

Article

# Neoliberalism and eurochristianity

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**Abstract:** This article argues for an articulation of the “eurochristian worldview” in order to situate neoliberalism as an expression of eurochristian colonialism. It uses an interdisciplinary focus on discourse related to neoliberalism and religion to evidence the necessity for analyses based on worldview. Following the thinking of Indigenous authors and cognitive theory to articulate key distinctions between worldview, culture, and religion, it challenges conventional secularization narratives for being, like neoliberalism, an expression of eurochristian worldview and ongoing colonization.

**Keywords:** neoliberalism; religion; colonialism; eurochristian; postsecular; secularization

*The Spaniards are convinced that his subjection is fake and that he is planning an armed revolt. They decide, therefore to kill him. But first they take precautionary steps and baptize the Aztec monarch. In this way, the Christian sacrament is linked to the conquering violence. The body of the chief is killed while at the same time an attempt is made to redeem his soul.*

—Luis N. Rivera-Pagán (Rivera-Pagán 1992, pp. 24–25).



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## 1. Introduction

The central aim of this article is to situate the phenomenon and the term that has come to be called “neoliberalism” within a longer history, arguing that “neoliberalism” is but the latest expression of colonizing impulses deeply embedded in the eurochristian worldview (Tinker 2019). Following Tink Tinker (wazhazhe, Osage Nation), I employ the term “eurochristian” to signal both a *social movement* and a *worldview* and not a “religion”. In common discourse, “neoliberalism” has operated as a tacit expression of a “secular” society, but the narrative of liberalism as arising from a perceived “break” with Christianity needs to be rethought because the eurochristian worldview underwrites liberalism in both its classical and “neo” forms.

While the average, middleclass individual in a neoliberal society may self-identify as thoroughly “secular”, the extractive techniques employed to form such a social milieu continue to extract and occupy a heavy, overtly Christian presence in “less developed” parts of the world and especially Indian reservations in North America. For example, there has been recent public attention over multiple sites of mass graves of Indigenous children of Turtle Island (both Canada and the United States) who were forced into Christian boarding schools.<sup>1</sup> The situation remains in living memory for Indigenous peoples of these regions who have long pointed out the injustices while colonizers have minimized and denied genocidal tactics, often by situating colonialism in a distant past. Ongoing denial and minimization necessitate a longer historical scope of accountability. Too much erasure occurs when people claim, “it’s different now”, and heavy focus on “neoliberalism” without an account of the longer history can mask ongoing erasure.

There is nothing postcolonial about Indigenous life, and the subordination of postcolonial studies to regimes of liberal “development” and academically liberal environments.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as Indigenous scholars have pointed out for years—well before recent popular books like Benjamin Friedman’s recent *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, for example—the

rhetoric of fifteenth-century papal bulls of donation and earlier eurochristian efforts continues to work in the major colonized regions of Anglophone colonization: The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup> With the United States' ascent to global power, we need to situate both foreign and domestic policies within "civilizing" attempts grounded within the eurochristian worldview.<sup>4</sup>

As thoroughly documented by Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett in *Thy Will Be Done*, Christian evangelicalism has been intimately tied to "development efforts" in U.S. hegemony over Central and South America, including collaborations with the C.I.A. to overthrow democratically elected governments (Colby and Dennett 1995, pp. 564–65). Emily Conroy-Krutz's history of nineteenth-century U.S. Protestant foreign missionary societies notes that a "hierarchy of civilization" was essential to Christian imperialism: "It was precisely because this hierarchy existed and because it was possible to move up toward civilization and Christianity that the mission movement existed" (Conroy-Krutz 2015, p. 50). Conroy-Krutz notes that as the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions got its start during the early nineteenth century, Samuel Worcester, whose meddling in Cherokee removal produced *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), wrote that South and Central America was in "so unpromising a state, that the opinion very generally prevalent [at the time was] that for the pagans on this continent but little can be immediately done" (Ibid, p. 36). As R. Andrew Chesnut details in *Born Again in Brazil*, throughout the twentieth century, impoverished and racially marginalized people turned more toward faith healing, folk saints, and increasingly charismatic forms of evangelical Protestantism and Pentecostalism.<sup>5</sup> The Trump administration (re)invoked the Monroe Doctrine in 2019.<sup>6</sup>

Joe Biden's policies aim to "rebury" the doctrine, but it nevertheless remains an issue—not simply as a political will-to-power that may or may not have been true when officially implemented in 1823, but as an expression of a persistent eurochristian worldview (Long 2021). In 1823, Supreme Court Justice John Marshall explicitly tied the existence of the United States to the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (more accurately, Erasure), which set in motions Indian removal and continues to be cited at both the State and Federal levels well into the twenty-first century (Native Values Initiative 2021). Historical tensions between varying Christian colonizers (Protestant versus Catholic, for example) are rooted in the religious wars of Europe that purported to solve the issue by stabilizing nation-state boundaries in Europe through efforts such as the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. From this perspective presented here, left-leaning liberation-theologians and right-leaning evangelicals both embrace the virtues of "Christian civilization", continuing a drama that keeps a eurochristian worldview present.<sup>7</sup>

As I argue, worldview is not identity, nor is it a matter of "choice" or "belief". It is the product of deep, cognitive framing. The eurochristian worldview was developing earlier and has existed since the so-called "discovery" of the new world. While current-day Europeans are often quick to situate a distinction between themselves and the more overtly imperialistic United States, the *economic developments underwriting neoliberalism were formed within a eurochristian worldview that persists today*. It is masked by secularization narratives, which is why an analysis like this is necessary. Writing this article does not cancel my own eurochristian worldview, despite the fact that I can intellectually understand what my Indigenous colleagues are saying. It is not a matter of cultural competence or "becoming Indigenous" or how many Indigenous authors I cite, but rather a taking account of a deep, persistent, and transgenerational cognitive framing.

When Indigenous colleagues of mine, such as Barbara Alice Mann (Onöndawaga/Seneca), articulate an Indigenous worldview, they are often confronted with academic pedantry concerning "essentialism", even while C.J. Jung and Joseph Campbell and one-size-fits-all models continue to persist across western academic and popular thought.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, when a eurochristian writer like myself wants to address the issue, I am held in suspicion of romanticizing Indigenous life. Both charges are red herrings. They employ a dialectic of erasure of Indigenous worldviews by subordinating them to a paradigm of eurochristian conquest and conflict. It is unquestionable that terminological notions

such as “Indigenous” are themselves the result of attempts at conquest that were globally implemented, which is but one reason why “eurochristian” is a better designation than “white people” or “westerner”.

It is also unquestionable that empires and genocides existed before the development of a eurochristian worldview, but that worldview is foundational to the economic situation today and the rise of neoliberalism. As Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw) has pointed out, relying on Indigenous critical theory, “helps to identify the processes that have kept indigenous peoples as a necessary pre-conditional presence within theories of colonialism and its ‘post’”.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, as Aimé Césaire noted in the 1950s, this is not only a matter of state-based actors and official policies but of everyday comportment in societies developed through eurochristian colonialism.<sup>10</sup> My aim here is to show how the eurochristian worldview underwrites neoliberalism. It will require some cross-disciplinary leaps in discourse to accentuate the persistence of the eurochristian worldview in cultural poetics where it is often accepted as “natural”. The opportunity to ponder questions concerning neoliberalism and religion invites us to link what may seem “everyday” and obvious to a deeper and ongoing, nefarious history premised on the ongoing erasure of non-eurochristian peoples.

## 2. Concerning the Postsecular and Method

Approaching discourse on neoliberalism while accounting for the embedded eurochristian worldview requires first that we take a “postsecular” view, though not the kind of postsecular view of liberal thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas, who has advocated the “translation” of religious views into liberal secular society in order to provide an “awareness of what is missing” (Habermas and Ratzinger 2010, pp. 51–52). Secularization narratives are similar to denials of “white privilege” in U.S. discourse. Modern notions of “race”, which remain a problem today, arise from distinctions colonizing eurochristians made between themselves and non-Christians in order to justify extractive conquest. I am sometimes accused of making Christianity into a monolithic antagonist, but such a position takes too much of the way liberalism treats the concept of “religion” for granted. It is necessary, rather, to rethink about the ways the subject of “religion” is currently thought, especially because theorists of neoliberalism and those identifying in the trajectory of neoliberalism have explicitly avowed “traditional Christian values” embedded in their notions of freedom.

However, the nostalgia for Christian values among neoliberal thinkers also needs to be distinguished from a broader inquiry that challenges the liberal grand narrative of secularization, because many eurochristians who are socially formed by secularization narratives often read such challenges as an “opening” to bring faith-based perspectives “back” to the table of public policy. This is particularly prevalent in the United States, where evangelicals have a loud political voice and actively position themselves as defending the erosion of Christian values. They often refer to both freedom of speech and exercise in the First Amendment to protect their views with little regard for truth, so that politics becomes a zero-sum game to protect religious ideologies or values.

While ideology may indeed be reflective of worldview, the two are not the same. Furthermore, while rightwing evangelicals in the United States evidence an aggressive example of the persistence of a eurochristian worldview, the social movement and worldview that I am calling “eurochristian” historically underwrites colonizing impulses globally. So, while I mainly use examples from the Turtle Island (“North America”), where I live, at least part of the value of my analysis is in addressing the situation beyond the idea of the nation-state, which is a transcendent ideational apparatus that emerged from the eurochristian worldview historically.

My analysis of a eurochristian worldview goes well beyond those who claim to be religious. Many people have a eurochristian worldview without considering themselves to be religious, and that worldview is historically grounded the articulations of violence and extractive economies from which liberalism and neoliberalism developed. As my colleague Tink Tinker reminds me regularly, the term “atheist”, for example, presents

a reaction-formed identity concerning the belief in an antecedent Creator or deity; but the negation preserves the initial frame. Similarly, the cognitive linguist, George Lakoff, frequently uses the example, “Don’t think of an elephant”. As he says:

Every word, like *elephant*, evokes a frame, which can be an image of other kinds of knowledge: Elephants are large, have floppy ears and a trunk, are associated with circuses, and so on. The word is defined relative to that frame. When we negate the frame, we evoke the frame (Lakoff 2004, p. 6).

The term “eurochristian” helps us think not only in terms of frames but in terms of image schemas or Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) that bind worldviews.<sup>11</sup>

Upon first hearing the term “eurochristian”, people sometimes think I am attacking Christianity, but that impulse to defend a “religion” or “belief system” that can be bracketed is embedded in the same historical development of our modern economic systems. A focus on a eurochristian *worldview* (and not a religion) as persistent throughout liberal secularization narratives offers scholars a way beyond oversimplified distinctions between “religious” and “public” spheres. It also pushes beyond the mistaken notion that “religion has returned”.

As Joshua Ramos has written, it is not so much liberalism but rather globalization that most acutely secularizes while deculturating religion:

Globalization [ . . . ] pluralizes, and pluralization creates secularization. Globalization also creates fundamentalism, which is a reaction to its counterpart of liberalization. Therefore, within the West, there is no return of religion. The “return of religion” model is constructed along the civilizational model of religion, which takes Samuel Huntington’s approach of the “clash of civilizations”, whereby religion and culture and territory are inextricably linked. But this is increasingly no longer the case, for globalization has disrupted all links. The effect of globalization is that there is no longer an intrinsic link between religion and culture. Religion is disembedded, and therefore made abstract and virtual. This separation and parting of ways is the basis of the apparent religious revival and of the public visibility of religion (Ramos 2021).

The rise of neoliberalism since the early seventies is partly an effect of the globalizing that Ramos describes. In neoliberalism, this accounts for the emphasis on strategic destabilizing and disruption in order to exploit crises, as opposed to German ordoliberalism, for example, which seeks to employ the State to maintain balance (Jessup 2019). Ramos’s rejection of the Huntington thesis follows Olivier Roy’s *Holy Ignorance*, arguing that “religion” and “culture” have gone their separate ways. Without disagreeing with Ramos and Roy, my emphasis on a eurochristian worldview takes a different tack.

Indigenous scholars such as Tink Tinker (wazhazhe, Osage Nation), Steven T. Newcomb (Shawnee/Lenape), and Mark Freeland (Sault St. Marie Anishinabek) have employed cognitive theory to emphasize an account of worldview as distinct from “culture”. Newcomb’s *Pagans in the Promised Land* is an especially cogent application of cognitive theory to eurochristian conquest of Indigenous peoples.<sup>12</sup> These Indigenous writers take an intergenerational approach to deep cognitive framing. Distinct from Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” thesis, they have added their traditional perspectives to cognitive theories of metaphor and law, as advanced by thinkers such as George Lakoff and Steven L. Winter on Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs). ICMs are integrated cognitive “maps”. They are neurologically physical, rather than “cultural”. They are importantly not only linguistic.

All human brains use metaphors for cognition categorization. Ideology, culture, and religion may indeed be expressive of worldview, but they may not substitute for it. In what follows, I will use an interdisciplinary literature review to show, through discourse analysis, how the eurochristian worldview persists beneath identity claims to religion and politics. I do not have the space (or the knowledge) for a thorough analysis distinguishing *all* features that separate Indigenous from eurochristian worldviews, but at least one central feature, as Barbara Alice Mann points out, is species privilege or androcentrism versus an Indigenous

account for “all our relations”.<sup>13</sup> Androcentrism produces specific ICMs in the eurochristian worldview, placing “man” above “animal” or “nature”—and historically above women and children, who are deemed closer to nature. The metaphor is one of proximity (“closer”) that rests on an idealized species hierarchy. To repeat, ICMs are not merely ideological; over time, they physically develop through neural binding. As Lakoff notes, “Between birth and age five, roughly half of the neural connections we are born with die off” (Lakoff 2008, p. 15). While as a eurochristian I can indeed intellectually imagine what Mann means by “all our relations”, I do not live it in the sense that it grounds my assumptions about all aspects of life. In what follows, it is necessary to articulate the metaphysical assumptions of the eurochristian worldview in order to see how neoliberalism is expressive of it.

### 3. “Religion” as a Modern Abstraction versus a Eurochristian Worldview

Discourse from religious studies is helpful here. What makes talk of religion confusing in everyday discourse is that people often treat “culture” and “religion” interchangeably, as if they were merely different signs for an unutterable signified. A worldview analysis must go beyond semiology. To take one famous example, Clifford Geertz once defined religion as:

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 2000, p. 90).

Talal Asad challenged Geertz’s view in his book, *Genealogies of Religion*. As David Chidester notes, Asad’s critique “was not merely about the validity of Geertz’s definition; it was also about the politics of defining religion as an autonomous cultural system” (Chidester 2014, p. 308). Chidester argues that common perceptions of religion today are built from imperialist comparative world religions models: “Imperial comparative religion merged knowledge and power, not in any simple social physics of cause and effect, as if the study of religion could cause imperial expansion, but in the ways in which knowledge about religion and religions circulated through the networks of empire” (Ibid, p. 312). Addressing a eurochristian worldview requires a deeper historical understanding of colonizing processes.

Secularist views of neoliberalism mask the fact that neoliberalism is itself a political theology that avows both faith in the “spontaneity” of markets and ongoing eurochristian supremacy. This affects faith-based perspectives as well. Scott R. Beck has noted:

charity workers, and homeless individuals who have accepted Christianity, attempt to separate the market and inspired orders through signifying practices that maintain a symbolic order, thereby justifying a sacred mission, in the case of the charity organization, and justifying self-worth, in the case of the homeless individuals.

As Carl Raschke has alluded in *Neoliberalism and Political Theology*, neoliberalism is itself religious in the sense that it *binds* us, willy-nilly, not only to indebtedness and finance capital but also to an international context in the wake of the Cold War that cannot be accounted for by simply blaming it on rightwing politics, Chicago School economics, and free market capitalism (as many do). Raschke also connects to deeper accounts of religion: “these conflicts are ultimately the output of deeper moral and religious forces that are dividing both the West, and the Westernised ‘rest’ of the world that has been bewitched by neoliberalism” (Raschke 2019, p. 3).

According to Raschke, neoliberalism announces a new “nomos of the earth”, following Carl Schmitt’s terminology and rooting of *nomos* in notions of capture (Raschke 2016). I will specifically address Schmitt later, but for now this emphasis on *nomos* helps distinguish a eurochristian worldview from Indigenous worldviews, not because of eurochristian accounts of a “prepolitical” state of nature but because the eurochristian worldview is



obsessed with *law*, governance, and sovereignty in a way that has always been incompatible with Indigenous worldviews.

As Tink Tinker writes in “Why I Do Not Believe in a Creator God”, the eurochristian worldview grounds “an up-down linguistic cognitive image schema [or ICM, which] functions to structure the social whole around vertical hierarchies of power and authority” (Tinker 2013, p. 169). His point is that in contrast to eurochristian frames, Indigenous deep frames do not traditionally have this hierarchy; so even if we could speak of “something like religion” for Indigenous Peoples, the very analogy would be flawed due to the concept of ‘religion’ in the deep frame of eurochristian thought. It is not just the word “religion” but the concept itself which is a problem here.

Just imagine the impulse of some uncritical thinkers who charge Indigenous thinkers with essentialism or even romanticism for saying they did not traditionally have “religion”. To the liberal secularist, this might seem offensive. They might say, “Of course Indigenous Peoples of North America had religion, just like Buddhists and Hindus in Asia”. Such thinking already sees “religion” as a “civilizing force”; but that frame of religion as civilizing is entirely eurochristian colonialism, as were the imperial knowledge–power matrices that established the human or social sciences during the nineteenth century.

For thinkers like Raschke, the “religion” of neoliberalism is less a matter of *avowed* faith (in markets or anything else) than what *binds* and governs us, something thinkers since Michel Foucault have been arguing also changes the nature of subjectivity and human experience as a dominant episteme of the “West”. This is why Raschke refreshingly refuses to treat the descriptor “neoliberal” as an identity-category for political wishful thinking to simply name an enemy, as many left-leaning liberals in the United States do. It is about power, not partisan politics.

Neoliberalism also names a “religion” in a deeper sense than how we may want things to be. Like political affiliations, “faith-based” approaches to religion see it as a kind of “belief” or avowal. They derive from older liberal—particularly Lockean—views of religion that associate it with an *interior conscience*. Such a view is especially inflected by Christian Protestantism, which treats religion as a private matter of conscience and avowal as an aspect of identity. It is this very tendency to reduce religion to private, internal assent and avowal that is exacerbated by both the destabilizing nature of neoliberalism and the separation between culture and religion that Joshua Ramos and Olivier Roy track. Yet self-congratulatory secularization theses continue to exhibit amnesia, forgetting that both liberalism and neoliberalism are inflected by Protestant Christian theology (as is Catholicism too). A eurochristian worldview underwrites all of this, and this worldview underwrites the more abstracted notion of “religion” as it arose in the modern era with increasing globalization.

For example, liberalism carries with it its own kind of baptism, its own “reset” button that forgets its own past, oftentimes through a kind of Pollyannish optimism. In *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lisa Lowe details how the emergence of liberalism was bound to the economic developments of capitalism. She argues that we need to read even the socially progressive “success story” of the abolitionist movement, which overtly framed its discourse within Christian morality, as simultaneously and more powerfully driven by colonizing efforts that did not disappear with emancipation. This work is important for situating liberalism within a eurochristian deep frame. Regarding the liberalism of John Stuart Mill, she writes:

By “liberty”, Mill did not mean the narrower ideas of individual right or free will, but rather “liberty” was the overarching principle that both defined political sovereignty in liberal society, and which authorized the differentiated power of government over “backward” peoples. Mill stated [in *On Liberty*] that this doctrine is only meant to apply to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children . . . We may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered in its nonage (Lowe 2015, p. 112).

As Lowe's comment illustrates, Mill's notion of liberty is itself considered "sovereign", but that notion of sovereignty only makes sense in the "uplifting" (*Aufhebung*) metaphorical procedures within the deep framing of eurochristian metaphysics. This has nothing to do with regional distinctions, whether or not Hegel was really interacting with the empiricist philosophies of English utilitarianism or whether Bentham and Mill were engaging with continental thought. I am not parsing philosophical nuances here. Rather, I am pointing to a deeper worldview expressed by a eurochristian *hubris* implicitly ascribed to by all of these thinkers who superimpose a "developmental" model of civilization onto a "human" (and human-alone) species. This is a source–path–goal ICM that imposes a linear, "evolutionary savior" model onto "humanity", its implicitly hierarchical species. Thus, Mill's hierarchical disposition is indicative of his eurochristian worldview, and while often considered "secular", liberalism maintains the structure.

The underlying eurochristian worldview was (and remains) transnational. In what is now the United States, its longest lasting impact is derived from Britain, Netherlands, Spain, France, Germany (and lesser European powers), despite nuances within those regions. Because many Europeans today embrace a secular worldview while seeing the United States as being more overtly religious, they fall into a trap of thinking that secularization has replaced, rather than expanded, the eurochristian worldview.

As postcolonial scholars have pointed out, in its most dominant forms, the eurochristian worldview emerged in imperial comparative religion and liberalism as part of a secularization process. "Religion" and "liberalism" both expressed their eurochristian worldview as political ideology while implicitly accepting that Christianity had "birthed" modern rationality, allowing a "civilized mind" to "naturally" dominate and infantilize its others. As Chidester notes, "[i]mperial comparative religion explained savages in terms that could easily be transposed onto subclassified persons at home. For example, it has often been noted that the analogy between savages and children was central to this enterprise" (Chidester 2014, p. 107). Again, the source–path–goal ICM is aligned with "human development".

Some eurochristians who are not in direct dialogue with Indigenous critical theory have made similar observations regarding the persistence of eurochristian worldview with respect to neoliberalism. Philip Goodchild (citing Giorgio Agamben and Dotan Leshem) notes that many have already pointed out the Christian underwriting of neoliberalism:

Some, in the wake of Max Weber and Michel Foucault, even attribute the origins of contemporary neoliberalism to the adoption of distinctly Christian modes of governance throughout modern institutions. For Christian thought has given priority, first in its theology and then in its practice, to the notion of 'economy' and the pursuit of gain (Goodchild 2020, p. 20).

Goodchild updates classical liberalism by *emphasizing* Christian values, seeing the *New Testament* emphasis on *oikonomos* as derived from perspectives of those marginalized by the Greek (Aristotle's) hierarchy of philosophy over political activity and the household—a logic of mastery. The term, which means something like "household manager" or "steward" is already hierarchical in the Greek sense; however, Dotan Leshem's etymological reading locates a key shift toward economic thinking in the west between the councils of Nicea (325 C.E.) and Chalcedon (451 C.E.) where a "one-dimensional *zoon oikonomikon* ["economic organism"] came to reign supreme in the human trinity" and writes "a history of the meaning attributed to the word *oikonomia* and its applications that signal out the Christianity of Late Antiquity as the transformative moment of its meaning and consequently of the ordering of the human trinity" (Leshem 2016, p. 3). These views suggest, but do not go far enough to articulate, what I mean by a *eurochristian* worldview underwriting neoliberalism. Let me shift to articulations of neoliberalism to clarify.

David Harvey has described neoliberalism as a *class-based project* developed by elite capitalists in the 1970s to counter what they saw as communist tendencies in the civil rights movements of the 1960s.<sup>14</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato and Noam Chomsky characterize the "neo" in neoliberal with the shift towards finance capital and the move away from the gold

standard and a shift away from civic obligations among capitalists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to give back to society in the form of philanthropy and cultivation of the arts (museums, concert halls, public parks, etc.). Yet Lazzarato makes clear that Lenin had already claimed that “the characteristic feature of imperialism is *not* industrial *but* finance capital” (Lazzarato 2015, p. 215). This ties neoliberalism to imperial colonialism but not to a eurochristian worldview.

During the twentieth century, the conservative German legal theorist, Carl Schmitt, critiqued liberalism for conflating politics and economics. As Devin Singh notes, “Schmitt’s retrieval of a theological aura to modern politics and sovereignty in *Political Theology* was couched in a resistance to the encroaching economic sphere. Politics as the offspring of the theological was championed against economy as the implicitly godless realm of “disenchantment”.” (Singh 2018, p. 11). Singh’s work compliments Leshem’s, who locates a particular shift in the Roman Christian milieu of late antiquity.

As Harvey describes it, capitalist elites in the 1970s courted members of the Republican party in the U.S. for a political base, while think tanks and efforts such as Business Roundtable were employed to counter the growth of the welfare state and a reluctance among capitalist investors in the wake of a shift away from the gold standard. These efforts were far from “spontaneous”. They were entirely ideological, yet they also responded to the critiques of the welfare state on the left, which had noticed growing inequity even with the rise in wages seen in the 1960s.

As Raschke reminds us, it is a mistake to read neoliberalism in simple partisan terms without realizing the contributions of liberal or affluent society’s youth to what we now call globalization (Raschke 2020). The late 1960s saw crises in urban housing, for example, which had revealed structural racism, and so part of capitalist ideology in disseminating media was to maintain suspicion and reluctance to enter discussions of racism. The Vietnam War was being conducted with no apparent change in American day-to-day lifestyle outside of perhaps the draft. Youth movement avowals of radicalism in liberal democracies evidenced more their middle-class privilege than their committed Marxism. U.S. hegemony idealized American exceptionalism, which has always maintained its eurochristian aura, especially after the 1823 *Johnson v. M’Intosh* case formally fused U.S. claims to sovereignty with fifteenth-century papal bulls of donation.

Ideologically, the westward expansion of eurochristian domination on Turtle Island served to “naturalize” a eurochristian worldview amid supposedly secular society. I have called this, following Steven Newcomb’s work on the ICM of “the dominate”<sup>15</sup> eurochristendomination (Green 2021). In the 1970s, Republicans influenced by emergent neoliberalism and capitalist revanchism found a basis for popular support in the fledgling Christian right, which had seen pressure from the government to desegregate or risk losing tax exempt status as the overreaching of big government. It is important to see the parallel development of the Christian right in the U.S. with the economic policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher because this is where largely Protestant evangelical theology and neoliberal political/economic ideology became an explicitly avowed *political theology*.

As Paul S. Boyer has tracked, however, contrary to popular “backlash” readings for the rise of the Christian Right against the “moral decline” of the 1960s, American evangelicals thrived from the 1925 Scopes trial to the 1970s, and the Jesus Movement influenced the Christian right (Boyer 2013, pp. 20–21). The very narrative of a “backlash” against “moral decline” was ideologically conceived to galvanize support and minimize dissent within the emergent Christian right.

It is when we combine the particular *politicizing* of religion through the capitalist, neoliberal interest in the Republican party (Harvey’s view above) that we see just how ideological the claims to “traditional Christian values” were and are; and what we are seeing more recently is the active *participation* in expanded government, especially in legal interpretation for the “protection” of religion, of that ideology—even while many constituents would say overtly that they want less government involvement. When we look at the religious element without a liberal, secularist separation narrative, we are able



to see a political-theological vortex framing distinctions between left and right instead of the simple right-left binaries at work.

The eurochristian worldview persists beneath both those on the “right” and “left”, as well as the increasingly archaic horizontal political metaphor that dates back to the French Revolution. The same worldview persists with respect to a conception of “religion” as a static and transcendent concept for “cultural systems”. Both derivations are *entirely eurochristian despite Enlightenment critiques of religious superstition that underwrite secularization narratives*.

In terms of cognitive theory, secularization narratives are motivated by eurochristian ICMs, which are a particular expression of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor and source–path–goal ICM. We saw this in Mill’s liberalism above, but it also underwrites the sense of linear progression in the frame of “progressive liberalism”. Metaphorically here, secularization is one more step on the *road* of a eurochristian worldview, and even as religious ideologues view this as a *decline* in traditional Christian morals (note the up–down image schema), the same eurochristian linear temporality persists. Competing civilization conceptions in “the West”, interfaith views of “religion”, and political binaries, are also underwritten by the eurochristian worldview, just as the term “pioneer” (from peon) advanced the “feet” of the eurochristian body politic.

#### 4. Neoliberalism and the “War on Society”

For eurochristians, “civilization” itself is not in question so much as who controls it from within the up–down articulation of power. This underscores whatever rancor we might witness along political contrasts between, for example, *liberal progressive* and *conservative*. We can also see the tangible evidence of the political-theological vortex in legal decisions. For example, Wendy Brown’s *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism* signals a shift in the United States Supreme Court during the latter half of the twentieth century with respect to religion. Brown traces the term “neoliberalism” back to the 1930s and articulates how the logic of endeavors to find a middle way between socialism and totalitarianism developed into a “war on society”, again after the civil rights gains of the 1960s and the welfare state (Brown 2019a, p. 9).

Neoliberal thought regarded universities as harboring leftist agendas, which fueled anti-intellectualism and a nostalgia for the myth of lost “tradition”. In such reaction-formations, Brown follows the rise of the Christian right and a moralized inflection of finance capital that brought about various economic crises while further impoverishing the working classes, who bore the brunt of austerity measures through a personalized adoption of debt. According to Brown’s analysis, the impoverishment that working-class supporters of neoliberals felt as a result of their political choices was then channeled to fuel populist rage against cosmopolitan, “liberal elites”, whose social-democratic impulses toward *society* seemed nostalgic for the Great Society and the welfare state. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher said society no longer existed, arguing that “there is no alternative” (TINA) to western capitalism. In other words, the so-called “progressives” were no longer progressive, even if those who were cultivated in the wake of the Great Society continued to smugly believe they were.

Neoliberal ideology was thus calculated to “destroy society”, as Brown shows, but not “civilization”. Working-class resentment was not so much an embodiment of “true” Americanism or “old time religion” so much as it was, in this worldview analysis, a zero-sum expression of a much older eurochristian ICMs dead set on annihilating anything outside of Christendom through trusted investments by other recognized Christians. This is pioneer mentality that again sees itself as making claims by occupying land as the “foot” of the colonizing body politic. Importantly, the nostalgia that thinkers such as Goodchild and Chomsky have for “classic” liberalism’s emphasis on philanthropic values of “giving back to society” in the form of museums, concert halls, etc., has little meaning for those determined to be “other” or too “immature” to enter into eurochristian society. The same goes for the sentiment that neoliberalism is “radical capitalism” or that it has “gone off

the rails" in a fitting, industrialist-inflected source–path–goal ICM. In fact, the dialectic between the eurochristian and this other requires "irrational", "uncivilized", "unevolved", "economically incapable", populations to further justify violent extraction.

David Harvey's work compliments Brown's analysis. Harvey notes that "progressive neoliberalism" (a rather oxymoronic term Raschke attributes to Nancy Fraser's analyses) was expressed when Bill Clinton radicalized the militarization of the police begun with "Law and Order Politics" under Richard Nixon. Under the guise of welfare reform and a "War on Poverty", an implicitly white-supremacist war against urban African Americans was waged that skyrocketed mass incarceration rates in the name of "safety" and "law and order". These are the very values embraced by the recent Biden–Harris ticket, which promoted itself simultaneously as progressive and a "return to normal". Their predecessor, Trump, indeed seemed to be fueled by increasing and unending crises, which he himself instigated. While some saw the 2008 housing crisis and the election of Trump in 2016 as signaling the end of neoliberalism, Harvey argues that we are seeing a deeper embeddedness of neoliberalism through capitalist accumulation in the wake of COVID-19 on a global scale. Harvey's analyses compliment my own here in the sense that the eurochristian worldview is drawn to this version of a zero-sum game.

Historically, as the Cold War gave way to the "War on Terror", the panacea anticipated by capitalist victory turned into waves of "states of emergency". Harvey has reflected on the 2008 housing crisis in the U.S. as a moment where neoliberalism did not die but rather *lost its political legitimacy*. This is crucial for understanding the results of the 2016 election. Donald Trump's unanticipated victory in the Republican primary and later landslide victory against Hillary Clinton evidenced the loss of faith in expert "liberal" elites, but according to Harvey this was a long-game strategy. The "progressive left" had already for a generation or more swung not so much to "the right" as to an embrace of neoliberalism which, because of its international tendencies, made party politics within the domestic space of the nation seem rather trivial. Trump was not a traditional conservative or in any way "presidential" in decorum. Professionalism no longer mattered, as the backlash against one of the most experienced presidential candidates ever showed.

In such an analysis, hatred of Hillary Clinton was amalgamated by a forty-year war on society. She could be aligned with technocratic elites, social justice movements that embodied an attempt to revive a notion of society that Reagan and Thatcher had long ago declared dead. Clinton (and Bernie Sanders) and now Biden's "return to normalcy" evidences the political successes of a rightward shift brought about by neoliberalism on *both the right and the left*, even as rhetoric among Trump supporters characterized Biden and Harris as "far left" when they are more like Nixon-era "law and order" diehards. What is at stake in elections is the tension between the elites and the pioneers, but both fit into the eurochristian worldview.

Before losing its political legitimacy, the neoliberal "war on society" galvanized the Christian right in the late 1970s to make a "moral majority" out of a pioneer mentality. While some have speculated the demise of the Christian right, again aligning with the loss of political faith in neoliberalism in 2008 that Harvey describes, as well as with the defeat of Mormon Mitt Romney in 2012, white evangelical Christians had no qualms supporting Trump. They were no longer going to play nice. To many, this has appeared to be a contradiction on in the "Christian values" avowed by religious conservatives; however, read against a longer history, there is intentional political strategy amid a broader, international phenomenon that François Cusset (2018) has described in *How the World Swung to the Right*. Capitalist or neoliberal revanchism in the 1970s was certainly not simply a U.S. phenomenon. On the global stage, it was a revanchism toward postcolonial efforts.

There is also a much older zero-sum game at work evidenced when we consider the eurochristian worldview, which produced capitalism and its own brand of colonialism, which in turn invented notions of race based on skin color to better distinguish, through their whiteness, their eurochristian-ness. Recent economic theorists, such as Benjamin Freidman in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, are historicizing the intimacy of theology

and capitalism against secularist accounts, but such scholars are also advancing their own careers while typically ignoring what Indigenous peoples and Indigenous scholars have been saying all along. Friedman makes only passing references to Native Americans and persistent racism in relation to the economy. His concluding remarks alarmingly distinguish the American situation from economic analyses of Malthus, Mill, and Marx because “America was (and to this day largely remains) a continent with vast uninhabited areas to be filled” (Friedman 2021, p. 414). Friedman gives a brief nod to “worldviews” in his last paragraph, correctly noting that religious thought influences them but without being able to go far enough to address the underlying eurochristian one, even if he helpfully describes how economic thought of the Enlightenment is thoroughly inflected with religious thought. The *eurochristian worldview* analysis thus needs more emphasis. The eurochristian worldview underwrites both “secular” and “religious” social formations, but it is also true that some neoliberal theorists were explicit in aligning neoliberal policies with traditional Christian values.

### 5. Neoliberalism and Religion

The fact that “Christian values” were publicly avowed by early neoliberal theorists is not the same as “religious views” or beliefs of individuals. It matters little that a neoliberal thinker like Milton Friedman, for example, was a secular Jew who apparently rejected religion altogether. Friedrich Hayek articulated an alignment with Christian values, not necessarily faith, and this in turn has affected a shift in how democracy currently works. I do not mean to say Hayek alone was causal; he tapped into a deeply framed, eurochristian colonial *hubris*.

As Wendy Brown points out, Hayek’s neoliberalism eschewed government-sponsored moral initiatives such as the “war on poverty” for inherently leading to repressive regimes. Hayek was suspicious of any conception of a “general will”, which compelled him to emphasize markets as “self-regulating” entities. The “general will” sounded too much like “society”, which seemed antiquated and nineteenth-century. Hayek was open to a kind of “traditionalism”, which he aligned with Christian values that he saw as embedded within markets, even while simultaneously regarding them as “spontaneous”. As Brown notes:

[Hayek’s] refashioning of liberalism withdraws authority from political life and confers it to religiously embedded norms and practices. The political, divested of sovereignty and public interest, is confined to generating universally applied rules (themselves best when they are codifications of norms emanating from tradition) and techniques that have the status of being practical, rather than true. Tradition secured by religion, on the other hand, acquires the mantle of incontestability and symbolic truth at the same time that it serves as a limit on the political. This formulation explains a strand of rationality organizing our current predicament: truth withdrawn from political life is rolled over to religious and moral claims rooted in the authority of tradition. The effect is to sever truth from moral accountability (a recipe for authoritarianism), to contest equality and justice with tradition, and to eliminate the legitimacy of popular sovereignty (Ibid, p. 102).

Brown cogently explains the logic by which neoliberal notions of freedom come to license antidemocratic, authoritarian sentiments. The irony here is that the rise of populism amid a loss of faith in the political enunciations of neoliberals has created the opposite of the intentions of neoliberal theorists like Hayek, who sought to preserve liberal democracy against state socialism and totalitarianism. Brown explains the current situation well, but an emphasis on eurochristian worldview sees little new here in tendencies to capture, convert, and extract. In other words, democratic society is expendable when it comes to the preservation of a eurochristian worldview.

There is, however, some room for nuance here. Totalitarianism and authoritarianism are not the same thing. If we follow Harvey’s line of thinking, that neoliberalism itself did not die after the 2008 crisis but that it has suffered a loss of political credibility, we might

be more understanding of the ways those who economically suffered under neoliberalism targeted their rage against “elites”. Arlie Hochschild in *Strangers in Their Own Land* helpfully describes part of the affective sensibilities of working-class whites against people of color and immigrants who they see need to “wait their turn in line” for the American dream, with a convenient amnesia of American Indian genocide and the need to distinguish between “white” (eurochristian) and “Indian” that produced early conceptions of whiteness in the colonies. Here again a eurochristian source–path–goal ICM is expressive of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, combined with the androcentric and eurochristian notion of the human to naturalize the idea that only eurochristian life pathways matter.

According to Robert P. Jones of the Public Religion Research Institute, whether Evangelical, Catholic, or Mainline Protestant, “in the United States today, the more racist attitudes a person holds, the more likely he or she is to identify as a white Christian” (Jones 2020, p. 175). From this perspective, which analyzes according to a eurochristian worldview, this makes sense, since the very notion of “white” was developed to distinguish Christian from heathen, villain, and savage. That notion of whiteness was radicalized with Protestant separations from Rome and the development of the “Black Legend” around Spain’s involvement in the southern hemisphere of the so-called “new world” that informs the racialization at the southern U.S. border today.

Although commonplace in American public discourse, it is a mistake to read working-class rage along party-lines, as social-media framing and the filters of our cookies settings might suggest. What the brilliant (if distasteful and unethical) work of now infamous groups such as Cambridge Analytica reveals is that swayable portions of voting populations and the ability to engage the disaffected, even if by means of disinformation. The war on truth, as Brown sees it, is really a game of strategy among those who already feel they have a divine truth on their side. In order to understand that zero-sum game, I argue that it is necessary to look at a deeper logic of eurochristian worldview as opposed to a smug rejection of evangelicals or the Christian Right as political ideology or even political theology.

An analysis of eurochristian worldview offers some insight for addressing partisan political stagnancy while necessitating much deeper reflection about the predicament of eurochristian (“white”) supremacy that our institutions and social-forming inherit. It also might help mitigate the obsession in U.S. political discourse for framing issues of race as either “black/white” or “People of Color/white” without adhering to “postrace” thought that places a liberal “reset button” on the issue of race by falsely claiming “we’re all equal now”. Racial designation and racial tension are the products of a eurochristian worldview that developed modern notions of race on the basis of skin color to justify its extractive ends. Similarly, partisan vitriol is a tool for further eurochristian colonizing efforts because it foregrounds one drama while waiting for non-eurochristians to die. This is how former “progressives” can continue to congratulate themselves for being law-and-order loyalists. However, religion must be part of the analysis.

For example, a simple “leftist” ideological critique would, in agreement with Louis Althusser’s “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, see “religion” as a particular function of repressive ideology. It would also lead to a view that working-class Christians are simply duped by unexamined ideological dogma. While it is true that neoliberal capitalists courted Republicans and the Christian right ideologically, the eurochristian worldview underwrites the appropriative aspects of colonialism and capitalism much earlier and in a way that includes “leftists” who might on the surface disavow “religion”. Marxists, for example, show their own “liberal” (economic, not political) inflection by treating religion as ideological mystification. A deeper account of fetishism reveals Marx’s own reliance on Charles de Brosses’ articulations of the fetish in *On the Worship of Fetish Gods*, which are entirely rooted in a eurochristian worldview and early slave trade off the west coast of Africa (Morris and Leonard 2017). Christian theologian Willie James Jennings sees this moment in the development of what he calls “the Christian imagination”, a helpful parallel to my description of eurochristian worldview (Jennings 2011).

In an analysis attentive to eurochristian worldview, we see that even claims to “atheism” are merely reaction-formations from within a eurochristian trajectory; thus, capitalist charges of “godless communism” and Marxist charges of the “opiate of the masses” *both work as expressions of a eurochristian worldview, whose inherently genocidal dynamics promote their own drama to consume the spotlight of anything on the “world stage” that might exceed their own implicit metaphysical framing.* During the Cold War, the economic tensions between the capitalism-communism dialectic foregrounded competing strategies within the eurochristian worldview for going about a civilizing process. As Marisol De La Cadena notes with Indigenous erasure in Peru and Central America (De La Cadena 2015, pp. 89–93), despite nationalistic claims of *indigenismo*, Marxists’ categorization of a worldwide proletariat neutralized Indigenous difference. Nations could claim Indigenous heritage while still treating Indigenous peoples as inferior. The genocidal result in many places was that Indigenous peoples were encouraged to deny being Indigenous in favor of potential class mobility.

Neoliberalism turns the tactics of eurochristian colonialism onto its own citizenry, just as Césaire noted with the repetition of Nazi nationalism and claims to universalism in France after the defeat of National Socialism. Citing Yves Florenne in *Le Monde*, Césaire reveals a bourgeois sentiment: “It is not by losing itself in the human universe, with its blood and its spirit, that France will be universal, it is by remaining itself” (Césaire 2000, p. 63). Partisan politics in the United States frame a eurochristian drama that rarely considers Indigenous people, and when it does, it subordinates them to citizenship status. A result has been that many U.S. citizens have been strategically cultivated to perform a jadedness toward “partisan politics” as a tool for the continued marginalization and domination of non-eurochristian perspectives, which can then be reduced to mere “identity politics” instead of accounting for the possibility that there might be other ways of looking at the world that might aid the crises we face today. Such nihilism paves the way for authoritarianism, but also displays of “wildness”, such as 6 January 2021, where populists try to “reclaim” sovereignty.

## 6. The Political Theology of Neoliberal Eurochristianity

In recent years, the topic of political theology has received a lot of academic attention. A political-theological critique, for example, might invoke the notion of sovereignty and apply it either to “decider” leaders or to the economy itself in terms of an aesthetics of “glory”. It would try to explain the excesses of signification that allow people to affectively “maintain faith” in neoliberalism while becoming simultaneously antidemocratic. However, while significant, such inquiries frequently remain thoroughly eurochristian.

Certainly, the work of Giorgio Agamben, inflected by Michel Foucault’s, has done much to articulate the political-theological critique. In the 1970s, Foucault saw that asceticism interrupts an ancient “care of the self” that would be based on various forms of flourishing. Denying the flesh exacerbates a new kind of transcendence, as well as a psyche-soma distinction that will develop a Christian conscience. More nuanced than Max Weber, who saw Calvinist-derived expressions of asceticism as merely an expression of the Protestant “ethic” and vocation, Foucault’s work saw the Christian expression first within institutions which then become internalized and expressed through governmentality in the early modern era. Such work goes a long way in helping to describe eurochristian ICMs present in neoliberalism through what Foucault’s later work called “governmentality”.

Peter Sloterdijk describes the phenomenon of a modern shift toward internal conscience in *The World Interior of Capital*. Like Schmitt’s characterization of the shift in the “nomos of the earth”, his argument has to do with the internalization of the globe as a sphere. As history moves, the birth of capital is part of “the monogestic faith of the Modern Age” (Sloterdijk 2013) that compresses “previously separate worlds into one global context” (Ibid, p. 14). He links universalist tendencies of colonialism with growing density of collapsing spheres, which produces disinhibiting tendencies associated with liberalism. “Thus, conscience does make cowards of us all”, says Hamlet, as he moves (and as Schmitt



lamented) from action to indecision, marking the eurochristian subjective turn of modernity, of which Foucault gave us a longer history.

More recently, Devin Singh has built on both Foucault and Agamben by focusing on the economic—rather than the political or epideictic (“glory”) in Agamben—aspects of Christianity in Rome. Singh’s work helps us distinguish the emergence of specifically **eurochristianity**. Singh notes that with attention to a thinker like Eusebius, “Constantine becomes a model for all of what God is like” (Singh 2018, p. 23). The fusion of emergent Christianity and Roman imperialism marks a distinctive shift toward the “euro” of eurochristianity. Singh’s work maintains attention to the economical metaphors at work in the gospel accounts of Christ’s life, where money, taxation, and coinage are fundamental to the significance of his milieu.

Even before Constantine, he writes, “Christ identifies not only with humanity but also with Rome [through acknowledgment of Roman taxation], which becomes symbolic for Christian empire. The timing of incarnation, then, reveals a truth about divine incarnation with humanity, facilitated through tax census as part of Augustan monetary administration” (Ibid, p. 49). This adds to Singh’s interpretation (via Eusebius) of Christianity as an entirely historical manifestation of God’s will at a precise economic moment in time, where writers began characterizing God as *oikonomos*, a fusion with paganism of the period (Ibid, p. 71). God becomes a master economist and Christ becomes an “imprint” of God’s will in this world, while humanity becomes various copies (*imago*) of Christ, which can in their individuality become tarnished, etc.

While Singh’s work resonates with what Goodchild and Leshem articulated above, Singh importantly clarifies against later interpretations of Christianity and austerity with respect to the handling of money that Christianity has always only made sense in relation to its manifestation as *economic critique* of Greek “mastery” and Roman taxation. This is crucial for understanding a eurochristian underwriting of neoliberalism because Singh shows us that Christianity is about economics, through and through.

Whether one reads the famous passage on rendering to Caesar what is Caesar’s and God’s to God (Luke 20:25) as Christ’s craftiness or as a statement between two worlds, the economic context is clear to the drama. Singh shows how by the time of Constantine, at least according to Eusebius, there has been a reconciliation between the emperor and Christ, which manifests in specific aspects of incarnation. In either case, this is but another instance of an “up–down” hierarchical ICM that Tink Tinker identifies as central to the eurochristian *worldview*. Certainly, the *ideology* present in the Roman empire’s adoption of Christianity is at work too, but the basic gesture is that of a grand economic actor above all others that may employ the work of human flesh toward a *temporalized* divine end, one that also helps produce a linear unfolding of progress toward that end through a *Parousia* or Second Coming.

In the standard story of liberalism, political subjectivity “broke free” from a corrupted version of repressive Catholicism, partly through the development of interest in pagan thought (Renaissance humanism). Yet Walter Mignolo sees in the emergence of capitalism and the colonial matrix of power the persistence of “savior rhetoric” in liberalism (Mignolo 2017). While Mignolo’s work is helpful, efforts to decolonize or “delink” from the colonial matrix of power (as he terms it) echo a liberal tendency to accept that we are all in the same situation with respect to worldview. Mignolo sees liberalism as a “break” with Christianity which echoes secularization narratives while Indigenous critical theorists like Tink Tinker, Jodi Byrd, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg)<sup>16</sup> have insisted both on attention to Gerald Vizenor’s articulation of Indigenous Survivance and the continued persistence of overtly Christian evangelizing designed to “civilize” Indigenous groups. For them, the effort is to maintain connections to pasts that eurochristian tactics have attempted to erase, not just to delink from a colonial matrix of power. This is again why a worldview analysis is necessary instead of an already existing and growing literature on decolonizing efforts. Decolonizing will mean different things to different groups of people, and too often eurochristians have in their efforts to “decolonize” or critique western society

have sought to “become Indigenous” or adopt “Indigenous spirituality”, as if one could simply “convert” one’s worldview.

Such efforts are of course part of a globalization process of commodification. Nation states developed through mercantile relations in the Netherlands and away from the Holy Roman Empire. The beginnings of international law would be found in regulating the seas, even if in dialogue with thinkers like Aquinas and “natural law” theory. These “universalizing” efforts were entirely eurochristian and androcentric, so if we return to even my basic articulation above based on an “all our relations” worldview we can see an incommensurability between eurochristian and Indigenous worldviews.

The abstracted eurochristian concept of “Nature”, along with its theology, was significantly challenged by the so-called “discovery” or the “new world”, yet even concepts of “stewardship” among current Christian environmentalists maintain an up–down image schema indicative of a eurochristian worldview. As Donna Haraway, following Marilyn Strathern, notes with respect to the crisis of the capitalocene that “[i]t matters what thoughts think thought thoughts”, and I would add that a eurochristian worldview “thinks the thoughts” that give us capitalism, neoliberalism, and the predicament of the capitalocene, which as a term is an important corrective to androcentrism (Haraway 2016, p. 38).

As advocates of the term capitalocene over Anthropocene assert, the extractive impulses that built modern economies have served only a very tiny portion of humanity. While the beginnings of capitalist exploitation were well under way, the Valladolid debates over Aristotelean notions of slavery expressed the challenges to eurochristian worldview that heightened a “justification” for the treatment and exploitation of Natives. The Reformation, of course, was also an expression of the need to render a new account for how the world came to exist as it was. The 1648 “peace” of Westphalia, which temporarily settled religious wars and established relatively secure boundaries for nation states, employed a secular notion of “civilization” while relegating armed conflict to various colonies around the world that were being extracted for the benefit of “European civilization”. Liberalism in this context is an expression of agreement—or “trust” in Goodchild’s terms—among eurochristians based on the assumption that the non-Christian world was a resource for extraction and the importation of Christianity to those regions was sufficient “repayment” for that extraction.

Carl Schmitt’s lamentations are relevant here. In *Nomos of the Earth* (originally published in 1950), Schmitt argued that dissolutions of spatial notions of *nomos* became conflated with *thesmoi* (institutions), obscuring its original emphasis on land (Schmitt 2006, p. 75). Schmitt’s book, with a cursory glance at the opening lines of Homer’s *Odyssey*, points to a distinction between land and sea important to the development of, and changes in, international law. Schmitt devotes much of his discourse on the “discovery” of the “new world” to analysis of Francisco de Vitoria’s work (making only a few passing remarks to Bartolomé de Las Casas). Schmitt read the development of the French Revolution as a return to “Caesarism” and a corruption of classical notions of empire. For him this would turn into twentieth-century nihilism. This nostalgia for empire is repeated in the far-right thought of *Nouvelle Droite* in France, which developed in the late 1960s and continues today, especially in the thought of Alain de Benoist. It is less explicitly avowed in thinkers like Hayek or American politicians who play Pollyanna to the inherent violence of the United States’ aspirations to empire.

What is interesting about a Schmitt or a Benoist (or anyone in the wake of the Stefan George Circle) is the complete lack of apology for their nostalgia for empire. In a way, it is refreshing, even if I find it diabolical. Such thinkers would argue that it is better than what we currently have. The nihilism of modernity that Schmitt saw was based partly on the idea that classical empires had a *katechon*, and in Christian terms this meant that protecting territory was tied to notions of staving off the end of the world. This association of Christian temporality aligned with the spatial protection through “just wars” (a feature of Christian empire since Augustine), but all of this would change with so-called “discovery” of Turtle Island (North America) because sea warfare and divisions, such as those in the papal bulls

of donation and discovery, would be different from land divisions, creating a new *nomos* that lasted from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Robert A. Williams Jr.'s *American Indian in Western Legal Thought* and *Savage Anxieties* offer an important counterbalance to Schmitt's in terms of historical perspective, but Schmitt's nostalgia does offer help articulating a description of the eurochristian worldview.

According to Schmitt, during the modern period, and largely because of sea warfare, the unifying concept of the *katechon* by which Christians recognize each other against infidels became blurred. Also blurred were distinctions between *hostes*—a known, friendly, or “Christian” opponent—and *inimici*—“an opponent with whom there is no friendship” (Ibid, p. 163). Debates about how to treat Indians evidenced such blurring. Even the mistaken name of “Indian” used as a gloss for various different peoples evidences the ease with which the eurochristian worldview can exclude any non-Christians.

In the breakdown of the old *katechon nomos*, Schmitt saw international law as having emerged as a *secular and neutral apparatus*. In this way, his thought accepts a kind of secularization narrative along the lines of Westphalian nation-states. He also completely disregards any idea that Indians might have their own concepts of custom, law, or *nomos*, relegating their “destruction” to their utter lack of “scientific power” (Ibid, p. 135). This goes beyond merely being a racist or a bigot. Schmitt was actively both. His thought is relevant here because it is an extreme manifestation of the logic of the eurochristian worldview, which is inherently genocidal. Far from being a neoliberal, he expresses a eurochristian worldview.

The nostalgia for strong authority that produced Schmitt's earlier work, *Political Theology* (1922), persisted in his post WWII writing, yet with a greater emphasis on liberalism's lack of moral accountability because, in his view, the introduction of the economic and market-driven organizing aspects of liberalism blurred the line between *hostes* and *inimicus*. In other words, “we cannot tell who's a Christian and who's not anymore, which renders the notion of the “just war” meaningless. The inherently racist and sexist notion of “the human” or “Man” in the eurochristian imaginary lost some of its semblance with the arrival of what Foucault called “disciplinary power”. As Foucault writes:

What I call Man, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is nothing other than the kind of after-image of this oscillation between the juridical individual, which really was the instrument by which, in its discourse, the bourgeoisie claimed power, and the disciplinary individual, which is the result of the technology employed by this same bourgeoisie to constitute the individual in the field of productive and political forces. From this oscillation between the juridical individual—ideological instrument of the demand for power—and the disciplinary individual—real instrument of the physical exercise of power—from this oscillation between the power claimed and the power exercised, were born the illusion and the reality of what we call Man (Foucault 2006, p. 58).

Earlier in the same lecture, Foucault distinguishes the arrival of disciplinary power from *sovereign* power, which is characterized by war and the threat of violence (Schmitt 2006, pp. 42–43). The economic forces, as Foucault's later work would make clear, on the one hand seem to evidence the disciplinary power erupting from the technology of *discourse*. At the same time, they operate in constant state of international war.

Such institutionalization now seems commonplace to neoliberal language of increasing productivity and outcome orientation. It was Schmitt's nightmare come to life. Schmitt wrote *Nomos of the Earth* as a former Nazi under the allied powers and heavily inflected by U.S. policies under which “denazification” was supposed to have happened. Schmitt's reading of the secularization process laments the “loss” of a “unifying” and ordered sense of Christendom, which he associated with empire. He sees in the development of “nihilism” and especially in emergent U.S. global hegemony a shift to the criminalization of opponents in warfare. Considering his own past as a Nazi anti-Semite and that the book was written just after the formation of the United Nations, along with the *Convention on the Prevention of Genocide* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, his closing words are eerie:

“Historically speaking, new amity lines are on the agenda. But it would be unfortunate if they were to be achieved only through new criminalizations” (Ibid, p. 322).

The word “genocide” does not appear in the book, but it seems to resonate, and Schmitt’s concept of secularization is more self-serving than it is factual. Yet, as his own powerful critique of American ascent to global power attests, American foreign policy is rooted in what we now call “American exceptionalism”. For example, Schmitt writes:

James Brown Scott, the American international law jurist, sees in the modern turn to a discriminatory concept of war a return to the Christian-theological doctrine of just war. But modern tendencies do not resurrect Christian doctrines. Rather, they are ideological phenomena attending the industrial-technical development of modern means of destruction (Ibid, p. 321).

For Schmitt, American assertions of “Christian values” are not “truly” Christian because they are mere ideology, yet he is surely not lamenting capitalism. He sees a loss of “values” and a violence indicative of liberal-democratic indistinctions. He laments that war has become “police action”. His view of secularization appears here to follow Max Weber’s notion of disenchantment. Interestingly, Schmitt points to the development of “civilization” as a term in the early nineteenth century to designate unity between France and the U.S. (Ibid, p. 286), yet he sees this as merely ideological—an instance of what Foucault later called “disciplinary power”.

Hayek, on the other hand, saw in neoliberalism not only a “third” way between totalitarianism and socialism but an adherence to traditional Christian values. The key element is sovereignty, which Schmitt saw as incoherent in liberal democracies. In my analysis, both Schmitt and Hayek express a deeply framed *eurochristian worldview*. Where a neoliberal like Hayek supplicates to enduring Christian tradition for regulating moral-impulses within markets, I see a status quo deferral to a eurochristian worldview. The contrast between Schmitt and Hayek is particularly illuminating in their shared eurochristian worldview because Hayek really saw neoliberalism as a defense against movements like National Socialism. They compete over different ways to conduct “civilization”, even to the point of “destroying society”, but they share the value of an inherently eurochristian civilization and economy that plays a zero-sum game with anything it considers “other”. I realize that this may sound overly “binary” or reductive at first glance, so as a way of wrapping up an admittedly difficult interdisciplinary analysis, let me return once more to worldview.

## 7. Worldview, Not Religion

As I have said repeatedly, I use the term *eurochristian*, following Tink Tinker, to designate a social movement and worldview, not a religion. The term is more accurate than what people colloquially refer to as “whiteness” or “eurocentrism” or “amer-european”, etc. As Tinker writes,

Proposing to use eurochristian as that more accurate descriptor captures not only present cultural realities but ties the reality back to its historical roots. In making this move, I am determinedly not making a “religious” claim per se. Nor am I interested in rehashing the oversimplified weberian doctrinal identification of puritan ethics with capitalism (Tinker 2019).

In Tinker’s account, both capitalism and communism (Marxist or Soviet, etc.) are expressive of a eurochristian worldview. It is not necessarily one thing that creates a worldview, such as Constantine’s adoption of Christianity and Theodosian codes. Those moves certainly “europeanize” some of the desert religion’s tendencies, but other factors exist. Tinker, for example, locates much of the eurochristian worldview that would come to devastate the western hemisphere in the trauma of the Black Death, which completely reorganized European society, especially relationships where land came to signify wealth. A feverish need to turn land into property accompanies the “pioneer” obsession with land. Ideology plays a role, but it expresses something deeper in the way of cognitive framing, which is

intergeneration and by no means simply a “social imaginary”. It is, as George Lakoff has argued, made physical in neural mapping.

The emphasis on worldview might also push us back toward the recent assessments made by Leshem and Singh with respect to late antiquity, but let me also address commonplace conversations here. As I said earlier, Tinker has addressed on multiple occasions how avowed atheists and agnostics continue express a eurochristian worldview. Logically, one must have a conception of the divine former that one rejects. The deeply framed milieu of the eurochristian worldview has already framed the very possibility of the rejection of God. We ought to situate critiques of nihilism from Nietzsche to Weber to Schmitt and even Brown in this regard. The “death of God” and whatever nihilism present in it remains eurochristian in worldview. Secularists remain eurochristian in worldview too.

Invoking a eurochristian worldview also sidesteps the theological debates of the Reformation, especially the sentiment of “by faith alone”, which when invoked in the political realm becomes merely *an aspect of identity*. Wendy Brown points out the contradiction in Hayek’s submission to Christian tradition while also showing how populist groups identifying as Christian increasingly employ that identity category as a legal weapon. Schmitt would agree. The fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has largely embraced various linguistic and logical slippages (see Brown’s book for a fuller account) to “protect religious freedom” marks a shift in the twentieth century where a reaction-formed identity category that had developed from a persecution complex (general Christian rightwing thinking) conflated its self-identification with “traditional Christian values”. It is important to separate such claims—themselves reflective of practices of reading that are rather recent—from the eurochristian *worldview* to which I am referring.

Identity and ideology are not worldviews, nor is my use of the term “worldview” indicative of some unexamined “essentialism”. My attention to worldview here is meant to highlight the purely ideological and identitarian assertions of conservative questions while simultaneously not letting more liberal Christians or “atheists” off the hook for participating in the inherently world-destroying qualities of eurochristianity.

In the most important existing book on the topic that I know, Mark Freeland (Sault St. Marie Anishinabek) defines “worldview”

as an interrelated set of cultural logics that fundamentally orient us to space (land), time, the rest of life and provides a prescriptive methodology for how to relate to that life. This definition is designed to provide a corrective to the lack of consistent use of the term. Worldview as a concept is often used but rarely defined. This lack of precision undermines the ability of the term to communicate cultural difference at a deep level. Since there is so much misinformation and misunderstanding to Indigenous relationships to land, I privilege a definition of worldview that can communicate those fundamental relationships to time and space (Freeland 2021).

Freeland’s remarks hopefully intensify my inclusion of Carl Schmitt’s approach to “land and sea” or “nomos of the earth”. His thought is entirely myopic for a Native American or Indigenous (non-eurochristian) perspective, yet even the terminology of “Native American” or “Indigenous” constantly refracts conversation into the narcissistic drama invoked by in my opening quotation from Luis Rivera-Pagán. The eurochristian worldview is so inept at dealing with something outside of itself that it must make it the same even as a means of destroying it for having deemed it “other”.

A eurochristian poetics of sacrifice thus exhibits a kind of gravitational pull that implicitly requires *conversion* in order to participate in conversation. One is converted even as one is put to death. Indians are immortalized in a timeless romance that implicitly underwrites ongoing eurochristian occupation. They are erased to a distant past. They are intentionally referred to in “cleaned-up” language (like “Native American” in the U.S.) so as to define them as terminologically different than treaty obligations (where they are often “Indians”). This is not about one particular language or another. The



eurochristian *worldview* persists within various Indo-European languages, some of which were developing before Christianity.

While linguistic analysis is important for understanding worldview, worldview cannot be reduced to language alone. A brief linguistic gloss may be helpful here. The modern linguistic adherents from Europe—and English is an acute example here—formulate after the Christian invasion of Europe. In England, following the late fourteenth-century flourishes of English literature (Wycliff, Langland, Chaucer) under John of Gaunt and Richard II and then more formalized under Henry IV solidified the “official” use of English for colonizing purposes. More generally, the eurochristian languages are nominalist, in the sense that they are noun-driven (rather than verb-driven), which distinguishes them from Amerindian contexts. Tinker notes that *wazhazhe* among many languages indigenous to Turtle Island do not work that way. As Eduardo Kohn’s *How Forests Think* helpfully notes with respect to South American Indigenous languages, “we are colonized by certain ways of thinking about relationality” (Kohn 2013), yet eurochristian androcentrism prevents us from seeing that “signs are not exclusively human affairs” (Ibid, p. 42). Indigenous worldviews are not androcentric. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s work on Amerindian perspectivism is also relevant for describing a non-eurochristian or Indigenous worldview.

It is interesting that modern eurochristian linguistic movements were emerging as the same social forces that brought about the Reformation were occurring. They are deeper than the expressed ideologies of political or religious doctrines. The English language is particularly exemplary because, since the 1066 “French invasion” (which did not understand itself as “French” but as familial overlording) and the subsequent developments of “Middle English” and then “Modern English”, the overwhelming linguistic reaction arrived in the form of a fixed, subject–verb–object, syntactical structure. On a cognitive level, the repetition of such a “subjective abstraction” does seem to parallel a cultural separation of “Man” from “world”.

Foucault identified European “Man” as part of these cultural poetics. Black feminists such as Hortense Spillers and Sylvia Wynter have also pointed out that the euroconstruction of “Man” intentionally excludes Black bodies and that Foucault himself largely pillaged the intellectual work of Black thinkers without feeling like he needed to give credit. Alexander Weheliye has noted both Agamben and Foucault’s debt (Weheliye 2014). Sylvia Wynter is especially intriguing because she links neurochemical behavior in human brains to storytelling (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, p. 11). What Foucault saw as ideological outplaying of bourgeois claims to power through discourse, I am saying, following Indigenous scholars, is expressive of deeper cognitive framing that is intergenerational. A more thorough analysis comparing Wynter’s work to Indigenous critical theory is warranted here, especially because of the narratives historically produced to explain “Christian values”.

Such work would be helpful the recurring attempts that avowed Christians frequently use to discuss “pre-Roman” Christianity, as if we could access that cultural sensibility in the twenty-first century. There is nothing ancient about claims to “purified” notions of Christianity or “fundamentalism”. Arguments over access to “truer” or “more original” versions of Christianity grew out of the historicism of early modernity, yet nineteenth-century fundamentalist claims—such as the “inerrancy of scripture”—were fed in the twentieth century by the political ostracism of largely Protestant Christians in the U.S. following the 1925 Scopes trial. While fundamentalists regarded the trial as a victory at the time for upholding the *Butler Act* (which had outlawed teaching human evolution in state schools), national memory has regarded the trial and statements made by William Jennings Bryan as symbolic of willful ignorance and rejection of modern science in the name of blind faith.

Cultural poetics intensify how persistent eurochristian framing is. Hyperbolized in cultural products like the play/film, *Inherit the Wind* (1960), which aligned such willful ignorance with redbaiting of godless “communists” by Joseph McCarthy, the fictionalized account accurately depicts the fact that the original case was itself designed as a public performance, drawing national attention to distinctions between urban and rural life.

In 1956, the U.S. had adopted the motto “In God We Trust”, replacing *E pluribus unum* and also signaling the religious leanings of northerners who saw the preservation of the union in religious terms. By 1957, Dwight Eisenhower assented to have the new motto on all U.S. currency—a clearly politically willed connection between “tradition” and the market. Suspicion about a loss of individuality was accompanied by the expansion in the 1960s of secular humanist-oriented education. All of this makes sense in the logic of the eurochristian worldview and remains difficult for anyone outside it to comprehend. In the “secularist” narrative, it seems “backward”.

In the U.S. especially, legal apparatuses extend eurochristian worldview while acting implicitly to erase Indigenous worldview. While Supreme Court cases from the early 1940s to the 1960s, for example, had emphasized protection for the exercise of non-Protestant religious groups—Jehovah’s Witnesses, Jews, and Catholics—the underwritten value of the legal expressions was one of “religious tolerance”, even for those whose religious devotion made them conscientious objectors to national wars. The rise of the Christian Right in the late 1970s marked a revanchist return of overt religious identification to politics, one which placed the Christian as the “victim” and “minority” who needed to be protected.

As Wendy Brown argues, not only the bitter irony but the way such seemingly contradictory impulses made way for the rise of antidemocratic politics in the twenty-first century as a result of inherent nihilism. The logic goes like this:

Lost entitlement to the privileges of whiteness, maleness, and nativism is then easily converted into righteous rage against the social inclusion and political equality of the historically excluded. This rage in turn becomes the consummate expression of freedom and Americanness, or freedom and Europeanness, or freedom and the West. With equality and social solidarity discredited and the existence of powers reproducing historical inequities, abjections, and exclusions denied, white male supremacism thus gains a novel voice in the twenty-first century (Brown 2019a, p. 45).

Yet this “novel voice” is, through Hayek’s logic, also “spontaneously” derivative of traditional Christian values. In other words, a kind of nostalgia haunts the sentiment. While scholarship has certainly pointed out the romanticized fiction of a time when “America was great”, the racialized and (cis)gendered elements also speak to another kind of nostalgia—for when white men were not held accountable. However, “whiteness” itself, as I have noted, is simply eurochristianity articulated as racial superiority.

In terms of race and gender, such lamentations may not garner much sympathy, but when inflected with “Christian values” that emerge, not from government policies but “spontaneously” within markets, Christianity becomes a welcoming signifier for “freedom”. It seems to be *that* version of freedom that the recent formations of the U.S. Supreme Court want to protect in terms of religious freedom. In other words, embedded in eurochristian notions of “freedom” is the “freedom” not to be held accountable or responsible because one embodies the right to superiority on the earth. It is a freedom that transcends morality (and even charges of nihilism) because it always already has avowed belief in a divinely ordained economy. There is no reason to listen, argue, or deliberate. Neoliberalism’s amplification of “capture, convert, and appropriate” can be expressed “secularly” in a way that implicitly acts as if eurochristian worldview is a natural “nomos of the earth”.

We also see this in the inherent eurochristian framing of the much-hallowed First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The very formation of the U.S. Supreme Court was already acting within a eurochristian worldview, even before explicitly incorporating the language of papal bulls of discovery to the government’s right to territory in *Johnson v. M’Intosh* 1823. It is not a question of whether or not the U.S. is a “Christian nation”; the notion of *nation* in its modern sense merely reinforces the eurochristian frame. It takes only a cursory glance at the United Nations’ *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* to see that while most of my examples are from the United States, eurochristian worldview remains on an international scene.

Distinctions between liberal or neoliberal, while nuanced, also collapse in an analysis based on view. Brown sees nihilism playing itself out amid religiously aligned political activists, which she has developed in various lectures since her last book (Brown 2019b). It is once again important that one take Brown's assessment of nihilism in tandem with my account of the postsecular outside a Habermasian reading. Brown reads nihilism through Nietzsche's "death of God" pronouncements and Max Weber's concept of "disenchantment". She does not engage in more recent and nuanced discussions about how Weber got it wrong. For example, Cornel West echoes more recent thought concerning Weber's thesis, when saying, "disenchantment of the world—resulting in fewer commitments to God-talk—is not true" (West 2011, p. 105).

When confronted concerning her reliance on white male authors (Weber in particular) at Yale in 2019, Brown reflected on the pedagogical possibility of breaking away from such a corpus of texts, yet never in her persuasive readings of thinkers within the "western" tradition is there room for a non-western "other" (Brown 2019b). I do not mean this as a postcolonial critique of Brown; I mean it as a critique from someone who listens to Indigenous voices who are never "postcolonial". These voices remain present amid both academic and political erasure, even in the "ruins of neoliberalism"; but in order to hear them, we must develop a sense of the underwritten, eurochristian worldview that perpetuates Indigenous erasure.

Brown's earlier book, *Undoing the Demos*, ends lamenting a "civilizational despair" that includes the Left, whose utopic desires seemed to pave the way for the TINA thought of Reagan and Thatcher or *The End of History* for Fukuyama. An analysis on eurochristian worldview can potentially step out of the left-right binary and see it as an engine of a eurochristian desiring machine. As a final qualifier, it should go without saying that "developing a sensibility" here in no way signals a change in worldview or an ability to no longer be eurochristian. The point for so much anticolonial thought starts with acknowledging the past and attempts at erasure before coming to the frequently posed questions by eurochristians as to what to *do next*.

Because the question regularly arises, I will note that undoing or "decolonizing efforts" do indeed begin with "Land Back" and all of the unthinking of possessive notions of the eurochristian conversion of land into property. More globally, Boaventura de Sousa Santos has articulated another tactic in *The End of Cognitive Empire*, but it requires especially that academics not confuse a discussion of worldview with an older postcolonial critique. De Sousa Santos writes: "The core problem is that the epistemological premises of both Eurocentric critical thinking and Eurocentric conservative thinking have strong (and fatal) elective affinities" that he calls "epistemologies" of the North (De Sousa Santos 2018, p. viii). Among his many suggestions is that we need not "another theory of revolution" but that "we need to revolutionize theory" (Ibid, p. ix). Being attentive to both Indigenous worldview and Indigenous critical theory would certainly be a step in this direction, yet such efforts have been undermined by a *passive acceptance* of neoliberalism and global capitalism as an inescapable status quo.

## 8. Conclusions

I have attempted an interdisciplinary assessment based on worldview to assess the persistence of a eurochristian disposition in neoliberalism. The analysis necessitates that we reject both the Enlightenment myth of secularization and the "humanist" impulses of the 1960s while also refusing to pander to eurochristian nostalgia for whatever privileges deemed "lost". When we tacitly accept that "secular" discourse flows only from the critical assessments of eurochristian thinkers, we disallow the fact that there simply might be a better way than rehashing more than two thousand years of what eurochristians have colonized into the notion of "Western thought". While I have at various points referred to Indigenous worldview here, my main goal has been to describe the persistent of a eurochristian worldview informing the phenomenon of neoliberalism, not to give a thorough account of Indigenous worldview.

This is not a simple negation of philosophical, scientific, political, ethical, or aesthetic ways of being particularized in “western thought”. Situating neoliberalism within its longer history of eurochristian domination helps us provincialize the sheer narcissism involved in the nihilism that scholars such as Wendy Brown detect in their own analyses of neoliberalism. It also offers a warning to those who would simply try to “reinstate” some more benign narrative of Christian values in what Philip Goodchild calls a “meta-physics of trust”. This requires a reassessment of what we mean by “religion”, whether etymologically conceived as “binding” or “rereading”, for so much of our binding comes from our rereading, which further embeds a eurochristian worldview. Indeed, if we want a “way out”, eurochristians need to be willing to listen to various Indigenous voices that are *not* eurochristian, which obviously does not mean the logic of capture that new agers and religious tourists seek when they want to “become Indigenous”.

The emphasis on eurochristian worldview also suggests continued suspicion of a broader western philosophical emphasis on universals, offering a different direction than the current preoccupation with identity politics. Emphases on universals of course reflect Enlightenment thought, which recent writers like Todd McGowan associate with a “true left”, as opposed to conservative emphases on particulars. McGowan is perfectly comfortable aligning with a Pauline erasure between Jew and Greek, citing Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ”. McGowan writes, “Where identity politics would recognize an opponent (Jew against Greek), Saint Paul’s universalism sees only a potential Christian comrade. All universalism has the same open structure that Saint Paul envisions for Christianity” (McGowan 2020, p. 171). What if eurochristians could just stop looking for potential comrades and concede that other persons and species exist and do not need them? McGowan holds up Nazism as the supreme example of identity politics and argues that reactions to totalitarianism in the twentieth century fueled a kind of reactionary mimetics that would become identity politics. Something of Schmitt’s predicament writing *Nomos of the Earth* is echoed there. Even so, in McGowan’s reading, the recent rise of rightwing Christian identity movements says more about a kind of particularism and its will to power than any “true” universalism. By contrast, in Wendy Brown’s terms, such movements reflect the supremacy of nihilism while employing the language of Christian traditionalism. In my analysis, the milieu in which Brown and McGowan write is a milieu saturated with tacit expressions of a dominant eurochristian worldview that includes both “the left” and “the right”. While I respect both of their work, I think our challenge is to find an alternative where some say there is none. An assessment based on worldview hopefully aids in such efforts.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> (Tiernan 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Even scholars who see “merit” in neoliberal efforts note the problems without being able to connect it to inherent genocide. In an ethnography from the 1990s, Hoksbergen and Madrid write: “support for neoliberalism, whether based on Christian or secular foundations, derives from an abstract theoretical social analysis that gradually evolved in the institutional and cultural environment of the developed world. Prescribing such a philosophy and way of life for another people with another history and culture implies the need for a total transformation of the basic identity of the people. In prescribing such a change the dangers of ethnocentricity and hubris are self” (Hoksbergen and Madrid 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Of course, these were the regions most reluctant to ratify the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The language of the papal bulls of donation echoes in English charters well after the Reformation (Miller et al. 2010).

- 4 While the United States provide the bulk of my examples, this is for clarity. It helps to distinguish clarity of what I mean by the eurochristian worldview by showing the results of its dominance on Indigenous peoples, but the eurochristian worldview of course grounded colonizing efforts all over the world regardless of the “nation” or language of the colonizers.
- 5 Chesnut summarizes: “Thus from Los Angeles to Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century and from Brazil back to Los Angeles at its end, Pentecostalism has rapidly become the South American nations most dynamic popular religion”. Pentecostalism and other forms of evangelical Protestantism throughout the twentieth century took South and Central America to extensions of efforts initiated in the nineteenth century toward Asia and the Pacific. The movement is tied directly to liberal economic expansion, even as the efforts are nominally directed at alleviating poverty (Chesnut 1997, p. 49).
- 6 (Taylor 2019).
- 7 That “hybrid” forms of Christianity exist is unquestionable, but just as the relatively recent religious studies discourse has moved from language of “syncretism” to that of “hybridity” to better account for the persistence of Indigenous features, the focus on the “new” and emergent comes at a cost to Indigenous Survivance. This is why Indigenous critical theory will at times be in conflict with borderlands theories over how to account for the persistence of Indigenous worldview. The use of “eurochristian” here is a protective measure to allow the intellectual space for Indigenous recovery efforts, which will vary by group according to the access to language, oral history, and collective memory.
- 8 On “euro-froming” and a critique of the usurpation of Indigenous twinship models, see (Mann 2000, pp. 62–63).
- 9 (Byrd 2011). Byrd cites Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee) and Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mowhawk):  
Indigeness is an identity constructed, shaped, and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is the oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples in the world (xxix).
- 10 As Césaire wrote:  
And I am not talking about Hitler, or the prison guard, or the adventurer, but about the “decent fellow” across the way; not about the member of the SS, or the gangster, but about the respectable bourgeois. In a time gone by, Léon Bloy innocently became indignant over the fact that swindlers, perjurers, forgers, thieves, and procurers were given the responsibility of “bringing to the Indies the example of Christian virtues”.  
We’ve made progress: today it is the possessor of the “Christian virtues” who intrigues—with no small success—for the honor of administering overseas territories according to the methods of forgers and torturers. (Césaire 2000, p. 47).
- 11 As Steven L. Winter notes:  
The very capacity of the brain to recognize patterns and form concepts depends on these structures of bodily experience. These basic structures or *image schemas*—such as BALANCE, PART-WHOLE, OBJECT, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, FORCE-BARRIER, and CONTAINER—provide structure to human thought and a measure of apparent unity and determinacy in our interactions with the world. Image-schemas are neither representations nor literal “pictures” but [ . . . ] schematics that emerge from cross-modal linkages in neural processes that transcend any specific sensory modality. (Winter 2001, p. 15).
- 12 Newcomb writes:  
The ICM of the Conqueror posits a central figure, such as a king, monarch, or pope, who is considered to come from or be derived from a divine source. The presumption of the conqueror’s divinity leads to the additional presumption that the conqueror has “divine right” to exert control or force, which is understood as being UP, as reflected in the metaphor POWER IS UP. Conversely, those peoples whom the conqueror has subjected to his control are conceptualized as being DOWN in relation to the conqueror, as reflected in the metaphor LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN. Furthermore, the conqueror is presumed to have the divine right not just to rule, but also to spread or expand his reign or domination outward by expanding his rule to “new” lands by means of war or force of arms. This conception is found in the term *imperium*, or “a dominium, state, or sovereignty that would expand in population and territory, and increase in strength and power”. In order to find or “discover” additional lands that the conqueror can subdue, he must send representatives forth to search out, discover, and find *new* lands to conquer and subdue. (Newcomb 2008, p. 24).
- 13 As Mann writes:  
In the communal world of Indigenous America, everyone arrives on this plane with an assignment, something that all the people are counting on that one has to accomplish, as it will influence the execution of their own tasks. In this scenario, the species privilege of Westerners accord to humans is almost comical. For “everyone” includes *all* our relations: the spirits, the animals, the plants, the rocks, the elements, the sun, the moon, the stars and the matrix that all share. (Mann 2015, p. 81).
- 14 My glossing of Harvey’s thought here is indebted to various episodes of his recent podcast, which updates his thinking since *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. See (Harvey 2021).



- <sup>15</sup> *Dominus* became actively used in addressing Roman emperors following Diocletian. The term and its association with “Lord” helps to distinguish the particularly European aspect of “eurochristian”. For Newcomb’s work, see *Pagans in the Promised Land*.
- <sup>16</sup> See especially, (Simpson 2017).

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