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ENDING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE:
A RAWLSIAN APPROACH TO LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Honors

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ABSTRACT

Liberation theology has played an important role for overcoming structural violence.

Originating in Latin America, the movement continues to expand throughout the developed and developing world. Marxism and liberation theology share similar philosophies – showing preferential option to the poor. While many Marxists may believe that a solution to structural violence is alienating violence through justified revolution, the chance of success is limited.

Liberation is a process, not an event. This essay identifies an alternative to liberation: applying the teachings of John Rawls and applying the Suffering Servant model of Jesus Christ. When we apply the Veil of Ignorance and the Difference Principle to liberation theology, we can realistically implement a system of equity in juxtaposition to the goals of a Marxist.

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A RAWLSIAN APPROACH TO LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation theology has played an important role for overcoming structural violence. Originating in Latin America, the movement continues to expand throughout the developed and developing world. Marxism and liberation theology share similar philosophies – showing preferential option to the poor. While many Marxists may believe that a solution to structural violence is alienating violence through justified revolution, the chance of success is limited. Liberation is a process, not an event. This essay identifies an alternative to liberation: applying the teachings of John Rawls and applying the Suffering Servant model of Jesus Christ. When we apply the Veil of Ignorance and the Difference Principle to liberation theology, we can realistically implement a system of equity in juxtaposition to the goals of a Marxist.

OUR GLOBAL REALITY / STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

We live in a global reality where wealth and poverty have never been higher. Numbers of our global reality reflect a tiered stratification that continues to widen. Forty percent of humanity (nearly 2.6 billion people) is impoverished, surviving on less than two dollars a day. Every year, malaria claims the lives of nearly one million children. The AIDS epidemic accounts for one of the greatest health concerns to humankind (affecting more than 40 million people) with the vast majority of those infected and without treatment in the developing world. Around the world, approximately 10 million children die before the age of five due to lack of prevention, treatment, and protection from violence, poverty, and disease. More than half a million women die negligently in childbirth each year. The developed world continues to exert ecological destruction, carbon emissions, and pollution on the earth – creating widespread public health concerns and natural disasters that disproportionately and explicitly devastate the world's

vulnerable and poor. Violent conflicts and wars such as the Iraq War have displaced and killed millions of people. The results of such tragedies have currently created a global diaspora of more than 8 million refugees and 23.7 million internally displaced persons (United Nations Human Development Report, 2007/2008).

While the poverty of the world's majority escalates, so does the wealth of an elite few. The gross domestic product of the world's forty poorest countries is less than the combined wealth of the world's *seven* richest individuals (United Nations Human Development Report, 2007/2008). Despite the 20th century's modern advances in medicine, the health of the poor remains in shambles. The public health crises of the 20th century, against the backdrop of modern medicine, reflect a failure to prevent and treat the maladies of the world's majority despite the resources to do so (Farmer, 2005). Paul Farmer's book *Pathologies of Power* addresses the disparities between existing medical technology and those who receive access to it. With the global spread of HIV and a plethora of other rising infectious diseases over the last twenty years, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have helped establish structural measures within the developing world to enforce "austerity measures" to promote "fiscal responsibility." Consequently, these institutional policies have resulted in a charity-dependent state that cannot spend its money on food, shelter, or healthcare for its own people (Farmer, 2005). The United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act is another policy that allows African countries to receive American aid and debt relief only if the nations agree to give up all key assets to private U.S. companies and cut public spending. This effectively keeps the African nations in a continuous poverty-stricken state of foreign dependency with self-serving strings attached to every donation. This arrangement disables the receiving nations from forming their own self-sustaining social programs (Monbiot, 1999). One of the greatest injustices done is

that poor countries are increasingly being forced to comply with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) rules that limit the people's access to reasonably-priced, generic drugs for diseases like AIDS or malaria (Farmer, 2005).

Farmer further elaborates on the differences between medical ethics in the developed world and the developing world. Medical ethicists usually focus on topics that relate to euthanasia, issues in palliative care, and Hippocratic privacy. Farmer points out that we rarely apply these medical ethics to questions of providing a ten-dollar drug to save the life of a suffering child in Haiti. He poses the question: When will they be a part of the discussion? (Farmer, 2005)

Farmer further describes the plight of those affected by the above statistics: "Their sickness is a result of structural violence: neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency. Structural violence is visited upon all those whose social status denies them access to the fruits of scientific and social progress" (p. 1686). What is structural violence? The Work Trauma Foundation defines structural violence as the "intentional use of power and/or organisational systems and structures or laws against an individual or entity (employer, management, shareholders, employee, group of employees, client, government, unions) to carry out a covert or unethical agenda, enforce change or indulge in unfair practices to the disadvantage of the affected individual or entity" (n.d). A revision to this definition would also include an *unintentional* use of power to carry out unfair practices against an individual or entity. Such a use of power can be considered structurally violent if it compels alienation and obstructs societal participation in a non-alienating structure.

In *Pathologies of Power*, Farmer (2005) begins by critiquing the human rights community and its disproportionate emphasis on civil and political rights over social and economic rights. He makes the point that the right to vote is completely undermined if the voter is HIV positive and without access food or medicine. How much does the right to vote matter to a person who is sick or starving? This call for material equity is now being vocalized after decades of silence from human rights and humanitarian organizations (i.e., the Nobel Peace Prize health groups Doctors Without Borders and Physicians for Human Rights are just now beginning to campaign for universal access to medicine).

Farmer further criticizes the human rights community by saying that while human rights groups usually do an excellent job at identifying and criticizing human rights abuses, they fail to criticize the structural institutions that create and galvanize them. They attempt to seek justice by addressing the “symptom” instead of the actual root “pathology” of injustice. This bears resemblance to our modern-day human rights groups condemning the woefully inadequate health conditions in the developing world without condemning the social institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO) whose policies helped create and maintain these conditions. This leads to Farmer's central thesis of his book: the lack of social and economic rights (rights to health, safety, nourishment) is the result of “structural violence” produced by the misallocation of structurally-alienating institutions. He calls for a new way to address the healthcare disparities by seeking to re-arrange our social institutions. This re-arrangement must empower the poor with the socioeconomic liberties they need to fully exercise their civil and economic liberties.

To begin the transformation that Farmer calls for, we must build a new philosophical shift of consciousness. What has been the underlying philosophy galvanizing structural violence? Buck-Morss' demonstrates in her essay “Hegel and Haiti” that it is a historical philosophy that,

while offering lip service to liberty, actually serves a zeitgeist of exclusion and alienation. She points to the philosophers of the Enlightenment and their views of slavery as an idea that based liberalism around freedom. This did not include those such as the slaves of Haiti into the discussion. Although ideas of freedom were integral to the time, she points that philosophers of the Enlightenment (i.e. Locke, Hobbes, Kant, and Rousseau) historically and epistemically overlooked the reality of slavery's expanded role in the economy of their time. Her thesis represents the need to unify isolated, binary conceptions between ideas and histories. She calls for an expansion of this synchronism to identify and develop universally applicable theories that promote a pragmatic reality. In doing this, she seeks out the ideas of historical revolutionary praxis as a source of hope. This leads to the conclusion that while the history of integrating history and theory for countries such as Haiti has been exclusionary, we can begin to change the course of history at any time through a historical shift of universal inclusion.

In what ways can we implement a philosophical theory that can realistically promote these goals? A theory galvanized and crystallized in the religious faith of the community could promote a solidifying philosophical theory for Paul Farmer's social justice praxis. In *Pathologies of Power*, Farmer appeals to a revitalization of liberation theology to destabilize our structurally violent global institutions.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Most American schoolchildren learn that Christopher Columbus was a hero. The story they learn is usually told from a privileged, Eurocentric perspective. According to our textbooks, Christopher Columbus' legacy is heroic and daunting. It is a tale of discovering the "New World" and bringing civilization to a world defined in savagery. Columbus is an icon of triumph to the mainstream. There appears little triumph, however, when looking through the eyes of

Native Americans and Africans. From below, rather than above, they see 1492 as an icon of tragedy. From below, Columbus committed heinous crimes. He galvanized ethnic cleansing characterized by murder, rape, torture, slavery, abduction, and the forced removals of indigenous people from their lands. They remember that the Americas were already discovered more than twenty thousand years before Columbus landed (Smith, 2002; Brown, 1993). In this light, Columbus was not a heroic navigator, but a cruel oppressor. Regardless of what version of Christopher Columbus we read, life in the Americas since 1492 has never been the same.

During the time of Christopher Columbus, a Dominican priest named Bartolome de las Casas was a voice for social justice. His story is less-known within historically Eurocentric circles. He publically entitled Native Americans as human beings and exposed the structural violence of his day as based on acquisition of gold. Las Casas, like the majority of people who attempt to see reality through the eyes of the oppressed and strive for solidarity with the poor, became very unpopular with the elite. He proclaimed his teachings to come from the Book of Sirach 34:22, "He slays his neighbor who deprives him of his living; he sheds blood who denies the laborer his wages." Modern-day liberation theologians consider Las Casas to be one of their early champions (Brown, 1993). What is liberation theology? In the 1970s, it emerged in Latin America to counter the structurally violent institutions creating poverty and alienation.

Liberation theology is a movement in Christian theology which examines the teachings of Jesus Christ within the framework of liberation from unjust economic, political, and social conditions. It has been described as "an interpretation of Christian faith through the poor's suffering, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society and the Catholic faith and Christianity through the eyes of the poor" (Berryman, 1987). Note that the spirituality of liberation theology is now being expanded out of Catholicism into Protestant, Muslim, non-Judeo-Christian, African American, gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgendered (GLBT), and feminist circles (Medina, 2007).

Keeping the ideology of liberation theology in mind, what is it that we can learn from the grossly unequal distribution of power and wealth in the world? How can we, from a philosophical angle, apply an efficient and feasible theory to end structural violence and promote social justice? Liberation theology is known as an approach that places preferential option for the poor, but in what ways can showing this preference actually benefit them? The purpose of this project is to identify a feasible and theoretically sound method to end global structural violence through the lens and goals of liberation theology. A careful examination of theology, Marxism, libertarianism, and liberalism will bring us to the conclusion that modifying the liberal philosophy of John Rawls into a globally-minded socialist philosophy could point us in the right direction.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY, MARXIST REVOLUTION,

AND THE VIOLENCE OF LOVE

Historically, liberation theology has strong ties to Marxist ideologies. Liberation theologians and Marxists have common grounds that make this tie understandable within Latin America. The history of structural violence in countries such as Haiti or Nicaragua paved a path that made radical egalitarian ownership through means of an irreconcilably-violent and revolutionary interpretation of Marx's writings very appealing to many followers of liberation theology. This led to the analysis of certain interpretations of Marxism within the framework of liberation theology that will be examined shortly (Gutierrez, 1988).

Because liberation theology claims its transcendental foundations on the teachings of Jesus Christ, a careful overview of these teachings are crucial. Within the Christian interpretation, the nature of Christ dates as far as the Old Testament. The Book of Isaiah refers to

the Messiah as the Suffering Servant – one who brings future victory and salvation through present sufferings. After proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Jesus discloses that he is this prophesied Suffering Servant. While Marx’s conception of citizenship was based entirely on the material (even going as far to reject philosophical principal), Jesus taught that citizenship was both material and immaterial. Such citizenship meant recognizing that there is a continual conflict between “good and evil” (i.e: altruistic love and malevolent egoism), siding with the “forces of good”, and radically following the steps of the Suffering Servant to combat evil. This leads to the Christian praxis: What means of combat are acceptable against the egoistic institutions perpetrating structural violence? According to Christianity, the product of combat should be transformation and reconciliation. As exemplified through the Gospel account of the crucifixion, the Suffering Servant undertakes all of humanity’s violence and conquers it through forgiveness and love. Such is a form of combat that, according to the account of the resurrection, conquers hatred through reconciliation. According to this spiritual praxis, loving one’s enemy like the Suffering Servant will result in powerlessness by the perpetrators. In this light, no matter how much brutality oppressors externalize onto the alienated, the alienated internalize and externalize that brutality with unselfish love. When perpetrators of violence realize that there is nothing they can do to change or submit those to their will, this presents an opportunity of transformation. This leads to a spiritual awakening – a shift of consciousness – that affirms the triumph of love as inevitable. Therefore, any retaliation that destroys any chance of future reconciliation (a murdered person is unable to be reconciled) is incompatible with Christianity (Bondi, 1974). Note that the Suffering Servant model will be a central philosophy when applying revolutionary praxis within our interpretation of liberation theology.

The justifications of Karl Marx appear to contrast with the teachings of Jesus when Marx reveals in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) that violence is a justifiable step to achieve a non-alienating, communist society. He teaches that humans can dichotomously analyze society through the economic infrastructure and the social superstructure. To understand the economic infrastructure we must understand Karl Marx's views on productive relations. According to Marx, pre-communistic societies are characteristically defined between the oppressor class (bourgeois) and the oppressed class (proletariat). The small bourgeois class exploits and alienates the large proletariat class; therefore, such an economy will be inherently conflicted between those who exploit and those who are exploited. Marx believed that pre-communist societies are attributed with a social superstructure – that is, they are comprised of social institutions (i.e, the state, laws, popular morality and religion). To Marx, these constructions promote false consciousness. Their composition expresses, guarantees, and protects the interests of a particular class in a way that allows them to violate the mass majority through whatever violence is necessary to maintain the *status quo*. Historical revolution occurs when this presiding class has been removed and policies have been rectified for the interests of a new ruling class. According to Marxist theory, a revolution is achievable when the pre-communistic society's economic state becomes so critical that the only conceivable solution is to self-consciously challenge the bourgeois class. It is evident that such a challenge will become violent if the ruling class has no intention of giving up their status as rulers and exploiters (Bondi, 1974; Marx & Engels, 1848).

A revolution described above is not unknown to history. This is exactly what happened during the French Revolution and the American Revolution. Historically, it appears that ruling classes are only replaced by new ruling classes that inevitably create another alienating

socioeconomic class struggle. For Karl Marx, a legitimate communist revolution would eradicate all class systems. This, in turn, would eradicate all forms of alienation – including any and all forms of false consciousness. Within such a communistic society, there would never again be cause for another revolution because the state would never allow a ruling class to emerge again. Marx believed that obstructing the ruling class from ever rising again would eventually lead to a peaceful society – self-conscious and inequity-free. For many Marxists, in order for this violent-free society to emerge, an irreconcilable violent revolution is justified (Bondi, 1974; Marx & Engels, 1848).

To the point of identifying the structurally violent nature of our social institutions, Karl Marx gives an accurate portrayal of what is happening. Looking at the free market system he would say that there is nothing free about it. His analysis on private ownership and capitalism concludes that it is inherently exploitative, alienating, and structurally violent. Marx's analysis accurately reflects the statistics and inequalities present in global stratification. Unfortunately, many interpretations of Marxism take foot to a slippery slope after its identification threshold. The traditional Vanguard interpretation of Marx's praxis offers an unsatisfactory and abstract answer by appealing to an irreconcilably-violent upheaval to create material change in society. Many have turned to an irreconcilable violent model to achieve egalitarianism. This is best exemplified by the Vanguard Party's interpretation of *The Communist Manifesto*. Such a revolutionary and violent approach to liberation theology was non-ideological and inconsistent. Within this revolutionary interpretation of Marxism, there are no plausible solutions to liberate the poor from structural violence outside of a risky, radical, irreconcilable violence – a violence that has made their plight even more miserable and misunderstood. Note that Marx is correct with his analysis of the social problems between the bourgeois and the proletariat; although

revolution will take place, he does not present a clear-cut solution as to how we should go about with this process. The Bolsheviks interpreted this as revolution and immediate overthrow of the government. These interpretations have gone down paths that destroy pluralism and create terrors comparable to the Fascist Right. It appears that attaining true social justice within our social institutions is a process rather than an event (Bondi, 1974; Marx & Engels 1848).

The teachings of Fr. Gustavo Guiterrez are typically known as the more radical and irreconcilable revolutionary school within liberation theology. Understandably, the idea of a Vanguard Jesus Christ promoting armed violence, possibly to the point of terrorism, against perpetrators of structural violence is very controversial, contradictory, and, quite possibly, counter-productive. The teachings of Dom Helder Camara, Brazilian Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, promote a far more pacifistic approach to change in his book *Spiral of Violence* (1970). Camara identifies three types of violence within our social structure. Violence No. 1 is the type of violence that this entire paper has addressed — structural violence. It is the violence of creating suffering, injustice, humiliation, and restriction. Violence No. 2 is revolutionary violence from the proletariat — the violence that the extreme left promotes. Violence No. 3 is the response from perpetrators of Violence No. 1 against the perpetrators of Violence No. 2. This deadly arrangement of attacks is what he calls the spiral of violence. He draws his conclusions on the spiral of violence from the Vietnam War: When the ugliest forms of capitalism clash with the ugliest forms of socialism, we have a quagmire that can only result in endless bloodshed. Countering injustice with terrorism galvanizes the rationale for the original injustice. He concludes that the “Christian” way to address Violence No. 1 is through pacifistic social justice. He states:

Everywhere, as well as an inert majority and an extreme left and extreme right who clash with one another in a shifting balance of violence and hatred, there are minorities who are well aware that violence is not the real answer to violence; that, if violence is met by violence, the world will fall into a spiral of violence; that the only true answer to violence is to have the courage to face the injustices which constitute violence No. 1 (p. 55, 1970).

This approach was promoted by El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero (1988) as the violence of love – a praxis more Gandhian in nature. Many Marxists could reply to this argument by saying that the violence of love, although matching the teachings of the Gospels, does not really reconcile, but only acquiesces. Its philosophies force people into a sedentary praxis. By appealing to a pacifistic approach in congruence with the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are far too optimistic that the perpetrators of structural violence would only see pacifists as complicit pushovers that they can exploit even more. To fully understand Romero's conception of violent love, we should re-examine what we know about violence.

In Roberta Bondi's (1974) essay "Marx and Christ: The Question of Violence," she writes that violence is and will always be a part of human nature. She defines violence based on Troy Organ's book *The Anatomy of Violence* as an objective attempt to impose one's will on another. Therefore, instead of adhering to binary distinctions between violence and pacifism, we should accept that a gradient or continuum of violence exists. Whether we are perpetrating genocide or campaigning to end it, both sides are committing violence by enforcing their will on an opposing party. Therefore, violence is present everywhere – within our communities, homes, and eve

within our own minds. Such is the result of human individuality and nature. According to this model, the Vanguard Party and Jesus Christ both promoted violence, but on different spectrums.

This raises the question: If everything is a level of violence, where would the violence of love fall on this continuum? The violence of love only operates where reconciliation and transformation can result. It is obvious that murdering the oppressor null and voids any chance of such reconciliation. Martin Luther King Jr. himself was very concerned about the question of violence. He wanted to address the structural violence that galvanized the Civil Rights Movement in a way that would set the stage for future cooperation instead of retributive hatred (Sabl, 2001). Even acts of violence that result in injury rather than death significantly reduce any future chances to reconcile or transform the situation. We must stand back and see what fruits we can bring through our violence. From a class standpoint, does our violence create equity and justice, or does it alienate and impoverish? When seeking to end structural violence, does our violence reconcile or does it devastate? To Camara and Romero, a revolutionary and non-reconcilable violent approach to liberation theology entails the latter. Furthermore, an empirical analysis of the failed attempts to expose structural violence by means of radical violence has created an even wider strain between and within the socially stratified classes. Since the 1970s, many events have destroyed the hopes of revolutionaries to overthrow the bourgeois in this way – one of the most poignant examples being the creation of the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). The unification of the developed world is, quite possibly, the strongest it has ever been. A confrontational and irreconcilable revolutionary approach to liberation suggested by various interpretations of Marxism has an almost nonexistent chance of ending structural violence. By showing preferential option to the poor, we must act according to a train

of action that will *realistically* benefit the poor while promoting the kind of reconciliation found in the Suffering Servant model.

To answer the Marxist appeal to complicity by the Suffering Servant model, we can reply to this argument by saying that revolution is a process rather than an event. In other words, there must be an element of transformation – a shift of consciousness that cannot be forced, but exemplified. The approach is not sedentary if we, through the violence of love, show overt opposition to the alienating policies of social institutions while refusing to maim or murder those who are not privy to allowing social change. This is exemplified through the activism of great world changers such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. It is clear that integrating an unmodified Marx and Christ to end structural violence is currently an unreconciled paradox. For now, we will examine political philosophies to determine a new solution to reconcile the two. We will examine and refute the political philosophy of libertarianism – one of the most shared and popular political philosophies within the privileged class.

LIBERTARIANISM: WHEN OUR LIBERTIES DENY OTHERS OF THEIRS

A central issue in this paper is the necessity of redistribution of wealth. To understand the importance of this proposal, we must first refute the political philosophy that defends unchecked accumulation of wealth: libertarianism. How would a libertarian approach liberation theology and the question of pragmatic solidarity between the class systems and their liberation from alienation? To understand where a libertarian is coming from, we must first know that a libertarian definition of liberation is freedom from intervention. Libertarianism *does* believe in the rectification of injustice in instances of proprietorial infringement. This infringement is measured by John Locke's equation of justice as private ownership. As long as the money and

power that free markets maintain have not been obtained through means of force or fraud, the rich only have a moral, yet free, obligation to give back to society as they see fit (Nozick, 1974).

Robert Nozick (1974), one of the most well-known libertarian philosophers of the 20th century, would counteract the first section on structural violence that injustice is not happening; rather, global inequity and poverty is a result of human tragedy. It raises the question: is structural violence even real? According to Nozick, it is not. He would say that structural violence is inadvertent and non-intentionally violent against the poor; therefore, it cannot really be called violence at all. Before we continue any further, it is wise to consider the variation of violence that creates injustice. Violence is not usually perpetrated for violence's sake. The majority of perpetrators use alienating violence as a means to an end – revenge, money, power, removal of obstacles, and other needs. The man who has been mugged and stabbed was the victim of violence, however, his wounds are incidental in relation to the robber's intention of obtaining the wallet. In the case of the institutions that create structural violence, it is far more subtle than the earlier examples. We should keep in mind that subtlety is *not* the same as fiction. The violence is real. Structural violence, direct violence, indirect violence, consequential violence, and historical violence – these terms can become a game of semantics when we begin to talk politics and justice. Whatever the case, violence is condemnable within liberation theology if it either creates alienation and human suffering or destroys future opportunities for reconciliation. Although it is possible to isolate a violent event with no direct blame or call for rectification of injustice (for example: a natural disaster or accident), the historical evidence of structural violence is undeniable and morally wrong.

A libertarian definition of unjust violence would be taking something away through force or fraud. Empirically, the affluence of the West that comes at the expense of others has been

actively done so through force *and* fraud. Embargoes, coups, imperialism, direct ecological and sociological destruction, non-informed consent, and political coercion have been the means to an end for many First World free markets (Chomsky, 1985). Despite the claims that free markets are inadvertently causing poverty, empirical evidence cannot deny the direct and violent actions of free markets against the livelihood of the poor. If Marxist revolutionaries are naïve, then libertarians are complicit. Nozick would contradict himself to take seriously the principles of just initial acquisition and transfer while simultaneously saying that structural violence is not really violence at all. In reality, it *is* violence and it *is* injustice to libertarians who take their positions seriously. When the rich inherit these luxuries as a result of this violence, it is not just transfer because it was never just initial acquisition. We cannot, therefore, justify Nozick's conception of justice as means of nonintervention because his defense of the world's richest few is inconsistent with his Theory of Entitlement.

Despite the claims of Nozick that showing preferential option for the poor would be unjust, taking libertarianism seriously would indirectly and even radically and unrealistically force the West to forfeit all of the resources that it has unjustly acquired and transferred. The things it has taken from the poor have been advertently taken from the lands of others. The West would, therefore, have an obligation to give it back – the scientific advancements that we have fraudulently acquired through uninformed consent in clinical trials, the chemicals we have pried out of the hands of developing nations to make our medicine, and the lands we have acquired through military force and genocide. Interestingly, forcing Nozick to be consistent with libertarian theory en lieu of proprietorial liberation theology would force us to give back to the developing world in a way that would be just as unrealistic and radical as revolutionary Marxism! At best, Nozick would have to at least reconsider the call for partial redistribution of

wealth to the poor to achieve only a small step towards rectification of injustice. Interestingly and contradictorily, redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor is exactly what libertarians initially termed as the ultimate injustice (Nozick, 1974).

APPLYING RAWLSIAN LIBERALISM TO LIBERATION THEOLOGY

As demonstrated historically and philosophically, libertarianism and irreconcilable Marxism fall short of the mark for meeting the pragmatic and solidifying goals of liberation theology. One of the central flaws to both political philosophies is the emphasis on ownership and labor to define liberty and justice. Property and labor are important aspects of justice; however, they are among many other faculties. We must have civil, political, social, and economic liberties for justice and liberation to be met. Non-Lockean liberalism, unlike the political philosophies examined, is a system that defines justice and liberty as fairness. John Rawls' influential book *A Theory of Justice* commenced a philosophical paradigm shift in the 1970s that moved away from approaching progressive liberalism solely within a historical context. While influenced by Kantian objective procedure, Rawls takes this position a step further by appealing to meta-ethical rational normatives. In this book, Rawls describes how a logical system of ordered principles of justice could answer how a fair and just society should be arranged, how we should assign our basic rights and duties to individuals, and how we should address the disparities between the socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged. Note that Rawls' primary concern is identifying a principle of justice that would uphold in an ideal society. Rawls makes it very clear the distinction between the teleological theory of utilitarianism and his theory of justice as deontological and based on fairness. While a utilitarian can justify a societal injustice if it means the happiness for the majority, Rawls rejects this justification by stating that infringing and denying the rights of individuals is never justified. His theory of justice based on

fairness defends the equal rights for all. The idea behind Rawls' theory of justice as fairness will be examined and modified in a way that abandons its liberal roots and transforms it into an applicable theory of socialism.

First, we will examine Rawls' liberal theory *prima facie*. In order to logically give the poor an epistemic advantage, Rawls asks us to imagine ourselves in the Original Position. Under the Original Position, we stand behind the Veil of Ignorance to deny ourselves any knowledge of our current standings in life. The Veil of Ignorance puts us in the position in which we do not know anything about ourselves: our ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, generation, health, or gender. We must come to the conclusion that the “least of these” very well could have been us. Under the Veil of Ignorance the rational person will choose, in an enlightened way, what system would be the most advantageous and fair if living in another’s skin. Note that this is an answer to Marx's critique of social justice as an arbitrary, self-serving illusion. Lowering the Veil of Ignorance removes any chance of bias within our conception of justice. The Original Position allows those constructing structural violence to temporarily stand in a position from below, instead of above. Note that this is *precisely* the aim of liberation theologians. The first step to showing preferential option to the poor is to stand, if only within one’s mind, in their social, economic, civic, and political position. The corollary of applying the Original Position will be, according to a Rawlsian, a generation that promotes fairness and liberty to all (Rawls, 1999). Up to this point, unmodified Marxism and libertarianism have provided insufficient and unrealistic solutions as to *how* justice should be served in regards to structural violence. This is precisely how Rawlsian liberalism sets itself apart from the other political philosophies. After we have theoretically placed ourselves under the Veil of Ignorance, Rawls argues that the logical person

would choose two principles of justice to apply within the real world: (a) the Principle of Equal Liberty and (b) the Difference Principle and Principle of Equality of Opportunity (1999).

The Principle of Equal Liberty states that every person should have equal rights to the broadest system of equal liberties compatible with a parallel system for all. The Principle of Equal Liberty leads to application of two-folded principles: the Difference Principle and the Principle of Equality of Opportunity. Under the Difference Principle, we must arrange social and economic inequalities so that they are (a) of the greatest benefit to the least advantaged persons and, (b) under the Principle of Equality of Opportunity, latched to positions and offices open to everyone under equal and opportunistic conditions. Rawls does not promote complete egalitarianism, because humans are born with varying degrees of advantages and disadvantages. We are born with varying levels of health, intelligence, and natural talents that are the result of the natural lottery. To rectify injustice and promote fairness, we must rearrange the institutions which create structural violence. These institutions force millions to lose within the social lottery and abandon those who lost the natural lottery. By arranging our social institutions to extenuate the arbitrary effects of the natural *and* social lotteries we now have a principle that is distinctly compatible to the central tenant of liberation theology: showing preferential option to the poor. Rawls is no longer interested in whether structural violence is historical, circumstantial, direct, or indirect. He wants to see that we live under a system that is built on fairness for all (Rawls, 1999).

MODIFYING RAWLS WHILE BRIDGING MARX AND CHRIST IN OUR THEOLOGY

Keeping the above concerns in mind, Rawls believes that we can redistribute the unequal distribution of wealth and bridge the gap between the rich and poor by making sure everyone has sufficient social primary goods. The only way that this can be done is through progressive

taxation. Social primary goods are the tools humans need to meet the capacity of following one's life plans. Clearly, someone with a chronic health condition will have different life plans than someone in perfect health. The important thing to Rawls is that they have the social, economic, political, and civil liberties within the boundaries that the natural lottery allots. The emphasis of social primary goods results in equity rather than egalitarianism. As Farmer (2005) suggests, it is logical to approach the redistribution of social primary goods with social and economic liberties as a primary goal and political and civic liberties as secondary. Note that this is a revision to Rawl's theory by prioritizing equality/difference over liberty (1999). This is a new definition of what it means to have liberty.

Why the revision? As Farmer stated, no person can pursue political and civil liberties if he or she is malnourished or sick (2005). This has been the problem that countries like that of Haiti have faced for decades. While Rawls' argument states that the corollary of applying the Original Position would be a social contract with a lexical ordering of civil liberties over socioeconomic liberties, Farmer demonstrates that Rawls is not correct in this presumption. From a psychologically humanistic standpoint, civil liberties are useless unless people have been physiologically empowered to exercise them. This revision is critical to the crux of our modified Rawlsian-socialist theology of liberation.

Critics of Rawls, particularly from a Marxist point of view, point to the historical failings of liberal politics to stop structural violence. Many claim that the Difference Principle is too soft on the rich and that what is needed is violent revolution. This revision of prioritization to Rawls' theory captures the goals of a Marxist and egalitarian without the violent and implausible ramifications noted in previous sections. By reversing the prioritization of equality/difference while keeping liberty in mind as the final goal, we now have a careful analysis of the Difference Principle that is uniquely socialist and meets the traditional goals of a Marxist-based liberation

theology. The real critique should be directed to the social institutions who fail to take the Difference Principle seriously. After this modification, we can attribute John Rawls' modified theory as socialist and leave liberalism altogether. To attribute Rawls as a socialist, we must redefine liberty in terms as liberty from structural violence. Because we are still revolutionary, we can attribute the Difference Principle as evolution of Marxism within today's global reality. We are now within the "den of lions" covertly arranging the institutions one law at a time, one problem at a time, one policy at a time while the "Children of the Revolution" slowly acquire a re-arranged society defined by justice.

Where would Rawlsian liberalism fit with the Suffering Servant model? What happens in cases where the state which creates structural violence manifests direct opposition towards any form of policy changes and oppression against those who strive for it? Sabl (2001) appeals to a form of Rawlsian civil disobedience that continuously and unapologetically stands for a just and fair society that is founded on fairness for all. By peacefully refusing to participate in activities of the government that violate these conditions, we are following a Gandhian praxis that is congruent to the Suffering Servant model of Christianity: Nowhere along this praxis should our violence promote a situation that destroys any chance of future reconciliation with our oppressor. Dom Helder Camara calls for a form of pacifistic liberation theology that approaches the perpetrators of structural violence "with both the innocence of the dove and the cunning of the serpent." We now have a liberation theology that promotes a violence that is only reconciliatory. Within this praxis, we are now working continuously to see that progressive taxation, redistribution of wealth, and the destabilization of dominant powers slowly slide into the power of the exploited without the immediate, non-reconcilable overthrow of the bourgeois class. By appealing to a system of fairness, we appeal to an eventual system of democratic, pluralistic socialism. These measures of taxation are teleological in the sense of being a means to an end

for the eventual establishment of social institutions devoid of a structurally violent false consciousness. This teleological measure, unlike utilitarianism, meets the needs of every person until complete equity has been fulfilled. While appealing to Rawls's original position and tweaking his liberal philosophies of political and civic freedoms to being second nature to economic and social freedoms, we now have a less confrontational and overtly oppositional approach to Marxism in congruence to the values of the Suffering Servant model.

One objection to the Rawlsian-socialist/Suffering Servant proposal of liberation theology is that it contradicts his later philosophical moves in his book *Political Liberalism*. In this book, Rawls appears to leave behind the Veil of Ignorance and the Original Position en lieu of stressing public reason and civility over comprehensive doctrines. He teaches that citizens who consent to incompatible comprehensive doctrines should assent the constitutional essentials with the knowledge of their moral commitments and social situations. Within this theory of citizenship, these accommodations can be portrayed as expressions of civility and willingness to speak the language of public reason. This could present a problem for the ideologies of liberation theology and the Suffering Servant model because they are moral comprehensive doctrines. In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls provides a 'proviso' from which he offers the teachings of Martin Luther King Jr. In this example, King's teachings on civil rights were religious, but still maintained an idea that is compatible with the voice of public reason. Rawls believes that comprehensive doctrines which are compatible with the constitutional essentials could be translated into the voice of public reason on the 'proviso' that they can be translated over time. Like the teachings of MLK, the comprehensive doctrines of a Rawlsian-socialist liberation theology can be made compatible and translatable to the voice of public reason. This would allow synchronism between *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism* within our liberation theory.

PROMOTING GLOBAL RAWLSIAN SOCIALISM FOR
LIBERATION THEOLOGY

How should the international institutions that create structural violence be rearranged? Rawls did not really expand the Difference Principle to be operative in fragile or failed states. How are we to arrange the institutions in countries like Haiti where none of this is evident? How can the government redistribute its wealth if there is little wealth to begin with? Rawls conceives the Difference Principle as functional within established, constitutional states with citizens maintaining constitutional rights. Furthermore, looking at Rawls' later lecture, *Law of Peoples*, he makes a move that contradicts philosopher Charles Beitz's predictions that applying the second principle of justice as fairness to international affairs would create justification for international redistribution according to each nation's natural resources (1979). *The Law of Peoples* makes a surprising appeal to state self-sufficiency. In this essay, Rawls appeals to a cut-off point for international aid to other nations. This creates a problem when we are referring to ending worldwide structural violence – particularly that of the Western-endorsed private sector. While Rawls' critique of Beitz on redistribution according to a nation's natural resources is accurate (i.e. many of the world's most impoverished nations are rich in natural resources), his move towards state self-sufficiency is a mistake. By appealing to *The Law of Peoples* we are simultaneously signing on to justification for injustice by the state against other states to create its own forms of self-sufficiency based on "fairness". We must be globally-minded when lowering the Veil of Ignorance.

Ser-Min Shei (2005) insists that the whole of humankind is morally responsible for world poverty and human suffering. We could make humankind responsible through Gillian Brock's (2008) appeal to international taxation reformation by abolishing tax havens, tax evasions, and

transfer pricing schemes and demanding moral accountability for a higher distribution of wealth. Integrating a socialist Rawlsian model of redistribution based on the Difference Principle would allow a much more efficient means of development outside of strings-attached charity. Furthermore, by adapting and applying the priority of difference to global political institutions that are independent of the state, we would have a system that can be conceived in terms of extra-constitutional human rights. Therefore, international organizations like the United Nations could apply the Difference Principle and redistribute to the developing world independently of the state's actual capital or weakened infrastructure. Note that this would expand into progressive taxation of the wealthiest nations.

Base groups seeking Christ through the transcendent and a socialist Rawls through the material could work to see that our international structurally violent institutions are destabilized into socialist institutions that would apply an international taxation praxis – taxing (instead of protecting) wealthy organizations and nations to distribute (instead of removing) social primary goods for the least advantaged nations. Empowering the poor with such a faith-based community activism is kind of praxis would allow for the dissolution of alienating policies into a system that promotes prevention, eradication, compensation, and equity to the world's sick and poor. This mode of action is the cornerstone of beginning a global institutional social change by sliding the resources and power into the hands of the people.

One alternative to this Rawlsian proposal to end structural violence comes from Philippe van Parijs (1993) and his call for the Global Unconditional Annual Basic Income (GUABI). This proposal guarantees a globally shared minimum income regardless of their current standing or work performance. While a guaranteed minimum income has been implemented in the past, the Global Unconditional Annual Basic Income differs in three ways: (1) The basic income is

individualistic. It is given to all people regardless of their situation. (2) It is distributed regardless of other income sources (this includes the capital income or the labor income of the individual). (3) The basic income is not contingent on whether people are working – including the voluntarily unemployed. This basic income would guarantee a minimum income for all peoples and offers the world an 'opt out' clause to live only on a basic income of socioeconomic survival. While this option is available, van Parijs believes that the majority of humanity would choose to contribute to society and live above the means of simple survival. According to van Parijs, this would constitute the layout for a social security system. It would supplement the need by social insurances to provide to the sick, unemployed, or disabled. This basic income would guarantee every person on the planet the means to ensure socioeconomic survival: food, clean water, shelter, health care, education, and their climatic and cultural contextual needs. This basic income proposal was globally expanded for the purpose of creating a shared commitment to all nations to eradicate poverty and inequity. This would guarantee a minimum income for all people in order for their socioeconomic rights to be met.

Van Parijs (1993) concludes that there are two ways to implement the GBI: (1) A global system such as the United Nations can collect the funds and distribute the GBI worldwide. (2) A global pact could be made by the nations to meet the criteria of the GBI as long as the responsibility for real distribution is nationally delegated. Regarding funding for this undertaking, van Parijs believes that the GBI's funding can come from the contribution by all countries in proportion to their gross domestic product. He also points to global taxes on international subsidiaries (i.e. taxing a CO2 cap-and-dividend system, air travel, and/or ocean fisheries).

It is important to determine whether the UBI could be effectively construed as an alternative to addressing the issue of structural violence. Van Parijs (1993) believes that

alienation can be eradicated through this proposal. Van Parijs is consistent with Karl Marx when he believes that there really is nothing free about the 'free labor' system. He believes that it is compelled and consequently alienating because the proletariat receives no 'opt out' clause from the wage labor system. This 'opt out' clause thus offers humanity a chance to leave the free market if they choose.

A Rawlsian socialist would object to van Parijs' 'opt out' clause. Justice requires participation by all members of society. While understanding the congruence between van Parijs and Marx, a Rawlsian would state an apparent contradiction between alienation and 'freeloading' on the efforts of a cooperative society. While our current reality reflects the validity of van Parijs' UBI and the 'opt out' clause, it is not justified when we turn our Rawlsian socialist theory into praxis. Central to the proposal of our Rawlsian-socialist liberation theology is that the re-arrangement of our structurally violent institutions would mean that they would *no longer be alienating*. Therefore, if the 'free labor' market really becomes free, then why would a person choose to 'opt out' of it unless to perpetrate violence against a non-violent structure? This brings us to the question: is compulsion structural violence? The answer depends on what type of compulsion we are enforcing. If we look to the Suffering Servant model, our violence would create reconciliation and justice rather than alienation. To allow the freeloader to take without giving harms the societal construction. Compulsion by a government would not constitute injustice if it reconciles the abuse of an entity. Therefore, to not offer an 'opt out' clause in a just and fair society would not constitute unacceptable violence.

A counter-objection to the Rawlsian response against van Parijs could state that to say that the reconciliation will occur is only an assertion. What happens if this non-alienating state does not materialize? What alternatives would we have if reconciliation fails? A libertarian fall-back option would say that the freeloaders should be left to die because it is their choice not to

work for their survival. In contrast, a Maoist would promote sending the freeloader to a labor camp for re-education. Obviously, neither of these solutions are acceptable. We can reply that while reconciliation is a process, it is not a negotiable concept. If this reconciliation does not take place, then other conceptions of justice would not materialize – including the chance to opt out of its alienating policies. The point of remaining an alienating state is that it would *still* implement alienating practices. This would disable it from implementing the UBI to allow an 'opt-out' clause in the first place.

Apart from the 'opt out' clause, a Rawlsian-socialist could incorporate the UBI on the pain of remaining consistent with his own theory of justice. From behind the Veil of Ignorance, it would appear that the least advantaged person would be in favor of the UBI to receive the basic insurance of survival. In what ways can van Parijs' proposal be applied and the UBI be distributed without the 'opt out' clause? Stuart White (1997) believes that the 'opt out' clause should be abandoned in favor of a participation income. He states:

Each person is entitled to a share of the economic benefits of social cooperation conferring equal opportunity (or real freedom) in return for the performance of an equal handicap-weighted quantum of contributive activity (hours of socially useful work, let us say, weighted by labour intensity) (p. 318).

A participation income would allow distribution of something similar to the UBI as long as its able-bodied recipients participate in a paid or unpaid economic activity. Note that the elderly and disabled would still receive the UBI.

The aims of van Parijs are still achievable through establishing a worldwide Rawlsian socialized system of taxation without an 'opt out' clause. This taxation and redistribution would

vary according each country's gross domestic product and the income of the households within them. This would allot for a global redistribution system based on fairness without a frivolous 'opt out' clause. The argument remains committed to a Rawlsian approach of worldwide cooperation, contribution, and redistribution (van Parijs, 1993).

CONCLUSION

What is it that we can take from this proposal? While Marx has much to say about the problem of structural violence, John Rawls has much to say about how we can fix it. In comparison to other political philosophies, taking the modified principles of Rawlsian liberalism and transforming it into a socialist theory is the best fit within the goals of pacifistic liberation theology without becoming complicit. While appealing to Rawl's Original Position and tweaking his liberal philosophies of political and civic freedoms to being second nature to economic and social freedoms, we now have a less confrontational yet steadfastly oppositional approach to Marxism in congruence with the aims of a pacifistic, Christ-centered liberation theology. This approach to justice bridges the gap between the rich and poor, promotes justice and violence in a feasible, reconciling fashion, and promotes *all* of the paradigms of liberty that other political philosophies have failed to meet. Liberation theology can and must take a new direction: a direction that promotes feasibility, dialogue, reconstruction, and justice on an international platform.

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