⁰ Are my alternatives either an elitist re-Catholicisation, or a continued mass market capitulation to market forces?

⁴⁶ Ibid., 124.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 127. For a more detailed assessment of Fresh Expressions, see Martyn Percy, “Old Tricks for New Dogs? A Critique of Fresh Expressions” in Martyn Percy and Louise Nelstrop, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008), 27–39. Percy reveals the obsession with the new, and rejection of any notion of previous understandings of the Church, manifest through a continuation of the homogenous group unit principle. The suspicion is that bourgeois niche self-interest funds much of the associations of these new groups.

⁵⁰ Milbank, “Stale Expressions”, 122

The Anglo-Catholic resistance to which Milbank points is an immediate ecclesial challenge to my own Evangelical ecclesiology, where it seems I have to jettison my Evangelicalism no matter what response I make. For Milbank seems to see the Anglo-Catholic turn as a move *away* from Evangelicalism, and a response not just to capitalism but to Evangelicalism itself. Even if Milbank is correct, and I have yet to test the validity of his claims, his response is insufficient for my desired reparative. For Milbank himself considers that resistance to the dislocating forces of consumer life within capitalism “seems well-nigh impossible,” even for the re-Catholicisation to which he directs us.⁵¹

1.3 Cultural Despisers and Cultural Accommodators

There is certainly capitalism without Christianity. But my focus is on Christian-capitalist assemblages ... Christianity and Capitalism have formed multiple assemblages, composed partly of elements that impinge *upon* one another, partly those that are differentially incorporated or infused *into* each other, and partly of those that *exceed the reach* of such connections.

— William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*

In the same year as Milbank’s article, 2008, Connolly produced his own work focussing on a diagnosis of the dependence of Evangelicalism and capitalism to each other. Where Milbank sees capitalism and Evangelicalism as mutually fused with each other, Connolly instead argues that it is Evangelicalism which has deformed the nature of capitalism. I now explore that claim and Connolly’s method, and correlate it further with Milbank. I will show that neither account or method provides the diagnostic and reparative I seek.

1.3.1 Resonance and Resistance: The Evangelical capitalist resonance machine

Connolly, in *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, sets out to diagnose how the “capitalist project” has been perverted and warped by its resonant relationship with

⁵¹ Ibid., 127.

conservative right-wing Christian religious beliefs.⁵² “The premise, the drive and anxiety informing this book” is the deforming forces of late capitalism and how Christianity gave rise to those forces.⁵³ Connolly’s work “addresses elements of volatility in capitalism and Christianity, as it also addresses resonances between them.”⁵⁴ Connolly names this intersection and resonance the *evangelical-capitalist machine*.⁵⁵ More specifically, Connolly claims that it is the relationship between the American Evangelical religious right and capitalism that gives rise to a variety of pathological behaviours in that relationship.⁵⁶

Connolly’s work, when first written, was provocative (rather like Milbank’s “Stale Expressions”), giving rise to some significant and important responses in terms of research projects and symposia.⁵⁷ Connolly’s work animated some Evangelicals to begin to explore what the real relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism might be.⁵⁸ Indeed, my reading of Connolly alongside Milbank spurred on my own research interests, and ultimately my project here. As my research has continued these last few years, I have noticed the responses to Connolly, after an initial flurry, have been rather scant.⁵⁹

⁵² William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), xi–xii.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 45. Connolly assumes a history and development of the relationship between American Christianity and capitalism. For a more comprehensive history, which is a fascinating, insightful and, at times, jocular assessment of Christianity in America, see Stephen J. Nichols, *Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to the Passion of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008). For an extremely extensive history of modern Evangelicalism in the US, see Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁵⁷ For example, see the symposium of the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, “Political Theology Network,” accessed 1st August 2017. <http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/symposium-on-william-e-connolly>. This led to several articles in *Political Theology* as a response to Connolly, and Connolly himself countering those responses. See William Connolly, “Capitalism, Christianity, America: Rethinking the Issues,” *Political Theology*, 12, no. 2 (January 2011): 226–236.

⁵⁸ For example, see Mathew Guest, “Evangelicalism and Capitalism in Transatlantic Context,” *Contemporary British Religion and Politics*, 4, no. 2 (2010): 257–299. Guest’s paper is a direct response to Connolly.

⁵⁹ A detailed search for accounts of Evangelicalism in relationship to capitalism show that very few have been made. Despite its title, John Hayes’ 2012 article focuses on mid eighteenth-century pre-Civil War Evangelicalism and the transmission of a type of Evangelical culture into present-day Southern

Connolly is sensitive and alert to there being multiple forms of capitalism. He sees a trajectory and development of various types of capitalism, where we have arrived at a particular version today.⁶⁰ This is late capitalism: “the latest incarnation of the capital-Christian complex, finding active expression in the United States, is distinctive and fateful in the danger it presents.”⁶¹ Those ‘fateful dangers’ are something Connolly spends little time delineating. His work begins with a short personal narrative on the demise of labour unions and democratic capitalism.⁶² Other than this, he offers no particular outline of the dangers he sees late capitalism as presenting. Indeed, he seems ambivalent about capitalism itself, the first sentence of his work making that very claim: “My relationship to capitalism [h]as long been ambiguous.”⁶³ But he is less ambiguous in wanting to “identity potential means by which to usher in new configurations” of capitalism.⁶⁴ He appeals for a vision of a new kind of capitalism, an “eco-egalitarian capitalism.”⁶⁵

My research problem does not seek a new form of capitalism, and I am perhaps ambiguous like Connolly about various *forms* of capitalism. Central to Connolly’s diagnosis is a contention that sits at the centre of my own research problem. For Connolly claims that previously a *religious ethos* was able to resist the pathologies of *early* capitalist consumption.⁶⁶ Connolly determines that later manifestations of capitalism

US Evangelicalism; see John Hayes, “The Evangelical Ethos and the Spirit of Capitalism,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 39, no. 3 (2012): 205-217; and Brian Steensland and Zachary Schrank, “Is the Market Moral? Protestant Assessments of Market Society,” *Review of Religious Research*, 53, no. 53 (2011): 257-277.

Brian Steensland and Zachary Schrank’s 2011 paper is more helpful for my project, employing a discourse analysis of market-related topics in two prominent Christian periodicals over a twenty-year period. An extensive search of online recent thesis results in locating this one work of practical theology, focused on the impact of brands and branding within Evangelical Christianity, see Chris Hodder, “Are relationships with brands problematic or beneficial to Christian faith?” (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Derby, 2017).

⁶⁰ Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, 9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 117. In contrast for a defence of capitalism as the basis of liberal democracy, see Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (Lanham, Maryland: Madison Books, 1982).

⁶⁶ Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, xiii.

emerged with forces that a *religious ethos* was unable to resist. An Evangelical ethos developed through its *resonance* with capitalism, that was then unable to resist the pathologies it had created in its relationship with capitalism.⁶⁷

1.3.2 An Embedded Ethos: Assemblages and countermovements

Connolly proposes that historical, ideological, and institutional variations of capitalism are best understood through the methodology of *assemblages*. In other words, different forms of capitalism exist due to varying cultural and contextual *assemblages*. In the western world, in particular the USA, Connolly claims capitalism has created a particular assemblage with US right-wing Evangelicalism.⁶⁸ To understand this *assemblage* we need to understand capitalist practices and the ethos embedded within those practices. It is the practices of capitalism and the practices of Evangelicalism, in concert and combination, that create a “spiral of resonances”⁶⁹. This concert is made through ‘assemblages’ of media, churches, cultural consciousness, and a “spiral of resonances” that produce the *Evangelical capitalist resonance machine*.⁷⁰

Like Milbank’s “Stale Expressions”, Connolly’s book was researched and written just prior to the international credit crunch of 2007 and published as that was unfolding.⁷¹ He later provided a response to critics of his book that pays heed to that credit crunch.⁷² Connolly suggests that the credit crunch did not cause a pause in the “evangelical-resonance machine,” but rather led to an intensification and “re-kindling” of it.⁷³ Here, the claim is that all political economies have an embodied ethos within them. It is not that

⁶⁷ Ibid., xiii.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 9-22.

⁶⁹ Ibid., xi.

⁷⁰ Ibid., xi.

⁷¹ Mervyn King was governor of the Bank of England from 2003 to 2013. King provides a first-hand account of how the credit crunch began in August 2007, see Mervyn King, *The End of Alchemy: Money, Banking, and the Future of the Global Economy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2017).

⁷² William Connolly, “Capitalism, Christianity, America: Rethinking the Issues”.

⁷³ Ibid., 228.

capitalist markets have disembedded from any religious ethos, but rather that they have taken their current shape from a new religious ethos provided by right-wing Evangelicals.⁷⁴ An embedding of a religious, and in particular Evangelical, ethos with capitalism has taken place. Connolly relies on Max Weber in order to assert that the Protestant Work Ethic is *the ethos* that was initially embedded in early capitalism.⁷⁵ Pathologies of early capitalist consumption were constrained by that Weberian Protestant Work Ethic and ethos. Where economists consider late capitalism to have become disembedded from any religious ethos, Connolly would have us understand how the Protestant Work Ethic mutated and intensified into the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism with an embedded religious ethos.⁷⁶ The Protestant Work Ethic and issues of providence in creation are the basis for the resonances that these beliefs have with the capitalist system. There is nothing original about Connolly's claim here, in linking certain forms of Protestant Christianity with capitalism.⁷⁷

Evangelicalism is not only incapable of resistance to any deforming forces of capitalism; it is now the primary driver of those forces. It is here where Connolly contends that only through an alternative and "counter political movement,"⁷⁸ a democratic and left-wing visualisation of a new ethos, that capitalism might be redeemed.⁷⁹ In particular, Connolly's vision requires a "world without divine providence, a self-regulating market, or consummate capacities of human mastery of the world."⁸⁰ Connolly has assumed that capitalist markets are redeemable and need to be redeemed. He also presumes that this liberal democratic vision stands in contrast to any Evangelical religious ethos. Connolly's boldest claim is aimed at questioning Evangelicals like myself, suggesting that those on

⁷⁴ Ibid., xiii.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁷ For example, see Guest, "Evangelicalism and Capitalism in Transatlantic Context," 261.

⁷⁸ Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, xii.

⁷⁹ Ibid., xiii–xiv.

⁸⁰ Ibid., xiv.

the edge of the “evangelical resonance machine” might connect with his vision.⁸¹ Taking aim at Evangelicals is easy sport, as we have seen with Milbank. It does not do justice to the complexity of how Evangelicals really relate to the world. Indeed, as already noted, Connolly’s presentation of Evangelical Christianity is decidedly anaemic. Whilst Connolly tries to show awareness of the various types of Christianity including Evangelicals, he does very little to show an understanding of their internal visions and aspirations.⁸² Instead he focuses on the epiphenomena of Evangelical worship practices in concert with late capitalism. The understanding and nuance he displays for neo-liberal non-Christians is not afforded for the object of his scrutiny — Evangelicals. Connolly’s jump from Weber’s Protestant Work Ethic to the practices of Evangelicals today is also insufficient warrant for his claims, and will not suffice for my own account.⁸³ I recognise the secondary, i.e., epiphenomena, of Evangelical behaviours in capitalism, but I do not recognise myself and my Evangelical peers in Connolly’s account of the ethos and nature of Evangelicals. Evangelicals may well spring from a Weberian Protestant Work Ethic and ethos and may also have a new ethos unable to resist the deforming forces of capitalism. But how did Evangelicals arrive at that condition today, and has their ethos lost all capability for resistance? Connolly does not provide an answer to that question.

Connolly is not seeking a non-religious ethos for his countermovement, just as he is not looking for a Christian one. His ambivalence about Christianity is clearly expressed: “The quickest way to put the point is therefore to say that the evangelical-capitalist resonance machine both poses dangers to resist and expresses one symptom of a larger condition to be addressed.”⁸⁴ Christianity, whilst the problem, can also be serviceable as

⁸¹ Ibid., xiv.

⁸² For example, Guest reminds us of how Connolly presents Evangelicalism as a monolithic block, unaware of its complexity and diversity, and is, for example, unable to pay heed to those Evangelicals already resisting associations between Evangelicalism and capitalist markets. See Guest, “Evangelicalism and Capitalism in Transatlantic Context,” 263.

⁸³ Guest demonstrates how Connolly is heavily indebted to Max Weber for making those links yet, having made that elucidation, remains overly indebted to Weber himself, see *ibid.*, 261.

⁸⁴ Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, 64.

part of the solution. Connolly, for example, is grateful for the spirituality of his Christian parents, for how spirituality and a Christian ethos can lead to healthy social arrangements.⁸⁵ This, however, is my main problem with Connolly. In responding to Connolly's argument, I want to be alert to the origins and loss of resistance by my Evangelicalism. But his vision is one that would ultimately denature Evangelicalism and render it as something other than Evangelical. Indeed, he seeks to strip an Evangelical ethos from its origins, beliefs, and practices, and redeploy it as a re-assembled useful resource within a non-Evangelical imagination and horizon. And all this when he has not understood Evangelicalism at all in terms of its origins, visions, and aspirations. Connolly seems to have become himself captive to a logic of capitalism, in seeing Evangelicalism simply as a resource to be cherry-picked for items that will support his democratic, left-wing vision.

Connolly believes Evangelicals like me are “teetering on the brink” of a new countermovement. That countermovement for Connolly is one where Evangelicals will need to “affirm a world without divine providence, a self-regulating market, or consummate capacities of human mastery of the world.”⁸⁶ This “creed”, as he calls it, will “activate positive political energy” for a countermovement.⁸⁷ I am sure Evangelicals might be willing to give up a belief in a self-regulating market and human mastery of the world. But I venture that, like me, they are unwilling to accept a world without divine providence and the involvement of God in his creation with his people. All those things are, I suggest, inimical to Evangelicalism. Ultimately Connolly's vision is one that wants to make use of a Christian ethos, but not the person of Christ. He makes the all too common mistake of not understanding how relationship with Christ is central to

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xiv.

generating Evangelical beliefs, practice, and ethos.⁸⁸ Evangelicals are not going to give up their belief in a Christ who entered materially and providentially into this world for the sake of a new neo-liberal political vision. Or perhaps some already are, by engaging in the post-church response I noted anecdotally, and that Milbank has registered.⁸⁹

Milbank alerts us further as to why Connolly's vision is faulty, or at least not one many Christians can accept, let alone Evangelicals.⁹⁰ All of Connolly's vision can be viewed as a claim to commitments within a theological horizon. Milbank does not reference Connolly, but he certainly has in mind correlationist accounts such as Connolly's that seek to 'out-narrate' a Christian theology, i.e., vision and horizon. For Connolly presents what Milbank would call an "idolatrous confinement" where a Christian knowledge of God is reduced to a correlation with the ultimate needs of a neo-liberal vision. Connolly's vision is exactly the type Milbank warns about, one that is reduced to a "sublimity beyond representation," merely confirming ideas of an "autonomous secular realm."⁹¹ Connolly would have me re-embed my Evangelical ethos into a neo-liberal vision and horizon. This is impossible, for any attempt to do so leads to the loss of any Evangelical ethos. For Connolly's account is far from neutral, with its own traditioned anti-theologies as extra-Scriptural authorities. And, as noted already, Connolly has not understood what an Evangelical ethos is really generated by. Connolly requires me to 'update' my Christianity to conform to his modern social theories and imaginations.

Connolly, like Milbank, has little expectation for the efficacy of his own vision to have any traction in the face of the strong deforming forces of capitalist consumption:

⁸⁸ Even a symposium in response to Connolly, and the subsequent publication of responses, did not see Connolly or his critics acknowledge the lack of account and understanding of the Evangelicals Connolly has in his sights. See Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*.

⁸⁹ There is now something of a *post* post-church movement, with some realising what they have lost in engaging in projects similar to Connolly's vision and horizon, for example, see Bouma, *Understand Emerging Church Theology*.

⁹⁰ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

⁹¹ Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 1.

“would capitalism be transfigured into something else if these activities and movements acquired impressive momentum? I am not sure.”⁹² Connolly’s work does correlate with that of Milbank, in so far as they both determine Evangelicalism (of a particular type) to be intrinsic to capitalism. Like one trajectory from Milbank, Connolly sees the future of thinking Evangelicals as lying outside of Evangelicalism. Again, I am left to ask: is my only hope a move out and away from Evangelicalism, into an Anglo-Catholicisation with Milbank, or into a post-church, left-wing political countermovement with Connolly? At least Milbank offers a vision of an *assemblage*, so to speak, around the person of Christ and His church. Evangelicalism is unable, within the accounts of Milbank and Connolly, to respond to the problems of life in late-capitalist market societies because it is the root cause of those problems, to be abandoned or mined as resources for something beyond recognition. After being offered these two post-Evangelical countermovements, I am led to ask: has anyone proposed and/or evidenced an Evangelical countermovement from an understanding of Evangelicals by an Evangelical?

1.4 Evangelical Accounts of the Relationship

I now examine Evangelical accounts of the relationship with capitalism, made by Pete Ward, Mathew Guest and Rob Warner. I will show the alternatives they provide to Milbank and Connolly, how they confirm the need to make my own account, and how they point towards a suitable method for that account.

1.4.1 Liquid Church: Further intensification of the relationship

Pete Ward, in his work *Liquid Church*, provides an account that contrasts starkly with those of Milbank and Connolly.⁹³ Milbank and Connolly seemingly despise the culture

⁹² Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, 145.

⁹³ Pete Ward, *Liquid Church* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002).

of capitalism and Evangelicalism. Ward, on the other hand, berates Evangelicals for not having embraced the forces of capitalism, in particular commodification, more readily. Ward goes so far as to claim, “I believe that commodification is essential to Evangelism.”⁹⁴ For “rather than condemn the shopper as materialist Liquid Church would take shopping seriously as a spiritual exercise.”⁹⁵ Where the underwriting of commodification by ecclesial practice is inherently evil for Milbank, according to Ward, it is a theological necessity, and a vital ecclesial practice for the church. Ward is certainly critical of the relationship between Christianity and capitalist markets, but his countermovement is to embrace and further intensify that which Connolly and Milbank delineate as the problem. Now, there are many reasons to take Pete Ward to task, not least of which is his overzealous wholesale adoption and extrapolation of Zygmunt Bauman’s liquid modernity for the construction of Liquid Church ecclesiology. Bauman is the first to warn of the new totalitarianism and wickedness inherent to Liquid modernity, that replaces the wicked in the Solid⁹⁶. That wickedness is then subsumed and smuggled into Ward’s Liquid Church thesis.

Ward’s claim is not that Evangelicals have failed to resist the formational forces of modern life such as with capitalism, but rather that they have failed to connect and integrate with those forces and mechanisms of modern life.⁹⁷ Ward would have Evangelicals further correlate with the imaginations and relationships of modern life, and not try to resist them.⁹⁸ Furthermore, a theological description of church can and should be mapped directly against contemporary “sociological descriptions of contemporary economic life”, such that the shape of church should be determined by the socio-logic of those forms of contemporary economic life.⁹⁹ This is what Ward imagines as ‘Liquid

⁹⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁹⁶ Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis, *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

⁹⁷ Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*, 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 3-4.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 11.

Church’, whereby it is not that Christianity has conformed too closely to, and set the agenda for, contemporary economic life, but rather it is that church has not gone far enough in accommodating to the possibilities of our new “network” society.¹⁰⁰

For Ward, there is a “resonance” between church and the “sociological theory of consumption” that necessitates church as ‘Liquid Church’ to conform to this social theory, such that it “must emerge from a connection to the spiritual desires and preferences of those who are so far outside of Church life.”¹⁰¹ For Ward, it is individual participations around cultural imaginations that give rise to its collective forms.¹⁰² Ward pits what he sees as organised church, with congregations and services as being “institutional” and directly against ‘Liquid Church’. For Ward, it is the *imaginings* of modern network society that produce participation and emerging social relationships and, ultimately, ‘Liquid Church’, and those stand contra the imaginations of the “institutional church”, or “institutional box” as he calls it.¹⁰³

This is rather troubling and appears to be a de-ecclesial move by Ward. His trajectory is one where ecclesiology is solely about individual relationship to Jesus; that then takes any and every form it wants to around imaginations for life in modern culture. Ward is not alone in making such de-ecclesial moves. Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, in a book popular with a wide segment of Evangelical church leaders, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, want to place relationship with Christ as prior to any notions of church.¹⁰⁴ For Hirsch, Frost, and indeed Ward, mission for Christians comes solely from individual relationship with Christ, not the church. This approach leads rather tragically to all notions of church being subject to the anomic imaginations of isolated consumers, where

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 209.

the forms of the church are completely dispensable by individuals.¹⁰⁵ There is also an epistemic problem that contributes to this issue that “depends upon the epistemological priority of the individual thinking self.” This self sees no place for the existing church as a social context to learn the stories and language of Christian faith.¹⁰⁶ Can we really separate the body of Christ from the person of Christ in social realities in this way? Or another way to ask this, is the body of Christ a free for all, with no shape, texture, or delineation, save the imaginings of whatever modes of culture give shape to it? Ward tries to offer a theological imagination for ‘Liquid Church’ but expresses it as one that needs to inhere and map against the contours of modern culture. Here, he also seems to have fallen foul of the warning by Milbank concerning how social theory is already a theology, and from that, how any imaginations for ecclesiology are already replete with theological commitments.¹⁰⁷ Why should the body of Christ take its ordering from other social realities, rather than take its priority from the person of Christ and the body of Christ, the church?

Ward, Connolly, and Milbank have offered me two polarities for my thesis problem. The despising of culture on the one hand, or extreme accommodation to culture on the other. Ultimately Pete Ward may be the logical conclusion to, and manifestation of, the observed problems of my Evangelical ecclesiology, and an embodiment of Milbank’s thesis. Is there something between these accounts? A *via media* that offers an understanding of Evangelical Christianity better nuanced with regard to its relationship with capitalist markets? And would such a *via media* enable me to perceive alternative ecclesial practices that neither overly refute the market nor accommodate it, whilst taking

¹⁰⁵ I have taken Hirsch and Frost and this position to task in more details in, Jason Clark, “Consumer Liturgies and their Corrosive Effects on Christian Identity,” in *Church in the Present Tense*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2011), 45.

¹⁰⁶ David Fitch has outlined this problem, see “Missio Alliance,” accessed 10th April 2018, <http://www.missioalliance.org/missiology-precudes-ecclesiology-the-epistemological-problem/>.

¹⁰⁷ For a summary of this thesis by Milbank, see Fergus Keer, “Simplicity Itself: Milbank’s Thesis,” *New Blackfriars*, 73, no. 861 (1992): 307, and Milbank himself, John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 382.

seriously critiques of the church and market? Could such accounts also respond to the claims by Milbank, Connolly, and Ward, attending to the issues of commodification, and assemblage by Evangelicalism with capitalism, but by continuing to be inherently Evangelical? It is to that possibility that I now turn.

1.4.2 Congregational Studies and Historical Accounts

Pete Ward's proposal is made without any concrete observations of Evangelical life. Indeed, he goes so far as to claim his proposed ecclesial countermovement of Liquid Church is an "imaginary exercise."¹⁰⁸ Milbank and Connolly also have no substantive account of lived Evangelical life to warrant their claims. There is a danger in the making of such imaginary accounts, to which, ironically, Pete Ward is attentive with his later work. A danger where "we are prone to a sleight of hand that appears to make social theory appear to be a description of social reality — which of course it is not."¹⁰⁹ Ward seems to have fallen prey to this own sleight of hand. Accounts from social theory and/or theology must correlate with concrete lived realities if they are to attend to my research problem. It will not suffice to propose *hydroponic* ecclesiologies that are not rooted in social reality. Indeed, my intuition, subject to further work in this thesis, is that these imaginary ecclesiologies are epiphenomena of the pathogenic mechanism of commodification. The generating of more and more fanciful ideas of what church should be, is a manifestation of the very pathogenesis I am seeking to address.

So where have others made accounts — concrete accounts — from observations of Evangelical Christianity in its relationship to capitalism? Eve Poole provides an account of views by the Anglican church on recent forms of capitalism. Her account is partially

¹⁰⁸ Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Pete Ward, "Introduction," in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, edited by Pete Ward (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 4.

attentive to the Evangelicalism within Anglicanism.¹¹⁰ Then there are specialist studies, such as the work of Stewart Davenport. He concentrates his account on the relationship of North American Evangelical Protestant Christians to capitalist markets between 1815 and 1860.¹¹¹ There are, in addition, some rather dated works like that of Craig Gay on earlier forms of capitalism.¹¹² A more recent work closer to Evangelicalism, but certainly not by self-identified Evangelicals, has been written by Peter Block, Walter Brueggemann, and John McKnight.¹¹³ There are also two Grove Booklets by Peter Heslem, one before the 2007 credit crunch and one as a response afterwards.¹¹⁴ The earlier of these sets issues of globalisation against an Evangelical biblical story. The latter explores faith and enterprise. This small foray is very limited and presages the need for more detailed accounts. Indeed, not only can award-winning books on Evangelicalism written by academics fail to define Evangelicalism, they can also be written on the cultural captivity of Evangelicals with scant reference to the forces of capitalism.¹¹⁵

It seems that accounts made by Evangelicals intramurally in order to understand Evangelicalism in relationship to capitalism, are rather rare. Capitalism may be the water that Evangelicals swim in and fail to notice, let alone question. There have been several works by those close to Evangelicalism who take Evangelicalism to task. But these works

¹¹⁰ Poole provides an account of Anglican theological assessments of late capitalism. However, her sources are useful for our account, in particular in highlighting the work of Peter Sedgwick. See Eve Poole, *The Church and Capitalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹¹¹ Stewart Davenport, *Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon: Northern Christians and Market Capitalism, 1815–1860* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

¹¹² Despite the title of his work, Craig Gay's account is now somewhat dated and provides only a brief historical account of the development of capitalism and Evangelicalism, with a sociological reading of North American Evangelicals in their relationship to capitalism through the lens of democratic and republican politics, in reaction to the forces of secularisation in the mid-to later-20th century. His account is useful for us with regard to the interactions of Evangelicals within secular forces, but is limited by its specific US-centric political reading. We are looking for a much broader account of Evangelicals within the North Atlantic context and capitalism. See Craig M. Gay, *With Liberty and Justice for Whom?: The Recent Evangelical Debate Over Capitalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991).

¹¹³ Peter Block, Walter Brueggemann, and John McKnight, *An Other Kingdom: Departing Consumer Culture* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016).

¹¹⁴ Peter S. Heslem, *Globalization; Unravelling the New Capitalism* (Cambridge: Grove Booklets, 2002), and *Transforming Capitalism: Entrepreneurship and the Renewal of Thrift* (Cambridge: Grove Booklets, 2010).

¹¹⁵ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 50. Rah has one sole reference to the forces of capitalism in relationship with Evangelicalism.

often present a simplistic notion of the modern church being a capitulation to some monolithic notion of Christendom, and a call to ecclesiologies formed around social and cultural landscapes.¹¹⁶ Despite their claims of how the church has capitulated to culture, my intuition, subject to my research here, is that these works are themselves deeply flawed as expressions of accommodations to capitalism imaginations.

Some accounts made of Evangelicalism in its developments within broader cultural relationships are closer to my situation. One such account is from Guest, who has made a substantive study of Evangelicalism in its relationship to modern culture, including capitalism.¹¹⁷ He then built on that work to make a more specific account of Evangelicalism's relationship with capitalism that was in part a rejoinder to Connolly's work.¹¹⁸ In surveying the sources that Guest uses for his account, the lack of references to other accounts by Evangelicals of the relationship of capitalism to Evangelicalism is striking.¹¹⁹ Guest makes use of nearly 50 sources, none of which are accounts of the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism. Moreover, where his sources deal with the relationship of Christianity to capitalism, they do so from within a broader methodology of spirituality (or religion generally), and of cultural formation. Guest has one single source to account for the origins and development of the relationship of capitalism with Evangelicalism. That source is Weber's, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.¹²⁰ And that is despite Guest asking us, as I have already observed, to note how Connolly relies too heavily on Weber's account of the Protestant Work Ethic.¹²¹ Guest's slightly earlier and more extensive work in providing an account of Evangelicalism and its relationship to contemporary culture, makes use of over 260

¹¹⁶ For example, see John Drane, *The McDonaldisation of the Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000) and John Drane, *After McDonaldisation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

¹¹⁷ Mathew Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture: A Congregational Study in Innovation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

¹¹⁸ Guest, "Evangelicalism and Capitalism in Transatlantic Context."

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 277–279.

¹²⁰ Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 257.

¹²¹ Guest, "Evangelicalism and Capitalism in Transatlantic Context," 261.

sources.¹²² These sources demonstrate a similar lack of accounts of how capitalism relates to Evangelicalism. Again, Weber's Protestant Work Ethic is the sole account to understanding Evangelicals in relationship to capitalism.¹²³

Guest makes use of David Bebbington's historical account of Evangelicalism.¹²⁴ He highlights that, whilst Bebbington's account is expansive and extensive, it does not consider the relationship of Evangelicalism as it developed within capitalism. Bebbington himself is primarily concerned with Evangelicalism's interactions with the Enlightenment, and goes so far as to dismiss the need to understand how Evangelicalism relates to capitalism.¹²⁵ Guest further claims that a complex and multifaceted exploration of the broader "social phenomena" of Evangelicalism is still yet to be made. For example, he notes a need for understanding the development of Evangelicalism in relation to the social anxieties of the new leisured and middle classes with emerging capitalist cultures.¹²⁶

1.4.3 The Protestant Work Ethic: A continued dependence on Weber

In searching for additional intramural accounts of Evangelicalism and its relationship to various cultural settings, we find that Warner offers a more extensive work.¹²⁷ Warner's account is very close to the context of my thesis, taking in my own wider Evangelical community, and that of my own church denomination. Warner cites over 700 sources for his impressive account of Evangelicalism.¹²⁸ Yet, as with Guest and others, the only

¹²² Guest undertook a study and survey of two Evangelical congregations within the same Church, St Michael-le-Belfrey in York. Guest evidences manifestations similar to my own observations of the forces of capitalism at work in the worship life and practices of Evangelicals. See Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 242-255.

¹²⁴ David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

¹²⁵ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 272.

¹²⁶ Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 23-27.

¹²⁷ Rob Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism, 1966-2001: A Theological and Sociological Study* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

¹²⁸ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 249-276.

explicit account of Protestant Christianity and capitalism within these sources is made with Weber. Warner does highlight, as does Guest, some accounts from people outside Evangelicalism within methodologies of religion and culture, where the dynamics of marketplace and religion feature.

This lack of accounting is significant. For example, Warner examines how Evangelicals have pragmatically used the tools of marketing available in late-capitalist market societies, such as Alpha, in response to cultural factors of the Enlightenment and existentialism. But he does not explain how Evangelicals ended up making use of capitalist practices like marketing. Warner is important because he confirms my observations of how Evangelicals have indeed taken up the tools of capitalism for the propagation and experience of faith. But we are left needing to understand how and why that state of affairs occurred.¹²⁹ It is in the work of Bebbington that Warner (like Guest) finds his understanding of Evangelicalism, and of the cultural factors for understanding the nature of its larger social context.¹³⁰ This reliance on Bebbington may have led to a lack of consideration of capitalism.¹³¹

It would seem that those who have surveyed Evangelicalism up close confirm the need for my account. My work may be seen in part as an extension and broadening of the work begun by Guest and Warner. Having established the need for the making of my own account, I now outline the method I will use. I first highlight methodological issues integral to this work, before then outlining the structure of the rest of my thesis.

¹²⁹ For a thorough assessment of how Alpha is both a product of capitalist possibilities and simultaneously a creative response to them, see Stephen Hunt, *The Alpha Enterprise* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004). For other extensive assessments of Alpha, see, Andrew Brookes, ed., *The Alpha Phenomenon: Theology, Praxis and Challenges for Mission and Church Today* (Peterborough: CTBI Publications, 2007); and Chris Hand, *Falling Short?: The Alpha Course Examined* (Epsom: Day One Publications, 1998).

¹³⁰ Whilst Warner sees himself building upon the historical account of Bebbington, he does claim to modify Bebbington's thesis, *ibid.*, 20.

¹³¹ Bebbington is dismissive of the influence of capitalism upon Evangelicalism; see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 272. We shall return to this when we review Bebbington in detail.

1.5 A Contested Tradition: Locating the research method

...evangelicalism, we contend, is strong not because it is shielded against, but because it is — or at least perceives itself to be — embattled with forces that seem to oppose or threaten it. Indeed, evangelicalism, we suggest, *thrives* on distinction, engagement, tension, conflict, and threat. Without these, evangelicalism would lose its identity and purpose and grow languid and aimless.

— Christian Smith and Michael Emerson, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*

I established earlier how we might understand the interactions of Evangelical beliefs and practices within contextual challenges as being like the immune system of a body interacting with environmental factors. I also assume that a contestation of identity within changing environmental conditions is the nature of all Christianity. In other words, Christianity is always contested, and Evangelicalism is especially so, because it has thrived on contestation for its genesis and formation. Christian Smith highlights this internal orientation of Evangelicals, as *active engagement* towards the world.¹³² Evangelicals, institutionally and individually, have an innate capacity and ability to renegotiate their identity within changing cultural environments. In other words, as Guest notes from Smith, “Evangelicals *do* accommodate their position in response to cultural change, but part of this process of accommodation involves a revitalisation of Evangelical identity, not least by focusing on new sources of opposition.”¹³³ There are, however, others like D. A. Carson who contest strongly for a *givenness* to Evangelicalism that does not allow for any renegotiation of convictions and boundaries.¹³⁴ Warner has taken claims like Carson’s to task.¹³⁵ Warner has demonstrated how Evangelicalism is indeed a contested and renegotiated tradition, such that a recent form of Evangelicalism (the very kind D. A. Carson seeks to underwrite as a pure Evangelicalism):

¹³² Christian Smith and Michael Emerson, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 88.

¹³³ Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 16.

¹³⁴ Donald A. Carson, “Domesticating the Gospel,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6, (Winter 2002): 82–97.

¹³⁵ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 35.

has unconsciously assimilated a neoplatonic theism, a Reformation forenso-centric soteriology, a Pietist individualism, and enlightenment epistemology and a pre-critical tendency to literalism, then Evangelicalism is a complex construct of historical theology, formulated through an often unperceived interaction with its cultural setting, rather than ... a confident and un-reflexive formulation, unadulterated, timeless, and universally applicable distillation of the Gospel of Christ.¹³⁶

Bebbington has provided the most detailed and widely accepted historical account of the development of Evangelicalism in Britain to date.¹³⁷ Even a cursory reading of Bebbington reveals the concrete history of Evangelicals as one of cultural accommodation, resistance, and revitalisation.¹³⁸ There is no pristine form and singular Evangelical tradition to transmit unsullied by new and emerging cultures. This leads to further methodological considerations that flow from notions of contestation and re-negotiation. For I am encouraged about the possibility of my own reparative account by the observations of Smith, Guest, and Warner that Evangelicalism engages and revitalises itself through ‘self-critique’. I locate my method within this Evangelical horizon of ‘self-critique’, as I reconceptualise in order to revitalise, rather than repudiate, my Evangelical tradition.¹³⁹

1.5.1 Blueprint Ecclesiologies and Reparative Reasoning: Rootlessness versus indebtedness

...theodramatic ecclesiology is not governed by the blueprint criteria of completeness, normativity, universal application and systematic coherence. Rather is it judged by how well it promotes the church’s practical coherence with the principle laid down by Paul, that the church should boast in the cross of Jesus Christ, and only in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Its assessment is therefore in terms of how well it fosters the church’s truthful witness and its members’ discipleship within this particular context, as well as its practical prophetic force and application within a particular scene of the theo-drama.

— Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*

¹³⁶ Ibid., 35.

¹³⁷ Again, for a more recent history that covers the USA, as well as the UK, see the five-volume History of Evangelicalism Series, edited by David W. Bebbington and Mark A. Noll.

¹³⁸ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.

¹³⁹ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 14.

Nicholas Healy articulates a theodramatic horizon for ecclesiology as part of his broader project of a “practical-prophetic ecclesiology.”¹⁴⁰ For Healy’s theodramatic is performative, and a method to judge the ecclesial faithfulness of those performances. This method of ecclesial assessment attends to the concrete nature of the church, to enable the church to make performative responses to such assessments. “Ecclesiology’s main function is to help the church respond as best it can to its context.”¹⁴¹ I am making my own ecclesial assessment in a similar vein, of the failings of Evangelical ecclesiology in the particular context of life in capitalism. I do so in order to make a reparative response, i.e., how Evangelicals might live more faithfully to their theological visions and horizons. Healy reminds us that ecclesiology all too often becomes something other than a performative response, reduced instead to highly systematic and abstract theory “focused more upon finding the right things to think about the church rather than oriented to the living, rather messy, confused and confusing body that the church actually is. It displays a preference for describing the church’s theoretical and essential identity rather than its concrete and historical identity.”¹⁴² My goal is not to define *correct* ecclesiological method, but to broaden more concrete forms of ecclesiological method and reflection.¹⁴³ In order to talk about the concrete church, it is also important to know what that is not. It is not the empirical church versus its theological ideal, “an ecclesial equivalent of Nestorianism.”¹⁴⁴ Neither is it understanding the church as a solely human production and activity, which is ecclesial Ebionism.¹⁴⁵ In short, it is not about the transmission of theories to others, which are, or might one day, be put into practice.¹⁴⁶ For the church is

¹⁴⁰ Healy draws directly and heavily upon Urs von Balthasar and his ideas of theodramatic theory. This theodramatic theory makes possible a theological description of the church that is not abstract, and also acknowledges the sinfulness of the church, see Chapter 3, ‘A Theodramatic Horizon’, in Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁴¹ Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*, 22.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ For this is to split the church into a human part and a divine part, *ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴⁵ The denial of any divine nature, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

about a distinctive way of life lived around the person of Jesus Christ: “its life takes concrete form in the web of social practices accepted and promoted by the community as well as in the activities of its individual members.”¹⁴⁷

This can be overlaid with those ecclesial responses that convey vociferous commitments to anything other than any previous church way of life, for a post-church life as ‘hydroponic ecclesiologies’. Post-church ecclesiologies are in actual fact far from rootless, and are deeply embedded in commitments to social, political, and consumer imaginations and horizons. One suspicion my thesis will test, is that the root system to post-church ecclesiologies is planted deeply in the soil of capitalism, and that a celebration of the self, nurtured in previous Evangelical worship environments, has continued along a logical trajectory in capitalism into unfettered agency. Those once ‘God made’ in their worship now make God in the image they require for the way of life they desire, a way of life free from the inconveniences of shared commitments with others. The inability to admit and commit to any shared ecclesial horizon of the church in history is part of the pathogenesis I am looking to diagnose and respond to. For many post-church people, a definition of ecclesiology is not just difficult, it is psychosomatically painful.¹⁴⁸ My thesis will explore if and how consumer culture has trained people into a solipsistic existence which leaves them unable to engage in the relational commitments necessary for the “miscible” nature of Church life.¹⁴⁹ To engage in church with others is to induce existential angst about violating the self of consumer agency. Many are unable to describe themselves in terms of any identity located in and with others, and are trapped looking in the mirror of their own reflection for ecclesial commitments. Percy discerns and

¹⁴⁷ By practices, Healy has in mind David Kelsey’s definition of “practice” from *To Understand God Truly*, p.118, that is based upon Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), and Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*, 5.

¹⁴⁸ Martyn Percy observes how Fresh Expressions have one thing in common; the avoidance of the word ‘church’, because “Church is boring, cumbersome, institutional, messy and difficult.” Martyn Percy, *Shaping the Church*, 78.

¹⁴⁹ For an understanding of the phrase “miscible life of church,” see *ibid.*, 78.

diagnoses such ecclesial manifestations and phenomena as a kind of “sacralised narcissism.”¹⁵⁰

This modern problem of systematised accounts of church, separated from the complexities of concrete everyday life, is the construal of *blueprint ecclesiologies*.¹⁵¹ Such *blueprint ecclesiologies* are overly systemised theological construals of the church into idealised “supermodels” of ecclesiology.¹⁵² The primary concern here is with how these accounts are funded by modern modes of thinking and commitments into abstracted visions of church. Healy almost certainly does not have in mind in his writing the rank-and-file of Fresh Expression post-church practitioners in the UK. But the shoe does fit, so to speak, with the endless proposals about what church should be, by those incapable of performing those idealisations.¹⁵³ For these idealised visions of “blueprint ecclesiologies” can never live up to any concrete and quotidian realities of church life.¹⁵⁴ We saw how Ward’s ecclesial account was self-consciously made as an “imaginary exercise.” Ward’s ‘Liquid Church’ is, in some regards, an exemplar of a “blueprint ecclesiology.”

A contrast to such “blueprint ecclesiologies” might be found with Peter Ochs notion of “reparative”. Stephen Kepnes draws on the “reparative” method of Peter Ochs, and claims there is a place of respect for our forebears: “Since our times are different, there is no reason to assume that our forebears’ solutions will necessarily be ours. At the same time, we need not throw everything out and start again but instead, we must adapt, change, and ‘repair’ the wisdom of our mothers and fathers so that it works more

¹⁵⁰ Percy has in his sights here Fresh Expressions, and makes a similar correlation with Milbank to my own, see Percy, *Shaping the Church*, 76-77.

¹⁵¹ Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*, chapter 2, “Blueprint Ecclesiologies.”

¹⁵² Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*, 32.

¹⁵³ See Percy, *Shaping the Church*, 68–69 for an overview of a tranche of new ecclesial groups whose self-narrations fit my categorisation here of ‘hydroponic ecclesiologies’.

¹⁵⁴ This reminds me of a friend, part of a Fresh Expressions in London. When I asked him about the progress of their church planting after two years of work by his team, his response was that they were closer to an idea of what church should be, and might be ready to try something in the future.

appropriately for us.”¹⁵⁵ We can assume those forebears sought to respond to their own contexts as best they could. We can take their wisdom and make our own responses. In other words, we do not need to throw the baby out with the bathwater.¹⁵⁶ Ochs’s “reparative” method would also have us consider Evangelicalism as a communal process of suffering in changed conditions, where beliefs and practices are performed and re-narrated to provide a healing response to the problems of emerging capitalist society. Ochs’s method also invites us to consider how an examination of the habits and practices of Evangelicals might provide a “thick” description of identity formation and socialisation.¹⁵⁷ For Ochs, “thinking properly happens after a group performance of thinking and acting to re-describe, organize, and map what just happened.”¹⁵⁸ With Healy and Ochs, we might understand the development of Evangelicalism as a communal process of suffering within changed conditions — particularly that of emerging late capitalism — a location where beliefs and practices are performed and re-narrated to provide a healing response to problems of faithful living in that context.

1.5.2 Ambiguity, Possibility and Intelligibility: Establishing definitions, terms and limitations

Having established the context, need and the dialogical mode of my project, it is time to face the most challenging aspect for my research method, that readers have no doubt already been asking. How can I make a meaningful account of such broad domains, i.e., Evangelicalism and capitalism? How do I undertake such a task without ‘biting off more

¹⁵⁵ Stephen Kepnes distils and summarises Peter Ochs’s method of ‘reparative reasoning’ in Steve D. Kepnes, “Peter Ochs: Philosophy in the Service of God and the World,” *Modern Theology* 24, no. 3 (2008): 499–503, 499. Ochs is a Jewish Pragmatist theologian whose work is hard to categorise, but straddles the fields of theology, philosophy, and ethics.

¹⁵⁶ Many consider this methodology of Ochs to be too conservative, too unwilling to repudiate things that ought to be repudiated. For example, James K. A. Smith takes Ochs to task for failing to repudiate and critique modernity. See James K. A. Smith, “How Religious Practices Matter: Peter Ochs’s ‘Alternative Nurturance’ of Philosophy of Religion,” *Modern Theology* 24, no. 3 (2008): 469–478.

¹⁵⁷ Smith demonstrates how Ochs’s reparative method can be used for such descriptions and accounts of communities. See Smith, “How Religious Practices Matter,” 472–473.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

than I can chew,' so to speak? How can I talk intelligibly about these two territories, without absurd reductions and inappropriate extrapolations from the broadly general to the specific? This challenge is not unique to my work; others have faced it with their research.

For example, in practical theology it is common to undertake a study of one or two congregations, then to extrapolate from that across all of Evangelicalism.¹⁵⁹ Guest undertook his PhD work with such a study of one church community. Of course, it is impossible to extrapolate from one congregational study against all of Evangelicalism, to move from the specific to the general so readily. But it does not make the attempt invalid or unwarranted, or unhelpful. In a similar vein, Warner completed his historical account as his 'case study' of Evangelicalism.¹⁶⁰ Warner's 'case history' spans a very particular period of time, with a particular focus on a recent transformation of British Evangelicalism. Even with Warner's focus on the period of 1966-2001 and English Evangelicals, he comes in for immediate criticism for not paying attention to Evangelicalism in its wider nature and instantiations. There is a necessary paucity to his historical account, something I suspect Warner would be the first to admit.¹⁶¹ One is left wondering how to speak about Evangelicalism if one must 'boot up' a complete history and account of Evangelicals, let alone then bring Evangelicalism into contact with any particular domains for examination. Those expert in congregational studies like those of Guest, and mixed method accounts like those of Warner's, are mindful of the potential

¹⁵⁹ Guest is a key example of this method, see Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary culture*.

¹⁶⁰ Warner's successful PhD details this historical method in "Fissured Resurgence, Developments in English Resurgence Pan-Evangelicalism 1966-2001" (PhD Thesis, Kings College London, 2007). This PhD thesis was later edited into the book *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*.

¹⁶¹ For example, see Christopher Cocksworth, review of Rob Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism 1966-2001: A Theological and Sociological Study* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007); Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 222-224.

and limits of their methods.¹⁶² If they have been able to do so, it cannot be beyond the reach of my project to do likewise.

David Martin is helpful here, in facing head-on these methodological constraints I face. For Martin claims that in trying to present any accounts of “modern ecclesiologies”, we are always forced into ambiguous usages of conceptions and deployments. However, such ambiguity often reveals the “actual situation” in which church communities interact with other social bodies and forces.¹⁶³ My account will by necessity incorporate such ambiguity when seeking to describe Evangelicalism in relation to capitalism, just as all other robust accounts have to. Martin would say the ambiguity of my account carries with it the possibility of revealing something that overly focussed accounts cannot make.

1.6 Map Making: Research and thesis design

“That’s another thing we’ve learned from your Nation,” said Mein Herr, “map-making. But we’ve carried it much further than you. What do you consider the largest map that would be really useful?”

“About six inches to the mile.”

“Only six inches!” exclaimed Mein Herr. “We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!”

“Have you used it much?” I enquired.

“It has never been spread out, yet,” said Mein Herr: “the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.”

— Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded: Fully Illustrated Edition*

I am building an eclectic method to identify the pathogenesis of Evangelicalism within capitalism. The rest of this thesis chapter now explains and justifies that method and research design. If I am to find a resistance gene within Evangelicalism, then I will need to make a map. Map-making is the over-arching concept for my thesis method as a whole, in terms of its nature, aims, and limitations. For, “a map always *manages* the reality it is

¹⁶² For example, see Martyn Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture*, 106–109, for delineation of the potential of congregational studies.

¹⁶³ David Martin, *Reflections on Sociology and Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 127.

trying to convey. No map perfectly captures the territory it surveys; there is always too much to see; too much to weigh and discern; too much to be interpreted and then refracted back. All maps are partial interpretations of reality.”¹⁶⁴ The map is never the territory. Any mapping of any territory is flawed, for it is an abstraction of the reality of a territory. In other words, the description of the thing is never the thing itself. An ideal map in acknowledgement of this would contain a map of the map of the map, etc., in endless self-reflexiveness. Whilst any map is an abstraction, the reality is we cannot navigate a territory without abstraction. Luis Borges took the above story from Lewis Carroll and made it into his own single-paragraph short story.¹⁶⁵ Baudrillard, following Borges, suggested that map-making is now impossible, because the map that once covered over reality has ceased to exist even as a map, along with the disappearance of the reality it once covered.¹⁶⁶ The territory of Evangelicalism is in an immense landscape with many extensive archipelagos, subterranean outposts, and outlying trading stations, all within the extended socio-political geography of capitalism. There is a danger in trying to speak meaningfully of Evangelicalism in its relationship to capitalism that I fall into the trap Lewis Carroll and Borges alerts us to, of needing a map that is on the scale of one mile to one mile.¹⁶⁷

My account will be a necessary abstraction, not just in terms of its scale, but in terms of what territory it details, and the legend provided for its navigation. As already noted from Martin, ambiguity and abstraction do not dictate a lack of meaning. Ambiguity

¹⁶⁴ Martyn Percy, *The Wisdom of the Spirit: Gospel, Church, and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 31.

¹⁶⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1998), 325. Written in the form of a literary forgery, “The Borges story,” credited fictionally as a quotation from “Suárez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lérida, 1658”, imagines an empire in which cartography has become so precise, that maps are made to the same scale of the empire itself. The story was first published in *Los Anales de Buenos Aires*, año 1, no. 3, as part of a piece called “Museo” under the name B. Lynch Davis, a joint pseudonym of Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casare, see “1946,” Borges Centre, accessed 26th May 2018, <http://www.borges.pitt.edu/node/130>.

¹⁶⁶ Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulations,” in *Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) 166–184.

¹⁶⁷ Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded: Fully Illustrated Edition* (Altenmünster: Jazzybee Verlag, 2015), 73.

and abstraction are required for meaning-making of complex situations. A measure of my map's accuracy will be whether its reductions cause it to lose the very things it sought to navigate, rather than the things it did not seek to explore. Maps also require interpretation, a process that gives rise to major errors. My map will come with my own theological interpretation and its own risks of error. My own assessment of my interpretation will be made by seeking to return and navigate the current state of affairs that gave rise to my research, i.e., am I able to better navigate my current situation as a result of my thesis? Like the map-maker this will be a work that attempts "... to render sociological or historical content more intelligible than it was in the experience of those who lived it ... a reconstruction that aspires to confer intelligibility on human existence."¹⁶⁸ The map-making method of my thesis functions as a kind of heuristic concept map, able to trace correspondence between church acts and beliefs in order to allow for instruction, construction and evaluation of the context of Evangelicalism within its relationship to capitalism ¹⁶⁹ This heuristic is also strategic, in order that the thesis findings might be deployed by other Evangelicals as a map for their own contexts.

I will be making five maps for my account, in five chapters, that aspire to a conference of intelligibility. I will superimpose each map one upon the other. For map makers have for some time engaged in the process of 'map overlaying', superimposing multiple thematic maps to reveal optimal locations. In 'map overlaying' physiographic factors are given a tone — the darkness of the tone denoting perhaps the cost values for those locations. Then social values perhaps are given a darker tone. The overlaying of these maps produces a map where combined tonal values contrast with areas of lesser

¹⁶⁸ Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol. 1: Montequieu, Comte, Marx, Tocqueville, *The Sociologists and the Revolution of 1848* (New York: Basic Books, 1965), 270.

¹⁶⁹ Here, I have in mind the methodology of 'concept maps' by Joseph D. Novak, *Learning, Creating, and Using Knowledge: Concept Maps as Facilitative Tools in Schools and Corporations*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009).

overlay or no tone at all.¹⁷⁰ I create my maps, and then overlay my maps to identify optimal locations for my construction of reality.

1.6.1 Binoculars, Mongrels and Theological Politics: Grosstopicality of theology and social science

Ul Qoman man and Bes maid, meeting in the middle of Copula Hall, returning to their homes to realise that they live, grosstopically, next door to each other, spending their lives faithful and alone, rising at the same time, walking crosshatched streets close like a couple, each in their own city, never breaching, never quite touching, never speaking a word across the border. There were folktales of renegades who breach and avoid Breach to live between the cities, not exiles but in-siles, evading justice and retribution by consummate ignorability.

— China Miéville, *The City & The City*

My map-making is also, to use the neologism of China Miéville, “grosstopical”. Beszel and Ul Qoma – two fictitious cities occupy one spatial area. They are constructed and operate distinctly in their own rights, the same spaces simultaneously existing as both cities. The Beszel/Ul Qoma divide is generated and perpetuated psychologically, such that the distinction is subconsciously made and then preserved by social training in ‘unseeing’ and ‘unsensing’. Any act of breaking out from the dichotomy is the crime of ‘breaching’. My thesis method seeks a ‘breaching’ and grosstopicality of social theory and theology, as a contextual theology, to offer some “kind of attempt to confer intelligibility”.¹⁷¹ This ‘breaching’ is akin to the ‘interactionist’ method of David Tracy, where key sociological accounts are brought into overlay with theological understandings of reality.¹⁷² My ‘breaching’ is also indebted to Jacques Ellul’s dialectical method, which is primarily about the ‘historical’, i.e., the dialectic of social reality and facts, and secondarily, the ‘theological’. This account of reality and the theological are then

¹⁷⁰ See “Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences,” accessed 19th October 2017, https://www.e-education.psu.edu/natureofgeoinfo/c9_p6.html.

¹⁷¹ Percy, “Response to Part I”, 59.

¹⁷² David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1981), 24.

combined to create a dialectical hermeneutic, an agonistic that describes a style of life and action.¹⁷³ My thesis overlays accounts of reality from social theory with the theological to produce such a third dialectical view. There is an “intellectual journey” my thesis makes in order to take on “the character of a living dialogue”, in order to get close to the concrete ecclesial life of church.¹⁷⁴ In this, I seek to represent a totality larger than the account I have made.¹⁷⁵ The nature of my map-making means I will be using many sources. At times, I will provide extensive engagement around sources, but at others, I will borrow sources constructively.

My ‘breaching’ also has warrant from the tools and resources of political theology. i.e., the historical, sociological, philosophical, political, economic, and theological. Indeed, political theology, whilst existing in many forms through history, has only recently, in the last few decades, established itself as a defined discipline, its mixed method nature gaining more purist credibility perhaps.¹⁷⁶ I am not making a political theology per se, but rather more a ‘theological politics’. For I do not seek to theologise over a politics that already exists, being alerted to the problems of this by Milbank at the start of this chapter. By that, I mean I do not want my theological mapping and interpretation to be the handmaiden of a socio-political that already exists within the relationship of Evangelicalism and capitalism. My justification for this is taken from Arne Rasmussen. Rasmussen juxtaposes political theology with a *theological politics*. He compares political theology where theologians like Jürgen Moltmann want to theologise

¹⁷³ Jacques Ellul, “On Dialectic”. Also see Daniel B. Clendenin, “Introduction”, in Jacques Ellul, *The Presence of the Kingdom*, translated by Olive Wyon (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1989), xxviii.

¹⁷⁴ For explanation of Ellul’s method and warrant for my location in his dialectic, see D. J. Wennemann, “An Interpretation of Jacques Ellul’s Dialectical Method” in Paul T. Durbin ed., *Broad and Narrow Interpretations of Philosophy of Technology: Volume 7 (Philosophy and Technology)* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 182.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ There are recent texts that now confirm the origins, nature and methods of political theology; for example, see Elizabeth Phillips, *Political Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (London: T & T Clark, 2012).

over a politics that already exists, with the theological politics of Stanley Hauerwas.¹⁷⁷ A theological politics might ask “what kind of community do you need to understand how these claims should be embodied?”, in contrast to a political theology which might ask “what kind of theology explains how these people are already embodied?”¹⁷⁸ This is precisely the mode of my work, not a theological diagnosis abstracted from concrete reality, but of an understanding of the type of Evangelical community that embodies its beliefs and practices in real life.

But I am similarly alert, as described earlier in my chapter, to a problem with Milbank’s method, of trying to out-narrate the social context I am examining with my theological interpretations. The standing back and trying to ‘out-narrate’ all other accounts of social reality à la Milbank “becomes a kind of compelling form of intolerance that reasserts Christian ‘mastery’ over all narratives and culture.”¹⁷⁹ So whilst paying heed to Milbank, I will ensure I do not simply theologise over a social reality narrated by social sciences; I am unwilling to fall prey to not being informed by the social sciences. In short I am not trying to “re-order the world and the church by out-narrating its existing meta-narratives”¹⁸⁰ Percy explains, in a critique of Milbank’s method, the dangers of this method for my research, “Put another way, a theology that is uninformed by the social sciences may turn out to be very clever and erudite in some sense, but it may also be ultimately ‘unreal’.”¹⁸¹ There are many other problems with Milbank’s demonising of the social sciences, but it is Milbank’s ecclesial method that is most problematic to my thesis aims. For Milbank,

¹⁷⁷ Arne Rasmussen, *The Church as Polis: From Political Theology to Theological Politics as Exemplified by Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

¹⁷⁸ Stanley Hauerwas explicates Rasmussen’s explanation of a theological politics in relationship to his own work in an interview about Homiletics. “Homiletics Online,” accessed 7th October 2017, <https://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/interviews/hauerwas.asp>.

¹⁷⁹ Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture*, 66.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

treats the church as given construct — the City of God. In contrast I take the view that there is no version of Christianity that is without local accent. No-one can speak, or has ever spoken, of ‘pure’ Christianity or a ‘pure’ theology. The dialect is always particular: Rome, Geneva, Canterbury, Atlanta — Christianity speaks in tongues that are tinged and tilted in a local accent.¹⁸²

Evangelicalism, as I will show in my work, is particularly prone to taking on local accents and dialects, within its ecclesial mode of being.

My research design here also has further warrant and underpinning from methodological recommendations by Percy. In particular, how reading theology with social science allows for the kind of reading of concrete ecclesial life I seek. For the textures and shapes revealed in social science are a kind of theology.¹⁸³ Percy explains how readings of theology with social science act as a ‘binocular method’ that eschews “pedigree” and “purist” approaches. This then allows “breeding and blending that produces a certain kind of interpretative individuality”.¹⁸⁴ My project is similarly and deliberately “mongrel” and eclectic in its method.¹⁸⁵ This ‘binocular’ distils all my methodological considerations for my research, and provides the method for how the five maps/chapters of my thesis are constructed. One lens of my binoculars will be focused on an account of Evangelicalism and capitalism, via Bebbington, Weber, and Polanyi. These are my second, third and fourth chapters, which produce a richer theological account by making use of non-theological methods.¹⁸⁶ Within this, I will make use of an additional stereoscopic, an ‘Ideal Type’ account from Weber and a ‘materialist account’

¹⁸² Ibid., 68.

¹⁸³ Percy not only takes Milbank to task for over-privileging Christian narratives and demonising those of social sciences; he reminds us that social sciences are not replete with anti-theologies, but rather, there are necessary theological readings within social sciences that are required to make any intelligible account of the world, and for any possible engagement with the concrete of everyday life. See Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture*, 67–68.

¹⁸⁴ Martyn Percy, “Confessions: Tone and Content in a Reasonable Radical – A Self-Critical Retrospect,” in *Reasonable Radical*, 333–334.

¹⁸⁵ Percy, “Confessions”, 334. Percy explains how “pedigree” and “purist” methods contrast with the possibilities of “mongrel” methods, which cross-breed to produce very different and needed accounts and interpretations. Furthermore, Percy calls for a blended theological-social science approach, for, *à la* Peter Berger’s notion of the heretical imperative, “no single theological method on its own is ever sound of sufficient,” see *ibid.*, 335, and Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (Glasgow: William Collins & Son, 1979).

¹⁸⁶ Again, for warrant for this method of overlaying social theory and theology, see *ibid.*, 8. See also David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 24.

from Polanyi. Both are diachronic and, when overlaid, provided a unique view of the development of Evangelicalism within capitalism. I then bring this implicit theological rendering into an explicit theological examination in chapters four and five, as the other lens to my binocular method. This lens is explicitly theological, bringing into overlay and contact, neo-Augustinian theological resources to explicitly theologise my account. These neo-Augustinian sources are, first, the theological tools of those most critical of Evangelicalism, such as Milbank and Connolly, and second, they problematise the relationship of Christianity with capitalism. This explicit theological reading provides a diagnostic for my diachronic that is deployable against my Evangelical context.

At the outset of my research, I was inspired by Bonhoeffer's own method, that I now see as a type of binocular, and by his impossible task of producing a theological sociology, or sociological theology, of the church.¹⁸⁷ Theologians could not see value in Bonhoeffer's work due to the sociology, and sociologists were as blind to his work, due to the theology in it. Little has changed today between theologians and sociologists. Bonhoeffer's work is certainly "difficult, and overloaded, though it is in many respects unclear and youthful in style" – he was only twenty-one when he produced it. But his work brought me closer to understanding the church, and did something many academic texts do not – it invigorated me and fuelled my desire to understand the church in its concrete reality.

1.6.2 Personal Pronouns and Opening Out: Final methodological considerations

I now make some final methodological comments, drawing further attention to the macro structure of my thesis and how it will be made. I have made reflexive use of the first person to explain the ministry context that was the impetus for this thesis. That reflexive first person will fade into the background for most of my work. However, I will continue

¹⁸⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio* (London and New York: Collins, 1960).

to use the first-person for ongoing academic reasons. I do so to convey how my stance, my judgements, and my involvement to the research are not peripheral to the content of the research. I use 'I' to foreground what I, the researcher, have done, and for discursive moments about my capacity and method as researcher, which are distinct from the personal. I want to engage my reader in a shared exploration and show my subjectivity and my evaluations as I go through my research. I want to create a link between the reader and the writer, and conjure the territory of my research in an engaging manner. I reject the faulty perception that the default of the pronoun 'I' is equal to a non-academic voice. I have situated my use of the first person in recent humanities research on the personal in presenting research.¹⁸⁸ Most of all, I do not presume a 'We' where there is none, being a sleight of hand where the researcher is nowhere and everywhere.¹⁸⁹ Nor do I use the third person presuming agreement by my reader. Of course, I make use of the third person when there is a 'We' in reflection and discourse.¹⁹⁰

I have also taken an 'opening out' model for my thesis structure.¹⁹¹ Here, my introduction serves as the specification of my research problem, with an initial conversation to locate the validity of my problem, and the method for addressing my thesis. My literature review takes place throughout my thesis as a whole. My key research findings occur through each of the chapters which follow. My analysis tracks back and forth across what has been discovered in the thesis, connecting it up with previous

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, Ken Hyland, *Disciplinary Discourses, Michigan Classics Ed.: Social Interactions in Academic Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004), and Ken Hyland, "Options of Identity in Academic Writing," *ELT Journal*, 6.4 (2002): 351–358, and Pat Sikes, *Autoethnography (Sage Benchmarks in Social Research Methods)* (Los Angeles: SAGE, Los Angeles 2013). Whilst Sikes's example justifies the use of the first person, I make no attempt at producing an autoethnography.

¹⁸⁹ This is what Donna Haraway describes as 'The God Trick'. See Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99.

¹⁹⁰ There are significant examples of the use of the first person for theological accounts, such as Stanley Hauerwas, the warrant and impact of which is explained in Herman Paul, "Stanley Hauerwas: Against Secularization in the Church," *Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie*, 29.2 (2013):12–13. Here, the use of the first person is the *hic et nunc*, that ensures a commitment to the particularities of the time and place of the research being made.

¹⁹¹ See Patrick Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write, and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation*, Palgrave Study Guides (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 59.

research and literature. My thesis 'opens out' into discussions of the themes and implications from my research. My final chapter runs my thesis recursively back against the original conditions that gave rise to my research to test its validity and serviceability for my problem.

Chapter 2

Evangelical Anxiety: From Assurance to Providence

...symptoms of discontinuity in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of conservative Protestantism should not be seen in isolation from each other. They are bound together by an underlying factor, a shift in the received doctrine of assurance with all that it entailed. Those who pursued the High Church quest for holiness with single-minded devotion frequently felt a nagging doubt. For all their self-discipline, were they to be numbered among those finally saved? Their efforts gave them no certainty; sometimes their failures heightened their anxiety. So the novel assurance they discovered in Evangelicalism was greeted with relief. Again continental Protestantism exercised its most decisive influence on the origins of Evangelicalism not in the sphere of practice but in that of doctrine.

— David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*

This chapter maps these forces and processes of Evangelicalism, as a kind of physiographic of the development of the doctrine of assurance around anxiety. My mapping will trace and suggest how assurance migrates into providence under the anxieties of life in capitalism. This route from assurance into providence is part of the pathogenesis between Evangelicalism and capitalism that my thesis diagnoses. My map in this chapter overlays my first chapter, looking for resonant assemblages, the resonant arrangements with beliefs and practice by Evangelicalism with capitalism. I am looking for those moments of intensification in the relationship between Evangelicals and capitalism, and resultant loss of resistance to the deforming forces of capitalism, so that I might identify resources to then counter this loss of resistance.

I begin this chapter by defining the terms Evangelical and capitalism and explaining my use of them. I then establish how anxiety and assurance is a pathway that opens up and extends the resonant relationship of capitalism with Evangelicalism. I will situate this claim within a broader examination of the anxieties of life in capitalism for Evangelicals, of the route assurance takes into providence as Evangelicals seek to assuage the anxieties of life in capitalism. Ultimately, I modulate Bebbington's thesis about the doctrine of assurance. We will see how the Puritan inner anxiety assuaged by the doctrine of assurance migrated into new anxieties within the context of emerging capitalism, and how that assurance then relocated to the doctrine of providence for calming those new anxieties.

2.1 Capitalism: Technical critique or social arrangements?

Capitalism is one of those terms that people readily use without necessarily being able to explain its technical meaning. This knowing but not being able to explain is what Michael Polanyi calls “tacit knowing”, where everyone knows “more than we can tell” or fully codify, about certain kinds of knowledge.¹ For example, we can recognise a face among a million others, but we cannot tell how we recognise that face.² Most people in the west are aware that they live in a capitalist society and would likely recognise a society that was not capitalist, but they might find it hard to explain in detail what capitalism is and what it is not.

Many of the accounts interacted with in my previous chapter seem to suffer from a similar mode of ‘tacit knowing’ in their use of the term capitalism. As we have seen, Milbank and Connolly use the term with a particular abandon, and lack of definition. Indeed, the term capitalism is rather fecund, generating all sorts of possibilities. But I need to carefully consider how I understand and deploy that term for my account and the diagnosis I seek. And especially so, as I am not objecting to Milbank’s and Connolly’s assertions, and accept their premise of a problematic relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism. Where ‘tacit knowing’ is a mode of the implicit, I will also need to be explicit about my understanding and use of the term capitalism. Eve Poole provides a helpful delineation to navigate this state of affairs. For Poole suggests that methodologically, we can focus on capitalism as either a concept that attracts a technical critique of ownership and property laws, or as an examination of the arrangements and relationships of capitalism as they occur in the real world.³ The latter is most serviceable for my account. For it is the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism, its

¹ Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1967), 4.

² Ibid.

³ Poole, *The Church and Capitalism*, 4. For an example of such a technical account, see Donald Andrew Hay, *A Christian Critique of Capitalism* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1975).

‘arrangements’, in particular social and embodied organisations, that I wish to explore. Rather than provide a technical theological account of economic systems, for important as that might be, it is not the focus of my work. It is Evangelicalism in its *social* arrangements; its habits, dispositions, and practices within capitalism that are the focus of my account. Furthermore, Poole also reminds us that such an examination of capitalism through the overly technical, often reveals “a level of nuance and complexity that militates against precise critique.”⁴ Here, Poole provides support for a general use of the term ‘capitalism’ in my account. Using the term capitalism represents the multifaceted nature of various capitalisms, whilst it avoids collapse into overly technical arguments.

However, it seems important to define what capitalism actually is within any such technical or social arrangements. For Eve Poole, whilst delineating capitalism in terms of social or technical arrangements, does not provide a working definition of capitalism itself within those categories. Even the recent *Theology and Economics* edited by Jeremy Kidwell, sees Michael Pollitt stating that he “will use the terms ‘markets,’ and ‘capitalism,’ and ‘modern economics somewhat interchangeable[y]’”, without any attempt to define what those three terms are.⁵ However, later in this text, Nicholas Townsend offers a definition of Capitalism: “the meaning of capitalism is given precisely by reference to capital, the financial resources invested in a business and the assets they purchase. In that strict or literal sense, ‘capitalism’ names *a form of business in which the objective of making return on capital overrides others and so determines what the business does.*”⁶ For the purposes of my thesis I may refer to capitalism as meaning the broader arrangements of capitalism as it occurs in relation to the areas with which I am

⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵ Jeremy Kidwell, *Theology and Economics: A Christian Vision of the Common Good*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 28.

⁶ Nicholas Townsend, “Transcending the Long Twentieth Century” in Kidwell, *Theology and Economics*, 204. For the purpose of my work, and given my use of Kidwell’s text, I adopt this definition here. There are of course, a myriad of definitions of and types of capitalism, for example Martyn Percy examines ‘open market capitalism’, see Martyn Percy, “Christianity and Social Flourishing” in Kidwell, *Theology and Economics*, 231.

concerned. A certain ‘slipperiness’ around the term is warranted by my method and is inherent in the necessary ambiguity surrounding accounts of ecclesiology as established with Martin in my previous chapter. Of course, where the capitalism I am examining needs elucidating more specifically I will do so, with consideration to its various forms. In order to understand what these relational forms entail, we must first consider the nature of Evangelicalism.

2.2 What is Evangelicalism? Bebbington’s quadrilateral

Which evangelicalism and which evangelicals?...Evangelicalism that word most basic to Christian faith, seems elusive in both meaning and application.

— Bill J. Leonard, “Evangelism and Contemporary American Life”

Evangelicalism is widely understood to be a major development of modern Protestantism that emerged in the early 1730s in the United Kingdom.⁷ Bebbington asserts that there is something uniquely different about Evangelicalism to the forms of Protestantism, most specifically the Puritan Christianity, that preceded it.⁸ His thesis is that this emerging Evangelicalism has four key characteristics: “conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the Gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.”⁹ Whilst previous forms of Christianity may have exhibited some of these characteristics, it is Evangelicalism that has uniquely exhibited all four. Puritanism in the seventeenth century may have manifested some aspects of conversionism,

⁷ There are many summary texts that date the origins of Evangelicalism to the 1730s. One recent text, for example, is Brian Stiller et al., eds, *Evangelicals around the World: a global handbook for the 21st century*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 26. Beyond definitions of Evangelicalism, there are comprehensive surveys of the extant nature and plurality of Evangelicals around the world, see Donald M. Lewis and Richard V. Pierard, eds., *Global Evangelicalism: Theology, History and Culture in Regional Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014).

⁸ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

Biblicism, and crucicentrism, and thereby a continuity with Evangelicalism in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ But Bebbington asserts there is a break with Puritanism, seen in the unparalleled activism of Evangelicals, and activism untypical of Puritanism.¹¹ It is the contextual interaction of the Christian faith with the Enlightenment that gave rise to a development in the doctrine of assurance, leading, in turn, to a new confidence of faith which found its natural outworking in overt activism.¹² McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb similarly describe a belief within modernity of “progress” and a “better” future that the Enlightenment fostered.¹³ We can understand the Evangelical activism that Bebbington identifies as located within that Enlightenment “confidence”.

Noll declares Bebbington’s quadrilateral of priorities to be “one of the most effective” descriptions of Evangelicalism and locates his account of the origins of Evangelicals within the same time period.¹⁴ Whilst Noll is indebted to Bebbington, he sees more continuities with the Puritans than Bebbington does. Whilst generally agreeing with Bebbington’s thesis on the relationship with the Enlightenment, Noll provides a more comprehensive overview of other contextual factors.¹⁵ For Noll, Evangelicalism is best seen as a revival of Puritan heart religion *without* a determinate social form.¹⁶

In *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, Michael Haykin and Kenneth Stewart bring several scholars together to critique Bebbington’s thesis, and dispute his assertions of the origins of Evangelicalism in the eighteenth century.¹⁷ They generally locate Evangelicals within Puritanism and both question how great a role the Enlightenment played in the development of Evangelical activism and the formulation of the doctrine of assurance

¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹¹ Ibid., 35.

¹² Ibid., 42, 48.

¹³ Neil McKendrick, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 316.

¹⁴ Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys. A History of Evangelicalism* (Nottingham: IVP, 2004), 16.

¹⁵ See Chapter 18, “Explanations,” *ibid.*, 127–144.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 48–54.

¹⁷ Michael A. G. Haykin, Kenneth J. Stewart, and Timothy George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008).

that Bebbington claims. Bebbington is willing to concede, in a response at the end of this work, that Evangelicalism may have originated slightly earlier than he originally specified, and that the doctrine of assurance as described in relationship to the Enlightenment is more complex than he had presented it.¹⁸ However, his quadrilateral of priorities, the influence of cultural context, and the lack of attention to polity remain for Bebbington undiminished in their influence on the emergence and development of Evangelicalism.¹⁹ Bebbington, by way of explanation for the modification of his thesis, turns to the relationship of Evangelicals with the market and economics, stating that the doctrine of assurance must be explored more completely within this relationship.²⁰ He does not, however, provide such a description – a lacuna my work will address.

It is worth noting again that Bebbington has previously been very dismissive of the influence of capitalism upon Evangelicalism, claiming that “the cultural context, not economics or politics, does most to explain the shape of Evangelical religion.”²¹ In contradiction to this, Bebbington has more recently described how most developments of Evangelicalism “were possible because of the commercial growth of the eighteenth century.”²² Leading early Evangelical leaders themselves noted that their faith propagated fastest and best where capitalist markets were developing. For example, Thomas Taylor (1738–1816), appointed by John Wesley in 1761 (and having an itinerant career longer than Wesley’s), shared his Evangelical faith over several decades throughout Wales, Scotland, and England (with twenty-two circuits in England alone).²³ In his extensive travels, Taylor observed Evangelical faith in relationship to many and varied cultural

¹⁸ Bebbington, ‘Response’, *ibid.*, 417–432.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 425. An attempt to explore the divisions of self-definition by Evangelicals offers what are labelled fundamentalist, confessional, generic, and post-conservative definitions – and this differentiation is just amongst Baptist Evangelicals. But underneath these delineations is a reliance on Bebbington for what they have in common; see Kevin T. Bauder et al., *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

²⁰ Bebbington, ‘Response’, 421.

²¹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 272.

²² Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 419.

²³ Donald M. Lewis, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography: 1730–1860* (Oxford: Blackwell Reference, 1995), 1087.

situations – physical locations, political environments, the emerging psychological world, various ecclesiologies, the emerging middle classes, and market society. Taylor’s assessment was that in relationship to all and any environments, “evangelical religion spread best where trade was growing.”²⁴ Thomas Taylor was the embodiment of the new possibilities that capitalism and market societies offered. From his confident transmission of faith, to freedom of travel, to independent learning, and self-expression through new media and markets, Taylor was able to observe not only the beginnings of the Evangelical tradition, but also its relationship to the rise and development of the market society in capitalism. Weber wanted to know what lay under this observation and phenomena, of the growth of Protestant Christianity within the rapid development of capitalism.

Noll has identified a similar lack of accounting for the connections between “Protestants and money.”²⁵ He suggests that this may be due to an inability to see religion as “a primary motivator for human action or to believe that religious speech can be anything but a screen for social and economic motives.” Furthermore, historians who assume a religious outline to history often cannot conceive of anything other than “providential models” for history, which discourages research accounts.²⁶ This lack in accounts has led to the state of affairs where “even basic questions about the economic dimensions of the Protestant churches and voluntary societies remain unanswered.”²⁷ Whilst Noll and Bebbington are comprehensive in their accounts, details of capitalism’s relationship to Evangelicalism are in the background, so to speak, as contextual textures and events, which I will surface, make explicit, and bring to the fore.

Despite a delineation of Evangelicalism that differs markedly from that of Bebbington, Boyd Hilton like many others also considers Bebbington’s work to be the

²⁴ Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 276.

²⁵ Mark A. Noll, *God and Mammon: Protestants, Money, and the Market, 1790–1860* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Noll seeks to address this situation in his work, *God and Mammon*, with an account of the antebellum period of Protestant Evangelicalism in the USA. This work provides a set of identified categories and domains of market relationships, in a very narrow period of time. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

‘best introduction’ to Evangelicalism, whilst Mark Noll declares it to be “the most serviceable definition.”²⁸ Bebbington certainly helps explain the observation by others of how, despite such wide diversity, Evangelicals were able to unite in action around core doctrines and practices.²⁹ Warner, like so many, draws upon Bebbington’s work to define Evangelicalism. However, Warner modifies and modulates Bebbington’s thesis by claiming that there has been a recent bifurcation between *activist-conversionists* acting as ‘entrepreneurs’ within late modernity, and *biblicist-crucicentrists* turning to a form of fundamentalism.³⁰ Because of his focus on Bebbington, Warner explores this bifurcation as a response to Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment epistemic issues³¹. As I have suggested, an understanding of the forces of capitalist markets is lacking in Bebbington’s thesis, and similarly in Warner’s work.

In all this, there is an important connection and potential for my account. The *activism-conversionism* ‘entrepreneurial’ strand of Evangelicalism that developed in the UK in the late twentieth century owes much to its entrepreneurial possibilities because of its situation within developing capitalist markets. William Kay evidences how the very streams of ‘entrepreneurial’ Evangelicalism that Warner so thoroughly surveys, including those of my own church denomination, are successful because of their embrace and use of the artefacts of popular culture and market forces.³² I have previously noted and quoted where Warner similarly highlights that “evangelicalism is a complex construct of historical theology, formulated through an often-unperceived interaction with its cultural

²⁸ See Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England 1783–1846*. New Oxford History of England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 176 and 691. See also Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5. The effectiveness of Bebbington’s thesis is something even his most ardent critics accept. See Timothy Larsen, “The Reception Given *EVANGELICALISM IN MODERN BRITAIN* Since Publication,” in Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 21–36.

²⁹ For a description of this phenomenon, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes*, rev. ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 74.

³⁰ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

³² William K. Kay, *Apostolic Networks of Britain*, 169–170.

settings.”³³ Yet Warner sees market forces having no primacy for Evangelical development, where instead it is the forces of secularisation that generated and retarded Evangelical growth.³⁴ Warner would have us see the ‘entrepreneurial’ *activist-conversionist* Evangelicals of late modernity as stimulated to growth by secular forces, while at the same time *biblicist-crucicentrist* Evangelicals are being stifled in a straitjacket of secularity.³⁵

Warner is somewhat aware of capitalism and does ask “whether evangelicalism may have become a quasi-established, structurally differentiated religion, baptizing materialism and the American Way.”³⁶ We can additionally understand how voluntarism within late-capitalist society made the expansion of this ‘entrepreneurial’ stream possible and logical.³⁷ Warner also posits that Stark’s free-market thesis, in combination with Hammond’s analysis of the construction around personal autonomies, “identify a zeitgeist that has been conducive to the commodification of evangelical religion.”³⁸ That claim is rather multi-layered and overly accretive, as is most of Warner’s thesis. That zeitgeist of market forces and its influence has far more impact, and a primacy to which we now turn.

2.3 Protestant Anxiety and Discontinuities: Generating Evangelical activism

Bebbington himself, in response to critiques of his work *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, notes that the nature of assurance is more complicated than he had proposed.³⁹ There is a complexity to the doctrine of assurance, centred in the doubt and anxiety for

³³ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 13–14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 22–24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 22–24.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷ Warner himself suggests that this ‘entrepreneurial’ spirit had a passing affinity with the Thatcherism of the 1980s. See *ibid.*, 26.

³⁸ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 27. Stark’s free-market thesis is detailed in Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), and Hammond’s analysis is found in Phillip E. Hammond, *Religion and Personal Autonomy: The Third Disestablishment in America* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992).

³⁹ Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 421

the Protestant reformers that can be understood through an examination of Weber. This Protestant doubt and anxiety

was so arresting as to persuade the pioneer sociologist Max Weber about the habitual self-questioning of Protestants. Their doubts about salvation drove them, according to Weber, to demonstrate their faith by works, not least the qualities that gave rise to capitalism. Assurance was therefore a more complex matter than Evangelicalism in Modern Britain allows.⁴⁰

Protestant reformers, having left behind doctrines of assurance, suffered resultant anxieties about their personal salvation. If the church was no longer able to dispense an assurance of salvation, how did someone know they were saved? There was a paucity to life before the industrial revolution, where salvation was a compensation for the sufferings of life. That assurance was now removed. We might understand that Protestants now stood on their own as a kind of ‘naked self’, determining their own salvation before God with much ‘fear and trembling’. For Bebbington it was this new anxiety, and focus on the doctrine of assurance, that generated the activism that was distinct to Evangelicals.

2.3.1 Novelty and Complexity: Assurance and conversion

Bebbington gives us warrant and reason to understand how the doctrine of assurance is the epicentre of the forces creating Evangelicalism. Bebbington has a focus and claim about those forces as being primarily about enlightenment epistemology. But the nature of assurance is more complex than this, as Bebbington now acknowledges. A detailed examination of the validity of his claims will help establish to what extent the forces of emerging capitalism fulminate around the doctrine of assurance, and how I might modulate his thesis as necessary. If Bebbington remains broadly correct in postulating that an emerging doctrine of assurance is central to understanding Evangelicalism, am I

⁴⁰ Bebbington, “Response,” in *ibid.*, 421.

able to locate the moments of intensification of Evangelicalism with developing capitalism?

In order to address these questions, I will examine three key claims by Bebbington. First, that the Evangelical doctrine of assurance is the process through which individuals, having received the gifts of salvation, become aware of what they possessed within that salvation.⁴¹ Second, that there is a novelty within Evangelicalism of how it claimed assurance should accompany such conversion. This novelty of assurance generates the activism of Evangelicals in their extensive concrete mission.⁴² Third, that this novelty for assurance takes shape around the influence of the Enlightenment epistemology. The new anxieties about assurance of faith migrate towards, and find relief in, Enlightenment epistemology, where direct witness of the individual becomes the new mode of assurance.⁴³ It is this thesis for which Bebbington is most criticised. For example, Gary Williams prefers to see something else at work, whereby Evangelicals renew a Puritan focus on assurance. It is a cautious view of assurance, rather than any new Enlightenment epistemological confidence, that leads to Evangelical activism.⁴⁴ Williams would have us understand how many Protestant Christians found that the Enlightenment's "direct witness" for faith through reason was far from comforting.⁴⁵

Bebbington, in response to critiques like this, and as I have already noted, has admitted that the doctrine of assurance is more complex than he originally proposed.⁴⁶ The location of this complexity is perhaps found in Weber's diagnosis of how Puritan Protestants demonstrate their salvation by works due to their constant self-questioning of faith.⁴⁷ If Puritans were focused on assurance, it was a lack of assurance that drove them

⁴¹ Bebbington, 6–7.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁴ Gary Williams, "Enlightenment Epistemology," in Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 369.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 369.

⁴⁶ Bebbington, 'Response', in *ibid.*, 421.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

into ways of working, through their doubts. Whether the focus on the doctrine of assurance was due to a new confidence caused by Enlightenment epistemology, or an ongoing lack of confidence in assurance, one proposition/argument does seem common to Bebbington and his critics' accounts: the doctrine of assurance is central to Protestant Evangelical faith and its development and renewal by Evangelicals.

It is worth dwelling a little further on the nature of assurance and what was taking place with individuals. This analysis is necessary first to better understand the complexity to which these critiques of Bebbington alert us, and second, in order to ensure I do not stumble into what looks like an open door to examine the economic forces around assurance, but rather to ensure my focus here is really warranted.

2.3.2 The Doctrine of Assurance and the Interiority of the Self

Society changed considerably between the time of sixteenth-century Puritans and the Evangelicals of the eighteenth century, especially with regard to the nature of private and public life. For “the sixteenth century’s division between an individual’s self-fashioned public role and the privacy of his interior life before God had greatly diminished by the eighteenth.”⁴⁸ Noll claims that any gap between the public and private was closed by, first, Wesley’s recovery of affective Puritan assurance and, second, the effects of Enlightenment epistemology on assurance as Bebbington has demonstrated.⁴⁹ These accounts by Null, Noll, and Bebbington locate the development of assurance as being in the hands of leaders of the Evangelical movement. This does not sufficiently explain what was taking place in the individuals who were forming this doctrine in their daily beliefs and practice. Fortunately, the interior life of individuals, and the development of that interiority, is available to us with a little excavation of additional sources. To talk of

⁴⁸ Ashley Null examines this in detail in “Thomas Cranmer and Tudor Evangelicalism,” in Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 250.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 251.

assurance and providence requires an explanation of those doctrines. My use of assurance and providence takes its lead from the historical sources I deploy for the rest of this chapter. The development of these doctrines in their theological nature will be picked up in my later chapters.

It seems that initially, assurance and the personal experience of assurance for conversion within Puritanism was restricted to the elite of Christian society. For example, Thomas Cranmer, whilst able to reveal to friends (who confided these revelations to Elizabeth I) his most personal emotions around his experience of faith, was unable to bring this identity into his public life and persona.⁵⁰ He was, however, able to bring his convictions around justification by faith, and the need for assurance in conversion, to bear on his writings of “The Bishops’ Book” and, ultimately, the Book of Common Prayer.⁵¹ Subsequently, Puritans who sought the ongoing catechism of the English population, to “secure the Reformation” in the face of Catholic liturgical formation, took the Puritan faith of the heart to the masses with Cranmer’s catechism.⁵² It suited emerging Protestant countries to allow this form of Christian formation, because of its anti-Catholic nature, or, at least, they allowed it for the production of Christians within Protestant states. Puritan faith of the heart was taken to the masses for Protestant catechism in an attempt to wrest Christian identity away from Catholic political ecclesial influences. In reaction to the political and ecclesial issues of conformity and anti-Catholicism, the Puritan Richard Baxter “peels back” the nature of Christian commitments to reach “the innermost sense of conversion, the conversion of the heart.”⁵³

This move of assurance into the interiority of the individual is key to what took place next. For the inner dialogue of conversion that was beyond the control of the state moved into public view theologically. Just a few decades later, Wesley and Edwards were

⁵⁰ Ibid., 225–226.

⁵¹ Ibid., 224.

⁵² John Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism,” in Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 267.

⁵³ D. Bruce Hindmarsh, “Antecedents of Evangelical Conversion Narrative,” in *ibid.*, 343.

able, through the new freedoms of trade routes, publicity (print media), and communication, to bring this inner world to life for the masses. Evangelicalism was thus able to bring resources to the psychological and social needs of people who found themselves in a rapidly changing world of broad dissenting thought, and, in particular, the renegotiations of Puritan church-state relationships.⁵⁴ Through the freedoms of the new capitalist markets, the inner experience of Thomas Cranmer was now the domain of public life and identity.⁵⁵ Where St Augustine's autobiography revealed the necessity of the inner life in conversion, the need for such inner experience remained largely silent in Christian literature, with significant exceptions, until the arrival of the journals of Jonathan Edwards in the early eighteenth-century.⁵⁶ Of course, that autobiography is merely one form of evidence for the encouragement of inward experience in conversion, with prayer being an immediate example, not to mention various contemplative lives. Personal narratives of the autobiographical, and stories of the inner life now held sway for emerging Evangelicals. Those who had experienced this inner assurance were able to communicate those stories throughout new emerging capitalist market opportunities by speaking, travelling, and publicising amongst other activities. In this, we begin to see the extent to which Christian identity around the doctrine of assurance and the relationship of Christian faith with the market became intrinsic to each other. The leaders of the Evangelical movement were those who were able to express their experience of this inner assurance and to do so supremely through the opportunities of the market. Their methods for transmission about assurance took hold and resonated not just with new market forces and opportunities, but with the priority of the interiority of the individual that had already taken place with English Protestantism. This new priority and opportunity saw that the "young men who preached the sermons, founded the magazines, established the local

⁵⁴ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 142.

⁵⁵ Ashley Null, "Thomas Cranmer and Tudor Evangelicalism," 228.

⁵⁶ D. Bruce Hindmarsh details the gulf of autobiography that is concerned with self-agency from the time of Augustine until Evangelicals in his "Antecedents of Evangelical Conversion Narrative," 332.

classes, built the connections and wrote the books, pamphlets and articles were social actors of unusual force.”⁵⁷

This developing interiority of individuals, the development of self-agency and its effects on society in general, along with the impact on Evangelicals, has been examined in detail by Breen and Hall. They highlight that the preaching of revivalists “did powerfully hold out to ordinary people the prospect of personal liberation, of creative agency, of exciting self-fashioning – unintended concomitants of the Whitefieldian experience of ‘new birth’.”⁵⁸ Mark Noll presses into a similar focus on the need to understand this emerging self-agency, and exhorts that a “full explanation must not back away from this agency.”⁵⁹ Whilst Noll suggests the necessity of such an account, he does not provide one. He does hint at the interconnection that might be found in such an account that would reveal “human responsibility to realms of theological principle, religious conviction or social tectonics.”⁶⁰ This is precisely the realm I am looking to map. For now, I place a marker on my map, noting that this is as a location to return for a theological mapping in my later chapters.

2.3.3 The Doctrine of Assurance and the Wider “Revival of the Heart”

Evangelicalism was an answer to accelerating economic and demographic change. As such, it offered a solution to structural religious crisis. It represented also a religious response to the new mental world of the Enlightenment. And it presented internal, psychological resources to meet the external, social challenges of the century.

— Mark A. Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*

Evangelicalism was not just a response to the trials and challenges of economic migration, but was also a response to the wider changes in how human beings understood the world conceptually, and their place within it. The metaphysical upheavals taking place required

⁵⁷ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 132.

⁵⁸ T. H. Breen and Timothy Hall, “Structuring Provincial Imagination: The Rhetoric and Experience of Social Change in Eighteenth-Century New England,” *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998): 1424.

⁵⁹ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 132.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

a response by the church, which the doctrine of assurance allowed to take place. Yet this interior move was not limited to just Protestantism, instead deeply affecting all peoples. For example, Mark Noll details how this “revival of the heart” was seen amongst Catholics and Hasidic Jews, and not just Protestants.⁶¹ We might discern from this the nature of the move from interior experience to public expression that the market was imposing on all religious movements at this time. Furthermore, Noll has shown how this revival of Puritanism was a movement that revived the Puritan “heart religion” without any concomitant social movement.⁶² In other words, there was something about this “revival of the heart” that was common to all peoples, and that did not require a church-mediated social environment. Here we see the emerging nature of the social arrangements of capitalism, superseding and overriding the social arrangements of any and all religious actors. In short, I suspect that the “revival of the heart” taking place, had found a social expression in capitalist market social practices. This is a dramatic change from how the “heart religion” of the Puritans had previously been manifest socially.

Indeed the “heart religion” of the Puritans had been deeply rooted in a desire for social change that had been discredited owing to its association with political revolution.⁶³ The dissenting Puritans, as a result of this, pursued their “heart religion” more as a subculture of voluntary religion, in prayer, fasting, and Bible study.⁶⁴ I suggest that the Puritan “heart religion” that Evangelicals went on to renew, having divested itself of any determinate social structure owing to previous failings in social and political change, found a new place for resonance. The inner “heart religion” of the Puritans perceived emerging capitalist markets to be places in which it could flourish without fear of persecution. In other words, the emergence of markets as places and spaces away from the identity of church and state needed a form of Christian faith that would act as a

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 47.

⁶³ Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism,” 253.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 254.

resource to Christian identity, whilst at the same time being free of the ecclesiological structures of the religion it was seeking to escape.

The inner assurance of the Puritans not only enabled the confident formation of identity in a changing world but found its formation and sustainability in having no social form, flowing freely into market locations.⁶⁵ And the effects of this on the shape of public and private life are immense. This Puritan inner assurance was at the heart of the Evangelical revival of all denominations and the simultaneous development of the later middle classes.⁶⁶ Davidoff and Hall trace how this Puritan antecedent results in a relocation and separation of work from home, and the establishment of bounded public and private “spheres”.⁶⁷ A radical transformation then takes place within capitalist markets, where the location of consumption and identity formation move from public to private, and then into the home. Evangelical revival through tracts and language made the home the central location for its activities and “imagined communities”, becoming captive to the logic and relationships of leisure and family.⁶⁸ Assurance moves from its inner experience into the outward expression of self-creation by the external providence of the market manifested in the life of the believer. Assurance becomes a matter of being self-made and of outward provision by God, which are both ultimately ceded to the market. This outward demarcation of the self-made, underwritten by the providence of God, arrives at particular forms of a public self, for example where “A new claim was asserted, that *salvation* was the mark of gentility.”⁶⁹ The market quickly becomes the sign of God’s providence for his assurance as the market takes on the ontological values and aseity once ascribed to God.⁷⁰ We can see one example of this nature of aseity where Elaine May suggests the push to consumerism was able to be presented as a moral issue

⁶⁵ Ibid., 254.

⁶⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 20–22.

⁶⁷ Ibid., xv.

⁶⁸ Ibid., xviii.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 79.

⁷⁰ P. H. Sedgwick, *The Market Economy and Christian Ethics: New Studies in Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7–8.

– to be a true American in the Cold War was to be a committed consumer, guarding the home, etc.⁷¹ Even more recently after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, US President George W. Bush presented the moral response to terrorism, in part, as a call to continue shopping and “get down to Disney World”.⁷² Some see this moral fuelling of consumption as being at the root of the recent global credit crunch.⁷³

This contrasts greatly and again with previous Protestant and early Evangelical approaches that saw consumerism as crass, unrestrained avarice, and a threat to morality. Evangelicals took a view of salvation that involved debt and obligations, where “individuals stood in a commercial relationship with God, whose ultimate merchandise was heaven.”⁷⁴ Within this ‘economy of salvation’, providence becomes an obvious location for the manifestation of faith and the outworking of a relationship with God. We see evidence of this view of salvation modulation in later time periods. Dominic Erdozain demonstrates how Christianity initially resisted leisure as vice, with attention to recreation as part of ecclesial duties.⁷⁵ Early Evangelicals believed that the emerging leisure society was a competition for affections. Yet this moral resistance soon gave way to beliefs that supported “the active pursuit of commerce”.⁷⁶ These concerns seem to have some basis for legitimacy, given the recent diagnosis of leisure as the collapse of individual needs within the economic.⁷⁷ People located themselves in what they consumed, such that “people recognise themselves in their commodities; they find their

⁷¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

⁷² Remarks by President George W. Bush. The White House Archives, President George W. Bush. Last updated 27th September 2001. Accessed 28th May 2018. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010927-1.html>.

⁷³ See Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism (American Empire Project)* (New York: Holt Paperback, 2008).

⁷⁴ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, 183.

⁷⁵ Dominic Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure: Sport, Recreation and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 273.

⁷⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 26.

⁷⁷ Mike Featherstone, “Consumer Culture: An Introduction,” *Theory Culture Society* 1.3 (1983): 5. Also see Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage Publications, 2007).

soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment.”⁷⁸ Here I begin to delve into the post-war cultural realities formed by intentional government policy in the west – especially in the USA, but spilling over elsewhere.⁷⁹

2.3.4 Markets and Migration: Islands of social care

If Evangelicals, with their focus on Gospel as doctrine, did have the disregard for social and political theory that Bebbington claims, it is little wonder that they turned to the capitalist markets for their understanding of social relationships.⁸⁰ Bebbington suggests that it was a lack of alternatives between adherents and dissent that gave rise to a lack of concern for polity.⁸¹ It was this lack of concern for polity within which the market provided a *tertium quid* between the public realm of the state, and the private realm of the home. The nineteenth-century commentator Robert William Dale observes this lack of attention to polity: “Although its leaders insisted very earnestly on the obligation of individual Christian men to live a devout and godly life, they had very little to say about the relations of the individual question to the general order of human society, or about the realisation of the Kingdom of God and all the various regions of human activity.”⁸² Authority for belief and practice had moved from external tradition to personal experience, and the Bible in private interpretation. Disillusionment with forms of state-church relations, and the empowerment of individuals to respond before God despite the failures of church, drove the development of the Evangelical church. Noll describes this

⁷⁸ Herbert Marcuse, quoted in *ibid.*

⁷⁹ This is much more modern history than the story I have been telling about the Puritans, and is beyond the scope of my thesis. There was government policy to build families into consumer units to aid economic recovery. Dad goes to work; mom/mum stays home and buys stuff for the home. If Evangelicalism is at all linked with the middle class, this was the policy aimed at the middle class. It is unsurprising that the two grew up together. For an example of how American abundance was underwritten by post-war cultural realities and intentional government policy, and how this took place alongside the nature of abundance in the Protestant Work Ethic, see Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

⁸⁰ Bebbington, “Response,” 429.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

process as one where we see that “bourgeois evangelicalism represented the Methodisation, not just of the church, but of life as a whole.”⁸³ Evangelicalism began as a movement seeking to revive inherited churches, but quickly became a movement that replaced them with new forms of church.⁸⁴

But within Evangelical history, the opposite often took place: Evangelicals often did give attention to determinate social forms as they sought to provide a response to social stresses produced by capitalism. I have been intentionally offering broad statements covering large time periods. While assurance became personal for Evangelicals in history, it would later face the threat of commodification itself. For example, a more recent analogue and continuation of the relationship of Evangelicalism to capitalist markets can be seen in the growth of Pentecostalism in the developing world. Martin has traced and analysed this growth both in Latin America, and more recently, within a global framework.⁸⁵ Martin reveals how Christians under new economic migrations and emerging conditions of capitalist markets have seen Pentecostalism as a cohesive force, able to provide “islands of social care” within the ravages and dislocations of capitalism: “It takes those marooned and confined in the secular reality by fate and fortune, and offers them a protected enclave in which to explore the gifts of the Spirit, such as perseverance, peaceableness, discipline, trustworthiness, and mutual acceptance among the Brethren and in the family.”⁸⁶ Martin, referencing his own work in a preface for Guest, suggests that there is a “dialectic of incorporation and resistance” by Evangelicalism in its relationship to cultural contexts.⁸⁷ This dialectic has been detailed by others. For example, Stewart Davenport’s account of Evangelicals in relation to capitalist markets in North America between 1815 and 1860 is made through contrasting

⁸³ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 233–234.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 206–207.

⁸⁵ David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). See also his more recent work, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁷ Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, xiii.

Evangelicals, who were accommodating to new markets with those who resisted, but then capitulated, to market forces.⁸⁸ Historians often portray Evangelical Protestantism as either a top-down means of social control or a bottom-up process that created passive workers (e.g., through the Protestant Work Ethic). William Sutton, in contrast, provides evidence that popular Evangelicals, employees and employers alike, in antebellum North America worked together to create capitalist environments whilst simultaneously resisting the pathologies that arose in that relationship through trade unions, Sunday schools, and temperance movements.⁸⁹

Amos Young, in his extensive survey of Pentecostal communities, and drawing on the work of Martin, suggests there is a response to economic manifestations in which “Pentecostalism creates communities that provide new networks of social and economic services for uprooted populations.”⁹⁰ Within this, Pentecostalism functions as an alternative system of economics by restructuring kinship relationships within new economic environments.⁹¹ This enables believers to connect with their new context whilst freeing them from their previous obligations to their place of origin. I propose that this restructuring process has continued, whereby late-capitalist markets provide migrations within new economic flows that have dis-embedded Christians, not just from their biological families, but from their Christian communities and traditions.

Martin explains this process in practical terms by describing how conceptions of religious fraternity, to maintain distinct identities in relation to the larger society, often become “systematically blunted and even reversed.”⁹² One example of this process can

⁸⁸ Stewart Davenport, *Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon*.

⁸⁹ William R. Sutton, *Journeymen for Jesus: Evangelical Artisans Confront Capitalism in Jacksonian Baltimore* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

⁹⁰ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

⁹¹ For another example of Pentecostal “islands of social care” see Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (London: University of California Press, 2007), 99–105. Here, the ongoing story of St Stephen’s society and its ministry to drug addicts in Hong Kong is detailed.

⁹² Martin, *Reflections on Sociology and Theology*, 121.

be seen in the way the concept of interiority was used in the Protestant Reformation to define Christian practice and fraternity. Secular revolution and the emergence of secular space could take place around that interiority, where Christianity “contains repertoires of images and aspirations which are in various ways at odds with social requirements” that cannot be realised.⁹³ Christian Smith, in a similar vein, demonstrates how Evangelicals employ subcultural codes with great conviction, yet those codes are strategically deficient and inadequate for the social transformations within which they arise.⁹⁴ Within this, we might see how individualism and voluntarism, whilst potentially powerful as ways of responding to the social forces of capitalism, are often co-opted by those very forces and freedoms. Here we begin to see the ongoing process of resistance and agonistic response to late-capitalist markets, that carries within itself the possibility of conceding Christian social practices to the socio-logic of the market.

McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb declare the idea that the Industrial Revolution was a time of extreme suffering to be a pre-lapsarian myth, yet their account does provide details of the vicissitudes and extreme risks people faced during the birth of capitalist markets.⁹⁵ The associations that emerge in response to these social challenges of capitalist markets can be seen as coterminous to Martin’s suggestion of the need for “islands of social care.” Martin demonstrates how Pentecostalism responds to the social disarray of capitalist markets, whether enabling men to save their wages and stay sober, or empowering women to escape from caste-based polygamy.⁹⁶ Pentecostalism is “creative and active, a seizing of opportunities [...] of social change.”⁹⁷ In Martin’s account, we see a similar duality that was at work within early Evangelicalism. Christians used the resources and opportunities of capitalism, whilst offering a simultaneous countermove

⁹³ Ibid., 122.

⁹⁴ Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism*, 217.

⁹⁵ McKendrick, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, 197–202.

⁹⁶ For example, the traditional Brazilian ‘freedom without responsibility’ for men is challenged by the Pentecostal church, as it restores “the family as a viable moral, cultural and economic household, largely through the reformation of the male.” See Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 75.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 76.

that seeks to limit the effects of the market, and to reinsert the social in the face of commodification and the dissolution of agency.

Within this, we can see that Evangelicalism ‘suffers’ as a competing sociality to the agonistic interactions that it faces with the new socialities of late-capitalist markets. Guest highlights this process of resistance and resonance, pointing out that Connolly’s claim to articulate the resonance between Christianity and capitalism is nothing new. Evangelicals have been aware of this resonance problem for some time. In particular, Evangelical Anglicans within a social justice tradition have previously resisted such ‘resonance’.⁹⁸ Whilst Connolly calls upon religious groups to partner him in conversation about these issues, he misses the fact that many Evangelicals have already been active in resisting the forces of capitalism.

It is not just in the developing world where we see this mechanism at work, but also where migrant communities move from developing worlds into developed countries.⁹⁹ Globalisation means populations increasingly flow where capital flows, prompting the rise of migrant churches.¹⁰⁰ Where people migrate around work we see religious identity as parasitic to that economic migration.¹⁰¹ Churches are habituated in the realities of that new economic location, whilst at the same time seeking to enable people to construct forms of life and support for each other within that reality. Methodism does much the same within urban London, such that we might consider that “Pentecostalism is an extension of Methodism and the Evangelical Revivals (or Awakenings) accompanying Anglo-American modernisation.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Guest, “Evangelicalism in Transatlantic Context,” 262.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ For examples of people, groups, and churches see *ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰¹ For an example of this experience within a broader religious context, and for the highlighting of similarities and differences that arise due to differences between religions, see Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1960).

¹⁰² Guest, “Evangelicalism in Transatlantic Context,” 7.

In globalised society, we see this double dynamic of resistance and resonance at work. There are new emerging forms of economic life and social arrangements of capitalism within current globalisation. We may view the most recent changes in late-capitalist markets within a globalised economy as constituting a new sociality to which Evangelicalism, along with other forms of Christianity, agnostically seeks to respond, and with which it seeks to compete. Within this, we might perceive new forms of emerging church ecclesiology and post-ecclesial moments as an attempt to help Christians hold onto identity amidst new pressures of social dissolution, whilst at the same time being captive to the logic of the market opportunities and resources used by those forms.¹⁰³ Additionally, we may see within Martin's thesis that Evangelicals seek, in the post-ecclesial moment, to carry within them an imagination of the Christian self, 'in the world but not of it', so to speak, that cannot be realised. For this imagination contains the genesis of a self, a self created by market imaginations, that is in isolation from others.

Recent research has highlighted how mobility and unsettlement remain key factors in understanding identity construction. Identities are now plural for people, and affective rather than instrumental, such that it is how people 'feel' about community that is most important to them.¹⁰⁴ Whilst there is the complexity of identity within a globalised context, people are simultaneously collapsing their identities into 'village communities', seen most clearly in resentments to the removal of schools, church buildings, and youth clubs, that they may never visit or take part in physically.¹⁰⁵

Contemporary social-scientific accounts like Martin's show how religious identity can be parasitic to economic migration, whilst at the same time seeking to provide care,

¹⁰³ Guest traces some of the recent post-ecclesial moments taking place amongst Evangelicals. See Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 49.

¹⁰⁴ Even Northern Ireland, with its strong national identity, is now a place where people hold multiple identities. See Helen Brocklehurst, "British Island Stories: History, Identity and Nationhood," Full Research Report ESRC Award No. L219252035B, accessed 9th May 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/2fhgxak>. See also Simon Clarke, "Mobility and Unsettlement: New Identity Construction in Contemporary Britain," Full Research Report. ESRC End of Award Report, RES-148-25-0003 (2007), accessed 9th May 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/39yf3xh>.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

and the deepening of agency and resistance to those economic forces. Martin's work provides us with an analogue and paradigm through which to filter eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historical accounts for an interpretive framework. For example, we can perceive Evangelicalism to be using the rhetoric of neo-liberalism, whilst also seeking to respond to the problems capitalism produces with social cohesion. This double dynamic is where Evangelicalism, like Pentecostalism, "finds itself in serious tension with a central thrust of consumer capitalism."¹⁰⁶

2.3.5 A Mixed Bag: A creature of and a response to capitalism

Evangelicalism was about being in the world, even whilst it tried not to be; this is its double dynamic. Personal faith as a way of fleeing the world led, in fact, to a way of living in the world. Previous "patrician" and "plebeian" modes of construction of Christian faith inevitably gave way to "bourgeois" constructions of the leisured classes of the emerging market.¹⁰⁷ This was manifest and seen most readily in the rise of voluntary societies and organisations, on "a wave of voluntarism."¹⁰⁸ That voluntarist behaviour would carry the Evangelical church to its current location. Ironically it was a 'higher' view of church that led to a lower commitment to church.¹⁰⁹ Authentic personal experience took precedence for Evangelicals over church structure. Whilst being centred around a new self-agency, this did lead to enormous social change, at least in the inception of Evangelicalism.¹¹⁰ The relationship of Evangelicalism to capitalism was indeed a 'mixed bag', as all forms of ecclesiology always are, being both captive to the worst of

¹⁰⁶ Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 76.

¹⁰⁷ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 233.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁰⁹ Noll claims that a more spiritual vision for Church was ultimately translated to a commitment to the idea of "nation in the United States" (Noll, *America's God*, 13). Noll also notes that the American process of moving away from Puritan conceptions of church to their own ecclesiastical forms finally arrives at voluntary forms of ecclesiology led by charismatic leaders (Noll, *America's God*, 173).

¹¹⁰ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 281.

market forces, and yet at the same time, being able to transmit themselves through the market, effecting enormous change in resistance to those forces.

Within the resonant relationship of Evangelicalism with capitalism there was, as Noll writes: “no one Protestant approach to money. Neither did there exist any grand system of economic practice that systematically governed the behaviour, the speaking, or the life assumptions of the churches and church people. Single cause explanations simply do not work as a satisfying covering explanation for religious–economic connections.”¹¹¹ At times in this ‘mixed bag’, spiritual renewal of Evangelicalism sometimes took its form in the market in ways that did not interrupt the market. Katharyn Long sees this as a “revivalism without social reform” that was part of the make-up of Evangelicalism.¹¹² Yet this is not how Evangelicals saw themselves, with the Wesleyan, Samuel Chadwick, suggesting that “conversions not only bring prosperity to the church, they solve the social problem.”¹¹³ Additionally, Erdozain draws our attention to how, unlike any other movements, Evangelicalism created “schools, nurseries, communes, colleges, ecological housing associations, subsistence farming centres, criminal resettlement houses, women’s refuges, practical anti-racism projects and urban renewal programmes.”¹¹⁴ We can see a fascinating double dynamic here. Evangelicalism in its global form becomes disembedded from local context, but on the other hand there is evidence of the contrary, its embeddedness in response to contextual features.¹¹⁵ Evangelicalism within my accounts so far is seen as both a creature of capitalism, and a way of responding to capitalism. Initially for Evangelicals, and dominant for them, was the desire for inner

¹¹¹ Noll, *God and Mammon*, 8.

¹¹² Katharyn Long, *The Revival of 1857–58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening*, Religion in America Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 124. Long gives a supporting example for this claim with noon-hour prayer meetings, which did not interfere with the working day.

¹¹³ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 5.

¹¹⁴ Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure*, 3.

¹¹⁵ By way of further example, and for a particularly comprehensive examination of multiple and varied accounts of the relationship of Pentecostal evangelicals to capitalism, see Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino, “‘Religious Consumers’ in a Changing ‘Religious Marketplace’,” *Latin American Research Review* 36, no. 1 (2001).

spiritual renewal of the self around an identity in Christ. Yet that social imagination for the self eventually atrophies and becomes a market imagination within capitalism. We can see that a lack of attention to the form of church by Evangelicals led to its taking a form captive to the logic of market imaginations. The Evangelical focus of salvation outside the church, results in the relocation of salvation into the home, which simultaneously becomes the location for the privatisation of life around the demands of capitalist markets and leisure.¹¹⁶

Evangelicalism capitulated to the socio-logic of the world in which it had once been most affective. It was then unable to continue to fund a stable imagination of the self within further developments of capitalism. What markets *did* to people and communities in practice is now my main concern, such that:

The new market world, by contrast, featured mobility, efficiency, individual self-exertion, specialisation, productivity, expanding consumption, and a way of life that disrupted communities, uprooted relationships, and commodified family connections. Within this narrative, religion has been important, primarily for its role in either retarding or exhilarating return to markets... In more general terms, religion was useful if it resisted the spread of the market but retrograde if it facilitated the transition to modern capitalism.¹¹⁷

I have reached the point where I need to provide focused attention to how life in developing capitalist markets interacted with the beliefs and practices of Evangelicals in assurance, to supplant a Christian imagination for life with a market imagination. If anxiety about assurance of salvation was the doorway and then pathway- the catalyst to Evangelicals taking action in the new emerging world of the capitalist market- how did market imaginations subsequently colonise and dominate those original imaginations of Evangelical Christians in the way we see today? Such understanding will allow for the retrieval of resistance in my Evangelical tradition. A possible point of resistance is the local and contextual in mission, in the face of globalised 'sameness'. If so, a reduction or

¹¹⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 83.

¹¹⁷ Noll, *God and Mammon*, 16.

increase of contextual mission could be a gauge for measuring and assessing Evangelicalism's resistance to the negative forces of capitalism.

2.4 Conclusion

We are at a crucial juncture in my mapping of Evangelicalism, one where we see how, despite doctrinal claims, inner assurance for Protestants *often required evidence of assurance to be visible, in good works*, despite beliefs about salvation by faith alone, that then also manifest in the providence of God as a sign and validation of that assurance.¹¹⁸ We might now see how Protestant self-questioning over assurance led to a work ethic that demanded external signs of providence for that assurance.¹¹⁹ Here we are at a boundary on my mapping, with signposts into Weber's Protestant Work Ethic. I have surfaced many elements that are presaged by Weber's work.¹²⁰ Many of the accounts and sources I have interacted with are based upon and, at times, as I have shown, solely underpinned by the use of Weber's Protestant Work Ethic. And as already noted, Bebbington indicates that Weber provides an account and explanation of how the Protestant doctrine of assurance combined with the nature of emerging capitalist markets.¹²¹ We therefore now enter the domain and territory of the ascetics of capitalism, where Weber is our principal guide.

¹¹⁸ As already noted in this chapter, Bebbington evidences how for Protestants there was great anxiety around assurance, that led to a reliance on good works as remedy to that anxiety. Evangelicalism provided great relief to this anxiety with its belief and experiences of assurance by faith. See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 44. My chapter here has shown how this new Evangelical inner assurance led to a migration and focus around providence. For historical example, Scottish Puritan dissenters celebrated the providence of God on market days. These days were combined with extended periods of worship and revival around Christian identity. See Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 295–296.

¹¹⁹ Bebbington, "Response", 421. Here Bebbington claims again how anxiety around assurance led to reliance in some way on providence, as evidence for assurance.

¹²⁰ Bebbington confirms this boundary, and of Weber's concern with how these good works and the 'worldly asceticism' it resulted in may have generated the development of capitalism, see Bebbington, "Response", 44–45.

¹²¹ Weber and Parsons, *The Protestant Ethic*. Pete Ward has also indicated that it is in Weber that an understanding of how Evangelicalism became enmeshed with capitalist markets may be found, Ward, *Selling Worship*, 11.

Chapter 3

Assurance, Anxiety and The Protestant Work Ethic

Invoking Weber brings me into contact with a thesis with a long history of intense dispute and methodological debate, as well as wide acceptance. A recent survey considers Weber's Protestant thesis to be "the focus of the longest running debate in modern social science", such that it is almost "impossible to pull Weber out of the bag without the baggage of a century's worth of critics."¹ Like Jacob and Kadane, I might well ask: "Given its thorniness, why invoke Weber's thesis yet again?"² Yet my previous chapter has led us to the need for this invocation.

For my interrogation and deployment of Weber, I undertake a few tasks in this chapter. First, I distil from Weber and related works a summary of the Protestant Work Ethic thesis for my own orientation to that thesis. Second, I locate Weber's account within a summary of the long-standing debate about his method and thesis, drawing attention to the possibilities and limits of his thesis for the purpose of my work. This then allows me to make my third move, of modulating and then deploying Weber, to bring him into further contact with the issues of assurance and providence my thesis needs to make. In particular, I will run my modulation of Weber against a specific concrete example from Evangelical history, to test the validity of my work so far. That analysis leads to the proposal that Evangelical identity is propagated and mutated through a particular ascetic mechanism of capitalism.

¹ Margaret C. Jacob and Matthew Kadane, "Missing, Now Found in the Eighteenth Century: Weber's Protestant Capitalist," *The American Historical Review*, 108, no. 1 (2003): 20. Then, for an overview of the history of debate around Weber's Protestant Work Ethic, see David Zaret, "The Use and Abuse of Textual Data," in *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts*, edited by Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 245.

² *Ibid.*, 21.

3.1 In a Nutshell: The Protestant Work Ethic thesis

Weber's basic Protestant Work Ethic thesis is simple to state, and gives us some understanding as to its durability and utilisation by others:³ "Weber's main emphasis is upon the role of religious ideas as they generated an attitude of ascetic discipline. These religious ideas, exemplified in Protestantism, worked to create a set of economic attitudes, which aided the rise of capitalism."⁴ Weber's Protestant thesis arose in response to the question of why modern capitalism has emerged with the pursuit of profit and had not done so previously. After all, the impulse of greed and gain has been present throughout history. Weber asks what is unique about the capitalist enterprise, what are the conditions that allow for the first time in history the rational, protected pursuit of profit by all?⁵ Weber defines "capitalist economic action as one which rests on the expectation of profit by the utilization of opportunities for exchange."⁶ He provides us with a brief materialist economic history as to the resistance of societies to capitalism, but he finds economic, legal, and scientific rationalisations insufficient to explain the emergence of capitalism:

For though the development of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and law, it is at the same time determined by the ability and disposition of men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct. When these types have been obstructed by spiritual obstacles, the development of rational economic conduct has also met serious inner resistance. The magical and religious forces, and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them, have in the past always been among the most important formative influences on conduct.⁷

Here, Weber reveals something of his Ideal Type methodology, the idea that humans cannot be best understood within their social worlds through the methods of the physical sciences.⁸ In a way, Weber prefigures Milbank's thesis, exposing the bias and traditions

³ My thesis is primarily focused on the Evangelicalism of the UK and North America, and Weber has been extensively dealt with in English across disciplines, such that, for the purposes of my thesis, I have not engaged directly with sources in German.

⁴ Richard L. Means, "Weber's Thesis of the Protestant Ethic: The Ambiguities of Received Doctrine," *The Journal of Religion*, 45, no. 1 (1965): 6.

⁵ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 17–18; Weber provides an extended explanation of his understanding of capitalism.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17–27.

⁸ Alex Callinicos, *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 153; Callinicos explains the emergence of the European anti-naturalist school of thought in sociology,

of sociology that lead to inadequate socio-economic explanations of human behaviour.⁹ Weber was adamant that scientific methods may be objective, but that they worked “within an inherently subjective framework.”¹⁰ For materialist rational and scientific analyses of culture are embedded within “value-inscriptions,” which “are subject to no rational adjudication.”¹¹

Weber moves the understanding of capitalism from materialist Marxist accounts of “production” to one of “consumption”.¹² It is the rational actor and consumer, their wants and needs, that determine market economic constructions. Weber forces us to look behind the relationships of the phenomena of market exchange, so that capitalist markets must be understood as a social phenomenon and “the intended consequence of individual actions.”¹³ This method explains capitalism as a process of rationalisation by individuals around an ethic of “acquisition as the ultimate purpose of life.”¹⁴

Weber calls this ethic and rationalisation the “Spirit of Capitalism”, and describes this spirit as a form of asceticism.¹⁵ There is an inner-worldly asceticism to capitalism, the orientation and discipline of life around the material pursuit of wealth. This ascetic of the “Spirit of Capitalism” has “had to fight its way to supremacy against a whole world of hostile forces.”¹⁶ It is in religion that Weber discerns the stimulus and impetus to overcome these forces. For, whilst it was religion that provided the greatest resistance to capitalism, it was the character and inner ascetic of Protestantism that gave rise to the

with its reaction to the evolutionism and empiricism of intellectual culture, after Darwin, and Weber’s location to that.

⁹ Milbank exposes the bias and traditioned contexts of social theory, and demonstrates how, contrary to the Marxist priority of the economic over the ideological, “there is no socio-economic reality which is more basic than the reality of religion.” See Keer, “Simplicity Itself,” 306.

¹⁰ Callinicos, *Social Theory*, 156.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Marx’s critique of political economy has a long history and tradition of use. For an overview of the recent renewal of interest in this critique, see Alex Callinicos, *The Resources of Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

¹³ Ibid., 159; Callinicos expands on the “marginalist economic” model that underlies Weber’s Ideal Type methodology.

¹⁴ Ibid., 161.

¹⁵ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 47–78.

¹⁶ Ibid., 56.

new ethic of moneymaking.¹⁷ Whilst, for Marx, “human beings’ social relations with each other are the outcome of economic relations,” Weber explored the inverse, or, how social relationships generate the nature of economic life.¹⁸ Weber also makes use of the “historical interpretative” tool and concept of “elective affinity” to describe the relationship between capitalism and Protestantism. This is where two social forms are functionally compatible without the need to claim the ‘causal primacy’ of any one form: “Thus there is an elective affinity between the Protestant ethic and the capitalist spirit, both of which are forms of inner-worldly asceticism. Similarly, capitalism and bureaucracy, two types of instrumentally rational social organisations, are bound together by an elective affinity for one another.”¹⁹ Having claimed this ascetic relationship, Weber then provides an argument to justify this thesis and relationship which can be summarised as follows.

Luther introduced the Protestant idea of ‘calling’ (in German, *Beruf*). Luther, in effect, brought ordinary life and worldly affairs within the realm of moral duty, such that the life of ordinary people had to excel the morality of monastic asceticism. This broke with the Catholic division of ethical life into *praecepta* and *consilia*.²⁰ This focus and attention on the station and calling of life of the individual, drew out a new emphasis on providence. For Luther, ‘calling’ was about how worldly duties were no longer subordinate to monastic ascetics, but at the same time, this attention to calling took place in “obedience to authority and the acceptance of things as they were.”²¹

¹⁷ Ibid., 73; Weber cites pre-Reformation doctrine and its resistance to the Spirit of Capitalism. The work of Noonan also provides one of the most comprehensive explanations of the pre-Reformation understanding of usury, and examines how Calvin, free from Canon law, explored the uses of money to benefit others, but within strong limits of social relationships. See John T. Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

¹⁸ Callinicos, *Social Theory*, 171.

¹⁹ Ibid., 163.

²⁰ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 79–80. Kemper Fullerton also provides a more detailed overview of Luther’s conception of calling in relation to *praecepta evangelica* and *consilia evangelica* in “Calvinism and Capitalism”, in Bryan S. Turner, *Max Weber: Critical Responses* (London: Routledge, 1999), 101–103.

²¹ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 86.

Luther may have promulgated early European labour divisions, wherein a ‘vocation’ from God was no longer the special domain of the clergy or church, but was now applied to any occupation or trade. Yet his formulation of calling was still within a traditionalist framework, alongside what was, for Luther, the suspicion of any “tendency to ascetic self-discipline in leading to salvation.”²² For the notion of calling, in the Lutheran sense, “is at best of questionable importance for the problems in which we are interested.”²³ This is because Weber saw the fulfilment of the Protestant ethic, not in Lutheranism, but within Calvinistic forms of Christianity.²⁴

It is in Calvinism that Weber locates the individual within Christianity as inhabiting a place where God laid all of their lives, in every detail, bare for assessment.²⁵ Here we see where Weber has misunderstood Calvin, for Calvin (like Luther and Melancthon) included assurance of one’s salvation as part of saving faith.²⁶ Weber may misunderstand Calvin, but it is Weber’s understanding and subsequent use of Calvin that is my main

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ For an extended theological critique of the Reformers’ understanding of vocation, see Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 105–110. Volf argues that the Reformers’ understanding of work as vocation can lead to injustice as it reinforces the status quo, which might then include forced, dangerous, and exploited labour.

²⁵ It is worth making a note here, again, on my method and use of sources. My thesis does not seek to completely and solely critique the Protestant Work Ethic, for if it did, it would examine Calvin directly and extensively here. Instead, my critique constructively points to sources and requirements that such an excavation of Weber would require.

²⁶ For example, see John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans by Ross Mackenzie, ed by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1960), 116. Here Calvin’s exegesis of Romans 5 affirms the assurance of salvation that a believer might experience from justification by faith. Rom 5:1 reads (NRSV), “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Luther, Melancthon and Calvin in their commentary on this opening verse of Romans 5 claim that there is a status and experience within justification by faith, that provides for peace and assurance by the believer, see Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol 25: *Lectures on Romans*, ed by Hilton C. Oswald, trans by Jacob A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 285, and LW. Philip Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans by Fred Kramer (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1992), 122, and John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans by Ross Mackenzie, ed. by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1960), 104. Calvin, 104. Whilst there are many commonalities between Luther, Melancthon and Calvin on assurance, there are many significant differences. Calvinists did not allow for assurance of one’s salvation as part of saving faith but even they agreed that one can have assurance of salvation. The full scope and assessment of Calvin’s assurance of faith is beyond my thesis, but for a detailed and comprehensive overview see Anthony N.S. Lane, “Calvin’s Doctrine of Assurance Revisited,” in D.W. Hall (ed.), *Tributes to John Calvin: A Celebration of his Quincentenary* (Phillipsburg (NJ): P&R, 2010), 270-313.

concern. So, for Weber, with Calvin no sacrament or any aspect of the church could provide assurance of salvation, for even within the church were the ‘doomed’ to be located.²⁷ And whilst Christ has died, salvation was for the elect, of which no one could lay claim and guarantee of ownership, with the result that “for salvation, the Calvinist’s intercourse with his God was carried on in deep isolation.”²⁸ The daily life of Christians, especially their labour, becomes the sole activity for the glory of God, with attention to hard work and prosperity as signs of Christian assurance being established. In the face of the doctrine of predestination and the psychological pressures of accountability over the use of one’s life within this doctrine, good works are “the technical means, not of purchasing salvation, but of getting rid of the fear of damnation...In practice this means that God helps those who help themselves.”²⁹

Alongside this new ‘work ethic’ ran a Protestant aesthetic of desire, in which an ascetic of the material life of the cloistered monk was aspired to.³⁰ The more strongly this Calvinist asceticism was practised, the more it resulted in an individual being driven further away from the material world. Andre Biéler calls this combination of work ethic and ascetic “Protestant occupational asceticism”.³¹ Biéler describes how this ethic stimulates production, whilst the ascetic stops consumption, such that the capitalist spirit is to produce much and consume little.³²

With restrictions upon Christians on giving to churches through anything that appeared to support religious and mystical icons, and as giving money to the poor was seen as undermining the drive to work and encouraging begging, these Protestants were left to invest their money, and nascent capitalism was born.³³ Weber then traces the

²⁷ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 104.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

³¹ André Biéler, Edward Dommen, and James Greig, *Calvin’s Economic and Social Thought* (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, World Council of Churches, 2006), 434.

³² *Ibid.*, 435.

³³ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 177–178. However, Weber is more nuanced about this claim, something missed by many critics (see footnote 55).

development of this Protestant Work Ethic and ascetic through pietism, Methodism, and other sects, such as Baptists.³⁴ Weber's diagnosis terminates with the birth of Methodism, and notes an injunction of John Wesley's embodying his Protestant Work Ethic thesis. Weber correlates his argument with a direct quote from John Wesley: "we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and save all they can; that is, in effect to grow rich".³⁵ Weber understands Wesley here providing a proof of a work ethic thesis and of how Wesley was charging Christians to "give all they can, so that they will grow in grace and lay up a treasure in heaven".³⁶ Now Wesley did indeed make this statement, but Weber has misinterpreted Wesley, something that is easily evidenced by looking at the wider quote from Wesley, where in fact Wesley claims how "frugality" and "industry" in terms of a work ethic lead to riches, but that such riches lead to "pride, anger and the love of the world".³⁷ In other words, Wesley's well known dictum is indeed a description of a work ethic, but a warning of the results of such an ethic, something Weber has missed.

In summary, Weber's Protestant Work Ethic thesis consists of the relationship between four key ideas:

- 1) Calvinist doctrine and beliefs of predestination induced 'salvation anxiety' in believers. Throughout their lives, work became an issue of calling, where God now assessed the individual in that location.
- 2) Believers within Calvinist worship unable to turn to sacraments, or to the church, for comfort and assurance, see providence in ordered lives as evidence of being one of the 'elect'.

³⁴ Ibid., 95–154 (chapter IV, "The Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism"). Whilst Weber might have used the term 'sect' to describe Methodists and Baptists, theologically they are not normally described as such.

³⁵ Ibid., 175.

³⁶ Ibid., 176.

³⁷ Wesley's statement is from one of his sermons, see John Wesley, Sermon 116, paragraph 8, <http://www.wbbm.org/john-wesley-sermons/serm-116.htm>, accessed 18th September 2018.

- 3) The ordering of ordinary life and labour around a monastic ascetic and its ideals as the means for fulfilling one's calling leads to a Protestant and occupational ascetic.
- 4) This ascetic combines with a Puritan aesthetic that results in the rational mastery of economic life and the "Spirit of Capitalism", in which much is produced, little is consumed, and the pursuit of profit is established as a morally good issue.³⁸

In his conclusion, Weber describes the terminus of the bourgeois ethic, and the bourgeois businessman, wherein "the power of the religious asceticism provided him in addition with sober, conscientious, and unusually industrious workmen, who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God."³⁹ Weber does not describe how we arrive at the transformation of his Protestant ethic into the *bourgeois businessman*. But he does observe and note at the end of his work that the religious underpinning of capitalism that he had diagnosed was mostly gone from society, such that "today the spirit of religious asceticism – whether finally, who knows? – has escaped from the cage."⁴⁰ Weber concludes his work with an observation of the transformation of the Puritan work ethic into something else, which he leaves others to describe and diagnose:

The Puritan wanted to work in calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt.⁴¹

³⁸ I have 'filled out' and developed the suggestion of four key ideas summarised by Gianfranco Poggi. See "Historical Viability, Sociological Significance, and Personal Judgment," in Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth's, *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts*. Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 295–296.

³⁹ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 177.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

This mechanised nature of capitalist production in relation to the “the rosy blush of its laughing heir, the Enlightenment,” left the notion of calling and duty to one’s vocation as a “ghost of dead religious beliefs.”⁴²

3.2 Ghost in the Machine: The wider debate

Having made this summary of Weber’s method and Protestant Work Ethic thesis, I now locate that thesis within the wider debate and criticisms of his work. This will allow me to then propose how his thesis, with modifications, may be useful to my project. In order to explore the critiques surrounding Weber’s thesis, I have grouped them into three key areas: methodological issues within social theory, historical issues and criticisms, and theological concerns.

3.2.1 Weber’s ‘Ideal Type’ Methodology

Weber deploys his Ideal Type method to produce an account of the Protestant Work Ethic, seeking to “establish a more differentiated dialectical relation between religion, lifestyle, and emotion.”⁴³ Weber took the epiphenomena of religious beliefs seriously, and refused to deploy methods that reduced the action of actors in any realm, including the religious, to mere social or historical factors.⁴⁴ It was not that Weber was opposed to these other methods for a “multi-dimensional analysis”. Rather, Weber sought to take a specific religious factor (Protestantism) and to then analyse that within a complex relationship (Capitalism), for which he found his Ideal Type methodology more suitable.⁴⁵ Yet even within this, Weber saw himself as something of an economic historian.⁴⁶ MacKinnon has

⁴² Ibid., 182.

⁴³ Thomas Nipperdey, “Max Weber, Protestantism, and the Debate around 1900,” in Lehmann and Roth, eds., *Protestant Ethic*, 79.

⁴⁴ A process explained by Nipperdey in *ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁵ Lehmann and Roth, *Protestant Ethic*, 79.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

claimed that critics who see Weber as having no materialist grasp overlook the fact that Weber accepted material preconditions as necessary for his ‘Ideal Type’ dialectic.⁴⁷

An ‘Ideal Type’ is not a moral ideal, nor an average of the instances of something. It is, rather, a heuristic description, not of reality, but as a means of expression which point towards descriptions of reality.⁴⁸ Ideal Types were, for Weber, a means to make sense of the “chaos of infinitely differentiated and highly contradictory complexes of ideas and feelings.”⁴⁹ These then provide guidance for “understanding the unique individual character of cultural phenomena.”⁵⁰ In short, Weber’s Ideal Types allow for investigation between collective phenomena, to locate similarities and differences in concrete realities. We can, and do, speak about Protestants knowing that this is an accentuation of a collective ideal, and that there is a likelihood that individuals will behave in the expected social ways to which Protestants are prone. All the collective types we, like Weber, use, are never the full account and embodiment of what they label, be that Protestant, Evangelical, etc. But Ideal Types allow for the construction of theses, that link those types, and explain the real-world conditions that gave rise to phenomena between them. Ideal Types are therefore approximations for us to then correlate cause and effect between those types.

I write of Evangelicals as an ideal type to get closer to their concrete actions.⁵¹ My description of Evangelicals then allows me to consider variations in actions by

⁴⁷ Malcolm H. MacKinnon, “The Longevity of the Thesis: A Critique of the Critics,” in Lehmann and Roth, eds., *Protestant Ethic*, 211.

⁴⁸ For a detailed and recent explanation and assessment of Weber’s Ideal Type method, see Hilliard Aronovitch, “Interpreting Weber’s Ideal-Types,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Volume 42, Issue 3 (2012), 356–369.

⁴⁹ Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, edited and translated by E. A. Shills and H. A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1949), 96.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁵¹ When any social scientist attempts to explain terms like capitalism or Protestantism, they often subsume those terms under general concepts of economics or religion. But to do so elides the most important distinctives of those domains. When, on the other hand, a social scientist makes use of historical methods and particularises the phenomenon being reviewed, often the result is that there is no room left to compare related phenomena between domains. Weber’s Ideal Type method sought to escape this dilemma.

Evangelicals to my approximations and abstractions. As Julien Freund puts it, "Being unreal, the ideal type has the merit of offering us a conceptual device with which we can measure real development and clarify the most important elements of empirical reality."⁵² Weber had three distinct levels of abstraction to Ideal Types. First, there are Ideal Types of historical particularities, such as 'the Protestant Ethic', or 'capitalism' which are phenomena from specific historical periods manifest within particular cultural contexts. Then, second, there are Ideal Types as abstractions of elements from social reality found in a variety of historical and cultural contexts, such as 'bureaucracy'. Third, and finally, there is an ideal type that describes a common and particular behaviour for all cultures and contexts. For Weber, this was the realm of economic theory, which often generates categories of describing people in economic terms, with economic motives.⁵³

Of course, Weber's Ideal Type theory is greatly contested.⁵⁴ But it remains in significant use within social sciences as a method for understanding how agents act and interpret their experiences. However provisional understanding of agents has to be, it does at the same time provide causal explanations of those agents.⁵⁵ Despite Weber's claims to be somewhat of an economic historian, and to be attentive to material conditions, he is often seen as lacking attention to the material in his accounts. Social scientists like Harvey Goldman see a dialectic between the materialist accounts of Marx and the rationalistic account of Weber.⁵⁶ Within this placement, some social scientists further discern Weber as being between two interpretative poles, one of "a fruitful battle with historical

⁵² Julien Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 69.

⁵³ This summary is taken from Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2003), 223–224.

⁵⁴ For examples of recent critiques and updating of Weber's Ideal Type method see Hilliard Aronovitch, and Juan Manuel Forte, "Religion and Capitalism: Weber, Marx and the Materialist Controversy," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 4 (2008): 427–48; K. P. R. Bartels, "The Disregard for Weber's *herrschaft* the Relevance of Weber's Ideal Type of Bureaucracy for the Modern Study of Public Administration," *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, Vol. 31, no. 4 (2009): 447–478; and Thomas W. Segady, "The Utility of Weber's Ideal Type: Verstehen and the Theory of Critical Mass," *Sociological Spectrum* 34, no.4 (2014): 354–61.

⁵⁵ Weber, *Methodology*, 43.

⁵⁶ Harvey S. Goldman, "Weber's Ascetic Practices of the Self," in Lehmann and Roth, *Protestant Ethic*, 161–162.

materialism” and the other side where Weber “fit[s] perfectly into Marx’s system.”⁵⁷ Weber, in his own context of struggles for German national identity, was seeking an empowered self, one able to master the rationalised world and “generate selves with power.”⁵⁸ This does raise the question of how we might understand the way a “self is shaped by relations of power in institutions and social practices.”⁵⁹ Here we reach a boundary and limit to Weber’s thesis; we then need to pay attention to the non-rational and the material. My next chapter attends to material accounts. In the interim, and related to any deficit of method for material accounting, is the need for historical accuracy, in particular the issue of economics history, to which we now turn.

3.2.2 Historical Issues in Weber’s Analysis

It is the accuracy of Weber’s historical data that has drawn some of the sharpest criticisms. Richard L. Means provides a summary of many of these historical criticisms.⁶⁰

First, it was not Calvin who introduced usury (the taking of interest) to Geneva, but rather the Catholic Bishop Fabri 150 years before Calvin.⁶¹ Whilst Weber insists on the centrality of usury to the Protestant Work Ethic within Calvinism and later Puritanism, he seems to have made the mistake common to other sociologists of not examining the writings and work of Calvin on usury. Andre Biéler has carried out one of the most extensive examinations of Calvin on economic thought, in relation to usury, and concludes that Calvin was one of the most outspoken critics of usury.⁶² Biéler also highlights how Weber failed to account for the change in Calvin’s thinking and

⁵⁷ H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: RSC, 1991), p. 65. See also J. A. Schupeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), p. 11.

⁵⁸ Harvey S. Goldman, “Weber’s Ascetic Practices of the Self,” 164.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Means, “Weber’s Thesis,” 3–6. Means draws on the work of Herbert Luethy for his summary of Weber’s historical deficiencies.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶² Biéler, Dommen, and Greig, *Social Thought*, 145-148.

transformation over time by later Puritans: “That relationship has been hybridized by so many historical influences and sociological factors that one would have to make a far deeper and more meticulous analysis than Weber’s ... in order to discover the real thread that runs through from one to the other.”⁶³ Yet with regard to Weber’s claims over Calvin’s ascetics, Biéler admits that an ascetic did exist. That ascetic was, as Weber claims, centred on providence, and an accounting for the use of the life to which God had called individuals. But this ascetic was about the fair sharing of wealth, and not about justification of poverty, as Weber claims.⁶⁴ However - and one does wonder how historians have missed this - Weber is at pains to point out that Calvin is misquoted as justifying poverty.⁶⁵ Weber goes into enough historical detail to remind us that Puritans subsequent to Calvin made begging illegal, because “the Protestant sects and the strict Puritan communities actually did not know any begging in their midst.”⁶⁶ As noted earlier, Weber does seem to claim that the Protestant Work Ethic had negative implications for how people saw the poor, but he distinguishes this as a later development after Calvin, and as a bourgeois and secular misappropriation of the Protestant ethic.⁶⁷

Another area of historical concern is Weber’s lack of exploration of the effects of social class, in particular the relationship between the middle classes and Protestantism.⁶⁸ Whereas Weber sees Protestantism as causal to the development of the middle classes, the development of the middle classes may have given rise to Protestantism. R. H. Tawney argues just this as having taken place, perceiving later “Puritanism” as being

⁶³ Ibid., 437.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 439.

⁶⁵ Indeed, Weber sees this justification of poverty as something that progressed over time, and manifested only in late-bourgeois capitalism. See Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 176–177.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 178. For a detailed examination of Calvin’s understanding of poverty, see Bonnie L. Pattison, *Poverty in the Theology of John Calvin* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006). Pattison explains how with Calvin, poverty can become a means of grace, an opportunity to gain knowledge of God in a way that is unseen when poverty and hardship are absent.

⁶⁷ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 177.

⁶⁸ Means, “Weber’s Thesis,” 4.

changed by the emerging middle classes.⁶⁹ Tawney's thesis argues that the passing of the aristocracy and the rise of the new middle classes led to these new rulers of society being predominantly and necessarily Protestant.⁷⁰

In the midst of this historical debate over the relationship between the middle classes and the Puritan revolution, I believe we can see two factors at play. There is a religious movement, the Weberian thesis of how religious beliefs work with religious actors in shaping and organising society. Then there is another 'movement', the Marxist materialist account of how economic forces and social structures give rise to the shape of religious beliefs and values. I suggest these movements are not mutually exclusive to each other, but work together as an explanation of resonance and relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism. This points me again towards the need to provide a materialist account of the relationship between religion and economics.

3.2.3 Theological Considerations of Weber's Protestant Ethic

Weber's Theological Sources

In later years, Weber repeatedly emphasized that for him the most important participants in the debate over *The Protestant Ethic* were the 'experts' in religious matters, the theologians. From them alone he expected a "fruitful and instructive critique."

— Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, "The German Theological Sources and Protestant Church Politics"

Weber explicitly invited critique from the theological sphere, stating that he expected this critique, and he had many reasons to expect it "to be the most competent."⁷¹ There were his strong personal relationships with Protestant theologians, in particular his closest friend Ernst Troeltsch, then his personal wrestlings with the church and Christian faith,

⁶⁹ R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (New York: Penguin Books, 1947), 197–211.

⁷⁰ For a summary of Tawney's thesis, see Means, "Weber's Thesis," 5.

⁷¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, "The German Theological Sources and Protestant Church Politics," in Lehmann and Roth, eds., *Protestant Ethic*, 27. See also Max Weber, "Kritische Beiträge zu den vorstehenden 'Kritischen Beiträgen'," in *Die Protestantische Ethik II*, 5th ed., ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen: Gütersloh, 1987), 31.

and, most obviously, the use he made of theological sources to justify his Protestant Ethic thesis.⁷² Indeed, Weber incorporated so many resources from cultural fields, including the theological, that *The Protestant Ethic* demonstrates that Weber was, of any sociologist of the nineteenth century, the most involved in theological discourse.⁷³ We cannot understand Weber's Protestant Ethic without being involved in the specialist theological discourses which he used in his research. After publishing his Protestant Ethic as a two-part essay early in his career, Weber returned near the end of his life to his work and revised it in light of some of the criticisms he received, integrating much of his later work into the wider relationship between religion and economics.⁷⁴

With regard to his theological sources and methods, it was the German liberal Protestant tradition that informed Weber, with "more than 40 percent of the modern literature that Weber used in *The Protestant Ethic* derived from German theologians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."⁷⁵ Dominating his attention was not only the historical material from those sources, but also contemporary discussion about the nature of Protestantism and modern culture, in particular the legitimacy of the German empire.⁷⁶ It was from this theological milieu that Weber proceeded with the existing concept that religion was not a consequence and function of other values and systems, but was an autonomous realm, where "German-speaking Protestant theologians of the nineteenth century mostly followed a psychological classification that allowed not only for the independence of religion, but also for the instructive power of religious ideas."⁷⁷

It was this that shaped Weber's Ideal Type method and understanding of human agency, set against the backdrop of the forces of the German empire and materialist

⁷² Graf provides a biographical sketch of these factors in Graf, "Theological Sources," 27–30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 48–49.

⁷⁴ Kaelber provides a historical sketch of the publication life of Weber's Protestant Ethic; Lutz Kaelber, "Max Weber's Protestant Ethic in the 21st Century," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 16, no. 1 (2002): 133.

⁷⁵ Graf, "Theological Sources," 30.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

debates. Weber's desire was to see people as free agents, able to structure actions around beliefs in resistance to the forces of political authorities. It seems likely that this was one of the reasons that Weber was so quick to dismiss Luther in his *Protestant Work Ethic*, wherein Weber saw Luther as being responsible for a political passivity that was unable to respond to the authoritarian political culture of the German Wilhelmine Empire.⁷⁸ Weber's dismissal of Luther also made him unable to recognise "the potential Lutheran contribution to the modern economy."⁷⁹

I suggest it is in his relationship and discussion with Troeltsch that we find the theological centrepiece to Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, a centrepiece that gives rise to the most important theological concerns.⁸⁰ It is in a publication by Troeltsch about the nature of Reformed Protestantism in England, and how the "doctrine of predestination" gave rise to a "mercantile impulse," that is redolent of theological elements in Weber's thesis.⁸¹ However, Troeltsch held a different view (at least at the time of his publication) to Weber, that it was the certainty of salvation and related asceticism that led to the spirit of capitalism. With an understanding of the context and limitations to Weber's theological sources, like Graf we might conclude: "How can a level of knowledge about the theology and religiosity of ascetic pietism be expected from Weber that even the experts, the

⁷⁸ Weber is able at a stroke to dispense with Luther's theology of calling, as one where "the only ethical result was negative...obedience to authority and the acceptance of things as they were preached." See Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 86. For a more detailed review of the relationship of Calvin and Luther within Weber's work, see Kathryn D. Blanchard, *The Protestant Ethic or the Spirit of Capitalism: Christians, Freedom, and Free Market* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010).

⁷⁹ Weber can be understood as providing a counter-thesis to Albrecht Ritschl, who read Luther as providing a piety that was the main principle for cultural progress and Christian freedom, and that later pietism was a re-Catholicisation of the Church by later Protestants. For a detailed discussion of this theological discourse and its relationship to Weber's thesis, see Graf, "Theological Sources," 41–48.

⁸⁰ For an outline of this relationship, and the publications by Troeltsch that relate to Weber's work, see *ibid.*, 32–33. Graf notes that the major intersections between Weber and Troeltsch are to be found in their critiques of Ritschl; see *ibid.*, 42. Graf engages with several sources to show Troeltsch's and Weber's claimed independence of each other, demonstrating how, as two friends, their exchange over shared questions and selection of literature produced strong similarities between them. See *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸¹ Graf highlights how this observation is made by Weber, with Weber quoting from Ernst Troeltsch, *Real-encyklopädie für protestantische theologie und kirche*, (1891), s.v. "Art. 'Moralisten, Englische'," 436–46; see Graf, 33.

German theologians, did not possess?"⁸² Yet, it is my task to consider the key theological limitations of Weber's thesis that later scholarship provides, to which I now turn.

Weber's Use of the Doctrine of Predestination

Weber's thesis relates Protestantism theologically to capitalism through a formulation of Calvin's doctrine of calling and predestination, which he aligns with a Protestant ascetic constructed from a synthesis of ascetics gleaned from Puritans to Baptists and Methodists that ends with the example of Benjamin Franklin.⁸³ It is this understanding of the nature and place of the doctrine of predestination, and the ascetic of Protestant Christianity, that is most questionable theologically.

André Biéler asks whether Weber's dependence upon a construal of Calvin and predestination is misplaced:

...is it correct to describe Calvin's own Calvinism in terms of this dogma, which has only a secondary place in the Reformer's teaching? Did not Weber himself recall that Calvin elaborated on this teaching only at the end of his career, in the final edition of the Institutes, because of the Polemics it had aroused? No one could deny that this dogma was important in the Reformer's thought, but to say that it set its seal on the whole of the religious and secular life of the original Calvinist communities, to the point of triggering specific professional reflexes in their members, is a considerable exaggeration – strongly contradicted by the facts of that age, which show us Calvinists who were not very greatly disposed to capitalist practices. On this first point we have no right to identify Calvin's own Calvinism with later Puritanism.⁸⁴

Not only is it incorrect to describe Calvin in terms of this dogma, but there were also many other groups, captured within Weber's historical net, that did not hold to this doctrine, and were directly opposed to the anti-predestination theologies, and the anti-election doctrines of Arminianism.⁸⁵ It would seem that *The Protestant Ethic* makes no account for this, and shows no understanding of it.

⁸² Graf, "Theological Sources," 49.

⁸³ Means, "Weber's Thesis," 7.

⁸⁴ Biéler, Dommen, and Greig, *Social Thought*, 438.

⁸⁵ Means, "Weber's Thesis," 7.

MacKinnon, in his rebuttal of Weber's thesis, suggests that it was the issue of "providence" that replaced "predestination" as an explanatory ethos for Protestant ascetics.⁸⁶ Yet MacKinnon accepts that Calvin's doctrine of predestination makes assurance difficult to experience.⁸⁷ Greyerz refutes MacKinnon's work and broadly supports Weber's thesis, but he is willing to affirm the merits of MacKinnon's work in highlighting the issue of providence rather than predestination.⁸⁸ It was the shortness of life, along with the belief of special providence and the involvement of God intervening in their daily lives, that led to the spiritual 'bookkeeping' and journaling that saw people measuring their use of time and what they gave their desires to.⁸⁹

If the doctrine of predestination did not hold the centrality that Weber claims, does his thesis immediately fail? Ironically, "Weber may be right about a connection between the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of Capitalism in spite of or even because of his possible misreading of theological doctrines."⁹⁰ Guy Oakes similarly suggests that Weber's thesis does not collapse in light of this theological critique, for Weber was correct in suggesting a link between a Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, whilst being wrong about the doctrinal premise behind that ethic and its relationship to Calvinism as a theological doctrine.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Guenther Roth, "Introduction" to Lehmann and Roth, eds., *Protestant Ethic*, 13.

⁸⁷ MacKinnon, "Longevity", 219. Here, MacKinnon summarises how it is almost impossible for the believer to psychologically understand and experience this predestination. All means of knowing and understanding, be they work, reflection or perception, are excluded and God alone knows who is saved. *Sola fide*, justification by persevering faith alone, is the only hope for believers. I however note again how Weber misunderstood how included assurance of one's salvation as part of saving faith, see footnote 26. Calvin.

⁸⁸ Kaspar von Greyerz, "Predestination, Covenant, and Special Providence", in Lehmann and Roth, eds., *Protestant Ethic*, 276.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 276–277.

⁹⁰ Roth, "Introduction," 13.

⁹¹ Guy Oakes, "The Thing That Would Not Die: Notes on Refutation," in Lehmann and Roth, eds., *Protestant Ethic*, 293.

Weber's Protestant Ascetic

As I have outlined, in his thesis Weber sees a response to the material world take shape with a Protestant ascetic and aesthetic. The need to marshal the resources of life with an ascetic, to demonstrate the involvement of God in ordinary life and work, coupled with a monastic aesthetic of avoiding the material world, leads to the hard-working Protestant who produces much and consumes little. This is the combination of work ethic and ascetic that Biéler delineates as “Protestant occupational asceticism”.⁹²

An immediate critique of Weber's Protestant ascetic is that he offers scant methodological explanation for it.⁹³ Whilst he describes capitalism as rational, organised, and calculated, he does not provide a definition of capitalism within economic history. Simultaneously, Weber provides descriptions of Protestant ascetics, which he locates within the capitalist spirit, such as “wasting time,” the “ascetic compulsion to save,” and “sober industrial workmen.”⁹⁴ Means demonstrates that Weber does not show how these concepts are operationalised within any sociological method. I would further suggest that, although Weber claims that the concepts arise in response to a theologically motivating force, he fails to explicate and operationalise his Protestant ascetic ‘theologically’.

What is the theological nature of this ascetic in the daily and ethical life of Protestant Christians? The primary example Weber offers for his Puritan ascetic in practice is from Benjamin Franklin, who is shoehorned into the role of exemplar for a Protestant ascetic and ethic. It would seem that Weber misreads Franklin's context, unable to see where Franklin was theologically deistic with an orientation towards money that was politically motivated, and set within a eudemonistic ethic alongside a use of humour in talking about money – humour which was lost on Weber (and his larger

⁹² Biéler, Dommen, and Greig, *Social Thought*, 434.

⁹³ Means, “Weber's Thesis,” 7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; Means surveys the adjectives Weber uses to describe the Protestant Ethic ascetic.

German audience) linguistically.⁹⁵ Apparently, Weber is in need of a better ‘Christian’ and Protestant example for his ascetic, within a theological operationalism, the possibility of which will be explored in the next section as I modulate Weber’s thesis.

With regard to his ascetic method, Weber is criticised for bringing a secular notion of personhood, an ascetically ‘fortified self’ able to respond to the pressures of German culture and rationalisation, and wrapping it within a construction of the Puritan self.⁹⁶ Puritans provide Weber with a “contemporary discipline of the self”. But more than this, Weber’s work reveals the larger dialectic that lies within all modern ‘practices of the self’, between the obligations and restrictions of institutions and the innovation and sources of the self in resistance to these.⁹⁷ One reading of Weber is that his Protestant Ethic is an attempt to recover Christian sources of the self in the face of a society that has abandoned those sources, for “by the late nineteenth century ... the new techniques and practices that had aided in shaping and equipping bourgeois individuals for lives and roles in national culture, and class, were seriously weakened and persistently challenged by the pressures of a rapidly developing capitalist society.”⁹⁸ Whilst Weber saw the Protestant ethic as adaptable and responsive to the rationalised world, he “rejected the possibility that the non-ascetic modes of self-fashioning could adequately empower the modern self for mastery and innovation.”⁹⁹ For Weber, only with individuals acting around a “higher cause” could innovation take place, with no social movement or association able to empower action.¹⁰⁰ It is in the “self-fashioning” of the Protestant self that Weber sees the “self-fashioning” of capitalism.

⁹⁵ Roth provides an examination of these factors, and establishes Weber’s misreading of Franklin, in Roth, “Introduction,” 16–20.

⁹⁶ We have already highlighted the contextual issues of agency for Weber within his Wilhelmine nationalism. Goldman outlines this critique of Weber’s ascetic, in Goldman, “Ascetic Practices,” 161–177.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

But it is not just that Weber is unable to consider a non-ascetic mode of “self-fashioning”, he is also unable to consider any ascetic other than his Protestant Ethic. Weber’s context also includes the discussion and practice of alternative ascetics around gender and lifestyle, within the emerging Freudian understanding of personality.¹⁰¹ Weber’s nervous illness, and the disposition of many of his friends towards “overthrowing the repressive character of capitalism,” shed light on his work as an attempt to recover the religious roots of capitalism in vocation, and a rejection of this emerging erotic inner aesthetic.¹⁰² This leads me (again) to ask whether there was more than one ascetic at work within capitalism, and if so, how it was related to Christianity. Would an exploration of this reveal the loss of religious sources of the self that Weber laments, and which seems most prevalent to our late-capitalist context within our thesis problem? Weber was willing to explore one type of Puritan ascetic but not to consider another ascetic of religion, of a turning into the retreat of the “private experience of the extraordinary with erotic intimacy and with subjective enjoyment.”¹⁰³ Weber had a “preference for action as a central sociological notion over inner experience” because he was looking to avoid the political indifference, the inability to take public action that resulted from “getting lost in the labyrinth of ‘inner experiences’”.¹⁰⁴

Yet Weber did seek to integrate this “aesthetic-expressive” modernism within his theories of rationalisation, and anticipates the “break between modernism and modernity that Daniel Bell later described as a cultural contradiction of Capitalism.”¹⁰⁵ This leaves me to ask what the relationship is between that hedonistic, expressive culture, and the “institutional core of modern society” that still rests on the Protestant ethic.¹⁰⁶ I am left to enquire whether there was another Protestant ethic, or emerging post-Protestant ethic,

¹⁰¹ Klaus Lichtblau, “The Protestant Ethic versus the ‘New Ethic’,” in Lehmann and Roth, *Protestant Ethic*, 179–180.

¹⁰² Lichtblau makes this case in *ibid.*, 181–188.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁰⁵ Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

¹⁰⁶ Lichtblau, 191.

which was also in a dialectical relationship to later capitalism, that would explain the demise of religious and Christian sources for the self and illuminate my thesis problem. And would such exploration make sense of the above critiques of Weber, in particular the suggestion that it was providence and not predestination that was the doctrinal locus and motive for any Protestant ascetic? For I have suggested in my previous chapter how providence leaves more room for activism than does predestination.¹⁰⁷

Not only did Weber invite ongoing theological critique, he concludes (literally) his *Protestant Ethic* with a request that examinations of his ascetic be made:

It would also be further necessary to investigate how Protestant Asceticism was in turn influenced in its development and its character by the totality of social conditions, especially economic. The modern man is in general, even with the best will, unable to give religious ideas a significance for culture and national character which they deserve. But it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interests of historical truth.¹⁰⁸

3.3 Modulating Weber

I have established a broad account of Weber's thesis, highlighted the main critiques of his work, and suggested where they might lead me for further investigations. I now move on to modulate his thesis within its wider critical and supportive resources. This modulation is then the impetus for my next chapter and account. By way of method for this modulation of his thesis, I now examine how the doctrine of assurance migrated into a focus on the doctrine of providence to provide an alternative ascetic to that proposed by Weber. This is the ascetic that I believe generated the greatest resonance by Evangelicalism with capitalism. In order to establish this, I will draw on the work of Peter

¹⁰⁷ I have noted how Warner's understanding of Evangelical activism, as demonstrated in Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, modulated from Bebbington's *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, relies on the epistemic issue of assurance, and has missed the role of providence in generating the activism of modern Evangelicalism.

¹⁰⁸ Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 183.

Sedgwick.¹⁰⁹ I will also bring my work from my previous chapter into direct contact with a sustained critique of Weber. Ultimately, I am trying to demonstrate how Protestants relocated assurance into providence as they simultaneously moved from lifestyles of Protestant production to Evangelical consumption. I will conclude by running my modulation of Weber against an ethnographic account of the life of Joseph Ryder.¹¹⁰ From this, I make a proposal for how Evangelical identity was constructed through the ascetic mechanisms of print capitalism. This allows me to test the validity of my thesis claims and work so far, as well as signpost the work for my next chapter.

3.3.1 Loss of Resistance by Religion: Consumer identities

In his work *The Market Economy and Christian Ethics*, Sedgwick, writing within the domains of theological anthropology and ethics, suggests that “the market world has created the modern society in which our lives are lived.”¹¹¹ Human identity is made through the consumptive processes provided by the market, and those processes determine human relationships. Religious faith, or even the implications of faith, such as the Protestant Work Ethic, has increasingly less to do with identity formation and human relationship within market forces.¹¹² Sedgwick establishes his thesis by extending the work of Habermas, and notes the centrality of Weber’s work to Habermas.¹¹³ His account of Habermas is set alongside an exploration of how the aesthetics of the Romantic Movement transitioned capitalism and the market from production to consumption.

Sedgwick claims that Habermas’s work first demonstrates the instrumentalism and rationality of the market that excludes social values, and second, that there is an interplay

¹⁰⁹ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*.

¹¹⁰ Jacob and Kadane, “Weber’s Protestant Capitalist”.

¹¹¹ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 2, 14; Sedgwick makes clear that Habermas does not, however, provide a theological understanding of the market relationship to human identity. He draws our attention to how Habermas uses Weber’s Protestant Ethic as the way into discussing human identity, although he believes Weber was wrong in his understanding.

between this “sociality” of the market and the patterns of thought of contemporary culture. The result is a “colonization of the life world”, with something other than religious values.¹¹⁴ In terms of method, and in order to attend to the lack of theological description by Habermas, Sedgwick argues that it is in the development of the Romantic Movement and its aesthetic that we can see the transformation of the Protestant Work Ethic into an ethic of consumption. He draws heavily upon Colin Campbell’s work, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, in making this suggestion.

Sedgwick provides a diagnosis of the ascetic and aesthetic of capitalism, examining how the transition from production to consumption took place. For he determines this move from production to consumption as a development of Weber’s thesis. Sedgwick is mindful of the limits of his thesis. As he reminds us: “The task of relating the Christian faith to the world of the shopping-mall, and the hi-tech industrial and service sector, within the constraints of a global market-driven culture, is one that can only be begun in this book.”¹¹⁵ For diagnosis is one thing, response is something more substantive and challenging. Sedgwick’s takes us through a complex methodology commensurate to his aims. He seeks the possibility of social relationships that are able to “nourish human identity and yet recognize the reality of holding together a market economy.”¹¹⁶ I have similar aims; I do not seek the undoing of market economies per se, but rather how Evangelical identity might be nourished within market economies. Sedgwick traverses the theological, sociological, anthropological, and psychological and produces a “fully orbbed” account of human identity formation within the market. In his account, Sedgwick maps the relationship of that formation with the resources of Christianity, in particular to the Protestant Work Ethic. I now highlight two aspects of this. First, a social-theory account of human identity and the market, and, second, a doctrinal progression through

¹¹⁴ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Romanticism to the post-Protestant Work Ethic and resultant dialectic.¹¹⁷ These two accounts provide for a modulation of Weber's Protestant Ethic.¹¹⁸ This modulation allows me to make my own modulation, as I bring Weber and Bebbington together to show the move from assurance to providence.

3.3.2 Modernity, The Market, and Human Identity

Sedgwick explains that, in an ever more secure and stable global marketplace, there is an increasingly complex "search for identity."¹¹⁹ Given current economic instabilities at the time of my research, we may question whether this has indeed held true since his work, and if, rather, economic instability goes hand in hand with identity creation.¹²⁰ Sedgwick articulates human agency as a process where self is formed by the ascetics and aesthetics of the market. I will later show that it is a dialectic of these social relationships with the market that is key to understanding the shortcomings of Weber's thesis. It is also key to a diagnosis of the entrenchment of Evangelicalism within late capitalism, and, I believe, to an understanding of the instability of our current economic climate.

Sedgwick describes Habermas's response to Weber as one in which Habermas is able to affirm the rationalisation of society described by Weber, whilst at the same time aiming to reconceptualise it.¹²¹ The ascetic of religion was able to link the rationalism of the market with that of working life and, simultaneously, with the rationalisation of cultural processes and the technological revolution. Weber highlights the relationship of religion to this rationalisation, whereas Habermas is concerned with the change in the

¹¹⁷ These two accounts form chapters one and two of Sedgwick's work, before he uses them to modulate Weber's Work Ethic in the remainder of his *Market Economy*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 151–199.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79–80.

¹²⁰ Paul Ormerod, "Credit Crunch: Risk-taking", *Sunday Times*, 23 March 2008, accessed 13 September 2010.
http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/banking_and_finance/article3602042.ece.

¹²¹ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 17.

rational and cognitive structures of religious world views.¹²² The secularisation of Thomist thought sees the move from a consciousness located in a world of the mythical where the universe is comprehended through anger, blessing, sickness, and prosperity to a Newtonian and post-Kantian secular world in which “the centre has disappeared.”¹²³ In this de-centred world of modernity, differentiations of the spheres of public, private, and social society emerge with competing claims for validity.¹²⁴

Thus, whilst modernity presents “an enormous unfolding of possibilities for human flourishing,” the rationality of these competing spheres, and the mode of claiming validity, result in a dissolving of such hopes for human flourishing. Weber diagnoses social rationalisation as caused by, and necessary to, the Protestant ethic. Habermas perceives a combination of this process with the “differentiation of spheres” of modernity, as better explaining the nature of the relationship between capitalism and all identity.¹²⁵ It is in this combination that Habermas observes that the values and beliefs of social groups “are no longer shaped to a decisive extent by the institutions which individuals may belong to.”¹²⁶ Habermas’s response to Weber is with a materialist account, using the work of Karl Marx, whilst attending to shortcomings in Marx’s account. Habermas describes the relationship between capitalism and society as the emergence of a complex separation of public and private that is more than “class conflict”.¹²⁷ In short, he places Weber’s Protestant Ethic within a wider materialist context. Sedgwick concludes his work on Habermas by highlighting how Habermas has failed to provide a crucial theological diagnosis of consumerism and its relationship to Weber’s Protestant Ethic. It is a theological reappraisal of Weber’s ethic that Sedgwick turns to next, and that we now examine.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 20.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 20–21.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 29–31.

3.3.3 Doctrinal and Ascetic Modulation: Providence and Arminian pietism

Sedgwick, with reference to McKendrick and J. H. Plumb, outlines consumerism as a feature of the late eighteenth century, and describes how present consumerism has arisen in such a short period of time.¹²⁸ Sedgwick suggests that “consumerism is a product of the romantic ethic” and describes how, through the work of Colin Campbell, we can trace this emergence of consumerism from a reaction to the sixteenth-century Calvinism of Weber’s Protestant Ethic.¹²⁹

Whilst Weber’s Protestant Ethic can account for the disciplined life of industrial production, it cannot account for the development of consumption that Puritanism condemned.¹³⁰ Sedgwick discerns a parallel development of an alternative Protestant ethic, beginning with Arminianism, that then combines with Cambridge Platonism for approval of the emotional behaviour necessary to the development of consumerism.¹³¹ In effect, an ethic of feeling and sentimentalism replaced Calvinist Protestantism. We can sketch this shift as follows. Calvinism with its monastic aesthetic led to feelings of pity and benevolence gaining value. A way was opened for beliefs to connect to other feelings, as developed within Arminianism and Cambridge Platonism.¹³² Sedgwick does not delineate his understanding of Arminianism, simply declaring it “the Arminian reaction to Calvinism.”¹³³ The Arminian nature of Methodism is important to understanding how Methodists consumed the products of their industrial Calvinist predecessors, as I will show later. Sedgwick does, however, explain three emphases of Cambridge Platonism. First, that the image of God in humanity is the goodness and love of God for humanity.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 82.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 85.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 83. A detailed understanding of Arminianism and its reaction to Calvinism can be found however, in Bebbington, 16-17, 18, 27-28, 60, 63, 73, 77, 92-93, 161-2, 172, 179.

Second, this goodness sprang from feelings, and these feelings were divine in quality. Third, and most importantly, there was inherent pleasure in taking action around those emotions.¹³⁴ This is the ground in which an alternative Protestant ethic grew, and which justified consumerism.¹³⁵ Sedgwick determines that Weber's Protestant ethic does not account for the full extent of industrialisation in England and that there is more than one ethic at work. Instead, there are two Protestant ethics that work together, against each other, with this Arminian version eventually eclipsing Weber's ethic.

In this alternative Protestant ethic, ethics and aesthetics become "almost interchangeable," with virtuous behaviour becoming a matter of "taste."¹³⁶ A reliance on the inner self emerges, one with a responsive emotional life, where the imagination "becomes paramount" to that inner self, and the fusing of aesthetic and ethic is seen as indispensable to consumer behaviour.¹³⁷ Sentimentalism then transforms into Romanticism.¹³⁸ Campbell explains how the middle classes, in reading texts and novels, indulge the romantic self and develop "modern autonomous imaginative hedonism."¹³⁹ Using the work of Thorstein Veblen, Sedgwick then demonstrates how consumerism is coherent with this claim.¹⁴⁰ The centres of the imagination for construction of the self-move from the sources of religion to the consumption of the artefacts of capitalism.¹⁴¹ Sedgwick cautions us that, before we condemn this as a "degenerate" search for the self, we must understand the need of people to find identity in the complex problems of modern capitalism, and we must suggest an alternative Christian anthropology that does not condemn this "search for identity out of hand."¹⁴² I have similarly suggested that, in order to understand Evangelicalism within late capitalism, we must read it as a move to

¹³⁴ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 83-84.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Campbell, *Romantic Ethic*, 77.

¹⁴⁰ In particular, Thorstein Veblen, *Conspicuous Consumption* (London: Penguin, 2005).

¹⁴¹ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 88.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 88-89.

help people find identity in hostile economic locations and provide ‘islands of social care’.

For Veblen, consumerism assumes a neo-Darwinian materialist description of natural selection as the basis for how humans consume resources within an imagined life of competition.¹⁴³ Campbell provides an extensive rebuttal to Veblen, showing how consumption is “modern autonomous imaginative hedonism”, and that emotions are the basis for Romanticism and this new self.¹⁴⁴ But what if something else is taking place, where these accounts of Veblen and Campbell function together, in the mode of the double movement I have suggested? In this mode, Evangelicalism is the product of material forces and, at the same time, the result of agents acting around beliefs in response to a rapidly changing economic world.

If we accept Sedgwick’s description of consumerism, we must view it as a cultural product made from the fusion of feelings and aesthetics within the creativity of individual imaginations. Sentimentalism and Romanticism are therefore the failure of individuals to take action, with a “lack of imagination” that resulted in that inaction.¹⁴⁵ Today we see that “there is within consumerism a failure all too often to engage with political and social change, as well as a pervasive individualism and concern with recreation.”¹⁴⁶ The ascetic and aesthetic of consumption, caught up within the imaginations of things other than the content of religion, is unable to do anything other than consume. This is a moment of intensity, resonance, and loss of resistance that I have been looking for. A theological analysis of this intersection between belief and practice, of religious actors and consumption, needs to be made. Sedgwick lays the foundations and outlines for one

¹⁴³ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 89.

¹⁴⁴ Campbell, *Romantic Ethic*, 1–96. See especially chapter 5, 77–96.

¹⁴⁵ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 99.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 102. For a more detailed examination of how consumer culture disables people from political action, see Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The Rebel Sell: How the Counterculture Became Consumer Culture* (Chichester: Capstone, 2006). For a non-theological, and comprehensive assessment of the nature of consumerism, its homogeneity and heterogeneity, see Karin M. Ekström and Helene Brembeck, eds., *Elusive Consumption* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004).

whereby; 1) the economy is seen as immutable, with any conceptions of God collapsed into it; 2) the domination of capital in that economy takes place alongside deformed notions of God; 3) the pervasive individualism of economic life becomes grounded in a subjective view of God; and 4) scarcity becomes fundamental to the economy. The market takes on the coercive divine attributes once given to God; where once there was unlimited political power but restricted economic power, this dynamic has now been reversed.¹⁴⁷

Sedgwick then explores the implications of this for the Protestant ethic.¹⁴⁸ A Protestant ethic once disciplined its workers and led to the production of capitalism, before “spheres of life” then opened up. These “spheres of life” offered new potential for human flourishing, leading to a change in an understanding of environments for work. Work ultimately becomes alienating and isolating with new global pressures on social relationships, and the Protestant ethic changes according to an understanding of vocation in order to help people form identity in the new locations of late capitalism. The imaginations for identity in this move centre less on the resources of faith and more around the consumption in capitalist markets.¹⁴⁹ Here, Sedgwick echoes and supports the findings of my work so far, of how Christianity seeks to aid identity and social relationships in the context of the challenges of a new world order, but at the same time, becomes captive to the socio-logic of the processes of capitalism.

Campbell suggests that the modern world can be viewed as a tension between Puritan and Romantic ethics.¹⁵⁰ Campbell further suggests that there are two ‘beings’ inside the middle-class individual: a “purito-romantic” bohemian youth, which is then followed by bourgeois middle age.¹⁵¹ This arises because parents raise their children as Puritans, teaching them delayed gratification, with the result that the children internalise

¹⁴⁷ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 113–130.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 151–199.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 177–179

¹⁵⁰ Campbell, *Romantic Ethic*, 202–210.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

and dream about repressed passions and develop a romantic personality.¹⁵² Puritanism and Romanticism have psychological links that reflect historical ones, and our current situation reveals the interplay between Weber's Protestant Ethic and Sedgwick's post-Protestant Romantic ethic. How ascetics are ordered around desire and the material is the question to which Sedgwick and Weber lead us, but do not answer. This is where we see the overlay of my map-making reveal the potential theological contours for further examination in my later chapters.

3.3.4 The Post-Protestant Work Ethic and the Doctrine of Assurance

The analysis in this chapter has enabled me to demonstrate a few key findings. *The Protestant Ethic* explains the influence that Protestants had in the development of capitalist production. Weber's Ethic however, as I have established, would possibly be better centred on the migration of assurance into the doctrine of providence. It is possible to combine this with my previous chapter's analysis of Bebbington, to show how assurance migrates to providence, as follows.

Separate from Catholics, Puritan Protestants may have been concerned with an ascetic of production for assurance. But later, when the resultant capitalism from that Protestant Work Ethic became extant, i.e., everyone became functionally a capitalist, there was an internal turn by Evangelical Christians, that was part of the genesis of Evangelicalism. For we saw with Sedgwick and Campbell how individuals were isolated within the new capitalist world, not just physically, but in the new spheres of public, private, and civic life. At the same time, we know from Bebbington there was great anxiety about assurance by Protestants to increasing prosperity in industrial England.¹⁵³ There was a move by Evangelicals to provide identity and 'islands of social care' within

¹⁵² Ibid., 222.

¹⁵³ See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 142–143.

a fast-developing capitalist world, with pressures of social mobility, long life, and the problem of the accumulation of wealth. As a result, the Protestant ethic bifurcates and makes an internal turn into a Romantic ethic. It is at this point that we can trace the explosion and activism of Evangelicalism, in particular Methodism. Whilst there was a functional environment in which everyone had become a Protestant within the capitalist matrix, there was a rising concomitant tide of Arminian pietistic Methodists who moved the location of assurance from the external to the internal for the initiation into authentic Christian life. In other words, if everyone now lived like a capitalist, how did one know one was saved? Assurance now had an inner pathway around feelings and consumption that it eagerly pursued.

The ongoing measure of whether this inner assurance was valid was now located and anchored in the doctrine of providence. The confirmation of inner feelings about assurance were to be seen in providence operating in the daily life of individuals. The provision of the material world became the domain of the social imaginations of individuals, and manifestation of their inner feelings. Whilst Evangelicalism had sought to respond to the challenges of a new world order, and did so through an emerging Romantic ethic, it became captive to the socio-logic of consumption. Pleasure and happiness became the ethical domains of the Christian life as a response to the ravages of late capitalism. We now run my findings and proposals here against a case study from Evangelical history.

3.4 Joseph Ryder: A case study of anxiety, assurance and Providence

Weber is much criticised for offering Benjamin Franklin as an embodiment of the Protestant ethic. In response to this, diaries have been uncovered by Margaret C. Jacob and Matthew Kadane of Joseph Ryder, a man liminal to the pre-industrial and industrial

worlds.¹⁵⁴ I suggest the journals of Ryder also give credence to Campbell's claims of the tension between Puritan and Romantic ethics. Ryder's journals, as we will see, also support my own claims about the nature of assurance and providence within these two ethics. These journals ensure my findings continue to be tested against concrete realities of lived experience.

Kadane and Jacob, whilst suggesting that Ryder's diaries are more suitable as an example of Weber's Protestant Ethic, also point out that his diaries call Weber to account on two grounds.¹⁵⁵ The first is doctrinal and suggests that it is the doctrine of providence and not predestination that was more of concern to Ryder. Indeed, Ryder exhibits the tendencies of anxiety about assurance and concerns with providence that Bebbington and Weber claim. Ryder's anxieties develop and change, from assurance to providence, evidence for my modulations of Weber and Bebbington. We can unpack this from Ryder in several steps.

First, Weber missed the context of radical dissenting from which people such as Ryder had emerged.¹⁵⁶ This was "kinder and gentler, where assurance was more available to believers".¹⁵⁷ Second, Kadane and Jacob set out how Weber's thesis misses the agony that prosperity brings to individuals within capitalism: "The dark side of capitalism lay not in its inequities. They could be explained by reference to the "inequality" of providence."¹⁵⁸ Ryder seldom queries the poverty he saw:

Rather than simple destitution, the life of the market had the potential to ensure eternal damnation. Questing for riches, prosperity, even comfort for the things of this world required a certain kind of courage as well as the ability to beg and humble oneself in the quest for grace. Ryder sought to be prosperous in this world, but simultaneously he could never be sure of his godliness.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Jacob and Kadane, "Weber's Protestant Capitalist," 21.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 27–28.

As I have suggested, the anxiety of more people living longer led to the need for a new ascetic and aesthetic to help people make sense of this emerging new economic world. One way that anxiety over providence is resolved is in the collapse of aseity from God into the market itself.¹⁶⁰ Jacob and Kadane state that we have naturalised capitalism so much that we have become blind to the anxieties that emerging capitalism evoked in those within its environs.¹⁶¹ Moreover, it was Weber who saw clearly this anxiety as he sought to explain the religious dimension of its relationship to capitalism. However, as demonstrated, his theological diagnosis of that relationship may be wrong. Evangelicals moved to respond to the anxieties of people like Ryder with their flexible ecclesiologies, by preaching assurance through the media of new capitalist economies.

An ascetic able to respond to the new material wealth was required and evidenced in the life of Ryder, and in Weber's Protestant Work Ethic. The self-examination required within this Protestant Ethic is evidenced in the extensive journals kept by Ryder. Indeed, this mode of extensive journaling is the review of assurance that began with Puritan anxieties about assurance and continued into Calvinist Protestantism.¹⁶² No wonder, then, that the act of journaling could be redirected within the media of capitalist markets to provide examples of successful identity construction that dealt with these anxieties, as we see with Jonathan Edwards's "faithful narrative". Edwards had previously written a bestselling biography from the journals of a young missionary David Brainerd (Brainerd died aged twenty-nine of tuberculosis), who was seen as a martyr, and inspired many into mission. This publication provided an "intimate spiritual diary," with insight into the experience of personal faith for Evangelicals.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ As I have already demonstrated with the work of Sedgwick.

¹⁶¹ Jacob and Kadane, "Weber's Protestant Capitalist," 28.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶³ Haykin, Stewart, and George, *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, 298.

Edwards undertook to prepare a longer account, published in 1737 and entitled *A Faithful Narrative*, which became an instant bestseller.¹⁶⁴ Edwards's narrative of revival, made possible by the market in printing and the international distribution of books, "fired" up Evangelical imaginations.¹⁶⁵ We see here the beginnings of the social imaginations that the market was able to transmit within Evangelicalism. Imagination for construction of the self moves from the sources of religion to the consumption of the artefacts of capitalism. Market and media led to the recapitulation of these Evangelical stories, with new experiences re-enacted in other market locations and the production of more stories that were then re-transmitted. But this begs a theological question: how did desire and market imaginations take over Evangelicals' imaginations for Christian living? In order to answer that question, and to establish the work of my next chapters, I finish this chapter with a proposal for how we might understand social imaginations, and the nature of market practices around those. This also extends my proposal in this chapter back into direct contact with more explicit considerations of the nature of capitalism.

3.5 Imagined Communities

Ryder's journals provide insight into how the religious resources of Protestant and Evangelical life were used to construct identity. This prompts us to pause to consider further how beliefs and practices combine for identity-making. At some point, we want to move from the descriptive to the diagnostic. We can see the where and the how a little better, the pathways of anxiety, assurance, and providence. But why? What takes place in the nature of human beings such that they follow these pathways? This is the mode of the explicit, to which we now turn.

¹⁶⁴ The full title of the work is "A faithful narrative of the surprising work of God in the conversion of many hundred souls in Northampton, and the neighbouring towns and villages of New-Hampshire in New-England: In a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Colman, At that time Pastor of Brattle Street Church, Boston" see *ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

One key conceptual framework for better understanding the use of religious resources for identity construction like Ryder, is to be found in Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Community' thesis.¹⁶⁶ Whilst Anderson's thesis centres on the nature of English national identity formation, he does evince how this identity is established as a cultural project, with an affinity to religion.¹⁶⁷ Anderson's concern is for how "imagined" political communities are culturally constructed, rather than about the validity of any such emerging identities. He suggests that people are able to see themselves as part of a shared community, imagined through the advent of print media, within an "imagined community".¹⁶⁸ It is "print-capitalism" where the standardisation of language, time zones, calendars - even the reading of daily newspapers - gave people the ability to imagine themselves, outside of an immediate location, belonging with people they have never met.¹⁶⁹ "Print-capitalism" allows for the transplanting of experiences across nations, for identity.¹⁷⁰ McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb coin the phrase "intellectual technology" to describe how, with printings and the alphabet, a process of self-education and self-construction of identity began that had been previously impossible without those technologies.¹⁷¹ Tom Beaudoin describes the process of young people's identity construction in late capitalism through the consumption of media as "consumer media capitalism".¹⁷² Indeed Beaudoin further suggests that we can talk about the fusion of

¹⁶⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

¹⁶⁷ Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth A. McAlister, *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁶⁸ Euan Hague, "Benedict Anderson," in *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, edited by Rob Kitchin, Phil Hubbard, and Gill Valentine (London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 17.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 18. It is left to others to detail the millions of religious tract, leaflets, and books that shaped a mass religious culture, see Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 141. Here, Hatch details the mass religious culture in print by Evangelicals.

¹⁷⁰ Neil Davidson, "Reimagined Communities," *International Socialism*, no. 117 (2007), accessed 20th November 2017. <http://www.isj.org.uk/index.php4?id=401&issue=117>.

¹⁷¹ For whilst the Chinese had established printing far earlier, their alphabet of 4,000 characters meant that learning to read and self-educate was impossibly complex. See McKendrick, 266.

¹⁷² Tom Beaudoin, "The Church: Defender of Theocapitalism?," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 29, no. 5, 2002.

identity construction through the ascetics and practices of the market as being one where we are to consider late capitalism as “theocapitalism”.¹⁷³

Anderson’s thesis is contiguous to my observations from Martin of how Christians in migration seek to provide islands of social care. The use of mass media and mass migration for social care within these new locations and market possibilities is cause for new “imagined communities”.¹⁷⁴ Identities were and are “built out of the raw materials provided by pre-existing religious communities.”¹⁷⁵ Religion gives people something to take hold of, to fund and resource their identities in the face of huge economic and social change. Hall and Davidoff note this process as one which “offered individuals an identity and community to which they could attach themselves in a society which was changing rapidly.”¹⁷⁶

Despite establishing the connection between cultural identity construction and the nature of religious identity, Anderson leaves religion behind in the eighteenth century and sees the forces of secularism behind “imagined communities”.¹⁷⁷ It seems an inability to see the dimension of religious actors in history is common to many. For Anderson, it is the decline of religion that leads to the imagining of new identities, whereas my account suggests it is the obverse.¹⁷⁸ For Anderson, it was the loss of beliefs, of life around monarchs, creation myths, and religious script languages that allowed for the creation of “imagined communities through the narratives of ‘print-capitalism’.”¹⁷⁹ I contend instead,

¹⁷³ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷⁴ More recent research provides continuing examples of Anderson’s thesis at work, suggesting that exposure to European news media is able to foster some sense of European cultural identity in people, supporting Anderson’s thesis. See Michael Bruter, “Understanding Identity Realignment: Symbols, News and European Identity: ESRC R000223463-A”, (2001), accessed 17th November 2017, <http://tinyurl.com/3xb93mw>.

¹⁷⁵ Goldschmidt and McAlister, *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas*, 18.

¹⁷⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 76.

¹⁷⁷ Goldschmidt and McAlister, *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas*, 15.

¹⁷⁸ Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Frank Turner sees Evangelical Christianity as typifying the ‘imagined community’ thesis of Anderson. See Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 42–43.

¹⁷⁹ Davidson, “Reimagined Communities.”

that it was the use of religious resources “and vast outpouring of evangelical publications,” that allowed an unprecedented explosion of new imagined communities.¹⁸⁰ Anderson misses that religion was most vital in identity construction at this time. Where Anderson is ‘blind’ to religion, seeing a “divergence of nation and religion,” my account has shown that there is an “ongoing and inextricable” connection between them.¹⁸¹

Anderson is able to see how Martin Luther might be able to become a “best-selling author” making use of the new vernacular print market, enabling the propagation of a Protestant identity beyond his own location.¹⁸² Yet, he is unable to see how Evangelical Christians continue in this process. Also, his thesis of the nature of national identities is contested, and more recently, national identity has been seen as less important and far from normative for people today.¹⁸³ But his thesis does help us understand how Evangelicals formed communities and identities within the emerging capitalist market. National and religious identities were established within each other’s terms, removing “the wedge between cosmology and history” that Anderson thought was in place.¹⁸⁴ Anderson’s thesis does situate my account of the use of the resources of religion for identity formation within the emergence of new capitalist markets.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, we can see how “Protestantism acted as a stimulus to national consciousness only to the extent that the development of capitalism had provided it with the framework to do so.”¹⁸⁶ Then, there is Neil Davidson, who is concerned that Anderson is not materialist enough and

¹⁸⁰ Turner, *John Henry Newman*, 43.

¹⁸¹ Goldschmidt and McAlister, *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas*, 16. Others have examined this omission of the religious actor in Anderson’s thesis, for example, see E. A. Tiryakian, “The Missing Religious Factor in Imagined Communities,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 50, (2011): 1395–1414.

¹⁸² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 39–40.

¹⁸³ Anthony Heath, et al., “Are Traditional Identities in Decline?”, *Full Research Report ESRC End of Award Report, RES-148-25-0031* (2008). <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/esrcinfocentre/viewawardpage.aspx?awardnumber=RES-148-25-0031>.

¹⁸⁴ Goldschmidt and McAlister, *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas*, 17.

¹⁸⁵ There are many other key criticisms of Anderson’s thesis. He is unable to explain why people would die for culturally constructed imaginations, or how and why people form internal beliefs (see Hall, McClelland, and Rendall, 40). Also, Anderson fails to see how the imaginations of colonisers are actually colonised already, and are not simply choosing any content they wish for the establishment of identity. See Hague, 19.

¹⁸⁶ Davidson, “Reimagined Communities.”

fails to explore “print-capitalism” as intrinsic to capitalism.¹⁸⁷ Where Anderson sees capitalist markets as merely fortuitous for technology and communications to manifest in “imagined communities”, Davidson sees capitalism as inherently necessary to “print-capitalism”.¹⁸⁸ Davidson draws attention to how capitalism gives rise to new structures of urban life, and psychological needs, that people collectively sought to respond to. This further supports my suggestion of how Evangelicals on the one hand sought to use the resources of capitalist markets to respond to the ravages of capitalism, whilst becoming captive to the nature of the use of those resources.

Giorgio Shani draws on Anderson’s work to give an account of the nature of globalisation and capitalist markets.¹⁸⁹ Religions have made use of opportunities within the context of globalisation to articulate transglobal identity. Globalisation has allowed people to renew, even if just culturally, Christian identity, with faith being more significant, not less.¹⁹⁰ For Shani, religion can be universal in a fragmented world and practiced anywhere.¹⁹¹ With Anderson’s “print-capitalism”, current technology gives rise to the formation of “transnational religious communities”, where transnational religious identities are shaped by ongoing developments of “print language”.¹⁹² Frank Lambert theorises that the Great Awakening was an “invention”, the stringing together of isolated revivals into a colonial (prior to US national identity) and transatlantic renaissance.¹⁹³ Within this, we might therefore return to, and better understand, Jonathan Edwards’s *Faithful Narrative* as a “revivalist script”, allowing the reconstruction of revivals in other locations to one that generated the original script. For Lambert these ‘scripts’ and

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 42–43. See also Davidson, “Reimagined Communities.”

¹⁸⁹ George Shani, “Transnational Religious Actors and International Relations,” in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, edited by Jeffery Haynes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 311.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid., 312.

¹⁹³ Frank Lambert, *Inventing The ‘Great Awakening’* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 6–8.

reconstructions worked within Anderson's "imagined community" thesis.¹⁹⁴ It was "through published work, such as newspaper reports, revival narratives, a revival magazine, revival sermons, revivalists' diaries and journals, [that] persons separated by great distances were drawn together into a revivalist 'imagined community' by reading about events in remote places that sounded very similar to ones at home."¹⁹⁵ A further concrete example of "print-capitalism", and the process of "revivalist scripts" can be found in the Tractarian movement. Frank Turner has provided an account of how the Tractarian movement sought to establish a restructuring of the identity of the Church of England, from within Protestantism, and in reaction to dissenting Evangelicals.¹⁹⁶

Within all this, we see how Evangelicalism was able to transmit itself through the media of new markets and re-narrate its stories and experiences. Others, in similar market locations, were able to reconstruct and inhabit those stories in their own new locations. From this, I posit that people in ongoing economic diasporas, looking for a Christian "social imaginary", found one in these scripts and stories.¹⁹⁷ These narratives then became commodities and resources to be traded by the new middle classes, who were able to read, and had the income to purchase these accounts.¹⁹⁸ A most specific example that demonstrates Anderson's thesis with regard to Evangelicals and the market is found in fashion. As I have already noted, McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb assert that it was print media that enabled people to view what was in fashion and to imagine themselves wearing these clothes.¹⁹⁹ In shopping, women found a new embodied life that greatly altered the make-up of their identity formation, and relationship to social space.²⁰⁰ My suggestion

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 144.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Turner, 162–164.

¹⁹⁷ 'Social Imaginary' is a concept and term used by Charles Taylor to which we shall turn in the next chapter.

¹⁹⁸ Lambert's work points to the development and demand by consumers for religious resources for identity construction, including religious goods and services.

¹⁹⁹ See chapter on "The Commercialization of Fashion" in McKendrick, 34–99.

²⁰⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, xxvi. I reiterate a point made in my previous chapter that this dynamic was enacted through formal government policy, for otherwise Davidoff and Hall might have us incorrectly view women as particularly vulnerable to shopping, when shopping is not gender selective,

finds support in the work of Weber, who claimed that the Puritan standardisation of clothing led to a ‘spirituality’ and categorisation of the person by clothing, or aesthetic.²⁰¹ The arrival of print media extended the logic of an aesthetic with unforeseen consequences.

The annual budgets of agencies such as the American Bible Society equalled the yearly turnover of large business firms.²⁰² Yet Evangelicals “imagined their work to be in the market but not of it, for they believed that ultimately their business was not books at all” and that they were eagerly embracing capitalism whilst resisting the rise of commercial society.²⁰³ For Evangelicals, modern business methods and technologies became allies of publishers, but “commercial culture was the enemy”.²⁰⁴ Evangelicals were at home in using mediated forms to express and transmit theological convictions, but often were unaware of how the media they chose shaped and mutated those expressions. Pete Ward suggests the Reformation, and its use of newly invented printing techniques, enabled the transmission of so much of the content of the Reformation, but in that process, favoured printed work above other communication media.²⁰⁵ Ward has made an extended account of this issue, of how the use of media changes the nature and content of what is being communicated²⁰⁶. Warner provides extensive contemporary examples of the continuation of this process, of the use of media within market locations, for the transmission of developing Evangelical faith. For example, the use of Alpha courses combines with entrepreneurial forces and capitalist market possibilities, and

apart perhaps from policies which reinforced women as home makers, and therefore consumers for the home. See again, Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance*.

²⁰¹ Lehmann and Roth, *Weber's Protestant Ethic*, 169.

²⁰² “Introduction,” in Noll, *God and Mammon*, 11.

²⁰³ David Nord, “Benevolent Capital: Financing Evangelical Book Publishing in Early Nineteenth-Century America,” in *ibid.*, 149.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

²⁰⁵ Ward, *Selling Worship*, 109.

²⁰⁶ One study has revealed that cities in 1500 with at least one printing press were 29 percent more likely to be Protestant by 1600; see Jared Rubin “Printing and Protestants: An Empirical Test of the Role of Printing in the Reformation,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 96.2 (May 2014): 270–286. Printing and publishing allowed for diverging voices in the Reformation, for whilst few had wide influence, many others were able chime in and ensure the Reformation was not a monolithic movement.

Warner argues that “Alpha can therefore be summed up as a Bash camp rationalistic conservatism combined with a Wimberist charismatic expressivism operating within the milieu of late twentieth century marketing.”²⁰⁷ Having identified the media and narrative intersection for the transmission of faith in capitalist markets, we can now understand how Evangelicals sought to inhabit an imagination true to their Evangelical identity, but also how that became captive to other socio-logics within capitalism. A spiritual discipline of journaling combines with the possibilities of mass marketing and distribution as a response to the anxieties of those very market possibilities. In this also, we can perhaps see how Calvinist industrialists sold goods to Arminian pietists, who were desperately trying to form identities in the same situations in which they saw their industrialist betters making identities for themselves.

Thus, in the life of Joseph Ryder, we see a move from the experience of short lives and concern with predestination to longer lives, wealth, and the relocation of concerns to providence and assurance. However, where Ryder keeps his Christian identity, Benjamin Franklin becomes a Deist.²⁰⁸ Franklin’s move can be seen as the secular move of capitalist identity formation, alongside the Evangelical Protestant move that maintains Christian identity in late capitalism. Both are responses to the challenges that Ryder faced. Moreover, for Ryder, material success might be a sign of election, but too much material wealth was the path to destruction. Knowing how to navigate that line was the source of Ryder’s ongoing anxiety.²⁰⁹ One way to resolve that tension is to remove it and to see the providence of God as no longer an issue for anxiety, such that the more materially successful we are, the more we can see how God has provided.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 122.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ The Prosperity Gospel is a specific and recent manifestation of this phenomena. For an excellent assessment of how the prosperity gospel developed from the kind of general Protestant conflation of providence and spiritual wellbeing, see Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Ryder wanted to balance the spiritual world and the new moneymaking world, with time management as one way of attempting that project. For Ryder's journals describe a life that was measured by the calendar of religious life, and the tensions of the business calendar.²¹¹ Ryder was a self-made man who never sold his own labour and who used discipline to cope with his dilemmas: "[He] exhibited many of the characteristics of a late eighteenth-century capitalist and suffered the despair endured by the rigid predestinarians who lived in the century and a half before his birth. Yet he was never fully possessed by the spirit of capitalism nor did he completely tailor his theology to his economic needs."²¹² Contemporary Methodists "evinced none of the agony" seen in the life of Ryder.²¹³ We do not know how many other Joseph Ryders there were, having little surviving evidence from the personal writing of his contemporaries.²¹⁴ Ryder's journals also detail the impact and the variety of sermons he heard each week, and how they were directed at the very issues of worldly success, to which he found himself relating.²¹⁵ Here we see a further link to my findings in Chapter Two on how imagined communities are formed with the resources of the Christian tradition through sermons, and their transmission through print media. In Ryder's account, we see both Tawney's view that it was capitalism which produced Protestantism and also that Protestantism shaped capitalism *à la* Weber.²¹⁶

Whilst Ryder's journal provides evidence of a Weberian ascetic and self-control, it also demonstrates my modification of Weber, to explain how the Godly who made money suffered in their prosperity:

²¹¹ Ibid., 42.

²¹² Ibid., 43.

²¹³ For example, David Whitehead, a Methodist Minister, as revealed in his journals: David Whitehead, *The Autobiography of David Whitehead of Rawtenstall (1790–1865): Cotton Spinner and Merchant*, edited by Stanley D. Chapman (Helmshore: Helmshore Local History Society, 2001). Moreover, we may see in that historical account that Methodism is in many ways *the* response to the anxieties of a population full of Joseph Ryders. That is a supposition requiring further justification, and thus, points towards an interesting avenue for additional research.

²¹⁴ Jacob and Kadane, "Weber's Protestant Capitalist," 45.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

²¹⁶ R. H. Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*.

The secularism of the Enlightenment may have been the coward's way out of the conundrum that governed the lives of the multitude of Joseph Ryders. They populated the burgeoning cities of England and America, traded and watched the market and the weather for signs of instability, for the awesome pleasure or censure of the deity. But for those reluctant capitalists who did not take Franklin's way out, for those who fretted over their spiritual progress or lack thereof and prayed in the darkness that damnation—the fate of the greedy and the sinful—might not overtake them, the tensions between this and the other world gave rise to a lifetime of struggle. Nowhere have we seen that struggle more painfully expressed than in Ryder's diary. If Ryder's agonized ambivalence was less unique than the historical artefact he unwittingly produced, then the story of how the capitalist spirit settled into the lives of those driving economic change on the eve of Britain's industrialization needs to be retold.²¹⁷

3.6 Conclusion

...rapid transformation destroys old coping mechanisms, old safety nets, while it creates new sets of demands, *before new coping mechanisms are developed*.

— Joseph E. Stiglitz, “Foreword” to Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*

In this chapter, we have determined that Protestant, and then later Evangelical Christians, sought to resist these deforming forces of capitalism, creating new modes of coping with ‘islands of social care’. Evangelicalism was both a creature of, and generator to, aspects of capitalism. Within this capitalism was on the one hand a product of Protestant work ethics, whilst on the other, the forces of capitalism simultaneously produced and modulated Protestantism into forms of Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism emerges via a rational Protestant Work Ethic, in which the ascetics of that ethic increasingly resonate and intertwine with a Romantic ethic around the ethos and practices of capitalism. If Evangelicals sought to resist the deforming forces of capitalism, those forces were not just of the material, but also the psychological and internal. Evangelicalism can therefore be seen as an ecclesial countermovement to rapidly changing market conditions, a countermovement that becomes simultaneously captive to the socio-logic of those conditions.

Life in the new Protestant world generated anxiety about assurance of faith. That anxiety was attended to with a relocation of assurance into providence. But the terms and

²¹⁷ Jacob and Kadane, “Weber's Protestant Capitalist”, 49.

limits of providence became increasingly set by market imaginations, rather than the original Evangelical horizons of faithful Christian living in the material world. What was initially resistance collapses into collusion and intensification. The resistance evinced in the Protestant Work Ethic resisted the deforming forces of capitalism, and quickly gave way to new and emerging work ethics that were intertwined with non-religious imaginations for life. The rational beliefs of the Evangelical life collapse into, and become a rationale for, market imaginations. It is to an examination of the nature of those market imaginations, through the kind of materialist accounts this chapter has signposted, that we now turn.

Chapter 4

The Great Disembedding: The Search for Identity Within the Market

The focus of my mappings so far has placed Evangelicalism in the foreground, whilst noting background interactions with capitalism. For the map and overlay of this chapter, I shift the balance to prioritise an account of the development of capitalism that traces moments of religious actors within it, such as Evangelicalism. I make two particular moves in this chapter for my mapping. The first is the production of a historical materialist account via the work of Karl Polanyi. This considers the forces at work in economic history, and the actions of human beings as actors in response to those forces. Ultimately, this allows me to explore how Evangelicals have *acted* in response to the forces at work within the development of Capitalism in terms of co-creation, co-option, and resistance. Second, I then show how the Weberian religious agency from my previous chapter and such a materialist account may work together as “imagined communities”, within which Evangelicalism found itself. Within this, I show how the providence of God becomes located in market imaginations, and how those imaginations are instantiated through the practices of the market. Finally, I show how Evangelicalism as an “imagined community” can be further located within Charles Taylor’s method of the “social imaginary”. This then allows me to gather up all my mapping together in one overlay for theological explication and diagnosis in part II of my thesis.

4.1 Karl Polanyi: The subordination of social life to the market

To comprehend the sudden changeover to an utterly new type of economy in the nineteenth century, we must now turn to the history of the market, an institution we were able practically to neglect in our review of the economic systems of the past.

— Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*

Polanyi and Weber were acutely aware of the need for accounts of the history of things in order to understand concrete realities. They believed such accounts, if made, could help explain their own contexts, and serve as predictors of future situations. For many have

ignored religious actors in making historical accounts, as we have seen.¹ Even more startling than that paucity of historical method, is the failure to consider use of any historical accounts for understanding current situations. Economists are particularly prone to this failure.² For many economists, the mechanisms of economics are ontological realities that come from nowhere, and are underwritten by no-one but themselves. Furthermore, economists have failed to consider how their rationalised, over-ontologised systems encompass human beings, and their nature.³ Yet the recent and ongoing global financial crises have given rise to a new impetus to consider the history of our economic systems, and, furthermore, how current failures in markets are due to a lack of attention to the history of economics.⁴ Whilst economists are prone to ignore economic history, theology and economics are even more likely to ignore and suffer avulsions with each other. Other economic histories, such as that by Tomas Sedlacek, have emerged since the 2007 credit crunch.⁵ It is beyond my thesis to compare and contrast Polanyi with this and other accounts, but others have begun that work.⁶ Also, a theological review of the technical mechanisms of capitalism, as mentioned at the outset of my thesis, are beyond

¹ In Chapter Two of this thesis, we saw how Anderson and McKendrick elided religious actors out of any consideration in their accounts of society and history. See McKendrick, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

² To understand how the history of economics became optional for economists, and the consequent problems for the field, see Geoffrey M. Hodgson, *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science (Economics as Social Theory)* (London: Routledge, 2001). Also, see Stephen A. Marglin, *The Dismal Science: How Thinking Like an Economist Undermines Community* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). Indeed, there is a plea to read economic realities through historical accounts of economic thought, or face the consequences of not doing so, with Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni, *Civil Economy: Efficiency, Equity, Public Happiness* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007). Bruni and Zamagni draw on 15th and 16th Century civic humanism in contrast to Polanyi's use of Marxist materialism. In any event, their warnings were too late, as the credit crunch unfolded in 2007.

³ It seems the recent credit crunch and global crises that ensued have caused leading economists to reconsider the nature of human beings within market systems, for example see <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/05/economics-global-crash-human-behaviour>, accessed 12th January 2018.

⁴ Kevin O'Rourke, "Why Economics Needs Economic History", accessed 29th December 2017, <http://voxeu.org/article/why-economics-needs-economic-history>.

⁵ Tomas Sedlacek, *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Ecumenic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶ One such excellent summary and comparison of Polanyi's economic history with other such accounts can be found in Tim Rogan, *The Moral Economists: R.H Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E.P. Thompson, and the Critique of Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

my remit, but again, others have begun to foray into this needed area of examination.⁷ The nature of markets, the habits, practices and dispositions of them, and how human beings live within, is, however, my focus.

There is a long history of debate over whether capitalism arose late or earlier in human history, and whether it was generated by natural human behaviour. Polanyi considered capitalism to be a recent invention in human history where “the self-regulating market is a new human invention for which there are no parallels in past human history.”⁸ Weber similarly considered capitalism a late arrival in human history, inextricably linked to the emergence of the Protestant church.⁹ Indeed, it was religion which held capitalism at bay, being able to ‘discipline’ behaviours away from motives for gain. For Polanyi, the defining feature of capitalism is the emergence of the self-regulating market (SRM), where, for the first time in history, the market was disembedded from social relationships, such as those of religion.¹⁰ As Gregory Baum writes:

In the past, Polanyi argues, economic activity was embedded in the social relations that made up the community as a whole. What was new and startling with the self-regulating market was that it ‘disembedded’ the economy from its social base, created widespread cultural alienation among workers and owners, and left society and the natural environment without protection. This ‘disembedding’ of economic activity from people’s social relations remains a key concept in Polanyi’s analysis.¹¹

The SRM is so foreign to humans and “so devastating in its consequences” that societal countermovements take place.¹² These claims are in contrast to those of market liberals and Marxists. Where market liberals insist that the market is self-regulating, Polanyi declares this view a “utopian myth.”¹³ For markets require protection and regulation to

⁷ For a recent attempt to explain this methodological divide and address it, see Kidwell, *Theology and Economics*.

⁸ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), 5.

⁹ See Chapter Two of this thesis, and Weber and Parsons, *Spirit of Capitalism*, 36.

¹⁰ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 5.

¹¹ Gregory Baum, *Karl Polanyi on Ethics and Economics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 1996), 4.

¹² Baum, *Karl Polanyi on Ethics and Economics*, 6.

¹³ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 3.

exist, and the societies around markets require protection from the effects of those markets. Marxists, and those supporting Marxist material accounts, insist that markets should be fully embedded within ‘socialism’, but Polanyi determines that this is an impossible subordination.¹⁴

Polanyi’s historical and materialist account contrasts with Weber’s Ideal Type account in more than just method, but also in terms of diagnosis. Weber shows how religion, in terms of beliefs and practices, formed capitalist markets, whilst Polanyi gives an account and explanation of how the markets were restrained by religion initially, but ultimately broke with religion and any other social relationships.¹⁵ Polanyi views the formation of capitalist markets as a process in which Christian understandings of human relationships and responsibilities towards each other are replaced with the “secular religion” of the market.¹⁶ This location of engagement by religion, then subsequent evacuation of the religious, is the pathogenesis I am looking for, where forces once resisted by Evangelical Christians with intense engagement are eventually co-opted and redeployed for the further development of capitalism.

There are many important assumptions to Polanyi’s work that are vital to make explicit before any interface with Evangelicalism can be made. His work relies on a dialectical understanding of history from Hegel and Marx. Functionalist and dialectical theories like this presuppose that history moves according to certain laws, and that humans are governed by “necessity”. Yet history must remain “open” to the Christian and, for my project, avoid any ontologising of history.¹⁷ I therefore approach Polanyi’s

¹⁴ Joseph E. Stiglitz, “Foreword” to *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2nd Beacon Paperback ed., by Karl Polanyi (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), xxix.

¹⁵ In particular, see Chapter Five, “Evolution of the Market Pattern,” of Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 59–70.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 106–107.

¹⁷ See Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 6, for further discussion of this priority for Christian readings of Polanyi. I am aware that theological understandings of the nature of history vary greatly, for example, in MacIntyre’s genealogical accounts of the Christian Narrative; see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame: 1990). In support of Baum’s claim, and how, for Evangelicals’ salvation, history is the arena

account as an economic history that reveals developments and trends, and not ontological “laws”.¹⁸ However, like Polanyi, and this is where my project began, I am examining how, for Christians, social life should not be subordinate to the market. As Joseph Stiglitz writes, “For Polanyi the deepest flaw in market liberalism is that it subordinates human purposes to the logic of an impersonal market mechanism.”¹⁹ Having established my reasons that relate Polanyi to my thesis questions, I now explore Polanyi’s thesis in detail, to test its validity, and determine its further serviceability for my project.

4.2 The Social Limits of Markets: Karl Polanyi’s ‘double movement’ thesis

Polanyi began *The Great Transformation* whilst exiled in England in the late 1930s, after being an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War. He completed *The Great Transformation* during the Second World War, whilst in the USA. Having experienced revolution and dictatorships first hand, he sought to explain the political upheaval of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through an exploration of the economic history of the origins of those times.²⁰ Polanyi saw four institutions as the foundation to the political unrest that had taken place: a political balance of power system, the international gold standard, the liberal state, and the SRM.²¹ The Gold Standard, a system in which the value of currency is based on gold, was extant amongst all major nations through the 1920s. The UK withdrew from the standard in 1931, due to market forces upon its currency. The collapse of the gold standard was “proximate” in cause to

in which God reveals himself, see Edward W. Klink III, and Darian R. Lockett, “Type 2: Biblical Theology as History of Redemption” in *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 59–92.

¹⁸ The captivity of Evangelicalism to the forces and social logics of capitalism cannot be explained for the Christian as being ‘determined’ by economic laws within Evangelical understandings of salvation history. See again Klink and Lockett, “Type 2: Biblical Theology as History of Redemption.”

¹⁹ Stiglitz, “Foreword,” xxxviii and xxxv. Further, I will show that the sociality of Christianity, the natural habitat for Christians of the ‘ecclesia’, should determine the dialectic of the relationship between Christians and the market.

²⁰ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*

the “superstructure erected upon the gold standard” by the liberal state with its “creation of the self-regulating market.”²² Moreover, “the subordination of human society to the logic of the market in a way to undermine political will is the central problem with which Polanyi deals by putting the nineteenth-century market economy in a comparative historical perspective with the aid of the findings of anthropological research on primitive and ancient economies.”²³ It is this focus on the emergence of the SRM that differentiates Polanyi from many other economic historians, in that he sees the SRM as a modern and new phenomenon, one that emerges from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, distinct from other forms of market society.²⁴ More important, and central to his thesis, is the claim of the nature of the SRM as being something outside of social relationships. For the SRM could not exist without interventions and creation by society, where, “inevitably society took measures to protect itself, but whatever measures it took impaired the self-regulation of the market.”²⁵ Central to Polanyi’s thesis is the assertion that society and social relationships are vital to humans, and that the SRM is problematic to that, owing to how the SRM is disembedded from social constraints. Where previous methods of market exchange existed, they did so with reciprocity. The SRM marks the first time that the market became an institution itself, based around the fictions that lacked relational reciprocity, specifically *labour*, *land*, and *money*.²⁶ The work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson supports the idea of labour as a metaphor, showing how this metaphor functions as a myth to understand the external world.²⁷ For my purposes, I assume Polanyi’s claims of the nature of these fictions.²⁸

²² Ibid.

²³ Ayse Bugra and Kaan Agartan, *Reading Karl Polanyi for the Twenty-First Century: Market Economy as Political Project* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1.

²⁴ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 87.

²⁵ Ibid., 3–4.

²⁶ Bugra and Agartan, *Market Economy*, 2.

²⁷ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

²⁸ The work of John Searle would be a starting place to confirm the nature of these fictions. Searle considers money, marriage, property and government to be fictions that exist only because we believe they do; see John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin Books, 1995); John

Markets had previously existed, but they had been controlled and regulated by the social relationships of societies. The SRM was an invention of the late nineteenth century, despite the claims by others in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the SRM was “natural”.²⁹ Polanyi traces, using Adam Smith’s “invisible hand”, the beginnings of the idea of a market as a function of the natural life of nations. This idea then combined with a move towards understanding markets scientifically and, in particular, the new Darwinian understandings of human nature as competitive, until laws governing economics were placed under “Nature herself.”³⁰ The SRM is not natural, and is founded on fictions, namely the new “commodities” of land, labour, and capital.³¹ Previously, land, labour, and money were not produced and then traded in markets as commodities:

Labour is simply the activity of human beings, land is subdivided nature, and the supply of money and credit in modern societies is necessarily shaped by governmental policies. Modern economics starts by pretending that these fictitious commodities will behave in the same way as real commodities, but Polanyi insists that this sleight of hand has fatal consequences. It means that economic theorizing is based on a lie, and this lie placed human beings at risk.³²

Polanyi evidences his thesis with an example of how governments constantly have to intervene to protect society from the effects of the market and to protect the SRM itself. Polanyi describes the social history of the nineteenth century as a result of a ‘double movement’ process:

On the one hand markets spread all over the face of the globe and the amount of goods involved grew to unbelievable dimensions, on the other hand a network of measures and policies was integrated into powerful institutions designed to check the action of the market relative to labor, land, and money. While the organization of world commodity markets, world capital markets, and world currency markets under the aegis of the gold standard gave an unparalleled momentum to the mechanism of markets, a deep-seated movement sprang into being to resist the pernicious effects of a market controlled economy. Society

Searle, *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁹ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 116–130.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

³² Fred Block, “Introduction,” to Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, xxv.

protected itself against the perils inherent in a self-regulating market system—this was the one comprehensive feature in the history of the age.³³

On one side of his argument, Polanyi traces the philosophical and legislative efforts needed to establish the SRM through the enclosures of the 1790s, the Poor Law Reform of 1834, the Bank Charter Act of 1844, the eruption in the 1830s of ‘laissez-faire’, and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.³⁴ The other side of Polanyi’s ‘double movement’ are the social movements and legislative actions to protect people from the ravages of the SRM, such as labour unions, the Chartist movement, and the first legislation that preceded the establishment of the welfare state.³⁵ Marx predicted the collapse of the mechanisms of capitalism, which would include the SRM, through the uprising of the working class in response to unfair distributions of production and the related exploitation of workers.³⁶ Yet Polanyi in contrast demonstrates how landowners and bankers joined workers in seeking protections from the market. As they sought increasing protections against the SRM, the tension of the ‘double movement’ became too much, so that the SRM was impaired, with the resultant First and Second World Wars, and the rise of dictators who sought to reinsert the market within social and national limits.³⁷

Polanyi remained uncertain as to the future outcome of the SRM, which he saw as an economic experiment in which liberalism and fascism/socialism remained on either side of the ‘double movement’ tension.³⁸ The neo-liberalism that was founded on a “secular salvation through a self-regulating market” has emerged throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America in a way that Polanyi could only have dimly glimpsed from his location in history.³⁹ But his theories immediately correlate with other failures

³³ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 79–80.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 85–87, 96, 143, 198.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 179–184. Legislation against free markets was not planned as collectivism, as many liberals suggested, but was rather an unplanned response to the dangers and abuses of the free market, such as children dying in chimneys (see *ibid.*, 147–148).

³⁶ Polanyi does highlight how the damage of the SRM and responses of people varied by class (*ibid.*, 158–160).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 29–32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 262.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

of the SRM, such as the more recent 1997 East Asian crises.⁴⁰ More substantively as a correlation, within the timeframe of my thesis production, we have the current global failures of SRM markets with the Global Credit Crunch that Polanyi's work presaged. Polanyi's double movement is presently writ large, with unprecedented protectionist interventions by nation states, and continues to generate application for present day challenges.⁴¹ Polanyi concludes his work with the claim that the ongoing tension between liberalism and fascism/socialism is not around a dividing line of the economy, but is an issue of morality and religion.⁴² Liberalism and fascism/socialism might profess identical economics, but they are embodiments of particular ideals.⁴³ What is at stake are the principles that embody these ideals, and of how they function like religious systems. Polanyi would have us believe that western identity is made up of three 'facts' taken from religion. First, that an understanding of death came through the Old Testament; second, that knowledge of freedom arose through the "discovery of the uniqueness of the person in the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament;" and finally, that knowledge of society was gained through life during the industrial revolution.⁴⁴ These religious foundations for identity are now disembedded from the daily life of people within capitalism by the nature and mechanisms of the SRM.

⁴⁰ In his foreword to *ibid.*, xv, Stiglitz demonstrates the use of Polanyi's theories for subsequent failures of the SRM with the East Asian market crises. One assumes Stiglitz would now add to this foreword the failures of markets in the current global credit crunch.

⁴¹ For example, see Kurtulus Gemici, "Beyond the Minsky and Polanyi Moments: Social Origins of the Foreclosure Crisis," *Politics & Society* 44.1 (2016): 15–43.

⁴² Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 267.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 267–268.

4.3 Modulations and Intersections: Polanyi's thesis in wider debate

In June 2008, Gregory Clark, claiming that the free market was not an invention of the eighteenth century, but was one of mankind's oldest "social institutions", offered this assessment of Polanyi's theories:

History has not been kind to Polanyi's prognostications. Free-market capitalism is a resilient and stable system in much of the world — particularly in English-speaking countries. It is the policy of world bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It is conquering vast new domains in places such as China, Eastern Europe, and India. International trade barriers have been substantially reduced. The gold standard is gone, but has been replaced by floating exchange rates, set by market forces. Better monetary management has greatly reduced business cycle severity. Between the traditional enemies of Western Europe — Germany and France — all is gemütlich.⁴⁵

The largest criticism of Polanyi's thesis has been that he is wrong and that the market is a 'natural' state of affairs for humans. Yet at the time of Gregory Clark's claim, we found ourselves at the start of the largest global economic crisis since the Great Depression. One must assume Gregory Clark made his judgements about Polanyi just prior to the economic events of 2007–2008, and submitted his work for publication as the global crisis began to unfold. This economic crisis is so great that the Financial Times has devoted a whole section to ongoing reporting and analysis of it.⁴⁶ Stock markets have had meltdowns, whole countries have been on the brink of bankruptcy, and remain there, protectionism remains a major action, from governments to ground protests by workers.⁴⁷ Polanyi wrote: "The profitability of business depended upon stable exchanges and sound credit conditions, both of which were under the care of the banker."⁴⁸ Under "the care of the banker" now seems a rather quaint phrase, if not an oxymoron, given the role of bankers

⁴⁵ <http://www.nysun.com/arts/reconsiderations-the-great-transformation-by-karl/79250/> (accessed 1st October 2010). Gregory Clark is professor of economics at the University of California; see <http://www.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/gclark/> (accessed 1 October 2010).

⁴⁶ "Financial Times In Depth," last modified 10th May 2018, accessed 14th May 2018, <http://www.ft.com/indepth/global-financial-crisis>, with regular anniversary reviews of the year since 2007 to tell the 'unfinished business' of the crises, <https://www.ft.com/creditcrisis>.

⁴⁷ For ongoing debt issues facing Italy as recently as September 2017 see, for example, <http://uk.businessinsider.com/italy-financial-crisis-deutsche-bank-2017-9?r=US&IR=T>, accessed 29th December 2017.

⁴⁸ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 208.

in recent economic history. Far from being incorrect in his analysis, Polanyi seems to be prescient of the current global credit crunch. Indeed, much ongoing analysis of the 2007–2008 credit crunch considers the centrality of Polanyi to understanding these events:

Another inescapable recognition is the substantial social cost of the financial crisis. Extending the analogy, one can call this “the Polanyi moment”—the realization that markets, when left to their own devices, are destructive to social relations and fabric. The dire consequences of the 2007–8 crisis are a testament to the power of Polanyi’s insights on the perils of markets.⁴⁹

The double movement of marketisation and the protection of society from the effects of the markets is seen more starkly at the time of writing. Governments have bailed out banks, and rushed through legislation to protect the free market, whilst simultaneously chastising the markets and introducing protections for their societies against the failings of the free market. For example, in 2010, a UK coalition government issued a statement that was unthinkable just two years earlier:

The Government’s agenda is not one of laissez-faire. Markets are often irrational or rigged. So I am shining a harsh light into the murky world of corporate behaviour. Why should good companies be destroyed by short-term investors looking for a speculative killing, while their accomplices in the City make fat fees? Why do directors forget their duties when a fat cheque is waved before them? Capitalism takes no prisoners and kills competition where it can.⁵⁰

EU Government interventions for protectionism of the type Polanyi details and predicts continue to take place. At the time of writing this thesis, Greece as a nation continues to skirt bankruptcy with a record deficit.⁵¹ It would seem that the cause of that debt is a Greek society that was unwilling to let the market be disembedded from its deeply cultural

⁴⁹ Gemici, “Beyond the Minsky and Polanyi Moments,” 15–43.

⁵⁰ Vince Cable, UK Business Secretary, as quoted in Andrew Porter, Robert Winnett, and Rosa Prince, “Banks Face New Tax on Bonuses,” *The Telegraph*, 22 September 2010, accessed 1st October 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/8017380/Banks-face-new-tax-on-bonuses.html>.

⁵¹ Debt evolution details can be found at <https://countryeconomy.com/national-debt/greece>, accessed 19th December 2017. A rather more dramatic rate of the growth of this debt in comparison with other countries can be viewed at <https://www.nationaldebtclocks.org/debtclock/greece>, accessed 19th December 2017.

and social values.⁵² In effect, the people refused to live by the ‘rules’ of the market as self-regulating. Ironically, their unwillingness to conform to the self-regulating disembedding of the market from their societal makeup is deemed to be an example of selfishness and unwillingness to work for the ‘common good’. That common good, it would seem, is the belief that markets are *the* society to which all societal relationships should conform, such that Greece “behaves as a collection of atomized particles, each of which has grown accustomed to pursuing its own interest at the expense of the common good.”⁵³ One could argue the Greeks had a different collective imagination for life, and refused to let it be subordinated to market imaginations. In any event, the turmoil of the past decade and the continued economic shocks predicted to continue have surfaced public and political recognition that markets are not natural. Rather, they are subject to the nature of the people within them, and their relationship with society. The relevance of Polanyi for our understanding of capitalist markets seems stronger than ever. For example, Jürgen Habermas draws heavily on Polanyi, as much as he did Weber, as my last chapter noted. Habermas has developed from Weber and Polanyi a social-theory thesis of the “uncoupling of system and life world,” of how economic life is embedded or not in the life of social systems.⁵⁴ Indeed, many anthropologists, political ecologists, economic sociologists, and moral philosophers take their cues from Polanyi.⁵⁵ Yet, within economics proper, we continue to find the most resistance to Polanyi.⁵⁶

Polanyi provides us with two *pathogenic* mechanisms of the market: the problem of the separation of state and market, and the ethical impoverishment of society, in which humans are reduced to a *Homo oeconomicus* understanding of humanity.⁵⁷ It is this

⁵² Michael Lewis, “Beware of Greeks Bearing Bonds,” *Vanity Fair*, 1st October 2010, accessed 29th April 2018, <http://www.vanityfair.com/business/features/2010/10/greeks-bearing-bonds-201010>.

⁵³ The concluding comments of Lewis, “Bearing Bonds”.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (London: Heinemann, 1984), 12. See also Gareth Dale, *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

assertion that human nature is somehow ‘better’ when not established around exchange markets that comes in for much critique.⁵⁸ What motivates people within non-exchange societies, and why is exchange seen as a less ‘natural’ basis for humans? Polanyi argues in response that it is the nature of the market that is inherently conflictual, that it leads to individuals being compelled to compete with each other.⁵⁹ Here we find a coherence between Weber and Polanyi, something also echoed by Emile Durkheim, whereby a free market erodes ethical and social obligations with a “pervasive anomie”.⁶⁰ For Polanyi, it was religion that was able to keep this anomic existence at bay. Weber demonstrates the possibilities of religion that became embedded in economic society, able to bring this much-needed discipline to markets. But this religiously disciplined market life ultimately gave way to non-religious resources for understanding society, i.e., the liberal utopia detailed by Polanyi.

Despite Polanyi’s seemingly pessimistic prognostications, he was optimistic for the future of free markets if they were able to attend to the problems he diagnosed. He believed that attention to these issues was possible by recognising the gap between liberal SRMs on the one hand, and state control of markets through fascism and socialism on the other. What was needed was the recognition that “the difference between the two is not primarily economic. It is moral and religious,” and of the way in which religion had previously been vital for setting social limits of markets.⁶¹ Here we find support for the claims I made in Chapter Two, in which we saw Evangelicals initially making such moral and religious responses to emerging capitalist markets. Evangelicalism can be seen as an example of the necessary ‘religious’ restraining and disciplining forces to the market, the

⁵⁸ For a detailed critique of Polanyi’s anthropology on this issue, see Michael Hetcher, “Karl Polanyi’s Social Theory: A Critique”, *Politics and Society* 10, no. 4 (1981): 406–409.

⁵⁹ Hetcher, “A Critique”, 411.

⁶⁰ See summary of Durkheim’s theory of anomie and its intersections with Weber and Polanyi, *ibid.*, 412. For a more detailed summary of Durkheim’s theory of anomie and the social limits of markets, see Kenneth Morrison, *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), 231–232.

⁶¹ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 267.

loss of which Polanyi lamented.⁶² Evangelicalism was once an initial countermovement *par excellence* to the dynamics described by Polanyi, but it remains to be seen if it can recover a mode of ongoing countermovement.

The locus of salvation moved from the nature of Christianity to one in which the SRM becomes the site of a “secular salvation”.⁶³ This site of “secular salvation” intersects directly with my previous account of the move from assurance to the issues of ‘providence’ by Evangelical Christians. We can now understand how providence as evidence of salvation becomes conflated with SRM ‘imaginings’ of the markets as ‘natural’, i.e., the developing aseity of the SRM. For I have already shown the move of aseity from Christian community into an aseity of the market, where the market becomes the ontological basis for all relationships and identity.⁶⁴ From this, we might understand how Evangelicalism has ceded its ecclesial and societal embeddedness to market logic. The market itself becomes a society, as identity and practice relocate from within religious communities to the market itself as the site of a new religious and embedded community, a new market community. Polanyi sees a move from a Christian society with a responsibility to others, which limited the effects of markets, ultimately replaced by a turn to the self that “renounces human solidarity” with the development of the “secular religion” of the market.⁶⁵

Polanyi’s account can be seen as providing many implicit theological contours in its diagnosis and implications. It maps out where markets become the site of identity, belonging, and being for people, replacing previous religious affiliations and commitments. This points us towards the possibility for more explicit theological diagnosis, in particular that of theological anthropology. By that, I mean we need to ask where Polanyi produced his understanding of the nature of humans as social creatures in

⁶² Ibid., 57.

⁶³ Ibid., 141.

⁶⁴ In particular, see Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁶⁵ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 106-107.

his account. As Gareth Dale writes: “With Aristotle and Marx he [Polanyi] defines man as a social creature, but whereas for Marx man’s sociality evolves out of human interaction with nature through social labour, Polanyi privileges the creation of moral community, a human capacity that achieves its highest form in religious myth.”⁶⁶ This claim reveals the competing understandings of human nature for Polanyi’s account — and all other accounts — of life in capitalist markets. We need to understand these accounts of human nature, i.e., which theological anthropologies are competing with each other? Furthermore, how do those theological anthropologies underwrite and construct daily social realities within capitalist life? Where and what imaginations are within these theological anthropologies, that fund these constructions of relationships in market life? All these questions are the purview of theological accounts. Polanyi’s own conclusion points to the nature of the religious and theological as a response to his diagnosis. Polanyi’s view of Christianity was certainly ‘unorthodox’ amongst his economist and academic peers, in that he read Christianity through a “Hellenic prism” of man as citizen, making a life in the *polis*, but in communion with God, rather than relying on the *polis* for ethics.⁶⁷ Polanyi also views Christianity through Aristotelian thought, such that “in denouncing the principle of production for gain as boundless and limitless, ‘as not natural to man,’ Aristotle was, in effect, aiming at the crucial point, namely, the divorce of the economic motive from all concrete social relationships which would by their very nature set a limit to that motive.”⁶⁸ But ultimately, Christianity for Polanyi was important because of its ability to unify individuality with sociality. For Polanyi it was not any Christian reality that was important, rather, what was crucial was how Christianity dealt with eschatological questions, and the connectedness of individuals to ethical communities. When it comes to a diagnosis of the nature of humans within the market, Polanyi draws heavily on Marx’s philosophy and anthropology, in particular theories of

⁶⁶ Dale, *Limits*, 9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 57.

“alienation” and “commodity fetish”.⁶⁹ Within this, markets are seen as undermining community, converting private vice into public virtue, where humans damage one another to serve their own interests.⁷⁰ I make an aside and an assertion here, that the leisure that emerges in market society is often construed as idleness in contrast to the previous Protestant Work Ethic. But Josef Pieper would point us to a different understanding of leisure as the location for reception of spiritual and physical realities.⁷¹ Leisure is not the hiding of vice as virtue, it is the key location for authentic religion. Or to paraphrase Erdozain’s work, while others might often describe western consumers as “entertaining themselves to death”, we are rather “playing our way to virtue”.

After moving to London, Polanyi helped found the Christian Left Auxiliary Movement. Whilst many members of this group were neither Marxist nor Christian, they “were deeply indebted to both ideologies and would effortlessly switch from deploying Marxian theory against liberal Christians in one breath to invoking the words of Jesus in the next.”⁷² One of the best-known but sporadic supporters of the Christian Left was the Labour Party intellectual Richard Tawney, author of *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, whom we encountered in my previous chapter. It would seem that Polanyi had no hopes for Christianity’s ability to resist the pathologies of the SRM, but instead, saw it as requiring the buttressing of communism for its sense of sociality.⁷³ In reaching for a synthesis of Christianity and socialism, Polanyi describes how socialism has religious and moral roots and that in “these roots lies the Christian inheritance.”⁷⁴ Fascism has to destroy Christianity because Christianity is the condition of the ‘countermovement’ to the market, and the possibility of socialism is Christianity:⁷⁵ In Polanyi’s own words, “If you

⁶⁹ Dale, *Limits*, 11.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

⁷¹ Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (San Francisco: Pantheon Books, 1952); Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure*.

⁷² Dale, *Limits*, 40.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁴ Karl Polanyi, “The Essence of Fascism,” in *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, edited by John Lewis, Karl Polanyi, and Donald K. Kitchen (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935), 361.

⁷⁵ Dale, *Limits*, 361–362.

are trying to establish a new social order you are trying to integrate a new system of social habits, and you can't do that without a religious symbol for the keystone."⁷⁶

In many regards Polanyi is redolent of Connolly, seeking to use the resources of Christianity, as if they can be further evacuated from any context and connection to the faith in Jesus Christ that generated those beliefs. There is no recovery of Christian resistance per se for Polanyi. Christianity is inadequate on its own for Polanyi because Christianity, in his view, is unable to recognise the reality of modern society. For whilst simpler societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were able to recognise their Christian inheritance, late-emerging capitalism, with its inherent issues of power and coercion, resulted in individuals unable to leave the contract of the new market society.⁷⁷ When social relationships are remodelled on market relationships, the market becomes the paradigm of social relationships, and the market is disembedded from all socio-logics other than its own, where individuals are powerless to 'opt' out of this society. At the same time that Polanyi wrote *The Great Transformation*, Weber, as my previous chapter noted, was also lamenting the loss of Christianity in continuing to shape and respond to market forces.

I may agree with Polanyi that Christianity carries within itself the notion that society is a "relationship of persons."⁷⁸ I may also agree, as with other social theorists such as Emile Durkheim, that individuals are "persons through interactions with others and that, in this sense, society does not remain purely extrinsic to persons," such that individuals enter into the definition of their identity as persons in community.⁷⁹ However,

⁷⁶ Karl Polanyi, "1932–5 correspondence: Polanyi–Joseph Needham," Karl Polanyi Archive, 56.11., describes how Marxism has its roots in the Christianity of which it was so critical. Mark Harvey, Ronnie Ramlogan, and Sally Randles, *Karl Polanyi: New Perspectives on the Place of the Economy in Society* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 114, describe MacIntyre as "probably the most influential moral philosopher in the English-speaking world." In his first book, MacIntyre describes how Marxism has its roots in the Christianity of which it was so critical. See his *Marxism: An Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1953), 126.

⁷⁷ Dale, *Limits*, 42.

⁷⁸ Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 33.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

I argue that it is not that Christianity is unable to recognise that society is disembedded from the SRM, rather the SRM is a society with which people are in an embedded relationship. For there are social relationships within the SRM where reconstructions of a social logic around market exchanges takes place that create forms of society. Christianity reveals that the SRM is an alternative society in itself. I can look to prior forms of the church in history like Evangelicalism, not to modify them as Polanyi would, but to be resourced by them. For I contend that Evangelicalism is one form of Christianity very able to ‘recognise’ modern societies, and was an effective ‘countermovement’, albeit with the subsequent loss of a Christian socio-logic to the market that I have already highlighted.⁸⁰ Rather, it is in recognising that the market is a society, and one that is religious in its nature and makeup, that we might discover the nature of a true and ongoing Christian countermovement. In that sense, the Evangelical mission into market society is most at peril where it has failed to perceive the market as analogous to religion. Is Evangelical Christianity able to understand its mission in the marketplace as one that is about contesting religious identity? Here I am not attempting to turn the tide, like King Canute, for all Evangelical market capitulations, and claim something about Evangelicalism that is fanciful at best and naïve at worst.⁸¹

4.4 Further Criticisms of Polanyi: Historical and conceptual

Polanyi’s causality is also questioned, and whilst his ‘double movement’ tension is broadly accepted, it is easily modified.⁸² For example, does the marketisation of society

⁸⁰ One does not have to look far to find a plethora of places and times where Christians have recognised modern society, and produced countermovements of resistance, judgement, and accountability; see Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness*, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 80, 94.

⁸¹ I use the Canute metaphor, aware that Canute has become shorthand for not recognising the futility of one’s actions, but that this was entirely the point Canute was aiming to demonstrate. See H. A. O. Huntingdon, *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon: Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People (Oxford Medieval Texts)*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 369.

⁸² Sally Randles, “Issues for a Neo-Polanyian Research Agenda in Economic Sociology”, in Harvey, Ramlogan, and Randles, *New Perspectives*, 146.

always lead to protectionism, or does regulation lead to marketisation in response?⁸³ Further criticisms of Polanyi are generally clustered around issues of historical accuracy to the events he details, and the lucidity of the conceptual constructions he makes from these. Many alternative historical accounts of the development of capitalism are at odds with Polanyi, in particular, that of Richard Tawney in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.⁸⁴ Tawney was a contemporary of Polanyi, and someone of whose work Polanyi would have been aware. For Tawney, the rise in market mentality began in the sixteenth century, when medieval market developments saw a transformation in social relations. That later combined with eighteenth-century attitudes by elites, whereby individuals were seen as needing to fend for themselves.⁸⁵ This pursuit of self-interest was also seen as being part of God's providential plan. In this, Tawney suggests that it is not religion that makes capitalism, *à la* Weber, but rather, it is the development of capitalism that leads to the formation of a Protestant religion that is most suited to a market society. Evangelical providence was now 'imagined' to be existing solely within marketised life. These markets are the 'natural' way for God's providence to be manifest. What is at stake with these competing historical accounts, is whether changes in social relationships preceded the industrial revolution and capitalist markets, or were the result of them.⁸⁶ We might see that the market depends upon Christianity for its understanding of the individual, whilst at the same time drawing individuals into itself, and away from social forms able to counter it, a rival society and an 'ecclesia' of sorts.⁸⁷ We can begin to see how Weber, Polanyi, and Tawney are complementary to understanding how

⁸³ Sally Randles explores the various possibilities of construing the double movement dynamic, in *ibid*, 146–147.

⁸⁴ Tawney, *Rise of Capitalism*.

⁸⁵ Dale, *Limits*, 81.

⁸⁶ For another example, see Block's examination of Polanyi's historical account of Speenhamland, and related poor laws, in Fred Block, "Karl Polanyi and the Writing of 'The Great Transformation'," *Theory and Society* 32, no. 3 (2003): 289–294.

⁸⁷ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 267; Polanyi determines that western individualism comes through a religious process.

Evangelicalism is a countermove to the markets, but is also formed by the markets themselves.

Conceptually, Polanyi comes in for the strongest criticism in his definition of the SRM. He appears to refer to it as “an ideal type (or model) – a system that operates according to its own rules and no others; as a ‘utopian experiment’ carried out by economic liberals but doomed to failure because the goal is unrealizable as an actually existing system.”⁸⁸ Polanyi’s ontological understanding of the SRM is to be questioned, for does he mean that markets are an ontological possibility, or merely an ideology that is unrealisable?⁸⁹ Whilst critics suggest that these descriptions by Polanyi are, if not in tension, then certainly contradictory, how can an ‘ideal type’ exist as an actual system? This tension is often resolved by suggesting that it is actual markets that require state intervention whilst ideal types of SRM are the utopian myth that Polanyi asserts never existed.⁹⁰ We should note that Polanyi’s *Great Transformation* was written across a period of time and various locations, such that his work displays his thinking as it developed, and circumstances were such that he was never able to harmonise his text.⁹¹

There is a way for us to harmonise and combine the Weberian and Polanyi/Tawney accounts of the market. The Ideal Type for Weber is the imagined basis for the construction of capitalism, whilst Tawney’s account offers the effects of the sociality of the market shaping the imaginations for those markets. Polanyi highlights the non-Christian resources that come to shape the imaginations for the understandings of the market as self-regulating. This reading of these accounts suggests that the issue for my thesis is how the ideas and beliefs of Christianity used by agents rationally in the real world come to be affected by the material experience of the sociality of the market. For, rather than a contradiction, these accounts reveal an intersection with the “imagined

⁸⁸ Dale, *Limits*, 73.

⁸⁹ Randles, “Issues,” 145.

⁹⁰ Dale, *Limits*, 73.

⁹¹ Block, “Writing,” 276.

communities” thesis of Anderson, as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. Even if the SRM does pose a threat to the social fabric of life, as Polanyi suggests, such that governments are frequently forced to respond, why are people who are aware of these effects still willing to order life around the SRM?⁹² Most importantly for my project, why are Evangelicals so complicit in that life ordering?

The limits of Polanyi’s account also reveal something else. Polanyi, by his own argument, states that there can never be an SRM, pointing out that on the one hand the embedding of the market economy is normal and necessary, yet on the other hand, protective countermovements weaken market self-regulation.⁹³ One way in which we may read Polanyi’s account theologically is as a description of an eschatological condition and possibility of life for humans within the created order. How Evangelical Christians should live in this eschatological space, and have lived in this space, faithful or not to their horizons, is indeed the heart of my project. This eschatological horizon and struggle for identity formation in the face of new economic spaces and realities can quickly be viewed within Evangelical history. For example, Erdozain’s historical study reveals how the Evangelicalism that moved to respond to the new challenges of living longer, having leisure time, and new wealth, and that provided a means for Christian identity within this new economic world, was ultimately subsumed into the activities around which it had ordered Christian life.⁹⁴ Erdozain notes Martin’s thesis on secularisation that Christianity often over-identifies with the territories that it conquers.⁹⁵ Where Evangelicalism grew in response to the material challenges of a capitalist society, we have now arrived at the situation where UK Evangelicals find the largest growth to be within the middle classes.⁹⁶

⁹² Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 156.

⁹³ Block, “Writing,” 297.

⁹⁴ Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure*, 279.

⁹⁵ David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards A Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 134.

⁹⁶ For detailed statistics on the socio-economic make-up of UK Evangelicals, see Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 23-27.

4.5 Diagnosis: Mechanisms of pathogenesis

Deploying Polanyi's analysis, we can now overlay features of his account with my own, to press into my diagnosis of the pathogenesis between Evangelicalism and capitalism.

4.5.1 Pathogenesis: Commodification

Polanyi highlights Robert Owen's diagnosis that economic problems are social ones.⁹⁷ Indeed, many aspects of Polanyi's thesis are underwritten by Owen's work.⁹⁸ Polanyi's and Owen's claim is that there is anomie within the nature of capitalist markets that combines with the unrestrained character of humans.⁹⁹ It was not just that the SRM, in being disembedded from social relationships, caused problems. Instead, it was the nature of humans themselves within a disembodied SRM that was the primary locus for concern. At the root of this relationship was the move within SRMs from production to exchange, where the nature of exchange interacts with the most problematic issues of human nature.¹⁰⁰ This move from production to exchange is the mechanism and process of commodification.

It is this exchange nature of the SRM, i.e., commodification, and its interplay with an understanding of human nature, i.e., a theological anthropology, that is the site of pathogenesis within capitalism. We have arrived at a location where the pinnacle of identity in market society is the individual who 'pays his way', is in 'nobody's debt', and believes that he can be "unentangled in the evil of power and economic value," separate from everyone.¹⁰¹ The SRM destroyed all non-market relationships through this move from production to exchange. Whilst the policy of laissez-faire in early capitalism was

⁹⁷ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 134.

⁹⁸ Baum details how Polanyi drew on Robert Owen's prior suggestions that economic institutions have an effect upon the 'cultural self-understandings' of people; see Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 3.

⁹⁹ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 134–135.

¹⁰⁰ Polanyi highlights Owen's diagnosis of the havoc on social environments that the move from production to exchange makes for humans; see *ibid.*, 134.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 266.

the “freedom from regulation in production”, the late-capitalist condition is a move to “consumption” through exchange.¹⁰² This move to a society constructed by consumption instead of by symbolic exchange, has been explained by Baudrillard in his *Symbolic Exchange and Death*.¹⁰³

One contour to the development of exchange is understanding how credit emerges within the fiction of money that replaces specie. This goes some way towards supporting Bell’s claim that it is the invention of credit that ultimately undoes the Protestant ethic that had previously restrained consumption.¹⁰⁴ The ability to consume now and pay later was an ethic vastly different to the Weberian Protestant Work Ethic. Polanyi provides an account of the ‘fictions’ necessary to the SRM, of land, labour, and money, and how they are mobilised through production and into exchange.¹⁰⁵ Where previously, commodities from production were sold within markets, land, labour, and money, which are not commodities, are marketised:

Labor is only another name for human activity which goes with life itself, which in turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man; actual money, finally, is merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance. None of them is produced for sale. The commodity description of labor, land, and money is entirely fictitious.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Ibid., 142.

¹⁰³ Baudrillard’s Symbolic exchange and initiation theories explain how non-modern societies were formed outside of notions of production and consumption, and how their social configurations were instead generated by excess, expenditure, and the symbolic. For Baudrillard, capitalism leads to the loss of life around symbolic exchange. Baudrillard’s theory is redolent of Polanyi when explaining how loss of symbolic exchange leads to fantasies and inventions of laws, states, markets etc. See Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London: SAGE, 2017). Baudrillard can help explain how human beings over-ontologise markets and consumption, and he points to the underlying theological domain of human nature. Why do human beings give anything for simulations of life, instead of real quality of life under capitalism? This theological consideration of human nature in theological accounting of life in markets is something we will come to in chapters five and six of this thesis.

¹⁰⁴ Bell, *Cultural Contradictions*, 66–69.

¹⁰⁵ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 75.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 76.

Yet Polanyi is quick to affirm that, despite these fictions for the SRM, they are also actual market realities.¹⁰⁷ Commodity fictions supply real-world organising principles, chief of which is that “no arrangement of behaviour should be allowed to exist that might prevent the actual functioning of the market mechanism on the lines of commodity fiction.”¹⁰⁸ Here, Polanyi is at pains to make sure that he is not recapitulating a Marxist commodity fetish thesis.¹⁰⁹ We may accept that labour, land, and money are fictions within the SRM, and that these combine with human nature in the production of the pathologies of the SRM that Polanyi highlights. But how do those fictions work, and how are they sustained in terms of agency and identity construction? We must get at the nature of those fictions, and how they work in combination with the nature of humans such that the SRM is a mode of operation to which humans seem determined to adhere. In my map-making mode, there is a continuing signpost here about the need for a theological explication of commodification, an analysis to which my next chapter will attend.

4.5.2 Pathogenesis: Resistance is futile

Baum argues that Polanyi reveals the complexity of modern SRM societies, wherein once we were able to discern the impact of our way of life on others, but now our ongoing desire to be ethical has become blocked by the disconnection of our lives from all sources of production.¹¹⁰ Polanyi’s thesis demonstrates how the ethical longings of bourgeois society cannot be met by that society, for “the capitalist society to which we belong is dominated by material forces that behave according to a logic of their own and thus deprive the citizens of the responsibility for their own lives.”¹¹¹ Protestants responded to this ethical anguish with the restriction of the ethical to issues that were inward and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 26–27.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 27.

intimate, ignoring issues and ethics of society, and all too often “repudiated” any notion of “civil consciousness”.¹¹² From this, we may understand Evangelicalism within the market as a place where the anxieties over the providence of the market are related to issues of internal ethics and morality, rather than to an ongoing countermovement of a collective social aspect. This occurs due to the powers of the market in disciplining people into privacy and isolation from each other. What that power is, and how it operates, needs to be diagnosed further, and made explicit with a theological diagnosis to which I will return later.

Dale has developed the work of Polanyi to show how there have been many ongoing countermovements to the SRM since the time of Polanyi’s writing. He has charted the history and theory of many of these counter-movements as they have sought to address the tension between neo-liberalism, utopianism, and socialist and fascist re-embedding of the market into social relationships. His conclusion is that the current economic crisis shows how the neo-liberal belief system has “cracked asunder.”¹¹³ Yet, as we have seen, most economists do not concede this. Polanyi’s work continues to bring a perspective to analysis of contemporary issues. For example, understanding the welfare state as a countermovement to the market reveals the later ongoing marketisation of society, and the undoing of that welfare state, owing to the ongoing pressures of emerging capitalism.¹¹⁴ Baum also suggests that Polanyi, if alive today, would view the grassroots movement of environmentalists as part of a countermovement to the damaging impact of the SRM and land.¹¹⁵ Dale also determines that there is currently an appetite for re-embedding the markets in the social, but that the prospect in the short term is a move back towards continued marketisation.¹¹⁶ For example, it is in current western government cuts

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Dale, *Limits*, 230.

¹¹⁴ See part I, “Reflections on Disembeddedness: Welfare State and Beyond,” of Bugra and Agartan, *Market Economy*, 13–66.

¹¹⁵ Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 19.

¹¹⁶ Dale, *Limits*, 231–2.

to state benefits for the very people that need to be protected from the market that the neo-liberal utopia is still being pursued. In this, perhaps, we see the ontological belief that it is the market that will ‘save us’, and not the addressing of the failings of human nature in relationship to goods and markets, the latter of which should be the primary concern of the Christian. Ayse Bugra reminds us that Polanyi’s predictions of the ongoing institutional separation of the political from the economic, such that society would be reduced to “an appendage of the market”, has come to pass.¹¹⁷ It is the

...contemporary neo-liberal world, where the emphasis placed on voluntary gift giving, civil initiatives, and romantic notions of civil society are used to hide the reality of an unprecedented commodification of life and livelihood on a global scale, is less equipped than ever to appreciate the implications of the liberal denial of power and take against them.¹¹⁸

It is not the neo-liberal dream that has faltered, but rather that capitalism has “lurched from crisis to crisis.”¹¹⁹ The parallels of Polanyi’s nineteenth century with our own age are disturbingly easy to chart.¹²⁰ Polanyi describes the horrors of the industrial revolution and the social degradation it wrought on workers and children.¹²¹ In our present-day context, we see that all of life is marketised; from health to education, welfare to science, social Darwinism persists in its drive to replace the citizen with a consumer, and all forms of social relationships able to counter the ravages of the SRM are increasingly enervated.¹²² Dale postulates that this course is so unsustainable that there may be a turn back towards a Marxist ethic, as Polanyi sought to establish.¹²³ Yet, despite all these

¹¹⁷ Bugra and Agartan, *Market Economy*, 187.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Dale, *Limits*, 233.

¹²⁰ For a detailed and thorough examination, and comparative analysis of Polanyi’s ‘Double Movement’ with regard to late-twentieth and early twenty-first century double movements within UK and US markets, see Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly J. Silver, “Polanyi’s ‘Double Movement’: The Belle Époques of British and US Hegemony Compared,” *Politics & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 325–355.

¹²¹ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 279.

¹²² Dale, *Limits*, 235–236.

¹²³ Ibid., 240–241.

examples of countermovements, and aspirations for new ones, the result of them all seems to have been the further adoption of the SRM, and the pathogenesis to which it leads.¹²⁴

Again, we are left to ask why and how this pathogenesis arises? If the earliest social counter-movements that arose in response to the SRM that sought to re-embed the social within the market and all subsequent ones failed, why is that?¹²⁵ Is there really, as Polanyi and Owen suggested, something about the ontological nature of humans combined with the SRM that leads to these problems, that no economic countermove can ever address? Whilst social theorists continue to look for their own ‘countermovements’ in modern society, informed by Polanyi’s thesis, I continue to ask: can Evangelical Christianity rediscover its ability as a countermovement in differentiation from secular hopes?¹²⁶ Evangelicalism provided an unparalleled response to the pathologies of the SRM with hospices, welfare, education, etc.¹²⁷ Can Evangelism repeat that move and countermove today, and what is it currently doing with regard to late-capitalist markets? Where are its ongoing ‘islands of social care’ *à la* Martin?

Polanyi may reject the concept of human nature as *Homo oeconomicus*, that human nature is not purely economic but cultural and social.¹²⁸ Yet he sees the emergence of human selfishness and individualism as a reaction to the materialist conditions of the SRM.¹²⁹ Here is revealed the further commitment to understanding of human nature, and Polanyi’s is redolent of a doctrine of the fall. There is something about human nature itself that becomes captive and resonates with the deforming forces of capitalism. Perhaps it is not that the SRM produces this selfishness and anomie, but that the SRM disciplines

¹²⁴ Ibid., 215–234.

¹²⁵ Such as the Chartist movement; see Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 180.

¹²⁶ Examples of contemporary resistance and adaptations within Polanyi’s thesis are given for East Asian labour markets, small-business associations in Europe, and credit inclusions in Brazil; see Bugra and Agartan, *Market Economy*, 173–254. Harvey, Ramlogan, and Randles, *New Perspectives*, 133–280, also give examples from comparisons of labour markets with the UK and France, telephone transactions as examples of exchange, and corporate mergers as double movements.

¹²⁷ Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure*, 3.

¹²⁸ Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 46.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

the nature that already exists within humans. For Christians, this materialistic preoccupation is not a cultural product of the SRM but is inherent in basic human nature. In this, I am further reaching for theological descriptions. The SRM has its own constructions and economic life to which humans remain willing to cede their daily lives and deepest identities, including Evangelicals. The world of economics, as on the one hand “irrational”, set around human wants and needs, and “rational” on the other, with regard to the shaping of moral and religious values.¹³⁰ Indeed, Polanyi criticises Weber for his unwillingness to integrate these issues of scarcity and irrationality within his understanding of the economic.¹³¹

4.5.3. Pathogenesis: *Oikos* and *polis*

It is worth noting a particular social arrangement from Polanyi’s work that points towards how we might understand the social arrangement of Christianity to all and any aspects of market life. Polanyi’s ‘double movement’ thesis was concerned with modern economies; his attention in the last part of his life was directed towards “archaic economies”.¹³² He was searching for a “good society” in which the nature of social relationships was the makeup of natural institutions.¹³³ Polanyi located this within Aristotle and the ancient Greek world of the *oikos*, and thereby joined the *oikos* debate and its related controversy. On the one hand, there were arguments that the *oikos*, the household of the ancient world, was self-sufficient and did not partake in the modern phenomena of land, labour, and capitalist markets.¹³⁴ On the other hand, various theorists advanced analyzes that the economies of the ancient world, particularly Greece, were prototypes of our modern

¹³⁰ Dale, *Limits*, 109.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 137; Karl Polanyi, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (Washington, DC: Henry Regnery, 1971).

¹³³ Allan Carlson, “The Problem of Karl Polanyi,” *The Intercollegiate Review*, 41, no. 1, (2006): 37–38.

¹³⁴ Dale, *Limits*, 138.

market economies.¹³⁵ Weber attempted a synthesis of these views, and as we know, his Protestant Work Ethic contends that modern capitalism is unique to human history, catalysed by Christianity. Whilst Weber determined that the nature of markets in the *oikos* was fundamentally different to modern capitalist markets, he conceded that *oikoi* functioned as “centres of commercial exchange.”¹³⁶

Polanyi took Weber and others in the debate as his guides, developing his own ideas that it was wrong to see the *oikos* as strictly self-sufficient as the “primitivists” did, and on the other hand that the “modernists” were wrong in reading modern market mechanisms back into antiquity.¹³⁷ The principle problem discerned by Polanyi in all these accounts, including that of Weber, was the propensity to consider trade and markets as exchange mechanisms independent from social institutions.¹³⁸ Other than Weber, it seems that most protagonists in the debate were unable to “conceive of an economy within market places and extensive trade and money use as co-ordinated in any manner other than through market mechanisms.”¹³⁹ Polanyi sought to establish that it is in antiquity that we find the possibility of markets that are not co-ordinated through disembodied exchange mechanisms. Many anthropologists and economic historians argue the obverse of Polanyi, that some ancient societies were motivated by material and personal gain with no regard for the well-being of wider society.¹⁴⁰

Beyond economic arrangements of the social, the notions of *oikos* and *polis* point to a need to understand ecclesiology around these arrangements. If the early church was an *oikos-polis*, a new social ordering within the economics of its day, this has implications for such social ordering today for the people of God. We can understand how the early

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 139.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 140–141.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Randles, “Issues,” 148.

church overcame the antimonies of the *polis* and the *oikos*, to form a hybrid *oikos-polis*.¹⁴¹ There are Christian understandings of the *oikos* to review and deploy against Polanyi and other social theorists, in order to understand how the early church was both a move, and countermove, to the nature of market and political life. Does the church therefore exist as the possibility of a non-marketised social entity? Can answers to these questions help us to better understand the emergence of the sphere of the economic from that of the *polis* and the *oikos* into current ‘commercial society’? I will return to these questions and this *oikos-polis* location in my next chapter and explicit theological review.

4.6 Social Imaginaries: Imaginations for collective social life

We have noted Polanyi’s suggestion that the resources of religious traditions are replaced by the resources of Neo-Darwinism and the “invisible hand of the Market” of Adam Smith.¹⁴² There is a kind of imaginative exercise taking place here. For if the neo-liberal establishment of the SRM was a utopian myth, it was a myth established with the imaginative use of resources other than those of religions previously able to keep the SRM at bay. Or, at the very least, it took new understandings of humans and the market for the liberal project to be imagined and enacted. Polanyi traces how the resources of neo-Darwinian and associated scientific accounts of human nature led to the ideas of scarcity, survival of the fittest, and competition becoming the accepted ‘nature’ of the market and human life within it.¹⁴³ The neo-classical (or ‘marginalist’) branch of economics in the Austrian school of thought anticipated much of Polanyi’s work.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, Polanyi was familiar with their work, wherein they suggested that economic

¹⁴¹ For a detailed understanding of how the early church *ekklesia* achieved this, see Bernd Wannewetsch, *Political Worship: Ethics for Christian Citizens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Bretherton summarises and extends the idea of the church as a hybrid *oikos-polis* in Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*. Another summary of the *oikos* in the early church can be found in Martyn Percy, “Christianity and Social Flourishing,” in Kidwell, *Theology and Economics*, 222.

¹⁴² Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 116.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 116–121.

¹⁴⁴ Dale, *Limits*, 95.

history and economic anthropology could not be separated with regard to understanding the nature of institutions and relationships with society.¹⁴⁵ In this methodology, institutions were to be understood as “historically specific mentalities”, a type of “Homo mass-psychologicus”, which gives priority to human needs and desires.¹⁴⁶ This means that

economic phenomena such as capitalist activity should therefore be understood psychologically, as mentalities that express themselves as sets of ideas and moral systems, customs and laws, specific to a people of a certain race or nation. Economic life is transacted within political and social organs that achieve their unity not simply through borders and an integrated territory but in the first instance as a ‘spiritual unity by the socializations of the actors, with law, morals, and religion...as their prime expressions’. The common element that unites the particular economies of a nation or state, he [Gustav Schmoller] says, ‘is not simply the state itself, but rather something deeper: the community of language, of history, of memories, of customs and ideas. It is a world of common feelings and ideas....’¹⁴⁷

This is a community of imagination so to speak, of a similar order to the “imagined communities” of Anderson.¹⁴⁸ Historicists, unlike Marxists, disregard the “relationship of social classes to the means of production, concentrating instead upon economic institutions, understood as psychological based phenomena,” whereby all economic behaviour is founded in psychology.¹⁴⁹ This methodology allows for an understanding of actors in the economic realm through accounts of psychology, history, and anthropology such that the behaviour of groups can be understood only as ethical considerations.¹⁵⁰ Polanyi’s account enables us to explore how, for economic actors in time and space, the social experience around internal experiences of beliefs and market relationships takes shape.¹⁵¹ The notion of how communities imagine, and then act out those imaginations,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 96.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 97.

¹⁴⁷ Dale, commenting on and quoting Gustav Schmoller, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁴⁹ Dale, *Karl Polanyi*, 97.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 96.

¹⁵¹ One intriguing example of the use of Polanyi’s work is made with regard to understanding how Polanyi’s double movements explains the new priority on the social life of economic actors in response to the nature of work organisation in the Irish software industry; see Seán Ó Riain, “Time-Space Intensification: Karl Polanyi, the Double Movement, and Global Informational Capitalism,” *Theory and Society* 35, no. 5/6 (2006). Riain concludes that as marketization reaches into every area of life, including the new informational capitalism, that humans produce necessary social protections to shield their

allow us to comprehend how economic life is embedded within cultural and social systems.

Polanyi refuses an evolutionary perspective, and the “necessary progress” of the social theory of his day.¹⁵² Modernity is no “high point” for Polanyi, with previous epochs stages toward achievements in modern society. Previous cultures have exhibited examples from which we can learn today.¹⁵³ He is neither a “functionalist”, nor a supporter of dialectical historical methods.¹⁵⁴ Polanyi can therefore be read theologically with an ontology of irrational human and social nature, and epistemology of rational behaviour and agency. How then do the resources of Polanyi’s neo-Darwinian and Hobbsian society combine with how humans construct identity and interact with the resources, beliefs, and practices of Evangelicalism?

Whilst there are many who have abandoned Christianity for the resources of their “imagined communities”, Christianity in many parts of the world, including the USA, continues apace. American Evangelicals continue the combination of beliefs centred around providence, with an understanding of the market as the natural source of God’s providence.¹⁵⁵ The fictions of the SRM can be seen as the raw materials for a post-Protestant Work Ethic, where in the face of new anxieties over wealth and poverty, a link between providence and the market is formed. We can view Evangelical Christians as actors rationally responding to the challenges of new global capitalist markets, who then unintentionally give over their understanding and priority of social relationship to the ontology of the SRM. Weber demonstrated that it was religious discipline that set the

‘selves’ within their work environments. In this way individuals are disembedded and re-embedded in their work environments, solutions for which Polanyi ultimately has no suggestions.

¹⁵² Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 15.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ For example, see R. L. Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

limits to markets, something Polanyi also affirms.¹⁵⁶ Yet ultimately, religion, in its process of ‘disciplining’, combines with the nature of the SRM, so that markets became ‘natural’ and the site of God’s providence. Where religion once disciplined the markets, the markets now discipline believers. We must not underestimate the anxieties that a Darwinian world presented people faced with unparalleled wealth and poverty. As we have seen, Evangelicals responded missionally to the many new anxieties of the modern world. They relaxed their ecclesiology at a time when the SRM was being parasitic to other social forms, thereby determining new social realities between the *oikos* and the *polis*. The SRM in Polanyian terms is a utopian fantasy and social imaginary that makes plausible various constructions and disciplines of practices around desire. It is no wonder that the sociality of the Christian life was thus too easily given over to the socio-logic of the market. This approach to ecclesiology, in which the form of church is allowed to take its logic from the new market contexts in which Evangelicals found themselves, is seen with Whitefield’s claim that “it was best to preach the new birth, and the power of godliness, and not to insist so much on the form: for people would never be brought to one mind as to that; nor did Jesus Christ ever intend it.”¹⁵⁷ It would seem that what is at stake is how human beings imagine life, and how those imaginations are disciplined and enacted. In other words, how are imagined resources, beliefs, and practices formed into identity and social relationships within capitalist markets? The work of Charles Taylor and “social imaginaries” is helpful at this point as a method to answer this question.

¹⁵⁶ I have noted earlier that Polanyi insists that it was institutions such as religion that held capitalism at bay, as they were able to ‘discipline’ behaviours away from motives for gain; Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 57.

¹⁵⁷ Whitefield provides this statement whilst being questioned by five Anglican clergymen just prior to his extensive preaching tour. See Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 12. For Whitfield’s own and extended explanation of his ecclesiology, see Charles Whitfield, *The Form and Order of a Church of Christ: Represented In a Concise Manner, from an Impartial Consideration of the Writings of the New Testament, and the Prophecies of the Old, Concerning the Same; So as to Render it Plain and Familiar to the Meanest Capacity* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Robson & Angus, 1775).

4.6.1 Charles Taylor and Social Imaginaries

Polanyi's Great Transformation was not to be reversed. With the current teetering of the global capitalist market system, Polanyi's diagnosis remains starkly prognostic and relevant. But it would seem that history tells us that humans by nature and inclination now persist in the pursuit of the SRM for living and being. We have already highlighted how both Weber's and Polanyi's accounts bring us into contact with human nature and societal relationships set around imaginings of the market. But they both fall short in diagnosing *the* nature of humans and the market, and the neo-liberal vision remains as strong and compulsive as ever.

The immense changes in politics, and the economy in the time period of our accounts, are met with new "collective experiences".¹⁵⁸ Ordinary people in their embodied lives have responded to these changes with a multiplicity of "contrast experiences"¹⁵⁹. Within those experiences, people's understanding of self and moral visions are played out within institutions of work, family, home, and now the new market society.¹⁶⁰ There is no one account for understanding the new modern ways of living, or of approaching identity and sociality within this new landscape. Rather, as Charles Taylor has determined, we need to speak of "multiple modernities" in order to understand the plurality of complex and collective experiences that have taken place.¹⁶¹ Within the accounts made so far, we are left with an "elusive set of self-understandings, background practices, and horizons of common expectations that are not always explicitly articulated, but that give a people a sense of a shared group life."¹⁶² Taylor draws upon Jürgen Habermas and the *Imagined Communities* thesis of Anderson in suggesting that one way

¹⁵⁸ Baum, *Ethics and Economics*, 73.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶⁰ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1. Lyotard now seems almost prophetic in his predictions of our arrival at this state of affairs; see Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated and edited by Geoff Bebbington and Brian Masumi (King's Lynn: Manchester University Press, 1979).

¹⁶² Stephen Crocker, review of Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, *Canadian Journal of Sociology Online* (2005), accessed 11th October 2010, <http://www.cjsonline.ca/pdf/socialimaginaries.pdf>.

to account for these multiple understandings is with the notion of “social imaginaries”.¹⁶³ Social imaginaries provide a reflexive account of modernity that avoids focusing, on the one hand, on technical determinations around “ideas”, and on the other, on materialist accounts of how people feel and respond in relation to these “ideas” and related processes.¹⁶⁴

Given the materialist account of Polanyi and the Ideal Type of Weber, Taylor’s social imaginary method offers a way to bring these accounts together, and to bring them into further contact with all my work so far. The notion of a social imaginary functions as an overlay to all my previous mappings. I will summarise and survey Charles Taylor’s social imaginary thesis, and, as I do so, establish points of connection with my own account. With this made, I will then be in a position to better compare and contrast theological accounts of those relationships and the Evangelical church as a kind of “social imaginary”.

4.6.2 What is a “Social Imaginary”?

By social imaginary, I mean something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.

— Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*

Taylor differentiates the “social imaginary” from social theory as being about how ordinary people ‘imagine’ social surroundings, in non-theoretical terms, given that most do not possess these theoretical terms, and yet this social imaginary makes possible shared practices around a common understanding.¹⁶⁵ We all “carry an implicit map of social space” that does not require us to be conscious of theorising about it.¹⁶⁶ Taylor sees

¹⁶³ Taylor, *Social Imaginaries*, 1.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 25–26.

theories as highly influential, but they are improvised and inducted into new practices such that they are ultimately “schematized” into the reality of space and time, and become a “dense sphere of social practice.”¹⁶⁷ The resources for the imagination of human nature within the neo-Darwinian and fictitious markets of Polanyi show how a variety of resources for imaginations, i.e., social imaginaries, are improvised and used for practices that are socially embodied.

For Taylor, it is not that ideas lead to material actions, or that material actions result in ideas; rather, human practices are simultaneously material, and modes of understanding: “Because human practices are the type of thing that makes sense, certain ideas are internal to them; one cannot distinguish the two in order to ask the question: which causes which?”¹⁶⁸ Taylor sees materialist accounts such as that given by Marx as implausible. We may be able to identify many examples of where an economic motive explains a moral idea, an account in economic terms, for example, of the “spread of the reformation doctrine of salvation by faith [...] not [being] very plausible.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, “ideas always come in history wrapped up in certain practices, even if these are only discursive practices. But the motivations that drive toward the adoption and spread of these packages may be varied.”¹⁷⁰ Taylor cites “civility” as an example of something that is not a natural condition of humans, but one that requires education and discipline, which religion is able to provide.¹⁷¹ Then, there is the Protestant notion of a “good life” with the imaginings of new social order against the indolence of monks and beggars.¹⁷² We can see that the Weberian Protestant Work Ethic functioned as a type of social imaginary, where rational beliefs and conceptions of a way of Christian life are improvised and practised through

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 29–30.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 31–32.

¹⁶⁹ Such as advertisers adopting the language of expressive individualism in the 1960s, which becomes a new moral ideal; *ibid.*, 32–33.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁷² Ibid., 39–41. Taylor also provides a brief economic history, reminiscent of the longer account made by Polanyi, of the repeal of poor laws and reconceptions of the poor as ‘work shy’; see 42–43.

the ascetic of that social ethic. Taylor establishes far more than just a method for understanding how people imagine social existence, such as understanding cultural revolutions in secularism, and many other things beyond my accounting.¹⁷³

4.6.3 The Great Disembedding

Taylor proposes that the process of the re-conception of society as a collection of individuals be understood as “The Great Disembedding”.¹⁷⁴ Previously, religious life was inseparable from social life, where “we primarily related to God as a society,” and religious actions of prayer and worship were understood as an agency that acted for the whole group of one’s belonging.¹⁷⁵ Earlier societies were unable to imagine the self outside of membership of those societies, with social embeddedness integral to identity. Christianity, with its conceptions of the church as a society that relativises other social arrangements, was the first imagination of a new identity in the direction of individualism.¹⁷⁶ The Gospel itself is a disembedding from social and collective memberships into a new social reality.¹⁷⁷

Weber’s thesis cannot be traced clearly to show a correlation between capitalism and the beliefs of Protestant Christianity; Taylor sees the relationship as being rather more “diffuse”.¹⁷⁸ In Weber’s thesis, moral self-understandings are embedded within religious practices, but not with one coming first, or driving the other.¹⁷⁹ But Taylor admits that we can determine that the beliefs of Protestant society do give a different shape to the

¹⁷³ For example, Taylor uses his social imaginary method to show three moments of transition in history, three cultural revolutions that “transformed the sacred and vertical social understandings of our ancestors into the secular and horizontal social understandings of the contemporary world.” For this, and a more detailed summary of Taylor’s own use of social imaginaries, see Jeremy S. Neill, review, Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 34.5 (2008), 575–580.

¹⁷⁴ Taylor, *Social Imaginaries*, 50.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 50–53.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

capitalism of western society than that of Chinese culture, for example. Likewise, we can see how my Weberian account allows for the shaping of capitalism by Protestantism, while at the same time its practices and the ascetic within those beliefs shaped the beliefs of Protestantism.

The disembedding nature of the Protestant Work Ethic can be brought into contact with Polanyi's thesis of the disembedded SRM. The SRM, with its fictions of the marketisation of labour, land, and money, combine with the Protestant Work Ethic practices of daily life, such that the imaginations at work ultimately disembedded people from their religious roots and religious collectives. Again, I contend that the SRM in its nature functions as a social environment in which individuals are disciplined through the practices of the market around imaginations of identity and belief. Here, we recall the location on my previous mapping of the internal move within Arminian pietism into an experience and imagination of providence, that then disciplined daily living around the nature of the SRM. Christianity, once able to 'discipline' identity within that environment, is ultimately replaced by the disciplines of the market itself.¹⁸⁰

4.6.4 Disembedding the Economy: Public and private life

Taylor traces how this "Great Disembedding" has worked out in modern social imaginaries, starting with economic life. The new modern social imaginary involves a new theory of moral order that changes our understanding of God's providence and the nature of his benevolence.¹⁸¹ Taylor traces this development from previous cosmological understandings of the place of humans sustained within that creation to the addition of

¹⁸⁰ I am mindful here of the claims of Anabaptists, and Hauerwas, along with others, who would understand the church today as an alternate community/culture. Insisting that church is an alternative culture does not make it so however; see Theo Hobson, "Against Hauerwas," *New Blackfriars* 88, no. 101 (2007): 300–312. The question perhaps is, does telling a different genealogy *à la* MacIntyre offer sufficient grounds for asserting an alternative identity? Maybe the genealogy can only be told in relation to the genealogy of capitalism.

¹⁸¹ Taylor, *Social Imaginaries*, 69.

eighteenth-century ‘invisible hands’, and the viewing of society through the lens of engineering design and ordering.¹⁸² Humans move to a society ordered around an exchange of services, with nature itself deemed to be an economic order.¹⁸³ Ontological hierarchies of kingship are maintained, but with deference to how kings keep the new market economies in order.¹⁸⁴ But eventually, the economy becomes more than a metaphor, and is established as the ultimate ontological orientation of society.

Taylor corroborates the location of market aseity highlighted in Sedgwick’s account, as discussed earlier. For we saw previously that Sedgwick describes the ontological move of aseity into the market as none other than the relocation of aseity of God into the economic. The market takes on the ontological values of God.¹⁸⁵ Campbell also reminds us that this move into exchange and consumption is one of the imagination.¹⁸⁶ We see the Polanyian neo-Darwinian imaginations for human nature combining with a post-Protestant Work Ethic that relocates identity creation into market activities, and the imaginations of providence of that market for identity construction.¹⁸⁷ Our question here again is: what is it about the nature of the market and the nature of humans that leads to this dialectic of imagination between identity and the market? Is Sedgwick correct, that it is the telos of the market, not the market per se, that is the problem requiring an alternative set of desires in response?¹⁸⁸ Or is the market ontologically problematic, given to providing an alternative social identity, with its own ascetic and disciplining practices around the intrinsic problems of human identity? In either case, it is the ascetic nature of the market, and the ways in which desire is imagined

¹⁸² Ibid., 70.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 71.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸⁵ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 120–121.

¹⁸⁶ We have seen previously that, as Campbell explains, the middle classes in the reading of texts and novels indulge their romantic selves and develop “modern autonomous imaginative hedonism”; Campbell, *Romantic Ethic*, 77.

¹⁸⁷ Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 118–121.

¹⁸⁸ Sedgwick, *Market Economy*, 149–150.

within identity construction and market practices, that my mapping continues to direct us for further theological analysis.

This change in self-understanding can be attributed to a new spiritual dimension, one whereby Weber may be right, “even if not all the details of his theory can be salvaged.”¹⁸⁹ A move then takes place within Protestantism away from the idea of higher vocations, with the claim upon ordinary life, work, family, and sex, as the locus for God’s activity with His people. This affirmation of ordinary life facilitates the “promotion of the economic to its central place.”¹⁹⁰ This new idea and order of the economic gives rise to a move from management of the economic by governments, to a defining of the fundamental way in which humans relate to each other.¹⁹¹ In effect, other social dimensions of human existence are shifted, such that the public and private spheres of life change into new modes of agency. However, we may counter with our account from Polanyi of how this state of affairs is unsustainable. Taylor sees the disembedding of society into the market economy as one in which “society has been unhooked from ‘polity’ and floats free through a number of applications.”¹⁹² But, we have seen that society is not free floating; rather, there is a re-embedding of human relationships into the socio-logic of the market.¹⁹³

Taylor continues with an extended discourse on how the public sphere develops into a “metatopical space” in which members of society could exchange ideas, i.e., as a metatopical agency, but one that exists independently of political society and completely within profane time.¹⁹⁴ It is modern literature *à la* Anderson’s thesis that has allowed us to slice time vertically, holding together “myriad happenings.”¹⁹⁵ With the economy as

¹⁸⁹ Taylor, *Social Imaginaries*, 73.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁹³ Taylor does draw attention to modes of re-embedding; for example, echoing Polanyi, Taylor notes that it is fascism that attempted to re-embed the society into the *polis* and failed. *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

the “first mode” of society, and the separation of the public from that sphere, the world of the family and the self, retreats into the intimate and private sphere.¹⁹⁶ Houses are constructed to protect people from others, whilst the centre of gravity of life shifts towards seeking “the good life” with a new aesthetic, in which art and music are intended for personal enjoyment and to enrich the private sphere.¹⁹⁷ This new understanding of human identity and private life finds its acceptance and definition in public space and in the nature of exchange in public life.¹⁹⁸ Here, we see the nature of the *oikos* and *polis* reconfigured around the emerging aseity of market life.

The development of reformation churches into a generation of ‘free’ churches centred around voluntarist associations, reinforces and creates this metatopical common agency.¹⁹⁹ Ironically, the intrinsic nature of Christianity to imagine one’s identity, whereby membership of church orders all other allegiances, plays out within the modern social imaginary as strong commitments to associate with others beyond traditional “fealty”.²⁰⁰ The voluntarist nature of modern Evangelicalism brings us to understand God and all of life as unmediated, and collapsed into the private.²⁰¹ The result is “modes of imagined direct access” that abolish all hierarchal belonging and mediation. However, this modern individualism “doesn’t mean ceasing to belong at all – that’s the individualism of anomie and breakdown – but imagining oneself as belonging to ever wider and more impersonal entities: the state, the movement, the community of humankind.”²⁰² Imagining ourselves in this new sphere involves belonging to a new

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 104–105.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 106.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 160.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 107.

²⁰¹ It is interesting to note that, in response to Baptist understandings of voluntarism, some like Paul Fiddes at Oxford have suggested instead that we need to understand ourselves not as voluntarists, but in the theological concept of covenant, even as ‘Free Church’ people. See Paul S. Fiddes, “A Fourth Strand of the Reformation”, *Ecclesiology*, 13, no. 2 (2017): 153–159.

²⁰² Taylor, *Social Imaginaries*, 160.

collective agency, which we can now determine takes its impetus from market imaginations for social relationships.²⁰³

4.7 Conclusion: Bearings for Theological Navigation

Here I pause to overlay all my explorations and maps so far, to see what we have discovered and what these signpost as the next place to venture.

Through Charles Taylor, I have been able to bring Weber and Polanyi into contact with my findings from the work of Bebbington, Martin and Anderson.²⁰⁴ We can now understand how Evangelicals moving into new economic environments sought to respond to the challenges of those environments, and were able to use the tools of capitalist media to share new ways of constructing identity and relationship with others, society, and the market for ‘islands of social care’. Taylor highlights the ontologising of capitalist markets, which correlates with my work on Weber and Sedgwick, for an understanding of how the providence of God is relocated to the market. We see a movement, a sleight of hand, in which initially God provides through the market to enact imaginations for the telos of life, but, ultimately, God is removed from this process completely, leaving as the only reality the market itself. We can also now understand how Selves are imagined and created within the SRM through this providence of the market, a providence that is activated through the disciplines of the market.

I have also suggested that Taylor’s account is not just a “great disembedding”, but that it also reveals the *embedding* within the socio-logic of capitalism, of imaginations for self-creations in market life. Christianity carries within itself the process of disembedding self from other social relationships, a process which then falls captive to

²⁰³ Ibid., 163.

²⁰⁴ For example, Taylor references Martin regarding his claim that people need support in the new economic worlds they come to inhabit, and regarding how Pentecostal Christianity provides this, much like Islam gives identity to African-Americans in disadvantaged contexts; Taylor, *Social Imaginaries*, 150.

being unable to re-embed people into market social realities.²⁰⁵ We can view Evangelicalism as a movement that was a corollary to the development of social imaginaries of capitalist markets. Evangelicals initially used the disciplined ascetics of the market for identity and relationships within capitalism. Market ascetics ultimately led to the formation and substitution of market imaginations for life. In other words, the church stopped being a thing in and of itself for Evangelicals. It became simply a tool to provide care within the market, ceding its logic to the market as a dispenser of religious goods and services.²⁰⁶ Then, we have the voluntarist nature of human identity. In voluntarism, identity is reduced to that which the self chooses, with resources exchanged within a market society, and no grounding in any social and communal context, other than the market. It may be that the market, with regard to identity and social relationships, is not the Marxists' "alienation" of humans under capitalism, nor is it the "anomie" of Durkheim, or even Weber's "iron cage". Perhaps instead, it is that social relationships and the desire to belong in community are a "fundamental social imaginary" of all humans, the desire for which gives us all our references for meaning and being.²⁰⁷ If that is the case, we may view the collapse of identity into the SRM, fuelled by the Evangelical post-Protestant Work Ethic, as the metonym of church and ecclesiology. The market is,

²⁰⁵ Baudrillard claimed that capitalism has completed and perfected itself, such that social reality is a simulation built upon the 'code' of consumer signs, rather than the meaning of objects themselves. There is a re-embedding and inscription of people into the social logic of consumption, and an ongoing loss of reality replaced by hyper-reality. See Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, edited by Natalie Aguilera (London: Sage Publications, 1998). Also, see Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, translated by Charles Levin (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981), 59.

²⁰⁶ For example, the Victorian penchant for 'sermon tasting', of travelling to multiple Sunday services and collecting publications of sermons, soon became so popular that it could be remarked that "some of the most distinguished Preachers of the day appeared again through the press almost before they had left the pulpit"; it is estimated that English Anglicans alone published over one million sermons a year. See Robert H. Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1998), 46.

²⁰⁷ Drawing on the work of Cornelius Castoriadis, Max Farrar, in discussing the epistemological nature of community in society, makes this claim for how conceptions of 'community' work as fundamental social imaginaries, where community is the organising principle of life; see Max Farrar, "Re-Thinking 'Community' as a Utopian Social Imaginary", accessed 3rd February 2018. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Max_Farrar/publication/268331132_Re-thinking_%27community%27_as_a_utopian_social_imaginary/links/5489bbf80cf2d1800d7aa030/Re-thinking-community-as-a-utopian-social-imaginary.pdf.

if not a *false body*, then at least a competing body, to which humans have ceded all sociology, because of its promise of actualising community desire; however, it has never produced a community, but rather fostered an idealisation and unrequited desire for community.

These interim conclusions now allow for, and point to, the need for more explicit theological discussion, giving rise to some key theological questions. It is a theological diagnosis that my thesis ultimately seeks to make, making that which has been implicit, explicit.

Chapter 5

Rival Ascetics of Desire: False Bodies, Resistance and Co-Creation

The problem is not that some coherent, holistic Christian Culture has been shattered but that believers practice and use Christian doctrines and symbols in a way that prevents them from influencing their everyday social practices. They are instead engaged with habits of interpretation and use drawn from consumer culture which treat cultural objects as consumable decorations for the pre-existing structure of everyday life.¹

“The foremost cartographers of the land have prepared this for you; it’s a map of the area that you’ll be traversing.”

[Blackadder opens it up and sees it is blank]

“They’ll be very grateful if you could just fill it in as you go along.”

Blackadder II, episode no.3, “Potato”

Evoking my map-making method, we can see where water flowed, and landscapes were shaped by formational forces as Evangelicalism interacted with capitalism. But what was it about those forces, and the nature of the landscape as they interacted, that led to what emerged? My last three chapters have been a kind of morphological mapping, concerned with the general landscape of Evangelical life within emerging capitalism, as I seek to diagnose the pathogeneses in that relationship.² I have made a kind of “morphology of landscape” that has mapped human activity, i.e., Evangelicalism, in cultural environments, i.e., social relationships of capitalism.³ My mapping and account is a kind of palimpsest, not an actual location but an ideal type, allowing observers to “summarize and identify actual scenes” of Evangelical life in capitalism.⁴ A landscape as palimpsest

¹ Vincent Jude Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

² Beyond the general landscape, and in terms of the structure of Evangelicalism, I have integrated some historical vignettes throughout the thesis.

³ I do not force map-making methods upon those methods of my thesis. Geographers seeking to interpret geographical landscapes have drawn upon socio-cultural, philosophical and linguistic methods to get beyond ocular visions, i.e., what we can understand led to how things came to be as they are, that we can see. For example, see Carl Ortwin Sauer, “Morphology of landscape,” in *Land and life: a selection of writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, edited by John Leighly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 315–50.

⁴ Nancy Duncan and James Duncan explain how landscapes function as palimpsests, and how landscapes function as ideal types that cannot be seen, but instead allow an observer to locate themselves within symbolic landscape accounts, enabling them to describe their own location in that landscape. See Nancy and James Duncan, “Doing Landscape Interpretation”, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009).

can then be defined, and further understood through multiple methods: of place, environment, history, region, mineral composition, political, social, religious and others. My method for further understanding in this, and then my next and final, chapter is the theological. For the theological allows me to move beyond the phenomena and epiphenomena I have mapped to the diagnostic. To move from the implicit to the explicit. In particular, to examine human nature within the nature of capitalism, to diagnose why Evangelical belief and practice interact with each other in market society as they do.

In particular, this chapter makes explicit the theological contours of my second and third chapters, and their analyses of the Protestant Work Ethic. It is the overlay to that map, to which the first chapter of this thesis pointed. Where the Protestant Work Ethic, and modulations of that, are about competing ascetics, this chapter theologises the nature of those ascetics. I will now delineate late-capitalist markets and Evangelical Christianity as rival schools of desire, problematising them not as a dichotomy, but as modes of resistance, resonance, and co-option around their ascetics. This chapter also overlays my fourth chapter, for ultimately this diagnosis allows me to explain why Evangelical imaginations have become embedded in market imaginations for providence, in a post-Protestant work ethic. In order to do this, I identify, from Neo-Augustinian sources, specific theological accounts that have problematised the relationship between Christianity and capitalism, and then deploy those against my thesis problem. I conclude that these theological accounts are correct in suggesting capitalism as a competing school of desire with rival ascetics and aesthetics, but that they overly dichotomise the relationship between the social realities of capitalism, and the ecclesia. At least they do insofar as any possible Evangelical habitation and horizon is concerned.

5.1 Neo-Augustinian Resources: Theologically problematising the relationship between capitalism and Christianity

We have, at the start of this thesis, seen the paucity of Evangelical critique of Christianity in relationship to capitalism. There have been a handful of, already noted, congregational studies, historical studies, and ecclesial critiques of Evangelical congregations within capitalism.⁵ If we are looking for a sustained and extensive theological engagement of the nature of Christianity within capitalism, it is to be found in a clutch of neo-Augustinian and reformed sources. Gathering together these accounts provides opportunity to examine how others have theologised the broader nature of Christian belief and practice within capitalism. Indeed, many of these sources and accounts arise within the stable of my key protagonists, Milbank and Connolly, who generated the impetus for this thesis. Milbank and Connolly make extensive use of Augustinian/Reformed resources for their theoretical accounts of capitalism and Christianity.⁶ To examine those sources serves my needs for theological accounts, whilst at the same time bringing me into direct contact with the main critics of Evangelicalism. These Neo-Augustinian sources also interact with post-Marxist material accounts in a way similar to how I have with Polanyi, to attain the ‘nitty-gritty’ for ‘hard’ accounts of the social arrangements of capitalism and Christianity. Like me, they want their accounts to be “situated within contingent social and historical practices.”⁷

Before we can examine and then deploy those sources, we need to ask the question; why not go directly to Augustine, rather than work from neo-Augustinian accounts

⁵ Even the recent and excellent Kidwell, *Theology and Economics*, is about the methodological relationship between theology and economics, and not the daily life of belief and practice by Christians within capitalism.

⁶ For an explication of the Augustinian sources of Milbank and Connolly, see Keer, “Simplicity Itself,” and K. Roberts Skerret, “The Indispensable Rival: William Connolly’s Engagement with Augustine of Hippo,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 2 (2004).

⁷ Stephen Long explains how social scientific accounts are insufficient for explaining economic life, and that materialist accounts like those of Marx, and, we assume, post-Marxist variants, can help theology in understanding contingent human action. See D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy: Theology and the Market*, Radical Orthodoxy Series (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 101. Also, in some ways Long is a precursor to the work of Kidwell, *Theology and Economics*, explicating the methodological relationship between theology and economics.

centred on his theology? For Augustine produced a pedagogy of desire, summed up in his maxim that *desiderium sinus cordis* (“longing makes the heart deep”).⁸ The nature of desire, and understanding desire, sits at the centre and nexus of capitalism and its interactions with human nature. Such an accounting of *desire* within the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism might undoubtedly and profitably be made with reference to Augustine. Indeed, much work is currently being undertaken in this area, drawing on Augustine directly to diagnose and understand aspects of current public life and culture.⁹ However a theological account of the nature of desire in relation to capitalism and Christianity from within a re-reading of Augustine would be a huge undertaking far beyond my thesis remit, and would overwhelm my thesis objectives. Similarly, it would be too much of a task for my thesis to make an Augustinian assessment of Evangelicalism in relation to its ascetics of desire. Instead, I have situated my theological work in this chapter within neo-Augustinian resources, and thereby Augustinian horizons.

There are many other Augustinian trails that we could follow in relation to my project. For example, we could explore the issue of possessions with the nature of ‘having’ and ‘use’, but this would bring us more into contact with the technical aspects of capitalism in relation to Evangelicalism, and away from the social arrangements I am exploring.¹⁰ So, rather than assess whether the resources I use are sufficiently Augustinian, or whether Evangelicalism is Augustinian in its theology and practice, I instead suggest that we can compare these theological accounts with the implicit

⁸ St Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John 28–54*, translated and edited by John W. Rettig, *The Fathers of the Church, Volume 88, 40.10* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 133, accessed 10th February 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt32b344>.

⁹ For two examples of where such work is currently being conducted, see Joshua Hordern, *Political Affections: Civic Participation and Moral Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Nicholas E. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011) which demonstrate, amongst other things, how Aquinas draws on Augustine’s understandings of emotions. See also Eric Gregory, *The Politics of Love: an Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

¹⁰ For example, see William Schweiker and Charles T. Mathewes, *Having: Property and Possession in Religious and Social Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

theological contours of the ascetics of Evangelicalism already mapped in this thesis. It will be sufficient to suggest how neo-Augustinian accounts overlay my map so far, and of what that reveals. I am, in essence, running several neo-Augustinian accounts recursively against my accounts, joining a conversation that is already underway with those who are influenced by Augustine, in particular, those critical of Evangelicalism. I will build on their accounts whilst identifying at the same time that these neo-Augustinian resources are insufficient for the reparative I seek. In short, the thesis turns back to the sources engaged with at the beginning, returning to those sources which set the thesis agenda in order to evaluate their arguments.

5.2 Technologies of Desire: Capitalism's victory over desire

Whilst many Christians see capitalism as “quite compatible with Christianity,” capitalism is “actually antithetical to the faith and an obstacle to history's true end”, or so claims Bell.¹¹ Capitalism has developed into a “savage” form in which its victory over all ideologies is complete.¹² So much so, that he asks: “Can Christianity fund resistance to capitalism?”¹³ Via the work of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, Bell seeks to show that capitalism is not just an economic issue but also an ontological problem.¹⁴ Contemporary capitalism is seen as the display of this faulty ontology and misplaced desire, which Christianity must resist.

¹¹ Daniel M. Bell, *Liberation Theology after the End of History: The Refusal to Cease Suffering*, Radical Orthodoxy Series (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

¹² Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 9. Here, Bell deploys the term ‘savage capitalism’ from Franz J. Hinkelammert, *Cultura De La Esperanza Y Sociedad Sin Exclusión* (San José: D.E.I, 1995). As an example of this ‘savage capitalism’, Bell argues that third-world debt is a primary tool used by the West to control the third world (Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 12).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴ In particular Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II (European Perspectives)*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, 1st ed. (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

Capitalism's perceived victory is one, not over history, but over desire. Capitalism disciplines desire by a "pincer movement" of the deterritorialisation of desire (overrunning all previous forms of social organisation), and the machine and mechanisms of capitalism that reterritorialise desire as axiomatic for the market, ultimately using the form of the 'State' to regulate that behaviour.¹⁵ The State operates on the basis of other power relationships; there is good and bad about the State. Models of power which locate the State as sole possessor of power are now bankrupt. For the State now finds itself under the control of the market. In Bell's own words, "liberalism severs the link between maximal government effectiveness and maximal government itself."¹⁶ A reformulation of government as 'civil society' takes place under Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, the early theorists of this civil society. Civil society and political society are further differentiated, and the State becomes immanent in the economic process, and moves away from acquiring wealth, towards supporting the individual in acquiring wealth. The health and prosperity of a nation is now measured in totality by the wealth of its individuals. Therefore, the goal of liberal government becomes the securing of optimal conditions for the economics of society.¹⁷

Bell goes on to diagnose and describe the practices of consumerism in capitalism as "technologies"; technologies that arrange people around misplaced desire. This is again drawn from the work of Foucault to explicate technologies as "ensembles of knowledges, instruments, systems of judgements, buildings and spaces bound together by certain presuppositions and objectives."¹⁸ Bell's main proposal is that liberation theology offers an understanding, and the real location of Christian resistance. Capitalism is to be resisted in such a way that the church becomes a separate economic, political state. Bell's argument here is that we should resist in a way where the church is an

¹⁵ It is through the work of Foucault that Bell maps this development of capitalism, see Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

economic formation in its own right. The church is the only *res publica*, à la Augustine, in a world in which it has ceded its notion of political and public life to the market. Instead of a correlation, the church becomes a separate world in its own right, an ecclesiology of separation: “Therefore only a more substantive ecclesiology, one that begins by collapsing the distinction between the theological and the social, between religion and politics, stands a chance of resisting capitalist discipline.”¹⁹ Here is the location of the most troublesome aspect of Bell’s work, for he offers no example of alternatives to capitalism after the call to overthrow it (albeit non-violently). He also proposes the church as a counter-*polis* to the state, which is problematic, first because it is questionable as to whether the church is a *polis* in and of itself against the world.²⁰ Then, second, his proposition leads us to ask how the church could be a full counter-*polis* with its own statecraft, and produce goods, educate, enforce legal processes, etc.²¹ Bell, if he is useful for my project, is not with this counter-*polis* proposal, but with his diagnosis of technologies of desire. For it is certainly right that Christians are called to embody a way of life in the world, but it is quite another to constitute the church as against, and out of, the world. Such counter-*polis* is anathema to Evangelical ecclesiology and engagement in the world, as we have seen in previous chapters of this thesis. Bruce Hindmarsh reminds us that Evangelicals have never had such a high view of ecclesiology: “When one thinks about Evangelicals and what they hold dear, one would be forgiven for not thinking immediately of the church. Indeed, one might even suggest, given the history of schism among evangelicals, that “evangelical ecclesiology” is an oxymoron, like “an honest

¹⁹ Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 72.

²⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, and many of his students (of whom Bell was one, with his PhD dissertation supervised by Hauerwas which then formed the basis of his later work), advocate this view of the church as counter-*polis*. See, for example, Arne Rasmussen, *The Church as Polis*.

²¹ After similarly highlighting the problems of assuming the church as counter-*polis*, Miroslav Volf succinctly takes Bell to task on the impossibility of such a counter-*polis* being able to undertake actual statecraft. See Miroslav Volf, “Liberation Theology After the End Of History: An Exchange,” *Modern Theology*, 19, no. 2 (2003): 261–269. A kind of theological argument ensued between Volf and Bell, with Bell writing an extended response to Volf’s critique of his work, and then Volf writing a rejoinder to that response. See first Daniel M. Bell, “What Gift Is Given? A Response To Volf,” *Modern Theology*, 19 (2003): 271–280.

thief” or “airline food”.²² The activism of Evangelicalism could not have taken place within an understanding of the church as a counter-*polis* totality. However, this lack of ontological constraint enables us to see how the ontologies of other social realities, such as those of the SRM in capitalism have become the dominant social realities for Evangelicals. Indeed, most Evangelicals rarely ask what the church is, unlike their Protestant forebears and Catholics.²³ The “free form” nature of more recent Evangelicalism leaves it prone to taking shape around cultural forces and ontologies, for every church.²⁴ There is certainly a spiritual ontological reality, where the church *qua* church is a creation of the Spirit, but as it exists in the world, it exists within a wider *polis*, and its members are of various *oikoi*, that sometimes make competing demands. For, “the whole authorisation of the church is conveyed by the Spirit, so that Pentecost can be seen as the moment at which the church comes to participate in the authority of the ascended Christ”.²⁵ There is a distinct moment of ascension and Pentecost before the Parousia of Christ. This moment is where the social practices of the church are embedded in social realities and take place through worship.²⁶ Yet, conscious review of the nature of church does not lead to that review being an ontological reality. For churches may have credal confessions, whilst their actual ecclesiology may be rather more implicit; in other words, a doctrine of the church does not ‘make’ the church.²⁷ A popular Evangelical trope is to repeat the call to be ‘in the world but not of it’.²⁸ We might turn this ‘in the world but not of it’ profession around, to see how Evangelicals have also wanted to be in the church but

²² Bruce Hindmarsh, “Is Evangelical Ecclesiology an Oxymoron?” in John G. Stackhouse, Jr., ed., *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 15.

²³ Howard A. Snyder, “The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,” in *ibid*, 83.

²⁴ For a detailed survey of ecclesial traditions, and an outline of recent Evangelical ecclesial forms, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002).

²⁵ Oliver O’Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 162.

²⁶ Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness*, 104. Here, Bretherton develops and extends O’Donovan’s ideas of the authorization of the church by the Spirit.

²⁷ Snyder makes a similar claim about the functional nature of a church in contrast to doctrinal and confessional constructions. See “The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,” 81.

²⁸ John 17:16.

not of it, with the result that they find no identity within the church other than the goods and services it dispenses to them. For Evangelicals have ended up rather more in the world than they profess, where “The gulf that had once yawned between the church and the world had virtually disappeared.”²⁹ Bell is a warning that unless Evangelicals have some footing in the church, they will find their social realities completely determined by market ontologies.³⁰

Those market ontologies are extant, for Capitalism no longer needs to justify itself: it has “come out”, and everyone must live as entrepreneurs or be marginalized.³¹ Churches are run as businesses, and all sports are financially endorsed; everything is now ‘out of control’, free-floating, and captive to the market. The “credit card has surpassed the time card” for access to the economy.³² Desire is thus seen as restless, and revolutionary in its own right. Drawing on Deleuze, Bell believes that resistance is impossible. Real revolution is about nurturing the flow of desire, rather than its destruction: It is the need to exceed the desire fostered by capitalism with a re-ordered desire.³³ Here we encounter a notion and nature of resistance, begging the question: what sort of resistance is appropriate for my thesis? Bell’s resistance is a complete refusal, a counter-*polis*, providing an alternative way of life to capitalism, where resistance is replacement in toto. The resistance my thesis seeks is more the kind set out in my first chapter, of re-narration, recapitulation, and an Ochian reparative in the mode of ‘physician heal thyself’. My focus is on how Evangelicals might get their own house in order, and not about the dismantling of capitalism. The resistance I seek is one that does not over-ontologise the world, into the kind of anti-Christ Bell creates. Percy is closer to what I seek for what I mean by

²⁹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 264.

³⁰ I have in mind here Paul Fiddes, and his covenant theology that resists and refutes the voluntarist reduction of church to the mere free association through choice by individuals. See Paul Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces: Baptist Identity in Church and Theology (Studies in Baptist History and Thought)* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 42.

³¹ Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 31.

³² *Ibid.*, 32.

³³ This echoes the suggestion by Miller to deepen agency, which I will highlight in the conclusion.

resistance, and I overlay his assessment of the Church of England's mode of resistance as taking place within the larger aspect of *resilience*. Here, "resilience has two faces to it: resistance and accommodation."³⁴

Bell presses his claims further, arguing that capitalism is a voracious deterritorializing, a form of madness that needs something more intense to overcome it. If "politics precedes being," the ontology of capitalism must be ruptured.³⁵ Capitalism's victory is ontological: "Capitalism is erected on the [...] ontology of univocal desire shorn of any particular ethos."³⁶ Capitalism is to be understood as a technology of desire in competition with the technologies of desire of the body of Christ. Yet, this seems to be claiming too much; that Christianity is not just about the focusing and training of desire, but it *is desire* - a complete "economy of desire."³⁷ This places too high a value on individual agency, able to marshal the resources of life within capitalism as a kind of "religious mirroring of the capitalist mentality to serve as the alternative to capitalism."³⁸ It is not only un-Christian to over-ontologise the church as *the* technology of desire, it is also something Evangelicals cannot accept. For Christianity is about a life formed through the agency of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not principally the technology of the church. It is an Evangelical impetus, as with much of Christianity, that it is not the church that makes us Christian, it is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Or, as Volf so penetratingly puts it:

...for God forbid that the church would understand itself as a technology for inducing the death of self and for giving birth to Christ in it! The church would then become a temple of Satan, rather than the house of God. It is *God* who opens the hearts to the Gospel, *God* who kills the old self and makes alive the new, *God* who comes to dwell in the soul—and all the self-binding of God to the means of grace notwithstanding, God does all this when and

³⁴ Percy, *The Shaping of the Church*, 61.

³⁵ Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 33.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 34

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁸ Volf, *Liberation Theology After the End Of History*, 265.

where God wants, with no strict correlation between external means of grace (“technologies”) and their internal effect.³⁹

Nearly a decade later, Bell still claims that capitalism as an ontological reality is an economy of desire, and the church is a counter-ontology and competing economy of desire.⁴⁰

A proposal for counter-technologies of desire is made by Bell from a study of Bernard of Clairvaux, where Cistercians offer an example of “technologies of desire”.⁴¹ These are deemed capable of resisting the technologies of capitalism.⁴² The analogue here is of how twelfth-century Cistercian’s liturgies functioned as technologies of desire, able to resist the pathologies of the prevailing culture. Bell anticipates objections to this use of Bernard, due to his support for the Crusades and his privileged monastic life. Despite such objections, he asserts that there is an attitude shown by Bernard, a willingness to embody and live faith with technologies that shape desire.⁴³ The claim here is that capitalism is an assemblage of technologies around desire, and nothing less will suffice than to grasp that the church is a place to practise alternative and resistant assemblages. But again, this begs the question; can we reduce Christianity to a competing of desire, i.e., technologies, when in fact it is about the deployment of technologies around something or rather someone – the gift of God in Jesus Christ to the world? If the church is a technology of desire, i.e., it trains desire, that training is surely, as per Volf, less about being a telos around notions of counter-*polis*, and more about the ordering of desire

³⁹ Miroslav Volf, “Against A Pretentious Church: A Rejoinder To Bell’s Response,” *Modern Theology*, 19 (2003): 281–285.

⁴⁰ Bell updates his work within the credit crunch context of the last decade. This time, Volf did not review Bell’s work, probably due to his original critique standing against Bell’s ongoing claims for the ontology of the church as a counter-*polis*, and competing economy to capitalism. See Daniel M. Bell, *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World (The Church and Postmodern Culture)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academi, 2012).

⁴¹ Anthony Lane has written a seminal work on Bernard of Clairvaux. In it, he reveals Bernard’s complex relationship with monastic and scholastic theology, and how this was integral to Bernard’s liturgical prayer and worship ascetics. See Anthony N. S. Lane, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Theologian of the Cross* (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2013), 41–48.

⁴² Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 88.

⁴³ Despite his best attempts, Bell remains wholly unconvincing with regard to these objections. The unrealistic lifestyle for Bernard’s technologies and Christendom’s outworking of them in the Crusades should give us pause for concern, as indeed they have for others in the church’s history.

around the person of Jesus Christ. Now such ordering around Jesus Christ might indeed, and ultimately, become some kind of counter-*polis*.

Connolly's methodological claims, explored in the first chapter of this thesis, of capitalism as an assemblage of resonances, certainly inheres with Bell's claims. This is no surprise, for Connolly, like Bell, draws on Deleuze to understand capitalism as an *assemblage* of beliefs, relationships, and practices. It is the resonance of the *assemblages* of Christianity with those of capitalism that explains the inability to resist capitalism's pathologies. Connolly calls Christians to look outside their worship practices, and to enter into a new assemblage of "existential orientations, relational tactics, local strategies, academic reforms, microeconomics experiments, large social movements, media strategies, shifts in economics and political ethos, state policies, and cross-state actions."⁴⁴ Connolly is unwilling to find any resistant assemblages within Evangelicalism, unless they are redeployed around his neo-liberal agenda, as we saw in the first chapter. In comparison, Bell looks to the liturgical worship practices of the Cistercians as a way to counter any resonance of capitalist assemblages. The problems of Bell's account also lead me to refocus on the Evangelical horizon, of how faithful performance of life around the person of Jesus Christ takes place, rather than some alternative counter-*polis* Evangelical economy. However, one does not need to stray too far off the side-roads of Evangelical history to locate communities seeking to live as a counter-*polis*. For example, Robert Beckford has explored Afro-Caribbean immigration into the United Kingdom, and the way dub music has served as a resistance to the stresses of capitalist markets upon immigrants, whilst enabling them to construct a new identity within that location.⁴⁵ Beckford describes the harsh conditions of poor labour markets that arise for immigrants within the flow of capitalist markets, the necessity for "cultural resistance" to those conditions, and the role the Pentecostal Afro-Caribbean church has played in that

⁴⁴ Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, 144.

⁴⁵ Robert Beckford, *Jesus Dub: Theology, Music, and Social Change* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

process.⁴⁶ Beckford would have us read the reconfiguration of church hall worship by immigrant Afro-Caribbeans as types of “resistance to a hostile social climate.”⁴⁷

Evangelicalism is prone to over-accommodation on one side of its historical archipelago and, on the other, to over-resistance by withdrawal from the world⁴⁸. As Warner notes, Evangelicalism’s “propensity for missional pragmatism leads to cognitive bargaining with the prevailing popular culture.”⁴⁹ The discussion in this section also prompts me to ask whether the practices, in particular the worship life of Evangelicals, are able to provide a resistant assemblage, and counter technology of desire. And can such resistance be made whilst simultaneously responding to any previous undesirable resonances by Evangelical practices in capitalism? In order to get at that possibility, I now turn to explore in more detail one of the key mechanisms within the assemblages of capitalism, something at the heart of capitalist technologies of desire, namely ‘commodification’. This examination of commodification is made with the work of Vincent Miller who has a different proposal and understanding for resistance and faithful living, more amenable to my project.

5.3 Commodification: The atrophy of resistance

Miller, author of *Consuming Religion*, is rather relaxed in his use of the terms “capitalism”, “consumerism”, and “commodification”.⁵⁰ He makes little attempt to define capitalism, and employs the terms almost interchangeably. However, late twentieth-century capitalist markets are indeed his focus, in particular, the social arrangements of

⁴⁶ Ibid., 37–44.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 45. This is a concrete example of the kind of Pentecostal ‘islands of social care’ we saw with Martin, *Tongues of Fire* in chapter two of my thesis.

⁴⁸ From Brethren enclaves (see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 157–159, 276) to prosperity churches (see Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 175–177).

⁴⁹ Warner, *Re-inventing English Evangelicalism*, 222.

⁵⁰ For example, Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 42. Miller talks about capitalism as having developed from early to late forms, but never defines what he means by capitalism or what those developments are.

consumer society around those markets.⁵¹ He is concerned with the social arrangements that take place within capitalism, and of how “consumer culture involves a great expansion in who may exercise cultural agency.”⁵² Capitalism now “constructs every person as the author of his or her own identity, expressed aesthetically through the consumption and display of commodities.”⁵³ Regarding consumerism, Miller is primarily concerned with the mechanism of commodification.⁵⁴ He provides an account of the developments of late capitalism, and of how consumer culture arises around those developments. Aided by post-Marxist material critiques, he identifies commodification as the process by which capitalism takes its cultural shape and form. Indeed, for him it is this commodification that presents the largest competition to religion and, therefore, to Christian ecclesiology. He contends that, if Christian ecclesiology is concerned with the social arrangements of life around beliefs and practices, it is principally commodification that undermines that possibility.

There is a thesis here, that consumerism is not a definable set of beliefs and ideologies that Christianity can counter, but rather that “it is primarily a way of relating to beliefs – a set of habits of interpretation and use – that renders the ‘content’ of beliefs and values less important.”⁵⁵ It is not that Miller does not believe that anything needs to be challenged in consumerism (such as the anthropological beliefs of consumers), but rather, that there is a preceding problem that renders any such critique impotent. Such is the power of this process that consumerism is able to ignore any critique of itself and, ultimately, turn it into an item for marketing, and further consumption. It achieves this with an unconscious “protean power”, abstracting the beliefs and content of Christian

⁵¹ It is the ‘cultural logic’ of capitalism that Miller explores, rather than the technical arrangements of capitalist economics (see Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 63–66). However, he does seek to explain commodification as a technical practice within consumerism, but even then, does so from a social and cultural perspective.

⁵² It is ‘consumer culture’ that Miller explores within the sociality of capitalism; see *ibid.*, 26–31.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 32–35.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

symbols and practice from the concrete reality of a formed Christian life.⁵⁶ The start of this process of abstraction is the mistaken notion that we form beliefs which lead to changes in behaviour; that meaning informs practice in some linear and concomitant manner. Whilst we develop alternative theologies to counter the beliefs of consumer culture, we fail to realise that consumerism operates without the need for any supporting ideology (rendering any ideological critique self-defeating), and that dissent is so woven into the DNA of consumerism, that capitalism uses any critique as raw materials for new consumer goods.⁵⁷

This state of affairs, of beliefs stripped from originating practices, is inherent to the processes of ‘commodification’. In addition to disempowering critique by even the most robust oppositions, commodification erodes the holding of any beliefs in a concrete and communal context. This has disastrous consequences for anyone or any group who wishes to hold to beliefs and concretise them into a pattern of daily life and formation. Commodification is a process of abstraction that is an expansion of who may “exercise cultural agency”, in which “it constructs every person as the author of his or her own identity, expressed aesthetically through the consumption and display of commodities.”⁵⁸

The Emergence of Commodification

The development and the nature of commodification can be traced through Marxist productivist accounts. Henry Ford applied the theories of Fredrick Taylor to workplace pay, such that today the aesthetic of an item becomes just as important as its function to its value. There is a transformation in the value of items away from production costs for ownership, whereas Guy Debord says, we have “moved from being to having.”⁵⁹ Several philosophical discourses further underpin this economic analysis; from Henri Lefebvre

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

he obtains an understanding of how the value of something becomes a function of what is signified by the image of a commodity. Then, from Guy Debord, Miller considers how we have moved from “having” to “appearing”; that everything has moved into representation as the apogee of Marx’s predictions of commodity fetish. There is a telos to this process, made with the work of Jean Baudrillard, in which human beings take on the pessimistic status of terminals consuming media images.⁶⁰

Miller attempts to be supra-philosophical and correlates his overall analysis against the work of Fredrick Jameson, in order to map cultural understanding in the abstract to the concrete action of politics. We now consume so many things that we cannot possibly have the energy to consider the origins of those items. There is a concomitant collapse of the temporal into agency and identity.⁶¹ Here, I suggest that inasmuch as we can speak of Christian identity at all, we have to speak of Christian identities, the fact of which undermines Evangelicalism in every way. Especially since we do not merely have as many identities as churches, or even as many identities as Christians, but we have as many Christian identities as each individual wishes to construct over the course of his or her lifetime.⁶² As Lyotard predicted, modernity has fragmented into ever new modernisms, until we are left with a war of all against all, and I suggest, arrive at a war of self against self.⁶³ The sheer energy required for creating a self and life within the consumerism of late capitalism leave little left for creating Christian identity. Moreover, commodification

⁶⁰ In 1966, Baudrillard completed his doctoral thesis, “Thèse de troisième cycle: Le Système des objets” (Thesis of the Third Cycle: The System of Objects), under the tutelage of Henri Lefebvre. Also, see Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*.

⁶¹ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 63–66.

⁶² Justification for this claim is supported by Anna Robbins who, drawing on Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, explains how human identity has become free-floating from any community, relationships and even one’s own self; see Anna M. Robbins, “It’s always right now’: Framing the Struggle for Meaning in Contemporary Culture,” *HOLINESS*, 2.3, (2016): 359–368.

⁶³ This disintegration of the self is explained in Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 15–16. The extensiveness of these multiple selves and the battle of self against self, is surveyed extensively in the sociological study of James A. Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium, *The Self We Live By: Narrating Self in a Postmodern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), and then a collection of essays they edited, Jaber F. Gubrium, and James A. Holstein, *Institutional Selves: Troubled Identities in a Postmodern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

is more likely to result in the resources of Christian faith being consumed as raw materials for creating this consumer identity. This articulation explains the phenomena set out at the start of this thesis, that Christianity is all too easily co-opted in the ‘dispensing of religious goods and services’. Miller then moves to apply this analysis to the effects on religious identity formation and Christianity in general, as now follows.

Effects of Commodification on Religion

What happens to religion within the cultural logic of consumerism? Primarily, what takes place is the abstraction of beliefs from contextual traditions, which weakens their ability to impact on concrete daily life, and any connection to the communities from which they originated. The result is that new communities are unable to form around those beliefs:

Traditions are pillaged for their symbolic content, which is then repackaged and recontextualized in ways that jettison their communal, ethical, and political consequence. Traditions are valued as sources of “poetic and imaginative imagery,” while their logic, systems of doctrine, and rules of practice are dismissed for their rigidity and exclusivity.⁶⁴

Whereas community and religious groups previously met psychological needs, consuming has taken the place of producing well-being: “People no longer hunger for salvation or an era of justice, but for ‘the feeling, the momentary illusion, of personal well-being, health, and psychic security.’”⁶⁵ This commitment to the agency of the self makes the sustaining of religious communities almost impossible. Then those who are able to synthesise their religious beliefs still have the problem of connecting those beliefs to the concrete of everyday life. Bretherton has highlighted how those trained in this nature of agency are unable to undertake the difficult problems and rich commitments that vibrant institutions like the church requires.⁶⁶ Percy has similarly noted this disabled agency, manifest in practice, by the ecclesial progeny of Evangelicalism, such that “many

⁶⁴ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 84.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁶⁶ Bretherton warrants this claim with the work of Miller. See Luke Bretherton, “Beyond the Emerging Church”, in Andrew Walker and Luke Bretherton, eds. *Remembering Our Future: Explorations in Deep Church*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 47.

Fresh Expressions therefore constitute a perfect fit for a post-institutional culture that does not want to invest in complex organisations and infrastructure for the common good.”⁶⁷ Without a community to support their beliefs, it is the willpower of the individual alone that sustains them. There has been a shift “from a world in which beliefs held believers to one in which believers hold beliefs.”⁶⁸ Miller concludes that religious beliefs and practices are in danger of being extracted from complex (deep) cultures and contexts, and of being abstractly consumed and unable to form practices of everyday life.⁶⁹ The therapeutic individual now aligns himself with post-Fordist marketing, and its use of religious symbols, to construct his own religion, to support his therapeutic choices.⁷⁰

Misplaced Desire

We, like Miller, are led to ask: why do human beings engage in this behaviour, and what might be the remedy to that behaviour? There is a point of intersection between the abstracting process of commodification and a theological problematizing around the issue of misplaced desire. Here Miller, like Cavanaugh and Bell, sees an Augustinian account of desire as able to explicate the problems of commodification, but also to offer the possibility of a response and resistance to its pathologies. Miller cites Bell in the production of his account of desire and of understanding consumerism as a competing ontology of desire to that of Christian desire.⁷¹ This theological critique discerns that consumer desire is not the attachment to things per se, but the complex desire for desire. This desire absorbs any longings for transcendence, justice, and self-transformation.⁷²

⁶⁷ Percy, *Shaping the Church*, 78.

⁶⁸ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 90.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 91–94.

⁷⁰ Here, Miller, like others such as Michael Budde, situates current late capitalism with a post-Fordist context, i.e., the emergence of a type of capitalism that differs from that system of capitalism formulated in Henry Ford’s automotive factories and production lines. For details of post-Fordist understandings of late capitalism, see Michael L. Budde, *The (Magic) Kingdom of God: Christianity and Global Culture Industries* (Boulder, CO, London: Westview Press, 1997).

⁷¹ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 112.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 144.

Consumer culture, whilst making people shallow and narcissistic, also derails those who seek to respond to it.⁷³ This is redolent of Richard Roberts, who reminds us of the possibilities within the marketplace for agency, which are only limited by the imagination, where the church becomes as locked into social niches as much as the rest of society have.⁷⁴ Recent extensive surveys of young adult Christians reveal this shallowness to faith. There is a trained disposition that disables people from engaging in the practices of faith they aspire to.⁷⁵ So then, the obvious question, if this is the case, is whether it is possible to resist this situation and lead to a Christian imagination for agency in the world?

Possibilities for Action

The nature and status of agency is the site of any possible resistance. In Marxist accounts, one reading of agency is as a superficiality, a shallow bricolage, with ill-informed syntheses that are ignorant misuses of religious beliefs and practices: “When the building blocks are so commodified the bricolage they fund is less likely to be surprising or subversive of the status quo, since it is built with the elements that offer little resistance to shallow appropriation.”⁷⁶ On the other hand, there are possibilities for *bricolage*. Bricolage, as per de Certeau, is an important process where knowledge is both practical,

⁷³ For an extended study on how a culture of narcissism emerged in a post-Protestant Work Ethic world, see Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1979).

⁷⁴ Richard H. Roberts, “A Postmodern Church? Some Preliminary Reflections on Ecclesiology and Social Theory”, *Essentials of Christian Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 194–195.

⁷⁵ See David Kinnaman, *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007); Christian Smith et al., *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). *Lost in Transition* is not about Christian young adults, but encompasses them. The research background to this book led to the research on Christian young adults; see Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). The imaginations for life in consumer culture by parents is handed on to their children, where faith has been reduced to the “Therapeutic Moralistic Deism”. In summary, God is there to feel better, to be protected from the pains of life, and to get you the things you want in life. For further scrutiny and analysis of the effects of affluence on young adult Christians, see David A. Sims, *The Child in American Evangelicalism and the Problem of Affluence: A Theological Anthropology of the Affluent American-Evangelical Child in Late Modernity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009).

⁷⁶ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 162.

and a cultural practice, with concrete action and significance, as long as the building blocks available are complex and rich. Here, the problem is not in the nature of bricolage itself, for that is to assume that the bricolage of commodification is somehow inherently deficient. It is the shallowness of the resources within bricolage that is the problem. We see that bricolage has been the normal response and means of growth of the church in history, that there is not, nor has there ever been, a linear relationship between theology and practice: “People appropriate religious idioms, as they need them, in response to particular circumstances. All religious ideas and impulses are of the moment, invented, taken, borrowed, and improvised at the intersection of life.”⁷⁷ In a similar vein, we see that “the problem with consumerism culture is not that the masses are encouraged to develop their own religious synthesis but that believers encounter the elements of tradition in an abstract, fragmented form and are trained to engage them as passive consumers.”⁷⁸ The response to a shallow bricolage is to encourage a deepening of religious agency, to modify and develop the nature of bricolage in use by religious traditions, to “give people the formation and responsibility necessary to engage their traditions creatively as mature practitioners.”⁷⁹ There is here, a hope that religious traditions can provide material for complex engagements with culture, whilst academic theology possesses resources and methods that can contribute to, and strengthen, popular religious agency. Miller concludes his work with suggestions of how religious agency may be deepened in this manner as bricolage within consumerist culture.

Unmasking and Deepening

Deepening of agency has a twofold approach: first, challenging and unmasking the abstracting effects of consumerism, and second, supporting and deepening consumer

⁷⁷ Kathryn Tanner, “Theology and Popular Culture,” in *Changing Conversations: Religious Reflection and Cultural Analysis*, edited by Dwight Hopkins and Sheila Greeve Davaney (New York: Routledge, 1996), 113.

⁷⁸ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

agency. This unmasking may be possible through the liturgical stabilisation of beliefs and the practice of negative rituals, the prohibitions to religious experiences, and practices as an antidote to a consumer culture:

Negative rituals, which reinforce the sacred by restricting access to it, have less appeal in consumer culture, which does not understand ritual prohibitions or cultic abstinence. Save an admission fee, it knows no iconostasis or temple veil. Its icons and idols are not protected in an inner sanctum open only to ritually purified initiates, but displayed before all on the covers of magazines and on billboards.⁸⁰

Unlike our consumer culture, which gains access to anything it wants in return for ‘an admission fee’, we need a veiling and withholding of some of our symbols and beliefs, thereby preserving them as elements of religious agency. The deepening of agency might be fostered around the encouragement of an increasingly educated laity. This would be a laity able to apply their superficial appropriations from the external pluralism of consumerism to the internal depth and plurality of the Christian faith. The church has previously all too often resisted self-agency and ring-fenced the internal pluralism of the church from its members. It must now see its vast historical depth and traditions as an opportunity to catalyse its members into a bricolage that embraces the complex.⁸¹ Despite his concluding optimism, Miller sounds a cautionary note that apathy, as the consumer malaise, may remain the response of consumers.⁸² This pessimistic warning is redolent of Weber, Milbank, and others, who fear any mode of resistance is doomed to be repackaged and consumed by the mechanisms of capitalism in concert with the nature of human beings.

We now better understand how commodification renders agency superficial, and unable to connect beliefs to the deeper sources of those beliefs. A response to this state of affairs is a worship-centred one, where the church is called to retrain desires, and orient

⁸⁰ Ibid., 206.

⁸¹ O’Donovan makes a case for agency on the basis of a formative programme that resists the tendencies of other formative influences; see Oliver O’Donovan, *Self, World, and Time: Ethics as Theology, Volume 1: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013).

⁸² Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 224.

them rightly. A deepening of agency is called for that only worship can generate. Where the worship of Evangelicals has generated a training into superficiality and dispensing religious goods and series, can it be reconfigured to orient engagement with the world more faithfully in a mode of resilience and resistance? In order to address that question, we now turn to the work of William Cavanaugh to ask how bodies in their social arrangements for life are configured.

5.4 False Bodies and Perverted Liturgies

Cavanaugh's analysis enables me to bring Bell's technologies of desire, i.e., practices of life in capitalism, into contact with the worship practices of the body of Christ, whilst being attentive to Miller's concerns with the issue of agency. I can now theologially explicate how imaginations for life are enacted in capitalism, and further, how beliefs and practices of Christianity become co-opted by the practises of life within capitalism.

5.4.1 The Res publica

In *Torture and Eucharist*, William Cavanaugh examines the torture that took place under General Pinochet in Chile. Cavanaugh claims that the State's approach to torture can be best understood as a disciplined liturgical process enacted upon bodies that are social, institutional, and physical.⁸³ On the other hand, with the body of Christ, Jesus is master of our bodies, and the State attempts to claim that it holds this role.⁸⁴ The State, with its practice of torture, disappears bodies such, that its victims practise the self-discipline of their own removal from public life.⁸⁵ This torture can be understood as a perverted liturgy that fragments people into isolation, and membership of false bodies.⁸⁶ Under the regime

⁸³ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

of torture, human bodies are atomised from proper social embodiment, and the church as the true *res publica* is replaced by the State with a related false soteriology.⁸⁷ This is because the church is not a rival *polis* to the State but is an alternative time-space reality to the State, which is a false body.⁸⁸ Now here Cavanaugh's argument is redolent of Bell, with a potential over-ontologising of the church as a counter-*Polis* to the world. But Cavanaugh, unlike Bell, does not see the church as an economy of desire which must replace the economic systems of capitalism. Rather, the church in its worship is what is most authentic and most real, and should bring order to all other social relationships.

The situation then arises in which the body of Christ is excluded from the political realm, which, rather than resolving conflict, "enacts it".⁸⁹ Therein, "the state protects us from the threats which it itself creates."⁹⁰ Instead of engaging in public life under the terms and logic of the State, the church is the only real public and authentically political body, thus revealing the false realities of the State and the market.⁹¹ Cavanaugh draws on the worship life of the Catholic church in Chile to demonstrate and then theologically explicate how the Eucharist is the primary response and act of "resistance" par excellence by the church to torture.⁹² Here, the Eucharist is a public enactment that forms the *res publica* in opposition to this isolation and fragmentation. But Cavanaugh is required to explain how this act of resistance had to be recovered by the Catholic church in the face of prior complicity with the state of Chile. This is because the Catholic church in Chile abandoned political space for the social, thereby exacerbating the problems of torture with its ecclesiology. This ecclesiology helped to create an autonomous political realm

⁸⁷ Cavanaugh traces how the Social Contracts of Hobbes and Rousseau are replaced by the Hegelian three-phase conception and progression of the 'nature-civil-political' body, with a resultant soteriology of the State as peacemaker, and as something that most contemporary Christians have adopted, see *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁸ Given the lack of role for the State within Cavanaugh's portrayal, it is difficult to see the State as anything other than rival.

⁸⁹ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 229.

by withdrawing the church into civil society as the soul of the people.⁹³ Cavanaugh diagnoses the influence of Jacques Maritain in this ecclesiology to have led the Chilean Catholic church to deny itself as a type of body politic.⁹⁴ This left Christians as part of a mystical body within which they were supposed to attend church then enter the world and incarnate their Christian values on their own, although they are unable to do so.⁹⁵ When the church moves away from the State into the social, it becomes just one of many social groups. Salvation becomes about the inward, the church becomes mystical, and any reality of the future Kingdom becomes more related to individuals than to social groups. There is no sense in which the church is itself a body analogous to other bodies with a corporeal incarnation or body politic.⁹⁶ With the church gone from politics, only the State can impersonate God in an embodied manner such that secular faith does not stay private; instead, it takes hold of our physical bodies and commands both them and our souls.⁹⁷ The liberation of church from State led to its privatisation and domination by the State.⁹⁸ Cavanaugh suggests that Augustine's "two cities" theology may help to diagnose the relationship between church and State. It also enables us to retrieve and enact the Eucharist as an act to "resist" the evil of the State and its violence, whereby the church is made publicly visible: "If the Church is to resist disappearance, then it must be publicly visible as the body of Christ in the present time, not secreted away in the souls of believers or relegated to the distant past or future. It becomes visible through its disciplined practices, but the church's discipline must not simply mimic that of the state."⁹⁹ In the early medieval period, Augustine's theory of time and relationship held sway. Two cities,

⁹³ Ibid., 120.

⁹⁴ In the fourth chapter of *Torture and Eucharist*, Cavanaugh provides an extended section showing how Maritain's 'dual planes of existence' was acquired from Aquinas and Dominican commentators on Aquinas, which was developed into the Church-State relationship mentioned above. This gave rise to the notions of State being able to act autonomously around human rights, rather than being directed by the church. See "A Distinction of Planes," in *ibid.*, 151–202.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 120.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 141.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 193.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 202.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 10, 234.

one formed by love of God and one by love of self, occupied two different times, not spaces.¹⁰⁰ Whilst the earthly city is not everlasting, the heavenly city sojourns with the earthly city in the “time between times.”¹⁰¹ This Augustinian notion of time gave way as the State became sempiternal to natural law in borrowing its sacred symbols from the church.¹⁰² At the same time that the State as church emerged, the church as State emerged in parallel.¹⁰³ As church made itself at home in the world, it lost its sense of being pilgrims passing through towards an eternal home. There is a contrast between Augustinian imagination of time with the secular imaginations of uniform homogenous time, of cause and effect, concluding that we have arrived at an understanding of church as a community that moves linearly from past into present and endless future.¹⁰⁴ In this imagination, the Eucharist interrupts the world, and provides a new identity; we become part of the body of Christ such that communion is an anamnesis, a remembering and re-enactment of the past.¹⁰⁵ We are literally “re-membered” into the body of Christ.¹⁰⁶

5.4.2 The Oikos-Polis: Competing social bodies

Cavanaugh asks what such Eucharist counter-politics looks like in the contemporary world.¹⁰⁷ He suggests that the church needs to be embodied in spaces from which it has been disappeared. For the church is a lived and public reality instantiated within the conflict of the *oikos* and the *polis*.¹⁰⁸ For him, this embodiment is primarily through the Eucharist. The church has lost its sense of homelessness in the world and has adopted the secular rhythms of society instead. Church is not a political space, but neither is it a ‘no-

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 222–223.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 222.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 223.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 229.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 234.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 253.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 268–269.

space’ – or in the words of John Zizioulas, church is *institution* and *event*, not one or the other.¹⁰⁹ In other words:

The Eucharist is therefore an ‘event’ in the sense of an eschatological performance in time which is not institutionally guaranteed, but it is an event which is ontologically determinative...the Eucharist is the ‘beating heart’ of the Church. Day by day, week by week, the Church is gathered around the Eucharist, but then disperses, only to gather again at the next Eucharist.¹¹⁰

The church is between *polis* and *oikos*, with its centre of gravity and home in pilgrimage.¹¹¹ Cavanaugh has similarly sought to extend his thesis of the State as a false Catholicity and body into other understandings of socio-economic reality.¹¹² Whether it is notions of the nation state, civil society, or globalisation, Cavanaugh determines that they are all “imagined practices”, constituted by disciplines around those imaginings.¹¹³ They are “ways of organizing bodies around stories of human nature and human destiny which have deep theological analogues.”¹¹⁴ All of these theological analogues, upon further examination, are exposed as “false theologies”.¹¹⁵ This diagnosis can be extended into understanding globalisation as a false body, deploying Michel de Certeau’s distinction between “itineraries” and “maps”.¹¹⁶ “Itineraries” are pre-modern “spatial stories”, as narratives and movements to traverse through space and time, whilst “maps” are the modern practice of erasing itineraries and the totalising of space and time into homogenised grids.¹¹⁷ A map is the flattening of complex social space, where the local is

¹⁰⁹ John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St Vladimirs Seminary Press, 1985), 15.

¹¹⁰ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 270.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹¹² Cavanaugh does this most immediately in William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T & T Clark, 2002). His more recent work focuses more on a theology of economics than the ascetics and social imaginaries of capitalist markets. See William T. Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

¹¹³ Cavanaugh draws on the work of Anderson for understanding how historically contingent imagined communities take shape. This brings his work into close contact with my similar diagnosis of Evangelicals within capitalism. See Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 1.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 100–101.

subsumed into the universal by the nature of production and consumption within global markets.¹¹⁸ Here, his account is redolent of those we have already seen in Polanyi's description of how the fictions of land, labour, and money are enacted through physical practices around social imaginations. We may understand Polanyi's fictions of land, labour, and money as taking place through this distinction of 'mapping'. At the end of my previous chapter I suggested that the collapse of identity into the SRM had been fuelled by an Evangelical post-Protestant work ethic, such that SRM had become a substitute for the body of Christ. Cavanaugh helps us to understand how the social realities that the practices of capitalism constructs are not just functionally, but theologically, a body in competition with the body of Christ. Anglo-Catholic ecclesiologies, such as those articulated by Cavanaugh, call us to consider how the church is a social body competing with other social bodies. We cannot merely consider the church as a free-for-all social arrangement. The church is the Body of Christ, mediating an experience and presence of Jesus in the world. As Oliver O'Donovan reminds us, the church is not just one choice amongst many, but is the ultimate choice for Christians to make – a choice that brings order to all our other social arrangements and choices.¹¹⁹

Many Evangelicals of all persuasions would do well to question how their churchmanship is often used to serve the purposes of other social arrangements, like the SRM. How often, if at all, do Evangelicals consider how the church is not a means to other ends, but is instead a distinct group of God's people in the world, called to a particular mission? As per the beginning of my thesis, Evangelicals would quickly claim that the daily aspects of life are meant to be used in service of the mission of God's people through the church, not the other way around. But it will not do for Evangelicals to over-ontologise the world and the SRM as the anti-Christ.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁹ O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*, 178.

Cavanaugh's conclusion is that space is dominated and ultimately detached from any particularity. There is a discipline to living within the global economy that results in a mapping of social reality, as isolation, fragmentation, and detachment.¹²⁰ This correlates with my earlier conclusion that this account of Evangelicalism within capitalism reveals a great disembedding from ecclesial social relationships towards an insertion into market social realities. For participation in the practices of capitalist markets is nothing other than the enactment of a narrative that is completely counter to the body of Christ as a social and theological reality.¹²¹ Cavanaugh's response to this problematic is to claim (again) that it is the Eucharist that resists and enacts a true embodiment around the body of Christ as an alternative social imaginary and reality.¹²² Ultimately, the performance of the Eucharist is an act of consumption in which we ourselves are consumed into a new social identity of the body of Christ, in contrast to how consumption within late-capitalist markets has us mapped into the social realities of capitalist practices.¹²³ For the practice of the Eucharist is resistant to the pathologies of commodification in capitalism "because the consumer of the Eucharist is taken up into a larger body, the body of Christ."¹²⁴ We must, however, question Cavanaugh's pessimistic diagnosis. Are we able to view late-capitalist markets merely as 'false bodies', within which the only ecclesial resistance we can offer is the practice of the Eucharist?

5.4.3 Capitalism as Perverted Liturgies

Can we correlate Cavanaugh's diagnosis of the State as performing liturgies on bodies, whether individuals or any group and association, with the conditions of social relationships in late-capitalist market contexts? If torture is a 'perverted liturgy' as an

¹²⁰ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 106–111.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 116–117.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 119–121.

¹²⁴ Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*, 54.

ascetic, can we, by extension, diagnose the ascetics of late-capitalist markets as a similar perverted liturgy? In other words, does the social imaginary of the Evangelicalism with which we are concerned (where we have understood Evangelicalism to be various sets of practices and habitation in competition with the ascetics of late capitalism) find an affinity and analogue with Cavanaugh's diagnosis? To put it more bluntly, can we perceive late capitalism to be a similar 'perverted liturgy'? Can we discern whether late-capitalist markets manifest as a similar 'false body' constituted by its ascetical practices and demands of social and human bodies? One does not have to look too far to see the ascetical demands placed on young people, for example to participate in the lifestyles of late-capitalist markets, with the associated costs of disciplining their bodies with diet and clothing at great expense of time and money.¹²⁵ The hours and costs of market lifestyle participation seem tortuous and liturgical.¹²⁶

Cavanaugh alerts us to how capitalist markets can be understood as the construction of a false body, through market ascetics, to the body of Christ. The response is of a political nature, and ecclesial. The Eucharist is the countermove, and act of resistance, in which the false embodiments of market relationships are resisted. For Cavanaugh, the church is a counter-*polis* to late-capitalist markets. This co-inheres with my previous chapter, where we understand the church as an *oikos-polis*, a place of social reality that sets the limits for the social realities of the market. We also saw earlier how Evangelicals, on the one hand, responded missionally with providing "islands of social care" in response to the anxieties of emerging capitalist market life. But as they relaxed their ecclesiology to do so, the Polanyian SRM imagination for life emerged and became

¹²⁵ For an expansive survey and example of the effects of modern economics on young people, see Adrian Furnham, *The Economic Socialisation of Young People* (London: The Social Affairs Unit, 2008).

¹²⁶ I examine how consumerism functions as a perverted liturgy in Clark, "Consumer Liturgies," 43. For an example of how Evangelical Christians in the USA directly collude and conflate religion with diet and exercise industries, see R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (*California Studies in Food and Culture*) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

parasitic to other social forms. Where the church had once been an *Oikos-Polis*, all aseity now collapsed into market identities.

Cavanaugh displays the type of Anglo-Catholic turn to which Milbank calls us, but leaves us with something decidedly non-Evangelical. For it requires an ontological understanding of markets as inherently counter to Christian identity and formation, and as we have seen, that is something distinctly non-Evangelical.¹²⁷ In addition, the Eucharist is the only ascetic practice available from Cavanaugh for counter-political formation. Evangelicalism, as demonstrated in the first chapters of this thesis, may have a far wider range of worship resources to counter the formational forces of the market. And those resources are made possible from an understanding of capitalist markets as places for co-creation, as well as resistance. Cavanaugh does help us to appreciate that Pete Ward's alternative proposal to embrace shopping as a spiritual practice should be explored with some caution, lest the forces of the capitalist markets embed us further into their social realities.

5.5 Conclusion: Beyond the Eucharist

We have seen that, like Cavanaugh, Miller as a Catholic sees this unmasking and deepening of agency as potentially taking place principally through the Eucharist and the Mass.¹²⁸ Now Catholic worship undertakes far more than the Eucharist in daily practice, and again, I do not need to demonstrate the obviousness of that here. However, the theological claims by Catholic theologians like Miller and Cavanaugh prioritise the

¹²⁷ For a 'classic' example of an Evangelical ontological account of the nature of ecclesiology, along with the willingness of Evangelicals to extend and locate ontological understandings onto the market as places for Christian formation and identity, see Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazzors Press, 2009). The extent of that embrace of markets for Christian identity varies greatly amongst Evangelicals, and at one end, see Pastor Ted Haggard call Christian leaders to "harness the forces of free market capitalism in our ministry." See *Exploring Ecclesiology*, 261. The Evangelical impetus generated from a general refusal by many Evangelicals to over-dichotomize the church and the world and belief that God is involved in mission in the marketplace, is evidenced in Stackhouse, *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, 204.

¹²⁸ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 217.

Eucharist in a way that is insufficient for my project. We have seen how Bell and Cavanaugh make an overly dichotomised account with their reified view of the church and the resources they use, compared to Miller. Rather, Miller views consumer society not as a ‘false body’ but as a competing one. Cavanaugh and Bell provide no possibility for such a location within capitalist markets.

It seems we now have two crucial theological moves to make with our neo-Augustinian resources. First, how might we problematise capitalist markets as rival schools of desire, not as a dichotomy, but rather as modes of resistance, resonance, and co-option? As the first three chapters of my thesis have shown, this is the logic of Evangelicalism in its relationship to other socialities. Cavanaugh and Miller may be correct in suggesting capitalism be understood as a competing school of desire with its ascetics and aesthetics. But they leave us with an account that is antithetical to the Evangelicalism of my thesis. Their account has been illuminating — in terms of understanding the competing nature of the ascetics within capitalism — but it is not amenable to my project in terms of over-dichotomising the church and the world. For I am making a strong and bold case, in the face of the evidence from Milbank and Connolly, that present-day Evangelicalism, despite its very real problems, has, within itself, modes of resistance and co-creation that are unique to it, and necessary. Cavanaugh, Bell, and, to some extent, Miller, do not provide for such a resourcement as we have noted. For they leave us with an ecclesiology where the body of Christ in its social arrangements is permanently at odds with the world. This forecloses the Evangelical impetus I wish to retrieve. There is an over-ontologising of the church in its relationship to other social bodies that reveals an ecclesial mode of life that is decidedly non-Evangelical. There is competition between the body of Christ and other social arrangements in the world, and those social bodies are created through habits and practices around imaginations for life. Second, this chapter also uncovered implications for understandings of Providence, of

how the privatised demand-and-desire provision of the market shapes how we think God provides. My next chapter will make this even more explicit.

It is a broader understanding of how habits and physical practices deploy imaginations to which we now turn in my final chapter. This will allow us to consider further how worship practices are indeed competitive, something the sacramental turn in this chapter has mapped, whilst avoiding an over-dichotomizing of the church and the world. We will also explore how worship practices can be more *affective* around Christian imaginations for living and allow for the recovery of resistance by Evangelical habits. Ultimately, I will arrive at my thesis proposal for how Evangelicals can deepen agency in the face of anxieties in market life, instead of continuing to capitulate and resonate with them. I will demonstrate that beyond the Eucharist, even the broadest sacramental and liturgical turns are insufficient to respond to the deforming forces of market imaginations, overly relying on curriculum to do the heavy lifting of formation.

Chapter 6

Rival Ascetics of Desire: Beyond the Eucharist

The symbiotic alchemy of map-making that occurs in religious groups is produced from the delicate fusion of the social imaginary with a prevailing theological construction of reality. The worldview that emerges will, invariably, not only determine how a church or congregation sees itself within the world, but how they see the world around them. This exercise – or rather ongoing process – rarely produces an actual map. But it does produce a kind of inner map in the mind of the believers: places to avoid; places of plenty, and so forth. In some cases, it will produce actual maps.

— Martyn Percy, “Symbiotic Alchemy”

Tomorrow
we shall have to think up signs,
sketch a landscape, fabricate a plan
on the double page
of day and paper.
Tomorrow, we shall have to invent,
once more,
the reality of this world.

— Octavio Paz, “January First”

Map-making is the effective metaphor of my thesis method. As we have explored already, map makers – cartographers – do not reveal the world the way it is. Rather, they approximate, reduce, symbolise, and resort to imaginative exercises to reproduce and recreate an experience of something else. Map-making is literally a metaphorical exercise, of referring to one thing by the production of another. The nature of this imaginative reproduction means that “To ask for a map is in effect to say, ‘Tell me a story’”.¹ We all carry around maps, approximations of the world, the “inner maps” Percy highlights above. These inner maps are the social imaginaries, the stories that human beings exercise agency around – consciously and unconsciously. The inner maps of life in capitalism are overlaid with the theological maps of the Christian life, producing an admixture story. Or as Percy describes, a “symbiotic alchemy” takes place.² What is

¹ Peter Turchi, *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer* (San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press, 2007), 11.

² Martyn Percy, “Symbiotic Alchemy: Mapping the Futures of English Revivalism and Evangelicalism” in *The Wisdom of the Spirit: Gospel, Church and Culture*, eds. Martyn Percy and Pete Ward (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 33.

imagined is used to reproduce an experience, and what is experienced is then re-mapped into a cycle of reiteration, for ongoing reimagination.

This chapter now maps theologically this realm of the imagination and its instantiation in practice. It is a mapping of the symbiotic alchemy between the social imaginaries of Christianity and capitalism. In particular this mapping is produced as a further overlay to the accounts of capitalism in my third and fourth chapters. In doing so, I seek to explain how imaginations for Christianity within capitalism are instantiated in the real world. At the same time, this theological mapping moves recursively across and over the rest of my thesis as a whole. It furthermore picks up where we left off in my last chapter, attending specifically to the limitations of the accounts in that chapter.

6.1 Affective Practices of Desire: The possibilities of co-creation and resistance

The sources of my last chapter left us with over-dichotomised accounts of the body of Christ with capitalism. Graham Ward is helpful at this juncture. Ward offers a metaphysics and theology more amenable to my search for understanding co-creation and resistance. Ward has been a collaborator with one of my main thesis protagonists, Milbank, with regard to the Radical Orthodoxy series of books. These books set out a “postmodern critical Augustinianism.”³ Indeed Bell’s work, examined in my previous chapter, also falls within this Radical Orthodoxy stable.⁴ Like others with neo-Augustinian resources, as per my previous chapter, Ward has considered the nature of

³ Radical Orthodoxy's origins are found in the Radical Orthodoxy series of books, the first of which is John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology (Routledge Radical Orthodoxy)* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1998). The series can be viewed at <http://www.routledge.com/books/series/SE0084/>). Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*, while not part of this series, is considered the precursor to this movement. Milbank initially considered Radical Orthodoxy to be a postmodern critical Augustinianism movement; see John Milbank, “‘Postmodern Critical Augustinianism’: A Short *Summa* In Forty Two Responses To Unasked Questions,” *Modern Theology* 7, no. 3, (April 1991): 225–237.

⁴ Bell, *Liberation Theology*.

capitalism and its effects upon human beings for cultural and religious formation.⁵ If my thesis has, so far, surfaced an understanding of the ascetics of belief and practice in capitalism, then this chapter now theologises those ascetics as rival schools of desire.

6.1.1 Dissolution: The social logic of capitalism

Ward claims a social atomism has occurred in late capitalism and secular modernity, to which Christianity must, and can, respond.⁶ The horizon for Ward's work and understanding of this anomie is an Augustinian horizon of the City of God as a social reality in competition with the Earthly City.⁷ This Augustinian horizon allows for a construction and proposal of a Christian anthropology, that then allows us to consider the nature of social and public bodies: specifically, where individual bodies are located, and where the body of Christ is located in relation to other "bodies".⁸ We can deploy Ward over and against the diagnosis by Bell and Cavanaugh, where the social bodies of capitalism are antithetical and ontologically opposed to the body of Christ. For Christianity does not have to be so completely against socialities of culture, or indeed, give into the opposite process by over-assimilating.⁹ In terms of a metaphysical and ontological reading of social bodies, we might ask how the one true social body – the body of Christ – has been displaced and dematerialised into social bodies within secular and capitalistic modern cities. In other words, "what kind of bodies occupy what kind of space and in what kind of relationship to other such bodies?"¹⁰ We have arrived today in

⁵ For example, see Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, Radical Orthodoxy (London: Routledge, 2000), 3, 35, 50, 54, 146.

⁶ Ward, *Cities of God*, 75.

⁷ The title of Graham Ward's *Cities of God* is a play on the title of Augustine's work *The City of God*; see Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, translated by Henry Scowcroft Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003). Ward draws extensively on wider Augustinian theology as well as specifically from Augustine's *The City of God*. For specific references where Graham Ward brings Augustine's *The City of God* into contact with his wider theological proposals, see Ward, *Cities of God*, 226–238.

⁸ Ward, *Cities of God*, 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7–9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

late capitalism, at a ‘transcorporeality’ in which “the body of Christ is mapped onto and shot like a watermark through the physical bodies, social bodies, institutional bodies, ecclesial bodies, sacramental bodies. All these bodies are available only in and through textual bodies.”¹¹ This is Ward’s ‘analogical’ method, constructed with a post-structuralist somatic and semiotic reading of culture and church.¹² This post-structuralist method considers the Freudian and psychological understandings of desire within human socialities to get closer to those lived experiences.¹³ However, his post-structuralist method raises some concerns, which I will highlight as I deploy Ward’s account.¹⁴

My thesis has mapped three stages of intensification in the relationship between Christianity and capitalism.¹⁵ Ward notes his own complex schema and process of intensification of the relationship between Christianity and capitalism.¹⁶ There has been a loss of religious checks and balances on the use of capital, as well as a migration to the commodification of all aspects of society. We have arrived at a time where “with the rise of the market-driven consumerism, cities become increasingly secular places – given over to the production of goods for consumption. As a consequence, in such cities, faith becomes privatised”.¹⁷ The domains of salvation, eschatology, and ontology have become displaced into the socialities of commodified life within the city.¹⁸ This correlates with my own diagnosis and previous account of the collapse of aseity from religious identity

¹¹ Ibid., 93.

¹² Ibid., 7-9.

¹³ Ward outlines his post-structuralist commitments in detail in *ibid.*, 11–13.

¹⁴ For example, see Maarten Wisse, ‘Graham Ward’s Poststructuralist Christian Nominalism’, *SOPHIA* 49, no. 3 (2010).

¹⁵ My chapters one through to four map; 1) the emergence of the Protestant Work Ethic within the birth of industrial society; 2) the development of Evangelicalism within the development of commercial society; and 3) the arrival at a post-Protestant Work Ethic within globalised late-capitalism.

¹⁶ Ward, *Cities of God*, 34–38. Ward provides a compressed and intricate outline of the rise and development of cities that arrive at the “advancement of capitalism, humanism, secularism, divorced from any need for God,” 38. His analysis highlights the mechanisms of commodification, the loss of religious constraints on consumption, and the role of imagined communities, for the development of cities into places of consumerism.

¹⁷ Ibid, 24

¹⁸ Ibid.

into market identities, and of how we can read the competing socialities of capitalism ontologically.

Despite the desire not to see Christianity as antithetical to culture, we see in Ward's descriptions of capitalist culture a pessimistic outlook similar to that of Cavanaugh and Bell, i.e., that capitalism is a false body which the body of Christ must eternally resist. There is an attempt to be alert to such pessimistic description by Ward, and he maps some possible theological responses to this state of affairs.¹⁹ Ultimately, it is the denouncement of the earthly city that Ward chooses to pursue. Unlike Cavanaugh and Bell, this denouncement is made within the context of Augustinian warnings against reducing culture to something completely antithetical to God. In terms of my own account so far, I have demonstrated that, for Evangelicals, retreating from the world, embracing natural theology, and liberally dissolving the distinctiveness of faith, are similarly not acceptable.

Setting aside Ward's claim that Evangelicals resemble conservative Catholics with their two-kingdom theology (and are thereby anti-modern), I concur with him that Christians cannot renounce the world theologically because scripture tells us not to.²⁰ Furthermore, we live within the world; we cannot see it and leave it to "rot and go to hell".²¹ We can see here how this undergirds my project, in that we understand

¹⁹ Ibid., 43–44. Ward outlines these options as; a) a retreat into itself by theology; b) the further embracement of natural theology in seeing this state of affairs as part of creation; c) the correlation of theology to culture, such that the doctrines of faith, crucifixion, incarnation, and resurrection are merely metaphors for understanding transcendental experience; and d) the emphatic rejection and denunciation by theology of the earthly city.

²⁰ Ibid., 69. A detailed discussion of two-kingdom theology, and how it relates to Evangelicals and the domains of our concern are beyond my thesis remit, but I note and suggest that it is the collapsing of the church and the material into the spiritual, the totalising of the Kingdom as the market, that is the situation to which Evangelicals have most contributed with their theology and practice. This contrasts to recent two kingdom theology, such as that of Darryl Hart, whose work asserts a collapse by Evangelicals into a social gospel, see Darryl Hart, *A Secular Faith: Why Christianity Favors the Separation of Church and State* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2006). This Catholic two-kingdom theology of course is distinct from Lutheran two-kingdoms theology. Ward expands on his use of two-kingdoms theology with regards to Luther and Augustine, and how he sees them as a type of Christian genealogy. See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory and Its Significance for Community Building: A Conversation with John Milbank*, accessed 5th June 2018. <https://bit.ly/2Jghgkg>. For an assessment and locating of Milbank's two-kingdoms theology with regards to Evangelicals, see Bruce Ellis Benson and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, *Evangelicals and Empire: Christian Alternatives to the Political Status Quo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 253.

²¹ Ward, *Cities of God*, 69.

Christianity as neither renouncing the world, nor leaving it to its relentless drive to consumption. Nor can we develop a humanistic approach that is unmindful of the ideologies and theologies buried within the social realities and practices of the market and late capitalism (something I have accused Pete Ward of doing in the first chapter of this thesis).²² We need responses that relate *positively* and *critically* to the postmodern city, and cultural context of capitalism. To renounce the world or be subsumed humanistically is ineffectual.²³

There is a theological advance beyond Bell and Cavanaugh that Ward makes, by broadening his understanding of the ontological resistance in the Eucharist. This is made through a further Christological move. For the body of Christ should be seen more broadly than the Eucharist, in the Ascension and salvation history, outlining how the Spirit transposes the church into a complex space of redemption.²⁴ This understanding seems more hospitable for my account. For this is to understand the church as a community of desire, able to counter and work within the other ontological socialities of capitalistic desire, through more than just the Eucharist. For Ward, a counter-economy and resistance take place in the Eucharist, as a primary resistance to the dissolution and social logic of consumption.²⁵ This is grist to Cavanaugh and Bell's mill; who explain how social bodies are false bodies in relation to the body of Christ. Despite Ward's claims of the possibilities of co-creation and resistance, we are offered little more than Cavanaugh and Bell. The Eucharist is again located as *the* ontological scandal in which Christ consumes us as we participate in it.²⁶

²² Ibid., 70.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 116.

²⁵ Ibid., 95.

²⁶ Ibid., 103.

Despite Ward's wish to avoid an ontological dualism, does he achieve it, and does he fall prey to a type of nominalism in his ontology?²⁷ Not the nominalism that 'Radical Orthodoxy' rejects, of a world totally disconnected from God's being, but rather the broader nominalism of universals, such that Ward's account arrives at a place where he claims that "there is no analogical ordering of the world that reflects the being of God, as there is only one big analogy: namely that everything, however different it is, is symbolically rooted in God."²⁸ This broader nominalism runs the risk of making co-creation with the material difficult, within the limits of his theological method and aspirations.²⁹ Such nominalism is ironical, given the aspirations of Radical Orthodoxy and its proponents like Graham Ward to oppose nominalist views, and to construct a participationist ontology.³⁰

We are then left with a question: how does the soteriological displacement of Christ's body, and the reverse of that displacement, take place through the Eucharist (and wider worship processes) into other bodies such as the church? I suggest that there is incorporation into the body of Christ that takes place broadly, i.e., through far more than the Eucharist, in the worship of the church. It will take something more than the Eucharist to reverse the displacement of bodies into capitalist socialities. Graham Ward, despite his theological aspirations, is trapped with a theology that leaves unrealised the possibility for co-creation and resistance, and remains abstracted in the mode Healy and Miller have warned us about. Ward's theological project, whilst promising, needs extending phenomenologically to demonstrate "how worship works" in the real world. But before

²⁷ Graham Ward, "Bodies: The Displaced Body of Jesus Christ," in: John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1998), 97–116.

²⁸ Wisse, 'Poststructuralist Christian Nominalism', 368.

²⁹ For an extended critique of Ward's nominalism, see Ibid. In terms of engagement in the material, this article in particular explores the implications of Ward's nominalism and sexual relationships. There are implications from this critique more broadly of how any nominalism by Ward sets up problems for engaging concretely with other realities of material existence.

³⁰ For further explanation of how Ward might have inadvertently constructed a nominalist theology that undermines his participationist aspirations, see Ibid.

we turn to this, we will continue further with Ward's own work, which points towards this phenomenology of reception and participation.

6.1.2. Materialising the Political: The erotics of redemption and liturgical participation

In contrast to the depoliticization, dematerialization, and commodification that characterizes late modern culture, the Christian gospel announces a theology of creation, embodiment, and resurrection that revalues the material. Thus, Christianity is a more-thorough materialism than the faux-materialism of a commodified world of consumption and disposal.

James K. A. Smith, "Foreword," to Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship*

With Miller, we saw how commodification rips signs and symbols away from originating beliefs and practice, such that the articulation of 'better' beliefs does not lead to 'better' practice. The commodification of beliefs is not merely into cultural artefacts, as products for consumption; rather, the cultural artefacts of commodification are also producers.³¹ We can therefore understand how the 'practices' of commodification produce political and social arrangements. These social arrangements take shape around the social imaginaries of late capitalism. It is not that social imaginaries have an ontological foundation per se.³² For stories are not ontologies, but ontologies are what happen when people re-tell and re-enact stories. Stories do not exist on their own; they have to be *told*. There are metaphysical forces in commodification, signs and symbols that we can read, and around which agents make their productions. Commodification can therefore be understood as what happens when agents in capitalism make social arrangements around the stories of late capitalism, i.e., the Polanyian fictions of land, labour, and money for the SRM. Commodification is not the complete abstraction of all beliefs from practice, but the practice itself that narrates and instantiates the imaginations of late capitalism. It

³¹ Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens*, The Church and Postmodern Culture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 153.

³² Ward makes this claim in his *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
129.

is the way that the social imaginaries of late capitalism are enacted and habituated. In other words, we might understand practice/enactment as discourse, and discourse as practice/enactment. This is the the cultural logic of “late capitalism”, an understanding of which Ward draws from Fredric Jamieson.³³ The body of Christ is displaced by the processes of commodification, and those processes obtain their impetus from competing desires within capitalist imaginations. Here, the church is a community of desire displaced by competing desires within other socialities, i.e., communities of desire.³⁴ This also brings us beyond the mechanisms of commodification back to Bell and his claims that technologies of desire are deployed by competing communities.

For there is a contrast between the socialities of desire and mechanisms of desire. On the one hand, via a “post-structuralist genealogy” of desire, we can understand psychologically and mechanistically how social bodies emerge which parody ecclesial accounts.³⁵ Direct contact with the work of Cavanaugh is made by Ward, for a theological understanding of the social.³⁶ Ward also displays a deeper theological understanding of Bell’s “technologies of desire”, showing how habituated practices around social imaginaries are made possible by the print capitalism highlighted by Anderson.³⁷ The body of Christ can be understood as an alternative community of desire, an “erotic community”.³⁸ This is an Augustinian (and Thomist) account of how Christ is present in church worship, specifically in the Eucharist.³⁹ Such an account is primarily about how

³³ Here, Graham Ward is referencing the title and work of Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991); see Ward, *Cities of God*, 3.

³⁴ In particular, see Ward, *Cities of God*, Chapter 6, ‘The Church as the Erotic Community’, 152–182.

³⁵ Ward, *Cities of God*, Chapter 5, ‘Communities of Desire’, 117–151.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 117–118.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 146–147.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 152–181; Ward constructs and arrives at this understanding by way of genealogy of presence, with Augustine and the relationship of the present and presence (156), Aquinas, where Christ is our nourishment and really present (157–159), Calvin, where Christ’s flesh and blood are spatialised between presence and absence, such that an economy of desire is set up between lack and not having (167), and Žižek where participation is understood as a mode of simulation, where notions of the now are commodified (170).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 156–161.

desire and presence in the Eucharist has become displaced into other social realities. Ward suggests that all human beings have a fundamental *appetitus*; a hunger that is also a desire, where human beings “crave the other” in an image of the “divine appetite in which the Father craves the Son and the Son the Father, and both the Spirit who maintains the eternal craving open with respect to the world God created out of his excess of loving.”⁴⁰ Here, desire is a result of plenitude rather than lack.⁴¹

With regards to developments of the Eucharist by Protestants, Ward claims that we see with Calvin, a dislocation between sign and symbol in the Eucharist. This dislocation lent itself to an undoing of an Augustinian understanding of the relationship between sign and symbol.⁴² Here we see perhaps the early cultural and market forces around faith, the mechanisms of commodification diagnosed by Miller, where the real presence moved into the consumption of symbols, such that reality was not in the symbol itself but in something that lay beyond it.

The church can be understood as an alternative community of desire, whose formation around that desire can be mapped through a doctrine of participation. That participation is then understood through a doctrine of the Spirit and a theological anthropology.⁴³ It is this participation that Ward suggests is the place where we can co-create with the world and resist the pathologies of culture, such as capitalism. Yet Ward still leaves us with participation being principally based around the Eucharist, his horizon dropping again from a broader understanding of ecclesial worship. Ward does have a broader theology of participation, but it remains largely an abstracted account. Ward’s account, whilst promising a more nuanced account of desire that would see the church as a likely place for the training of desire, seems to lack the psychology and phenomenology

⁴⁰ Ibid., 172

⁴¹ Angel F. Méndez-Montoya provides a summary and extension of Ward’s argument here for a theology of food. See Angel F. Méndez-Montoya, *The Theology of Food: Eating and the Eucharist* (Chichester West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 67–68.

⁴² Ward, *Cities of God*, Chapter 5, “Communities of Desire,” 161–167.

⁴³ Ibid., 171.

of reception for which he calls.⁴⁴ It will fall to me to locate such an account. In order to achieve that, I make a final step with Ward and explore how imagination within “imagined communities” operates between *praxis* and *poiesis*. This allows me to bring the work of this chapter into direct overlay with previous chapters and point forward to a final step for the explicit theologising and conclusion of my account.

6.1.3 Praxis and Poiesis: Social imaginaries and ontological realities

How does religious action create *concrete* socialities and effect cultural change? Ward locates an answer via an understanding of the practices of everyday living within the “imagined communities” motif of Anderson.⁴⁵ Combining this, and the work of Charles Taylor on “social imaginaries”, we can see that social arrangements are constituted by “a set of imaginary relations,” such that “any particular historical and cultural understanding of the public is inseparable from an implicit account of being human and in relationship.”⁴⁶ Such imaginaries provide models for all working relationships. Imagined ideologies of relationships and the lived experiences around these lead to the learning and internalizing of what it means to be relational.⁴⁷ These imaginaries are “crucial fictions” (as Charles Taylor calls them). They are not ontological realities. Instead they are “ways of *making* sense, they are forms of *poesis*.”⁴⁸ We ask, as does Ward, what makes one ‘fiction’ more effective than another?⁴⁹ In other words: how might we understand the ways in which one social imaginary might be more persuasive than another over time?⁵⁰ By this, I understand that social imaginaries function in part as ‘technologies of desire’,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 166.

⁴⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁴⁶ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 122.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 129-130.

some of which are more *affective* in how they train and direct human desires, and therefore are more *effective* in their reproduction and instantiations.

We can juxtapose Graham Ward further with my earlier analysis of Miller's work.⁵¹ Concern about the cultivation of desire is not only central to the Christian tradition, it is central to all anthropologies and "cultures" as Miller reminds us.⁵² In other words, our purpose is not to analyze the cultures within capitalism per se, but rather, to understand how desire works within cultural structures and social practices. For consumer desire in capitalism does not arise from a "coherent anthropology that can be contrasted with Christianity."⁵³ Even if such a contrast can be made, it is not a contrast I need to make, except in one regard. I assert desire operates universally for all human beings, as that which leads to all identity formation. And there is one fundamental contrast between Christian and non-Christian desire. Or rather, there should be one key contrast, whereby Christian desire arises from a call beyond the self. The desire of the non-Christian self is then understood as one that is incomplete. This status results not from any lack by the subject, but from being trapped and focused on a perpetual call to the self. Christian desire has as its object, or should have as its object, God and the other.⁵⁴ I am asserting that the ordering of life by and around desire is the liturgical anthropology and nature of all human beings.⁵⁵ In the face of that, I want to understand how Christian worship might be more *affective* and then subsequently effective for the training of desire than the "sophisticated systems of forming and inciting desire that the world" has seen within late capitalism.⁵⁶ Ultimately, I am asking how the *soteriological imaginaries* of Evangelicalism have *affected* and shaped Christian identity and might do so with greater effectiveness within

⁵¹ Miller himself draws on the work of Graham Ward to make his account of desire within consumerism; see Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 111–112.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁴ Ward, *Cities of God*, 75.

⁵⁵ Our primary concern is how Christianity has been deformed and misformed by the cultures of late capitalism. Moreover, our analysis of this topic is focused on how Evangelical Christianity, with its own worship practices, has added to such distortions.

⁵⁶ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 107.

capitalism. But none of this tells us what it is about the self, the nature of human identity, in concert with certain social imaginaries that gives rise to such variations in persuasiveness. Graham Ward asks a similar question himself, suggesting that it is in understanding the somatic, and not just the cognitive of imaginaries, that we will find our answer.⁵⁷

Bringing the work of Paul Ricoeur into contact with that of Charles Taylor, Ward correlates that with Freud and Husserl, to delineate how social imaginaries work at the cognitive level by agents acting through a will.⁵⁸ Ultimately that will is “set in motion by a motivation,” the inner desire that is the ground for all actions by agents.⁵⁹ For Ward, like Ricoeur, wants to affirm the notion of individuals having a sense of agency. It is the nature of motivation at the heart of the “poetics of individuals willing,” that is key to understanding how human beings choose to “act in some ways/circumstances and refuse to act in others.”⁶⁰ Motivation is that which operates solely under the will of the individual according to Ricoeur. Yet, this seems to be an unnecessary lingering Cartesianism.⁶¹ Instead, as Ward writes: “motivation (and the values that motivate) are not independent of cultural context but arise only from within sets of cultural possibilities and values. In motivation something is believed, and believed in strongly enough to *affect* behaviour.”⁶² There is an “association of *poiesis* to praxis,” where imagination and desire are the two forces between that association.⁶³ Here, we see Ward at odds with his interlocutors, who have an understanding of human beings as “individual volitional subjects who are subsequently in relation one to another by choice.”⁶⁴ Instead, Ward would have us view the actions of agents as located within “larger economies, forces or a nexus of cultural

⁵⁷ Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 130.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 130-140.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁶² *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

possibilities.”⁶⁵ This begs a question of whether any notion of the subject ‘unravels’ if such cultural forces are at play.

There is a complex discourse from social theory that points to a need for Christian understanding of agency within *poiesis*.⁶⁶ Now, I do not seek to establish a universal understanding of *poiesis*. Rather it is Christian conceptions and behaviours for *poiesis* and *praxis* (and in particular those of Evangelicals) that are my task. Such desire and narration has only one true and worthy object, namely Jesus Christ. Most importantly, it is the *soteriological imaginaries* of Evangelical communities that orient Evangelical agents for cultural production that are my concern. Desires and the ascetics around them are situated between *poiesis* and *praxis*, where desire is: “complex, multi-focused and held to be maintained by a power that is greater than that of any individual or even collective. For *praxis* is a “reading, rereading and composing the world in which it operates; fashioning from the flux of the social imaginary representations”, i.e., the stories around which human beings exercise their agency, for *poiesis*.⁶⁷ Here, *poiesis* is “an imaginative *praxis* that transforms the social,” i.e., in *poiesis*, desires are practically imagined, taking what is present in the world already, but then translating them into something new.⁶⁸ Desire and imagination are the forces that gives rise to transformative practices and an embodiment in Christ. They are also the forces that give rise to self-creation, the *autopoiesis* of the social imaginaries of late capitalism.

So, I am closer to understanding theologically (by which I mean *political theology*, with the ontological metaphysics of Graham Ward) the boundaries for social bodies; of how desire gives rise to embodied practices for formation of those social bodies. In terms of my mapping, I now draw down a gradient marked on my mapping, where the gravity of my account moves me towards an exploration of liturgical enactments of imagination.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7, 149–154.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 153–154.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 154–155. Here, Ward sketches out an Aristotelian ‘practical imagining’.

This is in order to better understand the habituation and disciplines of desire around cultural imaginaries. For it is worship that is the place where social imaginaries are trained, and desire enacted. We have arrived at the end of a mapping, with a signpost that points to a needed further exploration of worship. This is the phenomenology of reception that my account has already noted, that Ward was unable to adequately make for my thesis purposes. It is with James K. A. Smith's theological anthropologies and cultural liturgies that we now turn to understand how 'worship works' and seek to remedy this situation. In short, and in other words, I now answer the question: what makes one imaginary cultural liturgy more *affective* and *effective* than another?

6.2 The Habituation of Imagination: Beyond competing curricula and pedagogies

In short, the way to the heart is through the body, and the way into the body is through story. And this is how worship works: Christian formation is a conversion of the imagination effected by the Spirit who recruits our most fundamental desires by a kind of narrative enchantment—by inviting us narrative animals into a story that seeps into our bones and becomes the orienting background of our being-in-the-world. Our incarnating God continues to meet us where we are: as imaginative creatures of habit. So we are invited into the life of the Triune God by being invited to inhabit concrete rituals and practices that are "habitations of the Spirit".

— James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*

We have seen how imagination and desire are the forces between poiesis and praxis. Now, with Smith, we can examine further the nature of those forces. For Smith has produced a body of work that moves beyond accounts of worship as competing ascetics. He provides an understanding of how imagined communities give rise to competing ascetics, i.e., bodily habits and practice. It is not just theologians who are now alert to the nature and power of bodily habits for formation. Popular leadership materials draw on state of the art behavioral psychology for understanding the primacy and formational nature of habits.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do and How to Change* (London: Random House, 2012).

In particular, Smith extends an understanding of desire-based anthropologies into the realm of imagination and liturgy. For it is a construction of a theological and, in particular, Christian anthropology, just as we saw Graham Ward produce, that facilitates an understanding of how social bodies are created in relationship and competition with each other. Desire-based anthropologies describe and map competing ascetics of desire. These mappings allow us to better understand the competing effectiveness of secular liturgies, like those of capitalism, for how comprehensively they inscribe individuals into social realities. They also make possible an understanding of competing social bodies, i.e., the body of Christ in relationship to other social bodies, in terms of ascetics and imaginations, and do so without over-dichotomizing those accounts.

In contrast to Graham Ward, Smith's anthropology is primarily a philosophical one, although heavily reliant on the social sciences. Graham Ward also crosses disciplinary boundaries, from political theory, aesthetics, sociology, and anthropology to philosophy, amongst others. But Ward's centre of gravity is the theological, whereas Smith's is the philosophical. Smith is, after all, a philosopher, albeit indebted to Augustine, and drawing upon Aristotelian accounts of virtue.⁷⁰ In particular, Smith deploys and extends Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body.⁷¹ Whilst Smith's anthropology is established through the social sciences, it does not mean it does no theological work for us. Indeed, some might object to Smith's anthropology as not being sufficiently Christian, due to a lack of explicitly theological considerations, i.e., Christology, and his less than sustained pneumatology, for example. Smith is clear in his theological claims however, that

⁷⁰ For example, see James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009) 55, 60, 196–97, where Smith shows how these sources fund his method and work. A much earlier work of Smith, published in the Radical Orthodoxy series, shows early moves from phenomenology, into Augustinian theology; see James K. A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation* (London: Routledge, 2002). Here, Smith attempts to show how we might understand encounter between the material and divine, in terms of speaking about God. This Christian phenomenology is something Smith carries into his later work.

⁷¹ Smith makes extensive use of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. For example, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), as well as James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, Cultural Liturgies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 41–73.

“Christian worship is primarily a site of divine action,” where we are “invited to inhabit concrete rituals and practices that are ‘habitations of the Spirit’”.⁷²

Smith’s work in many regards is a contextual theology, with implicit theological considerations, as well as, at times, very explicit ones, seeking to deal with just the kind of “messy contingencies and miscibility of lived faith, rather than ‘ideal’ theological constructions of reality” that Percy calls us to consider.⁷³ Smith’s work in this regard is profoundly theological, and avails itself of my claim at the start of my thesis, that ecclesiology, if it is to attend to the concrete of lived faith, must make use of the implicit theology, and indeed the inherent methods “and insights” of social theory.⁷⁴ Beyond his method, Smith has some particular claims serviceable for my thesis, most specifically his diagnosis of how secular liturgies like capitalism have competing social imaginaries which fund that competition. The response to competing imaginaries with Christian imaginations is not an over-dichotomized collapse into the Eucharist, as we have seen others make, nor a collapse further into market imaginations, as Pete Ward calls for. Rather, for Smith, it is for better and more *effective* pedagogies around Christian imaginations. Yet we will see that Smith abandons an understanding of the work of the Spirit in worship practices for a focus on the affective nature of, and effective competition between, practices; a throttling down by him into the deployment of a list of competing curricula.⁷⁵ This is a diminution of his hoped-for ‘counter-measures’ to the formational forces of capitalism, where worship is reduced to issues of effective curricula, which I believe will ultimately remain largely ineffective.

⁷² Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 15.

⁷³ My location of Smith’s work is made on correlation to claims for contextual theology by Martyn Percy, “Response to Part 1: On the Vocation of the Contextual Theologian,” in *Reasonable Radical*, 60.

⁷⁴ Again, see Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture*, 8.

⁷⁵ Rather than an understanding of how the Spirit engages with the content and practices of worship, Smith leaves us with a list of curricula, and the hope that the content of those curricula are able to compete more effectively with secular liturgies. See Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 170–171.

6.2.1. Habitations of the Spirit: From head to heart

The pedagogy of the mall does not primarily take hold of the head, so to speak; it aims for the heart, for our guts, our *kardia*. It is a pedagogy of desire that gets hold of us through the body. So what would it take to resist the alluring formation of our desire – and hence identity – that is offered by the market and the mall? If the mall and its ‘parachurch’ extensions in television and advertising offer a daily liturgy for the formation of the heart, what might be the church’s counter-measures? What if the church unwittingly adopts the same liturgical practices as the market and the mall? Will it then really be a site of counter-formation? What would the church’s practices have to look like if they’re going to form us as the kind of people who desire something entirely different – who desire the Kingdom? What would be the shape of an alternative pedagogy of desire?

— James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*

Smith repeats here an assertion; that the way to the heart is through the body, and through story, and that desire takes shape somatically. Smith initiated this claim in his first *Cultural Liturgies* book and reasserted it in his second.⁷⁶ In other words, the *reception* of the signs and symbols for cultural production, be that of Christian faith or capitalism, do not start with the head, but with the heart and the body. It is the training and habituation of desires that shapes us, not our theories of desire. This being the case, we can then ask if the *stories* of rival social arrangements that we have explored can be understood in terms of how they take hold of our hearts and bodies. This possibility speaks directly to the gap we need to bridge, where better theologies of competing desire remain disconnected from concrete reality. Smith’s cultural liturgies method allows us to connect the theological understanding of desire developed in the earlier chapters of this thesis with the epiphenomena of embodied and lived experience. For Smith, like Graham Ward, would have us understand all of the concrete actions of life as the habituation and training of desire – that all of life is constructed by worship.⁷⁷ At the heart of Smith’s cultural liturgies project, we find: “[an] anthropology—a model of the human person that recognizes we are liturgical animals, creatures who can’t *not* worship and who are fundamentally formed by worship practices precisely because it is these liturgies—

⁷⁶ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 24. See also Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 14.

⁷⁷ I have already mentioned Graham Ward’s claim that all of life is constructed through *worship*; see Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship*, 181.

whether Christian or ‘secular’—that shape what we *love*. And we are what we love.”⁷⁸ According to this theological anthropology, worship is the horizon and field within which the training of desire takes place. I have already suggested that worship is *the* mode and nature of reception itself. It is through that worship that beliefs and imaginings take shape, and desire is habituated into concrete expression. So, if we are inherently and essentially ‘worshipping’ beings, how does worship actually *work*, how does worship influence us, *affect* – and effectively form – us? Smith responds to this question of how worship is *affective* by pushing further into the construction of his liturgical anthropology. He argues that human beings are creatures who are defined by their loves, and those loves are shaped by formative practices.⁷⁹ Smith’s liturgical anthropology accounts for the formation of our love and desires across all cultures, not just religious and institutional ones. We are invited to consider that we are not primarily shaped by ideas, but are shaped by that which we love. We are then to understand that those love-shaping practices are what we call ‘liturgy’.⁸⁰ Smith’s indebtedness to Augustine is again on display here, to “that patron saint of the Reformers,” for understandings of love, desire, and worship as the training to love the world rightly.⁸¹ Smith’s proposals allow us to consider in what ways worship practices might be more *affective*, i.e., produce a stronger orientation of the self around desire, than those of the cultures of secular liturgies, such as capitalism. It is liturgies, sacred or secular, that establish our identities, and simultaneously form our desires. So much so that “what defines us is what we love.”⁸² As Smith writes:

Because our hearts are oriented primarily by desire, by what we love, and because those desires are shaped and moulded by the habit-forming practices in which we participate, it is the rituals and practices of the mall—the liturgies of mall and market—that shape our imaginations and how we orient ourselves to the world. Embedded in them is a common set

⁷⁸ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 22.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸⁰ James K. A. Smith “Defined by Our Loves: A Liturgical Anthropology” (11th March 2013), accessed 26th March 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixKR7duSamU>.

⁸¹ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 7.

⁸² Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25.

of assumptions about the shape of human flourishing, which becomes an implicit telos, or goal, of our own desires and actions.⁸³

We are alerted to how liturgies train our hearts through our bodies, so that our lives are aimed towards our loves.⁸⁴ Cultural liturgies educate us pre-cognitively, having implicitly embedded in them an understanding of the world.⁸⁵ Here is a metaphysical and ontological connection with Graham Ward. It is not that we require an advanced understanding of metaphysics, and the ontological nature of worship to engage in worship itself. But it does help us to understand how worship is a *performative ontology*, that the *doing* of cultural liturgies embeds us into social realities.⁸⁶ Or, as I noted earlier, stories are not ontological realities, but the practices they lead to establish ontological realities.⁸⁷ Smith notes something similar himself when he comments: “Praying enacts an entire ontology and construal of the God-world relationship. This doesn’t mean that we need to pursue a doctorate in metaphysics in order to pray; on the contrary, the point is that by *doing it*, by praying, we are engaged in a sort of performative ontology that could be teased out in reflection and analysis.”⁸⁸ What is at stake is nothing less than the education and formation of our imagination.⁸⁹ For this affective process Smith outlines is something that is not primarily about worldview and cognition. Whilst our practices take shape around the imaginations and longings of desire, they do so “below the head”, in the heart and body.⁹⁰

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ It is worth noting that Smith strays here into another discipline, that of Social Ontology. Smith does not define Social Ontology, or explain from where he is borrowing his understanding of it. However, his work with Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, implies that his use of Social Ontology is derived from that work and related works in social sciences and philosophy. For an overview of social ontology and how it is emerging as a field of enquiry and method, see Barry Smith, David M. Mark, and Isaac Ehrlich, eds., *The Mystery of Capital and the Construction of Social Reality* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2008); and Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, eds., *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1996).

⁸⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, “Ontological Metaphors”, *Metaphors We Live By*, 25–32.

⁸⁸ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 193.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Smith demonstrates how we might better understand how our practices *train* desire. This is not a one-way process, for our desires are being formed by our imagination, and lead to new and changed practices. From this, I posit again that there is a resonant spiral between practice and imagination, the kind that led to the perfecting of capitalist practices by Evangelicals. Evangelical worship which had the providence of God at the heart of its worship, began with a desire to see Christian identity made within new economic flows. But ultimately, the imagination for providence in capitalism leads to the deformation of desire and the deformation of worship practices. This resonance spirals until worship is not primarily about Christian identity and faithful living, but about God providing a way of life that the heart is set upon within the capitalist landscape and social imagination.

It is here that we begin to nudge into the hopes for my thesis, the edges of the map of my account, that Evangelicalism contains within itself resources for a soteriology and theological anthropology which can place the desire for God into more affective worship practices. Worship practices that are, despite their previous problems, able to train and orient our desire 'rightly'. Might there be the possibility for an alternative resonance through Evangelical worship practice that redirects desire, setting up resonances that lead to better practices, as 'counter-measures' to the deforming forces of capitalism? If we can better understand *how* worship works, we might be able to consider how evangelical worship could be more *affective* in its resonances with desire than those of the *capitalist resonance machine*. In other words, with Smith we might begin to untangle the Evangelical worship practices from their negative *affective* resonances with capitalism and see them redeployed to greater *effect* around their own inherent horizon of faithful living for Christ.

6.2.2 Teaching the Body: Phenomenology of perception

As Smith constructs his liturgical anthropology, he is aware of a certain irony in his claims that it is practice that needs to be renewed. For his primary assertion is that our

imagination is the precognitive means by which we navigate the world through our bodies.⁹¹ Yet this very understanding of formation is acquired from a cognitive process of reflection.⁹² Or, as Smith himself describes this process: “To provide a phenomenology of perception, then, is to try to stand on our philosophical heads: offering a theoretical account that does justice to our pre-theoretical navigation of the world.”⁹³ He establishes this methodological possibility, through his modification of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s, *Phenomenology of Perception*.⁹⁴ Smith makes a complex phenomenological argument with a strikingly simple conclusion. His conclusion is that we do not primarily navigate our way through the world cognitively; rather, we have a “bodily attunement and perception that underwrites ‘objective’ knowledge and intellectual reflection”.⁹⁵ This being the case, then our primary task is in asking, “How do we teach the body?”⁹⁶

Smith wants us to understand not just that our bodies make meaning from stories, but how that takes place through bodily actions. How do our bodies and minds function together in generating meaning?⁹⁷ Bodies make meaning through liturgies formed around conceptual metaphors.⁹⁸ First, we acquire primary metaphors, through our environment and sensorimotor experience. These metaphors are not hardwired, nor necessarily universal, but may be “widely shared” by others.⁹⁹ Second, immersion in an environment with repeated experiences is what establishes those primary metaphors in us.¹⁰⁰ Third, we acquire hundreds of primary metaphors by these bodily interactions in daily life, and,

⁹¹ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 19.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 41-73. Smith is not the only person to revisit Merleau-Ponty. There has been a growing number of scholars in science, social theory, and psychology who have been drawing on Merleau-Ponty, not only for ontological conversations, but also for renewed exploration of symbols, knowledge, and being. For example, see Aud Sissel Hoel and Annamaria Carusi, “*Merleau-Ponty and the Measuring Body*,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 35, Issue 1 (2018): 45–70.

⁹⁵ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 72.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

fourth, these primary metaphors are the “building blocks of more complex metaphors.”¹⁰¹ Fifth, these metaphors “make sense” of our experience, and carry a bodily logic to them, such that, sixth, this bodily logic is recruited in conceptual logic, i.e., we do not have two logic systems, one for the body and one for the mind.¹⁰² Here, Smith relies on an understanding of *aesthetics*, drawing upon the work of Mark Johnston.¹⁰³ Johnston’s work bridges the world of cognitive science, language studies, and aesthetic philosophy, as it establishes how symbols and stories are enacted and made into meaning by human beings.¹⁰⁴ Smith then connects this work by Johnston into the theological, i.e., to his liturgical anthropology. For example, secular liturgies have different operative metaphors, leading to repeated co-activations of neural patterns, that inscribe us “in a habitual orientation to the world”.¹⁰⁵ Knowing what we ought to love is not enough to form us rightly, because we imagine what we love first, where imagination is cognitive, but is not “intellection”.¹⁰⁶ Being able to imagine the Kingdom of God is different to being able to know about it. This means that we act in the world “more like characters in a drama than as soldiers dutifully following a command”.¹⁰⁷ The stories that captivate and form me are ‘understood’ at a gut level.¹⁰⁸

The process here that honours human understandings of aesthetics is what Smith calls “general poetics”. Here, Smith draws upon cognitive science, literary Darwinism, and cognitive narratology to show the intersection between biology, science, and theology in describing how aesthetics ‘work’ for human beings.¹⁰⁹ There is a coherence of Smith’s

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 120-121.

¹⁰² Ibid., 122.

¹⁰³ Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), as cited by Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 110.

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, to understand how metaphors are not just the “device of poetic imagination”, but are rather the conceptual system by which we make meaning and navigate the world, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 123.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 127.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 133.

liturgical anthropology with these disciplines, which enables us to say; this is how worship ‘works’ for all human beings. We can understand how sacred and secular liturgies work universally “on the same imaginative, aesthetic aspects of human being-in-the-world.”¹¹⁰ What is revealed here is that counter-formation requires something able to overcome the “vast repertoire of secular liturgies” in which we are “quietly assimilated to the earthly city.”¹¹¹ Smith brings us out of his discourse into the vast horizon and possibilities of Christian worship, beyond the narrow confines of propositional process, where:

Christian worship invites us into a very different social ontology, through a different set of rituals – a counter-liturgy...Christian worship is an intentionally decentring practice, calling us out of ourselves into the very life of God. That worship begins with a *call* that is already a first displacement that is at the same time an invitation; to find ourselves *in* Christ.

Marilynne Robinson, in an essay entitled, “Imagination and Community”, makes a similar and earlier call than that of Smith, asking us to consider from a wider perspective how “generous the scale at which imagination is exerted”, and how imagination generates communities.¹¹²

Having established a liturgical anthropology, a theoretical model which “empathizes that we are not primarily theorists,” Smith then moves to connect that possibility even closer to the nature of *practice* by way of reference to the work of Pierre Bourdieu.¹¹³ This work by Smith is important for my project for a few reasons. First, Smith outlines how formation is both *acquired* and *natural*, demonstrating that practitioners are not just thinkers, and that their practice is not merely driven by rational choice, but mostly through the *habitus* of complex relationships and community

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 140.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 141.

¹¹² See Marilynne Robinson “Imagination & Community: What Holds Us Together,” *Commonweal Magazine*. Last updated 27th February 2012. Accessed 5th June 2018, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/imagination-community>.

¹¹³ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 75.

dispositions.¹¹⁴ All agents have habituated inclinations “that spawn meaningful actions.”¹¹⁵ Here Smith understands Bourdieu as arguing, not that we must give up a theory about practice, but instead that “practice can only be grasped through constructs which destroy it.”¹¹⁶ This is where observers by their nature have removed themselves from the communities of practice they study, and are thereby unable to understand those practices, such that “Practice has a logic of which ‘logic’ knows nothing.”¹¹⁷ This is Bourdieu’s “theory of practice as practice.”¹¹⁸ This is a vital understanding for us, in that we can see how habit is the ‘embodied know-how’ that is carried within communities of practice, i.e., worship practices carry an embodied know-how for generating and ordering practice itself. Furthermore, there is a resonance between theory and practice which allows for the atrophy of resistance in the face of capitalist practices that we have observed. This is important for us, because it enables us to understand how the stories of Christian worship compete with those of late capitalism in the real world. Smith himself is hopeful that this will allow us to understand how one cultural liturgy is able to “trump” another.¹¹⁹ We can understand capitalist practices carrying within themselves embodied know-how, that then leads to a knowing, which in turn leads to further intensified practice.

Second, and following on from this, we see that “We need to understand practitioners fundamentally as ‘doers’ who are *acting* in and upon their world, not just ‘thinkers’ who happen to be ‘doing’ stuff.”¹²⁰ There is a further understanding that *habitus* is structured, communal, individual, directed, and acquired. The structuring of *habitus* is “personal and political,” coming from outside and conditioning agents. However, that community in *habitus* is formed by agents’ actions, such that, “I need the community and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 79

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 80.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 76.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 89.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 80.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 115.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 80.

social body to enable me to perceive the world; however, the social body needs *my* body to instantiate its vision and practice.”¹²¹ In this conception, we are not ‘blank slates’, but rather have an orientation towards that world that is instinctive and that forms us:

So *habitus* is very much like an Aristotelian habit; it is acquired, and therefore it has a history; it carries an entire past within it. But it has been appropriated and incorporated to such an extent that it is as if it were natural – it becomes “second nature.” So it’s *not* natural, and therefore not just instinctual *reaction*; but neither is it conscious or deliberative.¹²²

Within this framework, we can now understand how the social imagination of late capitalism has produced a social logic and arrangement of practices that perfect the human condition around its own logic. Evangelical Christian tradition understands human nature, i.e., a theological anthropology, to encompass a disposition of the self which is fallen, and bent on turning all of life around that self.¹²³ The irony of Evangelicalism is revealed further; despite that understanding, its worship practices have not resisted that orientation but have instead re-enforced it.

Third, the mechanisms of *habitus* allow us to understand how the bodies of individuals are incorporated into other social bodies. As Smith writes, “Not surprisingly, my *incorporation* into a social body is effected through the *social* body co-opting my body.”¹²⁴ This deepens our understanding of how social bodies are competing with one another. Smith does not ask, as I have, what the limits are to competing social bodies, and what the ontological delimits are to those social realities. For example, as we saw with

¹²¹ Ibid., 82.

¹²² Ibid., 83. We see here Smith’s lack of theological working out of how original sin might impair the *capax dei* of participation in God, and for what is normal and unnatural. For detailed critique of Smith’s theology of participation, see Brendan Peter Triffett, “Processio and the Place of Ontic Being: John Milbank and James K. A. Smith On Participation,” *The Heythrop Journal*, 57, no. 6 (2016): 3.

¹²³ Bebbington explains the Evangelical focus and priority of conversion and the underlying theological convictions that underpin this, such as original sin and fallenness; see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 6. My own denomination’s statement of faith contains evidence of this ongoing theological commitment to doctrines of original sin and fallenness; see “Statement of Faith,” last modified 10th February 2010, accessed 17th June 2018, <http://www.vineyardchurches.org.uk/tools/statement-of-faith/> accessed 17th June 2018. John Stott provides an example of the Evangelical understanding of sin, and of how human beings are biased towards an orientation of life around a fallen self; see John Stott, *Basic Christianity* (Nottingham: IVP, 2008), 93.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 94.

Cavanaugh, all social bodies are antithetical to the body of Christ, but for Evangelicals, they are not. We can now see that, for Evangelicals, social bodies certainly compete against the sociality of the body of Christ. But rather than the two sharing an antithetical relationship, the body of Christ should provide the ordering to all other social bodies.

This leads to a question: how does the worship of the church effect incorporation into social bodies, and in such a way as to rightly order all our other social embodiments? Also, what kind of worship is able to *affectively* order Christians around the body of Christ? Smith has a response here, where he reaches for the work of Graham Ward, and in deploying Ward, is reminiscent of Cavanaugh in arguing that it is the Eucharist that is the counter-liturgy to the social imaginary of other cultural forces.¹²⁵ Yet, I argue again, as my previous analysis of Ward and social ontology has shown, that the Eucharist alone is insufficient to the task Smith has set for it, and for this thesis. Only a form of worship with a whole-of- life social imaginary can begin to compete *affectively* with the social imaginary of the market. Again, I suggest that Evangelical worship carries this *affective* possibility.

6.2.3 A Phenomenology of *Temptation*: How *mis*-formation happens

Having established his Christian liturgical anthropology, Smith then moves on to explain how various liturgies interact with that anthropology around the practices of capitalism. This is helpful for us in that it shows Smith's method deployed against real world capitalist life, and also lays bare the limits of his method for my purposes. Smith constructs "a phenomenology of *temptation*, or at least an account of how *mis*-formation happens."¹²⁶ The social imaginaries of rival liturgies interact and shape us, and have implications for Christian worship as counter-formation and response to those. This is the

¹²⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 101.

body/story nexus that Smith wants us to consider seriously, for “our identity and love are sharpened liturgically precisely because liturgies are those rituals and practices that constitute the embodied stories of a body politic.”¹²⁷ Our liturgies are the rituals that form identity around visions of the good life, and those ‘story-laden’ practices are “absorbed into our imagination,” such that:

Liturgies are compressed, repeated, performed narratives that, over time, conscript us into the story they “tell” by showing, by performing. Such orientating narratives are not explicitly “told” in a “once-upon-a-time” discursive mode – as if the body politic invites us to passively sit at the proverbial librarian’s feet for “story time” while she walks us through a picture-book narration. No, these stories are more like dramas that are enacted and performed.¹²⁸

For Smith *affectation* and *affectivity* become an issue of what and how stories become “inscribed” into our bodies through “micro practices”.¹²⁹ For, following from the work of my previous chapter, we also understand all practices as having ontological dispositions – there is nothing neutral and uncontested in space and practice.¹³⁰ Now here is where Smith helpfully maps and overlays his anthropology and cultural liturgy with an exegesis of the cultural practices of the mall. At the shopping mall, Smith identifies four key features that *compete* with all other visions for life; (1) a notion of brokenness akin to ‘sin’; (2) a twisted configuration of sociality; (3) redemption through consumption; and (4) a vision for human flourishing that is unsustainable.¹³¹ Within this we see that (1) there is a soteriology at play in the shopping mall, where shopping trains us to see how we are in need, and offers the solution to our brokenness. Then (2) shopping is a social practice that we often undertake with others directly, and are therefore present with others who are shopping. Third (3) shopping is “quasi-redemptive”, in that it provides therapy to troubled souls, along with the “warmth” of relationship with salespeople. The secret to

¹²⁷ Ibid., 109.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 109.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 110.

¹³⁰ Here, like us, Smith is dependent on William Cavanaugh for his understanding of how consumption offers an understanding of what it means to be human, see Ibid., 94*n*.

¹³¹ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 96–101.

the shopping experience is (4) that it is an experience that cannot be sustained once we return to our lives and homes. The “mall’s liturgy is not just a practice of acquisition; it is a practice of *consumption*.”¹³² Only a return to the shopping mall can recreate that experience. Such experience requires the disposal of our previous acquisitions, in order to be replaced with the new things the shopping mall is now ready to provide.¹³³ Here, Smith is redolent of David Lyon, who explains how “more consumption may mean less puritan-style religion but not less Durkheimian sacred”.¹³⁴

For Smith himself proposes that what is required is a counter vision of life, i.e., the Kingdom of God, to unmask this situation and provide an alternative vision, around which Christian worship might retrain and form us differently and more *affectively*. Smith recognises a gap left with his accounts of desire; that visions of the Kingdom still remain unable to generate *action* that is more *affective*.¹³⁵ But Smith fails to bridge this *affectiveness* gap, as I have already claimed, and now detail further. Peak stuff theory might intersect here, where we might have reached Peak worship; the commodification of worship by consumers might have reached its peak.¹³⁶ Only if worship practices are in some way beyond commodification, can Peak worship be overcome.

¹³² Ibid., 100.

¹³³ Francis Yip explains something similar, in how capitalism functions like a religious system, analogically. See Francis Ching Wah Yip, *Capitalism as Religion? A Study of Paul Tillich’s Interpretation of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School, 2010).

¹³⁴ David Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 84.

¹³⁵ For Smith wants something that ultimately “generates action.” See James K. A Smith, *Imagining The Kingdom*, 16.

¹³⁶ I have in mind here the notion of ‘peak stuff’ in capitalist lifestyles. The sustainability chief of IKEA, Steve Howard, explained in a debate on climate change held in London that “In the west we have probably hit ‘peak stuff’,” as he bracketed “red meat, sugar and home furnishings” — “peak curtains” — under the heading of “stuff”, accessed 5th June 2018, last updated January 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/f4b47ecc-bdf2-11e5-846f-79b0e3d20eaf>.

6.3 Peak worship: Beyond the Eucharist and curricula

I wish to understand the epiphenomena of worship in the real world, to make an account that is able to reflect on practice, so that practice might itself be renewed, concretely and in action. I have made my account of Evangelicalism, its beliefs and practices, within the matrix of capitalist practices, mindful of the theological dispositions apparent in those practices. We can further explore those theological orientations as they relate to the nature of practices themselves, via Smith. Smith lets us understand how theory about practice is a form of practice, such that “it’s a matter of coming up with a *theory* of perception that does justice to the fact that we don’t, first and foremost, *think* about the world.”¹³⁷

By sketching the lineaments of a liturgical anthropology, we should come to a new appreciation of *why* historic Christian worship and spiritual formation had a specific embodied shape. In other words, doing some theoretical heavy lifting in philosophical anthropology should engender a new intentionality in worship planning, spiritual formation, and Christian pedagogy – a new intentionality about the *how*, by helping us appreciate the *why*.

Here, Smith helps us address one of the key problematics I established with the work of Miller, concerning how better theologies do not necessarily lead to better practices. With Smith, we might bridge this commodification gap, where beliefs are separated from practices, by being able to understand how the imaginations of life within late capitalism are more *affectively* organized by the practices of late capitalism. I detailed earlier in this thesis Miller’s proposal that the solution for responding to commodification is through the deepening of agency, but such deepening is subject to the problems of basic human nature. In Miller’s theological anthropology and soteriology, such human nature prefers the liberation of the self, where the deepening of agency is likely to be always seen as a restriction on the self. In other words, the commodification of late capitalism panders and perfects too well the shallow desires of fallen human nature, such that any Christian identity and agency remains largely opposed and rejected by the auto-poetic self.

¹³⁷ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining The Kingdom*, 16.

We can understand how what is imagined is practised, and how what is practised is then imagined. Evangelicals, engaging in capitalist practices, sought, à la Bebbington, to approach the world with a new epistemological confidence. In doing so, they missed that the way their perceptions of the world were really taking shape were pre-cognitively and somatically. Their practices in capitalism intended meaning of the world, more through their bodies and less through their heads, and the construction of ‘better’ beliefs. It is not just that commodification separates beliefs from practice, in the method Miller outlined for us, but it is also that commodification relies on this embodied perception and knowing of the world, and it is affective and effective because it engages human beings at the deepest levels of how they make, and intend, meaning as agents in the world. As Smith writes, “We are what we love precisely because we *do* what we love.”¹³⁸ If I may parse that more crudely, and simply; what we love, not what we give intellectual assent to, is what we do, and what we do is then what we become in our experience and imaginations. The mission drift by Evangelicals from claimed beliefs about faithful living for Christ takes place because of a Christian theological anthropology that combines with a liturgical anthropology. Fallen human beings are prone to disordered love, and to loving the world wrongly. Capitalism, and the mechanisms of commodification, leverage that ontological reality and identity, such that even the worship of Christians becomes commodified into dispensing religious goods and services. Here is the atrophy of resistance that takes place through moments of co-creation with capitalism.

Yet, we have to face again the limits of Smith’s proposals. Smith asserts that his methodology is not a universal and naturalised liturgical anthropology, where the work of God is marginalised and the activity of the Spirit unnecessary.¹³⁹ For Smith is careful throughout his work to show how: “Christian formation is a conversion of the imagination effected by the Spirit, who recruits our most fundamental desires by a kind of narrative

¹³⁸ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 12.

¹³⁹ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 20.

enchantment – by inviting us narrative animals into a story that seeps into our bones and becomes the orienting background of our being-in-the-world.”¹⁴⁰ Despite those claims, Smith never fulfils them. For, on the one hand, Smith’s liturgical anthropology is concerned with understanding universally the *affective* nature of practices around the imagination, yet, on the other, the counter-formation he seeks through this understanding is one that is distinctly Christian, with the Spirit forming the imaginations of formational practice. But instead of making this pneumatological move, Smith defaults to detailing competing curricula. Smith provides a summary of liturgies from the Catholic and reformed tradition as examples of Christian worship that would provide the affective shaping and formation he seeks.¹⁴¹ It is as if Smith brings us to the edge of a theological possibility, exploring how the Spirit is mediated through practices for reception, and how the Spirit intends and forms worshippers. Instead, Smith pulls back from this and collapses his counter-measures away from the Spirit into suggestions for reformed liturgies, whose ‘content’ might be able to combat the forces of consumer liturgies. In explaining how one cultural liturgy might ‘trump’ another, Smith reduces liturgies to a competition of affectiveness – i.e., my content and liturgical curricula trump yours. The history of Evangelical engagement in culture can be viewed as what happens when leaning too far into attempts to trump cultural affectiveness. Miller would remind us that this is a dangerous mode in which to operate, and that commodification is waiting to eviscerate the content of all competing cultural liturgies to its own end.¹⁴²

Smith, in essence, moves towards the trajectory set out by Milbank, a re-Catholisation of worship, albeit one that is slightly closer to Canterbury and Geneva than to Rome. To put it more crudely, I find myself with the unpalatable situation of refuting

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 15.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 170–171.

¹⁴² Smith believes he can account for how other cultural liturgies “trump” others, see *ibid.*, 115. Beyond his arguments that liturgies effect such trumping through embodied intentions, he has missed Miller’s diagnosis of the way in which commodification separates belief from practice. Smith might not be wrong, but the situation is more multidimensional than his diagnosis, and, in combination with Miller, becomes a better diagnostic.

the re-Catholisation of Milbank, only to then be invited by Smith into a renewal of the reformed tradition as my main response. And it is not that I have any quarrel with Anglican or Catholic liturgies, as my first chapter makes clear. It is the reduction of worship to competing curricula that is the problem, and again over-dichotomising the church against the world in this context.

This leaves Smith in a similar cul-de-sac to Cavanaugh, Bell, etc. Whilst he does not dichotomise the world and the church into the Eucharist, he instead locates worship more broadly within a wider range of liturgical practices. Yet there is more ontological bite to Cavanaugh: he may be more limited in his focus on the Eucharist, but at least he does not understand the Eucharist as merely more affective content. Something takes place in the Eucharist, that the Spirit does to ontologise agents in the real world. With Smith, we are left with a list of liturgies to try out in order to see how effective they might be. These liturgies are extant, available, and practiced, and there is no evidence that they lead to a more effective radical counter-formation by church traditions that practice them.¹⁴³ There is something we can trace and learn from Cavanaugh and Bell into Ward and Smith, however. Evangelicals would do well to be alert to the competing of the social bodies of capitalism and the deforming forces of the practices of commodification. Recovery and use of counter-formational liturgies, mapping those against an awareness of the liturgies at play in Evangelical worship on Sundays and out in the world, would undoubtedly help in counter-formation and faithful living for Christ. In other words, telling a better story and inhabiting it through worship is a good start. But something is still missing; a Spirit-led, Christ-formed experience where co-creation can take place and resistance occur simultaneously, where the counter-measures of Christianity are not reduced to more effective liturgies.

¹⁴³ But there is a movement into these liturgies by Evangelicals seeking to resist the effects of consumer life on their faith, as chapter one of my thesis established.

There is another concern I have over Smith's methodology, one to which he himself is alert.¹⁴⁴ Given the nature of Evangelical piety, with an anti-intellectual orientation to culture, is there a danger that Smith's work further encourages a call towards less *thinking*? As Mark Noll has shown us, "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind."¹⁴⁵ Smith's response is that whilst he claims worship is integral for Christian formation, he is not claiming that any worship is *sufficient* for formation.¹⁴⁶ Worship for Smith is not the dissemination of intellectual ideas and the formation of *thinkers*, but the formation of *agents*, such that "the goal is not to denigrate the intellect; rather it is to situate theoretical reflection within the wider purview of our fundamental pre-theoretical orientation to the world".¹⁴⁷ In other words, we need to attend to the intellectual for certain, but we must also ensure that we locate this within a "pre-theoretical register".¹⁴⁸ If Smith is right about the nature of worship, the implications for us are that: a) we need a story able to counter those of other cultural liturgies; and b) those stories must be enacted in worship at, and through, the level of this *affective* understanding.

I have proposed, in the minority report that is my thesis, that Evangelical worship has this story and *affective* nature within capitalism. I propose that with Smith's understanding of worship, we might begin to see how Evangelical worship, despite claims of instilling cognitive propositions about doctrine, has instead been more *affective* in the deployment of its imagination around the narrative of capitalism, and through resonance with capitalist practices. It is the recovery of that *affectiveness* that my thesis now points towards for Evangelicals and others.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴⁵ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 3.

¹⁴⁶ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 11. The Evangelical mind is not always unthinking, but there is an evidenced resistance to engagement in thinking by Evangelicals.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 12–13.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 13.

6.4 Four Moments of the Christ Event: An affective Evangelical social imaginary

The burgeoning tradition of contemporary worship has received little attention academically, beyond some historical notice. The attention that it has received has generally been negative and rapidly dismissive; indeed, it is striking how often academic discussions of Christian worship in contemporary Britain and/or America fail to notice the tradition at all. If discussed, it is asserted to be theologically anaemic and musically poor, in contrast to the richness found in ancient liturgies, or the great hymnody of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the rare occasion when a writer pauses to give any evidence for these rather sweeping judgements, it will usually involve citing the words of a particularly trivial chorus, with expressed incredulity that something so lacking in content could have ever found its way into Christian worship.

— Stephen R. Holmes, "Listening for the Lex Orandi"

At the edge and end of all my maps, I look at where I would go next if my thesis had room for this excursion, demonstrating how Evangelicalism has, within itself, the resources to respond to the problems it has caused. Stephen Holmes reminds us how all too easily Evangelicalism is denigrated and found wanting by those unwilling to examine its fecundity and other such possibilities. Attention to actual Evangelical social imaginaries would reveal the possibilities for their affective nature and allow for an internal resourcement by Evangelicals from their own tradition. So, what is an Evangelical social imaginary? I believe O'Donovan provides the outline of one:

In following the narrative which the early church told of Christ and the Kingdom, we shall mark four 'moments', which we shall refer to as Advent, Passion, Restoration and Exaltation [...] The four moments can claim to represent the essential structure of the story [...] There is one story not four, and the division into four moments is an exegetical device only.

Through the Spirit the church recapitulates the whole saving event, Advent, Passion, Restoration and Exaltation. In Christ it is represented in that event; in the Spirit it participates in it.¹⁴⁹

O'Donovan's "four moments of the Christ-event" offer a credible and serviceable Evangelical social imaginary to counter the forces of capitalism. It is the affective dynamics of this social imaginary, in how it is an emotional counterpoint able to respond

¹⁴⁹ O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, 133, 145, 161. O'Donovan is an Evangelical ethicist, his work made from an Evangelical standpoint. His accounts are made from a post-Christendom and Augustinian perspective of co-creation and resistance with Christian worship and practices.

to the imaginations and practices of capitalism, that are most promising. For O’Donovan, the church is to be understood as Catholic in its authorization, and in its social reality. For “the catholic identity of the church derives from the progress of the Spirit’s own mission.”¹⁵⁰ But within this, the church in its structures is always catching up with that mission of the Spirit. If the church has any generic shape at all it is only insofar as it “recapitulates the Christ-event itself, and so proclaims the Christ-event to the world.”¹⁵¹

O’Donovan writes:

...the relation of the church to Christ, to which the Pentecostal Spirit admits it, is itself a formed relation: it is a recapitulation of the Christ-event, by which the community participates in the acts and experiences which the representative first undertook on its behalf. The shape of the pre-structured church, then, is the shape of the Christ-event, become the dynamics of a social identity.¹⁵²

In articulating the possible marks and shapes of the church, O’Donovan reveals a curriculum and imagination for ecclesiology. It is the faithful retelling and reliving of the whole story of the life of Christ that is the content and practice for Christian worship. Where O’Donovan claims that the recapitulation of the Christ-event constitutes the basic shape of Christian moral thought and action, I suggest we can also understand this recapitulation as constituting an Evangelical social imaginary for belief and practice. Evangelicalism is not unique in claiming an orientation around the person of Jesus Christ – the wider church can be measured by such creedal and confessional claims.¹⁵³ But within its own social imaginary, Evangelicalism lays a specific claim to this self-understanding, as we saw with the early chapters of this thesis, and with Bebbington’s Quadrilateral. O’Donovan is careful to define the four marks of the Christ-event as being *heuristic* and not a “hard and fast” delineation and structure.¹⁵⁴ This heuristic allows us to trace the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 169–170.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 174.

¹⁵² Ibid., 171.

¹⁵³ Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*, 9, explains this theological orientation by which all churches can be assessed.

¹⁵⁴ O’Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*, 173.

“correspondence” between the worship acts of the church and the manifest shape of the Christ-event.¹⁵⁵ O’Donovan’s heurism is not without problems and critique.¹⁵⁶ For my purposes, it is not the delineation of the moments of the Christ event, but the notion of recapitulation of that event, that is the greatest opportunity.¹⁵⁷

We have seen where the church became “instrumentalized as a consumer-oriented vendor of a salvation that is intrinsically private and individual.”¹⁵⁸ Within this, the value of church has often become how well it helps in the realising of the imaginaries of capitalist lifestyles. This instrumentalizing arrives at the terminus of a ‘churchless faith’ where individuals within the social arrangements of capitalism *use* the resources of Christianity to achieve the social imaginaries of capitalism. O’Donovan’s Evangelical social imaginary could further help us understand non-mediated modes of ecclesiology. We see in O’Donovan’s work something that Bryan Stone also claims; that “salvation is in the first place, a distinct form of social existence.”¹⁵⁹ The worship practices and habits of church are then something that name and instantiate the social realities and experience of salvation. This does not mean that I am merely repeating in a new guise that the church remains ‘useful’ for experiencing salvation. Recent widespread and popular re-imaginings of the church as ‘missional’ have often fallen foul of this de-ecclesialising of

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ O’Donovan lists four worship practices – four sacraments of baptism, Eucharist, keeping the Lord’s Day, and the laying-on of hands – that he sees as correlate to this recapitulation. Many Evangelicals would find that too prescriptive. See Ibid., 73. Bretherton determines that O’Donovan has conflated two distinct moments within the third mark of Christ’s exaltation; see Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 104. Bretherton would see moment three as corresponding only to resurrection with a distinct moment of ascension, and the Pentecost event (Ibid., 104-105).

¹⁵⁷ O’Donovan’s more recent work on ethics begins with a volume on moral agency. In this work, he does not develop the four movements of the Christ-event, but there are developments concerning agency that we can connect here. Most specifically, that acting the faith (ethics) is also thinking the faith (theology), see O’Donovan, *Self, World, and Time*. Agency is formed by theological virtues where the ‘reflective moment of practical reason turned outwards to reality’, 125.

¹⁵⁸ Bryan Stone, "The Ecclesiality of Mission in the Context of Empire," in *Walk Humbly with the Lord: Church and Mission Engaging Plurality*, ed. by Viggo Mortensen and Andreas Østerlund Nielsen (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans 2011), 106.

¹⁵⁹ Stone, *The Ecclesiality of Mission*, 107.

the church.¹⁶⁰ On the other hand, as an Evangelical, I do not want to over-ecclesialise salvation. God's mission in the world is *ecclesial*, the formation of a people. We can then press on to understand how the church as an ecclesia, a social body, is vital to Evangelical mission. Evangelical worship and practices should therefore bring people into a 'practical-prophetic' ecclesiology where the mission of God comes into all social realities, and simultaneously orders all those social realities around mission. The recapitulation and Four Moments of the Christ-Event provide a far more extensive worship curriculum. They can encompass the Eucharist and other liturgical realities, but also make possible a far wider range of affective practices outside the range of Anglo-Catholic resources. The recapitulation of the Christ-event could allow us to consider how current Evangelical worship could bring the right ordering to all social realities, rather than trying to out-narrate and completely overcome them in competition. That is a distinctly Evangelical imaginary. For Evangelicals, the recapitulation of the Christ-event is not about the homogenizing of identity in the face of the exciting self-expression encouraged by capitalism. Rather, it is about the freedom that can only come when God seizes us, and, through worship, we discover how there are no limits to the depths of identity-formation in the Christ-event.

6.5 Conclusion: The Scandal of Evangelical Christianity

The scandal of Evangelical Christianity might not be in its previous claims that, unless intellectual assent is given to propositional beliefs, an eternity in hell awaits people.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ For example, see Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 2003), 209. Here, Frost and Hirsch make the claim that ecclesiology is merely a form and function determined completely by mission. The person and work of Christ determine that mission. This completely separates the person of Christ from the body of Christ in mission, and relegates the Church to a completely instrumentalised tool for individuals.

¹⁶¹ Richard T. Hughes, "Are Restorations Evangelical," in Donald W. Dayton, Robert K. Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 116.

Rather, it might be that the scandal is in the face of consumer agency, to claim that we are not free to be whoever we choose to be. We will only know who we really are by the re-ordering of our agency, the transfer of object and subject of self, in relationship to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The depths of this experience no-one has fully plumbed. Here might be the relief from the very real suffering of life in late-capitalist societies, with new islands of social care. It is all too easy to decry current western economic pressures as insignificant, compared to those of the developing world. Yet, there is a kind of 'bondage' to create a self in consumer culture – the sheer scope of what self-creation means in capitalism is a type of suffering. The self, understood within the recapitulation of the Christ-event, might find needed relief from the perverted liturgies of capitalism. And Evangelicals might find a more faithful living of life for Jesus Christ.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Blending recipes, methods and ingredients

The art of theology lies in the blending of recipes, methods, and ingredients.

— Martyn Percy, “Confessions: Tone and Content in a Reasonable Radical”

My thesis is a tool, a map to be deployed, a reductionist device for others to use as a road map to the overt representations and propositions held in similar contexts. I have heuristically traced correspondence between the practices of the Evangelical church with capitalism, and its faithfulness to a horizon of a life around Jesus Christ. How well I have achieved that, or not, is the place to begin my conclusion, and to assess how well I have blended the recipes, methods, and ingredients of my thesis.

7.1 Necessary Limits and Implications: Other possible mappings

My research points to many related avenues of exploration, places my mapping method might have considered further, but which I determined I was unable to explore. In particular, I noted the value of a fuller Augustinian account of Desire, and correlations with assessments of Evangelical accounts of desire, while acknowledging the reasons why such work would be beyond my thesis remit. At one point in my research, I explored in detail a historical accounting of Evangelicalism in capitalism. Indeed, I made an extensive excursion with a review of historical texts to trace the moments of intensification between capitalism and Evangelicalism. That work was undertaken as a kind of ethnographic, an alternative reductionist account, to the reductions of Evangelicalism through congregational studies that practical theology sometimes makes. Ultimately, that method was a bridge too far for my work, and was discarded from my writing. It formed, however, a helpful background to the wider aspects of my research,

and allows me to know and connect my research to an account of Evangelicals in the real world, and to their concrete history.¹

I did not review the “prosperity gospel”, being an obvious manifestation of the capitulation of Christian faithful living to market imaginations.² For I was concerned not with that particular manifestation within capitalism, but with a broader understanding of the general perniciousness of the forces at work between Evangelicalism and capitalism. However, my research might go some way to explaining some of the nature of prosperity-based Christianity, as it would other versions of Christian faith within capitalism.

Then there are other significant domains that my research touched upon, where I had to make limited sorties and excursions, for instance, Evangelical ecclesiology. For my thesis has an ecclesial focus, seeking an understanding of the shape and forces in ecclesial life of Evangelicals by capitalism. We have seen that an Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology carries a theological critique of capitalism, and a way of worshipping and constructing the social reality of the church in the midst of that critique. I have charted an ecclesial course between this, on the one hand, and the collapse into market life for ecclesiology by Pete Ward, with *Liquid Church*, where shopping becomes an ecclesial practice. I have asserted that the former notion of ecclesiology makes too much of the church for Evangelicals, whilst the latter makes too little of the church, displacing too far all notions of social reality to market practices and imaginations. Yet I have not articulated *what* Evangelical ecclesiology actually is. As noted already, many might, and many have, assumed Evangelical ecclesiology is an oxymoron.³ Evangelicals might seem to have no ecclesiology, as we saw Connolly claim, other than that made from market imaginations, or voluntarist behaviours, as Milbank asserted. But that is not the case.⁴

¹ I have inserted many footnotes throughout the thesis to the historical sources of that research, in order to ensure that my account is undergirded by concrete historical examples.

² See again Kate Bowler, *Blessed*.

³ Bruce Hindmarsh, “Is Evangelical Ecclesiology an Oxymoron? A Historical Perspective.”

⁴ For a rare study on the doctrine of the church held by Evangelicals, see Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *The Community of the Word: Toward and Evangelical Ecclesiology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP USA, 2005), 125.

Indeed, some of the practical theology studies of congregations that my introduction surveys, do reveal the broader terrain of Evangelical ecclesiologies. My thesis does not seek to confirm such ecclesiologies, but rather is built upon those studies and assumptions about them. I believe this was one of the necessary limitations for my research. Moreover, within the large domains of my thesis, I am also aware of the difference between, as well as the overlapping of, Evangelical and Pentecostal Ecclesiologies.⁵

In addition, I criticised Smith for drawing back from understanding how the Spirit brings the church into existence, and instead collapses understanding of worship into issues of competing liturgies and curricula. Yet Smith, in some earlier work, reviews how Pentecostal practice gets much closer to the ontology of worship, and how the Spirit inhabits those practices.⁶ To be fair to Smith, understanding where God is in the practices of the church is a major theological undertaking. However, I wish Smith had marked the path more clearly. I am left needing to consider how the church is, as Reinhard Hütter states, “the public of the Holy Spirit.”⁷ Indeed O’Donovan reminds us that the Spirit authorises and empowers the church. It is through the Spirit that the church recapitulates the Christ-event. Such recapitulations are re-narrations and instantiations of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The authorisation and empowerment for all of this begins at Pentecost. O’Donovan helped us to see the link between pneumatology and the Christ-event. But his pneumatology is minimal, unable to answer our thesis questions in several key regards. There is a distinct moment of ascension and Pentecost in the Christ-event. This moment is where the social practices of the church are embedded in social realities, and take place through worship. O’Donovan’s pneumatology is central to understanding

⁵ For example, see John Christopher Thomas, ed., *Toward a Pentecostal Theology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010).

⁶ James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy, Pentecostal Manifestos* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010), 86.

⁷ Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000). Bonhoeffer has much to say about how the Spirit creates the church through its worship, as it exists between the ascension of Christ and His Parousia; see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*.

the agency of the church, but in such a way that this pneumatology is minimal to that agency. Ultimately O'Donovan ties the practices of the church, its sacramental nature, too closely to the resurrection, and away from the moment of Pentecost.⁸ Certainly, O'Donovan helps us move beyond the false binaries of the sacramental and capitalism, but his sacramentalism remains limited and disconnected from the Pentecost moment. The result is a minimal pneumatology that leaves him with a truncated articulation of sacramental life.⁹ In O'Donovan's most recent work, his second chapter explores in detail and develops ideas of how prayer and the curricula of worship are how our agency before God is renewed.¹⁰ Yet even here, O'Donovan's explanation of how it is the Spirit that uses the actions and resources of prayer to convert and transform us, is fleeting, tantalising, and made almost in passing.¹¹ What is still needed, and my thesis points to, is a robust theology of the Holy Spirit that engages with the formative practices of capitalism.

My research points to some additional potential ecclesial research projects on Evangelicalism and capitalism. In particular, using ethnographic methods, as a corollary of the binocular of my research method. For I have been deliberately self-conscious about my "methodological syncretism".¹² The *returning* of my research within that method, leads me not just to the theological, as above, but also to the ecclesial via ethnography. For the ethnographic is important to bring accounts of social reality into contact with social theory, and with theology. In other words, I find myself wanting to know if what is described is really there, and heed Pete Ward's warning not to mistake social theory

⁸ We have already noted that O'Donovan is careful not to be fixed on any number of sacraments, unlike other authors we have examined earlier who deploy the Eucharist as their primary sacramental movement.

⁹ We saw a similar problem with our other key interlocutors, like Cavanaugh, Miller, Graham Ward, and even Smith. They reduce the nature of how the body of Christ is made flesh in the world to a restricted sacramental curriculum.

¹⁰ Oliver O'Donovan, chapter 2 "Faith and Purpose", *Finding and Seeking: Ethics as Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2014).

¹¹ O'Donovan, *Finding and Seeking*, 41–43.

¹² Percy, "Confessions," 331–332.

for social reality.¹³ Part of my *returning* has me wanting to survey my thesis constituents to listen further with additional methodological modes, in order to better “comprehend the depth, density, identity, and the shaping of faith communities”¹⁴ For instance, an ethnographic survey of what Evangelicals share in their prayers with others, as a sampling of ‘the scene of the crime’, to map, and make explicit, Evangelical social imaginaries, would be illuminating. Correlating such an account against the modulation of Weber I have made would allow for production of an Evangelical Work Ethic within late capitalism. Another project would be a sampling of concrete Evangelical worship practices to identify moments of co-creation, resistance and atrophy, and a correlation of those moments with the theological findings of my thesis. Then there is some work to be done on where Evangelicals locate themselves in their social arrangements. For ethnographic research on how and where Evangelicals invest in and situate their embodied relationships could then be compared with my theological understandings of how the social imaginary of capitalism orients people in their social arrangements. This would further reveal the concrete commitments by Evangelicals, and what funds and underpins their social and embodied arrangements.

7.2 Summary of Findings: Evangelicalism — creature of and response to capitalism

We have seen that Evangelicalism was a creature of, and a response to, capitalism. Evangelicalism is not the bastard child, à la Milbank, of capitalism. Nor is it responsible for creating capitalism. It has a much more complex and resonant relationship with capitalism, fraught with many inherent problems. We are now in a better position to understand the real nature of the relationship and some of its problems. Also, we saw how many critiques of Evangelicalism presumed Weber’s account of the Protestant Work

¹³ Pete Ward, “Introduction,” in *Perspectives* 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 333.

Ethic. We have seen that whilst Weber's ethic still holds some water, we have arrived at a post-Protestant Work Ethic in late capitalism. Those who build their accounts on Weber would do better to consider how Weber must now be modulated.

Within this post-Protestant Work Ethic, I have shown how concerns with the doctrine of assurance migrated into considerations of providence. Anxiety about assurance in a new Protestant world, combine with anxieties about life in new economic flows of developing capitalism. My thesis identified that a focus on epistemic issues to explain the development of Evangelical belief and practice was only part of the story, and that an understanding of faith within economic arrangements was needed. For we can now see that while Protestants focused on epistemic issues for belief and practice, and Evangelicals obsessed about propositional formulations of faith for cultural apologetics and faith formation, something else was taking place. Commodification eviscerated every increasing 'better' and more foundationalist epistemologies by Evangelicals. The imaginations for capitalist life, through the embodied practices of life in capitalism, re-embedded imaginations for life into Evangelical narratives. Where once the Protestant Work Ethic resisted the deforming forces of the capitalist lifestyle, it now capitulated to them and, in many ways, perfected them. Providence was the doctrine that smuggled the social imaginaries of capitalism into Evangelical belief and practice.

Moreover, we can now understand theologically how human nature, the disposition of human beings to love the world wrongly, allows for this resonant behaviour in the first place. The pincer movement of capitalism is to bypass beliefs and capture human agents at the affective location for their *poiesis* that then flattens their agency into shallow consumer constructions for identity and meaning. A resonant feedback loop forms in capitalism, of habits and micro-practices that train and order desire around further engagement in those habits, leading to a further disordering of desire. Evangelicals, as they have sought close missional engagement with culture, thinking they can safely deploy those cultural resources within epistemic boundaries, have inadvertently missed

the Trojan horse of commodification. Evangelicals need to pay heed to these forces, and how they are centred around desire and the embodied practices of everyday life. By having too low a view of ecclesiology, of the body of Christ, social imaginations that are neither Christian, nor Evangelical, have become the ecclesial social constructions for many Evangelicals. The result has been the translation of Evangelical Christians into the anomic social arrangements of capitalism. This is the logical post-church, and post-ecclesial, terminus to which Liquid Church points. But what are we do in response? We cannot be guardians and gatekeepers of life within capitalism. Like so many of my thesis interlocutors ask: can we have any hope to overcome the deforming forces of capitalist life?

We have seen that the social imaginary for Evangelical life would benefit from more carefully choosing the stories it retells – from selecting and making use of worship curricula that retell a Christian story, to those that also respond to the competing nature of consumer liturgies. But my thesis has shown how, ultimately, this is not enough. Evangelicals being true to their nature cannot simply pursue a counter-liturgical pathway too far, for fear of over-dichotomising the church against the world. Also, we have seen how competing curricula are not sufficient to the task of more effective competition for formation.

I am proposing that if capitalism is able to co-opt the fallen nature of human agents, i.e., due to their theological anthropology, we cannot reduce formation to one of competing liturgies. What is required is a reordered theological anthropology, one made possible by relationship with the object of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ. My thesis aims were to diagnose theologically what it is about Evangelical faith that led to loss of resistance within capitalism. It was always beyond my remit to explain *how* Evangelicalism might then recover its resistance gene, rather than only to point to that possibility. This, ironically, is my minority report for my thesis. That despite the problems it has caused, Evangelicalism contains within itself an affective theological anthropology

that is the antidote to the deforming forces of life in capitalism. The pathway into resonance is also the potential pathway away from resonance. My work is the intramural examination and admission of the problems, made in order to fund responses that are Evangelical. My thesis brings me to that possibility and location. In closing, I offer an outline for this grand aim and future possibility.

7.3 Here Lie Dragons: Prisoners of geography and the future of Evangelicalism

Scully: On the old mariner maps, the cartographers would designate unexplored territories by simply writing "Here Be Monsters."

Mulder: I've seen the same thing on maps of New York City.

— *The X-Files*, "Quagmire"

Vladimir Putin cannot make mountains appear in the Ukraine to protect the flatland territories of Russia.¹⁵ Similarly, I cannot make the current situation of Evangelicals within capitalism something that it is not. Some, as we have seen, believe they can do so by positing the replacement of capitalism, while at the same time failing to understand the real nature of Evangelicalism.¹⁶ Capitalism may well be nihilistic, and manifestly irrational, in the way it undermines basic human needs. But I cannot replace the open and inviting flatlands of capitalism, or create mountains to protect and stop agents from a life within capitalism. I can, however, unmask the challenges of that environment and draw upon the resources Evangelicals have to respond to that situation with understanding and hope. I find myself, like many of my key thesis interlocutors, wondering if any theological formulations and a diagnosis can aid in the protean nature of capitalism. Perhaps we have reached a moment of "Peak Evangelicalism" in the USA.¹⁷ Meanwhile, in the UK,

¹⁵ Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2016).

¹⁶ This is a failing on the part of Milbank, Connolly and Bell that I have demonstrated. For an additional example of this failing, see this interview with Milbank in "The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture," accessed 3rd April 2018, <https://theotherjournal.com/2005/04/04/theology-and-capitalism-an-interview-with-john-milbank/>.

¹⁷ It seems American institutions are abandoning the use of the name Evangelical in a post-Donald Trump world, where Evangelical has come to equal Republican; see "Are Pastors Discarding the

Evangelicalism is already in marked decline with the post-church movement, where middle-class Christians participate in ecclesial life only when they have nothing better to do.¹⁸

Yet, I have claimed Evangelicalism thrives on contestation and renegotiation of its identity in the face of over-accommodation to cultural contexts, and my thesis provides resources for such renegotiations.¹⁹ Contestation implies some energy and vigour in the face of Christian apathy and indifference. This claim of possible re-negotiation is perhaps the location and signpost into some of the most important possibilities for research on the future of Evangelicalism. Martyn Percy has made his own map and account of the future of Evangelicalism that would seem to diagnose and point to “Peak Evangelicalism”.²⁰ In particular, for the Charismatic Evangelicalism, which is my own ecclesial location, Percy predicts a bifurcating choice, between either ongoing assimilation into mainstream

Word “Evangelical”? We Surveyed Hundreds,” Christianity Today, last updated November 2016, accessed 17th June 2018, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/november-web-exclusives/are-evangelical-pastors-discarding-evangelical-label.html>. Biblical scholar and academic Scot McKnight has called for the term Evangelical “to be buried;” see “Bury the Word “Evangelical,” Patheos, last modified 16th October 2017, accessed 17th June 2018, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2017/10/16/burying-word-evangelical/>.

¹⁸ Cory Labanow completed his congregational study on my own church in 2001–2002; see Cory Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church: A Congregational Study of a Vineyard Church* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). Whilst many pastors in my Vineyard Church movement were averse to such interviewing of their members, I welcomed this study. In Labanow’s original survey of my congregation, it was a surprise to see how many people, if not most, self-identified as regular weekly attenders. As a participant observer and pastor of the congregation, I knew this was not the case, and most of the people responding were some of the most absent week by week. In a personal review of this with Labanow, it seemed what was likely was that people meant when they were not on holiday, not at a sporting event, not catching up on work, undertaking a fun run, not taking a break for a week, etc, they still considered themselves weekly attenders. Now, attendance is not the same as engagement by any means, but it remains an indicator of the other social arrangements and commitments by Christians week-in and week-out. This same decline with the ‘nones’ and the ‘dones’ in the USA, with its own growing post-church movement, is something observed in my thesis; see chapter 1, page 7.

¹⁹ Beyond US *intra nos* review of the use of the term Evangelical, an example of the willingness by Evangelicals to examine and admit to the ‘toxic evangelicalism’ in daily life and to renegotiate its contested identity, is seen in the meeting of Evangelical leaders at Wheaton College in Chicago, and elsewhere in Illinois, April, 2018. Fuller Seminary President Dr. Mark Labberton’s presentation at the meetings shows the willingness by some Evangelicals to name, own, and respond to state Evangelicalism has ended up in with its cultural accommodations; see Mark Labberton, “Political Dealing: the Crisis of Evangelicalism,” Fuller Theological Seminary, last modified 20th April 2018, accessed 17th June 2018, <https://www.fuller.edu/posts/political-dealing-the-crisis-of-evangelicalism/>. An admission of Evangelical complicity with damaging capitalist lifestyles is made by Labberton.

²⁰ Percy, “Symbiotic Alchemy”, 31–49.

denominations, or sectarian isolation and annihilation.²¹ Here at the end of my thesis, constructed to resource the future of Evangelicalism, I open out my ‘maps’, overlaying them on the larger mapping produced by Percy. This generates for me a similar question to Percy’s, as he concludes his predictions of Evangelicalism’s future, “To what extent do the maps reflect the reality that might be on the ground?”²² As a junior map maker, I want to know how my map might now work in practice for those seeking to navigate the terrain of Evangelicalism in a capitalist context. My thesis shows how Percy’s two trajectories are indeed manifest and writ large, but offers a signpost to a different future for Evangelicalism; one that would be true to its own identity and tradition. For I have shown, on the one hand, that resistance to the pernicious forces of capitalism is to be found in making more of the church and in a turn towards Canterbury. But those deleterious forces remain extant for mainstream denominations to continue to negotiate. The turn back into the church might be a comforting temporary rerouting for Evangelicals. Then the previous Emerging Church, with ‘Fresh Expressions’, et al., is revealed by my thesis to be birthed from an Evangelical contestation about identity, one which has largely capitulated to the imaginations of capitalism for its ecclesial arrangements. This is a genetic dead end, in terms of sterilising its adherents, and in being unable to produce communities of faith formed around the mission of Christ in the world.

Now, my own mappings do not provide a new route or the opening of a new passage to navigate and escape the forces of capitalism. My project does, however, call for a denouement of sorts and for an Evangelical *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, for a renewal via an understanding of the context in which it is now situated. Roman map makers, faced with the end of the known world, marked terra incognita with the inscription HIC SVNT LEONES – Here are Lions. In the Middle Ages, the edges of the known world were delineated on maps with drawings of dragons, sea serpents, and other

²¹ Ibid., 44–48.

²² Ibid., 48.

portentous creatures. Rather less dramatically, medieval map makers simply noted “Terra incognita” or “terra ignota”.²³ Where Percy would seem to see a dissipation and inevitable flow of Evangelicalism in to the rivers of mainstream churches or underground into sectarian isolation, I remain hopeful for something different: for a new generation of Evangelicals, who will emerge, led by the Spirit, to navigate the *terra ignota* that lays before them. That hope is not just wishful thinking, but stems from my review of the nature of Evangelicalism, and a warranted conviction of how the Spirit authors the church.

Over time, cultural change reshapes the landscape, and reveals new places that can, and need, to be explored. Evangelicals have no excuse not to “see where they are on the map,” for globalised culture, social media and technology make such self-location easier whilst, at the same time, limiting previously unfettered notions of extensity.²⁴ Percy points towards the new landscapes revealed with the “sea changes” in modern culture, in particular of gender, with women in ministry, and the even more seismic changes around LGBTQ+ issues, all of which Christians are increasingly unable to ignore.²⁵ The maps before Evangelicals now contain the symbols of these new landscapes Evangelicalism has yet to navigate. Evangelicals might all too easily continue to label these new locations with “here lie dragons.”²⁶ My own mappings reveal something as seismic, and rather more subterranean; a place where the dragons and monsters are not new landscapes of ‘others’, but are in fact a self-location for how Evangelicals have been co-opted by the

²³ Despite references in popular culture, The Hunt-Lenox Globe of circa 1510 is the only known map that bears the phrase “HIC SVNT DRACONES” (here are dragons) near the coast of eastern Asia. The Hunt-Lenox Globe is housed in the collection of the New York Public Library, “Treasures of the New York Public Library,” accessed 16th June 2018; <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/treasures/items/show/163>.

²⁴ Percy, “Symbiotic Alchemy”, 46–47.

²⁵ Ibid, 42–44.

²⁶ The Nashville Statement on sexuality would seem to want to roll the sea back over revealed landscapes, and render these cultural locations as places to enforce conservative convictions. For nothing but “total allegiance” is allowed for their story of the “path” for following Christ; see “Nashville Statement,” Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, accessed 16th June 2018, <https://cbmw.org/nashville-statement/>.

imaginings and practices of capitalism. The greatest monsters to face and navigate are always those of our own making. Capitalism and its developments have been the sea in which Evangelicals have been swimming, and within which they have worked to perfect life.

Mappings of crimes have become rather sophisticated in recent years. You can insert your post code in the UK into an online map and explore the nature and exact location of crimes.²⁷ Chalk outlines once used at crime scenes are now a literary trope in modern culture, and are unused by modern investigators. The cliché of the trope is the chalk outline of a body at the scene of a crime. There is, perhaps, a scene of the crime map for Evangelicals, a chalk outline of where bodies interacted with each other, around the body of Christ, at the fulmination of the forces between capitalism and faith. That location is where, week by week, Sunday by Sunday, when they are not otherwise engaged in leisure and consumer experiences, Evangelical Christians gather and pray for each other. At this location, the scene of the crime, my thesis makes an honest confession before Connolly, Milbank, and others: Evangelicals have all too often instrumentalised worship, so as to leverage a consumer lifestyle and the social imaginaries of capitalism.

In my own church location, we practice the laying-on of hands. People here are engaged in deeply somatic experiences where they open up and share their inner struggles, dreams, hopes, anxieties, and aspirations with others. These are then re-narrated, as those praying with them share words and pictures, scriptures, and encouragements. The possibilities and practice of re-narration are deeply engrained in our worship liturgies, be they singing, coffee, doughnuts, ministry to the poor, praying for the sick, or ‘healing on the streets’.²⁸ All these moments extend the avenues and opportunities of re-narration in late-capitalist society. Jesus Christ in these contexts remains the

²⁷ See “Police UK,” accessed 5th April 2018, <https://www.police.uk/metropolitan/E05000557/crime/>.

²⁸ Those practices are evidenced in the extensive ethnographic study of my denomination in Tanya M. Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

overwhelming object of our desire, and the measure of our living. Here, Evangelical worship may provide one of the greatest possibilities for countering the pathologies of late capitalism. For it continues to locate the training of desires around Jesus and His Kingdom, offering a deeply somatic whole-life engagement through our worship.²⁹ My own denomination has been the subject of extensive ethnographic studies. These studies confirm these concrete worship practices and Evangelical imaginaries, along with examples of the scenes of the crime. I point to them to show that I am not party to just wishful thinking, but that the actual practices of Evangelicals carry, not only ongoing problems, but the opportunity for response that my research seeks.³⁰ At the scene of the worship crime, instead of asking Jesus to provide consumer lifestyles, remains the opportunity to recover a Christ-centred lifestyle, and this centring is not alien to Evangelicals. This is the main horizon to which my thesis points for further exploration. Here, perhaps, despite the problems Evangelicalism has caused, is the greatest possibility and unique opportunity for alternative formational practices within late capitalism.

²⁹ This correlates with Smith's claims for the ontological nature of Pentecostal worship; see Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*.

³⁰ Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back*; Jon Bialecki, *A Diagram for Fire: Miracles and Variations in an American Charismatic Movement* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017); Andy Park, Lester Ruth, and Cindy Rethmeier, *Worshipping with the Anaheim Vineyard: The Emergence of Contemporary Worship (The Church at Worship: Case Studies from Christian History)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017); E. Mary Neve, *Power Praying: An Evaluation of Prayer Ministry in the Teaching of John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement* (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012); Martyn Percy, *Words, Wonders and Power: Understanding Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism and Revivalism* (London: SPCK, 1996). Away from my denomination, a PhD study on Hillsong diagnosed the enmeshment with capitalist markets, but also the simultaneous assistance of Evangelical worship to help Christians navigate capitalist society; see Tanya Riches, "SHOUT TO THE LORD! Music and change at Hillsong: 1996-2007" (Master's thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2010); and Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner, eds., *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me Out Upon the Waters* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Then, there are these additional comprehensive studies and surveys; Esther Elliott, "Worship Time: The Journey Towards the Sacred and the Contemporary Christian Charismatic Movement in England" (PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, 1999); James Stevens, *Worship in the Spirit: Charismatic Worship in the Church of England* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007); Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong, eds., *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015); Wee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017).

7.4 Reflexivity: Meta-reflections on thesis learning

Question: Who called the cook a bastard?
Answer: Who called the bastard a cook?

— Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Catchphrases*

This World War I riposte fits well the discussions about a PhD candidate's abilities and progress, and their supervision. Several changes in supervisor in my project, due to faculty moving institutions, led to many challenges for me. As a result, the design of my research method and understanding of what I could achieve, and how to do so, came late in the process for me.³¹ Then, like many other researchers, the warp and weft of life, over so many years, has added to the texture of my research and writing.³²

I went into my research and thesis wanting to better understand something: how and why the forces of life in capitalism often overwhelm the aspirations and beliefs of Evangelical Christians for faithful living for Christ. My understanding of methods to conduct that review, and how they would need to be limited, took some time to realise. I initially thought I would be able to describe and diagnose the problem fully, and make a full proposal for remedy. It was not until the writing-up stage that I realised I had several theses of work within those aspirations. Pruning much away, I came to realise that my thesis had to be much smaller in scope. I arrived instead at an account that described the relationship between Evangelicals and capitalism, and did so from a particular and limited perspective. I then used that perspective with some very specific theological resources to point to the possibility of remedy, rather than offering the solution. In this regard the research process trained me to realise the need for limits; limits to what can be diagnosed, and what can be proposed.³³

³¹ I have had *five* wonderful supervisors attached to my work.

³² I have faced many other personal challenges to my research, the suicides of both my parents, and protracted SEN legal battles for my autistic daughter.

³³ Professor Matt Might's illustrated guide to a PhD, for the orientation of new PhD students, reminded me of the small dent a thesis usually makes in human knowledge: <http://matt.might.net/articles/phd-school-in-pictures/>, accessed 3rd April 2018.

The binocular method of Martyn Percy has allowed me to complete Percy's fivefold process that respects my subject being addressed, i.e., Evangelicalism, but has also allowed me to view the incompleteness of my subject.³⁴ As Percy predicts, such a process of study has changed me as much as, if not more than, any hoped-for futures of my thesis subject.³⁵ That fivefold process has allowed me to, first, notice something in plain sight, of Evangelical life within capitalism, and then to see the bigger picture and to see it in detail, this bigger picture being my accounts from social science with Bebbington, Weber and Polanyi. My detailed examinations, up close, were then conducted by drawing upon neo-Augustinian theological sources. Second, it has allowed me to read my subject with a method suited to my thesis aims. For my method based on Percy's binocular, fulfils the nature of such readings as "constructive" and "experimental."³⁶ Using this method, I have at times engaged in extensive critique of my sources. But at other times, I have borrowed sources with less detailed critique — yet always still situating my use of those sources in their critical contexts, which is part of the nature of making constructive accounts, such as mine. I believe my reading with this critical and constructive method has produced a 'thicker' account of my subject for myself and others. Third, I have interpreted my reading. At times my thesis has certainly struggled "under the weight of the method" and the complexity of my subject. This is not a failing, but an expected outworking, and the nature of the research method concomitant with the complexity of the subject being interpreted. There can perhaps be nothing more complex to interpret than ecclesial life that causes even the most complete theological explications to unravel under the weight of their methods and findings. Fourth, there is a reframing that I have attempted, where my findings are offered as a "temperate, modest exercise, involving a blend of caution and risk."³⁷ Fifth and finally, there has been a returning with my tentative

³⁴ Percy, "Confessions," 329–331.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 330.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

analysis and conclusions to the subject that generated my research. I stand as a pastor within the congregational life I have sought to understand, at a place of beginning, knowing some insights will be “vindicated” and others will require further “adjustment.”³⁸ My study began as the credit crunch was starting to unfold. I sense my intuitions for research are now mapped extensively into the daily life and experiences of my congregants, at a far more conscious register. The toll and price of a life lived under commitment to capitalist social imaginaries are extant, be that divorce, declining mental health, ulcers, and self-harm.³⁹ These are the epiphenomena of pastoral life to which people are perhaps readier to admit, to examine, and attend to, with the social imaginaries of the Gospel.

7.5 Epilogue

Evangelical Christian (EC): So, what is your PhD about?⁴⁰

Me: I’m exploring the nature of the relationship between Evangelicalism and capitalism.

EC: Why are you doing that?

Me: Evangelicals like you and I are supposed to live our lives faithfully around Jesus. Everything we have; all we own, our jobs, homes and relationships, are meant to be given in service of a life lived around Christ.

EC: They sure are!

³⁸ Ibid., 330-331.

³⁹ Proving this claim would require a thesis itself, but my pastoral observations and anecdotes have much warrant with this UK research on the growth of mental health illness and self-harm within the context of current economic changes, “Fundamental Facts About Mental Health 2016,” Mental Health Foundation, accessed 17th June 2018, <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/fundamental-facts-about-mental-health-2016.pdf>.

⁴⁰ As a participant observer, I offer this composite summary of the hundreds of times I have been asked about my PhD by Evangelicals from the most conservative to the more progressive, be they church members or students I have taught.

Me: So, my research explores why that so often isn't the case. Why do Evangelicals say that, but then live something different? I'm trying to understand how, instead of life invested in Jesus, we expect Jesus to provide us with stuff for the life we want, and expect.

EC: {Sighs} Yes. I have noticed that too. I wish we were more faithful to what we say we believe. Tell me more; what's going on?

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